From: MORGAN, MARK A (USBP)
To: MCALEENAN, KEVIN K
Subject: FW: The Homeland Security News Briefing for Tuesday, November 15, 2016
Date: Tuesday, November 15, 2016 7:31:03 AM
Attachments: dhsclips161115.doc

FYSA

We knew this was coming.

From: PROVOST, CARLA (USBP)
Sent: Tuesday, November 15, 2016 6:52:07 AM
To: MORGAN, MARK A (USBP)
Subject: FW: The Homeland Security News Briefing for Tuesday, November 15, 2016

fysa

Carla L. Provost
Deputy Chief
USBP
(b)(6);(b)(7)(C)

From: HUDSON, RICHARD M
Sent: Tuesday, November 15, 2016 5:30 AM
To: PROVOST, CARLA (USBP) (b)(6);(b)(7)(C)
Cc: LUCK, SCOTT A (USBP) (b)(6);(b)(7)(C) ; HULL, AARON A (b)(6);(b)(7)(C)
Subject: FW: The Homeland Security News Briefing for Tuesday, November 15, 2016

Deputy,

FYI… This was in the DHS News Briefing document this morning.

HEARING HELD ON BORDER PATROL DETENTION FACILITY CONDITIONS. The Arizona Daily Star (11/14, 270K) reports that at a Monday federal court hearing, "civil-rights advocates and federal prosecutors argued about conditions inside Border Patrol detention centers," where the agency allegedly "violates its own policies as well as detainees' constitutional rights by forcing them to sleep on concrete floors in conditions cold enough to earn them the nickname 'hieleras.'" Judge David C. Bury "began Monday's hearing by pointing to his 'concerns' about court filings in recent months, such as the radically different views expressed by experts who inspected the detention centers." The Border Patrol "claims it is doing the best it can with its budgetary restrictions, Bury said," though Bury is quoted saying, "this court can't be concerned with budgetary issues." The Justice Department is scheduled to present the Border Patrol's case on Tuesday.

VR

Hudson

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From: (b)(6);(b)(7)(C)
Sent: Tuesday, November 15, 2016 5:01 AM
To: BP (b) (7)(E) CHAVEZ, GLORIA I (b)(6);(b)(7)(C) >
Subject: FW: The Homeland Security News Briefing for Tuesday, November 15, 2016

From: Bulletin Intelligence
Sent: Tuesday, November 15, 2016 3:00:29 AM (UTC-07:00) Arizona
To: DHS@BulletinIntelligence.com
Subject: The Homeland Security News Briefing for Tuesday, November 15, 2016

The Homeland Security News Briefing

TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF

DATE: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2016 5:00 AM EST

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Leading DHS News:

SECRETARY: REMOVING THREE MILLION PEOPLE WOULD COST "BILLIONS." Bloomberg TV's Bloomberg Markets (11/14, 50K) featured an interview with Secretary Johnson. The Secretary stressed the importance of "building bridges" with American Muslim communities for the purpose of countering violent extremism, adding that attempts to "vilify" such communities are counterproductive for homeland security. When asked about Donald Trump's desire to "immediately deport two to three million illegal aliens who are criminals," Johnson remarked that prioritizing the removal of criminals is already current policy, and added, "I'm not quite sure where that number comes from," though he acknowledged that a "segment" of the undocumented population has criminal records. The Secretary added that three million people is roughly equivalent to the entire population of Chicago, and it would cost "billions" of dollars to remove such a large number of people.

In a report focusing on the release of DHS' latest National Terrorism Advisory System bulletin, Fox News (11/14, 11.07M) "The Daily Brett" blog notes the Secretary's statements, saying he "attempted to put [the three million] figure into perspective," and quoting him saying "you've got to get funding from Congress" to do anything of that magnitude.

FiveThirtyEight (11/14, 1.15M) says of Trump's desire to "immediately deport 2 million to 3 million undocumented immigrants with criminal records" that "there almost certainly aren't that many people who fit those criteria."

Vice (11/14, 2.28M) reports that "fact-checkers say Trump's claim that at least 2 million of them are serious criminals is based on 'very bad math.'" CUNY Brooklyn College professor Anna Law is quoted saying, "If he's deporting criminal aliens, I don't think anyone will object to that. ... But I'm concerned that to make the 2 to 3 million count he's going to scoop up a lot of undocumented people who just happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time."

The Washington Post (11/14, Bump, 11.43M) "The Fix" discusses Trump's "2 million or 3 million" figure, saying, "for all of the talk of a change in Trump's tenor and policy positions (itself still a question mark), there's one way in which he hasn't changed: his willingness to use incorrect and misleading data to reinforce his political rhetoric."

TRUMP SOFTENS TONE ON IMMIGRATION, BUT CHALLENGES REMAIN. The AP (11/14, Caldwell) reports in an analysis that on immigration, President-elect Trump "is starting to sound an awful lot like President Barack Obama." Since the election, Trump has "said he will focus on deporting criminal immigrants and not everyone living in the United States illegally," and that "he may be amenable to a fence along some parts of the roughly 2,000-mile border" instead of the wall he discussed during the campaign. The AP calls Trump's "softened stance" a sharp contrast with his campaign rhetoric, but says his estimate that two or three million criminals are in the country illegally "is probably much too high."

The New York Times (11/14, Davis, Preston, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports that President-elect Trump's "promise to deport two million to three million immigrants who have committed crimes" would "potentially...require raids by a vastly larger federal immigration force to hunt down these immigrants and send them out of the country." While Trump "adopted a softer tone on immigrants" during his "60 Minutes" interview, by "placing the number of people he aims to turn out of the country as high as three million, Mr.

Trump raised questions about which immigrants he planned to target for deportation and how he could achieve removals at that scale."

The Christian Science Monitor (11/14, 387K) says, "a Trump administration plan to deport up to three million undocumented immigrants isn't that significant of an increase over the Obama administration's record," but "it's how the president-elect has spoken about deportation and the advisers he has appointed to his transition team that could mark a shift from the current administration and a return to or expansion of" workplace and neighborhood raids as well as roving task forces.

The Independent (UK) (11/14, Major, 1.28M) says, "Take the rhetoric away, and you're left with an immigration policy that is no worse, and perhaps far more lenient – whether through intent or ignorance of policy – than Barack Obama's."

The Los Angeles Times (11/14, Bennett, 4.52M) reports that Trump's advisors "are drafting plans to resume workplace raids and to ramp up pressure on local police and jails to identify immigrants in the country illegally," which could put the incoming Administration "in direct conflict with Los Angeles and the laws of California, as well as other cities and states, setting the stage for an almost certain high-stakes legal and political battle." The Times adds, "If local authorities refuse to cooperate, Trump's advisors are looking at withholding some federal law enforcement funds and equipment that go to state and local police agencies for holding federal prisoners or improving police practices."

DACA RECIPIENTS FEAR THEY ARE "EASY TARGETS" FOR DEPORTATION. Bloomberg Politics (11/14, 201K) reports that DACA recipients "are worried they might be next in line after President-elect Donald Trump said he would immediately move against immigrants convicted of crimes." DACA recipients "feel they are easy targets, thanks to the trove of data they gave to" USCIS. Migration Policy Institute attorney Muzaffar Chishti is quoted saying, "A large number of immigrants in the country today have to be very concerned." Bloomberg Politics adds that "Trump might not be able to move swiftly," as "anyone deported would be entitled to a hearing before a judge" and "immigration courts already have more than half a million people in line."

MEXICO TO DISCUSS DEPORTATIONS WITH TRUMP TEAM. AFP (11/14) reports Mexico said Monday it will discuss with President-elect Trump's transition team "his plan to jail or deport millions of undocumented migrants with criminal records." President Enrique Pena Nieto has "given instructions to his ministries to consider any 'contingencies' in case Trump undertakes massive deportations when he takes office in January, government spokesman Eduardo Sanchez said."

The New York Times (11/14, Ahmed, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) says that since last week's election, "clouds of uncertainty and fear, of self-doubt and insecurity" have "descended over Mexico." Nieto and his administration, however, "have adopted a diplomatic and hopeful posture toward Mr. Trump's presidency."

Immigration and Customs Enforcement:

LAPD POLICE CHIEF: DEPARTMENT WILL NOT HELP DEPORT IMMIGRANTS. The Los Angeles Times (11/14, Mather, 4.52M) reports that while Trump has pledged to "deport millions of people upon taking office," Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck "said Monday that he has no plans to change the LAPD's stance on immigration enforcement," which "prohibits officers from initiating contact with someone solely to determine whether they are in the country legally." Under Beck, "the department stopped turning over people arrested for low-level crimes to federal agents for deportation and moved away from honoring federal requests to detain inmates who might be deportable past their jail terms." Beck said Monday, "I don't intend on doing anything different. ... We are not going to engage in law enforcement activities solely based on somebody's immigration status. We are not going to work in conjunction with Homeland Security on deportation efforts. That is not our job, nor will I make it our job."

The AP (11/14) reports that it has been LAPD policy "for decades not to initiate contact with someone solely to determine whether they are in the country legally."

Emanuel: Chicago Will Remain A "Sanctuary City." The Chicago Tribune (11/14, Byrne, Dardick, Ruthhart, 2.54M) reports that Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel promised Monday "to protect immigrants from deportation, even as president-elect Donald Trump has pledged to remove as many as three million immigrants who have criminal records and are living in the country illegally." Chicago has been a "sanctuary city" for years, and Emanuel "said that tradition would continue." Emanuel said, "To all those who are, after Tuesday's election, very nervous and filled with anxiety as we've spoken to, you are safe in Chicago, you are secure in Chicago and you are supported in Chicago. ... Chicago will always be a sanctuary city."

The Chicago Sun-Times (11/14, Spielman, Sweet, 798K) says Emanuel and Rep. Luis Gutierrez visited the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago "to spotlight a 200 percent spike in calls to mental-health hotlines across the state and a 250 percent increase nationwide blamed on anxiety sparked by Trump's election over Democrat Hillary Clinton." Gutierrez "pledged to not allow immigration reform to go forward 'on the backs of' Dreamers."

Reuters (11/14) quotes Emanuel: "You are safe in Chicago. You are secure in Chicago. And you are supported in Chicago. ... This is a city of inclusion." Reuters says, "Emanuel's words of reassurance...followed similar pledges last week from the mayors of New York and Los Angeles to maintain their designations as 'sanctuary cities.'"

NPR (11/14, 1.92M) reports, "Emanuel joins the mayors of New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Philadelphia and others who all have said their sanctuary city policies will remain in place despite the threat of losing federal assistance." NPR adds, "The loss of federal funding could be staggering. In the case of San Francisco, for example, city officials say they receive about $1 billion from Washington."

Another Chicago Sun-Times (11/14, 798K) article recounts the history of Chicago's sanctuary city policy, which dates to 1985. The Sun-Times says then-Mayor Harold Washington "made the move to protest the federal government's decision to question people seeking city services and conduct random searches of city records in an effort to find undocumented immigrants."

Local Officials Elsewhere Defend Sanctuary City Policies. The Boston Globe (11/15, Sacchetti, Irons, 1.08M) reports that officials in certain Massachusetts towns with sanctuary city policies "have said they won't change course in the face of the threat" of defunding. Somerville Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone "said the city risks losing $6 million in federal funding," and also "urged Trump to reconsider his threats." Curtatone is quoted saying, "We are not going to stand voiceless and in silence and let a Gestapo-like atmosphere be cultivated in this nation and come to our communities and break families apart. ... That will not be tolerated." Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh is quoted saying, "We will push back. ... I'll go to Congress. I'll go to the Senate. I'll go to the president and tell him the disruption he's going to cause to the country."

The Boston Herald (11/15, 509K) says, "Massachusetts cops say they are more interested in good relations with their immigrant communities than deportations, with some agencies saying they'll flatly refuse to cooperate with any 'mass roundup' under President-elect Donald Trump."

The AP (11/14, Har, Press) reports that "San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee vowed that the city will remain a sanctuary for immigrants, gays and lesbians and religious minorities despite" Trump's election. Lee is quoted saying from the City Hall Rotunda, "We will always be San Francisco," as "dozens of people roared with approval at an event that featured the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus and a host of public elected officials."

Another AP (11/14) article reports that Newark, New Jersey Mayor Ras Baraka "said on Monday the election of Republican Donald Trump as president won't change the way his city, the largest in the state, treats residents who are living in the country illegally." Baraka is quoted saying, "Newark already has a policy of protecting undocumented immigrants from deportation by U.S. immigration authorities. ... Despite the election of Donald Trump, we see no reason to change that policy."

Ivy League Universities Call For "Sanctuary" Campuses. Newsweek (11/14, 862K) reports that faculty and alumni of Brown University "are calling on school leaders to make the campus a 'sanctuary' for people who could face deportation under the policies of President-elect Donald Trump." A faculty letter sent to school officials on Friday is quoted saying, "We have reason to believe that Providence Police officers cannot enter the campus without permission of the University. ... Given that many students, staff members and their families are directly affected by this issue, we urge the University to immediately work to develop a protocol for the University serving as a sanctuary campus." Alumni of the school "are planning to issue a similar letter on Monday."

Fox News (11/14, 11.07M) reports that Yale and Harvard universities have also "launched efforts calling on their campuses to become sanctuaries for students in the country illegally." Fox News cites reporting by the Harvard Crimson indicating that "4,000 people signed a petition calling on Harvard administrators to protect the school's 'undocumented students.'"

Bunch: Civic Officials Must Protect, Expand Diversity By "Any Means Necessary." Philadelphia Daily News (11/14, 219K) columnist Will Bunch writes, "While Donald Trump may have won the presidency, he hasn't changed our values," adding, "we will lead the resistance to any effort that would shred our social fabric or our Constitution." Bunch writes critically of expecting resistance from Congress, and says, "states and even municipalities do have tools to counteract parts of the Trump agenda that their own citizens rejected at the polls last week." Bunch says Philadelphia civic leaders "ought to be working hand in hand with activists, philanthropy, and even sympathetic businessmen to find any means necessary to not only protect but expand our diversity, the social safety net and economic opportunity. This is the only serious counter to the policies Trump said he would enact as a candidate."

SURGE OF CENTRAL AMERICAN BORDER-CROSSERS OVERWHELMING DETENTION FACILITIES. The Wall Street Journal (11/14, Jordan, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) reports that government detention facilities are being overwhelmed as a result of a new surge of families and unaccompanied children from Central America illegally crossing the southwestern US border.

The Miami Herald (11/14, Nehamas, 856K) reports on the family of Leonardo Morales, a Colombian immigrant who was arrested for violating a deportation and is being held pending deportation. Their struggle, the Herald says, "is one that terrifies many of the 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States – especially after President-elect Donald Trump threatened mass deportations of undocumented immigrants he described as criminals in a nationally televised interview Sunday night."

FIALHO: ICE INCREASING DETAINEE NUMBERS IN ORDER TO NOT END PRIVATE IMMIGRATION DETENTION FACILITIES. Christina Fialho, executive director of Community Initiatives for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement, writes in the Huffington Post (11/14, 237K) that "Trump's deportation force has already been built, and its name is ICE," and adds, "All Trump will need to do in order to act on his most extreme intentions is further fund the agency and recruit more officers." Fialho says, "Even before Trump has taken office, ICE has begun to do his bidding," and accuses the agency of increasing the number of detainees "to provide the Homeland Security Advisory Council with an excuse not to follow in the footsteps of the DOJ and end all private immigration detention facilities." Fialho encourages readers to become involved in "respond[ing] to Trump with an unprecedented wave of courage and opposition to shield people from detention and deportation."

Customs and Border Protection:

SOME AMERICANS SMUGGLING CANCER VACCINE FROM CUBA. The New York Times (11/14, Jacobs, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports that Cuba's "robust biotechnology industry...has generated an innovative vaccine called Cimavax," which halts the growth of cancer and "keep[s] it from recurring in patients with non-small-cell lung cancer." Although the Roswell Park Cancer Institute "received authorization from the Food and Drug Administration to conduct a clinical trial of Cimavax," dozens of American cancer patients are not waiting for the study's outcome but have instead traveled to Cuba and smuggled out the vaccine. The Times notes that Americans are not allowed to travel to Cuba to seek medical care, and says, "none have declared with customs officials the dozens of vials of Cimavax

they bring back tucked in their backpacks or suitcases." CBP public affairs officer Stephen Sapp "says there is no record of Cimavax being intercepted at the United States' border." The Times adds, "If it were, it is unclear what might happen."

SMUGGLERS, BORDER-CROSSERS SET FIRES ON ARIZONA LAND. The Arizona Republic (11/14, 1.1M) reports that human smugglers "deliberately set" fires on Arizona ranchland in order to "draw law enforcement attention away from themselves," while other fires "can be inadvertently caused by undocumented border crossers lighting campfires or even carelessly tossing cigarettes." The Republic says, "the last thing ranchers in the Sonoran Desert want to deal with is fire, especially fires that may have been deliberately set." The Republic adds that 39 percent of the 77 wildland fires between 2006 and 2010 that have been investigated "were suspected to have been ignited by illegal border crossers." The Republic adds that "distress fires are a way for Border Patrol to find immigrants crossing the border," but the agency's public affairs office is quoted saying the "Tucson Sector does not condone the use of signal fires in any capacity. Individuals that are in distress are strongly encouraged to utilize the 911 emergency system."

HEARING HELD ON BORDER PATROL DETENTION FACILITY CONDITIONS. The Arizona Daily Star (11/14, 270K) reports that at a Monday federal court hearing, "civil-rights advocates and federal prosecutors argued about conditions inside Border Patrol detention centers," where the agency allegedly "violates its own policies as well as detainees' constitutional rights by forcing them to sleep on concrete floors in conditions cold enough to earn them the nickname 'hieleras.'" Judge David C. Bury "began Monday's hearing by pointing to his 'concerns' about court filings in recent months, such as the radically different views expressed by experts who inspected the detention centers." The Border Patrol "claims it is doing the best it can with its budgetary restrictions, Bury said," though Bury is quoted saying, "this court can't be concerned with budgetary issues." The Justice Department is scheduled to present the Border Patrol's case on Tuesday.

Transportation Security Administration:

AIRLINES INTRODUCE "MORE EFFICIENT SECURITY LANES" AT CHICAGO AIRPORT. The Chicago Tribune (11/14, Zumbach, 2.54M) continues coverage of the introduction by United and American Airlines of "more efficient security lanes at O'Hare International Airport, with the goal of reducing the type of bottlenecks that caused hundreds of travelers to miss flights this spring." The Tribune says, "The TSA has estimated the system cuts the time passengers spend in screening by about 30 percent."

Federal Emergency Management Agency:

WILDFIRES BURN THROUGH SOUTHEAST US LAND AS FEMA HELPS PAY FOR CONTAINMENT EFFORTS. Some of the various local media outlets covering wildfires that are currently burning in America's southeastern region point out that FEMA is funding some containment efforts. National sources, however, do not mention the agency.

ABC World News (11/14, story 5, 1:20, Muir, 14.63M) reported that "41 large wildfires" were burning in the Southeast US on Monday night. Five thousand firefighters are part of the effort to contain the blazes, which "have scorched 80,000 acres" of land. NBC Nightly News (11/14, story 6, 1:10, Holt, 16.61M) reported that drought-fueled wildfires have prompted air quality alerts in some parts of the Southeast.

The Columbia (SC) State (11/14, 357K) reports FEMA officials have authorized using agency money to help fund the Pinnacle Mountain Fire containment effort. The article quotes FEMA Regional Administrator Gracia Szczech, who said, "State and local partners are the frontline responders battling this wildfire, and we will continue to work closely with them."

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution (11/14, Stevens, 1.41M) reports FEMA officials have "authorized federal funds to reimburse costs" that Georgia incurs while fighting the Tatum Gulf Fire. The authorization, approved on Monday afternoon, "makes FEMA funds available to pay 75 percent of the eligible

firefighting costs, such as labor, equipment and supplies, as well as costs for emergency work such as evacuations and sheltering, police barricading and traffic control."

WTVD-TV Raleigh-Durham, NC (11/14, 181K) reports on its website that FEMA officials recently approved North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory's request for financial assistance as workers battle wildfires that have been burning in his state. The approval "allows FEMA to pay for 75 percent of the emergency protective measures taken in fighting the fires."

FEMA PREPARES FOR ASTEROID HITTING THE EARTH. The New York Times (11/14, Mele, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports FEMA recently participated in a planetary protection exercise that focused on the "potentially devastating consequences of a 330-foot asteroid hitting the Earth." The Los Angeles LAist (11/14, Tse, 92K) reports Administrator Fugate stressed the importance of the exercise, saying, "By working through our emergency response plans now, we will be better prepared if and when we need to respond to such an event."

MAPS REVISION MEANS THOUSANDS IN TENNESSEE MAY BE REQUIRED TO PURCHASE FLOOD INSURANCE. The AP (11/14) reports thousands of property owners in Tennessee's Davidson County "may have to purchase flood insurance for the first time" as a result of new flood maps that take effect next year. A flood maps revision that FEMA finalized last month added "more than 4,400" county properties to high-risk zones. Online coverage of this story is run by WTVF-TV Nashville, TN (11/14, Knutson, 134K), which reports that owners of Davidson County "properties with a mortgage may be required to purchase flood insurance."

Immigration:

SESSIONS COULD BE TASKED WITH BUILDING BORDER WALL. USA Today (11/14, Troyan, 5.28M) reports that US Sen. Jeff Sessions, who "has spent the better part of the last decade trying to fortify the border between the United States and Mexico," is considered a "strong candidate" for a Cabinet post in President-elect Trump's Administration. Sessions "could soon gain the power of the executive branch and the imprimatur to finish the task." If he is selected to be Secretary of Homeland Security, responsibility for building Trump's promised wall along the southern US border would land "directly on his desk." The Times notes that several of Sessions' allies "are working on the DHS and national security transition teams, according to an organizational chart for the [Trump] transition."

CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS CALLS FOR "HUMANE POLICIES TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES." The Boston Globe (11/14, Zoll, 1.08M) reports that the US Conference of Catholic Bishops "urged" Trump on Monday "to adopt humane policies toward immigrants and refugees." The Conference is quoted saying that serving those who flee conflict and violence "is part of our identity as Catholics," and pledged to continue doing so. The bishops "have pledged to work with a Trump administration and the leaders of Congress."

The AP (11/14, Zoll, Writer) quotes the bishops: "We stand ready to work with a new administration to continue to ensure that refugees are humanely welcomed without sacrificing our security or our core values as Americans. A duty to welcome and protect newcomers, particularly refugees, is an integral part of our mission to help our neighbors in need."

REFUGEES, MUSLIM-AMERICANS EXPERIENCING "DIVIDED RESPONSE" FROM AMERICANS. The New York Times (11/14, Hassan, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports that refugee families and Muslim Americans are experiencing a "divided response" from Americans. Over the last weeks, "advocates report a steep rise in attacks and acts of intimidation against blacks, Muslims and immigrants," but "many of those episodes have been followed by public acts of support and solidarity." According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, "acts of hate and intimidation" took place during the presidential campaign, "and have increased significantly since Mr. Trump was declared the president-elect." However, "the back and forth between acceptance and rejection can be particularly confusing for new arrivals."

COLUMNIST HOPES FOR TRUMP'S "DIVISIVE," "CRUEL" INITIATIVES TO FAIL. In his Washington Post (11/14, Robinson, 11.43M) column, Eugene Robinson writes that while he does not question President-elect Trump's legitimacy as president, he "cannot wish Trump success in rounding up and deporting millions of people or banning Muslims from entering the country or reinstituting torture as an instrument of US policy," adding that in "these and other divisive, cruel, unwise initiatives, I wish him failure." Trump, Robinson argues, "has not earned our trust or hope," but "he has earned the demonstrations that have erupted in cities across the country," as well as "relentless scrutiny by journalists," and "the constant vigilance of the public he now must serve." Robinson adds that while Trump appears to be backing away from some of his campaign rhetoric, his appointment of Stephen Bannon as chief strategist and senior adviser "is a big step backward."

US AGREES TO TAKE REFUGEES FROM AUSTRALIA. In continuing coverage, the Christian Science Monitor (11/14, Thomson, 387K) reports that Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull announced Sunday that the country had reached an agreement to have the US "take a 'substantial' number of refugees currently detained on the Pacific islands of Manus and Nauru," and noted on Monday that the transfers would begin after Donald Trump takes office in January. The Monitor says the plan was agreed on following Australia's earlier agreement to resettle Central American refugees from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.

However, The Guardian (UK) (11/14, Karp, 4.07M) reports that Donald Trump may scrap the deal "unless the US gets something significant in return, an American immigration expert has warned." University of Southern California school of law immigration clinic director Niels Frenzen is quoted as saying, "In all likelihood the only way it's going to happen is if the refugees are transferred to the US before inauguration day [20 January]."

REPORTER CHRONICLES REFUGEE RESCUE OPERATIONS IN MEDITERRANEAN SEA. Fort Collins (CO) Coloradoan (11/14, Pohl, 59K) reporter Jason Pohl provides an update on his ongoing two-week experience "documenting what might be the largest humanitarian crisis in decades," as he accompanies some Poudre Fire Authority firefighters volunteering with the non-governmental organization Global DIRT "rescuing refugees from the Mediterranean Sea, not far from Libya."

AUSTRIA: MIGRANTS MAKE UP 40% OF RADICAL ISLAMISTS IN COUNTRY. The Houston Chronicle (11/14, 1.91M) reports Austria's interior ministry says that 40 percent of the 287 Islamic radicals identified there since early 2011 "arrived as migrants looking for asylum." Of those identified, 87 have returned from fighting in Syria or Iraq.

Secret Service:

FAA INSTITUTES TEMPORARY FLIGHT RESTRICTIONS OVER NEW YORK UNTIL TRUMP SWORN IN. The Washington Post (11/14, Berman, 11.43M) reports the FAA on Monday announced there would be temporary flight restrictions over parts of New York because President-Elect Donald Trump will continue to live in Trump Tower until he assumes office in January. Flights below 3,000 feet are restricted "in an area that covers a large swath" of Manhattan, Queens, and the East River, with some exceptions, including "law enforcement-related flights and any military aircraft supporting the Secret Service."

Securing Trump Tower May Cause Manhattan "Traffic Apocalypse." The New York Post (11/14, Cohen, 3.82M) reports on the "Midtown...traffic apocalypse" that may happen if the Secret Service "shut[s] down part of Fifth Avenue as a security measure at Trump Tower." The article says the Secret Service and NYPD met last week to explore "how to make the 58-story skyscraper more secure now that Donald Trump has become president-elect." One police source said, "When this gets looked at more… [the Secret Service] may have other ideas about what they want to do there, but this is what we're trying to do to satisfy the Secret Service at this point."

The New York Daily News (11/14, Parascandola, 4.45M) reports the Secret Service and NYPD will meet again on Thursday to continue developing security plans. The article says the Secret Service "wants to keep traffic off of 5th Avenue whenever Trump is in town."

Newsday (NY) (11/14, DeStefano, 1.3M) reports police on Monday held an internal briefing to discuss "the types of security challenges they may face" in advance of their next meeting with the Secret Service. The article notes that Trump Tower doesn't conform to current city building codes, given that it was built in 1983. Newsday says, "The tower's glass facade, common on many Fifth Avenue buildings, could sustain damage in an explosion, sending shards over a wide distance."

SECRET SERVICE TO INVESTIGATE CREDIBLE THREATS MADE AGAINST TRUMP ON SOCIAL MEDIA. Fox News (11/14, 11.07M) reports that "online vitriol" and death threats targeting Donald Trump are "getting worse, and critics say social media companies should do more to rein it in." According to Fox, "hashtags like #AssassinateTrump and #Killtrump have proliferated," while a protester called for an assault against Melania Trump, "echoing a trending hashtag #RapeMelania." Fox News says the Secret Service intends to "investigate all social media postings deemed to contain credible threats while adding that there is a difference between one saying that they intend to kill the president and someone suggesting that someone else should."

Cybersecurity CEO Placed On Leave After Posting Trump Assassination Threats. The Los Angeles Times (11/14, Freeman, 4.52M) reports Matt Harrigan, the CEO of PacketSled Inc, a San Diego-based cybersecurity startup, "has been put on administrative leave after election night posts on social media about assassinating President-elect Donald Trump." Harrigan made his comments on Facebook, which were later taken down but not before they were copied over to Reddit. He posted, "I'm going to kill the president. Elect." PacketSled issued a statement on Monday saying, "Once we were made aware of these comments, we immediately reported this information to the Secret Service and will cooperate fully with any inquiries."

Ohio Man Charged For Twitter Assassination Threats Against Trump. The Cleveland Plain Dealer (11/14, 976K) reports Zachary Benson of Fairview Park, Ohio has been charged for "tweeting an Election-Night threat against Republican President-elect Donald Trump." The tweets were made just before most major news outlets declared Trump the winner. Benson was interviewed by the Secret Service on Wednesday and admitted to tweeting the threats.

DC DELEGATE WANTS SAFE ACCESS FOR BIKERS, PEDESTRIANS DURING INAUGURATION PREP. The Hill (11/14, Zanona, 1.25M) reports Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton sent a letter to the Secret Service, the National Park Service and the DC Department of Transportation requesting a meeting to "discuss potential accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians during the construction of grandstands for the inauguration parade." Norton is hoping to "ensure that cyclists and pedestrians have access to safe bike lanes and sidewalks." She noted in her letter that she had previously worked with the Secret Service and NPS "to allow DDOT to construct a bike lane near Lafayette Park, connecting bikers from Vermont Avenue NW to 15th Street NW."

National Protection and Programs:

WASHINGTON STATE'S REAL ID NON-COMPLIANCE MAY AFFECT RESIDENTS' AIR TRAVEL IN 2018. The AP (11/14) reports, "Airport officials on Monday told a Washington state Senate panel that thousands of passengers may be turned away from the state's airports starting in 2018 if it doesn't move quickly to ensure compliance with" the REAL ID Act. Washington state "is among just a handful of states that aren't in compliance with the REAL ID act and don't have an extension from the federal government," meaning residents with standard driver's licenses "now need additional ID for access to some military bases and will eventually be required to show additional documentation for air travel unless the Legislature acts."

Terrorism Investigations:

JUDGE SENTENCES THREE MINNESOTA MEN FOR RECRUITING FOR ISIL. On the CBS Evening News (11/14, story 6, 2:05, Pelley, 11.17M), Jamie Yuccas reported US District Judge Michael Davis on Monday handed out sentences to three Minnesota men for their roles in a nine-member terrorist cell that

recruited Somali Americans to go to Syria to fight for ISIL. According to Yuccas, the judge also plans to sentence six more defendants over the next two days, but "says he will not be lenient." US Attorney Andrew Lugar stated, "We need programs to make sure these young men turn away from ISIL, turn away from the ideology and become productive members of society going forward." Reuters (11/14, Mclaughlin) names those sentenced Monday as Abdullahi Yusuf, Abdirizak Warsame, and Zacharia Yusuf Adburahman. The men were sentenced to time served, 2-1/2 years in prison, and 10 years in prison, respectively. The AP (11/14) reports that Adburahman, who received the longest sentence, did not cooperate with the government. Yusuf, however, who received no additional prison time, did cooperate and has expressed an interest in rehabilitation. Judge "Davis said it didn't make sense to send Yusuf to prison because the government would miss a chance to help him," the AP reports. Davis is expected to sentence three more terror plot participants on Tuesday, the Minneapolis Star Tribune (11/14, Montemayor, 1.27M) reports.

Friend Of Terror Cell Participants Profiled. WCCO-AM Minneapolis (11/14, 70K) profiles Khaalid Abdulkadir, a friend of the terror cell participants who were sentenced on Monday. Abdulkadir was sentenced to three years probation last year after tweeting threats against the FBI and a federal judge following the arrests of his friends. Abdulkadir now works security at US Bank Stadium and credits his punishment with teaching him a lesson. "It opened my eyes to be honest and it changed my life around too, the way I think, the way I see stuff," he said.

FBI REACHES DEAL WITH FIRM TO FACILITATE SURVEILLANCE OF TWITTER. The Daily Caller (11/14, Lieberman, 898K) reports that the FBI has reached a deal with Dataminr, a data analysis company, to gather data on people's tweets. The deal "will permit the FBI to search the complete Twitter firehose, in near real-time, using customizable filters," the Federal Business Opportunities government webpage said. According to the Caller, the FBI wants the ability to more quickly scan Twitter to help prevent terrorist attacks. "The FBI will purchase roughly 200 licenses for Dataminr's Advanced Alerting Tool in order to revamp its intelligence collecting capabilities," the Caller says.

The Verge (11/14, Brandom, 1.25M) reports that the FBI's contract with Dataminr, which is partially owned by Twitter, "seems to violate a key clause in Twitter's Developer Agreement, which specifically forbids using the provided data to 'investigate, track or surveil Twitter's users.'" Twitter did not immediately respond to questions about the possible violation.

OHIO MAN ACCUSED OF PLOTTING ATTACKS AGAINST AUTHORITIES WANTED TO GO TO SYRIA. Citing new court filings, the AP (11/14) reports that Munir Abdulkader, an Ohio man who pleaded guilty in March to plotting to attack police officers and a US military official, had sought to travel to Syria but lied on a passport application. The filings were made in advance of Abdulkader's sentencing, which is set for Friday.

HAYDEN: TRUMP NEEDS "INTENSIVE" INTEL BRIEFINGS, READINGS. In an op-ed for the Washington Post (11/14, Hayden, 11.43M), former NSA and CIA director Michael Hayden writes that while President-elect Trump "has powerful instincts that seem to have served him well during the campaign," instinct "only goes so far." Hayden adds that Trump "does not know more about the Islamic State than the generals" and questions how much he will "accept that he needs intensive briefings and readings to supplement a thin personal database on global affairs." Hayden adds that "the intelligence community needs to understand how the president-elect learns and how contrarian ideas are best served up to him." In addition, it "needs to stand its ground, even, or especially, when it is irritating the client in chief."

Cyber News:

ARIZONA MAN ARRESTED FOR DISRUPTING 911 CALL CENTERS WITH MALWARE. FedScoop (11/14) reports 911 call centers in 12 states "were recently the target of a widespread distributed denial of service attack that disrupted normal services, Department of Homeland Security officials tell CyberScoop." FedScoop adds that the attacks "relied upon a network of infected iPhones." After reports of the outages last month started to surface, DHS began "disseminating relevant information through

multiple partners including the FCC, the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials, the National Emergency Number Association, the National Association of State 911 Administrators, and the National Fusion Center Association, along with all major telecom companies." This lead to the arrest of Meetkumar Hiteshbhai Desai, 18, in Maricopa County, Arizona, for "creating and then sharing the malware used to infect the devices." DHS spokesperson Scott McConnell says, "The Department of Homeland Security continues to work with federal, state and private sector partners to mitigate the effects of recent Telephone Denial of Services attacks affecting Public Service Answering Points in various states."

2007 DHS PROJECT DEMONSTRATED VULNERABILITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE. MuckRock (11/14, Waltman) details a 2007 DHS report received through FOIA concerning "Operation Aurora," where the agency's Control Systems Security Program demonstrated the hacking of a 27-ton generator by "opening its circuit breakers long enough for the machine to slip out of sync." MuckRock says the hack caused the generator to blow up in about three minutes. The test proved the existence of the "Aurora Vulnerability" cybersecurity flaw. MuckRock adds that the vulnerability "deals with what are called digital protective relays which manage circuit breakers in generators, motors and other parts of power grid substations."

PRECHECK EXPANSION HALTED DUE TO CYBERSECURITY CONCERNS. In continuing coverage, Fox News (11/14, 11.07M) reports on its website that the TSA's plans to expand PreCheck enrollment options "have been abandoned recently due to concerns over cybersecurity." Fox News says, "The TSA was hoping to reach a goal of 25 million people enrolled in the PreCheck and Global Entry program by 2019...but the agency is not willing to risk the security of its members to meet those numbers now." However, the agency "couldn't guarantee that sensitive testing data would be protected by the private companies it was working with on the PreCheck program." Agency officials are quoted saying in a statement, "While risk mitigations were included in the current RFP testing approach to protect the sensitive data during testing, the TSA has determined it will no longer accept the risk associated with sharing test data."

SEC TO REVIEW CYBERSECURITY RISKS TO "FLASH CRASH" PROGRAM. The Hill (11/14, 1.25M) reports SEC regulators will meet Tuesday to decide whether to approve the consolidated audit trail (CAT) program, which is "intended to address flash crashes in the market." The Hill says the SEC is "weighing cybersecurity concerns" with the program. The program "would create the largest database of securities transaction information in the world when completed." Industry officials "expressed their grievances in a series of comment letters, many of which highlighted what they see as a lack of detail in the plan's cybersecurity measures."

FORMER PENTAGON OFFICIAL SAYS TRUMP MUST FOCUS ON INFRASTRUCTURE CYBERSECURITY. Federal Computer Week (11/14, Rockwell, 263K) reports Paul Stockton, the "former assistant secretary of defense for homeland defense and Americas' security affairs and now managing director of Sonecon," urges the incoming administration to focus on critical infrastructure cybersecurity. Stockton says Trump "needs to ensure he's prepared to respond to a cyberattack on infrastructure. ... He can't wait until deep into his administration." Stockton, in an interview with FCW on November 10, "said Trump's transition team must pay close attention to existing public/private partnerships and the protection structures they've established and understand how they work."

UK HOME SECRETARY SIGNS ORDER EXTRADITING HACKER. In continuing coverage, the Financial Times (11/14, Croft, Subscription Publication, 1.39M) reports UK Home Secretary Amber Rudd signed an order extraditing hacker Lauri Love to the US to face charges of stealing government agency files.

412 MILLION ACCOUNTS BREACHED ON ADULT DATING, PORNOGRAPHY WEBSITE. The Guardian (UK) (11/14, Gibbs, 4.07M) details an investigation by monitoring firm Leaked Source that says the "adult dating and pornography site company Friend Finder Networks has been hacked, exposing the private details of more than 412m accounts and making it one of the largest data breaches ever recorded." The October breach "resulted in email addresses, passwords, dates of last visits, browser information, IP addresses and site membership status across sites run by Friend Finder Networks being exposed." Leaked Source says, "Passwords were stored by Friend Finder Networks either in plain visible

format or SHA1 hashed (peppered). Neither method is considered secure by any stretch of the imagination." Leaked Source's research found that the account details breached included "78,301 US military email addresses, 5,650 US government email addresses and over 96m Hotmail accounts."

RUSSIAN ANTITRUST AUTHORITIES INVESTIGATING MICROSOFT OVER KASPERSKY LAB COMPLAINT. International Business Times (11/14, 814K) reports Russia's Federal Antimonopoly Service (FAS) will investigate Microsoft after Kaspersky Lab filed a complaint accusing Microsoft of "using its dominating position in the market of operating systems to create competitive advantages for its own [antivirus] product." CEO Eugene Kaspersky "said Microsoft gave independent antivirus developers only one week to make their software compatible with Windows 10, and even in the case of compatible antivirus being installed, the operating system kept prompting users to activate the inbuilt Windows Defender antivirus, which would automatically disable any third-party security software." Anatoly Golomolzin, deputy head of FAS, says, "Windows Defender that switches on automatically if third-party software fails to adapt to Windows 10 in due time, such actions lead to unreasonable advantages for Microsoft on the software market. Our task is to ensure equal conditions for all participants on this market." Additional coverage is provided by PC Magazine (11/14, Brant, 2.14M).

CONTINUING COVERAGE: CYBERSECURITY FIRMS CLAIM TESCO WAS WARNED BEFORE BANK HACK. In continuing coverage, the Computer Business Review (11/14, 70K) picks up on earlier reports that several cybersecurity firms warned Tesco Bank prior to its recently announced breach and theft of client funds.

OPINION: NATIONAL RESPONSE NEEDED FOR CYBER PREPAREDNESS. In an op-ed for Forbes (11/14, 15.17M), Chief Strategy Officer for Risk Cooperative Andres Franzetti argues that becoming "truly cyber resilient" can only be achieved through a "proactive national mandate, not just a reactionary and retaliatory mentality." Franzetti opines that cybersecurity must be viewed as a "national security risk," "standardized levels of security" should be created, and partnerships between the public and private sector must be increased.

VIRGINIA PROGRAM TO PROVIDE FREE CYBERSECURITY JOB TRAINING TO VETERANS. The AP (11/14) reports, in brief, that Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe announced a new initiative called "Cyber Vets Virginia," in which veterans who are interested in "working in the cyber field in the state will have the opportunity to participate in a free cyber training program." Registration for the training will begin in January.

CONTINUING COVERAGE: ARMY ANNOUNCES BUG BOUNTY. In continuing coverage, ExecutiveGov (11/14, Adams, 548) reports the US Army announced its first bug bounty challenge, called "Hack the Army," which will be run in partnership with HackerOne. C4ISR & Networks (11/14) reports Army Secretary Eric Fanning, when discussing the program at a November 11 news conference, said, "The Army is reaching out directly to a group of technologists and researchers who train in figuring out how to break into computer networks they're not supposed to – people we might normally have avoided and much of the department still does actually." Fanning added, "We have secured legal approval to open this up to active-duty military personnel, reservist and guard, as well as civilians, government civilians."

National Security News:

GIULIANI SAYS DEFEATING ISIL LIKELY INITIAL FOCUS OF TRUMP'S FOREIGN POLICY. The Wall Street Journal (11/14, Paletta, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) reports former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani on Monday said that President-elect Donald Trump would likely make defeating ISIL a focus of his initial foreign policy. Giuliani – while speaking at the Wall Street Journal CEO Council meeting – said that he would be interested in the Secretary of State position and that his policy positions overlap with Trump. Giuliani said, "ISIS, short-term I believe, is the greatest danger and not because ISIS is in Iraq and in Syria, but because ISIS did something al Qaeda never did – ISIS was able to spread itself around the world."

NBC News Analysis: Trump Able To Undo Obama's National Security Policies. NBC News (11/14,

2.67M) reported on its website that President Obama has made “aggressive use of the CIA and Special Operations Forces to hunt and kill al Qaeda, ISIS and other terror groups,” but he also “imposed a set of rules designed to regulate the conduct of US operatives – banning torture, for example, and minimizing the risk of civilian casualties in drone strikes.” But NBC says President-elect Trump, “who campaigned against those rules, would be able to undo most of those rules in his first hour in office.”

WTimes Analysis: National Security Strategy Shifts Likely To Be Determined Within White House. The Washington Times (11/14, Taylor, 272K) reports that no matter who President-elect Trump selects for Defense Secretary and Secretary of State, “core strategy shifts are expected to be closely orchestrated from within the White House, with retired Army Lt. Gen. Michael T. Flynn the probable pick for national security adviser.” The Times quotes American Enterprise Institute resident scholar Michael Rubin as saying that Flynn could be polarizing in the new administration. However, the Times says, Flynn “is also popular among many in Washington.”

CARTER CONFIDENT ISIL WILL BE DEFEATED. Fox News’ Special Report (11/14, 1.53M) reported Defense Secretary Carter expressed confidence that ISIL will be defeated amid the slow push by Iraqi troops to retake Mosul from the terror group. US air power has hit 10 ISIL targets in the last 24 hours. Carter was shown saying, “It’s actually important...that ISIL everywhere...know that we intend and will destroy them.” His message comes as an ISIL attack in southern Iraq killed at least six people, while 23 were killed in an attack in Baghdad on Sunday.

KERRY, LAVROV AGREE TO CONTINUE CONSULTATIONS ON SYRIA. Reuters (11/14) reports in a brief dispatch that the Russian Foreign Ministry said Monday that Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Secretary of State Kerry discussed Syria during a phone call and “agreed to continue experts’ consultations to try to resolve the crisis.”

IRAQ DEPLOYS IRAN-BACKED SHIITE FORCES TO JOIN US-BACKED FORCES IN MOSUL CAMPAIGN. The Washington Times (11/14, Muñoz, 272K) reports US-backed Iraqi troops over the last week “have quietly advanced” on Mosul “alongside units of the Popular Mobilization Forces, the large coalition of Iraqi paramilitaries comprising primarily militias supported by Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps,” Pentagon officials confirmed Monday. The Times says the announcement is “deepening US fears that Tehran is claiming a greater role in the critical battle to oust Islamic State militants from Iraq’s second-largest city.” The Times adds that US commanders “could [be] put...in the uncomfortable position of having to provide American air support for militias with clear links to the Iranian regime, something Washington fiercely opposes.” An American “defense official” told the Times that resolving this predicament “is going to be a challenge.”

ISIS CLAIMS BAGHDAD SUICIDE ATTACKS. Reuters (11/14, Chmaytelli) reports that ISIS on Monday “claimed a series of suicide attacks that killed at least 14 people south and west of Baghdad” even as the US-backed push “to capture Mosul, the insurgents’ last urban stronghold in Iraq, made slow progress.” Reuters says ISIS’s latest series of attacks “showed that even though the jihadists have been losing territory over the past year – and face a big battle to hold Mosul in the north – they retain the ability to strike across Iraq, even in the central areas near the capital.”

ISIS USING DECOY TANKS, SOLDIERS TO HURT ACCURACY OF COALITION AIRSTRIKES. USA Today (11/14, Bacon, 5.28M) reports the Iraqi army has “seized wooden tanks and even replica soldiers used” by ISIS “to draw coalition airstrikes away from real targets,” which was confirmed by US Air Force spokesman Col. John Dorrian, although he said ISIS’s use of the decoys “was not as alarming as when the militants set fire to sulfur plants and oil wells.”

US OFFICIALS: RUSSIAN FIGHTER JET CRASHES IN MEDITERRANEAN. Fox News (11/14, Tomlinson, 11.07M) reports a Russian fighter jet crashed into the Mediterranean Sea off near its aircraft carrier off the Syrian coast on Sunday, two US officials said. The pilot ejected safely, according to Russian defense officials. The crash comes a day after Russian state media claimed the military “was preparing its Tu-95 and Tu-160 long-range bombers for imminent strike missions in Syria.”

ISIL CREATING GRENADE-DROPPING DRONES. AFP (11/14, Delany) reports ISIL jihadists, the

“[m]asters of invention,” have begun “weaponising the $1,000 drones that they normally use to spy on their foes.” They reportedly have created an add that releases a grenade so that the “pin is pulled free when the explosive device is dropped, arming it.” Meanwhile, Iraqi forces have begun sending their own drones to spy on ISIL forces.

IRAQI TOWN DEEPLY DIVIDED AFTER IRAQI MILITARY DRIVES OUT ISIS. The AP (11/14, George) reports that Iraqi security forces “hailed” the liberation of the town of Qayara “as an early triumph over the extremists as the country prepared for the long-awaited offensive to liberate the second-largest city Mosul that began Oct. 17,” but “for some residents, the ouster of” ISIS’s militants “doesn’t feel like victory.” According to the AP, government services have not only “failed to return,” but “oil wells set ablaze by the militants continue to burn uncontrollably,” and “violence persists” in the form of “revenge attacks” by residents against those who supported and benefited from “the brutal reign by the militants.”

GHANI ORDERS SACKED MINISTERS TO STAY. Reuters (11/14) reports Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Monday “instructed cabinet ministers sacked by parliament to remain in their jobs” as he asked the Supreme Court to resolve the “escalating power struggle.” In the last three days, lawmakers dismissed the foreign affairs minister and five others, “citing poor performance and budgetary issues,” but Ghani said they should remain in their posts until the court rules on the matter.

ICC PROSECUTORS SAY US TROOPS, CIA MAY HAVE TORTURED DETAINEES IN AFGHANISTAN. The AP (11/14) reports the International Criminal Court’s prosecution office issued a report on Monday that “indicates that members of the United States armed forces and the CIA may have committed war crimes by torturing detainees in Afghanistan.” The report says that US armed forces personnel “appear to have subjected at least 61 detained persons to torture” in Afghanistan, mainly in 2003-2004, while the AP adds CIA operatives “may have tortured at least 27 detainees in Afghanistan and elsewhere mainly in the same time period.” According to the AP, while the US is not a member of the ICC, American citizens “could face prosecution if they commit crimes in a country that is a member, such as Afghanistan.”

The ICC prosecutors “would have to clear several hurdles before formally bringing the case before the court,” USA Today (11/14, Michaels, 5.28M) similarly reports, but “even if an investigation is launched, it would be difficult to bring charges.” While ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda “signaled” Monday that a full war crimes investigation against the US “was likely,” the New York Times (11/14, Sengupta, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) says that she “did not announce a final decision on an investigation, which would have to be approved by judges, and it is unlikely that the United States will cooperate.” The Times adds that an ICC investigation, which comes as the “court is under great pressure to show that it is unbiased in its targets for investigation,” could also “set up a potential showdown with President-elect Donald J. Trump, who has said he supports torture as a tool of counterterrorism.”

PENTAGON IDENTIFIES US VICTIMS OF BAGRAM SUICIDE ATTACK. Fox News’ Special Report (11/14, 1.53M) reported the Pentagon identified 30-year-old John Perry and 20-year-old Tyler Ubelt as the two American contractors who were killed in a suicide attack by a former Taliban fighter at Bagram airbase in Afghanistan on Saturday. They are among 11 Americans killed in action in the country since early October.

NYTIMES PROFILES KASHMIRI MILITANT GROUP HIZBUL MUJAHEDEEN. In a nearly 1,600-word article, the New York Times (11/14, Anand, Kumar, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) profiles the militant group Hizbul Mujahedeen, which has “emerged as the face of the independence movement in Kashmir, the Himalayan region that was subsumed into India when it shook off colonial rule in 1947 and that remains at the center of the country’s 70-year dispute with neighboring Pakistan.” The Times examines the history and state of the conflict and also reports “the young men who have joined the Kashmir militancy grew up in a militarized land where they were routinely stopped and searched by security forces, and at times brutally beaten, their families say.” However, security forces have found it “hard to make arrests,” according to the Times, because when the police “close in, crowds of people rush to the scene and try to stop the security forces by throwing rocks, yelling chants and generally interfering, knowing the officers will resist shooting at them.”

AFGHAN PRESIDENT TO UN: ADD TALIBAN LEADER TO SANCTIONS LIST. Reuters (11/14) reports Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Monday asked the UN to add new Taliban leader Mullah Haibatullah to its sanctions list, with Ghani identifying Haibatullah as a terrorist. Ghani announced the request after meeting with members of the UN sanctions committee in Kabul.

BERGDAHL TRIAL MAY BE DELAYED. Fox News' Special Report (11/14, 1.53M) reports a military judge is considering to delay the trial of "accused Army deserter Bowe Bergdahl" after a motion from the prosecution.

OBAMA SAYS TRUMP COMMITTED TO MAINTAINING US ALLIANCES. Speaking to reporters during his first press conference since last week's election, the Washington Post (11/14, Eilperin, Jaffe, 11.43M) reports the President "reassur[ed] people at home and abroad that Donald Trump was committed to governing in a more pragmatic fashion than he had adopted on the campaign trail." Obama told reporters that as he departs on his last overseas trip "one of the most important missions he has...is to carry a message from Trump that the New York businessman is committed to upholding the NATO and transatlantic alliance."

Obama, according to NBC Nightly News (11/14, story 2, 2:20, Mitchell, 16.61M), plans to "reassure European leaders" during his trip this week that Trump "told him he will not pull out of NATO." ABC World News (11/14, story 2, 2:40, Raddatz, 14.63M) reported the President said that during their meeting last Thursday, the President-elect "expressed interest in maintaining our core strategic relationship, that he is committed to NATO."

The President, Bloomberg Politics (11/14, Dorning, 201K) reports, "said that...Trump told him he can assure European leaders the US will not back off its commitments to the NATO alliance." During their meeting last week, the President said Trump assured him of his "great interest in maintaining our core strategic relationships." Obama told reporters, "There is no weakening of resolve," the AP (11/14, Hennessey) reports. "There is enormous continuity...that makes us that indispensable nation when it comes to maintaining order around the world," the President added.

Responding to a question about foreign leaders' concerns about Trump, Politico (11/14, Conway, 2.46M) said Obama "made a point to note that the president, while 'the spokesperson for the nation,' is not the only person affecting US foreign policy."

Media Analyses: Concerns About Trump To Loom Over Obama Trip. The AP (11/14, Lederman) reports President Obama's last overseas trip this week "was supposed to be his grand valedictory tour," but instead he will use it "to try to calm shocked world leaders about the outcome of the US election, and what comes next." Trump's "unforeseen victory has triggered...grave concerns around the world," and the President will "confront global concerns about the future of America's leadership" during this week's trip.

USA Today (11/14, Korte, 5.28M) says the "forces that helped elect Trump – anxiety about trade, terrorism and migration – are some of the same forces roiling Europe," and the President will likely "acknowledge that many western democracies are seeing Trump-like movements." in an interview with Greece's I Kathimerini, Obama said, "On both sides of the Atlantic, we face the task of ensuring that our political institutions and economic policies are responsive to our people, many of whom feel that they have been hurt by globalization and trade. My message...will be that as our nations confront these challenges together, Americans continue to place enormous importance on our alliance with Greece."

According to the Washington Post (11/14, Eilperin, Faiola, 11.43M), the President will also confront Europe's refugee crisis when he arrives in Greece before traveling to Germany, which has "helped guide the continent's response" to the crisis. The "symbolic juxtaposition of the two countries," says the Post, "underscores the balance Obama hopes to strike" on his trip, which has become "more complicated after Donald Trump won the White House."

Greece, Reuters (11/14) reports, hopes the President's visit "will increase pressure on its creditors to grant debt relief." Obama is expected to discuss the debt issue and the continent's migrant crisis with Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, "but his visit will also trigger protests by leftist groups and trade unions" that

view the US as an “imperialist” power. The New York Times (11/14, Alderman, Kitsantonis, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports Greek officials had hoped Obama “might even persuade the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, to offer Greece some debt relief by the end of the year,” but “that possibility has all but evaporated with the victory of Donald J. Trump.” Instead, the Times says Obama will arrive in Athens “with his legacy threatened and his leverage sorely reduced.”

British Foreign Secretary: Trump Could Be “A Good Thing.” Politico Europe (11/14, King, 23K) reports British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said Monday that Trump could be “a good thing” for the UK and Europe, and urged the EU should not “pre-judge” the President-elect.

Britain, the New York Times (11/14, Bennhold, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports, “has long been anxious about its ‘special relationship’ with the United States, but after some choice remarks about Donald J. Trump by members of the governing Conservative Party during the presidential campaign, the relationship needs a bit of nurturing. And who better to tend to that, in his own mind at least, than Nigel Farage.” In fact, some in Farage’s party have “suggested him as the next ambassador to the United States,” but “May’s office on Monday was quick to slap him down.”

UK’s May Urges World To Address People’s Concerns About Globalization. The AP (11/14, Lawless) reports Britain’s vote to leave the European Union and the election of Donald Trump “have transformed the world in a year, Prime Minister Theresa May said Monday, in a speech arguing that governments must heed people’s concerns about the impact of globalization on jobs and communities.” The British leader said “change is in the air” and “it’s the job of politicians to respond.” Britain, she said, would champion free trade while managing “the forces of globalization so that they work for all.”

EU Ministers Agree To Expand Regional Security Cooperation. Reuters (11/14, Emmott) reports the EU on Monday “agreed a defense plan that could see it sending rapid response forces abroad for the first time,” as President-elect Trump’s “criticism of allies appeared to galvanize Europe into revamping its strategy.” The plan “could allow the bloc to send forces to stabilize a crisis before UN peace keepers can take over, and more broadly cement a willingness to act without the United States.” The AP (11/14, Cook, Charlton) calls the move the “first concrete step” taken by the bloc since Trump’s election, but says the plan “is a far cry from the idea of an ‘EU army’ with a military headquarters that was annoying some EU partners at NATO.”

The Washington Post (11/14, Birnbaum, 11.43M) says “cracks opened” at Monday’s talks among European nations weighing how to respond to Trump’s election. While most European leaders opposed Trump ahead of his election, “now that he is ascendant, that unity is dissipating, as nations make different calculations about how to handle his stunning victory.” The Post says the “splits could make it easier for Trump to maneuver European leaders to his advantage,” but also put the US “in the unfamiliar position of exploiting European disunity rather than campaigning for a stiff, unified European response to challenges.”

A Wall Street Journal (11/14, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) editorial urges European leaders to withhold their judgment of Trump until they have met him.

OBAMA PREDICTS TRUMP WON’T SCRAP IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL. Bloomberg Politics (11/14, Wayne, 201K) reports President Obama told reporters Monday that he doubts President-elect Trump will scrap a nuclear deal with Iran “because the agreement is working.” When the deal was struck in 2015, “the main argument against it was that Iran wouldn’t abide by the deal,” Obama said. “We now have over a year of evidence that they have abided by the deal.” Obama added, “My suspicion is that when the president-elect comes in and is consulting with his fellow Republicans on the Hill, that they will look at the facts.”

Politico (11/14, Griffiths, 2.46M) quotes Obama as saying, “To unravel a deal that is working and preventing Iran for pursuing a nuclear weapon would be hard to explain – particularly if the alternative would have them freed from any obligations and go ahead and pursue a nuclear weapon.” Meanwhile, in Brussels on Monday, the AP (11/14, Cook, Charlton) reports EU foreign ministers also “reaffirmed their support for the Iran nuclear agreement.”

The Los Angeles Times (11/11, Wilkinson, 4.52M) reports that "Trump's advisers make clear that revisiting the agreement is a priority for Trump even if the plan ahead is still a work in progress," but according to the New York Times (11/14, Gladstone, Subscription Publication, 13.9M), 76 national security experts urged Trump on Monday "to reverse his hostility to the nuclear agreement signed with Iran last year and to use it as a tool to ease other tensions with the country." A report signed by the experts, "including former officials from both major political parties, argued that the nuclear agreement had reduced the threat of war in the Middle East."

Eleven Mideast Nations Accuse Iran Of Sponsoring "Terrorism." The AP (11/14, Lederer) reports 11 Middle East and North African countries on Monday accused Iran of sponsoring "terrorism" and "constantly interfering in the internal affairs of Arab nations, sparking tension and instability in the region." In a letter to the UN General Assembly, the 11 countries cited Iran's support for Houthi rebels in Yemen and Hezbollah, as well as its support for "terrorist groups and cells" in Bahrain, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and elsewhere. The letter, "organized by the United Arab Emirates," was signed by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, Morocco, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and Yemen.

OBAMA URGES TRUMP HONOR PARIS CLIMATE COMMITMENTS. The Hill (11/14, Henry, 1.25M) reports President Obama on Monday "defended" the Paris climate deal that President-elect Trump "has threatened to tear up once he takes office next year." At a Monday press conference, Obama "made the case for the US to stay in the international agreement," arguing that it "made our economy more efficient, it's helped the bottom line of folks and it's cleaned up the environment."

US Climate Envoy: World Committed To Climate Deal With Or Without US. The AP (11/14) reports US climate envoy Jonathan Pershing said Monday that China and other countries will remain committed to the Paris climate agreement, "irrespective of what the next US administration decides to do." Speaking to reporters at UN climate talks in Morocco, Pershing said he doesn't know what President-elect Trump's "outlook" on climate policy will be, but said his Chinese counterpart, Xie Zhenhua, "told him that China intends to move ahead regardless." Said the envoy, "Of course they are going to move forward. I'm hearing the same from the Europeans. I'm hearing the same from the Brazilians. I'm hearing the same from Mexico, and from Canada, and from smaller nations like Costa Rica and from Colombia."

UN: 2016 "Very Likely" To Be The Hottest Year On Record. The Washington Post (11/14, Mooney, 11.43M) reports that in "an announcement timed for the ongoing international climate meetings" in Morocco, the UN World Meteorological Organization on Monday "affirmed what many scientists had already considered inevitable" – 2016, the agency said, is "very likely" to be the hottest year on record. The Post notes that the agency "was able to say as much, despite the year not even being over yet, because of the jaw-dropping heat seen throughout much of the year."

US CRITICIZES "TROUBLING" MEASURE ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS. Reuters (11/14) reports the US on Monday described as "troubling" an Israeli bill approved by a ministerial committee allowing settlers in the West Bank to remain in homes built on private Palestinian land and "said it hoped the law does not pass." State Department spokeswoman Elizabeth Trudeau told reporters, "We are deeply concerned about the advancement of legislation that would allow for the legalization of illegal Israeli outposts located on private Palestinian land." If the measure were enacted, she said, it "would represent an unprecedented and troubling step that's inconsistent with prior Israeli legal opinion and also break longstanding policy of not building on private Palestinian land." AFP (11/14) reports Palestinian leaders also denounced the measure. Nabil Abu Rudeina, spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, said, "The Palestinian leadership will turn to the UN Security Council and all other international organizations to stop those Israeli measures."

The AP (11/14), meanwhile, reports Israel's Supreme Court on Monday "rejected a government petition to postpone demolition of a West Bank settlement outpost" that the proposed measure sought to prevent. The court ruled in 2014 that the Amona settlement was built on private Palestinian land and must be demolished by Dec. 25 of this year. AFP (11/14) calls the court's ruling "a fresh challenge for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu."

Israeli Right Seizes On Trump Win, See It As New "Era." The Washington Post (11/14, A1, Booth, Eglash, 11.43M) reports right-wing leaders in the Israeli government "have seized on the election of Donald Trump to push forward" the "bold new legislation," believing "the time to act is now, as the president-elect begins to shape his foreign policy." Education Minister and leader of the pro-settler Jewish Home party, Naftali Bennett, said the Trump victory means that "the era of the Palestinian state is over."

TRUMP, PUTIN AGREE IN PHONE CALL TO IMPROVE "UNSATISFACTORY" RELATIONS. The Washington Post (11/14, Viebeck, Zezima, 11.43M) reports President-elect Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed during a telephone conversation Monday that relations between their countries were "unsatisfactory" and vowed to work together to improve them, the Kremlin said in a statement. According to the Kremlin, the two "discussed combining efforts in the fight against terrorism, talked about 'a settlement for the crisis in Syria' and agreed their aides would begin working toward a face-to-face meeting between them."

The Trump team, USA Today (11/14, Jackson, 5.28M) reports, said the President-elect "noted to President Putin that he is very much looking forward to having a strong and enduring relationship with Russia and the people of Russia." According to Reuters (11/14, Soldatkin), Trump's team said Putin made the call to offer his congratulations to Trump, and McClatchy (11/14, Johnson, 74K) says descriptions of the call by the Kremlin and Trump's office "were warm, even effusive." NBC Nightly News (11/14, lead story, 3:05, Holt, 16.61M) and ABC World News (11/14, lead story, 4:40, Llamas, 14.63M) both briefly noted the call, and the Washington Times (11/14, Miller, 272K) reports along similar lines.

TRUMP, XI HAVE CORDIAL FIRST CALL. The New York Times (11/14, Hernández, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports President-elect Trump "has called China a 'manipulator,' threatened to impose stiff tariffs on Chinese imports and accused the country of inventing the idea of climate change to hurt American businesses," but during his first telephone conversation with President Xi Jinping on Monday, he "appeared to set aside those critiques," vowing that the two nations would have "one of the strongest relationships." Xi, for his part, told Trump that "facts have shown that cooperation is the only correct choice" for the US and China, according to Xinhua.

NYTimes: China Stirring Up Nationalism Amid Economic Slowdown. The New York Times (11/14, Hernández, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) says "these are triumphant times for the Communist Party" with President Xi Jinping governing "with seemingly unobstructed authority" and the balance of power in the region "appears to be shifting in China's favor." At the same time, China "seems intensely vulnerable at times as it confronts a slowing economy and a society in the throes of staggering change." In response, the Communist party has "whip[ped] up nationalism."

NORTH KOREAN STATE-RUN MEDIA HAS NOT REPORTED TRUMP'S VICTORY. The Washington Times (11/14, Shepherd, 272K) reports North Korea's state-run media "still hasn't broken the news to the nation that Donald Trump won" last week's US election. The Times says North Korea's "literal radio silence on the news may be particularly puzzling as back in June an editorial by state-run media suggested a Trump presidency would be welcomed by the regime."

US ON ALERT AFTER INDICATIONS OF ACTIVITY AT NORTH KOREAN LAUNCH SITES. USA Today (11/14, Spitzer, 5.28M) reports recent satellite imagery shows "what appeared to be potential preparations at North Korea's Sohae launch facility," while South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff last week said they were "closely monitoring moves by the North Korean military at its Punggye-ri nuclear test site and other possible missile-launching sites." US forces, Japan, and South Korea are on alert.

Japan, South Korea Sign Preliminary Intelligence-Sharing Pact. Reuters (11/14) reports South Korea and Japan signed a "preliminary pact" – the General Security of Military Information Agreement – "to share and safeguard sensitive information on North Korea's missile and nuclear activities on Monday, a move that had already prompted anger among opposition lawmakers in Seoul," who had threatened that if the pact be signed, they would move to dismiss or impeach Defence Minister Han Min-koo.

Science Diplomacy Could Limit Possible Trump-era Nuclear Weapons Proliferation. The Washington Post (11/14, Wolfe, 11.43M) reports that "back-channel communications among private

scientists" could limit the proliferation of nuclear weapons during a Donald Trump presidency. Trump has suggested that US allies such as Japan and South Korea could build nuclear weapons and allow the US to reduce its defense budget. The story highlights the Cold War era Pugwash Conference as a "model of nonpartisan scientific activism" and example "of what scientists could accomplish if they worked without the constraints of formal politics."

IN OMAN, KERRY HOLDS TALKS ON YEMEN PEACE PLAN. AFP (11/14) reports Secretary of State Kerry held talks Monday with officials in Oman on efforts to end the war in Yemen. Kerry met with Oman's Sultan Qaboos to discuss "the conflict in Yemen and the urgent need to find a durable political settlement to ease the suffering of the Yemeni people," State Department spokesman John Kirby said. He said the two welcomed a roadmap proposed by UN special envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed and Kerry also "expressed the United States' deep appreciation for the helpful role Oman played in securing the recent release of US citizens held in Yemen."

NYTIMES: REVISED PEACE ACCORD "WILL SET A STRONG ROAD MAP" FOR COLOMBIA. The New York Times (11/14, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) editorializes that if the newly revised peace agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) "holds," the deal "will set a strong road map for Colombians to start healing the wounds of a brutal conflict that raged for more than five decades and build a more egalitarian, tolerant society." According to the Times, the accord is "a testament to what can be achieved through dialogue and compromise, even in a deeply polarized society."

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LEADING DHS NEWS

DHS Secy Johnson: Updated U.S. Terrorism Bulletin To Remain Largely Unchanged

Fox News, November 14, 2016

On the latest National Terrorism Advisory System bulletin which DHS will release tomorrow, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson read from the bulletin saying that DHS's basic assessment is that not much has changed from the last assessment. DHS remains concerned about homegrown violent extremists and their ability to attack the U.S. homeland with little or no notice. Johnson added that the most recent events in NYC and NJ reinforce this assessment and noted that the public continues to be of utmost importance in identifying and mitigating threats.

On election cybersecurity and cyber events that occurred over the course of the election, Johnson said that there were "minor incidents here and there" but nothing

significant. He repeated that he and the intelligence community have a great deal of confidence in the security of election infrastructure. Johnson also reiterated his joint statement with DNI Clapper in October attributing certain politically motivated hacking of U.S. interests back to the Russian government.

On the issue of immigration and border security and how the incoming administration might grapple with these issues, Johnson said that it is already DHS's priority to remove convicted criminals and to deport those apprehended at the border. He added that through his time at DHS ICE's enforcement and removal force has focused more on criminals, noting fewer deportations but that a higher percentage of those deported are convicted criminals.

Asked to react to Trump's position that would result in the deportation of roughly 3 million people, Johnson attempted to put that figure into perspective saying that that's "the population of Chicago – a lot of people." He added that with anything you do of that magnitude, "you've got to get funding from Congress." Johnson added that "right now, we're focused on public safety threats."

There Aren't 2 To 3 Million Undocumented Immigrants With Criminal Records For Trump To Deport

FiveThirtyEight, November 14, 2016

Donald Trump wants to immediately deport 2 million to 3 million undocumented immigrants with criminal records. One problem: There almost certainly aren't that many people who fit those criteria.

In a "60 Minutes" interview that aired Sunday, Trump said he would prioritize deporting or incarcerating the immigrants who are both in the country illegally and who are "gang members, drug dealers" or have other criminal convictions. He said there are "a lot of these people, probably 2 million, it could be even 3 million."

More Politics

It isn't clear where Trump came up with those numbers. But according to the Department of Homeland Security, there are roughly 1.9 million non-citizen immigrants who have been convicted of crimes and are subject to deportation — what the government calls "removable criminal aliens." That total, however, includes both undocumented immigrants and noncitizens in the country legally. The Migration Policy Institute, a think tank, estimates that there are roughly 11 million immigrants in the U.S. illegally and that approximately 820,000 of them have criminal records. (The Migration Policy Institute doesn't take positions on specific legislation but is generally seen as favoring immigration. The Pew Research Center, another think tank, comes up with a similar figure for the total number of undocumented immigrants.) Some of those immigrants are already incarcerated: A recent report from the Congressional Research Service estimated that at the end of 2013, there were more than 140,000 non-citizen immigrants in local, state and federal prisons and jails. (That figure includes people who are in the country legally, not all of whom are subject to deportation.)

Beyond the specific numbers, the policy that Trump outlined Sunday is similar to the one President Obama pursued in his first term. When Obama first took office, he prioritized deporting undocumented immigrants with criminal convictions, in some cases even for comparatively minor violations such as traffic offenses or shoplifting, according to Randy Capps of the Migration Policy Institute. Partly as a result, deportations soared under Obama, topping 400,000 in 2012.

More recently, however, the Obama administration has changed tack, focusing instead on deporting immigrants convicted of more serious crimes or for repeat offenses. (He has also consistently deported undocumented immigrants who entered the country recently.) Deportations have fallen steadily in Obama's second term, to below 250,000 in 2015.

Capps said that the Homeland Security Department still has the resources it had in Obama's first term. From a practical standpoint, then, it wouldn't be hard for the government to deport 400,000 or even 500,000 people per year — meaning that Trump could credibly deport 2 million people during his first term without requiring additional resources or authorization from Congress. Many, but not all, of the people deported would be convicted criminals.

"It would not be hard to get up to 2 million in four years, and most of them would be quote-unquote criminals," Capps said, although he added that many of those criminal convictions would be for relatively minor crimes.

Trump is also likely to roll back a central element of Obama's immigration agenda: his Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which offers temporary legal status to people who entered the country illegally as children. During the campaign, Trump pledged to end DACA, but he hasn't said how — whether he will close the program to new applicants, allow it to expire or end it even for the roughly three-quarters of a million people who have been granted legal status under the program.

"The proof is going to be in what his administration actually does," Capps said, "and it will take some time before we know that."

Trump's Promise Of Mass Deportation Can't Compete With Migrants' Desperation

Vice, November 14, 2016

While President-elect Donald Trump was renewing his campaign vows to build a border wall and deport up to 3 million people over the weekend, U.S. immigration officials

were taking steps to deal with thousands of Central American children and families arriving in Texas.

Speaking to 60 Minutes on Sunday in his first interview since the election, Trump said his administration would prioritize going after undocumented immigrants with criminal records.

"What we are going to do is get the people that are criminal and have criminal records, gang members, drug dealers, where a lot of these people, probably 2 million, it could be even 3 million, we are getting them out of our country or we are going to incarcerate," Trump said. "But we're getting them out of our country, they're here illegally."

There are an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S.; fact-checkers say Trump's claim that at least 2 million of them are serious criminals is based on " very bad math." Last year, for instance, Immigration and Customs Enforcement identified 64,197 crimes committed by fewer than 20,000 "criminal aliens placed in a non-custodial setting." Nearly a third of those offenses were traffic violations.

"If he's deporting criminal aliens, I don't think anyone will object to that," said Anna Law, a professor of constitutional law and civil liberties at CUNY Brooklyn College. "But I'm concerned that to make the 2 to 3 million count he's going to scoop up a lot of undocumented people who just happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time."

She added, "Anyone who has a criminal conviction, even something as minor as a traffic violation, jumping a subway turnstile, or a DUI might want to start looking for a lawyer now."

As for the rest of America's undocumented population, Trump said his administration would make a "determination" about the future of these "terrific people" after the U.S.-Mexico border is deemed sufficiently secure. Trump reiterated that he intends to erect a massive wall in some places, but said for the first time that he's open to extending the fence that already exists along nearly 700 miles of the border.

Meanwhile, Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson announced plans on Saturday to deploy 150 additional agents to Texas in response to a surge of Central American migrants arriving at the border. Johnson said 46,195 people were detained at the southwest border in October, up from 39,501 in September and 37,048 in August. Overall this year through September, 408,870 people have been apprehended along the southwest border, a 23 percent increase from the same period last year.

Immigration officials have said most of the people caught in the recent influx are families and unaccompanied minors. According to advocates working on the ground in Central America, these are mainly refugees fleeing violence in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.

"They have gangs demanding extortion and threatening them during the day, and security forces breaking doors down and rounding up young men at night," said Noah Bullock, executive director of Foundation Cristosal, a human rights group in El Salvador. "They feel like it's coming at them from both sides."

President Obama has been forced to deal with the issue of Central American asylum seekers repeatedly during his tenure, and he has faced criticism from advocates for holding migrant families in detention facilities and pressuring Mexico to better police its southern border in order to make it harder for migrants to reach the U.S.

Maureen Meyer, senior associate for Mexico and migrant rights at the Washington Office on Latin America, said that if Trump takes an even more hardline approach without addressing the violence and economic conditions causing displacement in Central America, it will do nothing to help the situation.

"If you have people who are willing to cross the U.S. border and the desert at the risk of dying, the thought of trying to deter people doesn't really fit with reality," Meyer said. "That's the part you can't factor into any enforcement policy: The lengths people are willing to go to protect themselves, and the extent to which people will go to be with their loved ones."

Obama deported a record 1.5 million people in his first term, and more than 2.6 million total during his tenure in office, so Trump's stated deportation goal appears to be within reach. But Law and others warned that Trump will have to respect the legal process and allow Central Americans and others with asylum claims to have their day in court.

"The thought that he's going to remove a million people on the first day is a non-starter," Law said. "These people have due process rights, even as undocumented immigrants. They have the right to appeal, and you've seen how backlogged the system is as it is."

As Law noted, U.S. immigration courts are currently facing a "crushing backlog" of more than half a million cases, leading to average wait times of more than 1,000 days just to see a judge in some states. She warned that without additional resources, Trump's quest to keep his campaign promises could overwhelm the system even further.

"That system has been gummed up for years," Law said. "If he intends to deport even 1 million people, that system will freaking collapse under current conditions."

Donald Trump's Plan To Deport Millions Of Immigrants Is Likely Using Very Bad Math

By Philip Bump

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

Update: In his first major interview since winning the presidential election, Donald Trump told CBS's Lesley Stahl

that he planned to move to deport 2 million or 3 million immigrants in the country illegally.

"What we are going to do is get the people that are criminal and have criminal records, gang members, drug dealers, where a lot of these people, probably 2 million, it could be even 3 million, we are getting them out of our country or we are going to incarcerate. But we're getting them out of our country, they're here illegally," he said, according to a transcript of the interview that aired Sunday night.

When Trump made a similar claim in August, we looked at his numbers on criminal undocumented immigrants, finding them to almost certainly be highly inflated. That assessment is below.

"We are going to stop illegal immigration pouring into our country," Donald Trump told CNN's Anderson Cooper during an interview that aired Thursday night. "My first day in office, I am going to notify law enforcement authorities that all of the bad dudes — and we have a lot of them — that are here illegally, that are the heads of gangs and drug cartels and all sorts of people. …"

"People who commit crimes," Cooper interjected, according to a transcript from CBS's Sopan Deb.

"And there are probably millions of them, but certainly hundreds of thousands. Big numbers," Trump replied. "They're out. They're out. The police know who they are. I've spoken to many police. The police know who they are. They deal with them all of the time."

A bit later, Cooper asked if those who hadn't committed crimes would be deported.

"We know the bad ones," Trump replied. "We know where they are, who they are. We know the drug cartel people. We know the gangs and the heads of the gangs and the gang members. Those people are gone. And that's a huge number." He added, "We're going to deport many people, many, many people, the bad ones."

"The vast majority of those 11 million are not criminals," Cooper said.

"Well," Trump replied, "we don't know that."

Well, we do.

From the first day of his candidacy, Trump has argued for new immigration restrictions on the basis that illegal immigration led to higher crime. The original formulation was his infamous description of Mexican immigrants: "They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people."

As the days passed and he was asked to defend that position, he reiterated it. "I said tremendous crime is coming across," he explained on Fox News last July. "Everybody knows that's true. And it's happening all the time."

The Washington Post has fact-checked the claim multiple times, including in April when Trump said, "People that shouldn't have been here, people that should've never been allowed to come over the border, and they come here like it's nothing. … You know, I'm looking at statistics where your crime numbers are so crazy, they're going through the roof, so we can't have it anymore."

In most cases, our fact checkers have pointed to a report from the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service that looked at this issue. The CRS produced this graph, approximating the small subset of immigrants here illegally who had also committed violent crimes.

Note that this is "roughly to scale," though the CRS couldn't determine what proportion of the violent criminal noncitizens were also here illegally. The vast majority of those arrested for violating federal crimes while here illegally were arrested for being here illegally, according to the most recent data included in the CRS report.

We do know, thanks to Pew Research, that first-generation immigrants (here legally and not) are much less likely to commit crimes than their children — or than native-born Americans.

Supporters of Trump would note that even one crime committed by someone here illegally is too many. That, of course, is true. It's also true that one crime committed by an American citizen is one too many. The question is the accuracy with which how the Republican nominee for the presidency depicts a broad population living in the United States.

Speaking of: When Cooper pressed Trump on the issue, the Republican nominee introduced another point of fuzziness. Cooper spoke of there being 11 million people here illegally, to which Trump replied, "It could be 30, and it could be five."

This, too, is a throwback to the early days of the campaign, when he said he heard there were 34 million immigrants here illegally, an inaccuracy probably stemming from faulty reporting on a government request for printing new green cards. Pew Research and the Department of Homeland Security put the figure at a little over 11 million — and Pew estimates that it has stayed flat in recent years.

It's worth pointing out that police officers who are aware of criminal activity by "bad dudes" are empowered to arrest the culprits. (A "sanctuary city" is not a place where immigrants here illegally have a blank check to commit crime; rather, those cities are generally ones where undocumented immigrants aren't turned over to the federal government if identified as being here illegally but without having committed another crime.) The heads of violent criminal gangs and drug cartels could — and should — be arrested anyway, and an executive order from the president won't prompt that to happen.

But more broadly it's worth pointing out how neatly this issue delineates the entire arc of Trump's campaign. The candidate targeted immigrants for criticism even before he said the words, "I am officially running for president of the United States." When his incorrect numbers were pointed out,

he stuck by them — and continues to stick by them, to this day.

For all of the talk of a change in Trump's tenor and policy positions (itself still a question mark), there's one way in which he hasn't changed: his willingness to use incorrect and misleading data to reinforce his political rhetoric.

Trump Starting To Sound Like Obama On Immigration

By Alicia A. Caldwell

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump is starting to sound an awful lot like President Barack Obama on immigration.

In his first postelection interview, Trump said he will focus on deporting criminal immigrants and not everyone living in the United States illegally. Two million or 3 million people could be immediate targets for deportation under this approach, Trump said, providing a likely inflated figure.

And that "big, beautiful wall" at the Mexican border? Trump said he may be amenable to a fence along some parts of the roughly 2,000-mile border.

The softened stance contrasts sharply with Trump's campaign rhetoric. As a candidate, he called for everyone living in the country illegally to return to their home countries and for Mexico to pay billions of dollars for the wall.

A look at Trump's shifting immigration stance:

FOCUS ON CRIMINALS

Trump said in an interview with "60 Minutes" broadcast Sunday that immigration enforcement will concentrate on criminals.

"What we are going to do is get the people that are criminal and have criminal records, gang members, drug dealers," he said. "We have a lot of these people, probably 2 million, it could be even 3 million; we are getting them out of our country or we're going to incarcerate."

Trump added: "We're getting them out of our country; they're here illegally."

Obama's Homeland Security Department has operated similarly. Since 2010, criminals comprised more than half of those deported from the U.S. Over his presidency, Obama has overseen the deportation of more than 2.5 million people.

Trump didn't say Sunday how he will target criminals. He previously has spoken about reviving programs that gave immigration agents access to jails so they could identify people living in the country illegally.

But if Trump does so, local jurisdictions likely will object. Local laws in some places bar cooperation with immigration authorities. And some federal court rulings make it difficult for local jails to hold immigrants beyond their criminal sentences or strictly for immigration violations.

It is even harder to deport criminal immigrants who aren't incarcerated. Many live in the shadows. Tracking them down would take a lot of time and government money.

Deportation costs average about $12,500 per person, according to a 2011 government estimate.

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2 MILLION OR 3 MILLION CRIMINAL IMMIGRANTS

Trump's estimate of criminals who are in the country illegally is probably much too high.

In 2012, Homeland Security officials estimated some 1.9 million criminal immigrants in the United States who could be deported. But the government didn't break down how many of those people were in the country legally and how many were here illegally.

A subsequent analysis by the Migration Policy Institute, a Washington think tank, concluded that only about 820,000 of those people were in the country illegally. The other million or so people had some sort of legal status, including green cards or visas.

Deporting green card holders is possible, though the process can involve lengthy court proceedings.

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FENCE vs. WALL

"I will build a great, great wall on our southern border," Trump said as he launched his presidential campaign in June 2015. "And I will have Mexico pay for that wall."

He repeated the pledge at almost every rally.

But in his weekend interview, Trump took a more nuanced approach.

In certain areas, Trump said, "it could be some fencing." Elsewhere, he added, the border wall was still appropriate.

The president-elect didn't outline where a fence or a wall might fit better. But his willingness to consider fencing marked a considerable concession from his campaign stance.

Border fencing is nothing new. There is fencing along about 650 miles in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California, encompassing almost a third of the border.

Under President George W. Bush, Congress authorized $1.2 billion to build hundreds of miles of double-layered fencing. The Congressional Research Service and the Army Corps of Engineers have estimated that the fencing already in place cost the United States about $7 billion.

Any new construction along the border would be a costly and complicated endeavor. Cost estimates of a wall have ranged from $10 billion to $20 billion.

Trump would also face myriad environmental regulations, objections from private land owners and a legally binding 1970 treaty with Mexico that governs structures along the Rio Grande and Colorado River at the Mexican border.

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Follow Alicia A. Caldwell on Twitter at www.twitter.com/acaldwellap

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What Donald Trump's Vow To Deport Up To 3 Million Immigrants Would Mean

By Julie Hirschfeld Davis And Julia Preston

New York Times, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — President-elect Donald J. Trump's promise to deport two million to three million immigrants who have committed crimes suggested that he would dramatically step up removals of both people in the United States illegally and those with legal status. If carried out, the plan potentially would require raids by a vastly larger federal immigration force to hunt down these immigrants and send them out of the country.

Addressing the issue in an interview broadcast Sunday on the CBS program "60 Minutes," Mr. Trump adopted a softer tone on immigrants than he did during his campaign, when he called many of them rapists and criminals. He instead referred to them as "terrific people," saying they would be dealt with only after the border had been secured and criminals deported.

But by placing the number of people he aims to turn out of the country as high as three million, Mr. Trump raised questions about which immigrants he planned to target for deportation and how he could achieve removals at that scale.

"If he wants to deport two to three million people, he's got to rely on tactics that will divide communities and create fear throughout the country," said Kevin Appleby, the senior director of international migration policy at the Center for Migration Studies of New York. "He would have to conduct a sweep, or raids or tactics such as those, to reach the numbers he wants to reach. It would create a police state, in which they would have to be aggressively looking for people."

The details are crucial to understanding the approach of a president-elect who centered his campaign on a promise to build a border wall and deport lawbreakers. On Monday, President Obama said he would urge Mr. Trump to consider leaving in place his executive actions that have shielded from deportation immigrants brought to the United States illegally as children.

Asked on "60 Minutes" whether he would seek to deport "millions and millions of undocumented immigrants," Mr. Trump said his priority would be to remove "people that are criminal and have criminal records."

"What we are going to do is get the people that are criminal and have criminal records — gang members, drug dealers, we have a lot of these people, probably two million, it could be even three million. We are getting them out of our country or we are going to incarcerate," Mr. Trump said. "But we're getting them out of our country, they're here illegally."

The Obama administration has estimated that 1.9 million "removable criminal aliens" are in the United States. That number includes people who hold green cards for legal permanent residency and those who have temporary visas. It also includes people who have been convicted of nonviolent crimes such as theft, not just those found guilty of felonies or gang-related violence.

"They certainly have that many to start," said Jessica M. Vaughan, director of policy studies at the Center for Immigration Studies, a group that supports reduced immigration.

But even if Mr. Trump's numbers are correct — and many immigration activists dispute them — it is not clear Mr. Trump could carry out those deportations quickly without violating due process.

In many cases, convicts would have to go through immigration courts before they could be deported. Those courts are overwhelmed with huge backlogs, so obtaining deportation orders from judges can take many months — if not many years. Thousands of immigrants are serving jail sentences that under current law cannot be curtailed. According to official figures, as of June only about 183,000 immigrants had been convicted of crimes and also had deportation orders so they could be detained and removed quickly.

Mr. Trump's approach would in some ways be a continuation of policies Mr. Obama has pursued to focus immigration enforcement on convicted criminals.

In 2014, his administration issued guidelines instructing agents to make criminals the highest priorities for their operations. In 2015, according to Immigration and Customs Enforcement figures, the majority of the 235,413 people deported — 59 percent — were convicted criminals, while 41 percent were removed for immigration violations.

"Under the Obama administration we have already managed to calibrate our policy with heavy emphasis on criminal aliens," said Muzaffar Chishti, the director of the New York University School of Law office of the Migration Policy Institute, a nonpartisan research group.

Since 2009, Mr. Obama has presided over the deportation of about 2.5 million immigrants, prompting sharp criticism from advocacy groups. He did so in part to build political support for a broad revision of immigration laws that would have provided a path to citizenship for immigrants in the country illegally.

Under a now-defunct program known as Secure Communities, the Obama administration used digital fingerprints shared by local law enforcement departments to find and deport immigrants who had committed crimes. Immigration and Customs Enforcement also partnered with local authorities to prioritize the arrest and detention of criminal aliens.

Both measures helped drive deportations to roughly 400,000 per year during Mr. Obama's first term. Multiplying that number by many times would almost certainly require reinstituting a program like Secure Communities and employing vastly more immigration agents, as well as using more aggressive tactics to find and remove immigrants who may have broken the law, according to Mr. Appleby of the Center for Migration Studies of New York.

If Mr. Trump seeks to revive programs of close cooperation between local police and federal immigration authorities, he is likely to encounter legal challenges and resistance from dozens of cities and counties that have curtailed or rejected cooperation.

Mr. Trump has said he would cut off federal funding for cities that refuse to help federal agents detain unauthorized immigrants. During his campaign, he highlighted terrible crimes by immigrants he said had escaped detection because of protective policies.

At a news conference in Chicago on Monday, Mayor Rahm Emanuel, a Democrat, sought to ease fears of deportation and harassment as he reiterated Chicago's status as a sanctuary city for immigrants.

"It is important for families that are anxious, it is important for children and adolescents that are unsure because of Tuesday, to understand the city of Chicago is your home," Mr. Emanuel said. "You are always welcome in this city."

Cook County, where Chicago is, has adopted an especially restrictive policy on ties between police and federal agents. Mr. Emanuel encouraged immigrants to call a hotline for legal advice, and said Chicago would quickly set up a municipal identification program to allow undocumented immigrants access to city services.

Mayor Betsy Hodges of Minneapolis was defiant. "I will continue to stand by and fight for immigrants regardless of President-elect Trump's threats," she said. "If police officers were to do the work of ICE, it would harm our ability to keep people safe and solve crimes." Mayor Ras Baraka of Newark, said the city's protections would not change.

In California, lawmakers in a Legislature dominated by Democrats rejected Mr. Trump's numbers and plans. "It is erroneous and profoundly irresponsible to suggest that up to three million undocumented immigrants living in America are dangerous criminals," said Kevin de León, the president pro tempore of the Senate. He said Mr. Trump's figures were "a thinly veiled pretense for a catastrophic policy of mass deportation," and he told immigrants, "the State of California stands squarely behind you."

The Los Angeles police chief, Charlie Beck, said his force would not change its policies. "We are not going to work in conjunction with Homeland Security on deportation efforts," he said, according to The Los Angeles Times. "That is not our job, nor will I make it our job."

Trump To Deport 2-3 Million Immigrants: A Shift In Practice Or Just Tone?

Christian Science Monitor, November 14, 2016

Donald Trump says he will immediately deport up to half a million more undocumented immigrants than the more than 2.5 million President Obama sent home during his two terms in office. But it's the tone of President-elect Trump that is markedly different than his predecessor.

"What we are going to do is get the people that are criminal and have criminal records, gang members, drug dealers, where a lot of these people, probably two million, it could be even three million, we are getting them out of our country or we are going to incarcerate," Mr. Trump told CBS "60 Minutes" correspondent Lesley Stahl in an interview that aired Sunday. "But we're getting them out of the country, they're here illegally."

It's unclear how the Trump administration will bring this plan to fruition. Trump appears to have softened some of his hard-line campaign promises on immigration. On paper, a Trump administration plan to deport up to three million undocumented immigrants isn't that significant of an increase over the Obama administration's record, immigration experts have said. But it's how the president-elect has spoken about deportation and the advisers he has appointed to his transition team that could mark a shift from the current administration and a return to or expansion of the raids of workplaces and neighborhoods and roving "task forces" of local police officers seen under former President George W. Bush.

"President Obama had prioritized the removal of undocumented immigrants that are criminals. The real question we're not going to know the answer to is how does [Trump] put that in practice, " says Victoria M. DeFrancesco Soto, a political scientist at the University of Texas at Austin. "Does he fly through that list and then go onto folks who don't have a criminal record but are technically here illegally and start deporting them?"

"The difference is in tone," adds Terri Givens, the provost at Menlo College in Atherton, Calif., and an immigration researcher. "We don't know yet what the numbers are going to be for Trump."

In Trump's interview on "60 Minutes," he didn't expand on whether the immediate deportation of two to three million undocumented "criminal" immigrants meant his first 100 days in his office or over a longer period. He did say that once the border is "secure," immigration officials would make a "determination" about the remaining undocumented immigrants in the country he said are "terrific people." Trump also didn't detail how immigrant officials would carry out these deportations.

But Trump's policy speeches and the advisers he has appointed to his transition team offer a window into how his

administration might go about it. In a speech he gave in September, Trump laid out a number of actions including building a wall along the US-Mexico border, the end of "catch and release" tactics, the tripling of ICE deportation officers, and the addition of 5,000 more Border Patrol agents. Following the speech, The Washington Post estimated his policies would add up to $51.2 billion and $66.9 billion in immigration enforcement costs over the next five years.

On Trump's transition team are several politicians who have backed aggressive tactics to stop illegal immigration. Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach came up with the "show me your papers" state law, passed byArizona, but partially undone by the US Supreme Court. Sen. Jeff Sessions (R) of Alabama subscribes to the approach. And former House Speaker Newt Gingrich urged Trump on Sunday to take aggressive action on immigration.

While the price tag for these proposals could be about four times more than US spending on immigration enforcement now, the number of deportations wouldn't be drastically more than under the Obama administration. In Mr. Obama's first year in office, about 360,000 undocumented immigrants (criminals and non-criminals) were sent back to their home countries each year.

Leading up to the 2012 election, however, the administration's tone shifted to prioritize the deportation of criminal immigrants through a process called "prosecutorial discretion." According to a 2015 report from the American Immigration Council, immigrants (legal and undocumented) are less likely to commit serious crimes or be behind bars than the native-born, and high rates of immigration are associated with lower rates of violent crime and property crime. Under the Obama administration's strategy, immigration officials were also discouraged from deporting other undocumented immigrants such as the parents of US-born children.

"In contrast, George W. Bush's immigration policy tended to reflect the philosophy that all unauthorized immigrants in America ought to feel that deportation was a possibility at any given time — because if they felt the pressure, they might be inspired to leave on their own before ICE got to them," writes Vox's Dara Lindarra. "Supporters of this strategy see it as a really important part of maintaining the rule of law against unauthorized immigration. They believe that if you have broken a law, and you don't feel afraid you might be punished for it, the law might as well not exist."

Some proponents of this strategy include Mr. Kobach, the Kansas secretary of State, and Senator Sessions.

But Trump has softened some of his more hard-line immigration proposals. In addition to saying Sunday immigration officials could make a "determination" about noncriminal undocumented immigrants, he said the wall on the US-Mexico border, a centerpiece of his campaign, could be part-wall, part-fence. House Speaker Paul Ryan added in an interview with CNN's Jake Tapper the same day that Trump and Republicans are " not planning on erecting a deportation force."

Still, even if the Trump administration used a combination of Obama and Bush's immigration strategies, writes Vox's Ms. Lindarra, "even if it, in practice, wasn't any more aggressive in immigration enforcement than either of its predecessors — it would put immigrants under a constant cloud of fear.In theory, that fear would be the point — it would be a reminder that violating immigration law has consequences."

Don't Act So Shocked At Trump's Plans To Deport 3 Million Illegal Immigrants – Obama Has Deported 2.5 Million

By Kirsty Major

Independent (UK), November 14, 2016

Donald Trump has announced his plans to put the "bad hombres" of America back where they belong: somewhere vaguely south of Texas.

Speaking to BCS's 60 Minutes, the President-elect said: "What we are going to do is get the people that are criminal and have criminal records, gang members, drug dealers, where a lot of these people, probably two million, it could be even three million, we are getting them out of our country or we are going to incarcerate." Only when these migrants have been dealt with and the US border is secure with his wall-cum-fence, will he then turn his attention to the remaining estimated 8-11 million immigrants residing in the US without proper papers.

During his campaign Trump launched a one-man vendetta against America's Latino community – calling Mexican immigrants "criminals" and "rapists", and blaming them for the rise in violent crime across the US. Rolling back ever so slightly on his plans to deport all illegal immigrants, he has now decided to focus the most attention on the type of mean desperados Danny Trejo would play in a Nineties action film.

Trump and Ryan contradict each other over immigratio

Take the rhetoric away, and you're left with an immigration policy that is no worse, and perhaps far more lenient – whether through intent or ignorance of policy – than Barack Obama's. The current President, or Deporter in Chief, as some immigration groups have labelled him, has removed more undocumented migrants than the total sum of presidents in the 20th century.

Notwithstanding the 2012 executive action, and its 2014 extension, that granted deportation relief to undocumented migrants who entered the country before their 16th birthday, and to the parents of legal resident children, Obama deported 2.5 million undocumented migrants between 2009 and 2015.

This is despite the support that Latinos gave to his election on the grounds that he would pass immigration reform through Congress.

Obama's administration has come down hard on illegal aliens who pose a threat to "national security, border security, and public safety". By 2015, 81 per cent of the Obama removals came from this priority one category.

There is no difference between this policy and the one proposed by Trump. In fact, the Republican may be at a loss to find his imaginary three million gang members. There are 1.9 million "removable criminal aliens" remaining in the US currently facing deportation under the Obama administration. Where Trump plans on finding the other 1.1 million felons is anyone's guess.

Then there's the problem with executing his plans, even if he does find them. Under the Due Process Clause all illegal immigrants are afforded rights under the US Constitution and are entitled to full removal proceedings in court. The president can't deport by edict and since the courts are operating under a major backlog, they won't be deported immediately in a rerun of Eisenhower's Operation Wetback, when hundreds of Mexicans were illegally deported without being given the chance to prove their citizenship.

Even Trump's own party has been charged with taming their leader's remarks – a pattern we should start to get used to. According to House Speaker Paul Ryan: "We are not planning on erecting a deportation force, Donald Trump's not planning on that."

Right now Trump has made no further plans to deport other undocumented groups – unlike Obama. Both misdemeanants and new immigrants were marked out as priority two and three categories to face deportation by the latter's administration. Since 2008 the number of cases of people being deported for traffic violations has quadrupled and in 2014, 121 migrants, mostly women and children, were deported for recently entering the country.

It doesn't sound like it, but on paper Trump's poorly considered soundbite-inspired immigration policy may be a blessing in a very ugly disguise.

When Trump Says He Wants To Deport Criminals, He Means Something Starkly Different Than Obama

By Brian Bennett

Los Angeles Times, November 14, 2016

President-elect Donald Trump's advisors are drafting plans to resume workplace raids and to ramp up pressure on local police and jails to identify immigrants in the country illegally in an effort to meet Trump's goal to deport 2 million to 3 million migrants who he says are criminals.

That could put the incoming Trump administration in direct conflict with Los Angeles and the laws of California, as well as other cities and states, setting the stage for an almost certain high-stakes legal and political battle.

The Obama administration set a priority in his second term of deporting migrants with criminal convictions, and it has expelled 530,000 convicted criminals since 2013. Since taking office in 2009, Obama has expelled 2.5 million people, more than any other president.

According to two senior officials in the transition team, Trump's advisors will seek to widen that net to include migrants who have been charged but not convicted, suspected gang members and drug dealers, and people charged with such immigration violations as illegal reentry and overstaying visas, as well as lower-level misdemeanors.

If local authorities refuse to cooperate, Trump's advisors are looking at withholding some federal law enforcement funds and equipment that go to state and local police agencies for holding federal prisoners or improving police practices.

On Monday, Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck said he has no plans to change the LAPD's refusal to enforce some federal immigration policies.

Under Beck, the department stopped turning over people arrested on suspicion of low-level crimes to federal agents for deportation and moved away from honoring federal requests to detain inmates who could be deported after their jail terms.

"I don't intend on doing anything different," he said. "We are not going to engage in law enforcement activities solely based on somebody's immigration status. We are not going to work in conjunction with Homeland Security on deportation efforts. That is not our job, nor will I make it our job."

In 2013, California Gov. Jerry Brown signed a law that bars state police from holding someone for immigration agents unless the suspect has been charged or convicted of a serious crime such as drug trafficking, child abuse or gang activity.

In recent years, police chiefs in numerous jurisdictions have rejected local enforcement of immigration laws, saying it makes immigrants less likely to report crimes or help police conduct investigations.

During the campaign, Trump said he also would withhold federal funds to punish so-called sanctuary cities, including Los Angeles and Chicago, for their lenient policies toward illegal immigration.

At a news conference Monday, President Obama said he will encourage Trump to keep a program that has given temporary work permits and legal status to more than 740,000 immigrants brought to the country illegally as children.

Trump said repeatedly during the campaign he would shut down the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, but he did not say whether he would seek to deport those given protection under the program.

"I will urge the president-elect and the incoming administration to think long and hard before they are endangering the status of what for all practical purposes are American kids," Obama said.

Those vetted under the program, he added, "are solid, wonderful young people of good character, and it is my strong belief that the majority of the American people would not want to see suddenly those kids have to start hiding again."

Early in his presidential campaign, Trump said he intended to deport all of the estimated 11 million immigrants in the country illegally. But he later amended that, and on Sunday he provided a broad outline of his plan.

He told CBS' "60 Minutes" that his administration will "get the people that are criminal and have criminal records, gang members, drug dealers, we have a lot of these people, probably 2 million, it could be even 3 million. We are getting them out of the country or we are going to incarcerate. But we're getting them out of the country. They're here illegally."

To boost the tallies, his advisors say, Trump will probably reinstate workplace raids to find those in the country illegally, to push illegal immigrants out of jobs and to send a signal across the borders to try to dissuade others from entering the country illegally or overstaying their visas.

Hard-line immigration advisors on Trump's transition team also are drafting plans to dramatically increase prosecutions of illegal entry, an immigration violation that doesn't always lead to deportation under current policy.

They plan to expand the use of a deportation process that bypasses immigration courts and allows immigration officers to expel foreigners immediately upon being captured.

The process, called "expedited removal," now applies only to undocumented immigrants arrested within 100 miles of the border and within two weeks of illegally entering the country who don't express a credible fear of persecution if they are returned home.

Trump's immigration policy advisors also want to expand a program that gives some police officers immigration authority and trains jailers to identify potentially deportable inmates.

The Trump administration also may restore a controversial program called Secure Communities that began under President George W. Bush. It automatically notified federal agents when an undocumented immigrant was fingerprinted and booked in a local jail.

Many communities, including Los Angeles, ultimately refused to participate and the program was canceled in November 2014. Immigration agents now must show a court has ordered deportation of an inmate, or probably will do so, to get the jail to hold a suspect for federal agents.

Immigration officials say they have enough officers and detention beds to deport about 400,000 people per year — the record set in 2012 at the end of Obama's first term.

Last year, the Obama administration deported about 235,000 people and Trump advisors believe that undoing some of the limits Obama set in his second term could push deportations back above 400,000 next year.

That could still require five years to reach 2 million deportations unless Congress provides money to hire thousands more deportation officers, hundreds more immigration judges and vastly more detention facilities.

Trump gave no time frame for his deportation target, and some immigration experts say his figures appear wildly inflated.

"There's nowhere near 3 million serious criminals among the undocumented population," said Frank Sharry, head of America's Voice, an immigration advocacy group. "We suspect he's gearing up to implement a very harsh and radical deportation regime and he's going to deploy it under the pretext they are criminals, when they are not."

Studies by social scientists have found that the incarceration rate among immigrants is lower than that of the general population.

A 2015 study of immigration and population data by the Migration Policy Institute, a think tank in Washington, concluded that the 11 million immigrants in the country illegally included about 300,000 convicted felons and 390,000 others with serious misdemeanors.

Trump apparently obtained his 2 million estimate from a document prepared by Immigration and Customs Enforcement as a request to Congress for funding in 2013.

In it, ICE estimated 1.9 million "removable criminal aliens" in the country. The estimate includes legal residents and valid visa holders who have been charged with crimes, putting their legal status in jeopardy.

That same year, ICE reported that 870,000 people had been ordered deported but had not yet been forced out. It's unclear how many are still in the county.

Adding those two figures may be how Trump reached his ballpark 3-million estimate.

During his "60 Minutes" interview, Trump was vague about his plans for the millions of immigrants in the country illegally who have not committed crimes.

"After the border is secured and after everything gets normalized, we're going to make a determination on the people that you're talking about who are terrific people," Trump said.

That sounds promising to Alfonso Aguilar, head of Latino Partnership for Conservative Principles, an advocacy group. "When he said 'terrific people,' it doesn't sound like he's going to deport 'terrific people,'" he said.

But Aguilar noted that in August, Trump laid out a hard-nosed, 10-point immigration plan that would make life difficult for immigrants without legal status, including requiring every employer to use a federal immigration status verification system for all hires.

Trump also said he would withhold visas for visitors from countries such as China, Iran and Haiti that won't receive convicted criminals being deported from the U.S.

Some hard-line advocacy groups urged Trump's team to go further and to consider deporting migrants who have committed low-level misdemeanors.

Mark Krikorian, head of the Center for Immigration Studies, which wants lower immigration rates, said the Obama administration "refused to deport a large number of illegal immigrants whose crimes they thought weren't serious enough to warrant deportation."

"For all the talk about how this is a radical departure and the end of the world and Hitler is coming, this is taking the handcuffs off and going back to more of what Obama did, but in a change of degree," said Krikorian, who has been sending policy proposals to the Trump transition team but is not a formal advisor.

Young 'Dreamers' See Peril As Trump Plans For Mass Deportations

Bloomberg Politics, November 14, 2016

The undocumented youth temporarily shielded from deportation by President Barack Obama are worried they might be next in line after President-elect Donald Trump said he would immediately move against immigrants convicted of crimes.

Trump said Sunday on CBS's "60 Minutes" that he planned to immediately expel as many as 3 million people, with a focus on gang members, drug dealers and other criminals. That was scant comfort to the more than 1 million undocumented known as dreamers, who were brought to the country as children. They handed over information including fingerprints and relatives' home addresses when they applied for protection under the president's 2012 executive order, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

"We're scared for our lives," said Greisa Martinez, 28, policy director at the nonprofit group United We Dream in Washington, and an undocumented immigrant from Mexico who received shelter from deportation in 2014.

Trump built his campaign on a pledge to drive out the more than 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the U.S., which would be one of the largest forced expulsions since President Dwight Eisenhower deported more than 1 million Mexicans in the 1950s. Now, as Trump prepares to take office his plans for fulfilling his central promise are taking shape, and leaving many uncertain of the future.

"A large number of immigrants in the country today have to be very concerned," said Muzaffar Chishti, an attorney at the Migration Policy Institute in Washington.

Read More: Understanding the Debate Over U.S. Immigration Reform – a QuickTake

Obama already has deported more people than any prior president, formally removing almost 2.8 million people since taking office, compared with 2 million under George W. Bush and 870,000 under Bill Clinton.

In 2012, the president issued the DACA executive order after a decade of attempts in Congress to pass the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act. The measure would have provided a path to legalization for the namesake dreamers.

Obama's program entitled more than 1 million people aged 31 and under who were pursuing or had completed an education and who had been in the country for at least five years to receive work permits. He later extended relief to another 3.6 million undocumented parents of American-born children, but that program is on hold pending litigation.

Martinez was brought to the U.S. from Mexico as a child. She grew up in Dallas, attended Texas A&M University, worked off the books as a used car salesperson and lived in constant fear of deportation. In 2014, she was elated when DACA gave her the chance to work.

"I cried," she said. "It was the Social Security number. The Social Security number was something that had haunted me since I was an elementary school kid, when I didn't have anything to put in those nine little boxes."

Still, the president's actions, which shielded nearly half of the nation's undocumented population, deeply angered Republicans who saw them as an end-run around the will of the people.Delaying Judgment

Trump said Sunday he would begin his crackdown with criminals. He said that after securing the border, he would make a determination on the remaining immigrants. He called them "terrific people," according to a CBS transcript.

And like Obama did with his executive order, Trump can take unilateral action with the stroke of a pen.

About 1.9 million "removable criminal aliens" are in the U.S., according to the Department of Homeland Security. An analysis of those numbers by the Migration Policy Institute found that those include both legal and illegal immigrants who committed a variety of misdemeanor and felony offenses. The institute estimated that of those about 820,000 are unauthorized immigrants. There are an additional half a million fugitives who fled from deportation proceedings and who remain at large, said Jessica Vaughan, director of policy studies at the Center for Immigration Studies, which has argued against admitting high numbers of people.Deliberate Process

Trump might not be able to move swiftly. Anyone deported would be entitled to a hearing before a judge. Immigration courts already have more than half a million people in line, according to Syracuse University's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, a nonprofit that distributes government data obtained through freedom-of-information requests. Wait times can exceed three years.

"I don't think there will be 3 million removals in the first couple years," Vaughan said.

Nevertheless, Young immigrants who entered the DACA program feel they are easy targets, thanks to the trove of data they gave to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, a branch of the Department of Homeland Security.

The application required not just personal information about the applicants, including elementary school records, old home addresses and health information, but information about undocumented parents and other relatives. The paperwork was so extensive that applicants joked that it should be measured not by pages but by pounds, said Tom Wong, a political science professor at the University of California at San Diego who studied their economic contributions.

"This is heartbreaking in a lot of ways," said Wong. "Folks went above and beyond to essentially give everything."

Vaughan said there are "hundreds" of undocumented immigrants with deferred deportation status who were mistakenly approved or who have committed crimes since being approved. She also says there are about 280 gang members who somehow received deferred status.

Still, she said, "I don't think it's likely that this list is going to suddenly become a target-and-locate list for ICE. I think that ICE and the Trump administration have higher priorities."

Martinez of United We Dream said her group is in talks with lawyers about what right to privacy, if any, DACA applicants have. The application states that information "is protected from disclosure" to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the branch of DHS that carries out deportations. Still, it also says "the information may be shared with national security and law enforcement agencies, including ICE and CBP, for purposes other than removal."

"When these people applied for DACA, they were doing that under a promise that information they provided to the government would not be used against them in immigration enforcement actions except under limited circumstances," said Kamal Essaheb, director of policy and advocacy at the National Immigration Law Center. "It would be a significant departure from how people expect to relate to the government if information that individuals gave under a certain promise, if that promise is violated."

Mexico To Discuss Deportations With Trump Team

AFP, November 14, 2016

Mexico City (AFP) – Mexico's government said Monday it will discuss with US President-elect Donald Trump's incoming administration his plan to jail or deport millions of undocumented migrants with criminal records.

President Enrique Pena Nieto has given instructions to his ministries to consider any "contingencies" in case Trump undertakes massive deportations when he takes office in January, government spokesman Eduardo Sanchez said.

"We will have to see how many of these deportations, which the US government usually carries out, ... correspond to Mexico," Sanchez said at a news conference.

"This and other issues will be part of the agenda that Mexico will put on the table in the bilateral meetings that will take place with the government of President-elect Donald Trump," he said.

Pena Nieto said last week that he had agreed to meet with Trump, possibly before the Republican billionaire takes office in January, and that he felt "optimistic" about future relations.

Trump said in a interview broadcast Sunday on CBS television's "60 Minutes" program that up to three million undocumented immigrants with criminal records would be deported or incarcerated.

The United States has an estimated 11-12 million undocumented migrants, mostly of Mexican origin.

Trump also reaffirmed his signature campaign pledge to build a wall on the border with Mexico, although he conceded parts of it may be just a fence.

Sanchez recalled that Pena Nieto has rejected Trump's call for Mexico to pay for the barrier.

The presidential spokesman said the foreign ministry will launch a campaign in the United States to keep Mexicans informed and protect them through Mexico's consular network.

Foreign Minister Claudia Ruiz Massieu huddled with consular officials on Saturday to design plans to protect and assist Mexicans in the United States.

While Pena Nieto prepares for the new US administration, he spoke by phone with President Barack Obama on Monday about economic ties, fighting organized crime and "managing migration," the White House said in a statement.

"Both presidents agreed to continue to take steps to solidify the relationship and institutionalize mechanisms of cooperation that have been created with bipartisan support to ensure that the strong and mutually beneficial partnership between Mexico and the United States endures," the statement said.

After Trump's Win, An Anxious Mexico Asks: What's Next?

By Azam Ahmed

New York Times, November 14, 2016

MEXICO CITY — Ever since the election of Donald J. Trump to the American presidency, Juan Pardinas, a Mexican academic, has been thinking back to his childhood.

Specifically, the Cold War era, when his days as a young boy were filled with a medium-grade anxiety that the

Russians might incite a nuclear war that could devastate North America.

"It's the same feeling of uncertainty," said Mr. Pardinas, a graduate of the London School of Economics whose work on anti-corruption legislation has been roundly praised in Mexico. "The feeling that politics has become a source of bitterness, anguish and uncertainty is really sad."

Clouds have descended over Mexico, miring it in a state of anguish and paralysis after the election of Mr. Trump to the highest office in the world. They are clouds of uncertainty and fear, of self-doubt and insecurity. There were even actual storm clouds hanging over the capital in recent days, a literal echo of the nation's state of mind.

"This may not affect people on the top of our country, but it can only mean bad news for us merchants and lower, working-class people in Mexico," said Claudia Rivera, a street vendor who owns a food cart in Mexico City.

Outside of concerns about the election, violence has been soaring to levels not seen since the start of the drug war a decade ago. And corruption and a loss of faith in the political leadership had already plunged the nation into a state of gloom. Now, the loss for many is external, too.

"A lot of people see the U.S. as a beacon of freedom, as something to aspire to," said Mr. Pardinas, who works on legislation and economic competitiveness. "But what happens when you lose a role model, the role model of a nation? Now all of us who admired the U.S. are having second thoughts."

For most Mexicans, the American election has been a grim exercise in self-perception. Mr. Trump, a candidate who called Mexican immigrants "rapists" and criminals, vowing to deport millions and build a wall to keep others out, has stoked long-held insecurities in Mexico over sovereignty and respect from its northern neighbor. And his victory was seen by some as validating the perception that Americans, or at least half of them, see Mexico through a knot of stereotypes.

Never mind that Mexico's rich culture and cuisine, its art and film, are having a global moment, Mexicans say. Or that a wall between the two countries these days might actually keep more Mexicans in the United States than out, given the recent research showing more Mexicans are returning home than leaving to seek opportunity in America.

"We are really in need of some reassurance," said Mr. Pardinas, echoing the sentiment of dozens interviewed in the wake of Mr. Trump's election. "But you need political leadership for that, and we are short on those attributes."

President Enrique Peña Nieto and his administration have adopted a diplomatic and hopeful posture toward Mr. Trump's presidency.

In a statement after the election, Mr. Peña Nieto said the results "open a new chapter in the relationship between Mexico and the United States, which will imply a change, a challenge, but also, it's necessary to say, a big opportunity."

He was sure, he said, that the relationship would be one of "trust and mutual respect" that would "build prosperity" for both countries. He also recounted that he had congratulated Mr. Trump by phone earlier and that the men had discussed the possibility of meeting again in the coming months "to define, with total clarity, the course that the relationship between the two countries will have to take."

However, behind the scenes, there was a deep worry regarding the transition, most immediately the possibility of mass deportations of Mexicans living in the United States.

The Foreign Ministry called back all the Mexican consuls general serving in the United States for meetings to discuss how to respond to the incoming administration. Other consular offices issued requests for Mexicans to report harassment or assaults, as anger stirred by Mr. Trump's ascendance has turned into racial threats and violence in parts of America. Meanwhile, the government has already expressed a willingness to renegotiate parts of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

But to some, Mr. Peña Nieto's statement seemed a missed opportunity to address the injury that many Mexicans still feel by Mr. Trump's anti-Mexican stance and the broad concerns about his threats regarding trade between the two nations.

Armando Ríos Piter, an opposition senator representing the state of Guerrero, said that after enduring Mr. Trump's hostile discourse for a year and a half, Mexicans deserved a more robust response from their president.

"It was a very light response to a very dangerous threat," he said.

As Mr. Trump prepared to take office, he continued, Mexico needs to establish its position regarding the United States wall with "firmness, clarity and dignity."

Instead, "we are left with a politically light position that doesn't say anything," he said. "We can't settle for a statement that says, 'I spoke with Trump.'"

In September, in anticipation of a possible Trump victory, Mr. Ríos submitted bills that would strengthen Mexico's hand. The bills, which have languished in the Senate, would allow the government to penalize American investments in Mexico should Mr. Trump follow through on his promises to tax or block remittances by Mexicans in the United States to finance his proposed border wall.

The legislation would also make it explicitly illegal for the Mexican federal government to finance anything that could be interpreted as a border wall, and it stipulated that if the United States decided to pull out of Nafta, as Mr. Trump has threatened, the Mexican legislature would review the dozens of agreements and treaties that govern the bilateral relationship.

In truth, the Mexican government is in a difficult place. Some Mexicans say their leaders must be careful not to antagonize the new president of the United States with their

own incendiary comments, given the economic importance America holds in Mexico.

"It is worrying and frightening to know that the loud guy holding a stick in his hand, saying he is coming to get you, to beat you up, is actually in power to do so now," said Leticia Vega, a Mexican lawyer.

Business leaders, meanwhile, have begun the process of normalizing Mr. Trump's presidency. Though most executives have adopted a wait-and-see approach, they are continuing with business as usual.

"Sometimes the rhetoric is very different from the actual business of governing," said Alejandro Ramirez, the head of the largest business consortium in Mexico and the chief executive of Cinépolis, which runs movie theaters across the Americas. "When you have to face the reality of governing you have to look much deeper into the facts, to see whether what you are proposing makes sense."

Mr. Ramirez buys $40 million worth of goods from the United States every year to run his cinemas, from popcorn and nacho cheese to audio equipment. If free trade were upended, those purchases might be made from other countries, he said.

Few thought a Trump presidency was possible. Now most are banking on a stark difference between Candidate Trump and President Trump, meaning that he will not be as harsh on Mexico as promised. Business consortiums and trade interest groups have taken a proactive stance on engaging the president-elect.

"If the Mexican government is smart about this, if they anticipate correctly the concerns of the incoming administration, they can build an agenda to which the Trump administration can respond," said Duncan Wood, the director of the Mexico Institute at the Wilson Center, which promotes relations between the United States and Mexico through research. "The immediate reaction I got from board members is that this is the moment for us to actually engage."

For some, though, Mexico's own problems loomed larger than a Trump presidency.

"The problems that we have generated here, in Mexico, ourselves are far more worrisome and immediate," said Juan de la Vega, 42, a lawyer who has a brother living illegally in San Francisco. "Those are the ones I worry about the most because they affect my life directly, like the stagnant economy, corruption and insecurity."

"In the grand scale of things, we as Mexicans know how to accept, assume and transcend this Trump thing," he added.

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

LAPD Will Not Help Deport Immigrants Under Trump, Chief Says

By Kate Mather

Los Angeles Times, November 14, 2016

Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck said Monday that he has no plans to change the LAPD's stance on immigration enforcement, despite President-elect Donald Trump's pledge to toughen federal immigration laws and deport millions of people upon taking office.

For decades, the LAPD has distanced itself from federal immigration policies. The LAPD prohibits officers from initiating contact with someone solely to determine whether they are in the country legally, mandated by a special order signed by then-chief Daryl Gates in 1979. During Beck's tenure as chief, the department stopped turning over people arrested for low-level crimes to federal agents for deportation and moved away from honoring federal requests to detain inmates who might be deportable past their jail terms.

On Monday, Beck said he planned to maintain the long-standing separation.

"I don't intend on doing anything different," he said. "We are not going to engage in law enforcement activities solely based on somebody's immigration status. We are not going to work in conjunction with Homeland Security on deportation efforts. That is not our job, nor will I make it our job."

Fear among immigrants and their families has rippled across the country in the days following Trump's election to the presidency. Trump made illegal immigration a central issue of his campaign, vowing to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, deport people who are in the country illegally and unwind immigration relief created under President Obama.

In Los Angeles, officials have tried to alleviate some of those concerns by signaling their support for the city's immigrant residents. At a meeting Friday at the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, Mayor Eric Garcetti said the city would question Trump's decisions on immigration.

"If the first day, as president, we see something that is hostile to our people, hostile to our city, bad for our economy, bad for our security, we will speak up, speak out, act up and act out," Garcetti said.

The mayor also said that the LAPD would continue to enforce Special Order 40, the Gates-signed directive that bars officers from contacting someone solely to determine their immigration status.

"Our law enforcement officers and LAPD don't go around asking people for their papers, nor should they," he said. "That's not the role of local law enforcement."

Beck said his command staff has also been meeting with community leaders to hear their concerns about immigration enforcement.

"This is the same LAPD you had Monday, a week ago. We have not changed because of the election on Tuesday. We have the same principles. We have the same values," he said. "This is not going to change the way that the Los Angeles Police Department enforces the law."

Chief Says No Immigration Role For LA Police Under Trump

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Los Angeles police chief Charlie Beck says President-elect Donald Trump's vows to deport millions after taking office will not affect his department's longstanding policy of staying out of immigration issues.

Beck told the Los Angeles Times (http://lat.ms/2fOsjih0 on Monday that his officers are "not going to engage in law enforcement activities solely based on somebody's immigration status."

Beck says it is not the LAPD's job to work in conjunction on deportation with Homeland Security, and that's not going to change.

It has been department policy for decades not to initiate contact with someone solely to determine whether they are in the country legally.

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Immigration Issue Provides Emanuel With Chance To Stand Up To Trump

Chicago Tribune, November 14, 2016

Mayor Rahm Emanuel on Monday promised to protect immigrants from deportation, even as president-elect Donald Trump has pledged to remove as many as three million immigrants who have criminal records and are living in the country illegally.

For more than three decades, Chicago has been a sanctuary city, where local laws prohibit government workers and police officers from asking about residents' immigration status. The mayor said that tradition would continue.

"To all those who are, after Tuesday's election, very nervous and filled with anxiety as we've spoken to, you are safe in Chicago, you are secure in Chicago and you are supported in Chicago," Emanuel said. "Chicago will always be a sanctuary city."

That vow is running headlong into Trump, who campaigned on blocking federal funding to sanctuary cities, ramping up deportations, increasing prison sentences for those who re-enter and building a wall along the Mexican border.

But the rise of Trump and the nation's rapidly changing political landscape provides a mayor who's been trying to rebuild his image with a political opportunity in a city full of immigrants and diverse neighborhoods.

Emanuel, after all, is the guy who famously offered up the credo "never let a serious crisis go to waste" as he prepared to push then-president-elect Barack Obama's Great Recession economic agenda in 2008. In this case, Trump's inflammatory rhetoric toward Mexicans and his immigration policies give Emanuel a political rallying point among Latinos after the mayor's popularity dropped sharply following the Laquan McDonald police shooting controversy.

Many Latinos, however, still look at Emanuel with a wary eye on immigration, given his relatively late religion on the issue. In the Obama White House, Emanuel advised against pursuing immigration reform in year one, having once called it the "third rail of politics." In the Clinton White House, Emanuel suggested hard-line immigration policies to achieve "record deportations of criminal aliens."

Twenty years later, Trump has talked about the same target Emanuel backed for Clinton — deporting undocumented immigrants with criminal records.

"What we are going to do is get the people that are criminal and have criminal records, gang members, drug dealers, where a lot of these people, probably 2 million, it could be even 3 million, we are getting them out of our country or we are going to incarcerate," Trump told "60 Minutes" in an interview that aired Sunday night. "But we're getting them out of our country. They're here illegally."

Latinos, immigrants worry about future under Trump presidency

For his part, Emanuel has not spoken to any of these specific policy proposals from Trump — and the mayor has not said he'd protect immigrants with criminal records who are here illegally. Instead, Emanuel has struck a more general tone of sympathizing with immigrants who remain fearful of a Trump presidency.

"Now, administrations may change, but our values and principals as it relates to inclusion does not," Emanuel said at a Monday event with immigrants' rights advocates to discuss expanding mental health services for those worried Trump will deport them or their families. "People from all faiths, all backgrounds and all parts of the world have beaten their path to the city of Chicago because Chicago offers them and, more importantly, as the son and the grandson of an immigrant, their children and grandchildren, a chance at the American dream."

Trump proposals

In his "Contract with the American Voter" prior to his election, Trump said he would take three actions on immigration during his first day in office: Cancel all federal funding to sanctuary cities, start deporting more than 2 million "criminal illegal immigrants" and suspend immigration from "terror-prone regions where vetting cannot safely occur."

During his first 100 days in office, Trump has said he will introduce legislation to build a wall on the country's southern border with Mexico, enact a minimum two-year mandatory federal prison sentence for those who re-enter the country after being deported and increase penalties for overstaying a visa.

It's unclear how many of those priorities Trump will push hard for, and how many turn out to be little more than campaign rhetoric or ideas he decides not to pursue while spending his post-victory political capital elsewhere.

Cutting off all federal funding to sanctuary cities would require action by a Republican-controlled Congress and, if passed, could cost Chicago significantly. This year, the city is receiving a little more than $1 billion in federal grant funding for myriad programs, including early childhood education, transportation, policing, health initiatives, public assistance programs and disaster management. Next year, the city is counting on more than $1.3 billion from the federal government.

The Justice Department released a report in May saying the city could stand to lose nearly $29 million in annual justice grants if found to be in violation of federal laws on detaining people to be turned over to immigration agents for possible deportation.

Democratic U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley of Chicago said he worries about Trump's threat to turn off that federal spigot, but said he thinks the new president ultimately will soft pedal that while seeking congressional backing for other initiatives.

"In the final analysis, though, I think if the president wants to do what he talks about, for example with a big infrastructure package, he's going to need support across the aisle," Quigley said on WLS-AM 890's "Connected to Chicago" show that aired Sunday. "And if he says none for Chicago, he's not going to get any support from anybody in Chicago, frankly in the Chicagoland area."

Emanuel has said he's not worried about a Trump administration penalizing Chicago for its political resistance to the Republican's policies, but the mayor's immigration remarks will put him at odds with a new White House where he already will find his clout immeasurably diminished after eight years of nearly unfettered access to the Obama administration.

Emanuel has supported Obama's immigration polices, including the president's 2014 executive order. That policy, which the Supreme Court blocked in June with a 4-4 tie, would have allowed as many as five million immigrants here without legal permission to apply for a program that would protect them from deportation and offer them work permits.

The mayor also has pledged to stand up for so-called "Dreamers," those who benefited from Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals that offered legal protection to around 742,000 people who were brought to the U.S. as children and stayed here illegally. Trump said during the campaign he would rescind that executive order that created DACA.

On Monday, DACA beneficiary Luis Gomez, who came to Chicago from Mexico as an 11 year old and is now studying at the Illinois Institute of Technology, said he worries about his ability to continue his studies and get a job if Trump follows through on that threat. And in an illustration of the difficulties anti-Trump forces face in building a unified front in the wake of Democrat Hillary Clinton's failed presidential bid, Gomez scolded both Emanuel and U.S. Rep. Gutierrez, D-Chicago.

"Rep. Gutierrez, if unity is to be achieved, you need to stop categorizing and separating the undocumented community between deportables and Dreamers. I demand that you stand behind all immigrants, not just immigrants without a criminal record," Gomez said as Emanuel and Gutierrez stood directly behind him. "Mayor Emanuel, the welcoming city ordinance only protects immigrants without criminal records. I demand you extend protection in the city ordinance to those who belong to my community with a record."

Emanuel has not promised to protect immigrants with criminal records who are living in the U.S. without legal permission. And Gutierrez said such people should be deported.

Years ago, Gutierrez blamed Emanuel for Obama not taking up immigration reform early in his first term. During Emanuel's first run for mayor, Gutierrez recorded automated phone calls against him and appeared in Spanish-language TV ads to proclaim, "When Rahm Emanuel could have used his power to help us, he turned his back to us and our most vulnerable families."

Since then, Gutierrez has buried the hatchet with Emanuel, as the mayor has shared the congressman's position on immigration issues. Emanuel also has enjoyed widespread support from the City Council's Latino aldermen.

Sanctuary policies

Emanuel's public statements reaffirming Chicago's sanctuary city status come as the mayors of New York, Los Angeles, Seattle, Philadelphia, Minneapolis and other major cities also have done so since Trump's election.

The morning after Trump's victory, Emanuel took the rare step of giving a speech at the start of the City Council meeting. The mayor argued the multicultural slate of politicians who won in Illinois on Tuesday shows the strength of the immigrant ideals he said give the area its vitality.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Emanuel said he understands how Trump's win has heightened the anxiety of immigrants who are living in the country without permission and pledged to fight forcefully for immigrants' rights in light of the anti-immigrant rhetoric Trump used throughout his campaign.

On Sunday, Emanuel issued a statement urging immigrants concerned about their rights to call the city's 311 center to get information about legal resources and other programs at their disposal.

Chicago's status as a sanctuary city stretches back to 1985, when Mayor Harold Washington issued an executive order prohibiting city agencies from inquiring about immigration status when providing services. That included police not asking crime victims or witnesses about their immigration status.

Emanuel went a step further in 2012, sponsoring a City Council-approved ordinance that said Chicago police could turn over information to federal immigration agents on immigrants only if they are wanted on a criminal warrant or have been convicted of a serious crime. This year, the City Council approved an Emanuel-endorsed ordinance to provide municipal ID cards to immigrants who are in the country without permission.

The Chicago law prohibits police from providing U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement officials access to people who are in the Police Department's custody, unless officers are "acting pursuant to a legitimate law enforcement purpose that is unrelated to the enforcement of a civil immigration law." In practice, that means police aren't supposed to turn over immigrants living in the U.S. without permission unless they are wanted on a criminal warrant or have serious criminal convictions.

Chicago's law also prohibits officers from allowing ICE agents to use their facilities for interviews or investigation. And it bars on-duty officers from responding to ICE inquiries or talking to ICE officials about a person's custody status or release date.

Emanuel, Gutierrez Seek To Reassure Immigrants Fearful Of Trump

By Fran Spielman And Lynn Sweet

Chicago Sun-Times, November 14, 2016

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez tried Monday to reassure students living in fear, driven to despair and contemplating suicide since the election of Donald Trump as president that Chicago will remain a "sanctuary city" that protects illegal immigrants.

Meanwhile, in Washington, President Barack Obama told reporters he's urging Trump not to revoke an executive order that gives protections to "Dreamers," immigrant youths living in the U.S. illegally through no fault of their own.

Trump has said he wants to rescind all of Obama's executive orders, including Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, DACA, which allows some 725,000 Dreamers to remain in the country.

"I mean, these are kids who were brought here by their parents," Obama said at a press conference. "They did nothing wrong. They have gone to school. They have pledged allegiance to the flag. Some of them joined the military. . . . By definition, if they are part of this program, they are solid, wonderful young people of good character.

"And it is my strong belief that the majority of the American people would not want to see suddenly those kids (to) have to start hiding again. And that's something that I will encourage the president-elect to look at."

Trump's hard-line stance on immigration is prompting a "public health crisis," according to Patrick Magoon, CEO of the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago. Emanuel and Gutierrez joined him there to spotlight a 200 percent spike in calls to mental-health hotlines across the state and a 250 percent increase nationwide blamed on anxiety sparked by Trump's election over Democrat Hillary Clinton.

If Trump dares to revoke Obama's DACA executive order, Gutierrez said he will consider it a "declaration of war." He pledged to not allow immigration reform to go forward "on the backs of" Dreamers.

"Before they come for you, they will have to come for us," Gutierrez said at the hospital. "Before they deprive you of your liberty and your freedom to express yourself and live fully in this country, they will have to deny us our freedom and our liberty to express ourselves."

Brown: Young immigrant Dreamers fear Trump will be a nightmare

The congressman then addressed the students so fearful that they or their parents will be deported, they are literally contemplating suicide and flooding suicide hotlines.

U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez vowed on Monday to fight efforts to deport "Dreamers" – immigrants protected under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. | Santiago Covarrubias/Sun-Times

"Do not despair. Do not leave us. Do not take an irrevocable action that none of us can then change," he said.

Emanuel then took to the podium to reassure immigrants that Chicago will not cower in the face of Trump's first 100 days threat to cut off federal funding to sanctuary cities where illegal immigrants can live without fear of police harassment.

"Chicago has in the past been a sanctuary city," the mayor said. The City Council "took (Obama's) executive order and made it an ordinance to be clear about what Chicago is. It always will be a sanctuary city.

"To all those who are, after Tuesday's election very nervous, filled with anxiety — you are safe in Chicago. You

are secure in Chicago. And you are supported in Chicago. Administrations may change. But our values and principles as it relates to inclusion [do] not."

The reassurances were not enough to satisfy Luis Gomez, an Illinois Institute of Technology senior who also spoke at Monday's news conference.

He used his time at the lectern to call out Emanuel and Gutierrez for not going far enough.

IIT student Luis Gomez said efforts by local officials don't go far enough to support to immigrants and sanctuary cities. | Santiago Covarrubias/Sun-Times

"Rep. Gutierrez, if unity is to be achieved, you need to stop categorizing and separating the undocumented community between deplorable and Dreamers. I demand that you stand for all immigrants — and not just immigrants without criminal records," Gomez said.

"Mayor Emanuel, the welcoming city ordinance only protects immigrants without criminal records. I demand that you expand protection in the city ordinance to those who belong to my community with a record."

Gomez also urged Gov. Bruce Rauner to "reject your party's destructive" politics and sign bills declaring Illinois a sanctuary state and allowing undocumented immigrant students to apply for scholarships to state universities.

Emanuel hustled out of the news conference without commenting on the Gomez broadside.

Gutierrez stood his ground against the surprise attack from the IIT senior.

"If you're in this country and you're a criminal — if you're a drug dealer, if you're a murderer — then you should be deported from the United States of America. I've been absolutely clear about that," Gutierrez said.

In an interview with "60 Minutes" that aired Sunday, Trump said he would begin by immediately deporting as many as three million undocumented immigrants with criminal records, then make a decision about the "terrific people" who fill the rest.

Chicago Reaffirms Immigrant 'Sanctuary' Status After Trump's Win

Reuters, November 14, 2016

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

'Chicago Always Will Be A Sanctuary City' : The Two-Way : NPR

NPR, November 14, 2016

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel added his voice to the chorus of big-city mayors who say theirs will remain "sanctuary cities" in response to President-elect Donald Trump's hard-line positions on illegal immigration.

Surrounded by immigration activists, business leaders and state and federal lawmakers, Emanuel sought to reduce the fear of immigrants living in this country without authorization.

"To all those who are, after Tuesday's election, very nervous and filled with anxiety ... you are safe in Chicago, you are secure in Chicago and you are supported in Chicago," said Emanuel at a news conference called to publicize the expansion of mental health services for people anxious over the election results.

"Chicago has in the past been a sanctuary city. ... It always will be a sanctuary city," the mayor said.

His comments come on the heels of Trump's appearance Sunday on CBS's 60 Minutes, in which the president-elect promised to deport all immigrants with criminal records.

"What we are going to do is get the people that are criminal and have criminal records, gang members, drug dealers, where a lot of these people, probably 2 million, it could be even 3 million, we are getting them out of our country or we are going to incarcerate," said Trump.

Trump did not mention sanctuary cities — jurisdictions that have policies of not cooperating with federal immigration authorities. But his "First 100 Days" plan includes cutting off all federal funding to sanctuary cities.

Emanuel joins the mayors of New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Philadelphia and others who all have said their sanctuary city policies will remain in place despite the threat of losing federal assistance. About 300 cities and counties across the country have such a policy. The loss of federal funding could be staggering. In the case of San Francisco, for example, city officials say they receive about $1 billion from Washington.

City leaders and local police in many jurisdictions say that immigrants are more likely to cooperate with police when they don't feel the threat of deportation if they report a crime.

Chicago's History As A Sanctuary City Started In 1985

Chicago Sun-Times, November 14, 2016

Chicago's days as a "sanctuary city" where undocumented people can access city services and live without fear of police harassment date back more than 30 years.

In 1985, then-Mayor Harold Washington issued an executive order prohibiting city employees from enforcing federal immigration laws. He made the move to protest the federal government's decision to question people seeking city services and conduct random searches of city records in an effort to find undocumented immigrants.

Four years later, then-Mayor Richard M. Daley affirmed the executive order. In 2006, the City Council turned the order into law as the immigration debate raged on in Congress.

It prohibited city agencies from asking about the immigration status of people seeking city services. The ordinance also prohibited Chicago Police from questioning the immigration status of crime victims, witnesses or other law-abiding citizens.

Despite that city policy, there remained a legal loophole.

When Chicago Police made a stop, ran a criminal background check and found a deportation order, there was no specific standard on what they should do amid mounting pressure from the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency to turn them over.

Mayor Harold Washington first made Chicago a "sanctuary city" in 1985. | Sun-Times file photo

As a result, a 54-year-old mother from Cameroon stopped after failing to signal a turn was detained for two nights in 2012 after police found a deportation order on her record.

The case of Rose Tchakounte — who was turned over to ICE, but never deported — became a cause célèbre for the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights.

In response, Mayor Rahm Emanuel and U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez, D-Ill., united behind a so-called "Welcoming City" ordinance that prohibits police from detaining undocumented immigrants unless they are wanted on a criminal warrant or have been convicted of a serious crime.

"If somebody has a criminal background, I want 'em in jail or out of the city. If you're an immigrant and you have no criminal background, I don't want that to be prohibitive from you contacting the police," Emanuel said then.

"If you see a crime, report it. If you're a victim, report it. The Police Department is not there as an adjunct of the Immigration Service. If you have a criminal record, that's different. If you're a good citizen, immigration status is not a pause button for you to call the Police Department. . . . I can't be advocating for the community to work with the Police Department if people are [so] worried about their immigration status that they don't report a crime."

Gutierrez said then that Emanuel's ordinance should not be confused with "cuddling up to criminals." In fact, he argued that lifting the veil of fear that has made illegal immigrants suspicious of police would make it tougher on the gangs that were at the time fueling a 38 percent spike in Chicago homicides.

"Chicago Police have guns and cars and badges and radios, but without the eyes and the ears of the community, they would be lost," Gutierrez said then.

"This ordinance protects everyone because it allows anyone who witnesses a crime, who knows about criminal activity and anyone who wants to make our city safer to come forward and share that information with police. And if there was ever a time, this is the time to have everyone … participating in fighting crime."

From a political standpoint, the 2012 news conference was an opportunity for Emanuel to make amends with Gutierrez.

During Emanuel's days as Barack Obama's chief of staff, Gutierrez accused Emanuel of standing in the way of immigration reform and being singularly responsible for Obama's failure to deliver on his campaign promise to Hispanics.

Gutierrez retaliated by endorsing mayoral candidate Gery Chico over Emanuel in the 2011 race for mayor.

When the two men united over the revised ordinance, all was forgiven.

"He's not chief of staff and he's not standing in the way. Those are pretty clear differences," Gutierrez said then.

"I have made a priority the reform of our immigration system. If the mayor of Chicago is going to work toward making Chicago a model city in respect to its treatment of immigrants, then I'm gonna stand with that mayor. The thing that separated us … was immigration during the campaign. The things that's uniting us after his election is immigration policy."

Emanuel added: "Luis and I were friends in Congress, remained friends during the campaign. He made his decision [to endorse Chico] and, the moment the campaign was over, he called me and said, 'Let's work together in the interest of the city' and I said, 'You're on.'"

Last year, the City Council accused Gov. Bruce Rauner of overstepping his legal authority by trying to temporarily block the flow of Syrian refugees into Illinois in the wake of the terrorist attacks in Paris.

After an emotional debate that harkened back to America's darkest, most intolerant days, aldermen also unanimously approved a resolution reaffirming Chicago's status as a "sanctuary city."

Emanuel's 2017 budget includes $1 million to create a municipal ID that will help undocumented immigrants to access city services. The so-called "Star Scholarship" to City Colleges already is open to undocumented immigrants. So are after-school and summer jobs programs.

State's 'sanctuary Cities' Risk Losing Federal Funds Under Trump

By Maria Sacchetti And Meghan E. Irons

Boston Globe, November 15, 2016

President-elect Donald Trump has said that on his first day in office he will halt all federal funding to sanctuary cities such as Somerville, Chelsea, and Boston, potentially costing the cities millions in aid. But officials in those cities have said they won't change course in the face of the threat.

Somerville Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone said the city risks losing $6 million in federal funding because, as a "sanctuary city" officials have vowed to welcome all immigrants, regardless of their legal status. The mayor also issued an executive order called the "Trust Act" which shields immigrants with minor or no criminal records from possible deportation.

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He urged Trump to reconsider his threats and said Somerville would maintain its principles at any cost. The federal funds are roughly 3 percent of the city's budget.

"We are not going to stand voiceless and in silence and let a Gestapo-like atmosphere be cultivated in this nation and come to our communities and break families apart," he said. "That will not be tolerated."

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Curtatone also tweeted a public statement to his constituents: "Somerville will stand by you."

Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh said he also would support all residents, regardless of their immigration status. Boston, where the City Council passed a Trust Act in 2014 that was signed into law by Walsh, receives over $250 million in federal funding. Walsh said if Trump withholds those funds it would be "disastrous," but vowed to fight anyway.

"We will push back," Walsh said. "I'll go to Congress. I'll go to the Senate. I'll go to the president and tell him the disruption he's going to cause to the country," Walsh said.

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Councilor Josh Zakim, who sponsored the Trust Act, acknowledged that neither the council nor the mayor have the power to stop the federal government from imposing its will and cracking down on undocumented immigrants.

"But what we can do is [reinforce] that the city government resources are not going to be used to vilify a certain population based on election results,'' he said. "That's not who we are as Bostonians."

Steve Annear of the Globe staff contributed to this report. Maria Sacchetti can be reached at maria.sacchetti@globe.com. Follow her on Twitter @mariasacchetti.

Local Cops Put Good Relations Over Roundups

Boston Herald, November 15, 2016

Massachusetts cops say they are more interested in good relations with their immigrant communities than deportations, with some agencies saying they'll flatly refuse to cooperate with any "mass roundup" under President-elect Donald Trump.

Trump in a "60 Minutes" interview Sunday pledged to act fast on his immigration agenda and said he could deport up to 3 million "criminal" illegal aliens beginning when he takes office.

Police in Boston, Chelsea, Cambridge and Lawrence, as well as state police, all agencies that deal with large populations of immigrants, told the Herald yesterday their officers have worked hard establishing trust and enforcing immigration law is a federal problem. Several of the agencies said they do act on federal detention warrants, however.

"We wouldn't be part of any effort of any kind of mass roundup," said Lawrence Police Chief Jim Fitzpatrick. He said of immigrants in Lawrence, "We encourage them to not feel that their police department in any way shape or form is not there for them in times of crisis."

Chelsea Police Chief Brian Kyes posted a letter to his community on the department's Facebook page on Friday that stated "civil immigration laws are the primary responsibility of the federal government ... This will not change as the result of the Presidential Election."

Kyes told the Herald yesterday, "I wouldn't want people to be fearful of our local police. If they're fearful, they won't cooperate. They won't report if they're victims of crimes or witnesses to crimes."

Cambridge police spokesman Jeremy Warnick said cops at times work with federal immigration officials to execute warrants, and shares fingerprints with Immigration and Custom Enforcement. However, he said, "We're not conducting immigration-related investigations. ... It's not something we do."

Boston police spokesman Lt. Michael McCarthy said in a statement the department "works tirelessly at building strong relationships and trust in every community in the city ... The BPD has no immediate plans to change our way of policing this city."

Mayor Martin J. Walsh said there are no plans to turn Boston into a sanctuary city, however. The mayor's office said Boston police will hold illegal aliens when there is an ICE warrant, and the city has no plans to change that practice.

State police said they now can contact Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel if troopers come into contact with illegal aliens during the enforcement of state criminal laws. When asked directly if they would partake in any mass roundup program if asked by the Trump administration, a state police spokesman said: "Investigating violations of federal immigration law is not a mission of the Massachusetts State Police."

Defiant San Francisco Vows To Remain Sanctuary City

By Janie Har

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A large crowd cheered Monday as San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee vowed that the city will remain a sanctuary for immigrants, gays and lesbians and religious minorities despite the election of a president who strikes fear into many of those communities.

President-elect Donald Trump has promised to cancel federal funding for sanctuary cities such as San Francisco that decline to cooperate with federal immigration authorities. He also said he plans to deport millions of criminals who are living in the country illegally.

"We will always be San Francisco," said Lee from the Rotunda of City Hall as dozens of people roared with approval at an event that featured the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus and a host of public elected officials.

"I know that there are a lot of people who are angry and frustrated and fearful, but our city's never been about that. We have been, and always have been, a city of refuge, a city of sanctuary, a city of love."

San Francisco receives roughly $480 million directly from the federal government and more than $900 million from the state, much of it pass-through federal money, city Controller Ben Rosenfield said.

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Mayor: Newark Won't Change Its Policies Regarding Immigrants

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — The Democratic mayor said on Monday the election of Republican Donald Trump as president won't change the way his city, the largest in the state, treats residents who are living in the country illegally.

Newark Mayor Ras Baraka said the city, which has about 280,000 residents, plans to continue its policy of arresting only those who engage in criminal activities.

"Newark already has a policy of protecting undocumented immigrants from deportation by U.S. immigration authorities," Baraka said in a statement. "Despite the election of Donald Trump, we see no reason to change that policy."

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Brown University Alumni, Faculty Call For 'Sanctuary' From Trump Deportations

Newsweek, November 14, 2016

Brown University faculty and alumni are calling on school leaders to make the campus a "sanctuary" for people who could face deportation under the policies of President-elect Donald Trump. Community members at the Ivy League school in Providence, Rhode Island, are among those at colleges and universities across the country taking action following Trump's election.

"We have reason to believe that Providence Police officers cannot enter the campus without permission of the University," says the faculty letter, which employees sent to administration officials on Friday; it was published online in the student newspaper Monday. "Given that many students, staff members and their families are directly affected by this issue, we urge the University to immediately work to develop a protocol for the University serving as a sanctuary campus." The letter includes 168 faculty member names.

Brown alumni are planning to issue a similar letter on Monday. That version, which unlike the faculty one will mention Trump, has more than 2,400 signatures, according to Maria Camila Bustos, one of the organizers and a recent Brown alumna.

"Many of us felt that because we're not on campus, we cannot demonstrate. But because we're alums, we have a voice," says Bustos. She says alumni began circulating a draft of the letter late on November 9 or early the next day after learning that faculty members were planning their own effort. "It went explosive, I think, through Facebook, through Twitter," Bustos says.

A draft of the alumni letter begins, "In the wake of the presidential election, we, the undersigned Brown alumni, strongly urge you to take immediate steps to make Brown University a sanctuary campus for students, staff, and their family members who face deportation under President-elect Donald J. Trump's proposed policies."

The alumni letter continues, "Trump's presidency puts the undocumented members of our community at unprecedented risk. The threat to students and workers requires a concrete and tangible response from the University; words and symbolic gestures would not suffice." Alumni from class years as far back as 1966 have signed the letter.

For us, it's not just a normal election where you have a right-wing candidate," Bustos says. "You're electing someone who knowingly said horrible things about minorities and marginalized groups…. To us, it's a really scary moment in our democracy."

In an email, Brown University Vice President for Communications Cass Cliatt said, "Based on consultation with legal counsel, we understand that private universities and colleges do not have legal protection from entry by members of law enforcement or Immigration and Customs Enforcement."

Cliatt added, "Brown is very serious in its commitment to supporting undocumented members of our community, and we continue to provide them with as much information as we can make available regarding the law and potential outcomes if policies change under the new administration."

Students, faculty, staff and alumni at Harvard drafted a similar letter to administrators last week. "What does the election of Donald J. Trump mean to the undocumented students currently enrolled at Harvard?" the draft said. "We urgently demand that you directly support our undocumented students at the College and in graduate programs."

The letter outlined a list of demands, including hiring a dean and assistant dean of equity, diversity and inclusion; creating a resource center for students without documentation; establishing a budget for helping those students; hiring a mental health professional who specializes in helping people facing immigration and deportation matters; and making an on-campus church a sanctuary "for students facing deportation proceedings."

As the Brown letters note, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement issued a 2011 memo stating that immigration arrests, interviews, searches and surveillance should not occur at "sensitive locations such as schools and churches...unless (a) exigent circumstances exist, (b) other law enforcement actions have led officers to a sensitive location...or (c) prior approval is obtained." Elsewhere on the ICE website, the agency says that "enforcement actions at or focused on sensitive locations such as schools, places of worship, and hospitals should generally be avoided."

In a post-election interview on 60 Minutes, which aired Sunday, Trump said he planned to first secure the U.S. border and deport immigrants without documentation who had committed crimes. That could number 2 million or 3 million people, he said. He added that he would later "make a determination" about noncriminal violators of immigration law.

Under President Barack Obama, as of fiscal year 2015, ICE had "removed" nearly 3 million people, according to agency data. About half of those people were noncriminal violators of immigration law.

Following the election, young people in the U.S. are especially concerned about the future of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which grants a two-year work status and exemption from deportation to people who immigrated to the U.S. before they turned 16 and were under 31 as of June 15, 2012. After two years, people with that status can apply to renew it. Obama started that program as an executive action in 2012, and Trump has indicated he might try to overturn it. As of January 2016, 820,000 immigrants with this status had received deferment.

Students at colleges and universities have been protesting since the election. Others have focused on healing. The University of Michigan Law School hosted what it called a "post-election self-care" event, which involved "activities such as coloring sheets, Play-Doh, positive card-making, Legos and bubbles," according to a since-deleted event page.

"The Law School has provided a wide range of resources for students following the election, primarily academic events responding to our students' request for faculty guidance and engagement about what this election means for the legal landscape generally, for their professional futures, and for the future of the country," Michelle Rodgers, a spokeswoman for the law school, said by email. "The event last Friday, in which a small number of students participated, was organized by another campus unit, the Counseling and Psychological Services office, and functioned as an opportunity to de-stress during lunch."

A "cry-in" reportedly took place at Cornell University, and at Tufts University, students reportedly coped with the election outcome by doing arts and crafts. At Yale, an economics faculty member apparently made an exam optional after hearing "from students who are in shock over the election returns."

Not all faculty members are taking such actions. "In the spirit of dealing with the wounds of those feeling grief and unbearable angst over the election, Kim [Kardashian]'s tragic Paris robbery, the heart-wrenching Brangelina break-up or other similar tragedy, I would like to do my part," Texas Tech University Professor Terry McInturff wrote in handout to students last Thursday. "While I can't offer 'arts and crafts' or a 'therapy dog,' the Energy Commence Department has arranged for free hugs from our therapy boa constrictor."

McInturff added, "In class, I don't care what you feel. Outside of class, I might. But I care what you think."

One Iowa lawmaker told the press on November 11 that he planned to investigate how much taxpayer money schools were spending on "cry zones and for all these different safe zones [where] you can talk about your feelings" about the election. He said he planned to propose a "Suck It Up, Buttercup" bill, which would multiply that fiscal amount by three and withhold it from future school budgets.

Ivy League Students, Faculty Demand Campuses Become Sanctuaries For Students In Country Illegally

Fox News, November 14, 2016

Students and faculty at three Ivy League schools — Brown, Yale and Harvard — have launched efforts calling on their campuses to become sanctuaries for students in the country illegally.

At Harvard, 4,000 people signed a petition calling on Harvard administrators to protect the school's "undocumented students," the Harvard Crimson reported Monday.

"The petition calls for immediate action, citing Harvard's commitment to diversity and Trump's threats to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which confers legal presence, a Social Security number, and a work permit to many of Harvard's undocumented students," the Crimson reports.

Asking for action, and not pity, several students commented that they will continue protesting until their demands are met.

How Philly Can 'Morally Secede' From Trump's America

Philly (PA), November 14, 2016

As I write this, thousands of high school kids from Maryland to Southern California to Seattle are walking out of their classrooms to protest the election of Donald Trump and the values that Trump stands for. Add their names to the honor roll of millions who are determined not only to be heard but to somehow fight back for a forward-looking and inclusive America.

But how?

The notion of resistance is at odds with hard reality. Write your local member of Congress to complain? The wheels of the U.S. Capitol have already been greased to pass all of Trump's legislative agenda, thanks to a GOP majority in the Senate and an even bigger advantage in the House.

Lean on your state's Democratic senator to thwart Trump's agenda with the exact same tool that the GOP used to deny President Obama for most of the last eight years. the filibuster? Sorry – the cowed, feckless Dems are already looking to play nice with the short-fingered-vulgarian-in-chief in a probably fruitless bid to save their rear ends in 2018.

File a lawsuit? Maybe, but Trump and his Senate majority are sure to confirm a slew of new right-wing judges, including a Supreme Court majority that will be defending the right of corporate personhood decades from now, long after my own personhood is six feet under.

No, the voices of resistance that ring the loudest – because they come with a set of teeth – are echoing far away from I-495, the Capital Beltway. In California, the state's two top legislative leaders issued a statement hailing the fact that Trump overwhelmingly lost in the nation's largest state and vowing to defend what the state has accomplished in everything from its cultural diversity to landmark laws on climate change. They wrote:

While Donald Trump may have won the presidency, he hasn't changed our values. America is greater than any one man or party. We will not be dragged back into the past. We will lead the resistance to any effort that would shred our social fabric or our Constitution.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (who's never before been mentioned positively at Attytood, but I digress...) also stepped up to the plate on the rise of Trumpism:

"Whether you are gay or straight, Muslim or Christian, rich or poor, black or white or brown, we respect all people in the state of New York," Cuomo (D) wrote. "It's the very core of what we believe and who we are . . . We don't allow a federal government that attacks immigrants to do so in our state."

Of course, these strong statements aren't enough for some people. The day after the election, #Calexit – i.e., the secession of California from the Union – was trending on Twitter for a time. But actual secession might not be the best strategy, even for states where residents expect the very worst from the 45th president. Ask South Carolina how that strategy worked out when they tried it. But there's a broader point here. States and even municipalities do have tools to counteract parts of the Trump agenda that their own citizens rejected at the polls last week. In fact, with Republican control of all three branches of federal government, this may be the only serious way that a regressive agenda can fought for the next two, four or (gasp) eight years.

Call it "moral secession." And what better place to break away from Donald Trump's America than the Cradle of Liberty, Philadelphia.

In the coming weeks, our civic leaders ought to be working hand in hand with activists, philanthropy, and even sympathetic businessmen to find any means necessary to not only protect but expand our diversity, the social safety net and economic opportunity. This is the only serious counter to the policies Trump said he would enact as a candidate.

So far, City Hall has laid down a temporary marker on the most controversial and possibly the most immediate crisis of the Trump era: Philadelphia's status as a "Sanctuary City" that doesn't notify federal immigration officials when undocumented immigrants are in police custody for nonviolent crimes. City officials say that it promotes trust in neighborhoods with large immigrant populatiuons – but the program has become such a bete noire to conservative talk radio and GOP politicians that Philly now has rebranded itself a "4th Amendment City."

"We respect and live up to the Fourth Amendment, which means you can't be held against your will without a warrant from the court signed by a judge," Mayor Kenney said after Trump's election last week. "So, yeah, we will continue to be a Fourth Amendment city abiding by the Constitution."

But it's not clear what is Kenney's Plan B if Trump's Washington makes good on its threat to freeze millions of dollars in federal aid as our punishment for honoring the Bill of Rights. And the mayor – who lacked mercy in ridiculing Trump's lack of qualifications on Twitter before the election – is otherwise, for now, going the full Obama in making nice talk about finding common ground with his administration.

There's a better path. Yesterday, I reached out to at-large City Council member Helen Gym. Not only has Gym been a leading voice for progressive causes since her election last year, but she's also vice chair of a national group of urban leaders called Local Progress. For the last couple of years, this alliance has been working on solutions to some of the problems that seem most endangered by a Trump

presidency: Immigrant rights, income inequality, criminal justice reform, and workers' rights.

The freshman councilwoman pointed to cities that acted when Washington or our increasingly conservative statehouses would not: Seattle and other localities that are moving to a $15 minimum wage, or the mandatory paid sick leave that Philadelphia enacted last year. She noted that one of Local Progress' more recent efforts – a campaign against Islamophobia – has a new sense of urgency with the election of Trump, who had called for a ban on new Muslim arrivals in the United States.

Gym said she and other progressives are committed to "making sure that Philadelphia remains a moral place, where there's a level of resistance to policies that are out there but also, more importantly, thinking about what progressive politics are going to look like and that includes pushing ahead on pay equity, fair (worker) scheduling, investments in our public schools and the ways in which we do that."

What are some areas where cities like Philadelphia can buck the grim national trendline?

– Immigrant rights: In addition to the uncertain fight over saving Sanctuary City/4th Amendment programs, the city can step up its efforts to reach immigrant communities through programs offering greater access to city services. According to The Nation magazine, other innovative cities in the arena include New Haven (Municipal ID cards), New York (free legal counsel to immigrants) and Los Angeles (counseling to speed the citizenship process).

– Policing. With Trump elected on a "law-and-order" platform with the backing of most police unions, what better time for Philadelphia and cities like it to take the lead in the kind of efforts that are actually needed to improve police-community relations. Local activists have urged that Philadelphia use this time to better fund and strengthen the city's Police Advisory Commission and push for changes in upcoming contract negotiations to make it easier to discipline officers with records of brutality or other offenses.

– Economic justice. Although blocked by Harrisburg from raising its minimum wage across the board, Philadelphia has made progress in recent years mandating higher minimum and prevailing wages for city subcontractors, service workers and city franchise holders, and there is more work to be done to increase pay and offer more job protections.

– Health care. The may prove to be the most endangered key service in the city under a Trump administration; a sweeping repeal of Obamacare could reverse the last couple years of progress in providing health care to the previously uninsured. Mayor Kenney's push for community schools that would provide health care and other social services looms even larger than it did before November 8. But how can Philadelphia rapidly expand social services in an era where funds may be tight?

Gym and others would love to see philanthropy – which has retreated somewhat in Philadelphia in the last couple of years – bounce back to help meet the unique challenges of the new political environment. Elsewhere, activists are looking at grassroots ways to replace social services that may disappear – sort of in the spirit of the now legendary free-breakfast programs operated by the Black Panther Party in the late 1960s.

But in the short term, Philadelphia needs one more kind of moral leadership: Strong words. Citizens here need to be reassured that while the current doings in Washington are #NotNormal, Philadelphia will continue to find new ways to offer brotherly love and sisterly affection to the 1.5 million who live here. Let's be honest, this city may never be a utopia (not until Ben Simmons gets healthy, anyway), but the current crisis is also an opportunity – to morally secede from the kind of hate that we heard in the 2016 campaign, and work on a better world in the place where we can. Here at home.

U.S. Detention Facilities Struggle With New Migrant Surge

Central American families and unaccompanied children overwhelm nonprofit shelters too

By Miriam Jordan

Wall Street Journal, November 14, 2016

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

Their Dad Is Getting Deported. Now They Live In Fear.

By Nicholas Nehamas

Miami Herald, November 14, 2016

Leonardo Morales was about to drive his children to school one September morning when federal agents in bulletproof vests arrested him for violating a deportation order.

"They said that they wanted to talk to him and they tried to take him behind another car so we wouldn't see and they handcuffed him," said his daughter, Valeria, 16. "It was awful."

Her dad has been held at Krome detention center ever since.

The family's struggle is one that terrifies many of the 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States — especially after President-elect Donald Trump threatened mass deportations of undocumented immigrants he described as criminals in a nationally televised interview Sunday night.

Eleven years ago, Morales, his wife and their two children fled guerrilla war and drug gangs in Colombia, where they lived in a city called Palmira, in a region the local press once called the country's "violence capital."

They came to the United States on a tourist visa, applied for asylum and settled into a quiet and successful life in Kendall. A search of public records shows Morales, who works in construction, does not have a Florida criminal record. Valeria and her brother Juan — young children when they arrived — now speak perfect English. They're not as comfortable in Spanish.

Miami is their home. And they can't imagine a life without their dad by their side.

"We are a family of four," said Juan, 14. "We don't want to lose our father."

"[My husband] is a man with no criminal record, who has contributed much to the community," said Yaneth Mejías, Morales' wife. "We haven't hurt anyone."

We don't want to lose our father.

Juan David Morales, 14

A federal official familiar with the case confirmed Morales does not have a criminal record in the United States.

Mejías says their ordeal is the fault of a man who told them he was an attorney and mishandled their asylum application. Like many requests from those fleeing South America, their application was denied.

"Unfortunately, we arrived in this country without knowing anyone and we fell into the hands of one of the many who do not do their job with love," Mejías said.

The man, Fredy Barragan, is a former federal immigration officer who in 2002 was sentenced to 10 months in prison for conspiring to accept bribes from immigrants seeking admission into the United States. Barragan now runs a Hialeah-based business called F K Immigration Services. He told the Miami Herald that he clearly advertises the fact that he is not a lawyer.

While he doesn't remember the details of the Morales case, Barragan insisted, "There's no way I told them I was an attorney. I'd get in huge trouble for that. All the paperwork I give to clients says in big letters I'm not an attorney."

(The website for his business prominently states, "We are NOT attorneys...")

"If I messed up their paperwork or told them I was an attorney, they wouldn't deport him," Barragan said. "They would give them a chance to stay until I was dealt with."

He said the family was looking for a scapegoat.

260 Number of undocumented immigrants with no criminal record deported from the United States every day

Compared to other regions, relatively few people leaving South America receive asylum.

In fiscal year 2014, South Americans made up about 4 percent of the nearly 24,000 people granted asylum, according to statistics from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

More than half of successful applicants came from just four countries: China, Egypt, Syria and Ethiopia.

Morales' asylum request was turned down on Dec. 20, 2010. A judge ordered his deportation, the usual penalty for losing an asylum case. He appealed, but the Board of Immigration Appeals in Washington D.C. rejected the appeal and affirmed his deportation late the next year.

Many undocumented immigrants who haven't committed a crime are deported.

In fiscal year 2015, the United States deported more than 96,000 undocumented immigrants with no criminal record, or roughly 260 per day, according to federal figures. That was down from previous years after the Obama administration began prioritizing the arrest of undocumented felons. (During the same time period, the U.S. deported nearly 140,000 undocumented immigrants convicted of crimes.)

Over two terms, President Obama deported more than 2.5 million people, more than any other U.S. president.

Living in the United States in violation of immigration laws is not a crime under federal laws, unless the immigrant has previously been deported or removed.

Like the Morales family, nearly half of undocumented immigrants enter the country legally using tourism and business visas and then continue to live here after their visas expire, according to the Pew Hispanic Center.'We live in fear'

The Morales case is a reminder that undocumented families live in constant fear of being torn apart.

Juan and his mother could be detained at any moment.

"Every time before I leave the house, I look outside," he said. "There's no sense of safety. I don't know who to trust anymore. I don't know what will happen next."

One member of the family is safe — for now.

Valeria has taken advantage of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), an executive action signed by Obama in 2012 that provides work permits for undocumented immigrants who arrived in the United States before they turned 16 and meet other qualifications such as school enrollment, military service and clean criminal records. Valeria wants to go to college to study neonatology. Juan, who has applied to the same federal program, wants to be an immigration lawyer.

On Saturday afternoon, the two children and their mother joined about 40 friends, family members and immigration reform activists for a vigil outside Krome in West Miami-Dade County.

The protestors held signs that read "Libertad para mi papá," "We want to stay here," and "Stop deportation now." Big-rig trucks and cars passing by in this heavily Hispanic part of South Florida honked when they saw the gathering.

People are very scared of what [Trump] promised to do.

Claudia Saucedo, a member of the activist group Dreamers' Moms

Andrea Hernandez, an American citizen originally from Ecuador, was among those who attended the vigil. Her

husband, Carlos, is also being held in Krome. "We live in fear," she said.

Trump's election has scared many undocumented immigrants. On Sunday, he appeared on "60 Minutes" and said he will deport or jail up to 3 million undocumented immigrants allegedly engaged in criminal activity. He could also work to undo DACA.

"People are very scared of what he promised to do," said Claudia Saucedo, a member of the activist group Dreamers' Moms, which helped organize the vigil and has advocated for the passage of Congressional legislation called the DREAM Act that would provide a pathway to citizenship for the undocumented. "We prefer to believe that as a businessman he will think about how immigrants contribute to this country. We came here for a better life, for security, not to cause problems."

We Can Stop Trump's Deportation Force. Here's How.

Huffington Post, November 14, 2016

Trump's deportation force has already been built, and its name is ICE. ICE, or Immigration & Customs Enforcement, is the federal agency currently responsible for detaining and deporting immigrants. All Trump will need to do in order to act on his most extreme intentions is further fund the agency and recruit more officers. He already has supporters in people like David Duke of the KKK.

This weekend, House Speaker Paul Ryan said, "We are not planning on erecting a deportation force." But a few hours later President-elect Donald Trump contradicted Ryan, telling 60 Minutes, "[W]e are getting them out of our country or we are going to incarcerate them," referring to two or three million immigrants he labelled "criminal[s]," "gang members," and "drug dealers."

Trump has declared war on immigrants. He just appointed to his transition team the architect of Arizona's "show me your papers" law, which has been called the most racist (and not to mention, unconstitutional) U.S. law in modern times. In the first 100 days in office, Trump plans to construct a wall at the Southern Border, achieve border security "in whatever way is the most effective," cancel President Obama's executive actions that provided immigration relief to 800,000 young people, suspend immigration from certain regions of the world, and amass a deportation force to remove undocumented immigrants. This is not new information.

But make no mistake: this is the man that ICE's union endorsed, making it the first time ICE ever endorsed a candidate for President. Even before Trump has taken office, ICE has begun to do his bidding.

The U.S. government is detaining a record number of immigrants right now. About 41,000 asylum seekers, victims of human trafficking, and other immigrants with longstanding community ties are currently imprisoned in immigration detention facilities, up from about 31,000 just a few months ago. ICE is planning to expand, build or contract for at least an additional 10 detention facilities, including two private prisons that the Department of Justice (DOJ) severed ties with earlier this year.

ICE has increased the number of people in detention to provide the Homeland Security Advisory Council with an excuse not to follow in the footsteps of the DOJ and end all private immigration detention facilities. In August, the DOJ said it would end its use of private prisons, after the agency's investigation revealed private prisons to be unsafe.

This expansion is the first step in launching a Trumpian deportation force.

While we cannot forget that President Obama has detained and deported more people than any other president in history, Trump's intentions and plans are far darker.

We must take Trump seriously and assume that he will act on his most extreme rhetoric.

We must listen to the panic of our neighbors, and we must stand beside them. Many of us do not know the extent to which Trump will act on his bizarre rants; they seem too far removed from most people's realities to be taken seriously.

But every day, I speak to teenagers in immigration detention who have not spoken to their parents since ICE kidnapped them and locked them in a prison with no charges. I meet with mothers in detention whose U.S. citizen children were left alone when ICE raided their home and arrested them in front of their families. I fight for people like Chansa "Kapi" Kapijimpanga, a father of two U.S. citizen children and a small business owner in Huntington Beach, California. Kapi is one of the thousands of people that ICE arrested and detained since September to fuel the unnecessary expansion of our immigration detention system.

This Trumpian deportation force must be stopped. And it can be stopped.

President Obama's Homeland Security Advisory Council can start by recommending this month an end to all private immigration detention facilities nationwide. President Obama can stop the expansion of these 10 new detention facilities, and pardon people in detention to protect them from deportation.

The U.S. Supreme Court can uphold due process protections for people in immigration detention in Jennings v. Rodriguez, which will be heard later this month. Over the course of the coming years, Congress can choose to respond to migration humanely, replacing private prisons with meaningful community-based alternatives to detention that are less costly and do not rely on incarceration or electronic surveillance. States like California can pass legislation next year, such as the Dignity Not Detention Act, and fund community-based alternatives.

And all people of the United States — including Democrats and Republicans — can respond to Trump with an unprecedented wave of courage and opposition to shield people from detention and deportation.

You can begin by joining the movement to end immigration detention with CIVIC as a volunteer or donor. And you can tell Trump to keep his deportation force out of our communities.

CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

A Hot Souvenir From Cuba For Some Americans: Cancer Vaccine

By Sally H. Jacobs

New York Times, November 14, 2016

Zuby Malik is an unlikely candidate to violate international law. A 78-year-old mother of four with a crown of silver hair, she is a retired obstetrician-gynecologist with a penchant for order.

But Ms. Malik is fighting for her life. After receiving a Stage 4 non-small-cell lung cancer diagnosis a year ago, she exhausted many of the treatments available to her and grappled with torturous side effects that left her itching and gasping for breath. During the summer, she decided to go to Cuba and bring back a cancer vaccine that is not approved in the United States. That she comes from a family steeped in medical training made the decision all the more difficult.

"At first, I was a little nervous," said Ms. Malik, sitting in her Northern California living room flanked by an oxygen tank and a table of medicines. "But American treatments were not helping me, and I decided I should go to Cuba. What other choice did I have?"

Soon after she began the medication, she said, her breathing became easier and her energy returned. In her refrigerator was a box of blue- and orange-capped vials of the vaccine.

Other cancer patients are following the same unlikely trail. Since beginning to normalize relations with the United States in 2014, Cuba has become a hot tourist draw with its unspoiled beaches and vibrant night life. But the country also has a robust biotechnology industry that has generated an innovative vaccine called Cimavax. It is part of a new chapter of cancer treatment known as immunotherapy, which prompts the body's immune system to attack the disease.

Cimavax is a therapeutic vaccine developed not to prevent cancer, but to halt its growth and keep it from recurring in patients with non-small-cell lung cancer. Developed in Cuba and available to patients there since 2011, it works by targeting a protein called epidermal growth factor, or E.G.F., that enables lung cancer cells to grow. The vaccine stimulates the body's immune system to make antibodies that bind to E.G.F., preventing it from fueling the cancer's growth. It is also available in Peru, Paraguay, Colombia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Last month, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York announced that the Roswell Park Cancer Institute, a nonprofit cancer center designated by the National Cancer Institute in Buffalo, had received authorization from the Food and Drug Administration to conduct a clinical trial of Cimavax. It marks the first time since the Cuban revolution that Cuban and American institutions have been permitted to engage in such a joint venture, said Roswell Park's chief executive, Candace S. Johnson.

The trial could take years, but American cancer patients are not waiting. Over the past couple of years, dozens have slipped into Havana and smuggled vials of the vaccine in refrigerated lunchboxes back to the United States, sometimes not even telling their doctors. Talk about Cimavax on cancer patient networks online has been escalating steadily as relations between the two countries have warmed and more patients are making preparations to go.

"There's no doubt that without this medicine, I would be dead," said Mick Phillips, 69, of Appleton, Wis., who first went to Cuba in 2012 and has been returning annually ever since. "When we were children, we were taught that Cubans didn't know what they were doing. Turns out they do."

Despite experiences like Mr. Phillips's, trials in Cuba have shown only a modest benefit over all. In the most recent trial, patients receiving the vaccine after chemotherapy lived about three to five months longer than patients who did not receive it. The study, published earlier this year in the peer-reviewed journal Clinical Cancer Research, also found that vaccinated patients with high concentrations of E.G.F. in their blood lived even longer.

The United States' embargo against Cuba prohibits the importation of most goods from Cuba, including medication, without a license. American citizens are now permitted to travel to Cuba if their purpose falls into one of a dozen categories approved by the Treasury Department, but seeking medical care is not one of them.

Most patients going to Cuba fly through a third country such as Canada or travel under a general education category called "people to people." None have declared with customs officials the dozens of vials of Cimavax they bring back tucked in their backpacks or suitcases. Stephen Sapp, a public affairs officer for United States Customs and Border Protection, says there is no record of Cimavax being intercepted at the United States' border. If it were, it is unclear what might happen.

Under the F.D.A.'s "personal importation policy, some unapproved medications may be brought into the country if there is not an adequate alternative available in the United States, or if treatment began in a foreign country and the amount is limited to a three-month supply. In addition, the Treasury Department recently established a new general

license enabling American citizens to import Cuban pharmaceuticals under certain circumstances. But in the case of Cimavax, the regulation has apparently never been put to the test.

Ms. Malik's son, Nauman, carried 80 vials of the vaccine and a set of syringes in his backpack when he and his mother flew into Los Angeles from Cuba in June. Patients generally receive an initial round of four injections at La Pradera, an international health center that caters mostly to foreign medical tourists in Havana — two to the arms and two to the buttocks — and then continue to give themselves periodic injections at home for up to several months. At the airport, Mr. Malik wrote on his declaration form that he was carrying medication, but he said that authorities did not ask what it was.

"I was ready for the discussion, but it just never happened," he said.

Cuban researchers began working on Cimavax in the 1990s, prompted in part by the high rate of lung cancer in the country. A noncontrolled study in 1995 produced the earliest published evidence of the feasibility of inducing an immune response against epidermal growth factor in patients with advanced tumors, according to a 2010 article published in Medicc Review, an international journal of Cuban medicine.

Dr. Kelvin Lee, the chairman of immunology at Roswell Park, has been collaborating with scientists at Cuba's Center of Molecular Immunology since 2011. He said he hoped the vaccine could be used on other head and neck cancers and ultimately "to prevent cancer."

Patients in Cuba began receiving the vaccine free in 2011, and it has been administered to more than 4,000 patients worldwide, according to Roswell Park. Lung cancer and immunotherapy researchers are intrigued by Roswell Park's proposed trial, which would combine the vaccine with a form of immunotherapy called a checkpoint inhibitor that keeps the cancer from turning off a patient's immune system. The Roswell trial intends to use the drug Opdivo, one of four checkpoint inhibitors approved by the F.D.A.

But the scientists are also reserved in their appraisal of Cimavax, in part because the Cuban trials were done on a relatively small number of patients. There is concern that the vaccine has received disproportionate attention in the flush of warming relations between the two countries.

"The data is intriguing, but we need to do more definitive studies to evaluate the benefits," said Justin F. Gainor, a thoracic oncologist at Massachusetts General Hospital who works on the design of clinical trials for novel therapeutics. "Right now, the body of evidence does not support using it outside the clinical trial process."

The Cuban health care system has long been recognized for providing high-quality health care. A 2015 report on the Cuban health system by the World Health Organization noted, "In Cuba, products were developed to solve pressing health problems, unlike in other countries, where commercial interests prevailed."

With Cimavax migrating into the United States, those commercial interests are already coming into play. In Cuba, a four-shot dose of Cimavax costs up to $100 to manufacture, Dr. Lee said. Mr. Phillips, of Appleton, Wis., estimates that he pays about $9,000 for his annual supply of Cimavax, or about $1,500 a dose, which a visiting nurse administers every two months. Although some patients say the price recently dropped to about $850 a dose, the total cost of the trip can easily run more than $15,000, including airfare, lodging at La Pradera for several nights, and several months worth of the vaccine.

Mr. Phillips, a lifelong smoker who was given a lung cancer diagnosis in 2009, said it was worth every penny. After chemotherapy and radiation, his cancer returned in 2010.

"Since I have been taking Cimavax, it hasn't come back," said Mr. Phillips, who travels to Cuba via Toronto.

How other patients are doing on Cimavax is difficult to gauge. Ms. Malik's oncologist declined to be interviewed, saying he did not know enough about the medication. Several patients said they had not told their doctors for fear that they would refuse to treat them further.

"I'm afraid he won't treat me if I am being treated by a Cuban doctor," said a 57-year-old woman named Lily who started Cimavax in Cuba in June and asked not to be identified because she is afraid of consequences for not declaring it. "I think he'll be afraid of liability or malpractice issues if he treated me while I was taking something that's not F.D,A.-approved."

In the five months since Ms. Malik began taking Cimavax, her experience has been mixed. Initially, the fluid in her lungs diminished significantly, giving her renewed energy and allowing her to get around without her walker. But recently, fluid has begun to build up in her right lung, and she has grown weak and short of breath. Her son says she is likely to switch to a new medication soon and stop taking Cimavax. a

"It's not panning out as we'd hoped," he said. "It's really like the Wild West trying to know what is best to do."

Stories of patients returning from Cuba are met with keen interest on the online health care social network Inspire, which supports a lung cancer group of about 53,000 members. They share information about how to travel under the radar and which size of refrigerated lunchbox is best.

"We got a lot of inquiries," said Judy Gallant, an owner of P&G Travel, which has offices in Ontario and Havana, and is planning trips to Cuba for half a dozen American patients. "We make it clear we are not medical people. We just help them connect with people who are."

Some American patients have a new worry: that when Donald J. Trump, the president-elect, takes office, he might

crack down on Cuba and make it more difficult for patients to travel there. But Mick Phillips does not seem worried.

"I think we're going to be O.K.," he said. "Trump may do a lot of things, but I don't think he's into preventing people from being able to live."

For Arizona Ranchers, Range Fires Are Part Of The Routine

Arizona Republic, November 14, 2016

Out of all the conflicts that might arise from trying to make your livelihood off of ranching cattle, the last thing ranchers in the Sonoran Desert want to deal with is fire, especially fires that may have been deliberately set.

Sometimes it's just part of the job, says Dan Bell, owner of the 50,000-acre ZZ Cattle Corp., a ranch in Nogales that sprawls along the border.

"Fires are natural. But it's based off the time of year," Bell said. "Usually you will get fires right before monsoon season, when you have lightning strikes and things of that nature. And with that comes different humidity, so the fires tend to be not as fierce as they would be at other times"

But it's not the naturally caused fires that have the most effect on those who operate ranches along the border.

Some fires are deliberately set as diversionary tactics by smugglers crossing the border who hope to draw law enforcement attention away from themselves. Other fires, the ranchers and law enforcement say, can be inadvertently caused by undocumented border crossers lighting campfires or even carelessly tossing cigarettes.86 percent caused by humans

According to a 2011 Government Accountability Office study, 2,467 reported wildland fires occurred between 2006 and 2010 in Arizona's border region, and about 86 percent were caused by humans. The study, which is widely cited by those seeking stronger border enforcement, noted that the number of those fires started by immigrants is inconclusive because not every human-caused fire has gone under an investigation by federal land management agencies.

But of the 77 investigated wildland fires, 30 fires, or 39 percent, were suspected to have been ignited by illegal border crossers.

Coronado National Forest, a division of the U.S. Forest Service, owns vast tracts of border land leased by ranchers. The agency never speculates on the cause of a fire without specific evidence, according to Heidi Schewel, a spokeswoman. but it is easy to differentiate between a natural and human-caused fire.

"In this part of the country there are only two types of fires: human-caused and lightning-caused. If there's no lightning, then we know it was started by humans. We then look for proper evidence to find out how it was started," Schewel said.

Although she said she was unable to provide specific numbers, Schewel says many investigations go unsolved because there is not a significant amount of evidence to prove the cause.

The most controversial fires are those started by drug smugglers. According to Bell, smugglers will light fires on his ranch land and walk along the fire to get to their destination in order to deter Border Patrol.

Although physical evidence can be scarce, investigators can use the location of the fire as evidence for the probable cause of a fire–especially when the area of ignition is a known drug smuggling trail. According to the GAO report, the investigation report for the 3,400 acre Horseshoe Fire stated that there was evidence that drug smugglers were in the area.

While these diversionary fires might get the smugglers where they need to go to support their own livelihoods, the fires are consequently damaging to Bell and other ranchers that live near the border.Conflicts for ranchers

In order for the Sonoran desert ranches to function for a year, they rely entirely on the summer rains to grow vegetation for their crop. When illegal, unprecedented fires start and are not quickly maintained, every piece of land that the fire touches then becomes unusable for grazing.

In 2011 a fire started by immigrants crossing the border burned two-thirds of ZZ Cattle Ranch, destroying the grass that Bell relies on to feed and bulk up his crop in order to sell them later in the year.

"We've had to reduce the herd numbers because we just don't have the feed out there," said Bell.

Ironically, negative effects of these fires also show on the smugglers side of the story.

"Those fires in 2011 fires were so severe that it actually hampered what they were doing for a couple of years because it got rid of a lot of the cover they were using" said Bell.

While diversionary fires are of particular concern, especially to Border Patrol, during Bell's time running the ranch he has seen fires started by immigrants for a couple other reasons: warming and distress.

It is not uncommon for Bell to run into migrants on his 50,000-acre ranch, especially since it extends right up to the border. Bell says that during their journey immigrants will often light fires for warmth but not extinguish them. Then the wind picks up, and the fire can get out of control.

"I don't think it's an accident at all," Bell said. "You shouldn't light a fire if you don't plan on extinguishing it."Occurrences at the border

According to Bell, a man who had a medical emergency while crossing the border ignited the Murphy portion of the Murphy Complex fire in 2011, which in total burned 68,000 acres.

While distress fires are a way for Border Patrol to find immigrants crossing the border, the "Tucson Sector does not condone the use of signal fires in any capacity. Individuals that are in distress are strongly encouraged to utilize the 911 emergency system" according to the Border Patrol Public Affairs office.

MORE: 5 reasons the Juniper Fire is the ideal Arizona wildfire

Border Patrol also invests in technology that would increase rescue and decrease fire signals. The agency says that the Tucson sector has invested in 32 rescue beacons that provide either a light at night or reflectors during the day that can be seen for miles, and when activated GPS coordinates are relayed for a swift rescue response.

Ranchers in the Sonoran Desert are not just passive owners who watch their cowboys do all the work. On any given day they can be found working to ensure growth of their crop. Because of this, they are often the first to notice a fire.

Regardless of whether or not the fire was started by the elements or humans, Bell has a procedure that he follows in order to ensure the safety of his land and his crop.

"First thing I want to do is notify the forest service that there is fire," Bell said. "The second thing is to find out where exactly the fire is to see if we have any cattle in harm's way. If we do, then we have to work with the forest service to figure out where we can put the cattle."

The forest service works with Bell in order to make the best plan to minimize the effects of the fire, which sometimes include temporarily moving the cattle onto other ranches. Although competitors, the ranchers near the border say they are willing to lend a hand when unforeseen circumstances arise.

Arizona's 2016 wildfire season has potential to be severe.

Border Patrol's 'Iceboxes' At Center Of Tucson Federal Court Hearing

Arizona Daily Star, November 14, 2016

A green sleeping mat was propped up next to the witness stand Monday afternoon as civil-rights advocates and federal prosecutors argued about conditions inside Border Patrol detention centers.

The mats lie at the heart of a lawsuit that claims the Border Patrol violates its own policies as well as detainees' constitutional rights by forcing them to sleep on concrete floors in conditions cold enough to earn them the nickname "hieleras," or iceboxes, among undocumented immigrants.

U.S. District Court Judge David C. Bury began Monday's hearing by pointing to his "concerns" about court filings in recent months, such as the radically different views expressed by experts who inspected the detention centers.

He also pointed to Border Patrol statistics obtained by civil-rights advocates that show most detainees stay in the centers twice as long as the agency's recommended 12 hours or less.

The Border Patrol, represented by the Department of Justice, claims it is doing the best it can with its budgetary restrictions, Bury said.

"But this court can't be concerned with budgetary issues," he said.

Bury noted the detainees had not been formally charged with an offense and many would face civil, rather than criminal, charges.

"Can they be denied sleep?" Bury asked, noting cameras in the centers showed overcrowding in facilities that did not appear to be designed for sleeping.

Monday's hearing dealt with a motion for a preliminary injunction that would force the Border Patrol to improve conditions at the eight detention centers in the Tucson Sector.

Bury heard testimony from an expert on incarceration and an expert on health care in detention.

The Department of Justice is to present its side on Tuesday.

During Monday's hearing, Sarah Fabian, an attorney with the Department of Justice, questioned the court's interpretation of agency guidelines and pointed to issues with transferring minor detainees.

The lawsuit was filed in June 2015 on behalf of three former detainees by the Morrison and Foerster law firm and several immigrant-rights groups.

TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

United, American Open High-tech, Faster Security Lanes As Thanksgiving Nears

By Lauren Zumbach

Chicago Tribune, November 14, 2016

United and American airlines are introducing quicker, more efficient security lanes at O'Hare International Airport, with the goal of reducing the type of bottlenecks that caused hundreds of travelers to miss flights this spring.

American Airlines has been sending passengers through two automated lanes at one of its Terminal 3 security checkpoints for about a week. United Airlines' three lanes, at a Terminal 1 checkpoint for TSA PreCheck customers, opened Monday.

The new lanes let up to five passengers at a time put luggage in bins for screening, rather than the single-file line where efficient travelers were thwarted by slower passengers. A conveyor system automatically diverts bags in need of

extra screening without halting the line — and separates flagged bags with possible weapons from those with oversized containers of shampoo.

The system also takes a photo of each bag's exterior that is linked to the X-ray of its contents and a unique radio frequency identification tag on its bin, to make it easier for agents to keep track of bags, and has a parallel conveyor belt that automatically brings empty bins back to the front of the line, similar to the ball return at a bowling alley. Ferrying empty luggage bins back to the front of the line has been a job of Transportation Security Administration agents.

The TSA has estimated the system cuts the time passengers spend in screening by about 30 percent. United has seen "up to 100 percent improvement" in automated lanes it installed last month in Los Angeles, said John Slater, vice president of United's O'Hare hub.

American says its line is noticeably quicker, too.

"The feedback that we have received from our employees and customers has been overwhelmingly positive," said Franco Tedeschi, American's Chicago vice president.

Transportation Security Administration workers move travelers through the new automated security lanes at O'Hare International Airport on Nov. 14, 2016. (Stacey Wescott/Chicago Tribune)

Airlines have been looking for ways to streamline the security screening process, particularly after airport security lines ground to a near-halt at some airports in May, causing hundreds of travelers to miss flights. Those lines, which topped two hours at times, now average five minutes or less at O'Hare, according to the Chicago Department of Aviation.

The TSA already was working on the technology, but the lengthy lines helped get the automated lanes up and running quicker, said Jill Vaughan, assistant administrator of the TSA's Office of Security Capabilities.

American said new screening lanes at four hub airports and a test of new CT scanners in Phoenix would cost $5 million when it announced the program this summer. United declined to say how much the new lanes cost.

Automated security lanes

Stacey Wescott / Chicago Tribune

Transportation Security Administration workers direct travelers through the new automated security lanes Nov. 14, 2016, at Terminal 1 of Chicago's O'Hare International Airport. The new lines automatically divert bags in need of extra screening and include a parallel conveyor belt to return empty bins to the front of the line.

Transportation Security Administration workers direct travelers through the new automated security lanes Nov. 14, 2016, at Terminal 1 of Chicago's O'Hare International Airport. The new lines automatically divert bags in need of extra screening and include a parallel conveyor belt to return empty bins to the front of the line. (Stacey Wescott / Chicago Tribune)

United added the new lanes at its TSA PreCheck checkpoint first because it tends to attract valuable frequent fliers. "The customers actually make that investment, and they get the privilege of going through a little more quickly than standard customers," Slater said.

Road warriors won't be the only ones to benefit from the improvements, however. United plans to redesign its Terminal 1 lobby and add more automated lanes at O'Hare in 2017, Slater said. The airline also expects to open automated lanes at Newark Liberty International Airport by Thanksgiving.

American is bringing automated lanes to airports in Dallas/Fort Worth, Los Angeles, Miami and New York in early 2017. It also will begin testing early next year new computed tomography, or CT, scanners in Phoenix that will let passengers keep liquids and laptops in carry-on bags during screening.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Federal Funds Authorized To Battle Pickens County Wildfires

Columbia (SC) State, November 14, 2016

The fire on Pinnacle Mountain continues to burn and has grown to around 2,200 acres in size.

Light rain has been falling in the area since about 5 a.m Sunday, which has assisted with slowing down the fire's path, according to Pickens County Emergency Management. All residents that were evacuated were allowed to return home. Residents should stay tuned for updates in what is still considered a dangerous environment.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency has authorized federal funds to reimburse costs to South Carolina to fight the Pinnacle Mountain fire.

This authorization makes FEMA grant funding available to reimburse 75 percent of the eligible firefighting costs for managing, mitigating and controlling the fire. Eligible costs can include labor, equipment and supplies used for fighting the fire and costs for emergency work such as evacuations and sheltering, police barricading and traffic control.

"This wildfire is a major risk to lives and property. FEMA has approved this request to ensure that South Carolina has the resources to fight this fire," said FEMA Regional Administrator Gracia Szczech. "State and local partners are the frontline responders battling this wildfire, and we will continue to work closely with them."

The state requested a Fire Management Assistance Grant, and it was granted Saturday. The fire started Tuesday,

and at the time of the request, had burned in excess of 1,500 acres of state and private land. The fire was threatening 180 homes around Pinnacle Mountain including the Folsom Rest Subdivision (Sugar Likker Road), Bear Valley Golf Club Subdivision, and other numerous subdivisions along the Cherokee Foothills Scenic Hwy. The fire was also threatening communication towers, infrastructure, utilities, and the Greenville watershed, Jocassee gorges, Gravely wildlife management area (black bear refuge), and Table Rock State Park.

Table Rock State Park has been completely evacuated and fire crews are canvassing the park to make sure all structures can properly be protected if the fire progresses. Pre-planning the park is a precautionary measure and will expedite defense of park structures if necessary.

Pickens County Fire and Rescue personnel are being assisted by many neighboring departments throughout the upstate from Anderson, Oconee, and Greenville Counties. Crews are assisting homeowners with blowing leaves and clearing vegetation from around structures.

"These precautionary measures are being exercised to stay one step ahead of the fire," Pickens County Emergency Management said in a news release Sunday. "Checklists are being given to nearby residences in case further evacuations are necessary in the coming days."

Federal fire management assistance is provided through the President's Disaster Relief Fund and made available by FEMA to fund firefighting activities when there is a fire threat that could cause a major disaster. Eligible state firefighting costs covered by the aid must first meet a minimum threshold for costs before assistance is provided.

More Than 25,000 Acres Burning In 3 North Georgia Wildfires

By Alexis Stevens

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, November 14, 2016

More than 25,000 acres of North Georgia was on fire late Monday — three separate fires that sent a smokey haze over metro Atlanta and as far south as Macon. For those closest to the fires, each day is a smoke-filled waiting game that the blazes will be extinguished without damaging any homes.

"All we can do is hope that the winds stay down until this thing can burn itself out," Wyndle Bates, an Epworth resident, told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Bates lives within 3 miles of the largest of three fires, the Rough Ridge Fire in Fannin County, and said his 64 acres should be safe. There are no trees within at least 100 feet of his home, keeping it safe from a potential forest fire. But he and his wife have been unable to avoid the thick smoke, heavier some days than others depending on which direction the wind blows.

"It's very, very annoying," Bates said Monday. "It gets into your home, your clothes smell, your home stinks."

Wildfires continued to spread in Rabun, Fannin and Dade counties, where some evacuations were in place. It could take weeks to extinguish the fires, and with no rain in sight the danger for more fires persists, federal and state experts said.

"In the northern metro counties where the drought is exceptional, the potential is there for fires to ignite," Wendy Burnett of the Georgia Forestry Commission said. "The drought is continuing to deepen and expand, so we're seeing more fires in the other parts of the state."

Since Friday morning, the agency has responded to 183 wildfires throughout the state, Burnett said, though most have been small and quickly extinguished. But those fires are only the ones on state-owned or private property.

In Rabun and Fannin counties, two major fires in the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest occurred on federal land, where crews from as far away as Alaska, California and Arizona continued efforts Monday to control the flames.

The Rough Ridge Fire was burning 19,411 acres Monday morning and was 20 percent contained, according to officials. Crews planned to continue "strategic firing," or forcing the fire to continue to rivers to allow nature to quell the flames, which were sparked by lightning.

In Rabun County, the Rock Mountain Fire burned an area of 5,484 acres, forcing evacuations in the Plum Orchard community and the Coleman River/Nichols Branch Road areas. Residents in Tate City, in neighboring Towns County, were also being evacuated. Investigators believe humans may be responsible for the Rock Mountain blaze, which remains under investigation.

Sixty homes have been evacuated in Dade County, where approximately 1,200 acres burned Monday afternoon, Burnett said. That fire may also have been sparked by people rather than nature, she said.

"Most of them are human-caused, but most are not intentionally caused," Burnett said.

Monday afternoon, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency authorized federal funds to reimburse costs to Georgia to fight the Tatum Gulf Fire burning in Dade. This authorization makes FEMA funds available to pay 75 percent of the eligible firefighting costs, such as labor, equipment and supplies, as well as costs for emergency work such as evacuations and sheltering, police barricading and traffic control.

Though the North Georgia fires remained at least 100 miles from metro Atlanta, winds continued to push smoke south. However, no new wildfires were reported around metro Atlanta on Monday.

In Cherokee County, crews have responded to 35 calls reporting wildfires since late last week, according to Tim

Cavender, fire department spokesman. There were no active fires Monday afternoon.

"The biggest thing is people are calling about the smoke," Cavender said. "We're telling people, 'Don't do any type of outdoor burning whatsoever.'"

The air quality was worsening throughout the day Monday in Atlanta, according to Air Now, which monitors the conditions. A red alert was in place Monday afternoon, meaning everyone was advised to reduce time outdoors.

Many, like Bates, are hopeful that much-needed rain will come soon. But it has been weeks since the area has seen any significant precipitation.

"Up until midsummer, we had record rainfall here," Bates said. "It's like someone shut the spigot off."

Worst Case Scenario: Western North Carolina Fires Burn Till March

WTVD-TV Raleigh-Durham (NC), November 14, 2016

LAKE LURE, N.C. (WTVD) –

Nearly 1,600 firefighters, including some from the Triangle, continue to battle wildfires throughout Western North Carolina with nearly 40,000 acres already burned.

Some 20 significant fires have been burning in the western part of the state since Oct. 23. and Gov. Pat McCrory announced Monday that it could take till the month of March to put out one of the fires.

According to WLOS, the Party Rock Fire near Lake Lure has already burned nearly 3,500 acres and remains just 15 percent contained. The governor and state Forest Service officials say if we there is no rain or snow, the worst-case scenario is that the fire would continue to burn until March.

Right now the estimated cost of the fires is more than $10 million.

"We have California wildfires in North Carolina and they continue to cause serious challenges for our firefighter community, for towns throughout western North Carolina, and they continue to use a lot of resources and impact our environment," said Governor McCrory.

He said that he's working together as a team with local, state, and federal officials as well as firefighters. McCrory stressed that safety for everyone involved is the priority.

Durham Highway Fire Department in Wake County Fire Chief David McNulty said crews from the Triangle have been working overnight shifts while helping.

"With all these resources I feel like a player on a team," said Bradley Dixon, a volunteer firefighter from Orange County.

Dixon is just getting into the Lake Lure area on Monday and said he is assigned to be in the area for the next 72 hours.

"I'm pretty much here to do what they ask," said Dixon.

Part of the hefty task is to protect homes and buildings. Captain Lee Faulk with the Cary Fire Department is on one of the many teams doing just that.

He spoke with ABC11 as he was preparing for another night shift.

"We set up on a house and basically kept the fire as it came through, away from the house," said Capt. Faulk. "It's different from what we're used to in the eastern part of our state, we don't have the elevation and the steep angles."

Officials are still trying to determine the cause of the fires. McCrory said dry conditions could mean the fires will last for several months.

The wildfires have threatened 1,780 structures, damaged one structures and destroyed two others.

On Saturday, FEMA approved the governor's request for financial assistance which allows FEMA to pay for 75 percent of the emergency protective measures taken in fighting the fires.

The state of emergency remains in effect for 25 counties in the western part of the state. While many evacuation orders have been lifted, mandatory evacuations are still in place in Burke, Graham, and Rutherford counties.

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NASA And FEMA Rehearse For The Unthinkable: An Asteroid Strike On Los Angeles

By Christopher Mele

New York Times, November 14, 2016

Imagine if scientists discovered that an asteroid was hurtling toward Los Angeles.

The possibility has existed on the pages of Hollywood scripts. But in what may be a case of life imitating art, NASA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other government agencies engaged last month in a planetary protection exercise to consider the potentially devastating consequences of a 330-foot asteroid hitting the Earth.

The simulation projected a worst-case blast wave by an asteroid strike in 2020 that could level structures across 30 miles, require a mass evacuation of the Los Angeles area and cause tens of thousands of casualties.

In 1998, the movie "Armageddon" dramatized an even greater fictional threat. In that blockbuster, a ragtag crew was sent on a mission to drill into an asteroid and set off a nuclear bomb to avert a global catastrophe. As the character Harry Stamper, portrayed by Bruce Willis, summed up to his crewmates: "The United States government just asked us to save the world."

Don't expect the need for such Hollywood heroics in real life, however. An asteroid that could cause such damage has no significant chance of striking Earth within the next century, Paul Chodas, manager of NASA's Center for Near-

Earth Object Studies at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., said in an email.

The center relies on several telescopes, such as the Catalina Sky Survey at the University of Arizona, to track potentially hazardous asteroids and comets. These objects, which are leftover matter from the formation of planets, can come dangerously close to Earth or cross its trajectory.

The center lists 659 asteroids that have some probability of striking the planet, "but none pose a significant threat over the next century, either because the probabilities are extraordinarily small, or the asteroids themselves are extremely small," Mr. Chodas said.

"Nevertheless, we must continue searching for asteroids in case there is one that is heading our way," he added.

That's where the planetary protection exercise, conducted on Oct. 25 in El Segundo, Calif., comes in. The simulation that projected a strike in 2020 involved representatives from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the Department of Energy's National Laboratories, the Air Force and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

While a warning of four years may seem like a lot of time, it would probably not be enough to deflect an asteroid of the size and orbit outlined in the simulation, Mr. Chodas said.

"Engineers think the simplest way to deflect an asteroid is to build a large spacecraft and simply ram it into the asteroid" years before it is predicted to hit Earth, he said.

It could take up to two years to build such a "kinetic impactor" spacecraft and another year or more to reach the asteroid, so in the case of this simulation, an evacuation, not a "deflection mission," was necessary.

For the organizers of Asteroid Day, a global movement that seeks to protect the world from dangerous asteroids, such planning is not out of this world.

The group, which maintains that one million asteroids have the potential to strike Earth but that only 1 percent of them have been discovered, was set on Monday to release a letter signed by planetary scientists supporting missions to increase knowledge of asteroids. The group promotes the "100x Declaration," which calls for increasing the rate of asteroid discoveries to 100,000 per year in the next 10 years.

"The more we learn about asteroid impacts, the clearer it became that the human race has been living on borrowed time," Brian May, an astrophysicist and a founder and lead guitarist for the rock group Queen, said on the group's website.

Asteroid Day is observed each year on June 30, the anniversary of what is believed to be the largest space-related explosion in human history: an asteroid strike in Tunguska, Siberia, in 1908.

An asteroid, believed to be less than 100 feet in diameter, exploded at the altitude of an airliner and flattened tens of millions of trees across 800 square miles. Researchers estimated the explosion was as powerful as a medium-size hydrogen bomb and several hundred times more powerful than the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

While there were no official reports of human casualties, hundreds of reindeer were reduced to charred carcasses in the explosion, the British Broadcasting Corporation reported.

In more recent times, an asteroid exploded over the Russian city of Chelyabinsk in 2013, shattering windows for miles and injuring more than 1,000 people.

Scientists have suggested that the Earth is vulnerable to many more Chelyabinsk-size space rocks. In research published in 2013 by the journal Nature, they estimated that such strikes could occur as often as every decade or two instead of an average of once every 100 to 200 years as previously thought.

Predictions of a catastrophic crash by a celestial object surface with some regularity. In September 2015, the last eclipse of the year fueled imaginative speculation on the internet that a giant asteroid would hit Earth.

In a statement debunking the idea, NASA noted that similar forecasts were made in January and March of that year that two asteroids were on dangerous paths toward Earth.

The agency noted that the asteroids flew by Earth "without incident — just as NASA said they would."

NASA Rehearsed For A Hypothetical Asteroid Hitting Los Angeles

By Carman Tse

Los Angeles LAist, November 14, 2016

The election is over and the choice is clear: according to a highly unscientific poll, most young Americans would rather see a giant meteor wipe out the planet than see Donald Trump become president.

On the rare chance that #GiantMeteor2016 does actually happen, NASA and the Federal Emergency Management Agency have already taken steps to prepare for the possibility. Last month, the two agencies held a joint exercise in El Segundo using the worst-case scenario of an asteroid hitting Southern California. In the exercise, it was too late to call on Ben Affleck and Bruce Willis, and thus played out the possibility of a mass evacuation of the region.

"It is critical to exercise these kinds of low-probability but high-consequence disaster scenarios," said FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate. "By working through our emergency response plans now, we will be better prepared if and when we need to respond to such an event."

In the simulation, the agencies worked on the (fictional) scenario that a 300 to 800-foot asteroid was just discovered, and there was a 2 percent chance that it would hit the United States on September 20, 2020—just at the tail end of

Trump's first term! The scenario continued, emphasizing that, by November of 2017, it was determined this hypothetical asteroid would hit the United States. The agencies were also tasked to work without the option of deflecting the asteroid, essentially rehearsing a mass evacuation of the Los Angeles region.

Although four years is a long, long time down the road, scientists say it's not enough advance warning to actually construct a spacecraft and send it to the asteroid to deflect it off its course, according to the New York Times. According to JPL, the agencies instead focused on "footprint models, population displacement estimates, [and] information on infrastructure that would be affected," as well as "considered ways to provide accurate, timely and useful information to the public. Also underscored were methods to refute rumors and false information that could emerge in the years leading up to the hypothetical impact."

While such extinction-level events have been the subject of Hollywood movies and the fanciful predictions of doomsayers, scientists basically say it's only a matter of time. NASA tracks over 650 such "near-Earth objects", and while none pose a threat in the next century, there's still plenty out there we have discovered yet. "We are not fully prepared, but we are on a trajectory to get much more so," said John Holdren, director of the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy, back in September. Our friends at JPL are now testing a system named Scout to track and discover these near-Earth objects.

Every year we do have our share of close calls. But so far none have come to end it all. In February, NASA warned of a 100-foot asteroid that would buzz planet earth, and later discovered a tiny object named 2016 DY30 that came within 9,000 miles of our planet.

New FEMA Maps Could Mean Thousands Must Get Flood Insurance

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) – Thousands of property owners may have to purchase flood insurance for the first time as new flood maps go into effect next year in Davidson County.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency last month finalized revised flood maps for the county, and more than 4,400 properties were added to high-risk zones, The Tennessean reported (http://tnne.ws/2fRUYDT) Sunday.

Since the last update in 2001, engineers flew laser instruments over more areas of the county, improving topographic base maps, Metro Water Services Assistant Director of Stormwater Tom Palko said. That allowed more accurate flood modeling. Land not previously studied in detail was also surveyed.

"The intent of the flood maps is to identify risk," Palko said. "If an area was previously unstudied, then we did not know the risk associated with living or building in that area."

Mortgage companies typically require coverage if a property falls into the 100-year flood plain – an area with a 1 percent chance of being inundated each year.

Homeowners whose properties fall into the flood plain may be eligible for subsidized policies through the National Flood Insurance Program. But they have to sign up before the maps become effective in April.

According to federal officials, an average flood insurance premium costs about $700 per year. Homeowners first have to survey their properties and calculate their flooding risk to determine the exact premium.

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Information from: The Tennessean, http://www.tennessean.com

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Thousands May Need To Purchase Flood Insurance Under Revised Flood Map

By Jesse Knutson

WTVF-TV Nashville (TN), November 14, 2016

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Thousands of property owners may have to purchase flood insurance following a revision to the floodplain map by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in Davidson County.

The change will add approximately 4,400 properties to the high-risk floodplain, and properties with a mortgage may be required to purchase flood insurance.

"I think if I was worried about it, I would have flood insurance," Fred French, a homeowner who lives in a high-risk floodplain area, said.

French does not have a mortgage on his home, so he won't be required to purchase flood insurance, but others will be required to, and all Davidson County residents near areas of water that could flood are being encouraged to purchase flood insurance regardless of whether they fall in these zones or not.

"Anything can happen, it's nature," Brittany Jones explained, who's family owns a home in a high-risk area of the floodplain map.

Jones' family has flood insurance, and Jones believes anyone who lives near water is better safe than sorry.

"You might need it, because you never know what could happen to your house," Jones explained.

To see if your home falls under the high-risk floodplain (areas designated as Floodplain or 100 Year Floodplain), you can visit the Metro Water Service's website where they have

posted the map. (http://maps.nashville.gov/PrelimFEMAViewer/)

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IMMIGRATION

After 11 Years, Sen. Jeff Sessions May Finally Get His Wall On The Border

By Mary Troyan

USA Today, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON – Sen. Jeff Sessions knows something about building fences.

The Alabama senator, a leading congressional opponent of overhauling immigration laws, has spent the better part of the last decade trying to fortify the border between the United States and Mexico, with mixed results.

Now considered a strong candidate for a job in the Cabinet of President-elect Donald Trump, Sessions could soon gain the power of the executive branch and the imprimatur to finish the task.

"The crisis at the southwest border highlights the simple fact that without barriers to prevent the illegal entry of additional aliens, the brave men and women of the U.S. Border Patrol simply do not have enough personnel to detain and deport all illegal border-crossers," Sessions said eight days before Trump won the election.

One of Trump's most indelible campaign promises is to erect a wall along the 2,000-mile Southern border, up to 55 feet tall, paid for by the Mexican government. Cost estimates are in the billions, and opponents say it is an unnecessary expense that will hurt the economy and wreck border communities and families.

Trump, in his first post-election comments about the border, told CBS' 60 Minutes that he would be open to a combination of walls and fencing to block illegal border crossers.

"I'm very good at this, it's called construction," Trump said.

Sessions, if he were to be named Secretary of Homeland Security, would be in charge of immigration enforcement and border security, putting responsibility for his long sought-after wall directly on his desk. Sessions joined the Senate in 1997 and is in his fourth term.

Eleven years ago, he was working the halls of Capitol Hill to generate support for a 2,000-mile, $4 billion-$8 billion fence, but was unsuccessful. Ten years ago, he was a leading proponent of the Secure Fence Act, which required double-layered fencing along five segments of the Southwestern border of about 700 miles total. And in subsequent years, he's tried to carve out money to finance the construction.

The Secure Fence Act was signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2006. But Congress amended it two years later, eliminating the double-layer requirement and giving the Secretary of Homeland Security the flexibility to also use lighting, cameras and sensors "to gain operational control" of the border.

Today, the Department of Homeland Security reports that 651 miles of fencing is in place on the border with Mexico.

In the 2016 fiscal year that just ended, the agency apprehended almost 409,000 people at the Southwest border who were attempting to cross, up from 331,000 last year.

"Those who attempt to enter our country without authorization should know that, consistent with our laws and our values, we must and we will send you back," Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson said Thursday.

It is not good enough for Sessions or Trump, who say the border remains porous, threatening national security and the American economy.

Sessions has been a leading critic of President Obama's immigration policy and he found a receptive ally in Trump. Sessions was the first sitting U.S. senator to endorse him in the Republican primary and he is now helping lead the effort to staff key leadership positions for the incoming Trump administration. Several Sessions' allies are working on the DHS and national security transition teams, according to an organizational chart for the transition.

"Donald Trump will build the wall," Sessions declared at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland.

Frank Sharry, executive director of the pro-immigration group America's Voice, called Sessions the most anti-immigrant member of the Senate.

"Building a 14th century wall in the 21st century would be an affront to who we are and to our neighbors in Latin America, as well as being a monument to stupidity," Sharry said.

Efforts to reach Sessions for comment Monday were unsuccessful.

Contact Mary Troyan at mtroyan@usatoday.com

Catholic Bishops Ask Trump For Humane Immigration Policies

By Rachel Zoll

Boston Globe, November 14, 2016

BALTIMORE — The nation's Roman Catholic bishops, meeting just days after Donald Trump was elected president, urged him Monday to adopt humane policies toward immigrants and refugees.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said serving people fleeing violence and conflict "is part of our identity as

Catholics'' and pledged to continue this work. Pope Francis has made helping immigrants one of the core issues of his pontificate.

''We stand ready to work with a new administration to continue to ensure that refugees are humanely welcomed without sacrificing our security or our core values as Americans. A duty to welcome and protect newcomers, particularly refugees, is an integral part of our mission to help our neighbors in need,'' the bishops said at the assembly in Baltimore.

Trump had said during the campaign that he would build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border and immediately deport all 11 million people in the country illegally, although he later distanced himself from that position. In an interview that aired Sunday on CBS' ''60 Minutes,'' he said he would focus on deporting people with criminal records beyond their immigrant status, ''probably two million, it could even be three million.'' The Obama administration has deported more than 2.5 million people since taking office in 2009, according to the Homeland Security Department.

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Trump also told ''60 Minutes'' that his promised solid border wall might look more like a fence in spots. House Speaker Paul Ryan rejected any ''deportation force'' targeting people in the country illegally.

A representative of the bishops had released the statement on Trump and immigration soon after Election Day. The statement was read aloud and affirmed by the bishops' conference as they opened their gathering.

American Catholics have built a vast network of aid and advocacy programs for immigrants and refugees. U.S. bishops are especially attentive to the issue given that Latinos comprise about 4 in 10 U.S. Catholics and are already a majority in several dioceses.

Archbishop Joseph Tobin of Indianapolis, Indiana, had opposed a request from Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, that the Catholic church stop settling Syrian refugees in the state. Tobin brought an Iraqi refugee to a meeting with the governor, who is now the vice-president elect. Tobin is one of three U.S. church leaders whom the pope will make cardinals in a ceremony Sunday in Rome.

The bishops have pledged to work with a Trump administration and the leaders of Congress. Trump's exact policies remain a mystery, but he may find common ground with Catholic leaders if he fulfills his pledges to appoint anti-abortion justices to the U.S. Supreme Court and protect the conscience rights of religious conservatives who do not wish to recognize same-sex marriage.

Archbishop Joseph Kurtz, outgoing president of the bishops' conference, highlighted care for immigrants and religious liberty as key issues in his address Monday.

Catholic Bishops Ask Trump For Humane Immigration Policies

By Rachel Zoll

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

BALTIMORE (AP) — The nation's Roman Catholic bishops on Monday urged President-elect Donald Trump to adopt humane policies toward immigrants and refugees, as church leaders begin navigating what will likely be a complex relationship with the new administration.

Meeting just days after the election, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said serving people fleeing violence and conflict "is part of our identity as Catholics" and pledged to continue this ministry.

"We stand ready to work with a new administration to continue to ensure that refugees are humanely welcomed without sacrificing our security or our core values as Americans. A duty to welcome and protect newcomers, particularly refugees, is an integral part of our mission to help our neighbors in need," the bishops said.

Trump had said during the campaign that he would build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border and immediately deport all 11 million people in the country illegally, though he later distanced himself from that position. In an interview that aired Sunday on CBS' "60 Minutes," he said he would focus on deporting people with criminal records beyond their immigrant status, "probably two million, it could even be three million." The Obama administration has deported more than 2.5 million people since taking office in 2009, according to the Homeland Security Department.

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Refugees Discover 2 Americas: One That Hates, And One That Heals

By Adeel Hassan

New York Times, November 14, 2016

DUNDALK, Md. — Ra'ad and Hutham Lalqaraghuli are no longer sure which America they're a part of.

Is it the hateful country they confronted a few weeks before the presidential election, when a note appeared at their door that said "Terrorist Leave no one wants you here"?

Or is it the generous country of welcoming strangers who heard about their ordeal and showered them with gifts and cards with positive messages?

The victory of President-elect Donald J. Trump has intensified their whiplash. After a year in the Maryland suburbs, having arrived with their four children as refugees from Iraq, they find themselves comparing the threats they fled to those that might still emerge.

They did not sleep on election night, after watching television coverage of the results.

They are "very afraid and worried," Ra'ad Lalqaraghuli said on Wednesday. "We don't know what this will mean."

Their confusion, and the divided response to the family's presence here, mirrors the experience of many other refugee families and Muslim Americans. In the past week, even as advocates report a steep rise in attacks and acts of intimidation against blacks, Muslims and immigrants — and on women wearing hijabs — many of those episodes have been followed by public acts of support and solidarity.

At Baylor University in Waco, Tex., hundreds of students and faculty members walked to class with Natasha Nkhama, a black student, after a friend posted a video of her describing an episode in which she was called a racial slur and forced off a sidewalk by someone who said, "I'm just trying to make America great again."

In Georgia, Mairah Teli, a Muslim teacher at Dacula High School, posted a photograph of an anonymous note she received on Friday that said she should "tie" her head scarf around her neck and "hang yourself with it."

A day later, she wrote in another Facebook post, "I am overwhelmed and deeply touched by all of the outcry and support that I have received in the past 24 hours. I can't even begin to articulate how touched I am to be receiving messages from all over the country with your support."

Acts of hate and intimidation, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, occurred across the country during the campaign, and have increased significantly since Mr. Trump was declared the president-elect. But the back and forth between acceptance and rejection can be particularly confusing for new arrivals like the Lalqaraghulis.

Their new home of Dundalk is an inner-ring suburb of Baltimore, one of the many working-class communities where the nation's battles over identity have become most intense. It was once a lively hub of workers filing into plants for Bethlehem Steel, General Motors and others manufacturing giants. Now it is dominated by strip malls.

Ra'ad Lalqaraghuli said he was initially eager to call it home.

"When I arrived in America, I was so happy," Mr. Lalqaraghuli, 43, said. "It's my dream country for my children."

He'd had experiences with Americans before. A graduate of Mosul University, in 2004 he began working as a group engineer for American contractors and the United States Army Corps of Engineers to help rebuild his country after the American invasion.

A promotion to project manager in 2009 led to his overseeing the construction of water treatment plants and several schools in Baghdad and two cities south of the capital, Nasiriya and Basra.

But his work for the Americans also brought him unwanted attention from terrorist groups. He spent one winter sleeping outside in the forest, to keep himself hidden, while his wife and children stayed with her family.

Militants from the Islamic State abducted two of his younger brothers and one older brother instead. "They said, 'In exchange for you, we'll give them back.'" He and his father didn't believe them, and the three brothers were killed.

His work on behalf of the United States government made him and his family eligible for humanitarian protection under special immigrant visas.

Lawyers in New York supported his application, and he gained approval quickly. Then, last year, a militia bombed the family home.

"I lost everything," Mr. Lalqaraghuli said.

At the Baghdad airport, heading to the United States, he still worried that he was being followed. All he had was his plane ticket, his passport, $100, and his wife and four children.

Betsy Fisher, the deputy policy director of the New York-based International Refugee Assistance Project, which resettled the family, said she was dismayed to learn of their newfound anxiety, after the many attempts on Mr. Lalqaraghuli's life for several years by different groups in Iraq.

"The people who enter this country as refugees are fleeing from terrorism," she said. "They cannot live in a place with violence."

She added of the message posted on the family's door, "Not only is a note like this horrifying, it should be deeply embarrassing for every American that this family was threatened, because the reason they are in this country is because he was of service to our country."

Advocates — like the Council on American-Islamic Relations, which is helping the family — say that many refugee families are reluctant to come forward when they become victims of hate crimes because they fear a greater backlash.

But after the note appeared — with a crude drawing of a woman in a hijab — Mr. Lalqaraghuli notified the police, telling an officer in the neighborhood who happened to be on a foot patrol near his apartment.

The police said that the note had been written by a 14-year-old neighbor, and that officers had talked to her and her parents but determined that no crime had been committed.

The neighbor's family did not respond to a message requesting comment.

Still, whether criminal or not, it was enough to stir up a response — an effort to counter intolerance.

Alta Haywood, a retired teacher who lives in Perry Hall, Md., sent the family a towering fruit basket and included a note that read in part, "I sincerely hope that other people in the area show you that they can be kind and accepting."

Another gift-giver, Dr. Lindsay Fitch, said the news of what had happened to the family "just grabbed me more personally." While talking to her two children about it, she

said, she decided to send the family the most American of welcomes: a home-baked apple pie and a pumpkin pie.

Included in her card were a photograph of her family and an invitation to have their families get together. "I wanted to welcome you to the Baltimore area," she wrote. "There are a lot of people here who want to welcome you with open arms. Hopefully, you'll find that welcome. Remember us when you encounter ugliness."

Mr. Lalqaraghuli, who works as a driver, said he greatly appreciated the outpouring of support.

But after Mr. Trump's victory, he said, it was hard to trust that acceptance would emerge as the country's dominant force.

He missed two weeks of work after the note was left, because he said his children felt safer when he is around. His youngest, Abdullah, 5, no longer sleeps in his own room. He joins his parents instead.

"Because he sees when militias come to my home, they come with the weapons," Mr. Lalqaraghuli said.

He was referring to their life in Baghdad. But as soon as possible, he said, his family will be looking to move out of Dundalk and start fresh in another town or state.

Where I Wish President Trump Failure

By Eugene Robinson

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

The people chose Hillary Clinton. But it's the electoral vote that counts, not the popular vote, so Donald Trump will be president. And no, I'm not over it.

No one should be over it. No one should pretend that Trump will be a normal president. No one should forget the bigotry and racism of his campaign, the naked appeals to white grievance, the stigmatizing of Mexicans and Muslims. No one should forget the jaw-dropping ignorance he showed about government policy both foreign and domestic. No one should forget the vile misogyny. No one should forget the mendacity, the vulgarity, the ugliness, the insanity. None of this should ever be normalized in our politics.

The big protests that have followed Trump's election should be no surprise. You can't spend all those months trashing our nation's values and then expect everyone to join you in a group hug. Trump made the bed in which he now must lie.

How did the unthinkable happen? Is Trump, like Brexit, part of some world-sweeping populist wave? Are the Rust Belt hinterlands in open rebellion? Was Clinton just a spectacularly flawed candidate? Did FBI Director James B. Comey boost Trump over the top? Did too many anti-Trump voters stay home out of complacency?

There is evidence to support all of those theories. But the urgent question isn't why? — it's what now?

If a normal Republican had been elected, I could say the polite and socially acceptable thing, something like "I didn't support So-and-So, but he will be my president, too, and I wish him success." But I cannot wish Trump success in rounding up and deporting millions of people or banning Muslims from entering the country or reinstituting torture as an instrument of U.S. policy. In these and other divisive, cruel, unwise initiatives, I wish him failure.

I do hope he succeeds in avoiding some kind of amateurish foreign policy blunder that puts American lives or vital national interests at risk. And let me be clear that I am not questioning his legitimacy as president. When the results are certified and the electoral college casts its votes, Trump will be the nation's duly chosen leader, ridiculous though that may be.

But he has not earned our trust or hope. Rather, he has earned the demonstrations that have erupted in cities across the country. He has earned relentless scrutiny by journalists, whom he shamelessly made into scapegoats during the campaign, and he has earned the constant vigilance of the public he now must serve.

There have been more than 200 reports since the election of harassment and hate crimes, mostly directed at minorities, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center. During an interview broadcast Sunday on "60 Minutes," Trump addressed his supporters: "I will say this, and I will say right to the cameras: Stop it."

That would have been a better start had he not also sought to minimize the incidents, saying there had been a "very small amount" of them; and had he not also claimed the media was somehow applying a double standard in reporting on the protests.

The most troubling post-election development thus far was Trump's appointment of campaign chief executive Stephen K. Bannon — a prominent figure in the racist, xenophobic alt-right movement — as chief strategist and senior adviser. A spokesman for Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said the move "signals that white supremacists will be represented at the highest levels in Trump's White House."

On "60 Minutes," Trump hinted that he might moonwalk away from some of his most radical promises on immigration, the issue that made him stand out from the crowd of Republican contenders. He said he will still build a wall on the Mexican border, but there "could be some fencing" instead of an actual wall in places. And he said that "we're going to make a determination" about the fate of millions of undocumented immigrants who have not committed crimes — sounding as if he knows his pledge to carry out mass deportation cannot be fulfilled.

He also backed away from the idea of having a special prosecutor reinvestigate Clinton over her emails. "They're good people, I don't want to hurt them," he said of Bill and Hillary Clinton.

If Trump is beginning to confront reality on some fronts, that's a first step — in a thousand-mile journey toward credibility and respect. But appointing Bannon is a big step backward. We must watch Trump, and judge him, every single inch of the way.

Read more from Eugene Robinson's archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook. You can also join him Tuesdays at 1 p.m. for a live Q&A.

Read more on this topic:

Paul Waldman: The Trump administration hasn't even started yet, and it's already a fiasco

Leon Weiseltier: Stay angry. That's the only way to uphold principles in Trump's America.

E.J. Dionne Jr.: Against Trumpian triumphalism

Kathleen Parker: Is the White House already changing Donald Trump?

Robert J. Samuelson: Trump's mission impossible?

In Test Of Trump's Immigration Stance, Australia To Transfer Refugees To US

Christian Science Monitor, November 14, 2016

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull of Australia said Sunday that the United States had agreed to take a "substantial" number of refugees currently detained on the Pacific islands of Manus and Nauru. He added Monday that such a transfer will begin only after the inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump in January.

The announcement comes after Australia agreed in September to participate in Washington's plan for resettling Central American refugees, Prime Minister Turnbull's government having said it would take people from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, as well as boosting its annual refugee intake from 5,000 to 18,750. Turnbull at the time said the agreement was "not linked to any other resettlement discussions."

Whether or not a connection exists, skepticism surrounds the likelihood of a Trump administration honoring an agreement to take in refugees from Australia's holding facilities, many of whom are Muslims from Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The president-elect has been clear about his anti-immigration stance, particularly when it comes to those of the Muslim faith.

"It looks pretty clear that the resettlement deal was done as a quid pro quo after Australia agreed to resettle Central American refugees," Peter Chen, professor of political science at the University of Sydney, told Reuters.

"But by holding off and starting the process in the expectation that Hillary Clinton would win the US presidency, it gives Trump the ability to reject the deal."

Australia's position on immigration hardened in July 2013, when a new policy was introduced implementing a refusal to resettle any refugee arriving by boat. Instead, any such arrivals are transferred to the Pacific islands, with the Australian government paying Nauru and Papua New Guinea (of which Manus is a part) to house the asylum seekers.

The Australian Border Force has been successful in preventing any people smuggling operation from landing asylum seekers by boat since July 2014, and they are redoubling their efforts following the latest announcement, lest the possibility of being transferred to the United States acts as a lure. Indeed, to combat this eventuality, Turnbull said that any new arrivals would be ineligible to be a part of this deal.

"The message to the people smugglers and their would-be passengers is very clear," Turnbull told Sky News Australia. "This deal, this arrangement is one off. It applies only, potentially, to those on Nauru and Manus today."

Australia has been increasingly keen to empty its facilities on Nauru and Manus, as criticism of the centers has grown, with some referring to them as the country's equivalent of Guantánamo Bay. A steady stream of alleged human rights violations has been published in the media and from international groups such as Amnesty International and the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

But is the United States likely to ride to the rescue under President Trump? Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies in Washington, thinks not.

"It's so difficult to justify," Mr. Krikorian told Fairfax Media. "I don't expect any Republicans will defend it. I can't see a lot of Democrats defending it either. My sense is that when the word gets out on this, it'll be dead on arrival."

Australia's Refugee Deal May Be Scuppered By Trump, US Expert Warns

Immigration expert Niels Frenzen says Trump will want something in return if he is to honour the deal to take refugees from Nauru and Manus Island

By Paul Karp

The Guardian (UK), November 14, 2016

Donald Trump is likely to tear up Australia's refugee resettlement deal with the United States unless the US gets something significant in return, an American immigration expert has warned.

Niels Frenzen, the director of the immigration clinic at the University of Southern California school of law, also warned that if US vetting had not already started, refugees would not be resettled before Trump was inaugurated as president on 20 January.

On Sunday the Australian government announced a deal to resettle an unspecified number of refugees in the US. On Monday, Turnbull clarified that the US would determine how many refugees it took and said they would come out of its existing refugee quota.

Malcolm Turnbull has said he is confident the deal will hold. On Monday night the deputy prime minister, Barnaby Joyce, said he knew whether Trump would honour the deal, but could not reveal the answer.

On Tuesday, Frenzen told Radio National he assumed Trump would scrap the refugee deal.

"In all likelihood the only way it's going to happen is if the refugees are transferred to the US before inauguration day [20 January]," he said.

"If the US has not already begun its own vetting or so-called background checks until now, if you look at the time the US has taken to vet Syrian refugees ... it's unlikely that that could be accomplished in a few months."

But Frenzen said if the US had been negotiating with Australia since January and vetting had been "ongoing" it was possible refugees could be settled before 20 January.

Frenzen warned that Trump would rescind the deal without the approval of congress. "A deal is a deal, until the deal is changed," he said.

Frenzen said the US election debate on immigration and refugees had been "volatile".

"I don't see that there's much political chance of Trump allowing this deal to go through, unless there is something else going on we're not aware of right now, which is certainly a possibility."

In September the Australian government agreed to take refugees in Costa Rica. Labor has questioned whether that commitment formed the first half of a bigger deal with the US to take Australia's refugees from Manus Island and Nauru.

On ABC's 7.30 program on Monday, Turnbull was asked what the government would tell Trump if he asked why he should accept Australia's refugees.

He replied: "Well it's the basis of a very long history of cooperation and you've seen the way we responded to President Obama's refugee summit in New York, taking additional refugees from Central America."

Asked if the deal was unlikely under Trump, Turnbull said: "You're entitled to speculate about that but I'm confident that the arrangements we've set in place will continue." He refused to countenance a plan B, saying only he was confident the deal would continue.

On ABC's Q&A, Joyce was asked if he believed Trump would honour the deal. He replied: "Even if I do know and the problem with it is because I'm on the national security committee, I do know … I really can't answer you."

Frenzen said he did not believe the Costa Rica deal would be sufficient to convince Trump and suggested taking detainees from Guantanamo Bay would be a bigger bargaining chip.

He noted "one of the biggest barriers" to the deal is that "a significant number of [the Nauru and Manus refugees], if not the majority ... are Muslim". In the campaign Trump called for a ban on Muslims entering the US, then appeared to shift his position by saying properly vetted Muslims might still be allowed in.

Frenzen doubted Trump would be able to deliver on promises to deport illegal immigrants and build a wall or fence between Mexico.

He said he was "not sure" who the two to three million criminal illegal immigrants Trump plans to deport were, because Obama had already deported many in that category.

"People will get over walls or over fences, or under walls. Wall or fence – it's just a campaign slogan, nothing more."

Just The Beginning: Follow Reporter's Trek With Refugees Off Libyan Coast

By Jason Pohl

USA Today, November 14, 2016

MALTA — To say the past week has been a whirlwind might be the understatement of the year, at least in my world. And I'm not just talking about what happened on Election Day.

Understanding how this journalist wound up halfway around the world, embedded on a two-week trip documenting what might be the largest humanitarian crisis in decades requires a little explaining.

This story dates to October.

I interviewed a pair of Poudre Fire Authority firefighters who returned from a two-week deployment volunteering with a non-governmental organization rescuing refugees from the Mediterranean Sea, not far from Libya.

Jim Houck and Estaban Guzman have been involved with Global DIRT for about three years, repeatedly working in the typhoon-ravaged Philippines. Their focus shifted this year when they flew to Malta and joined a team aboard a ship staged off the Libyan coast waiting for word of refugee-filled rafts in distress.

On the night of the third presidential debate, The Coloradoan published the story about their adventures as rhetoric whirled about the global refugee crisis and alleged threats to U.S. security.

President-elect Donald Trump has repeatedly pounded the drum of stricter immigration policies and banning certain people from entering the U.S., citing a purported lack of security systems and suggesting refugees were "ISIS-aligned." Speculation has mounted since his victory about the extent that U.S. policy might change when it comes screening Middle Eastern refugees, tightening an existing system.

Meanwhile, tragedy unfolds daily, generating a passing mention, if anything, among many U.S. news media outlets strapped for resources and reliant on United Nations news releases fed by volunteer groups.

Assailants stormed an overcrowded raft and beat dozens of men, women and children last month. Earlier this

month, the Associated Press reported more than 4,220 migrants have either gone missing or have died in the region. Some victims are educated, English-speaking men and women. Others are children who have yet to know a life devoid of oppression, struggle and fear.

All are human beings.

Nonprofit workers, including Houck, try to stay out of the politics. He just wants to use years of acquired skills and training to help people.

That brings me to this tiny island of Malta.

As I regularly do after interviews, I encouraged Houck at the end of our October meeting to stay in contact. I mentioned in passing he should let me know if a spot opened up for a journalist in the near future.

So when his name appeared on my iPhone not long after that interview, I was beyond speechless. I don't remember the exact words, but they went something like:

"Jason, what are you doing in the middle of November?"

A thousand thoughts raced through my mind. There was Election Day. There were major deadlines looming for my impending master's thesis defense. There was that thing called Thanksgiving. And there was an anniversary with my wife and adventure partner.

My nervous response to Houck: "Hard to say …"

He told me a spot opened up for a journalist to embed for two weeks on the 80-foot ship, the Minden, based in Malta and slated to stage off the Libyan coast until the end of November. He said there would be work involved, like preparing life jackets, prepping meals and other duties as assigned alongside fewer than a 10 crewmembers.

My response: "I'll float it by my boss."

A quick email, a few planning meetings and a handful of conference calls with USA TODAY editors later, my Microsoft Outlook calendar populated with plane ticket confirmation numbers and words this Colorado-based reporter still can't quite believe.

Denver to Malta.

Depart Nov. 11.

Return Nov. 27.

I hitched a ride Friday morning with Houck and another PFA firefighter, Tom Pickles, who is on his first deployment with the nonprofit. We were on separate flights out of Denver and reconnected in Frankfurt, Germany, for the flight to Malta.

The Minden left Malta on Saturday after cruising for about 24 hours to the staging area, at which point we wait for the distress calls to come in.

Then it's all hands on deck.

Suffice to say, the past week or so has been intense.

These next two stand to be even more so.

Reporter Jason Pohl covers public safety for the Coloradoan. Though he will have only limited connectivity during his trip, his reporting will appear in the Coloradoan as well as USA TODAY upon his return. For intermittent updates, depending on connectivity, follow him on Twitter: @pohl_jason.

Austria: 40 Percent Of Islamic Radicals Entered As Migrants

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

VIENNA (AP) — Austria's interior ministry says that of the 287 Islamic radicals identified in the country in the past few years, 40 percent arrived as migrants looking for asylum.

The ministry says its data covers a period from early 2011 and ending July 1 of this year. It released the data Monday in answer to a parliamentary query from the right-wing and anti-migrant Freedom Party.

The ministry says that of the identified radicals, 44 are believed to have been killed in Syria, 87 have returned from fighting in Syria or Iraq and 50 were prevented from joining radical fighters in those two countries. The rest are still believed to be in the region.

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SECRET SERVICE

The FAA Will Limit Flights Over New York Until Trump Is Sworn In

By Mark Berman

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

Until President-elect Donald Trump is sworn in and officially assumes office, flights are going to be restricted over New York because the incoming 45th president will continue living in Trump Tower.

The Federal Aviation Administration said Monday that it was announcing temporary flight restrictions over part of New York until Jan. 21, a day after Trump is set to take the oath of office. These restrictions, which officials say were imposed at the request of the Secret Service, kicked in Monday afternoon.

Generally, the airspace above New York and other major cities already have restrictions. In New York, stricter flight limitations are imposed during major events such as the U.N. General Assembly, which was held earlier this fall, and New Year's Eve, said Laura Brown, a spokeswoman for the FAA.

The Monday announcement, known as a notice to airmen, said the agency was imposing "temporary flight restrictions for VIP movement."

According to the notice, flights are restricted below 3,000 feet above ground level in an area that covers a large swath of Manhattan, as well as parts of Queens along the East River. There were some exceptions, including for any

planes heading to or from the New York area airports, law enforcement-related flights and any military aircraft supporting the Secret Service.

Another VIP restriction was announced in Indiana, where Vice President-elect Mike Pence is still living as he serves out his term as the state's governor.

During the transition period between election and inauguration, different presidents have used their time in various ways. Former president Ronald Reagan spent much of his time in California, and President Obama largely stayed away from Washington.

Trump has spoken to advisers about how many nights each week he will spend at the White House vs. his home at Trump Tower, according to a New York Times report over the weekend.

A spokeswoman for Trump did not respond to a request for comment.

The notice on Monday replaced one issued last week because of what the FAA called "a realignment of geographical restriction." The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, a nonprofit aviation group, said it had asked for a change after the first notice restricted "access to the popular Hudson River corridor." In a posting Monday, the group said the new notice allows pilots to access that corridor — used by sightseeing flights, among other things — while maintaining security for Trump.

Securing Trump Tower Could Cause A Traffic Nightmare

New York Post, November 14, 2016

Midtown could become a traffic apocalypse for the next four years — especially if the Secret Service goes so far as to shut down part of Fifth Avenue as a security measure at Trump Tower.

The Secret Service and the NYPD met last week to begin discussing how to make the 58-story skyscraper more secure now that Donald Trump has become president-elect.

"[The Secret Service] may consider going as far as wanting to shut down Fifth avenue in that block," a police source told The Post.

The source said that's the "worst-case scenario" since it would snarl traffic in the already congested area and disrupt local businesses.

"It's a very big deal for Gucci and Tiffany, and they're screaming," the source added.

Another source said they've discussed closing a stretch of 56th Street next to Trump Tower, but no decisions have been made yet.

For now, pedestrians who want to access businesses on the north side of 56th Street between Fifth Avenue and Madison need to go through a security checkpoint.

Barriers that are currently pressed up against a curb in front of Trump Tower will soon be moved out further into the easternmost lane on Fifth Avenue between 56th and 57th streets, police sources said.

Trucks making deliveries to that part of Fifth Avenue will have to continue unloading at 56th and Sixth, then use hand trucks to wheel their wares down the street.

"When this gets looked at more… [the Secret Service] may have other ideas about what they want to do there, but this is what we're trying to do to satisfy the Secret Service at this point," the police source said. "This is the minimum of what they're going to do."

Secret Service Wants To Shut Down Traffic On Fifth Ave. Around Trump Tower When The President-elect Is In Town: Sources

By Rocco Parascandola, New York Daily News

New York Daily News, November 14, 2016

As President-elect Donald Trump prepares for gridlock in Washington, the city he leaves behind should get ready for the real thing.

The NYPD and the U.S. Secret Service are negotiating over how to secure Manhattan's Trump Tower, the President-elect's home and headquarters, with measures that could include shutting down 5th Avenue.

The two sides are scheduled to meet Thursday to develop plans to keep troublemakers at bay, according to a police source, who said the Secret Service wants to keep traffic off of 5th Avenue whenever Trump is in town.

But top brass in the police department believes shutting down even a portion of one of the city's major avenues would be a nightmare.

"It's a negotiation," the source said. "Their job is to keep the president safe. Our job is to keep the president safe, but also let the people who live and work and visit there have some semblance of normality. It won't be complete normality, but it'll be adjusted normality. "

It was unclear how many blocks of 5th Avenue would have to be closed to accommodate stepped up security at the 5th Avenue and 56th Street tower overlooking Central Park.

154 photos view gallery Protests erupt around the country after Donald Trump is elected president

A spokesman for the Secret Service had no comment on security or the negotiations.

The area around Trump Tower has been Ground Zero for five straight days of protests since Trump's surprise election victory.

The building has been blocked by concrete barriers to keep away protesters and thwart potential car or truck bombs.

The glass tower, which opened in 1983, was built before 9/11, and is not fitted to withstand a terror attack.

The building includes retail, office and residential space.

President-elect Donald Trump is preparing for gridlock in Washington. (CARLO ALLEGRI/REUTERS)

The Federal Aviation Administration has already declared a no-fly zone over the Midtown skyscraper until Trump is sworn in Jan. 21.

The urgency surrounding the security measures was ratcheted up after talk that Trump may not spend all of his living hours in the White House.

According to a report, the billionaire may still try to spend much of his time in his $100,000, three-story apartment, 58th-floor apartment

But the Secret Service is reportedly trying to talk him out of it, according to the London Telegraph.

Merchants said all the new attention has been bad for business.

17 photos view gallery Donald Trump's road to the White House as President-elect

Henri Bendel, the famous retailer directly across Fifth Ave. from the President-elect's home, closed at 2 p.m. on Saturday.and 3:45 on Sunday. Both days they were supposed to stay open until 8 p.m.

The store has also endured fallout from the protests in another way. The theme of the store's annual holiday window is love — in the form of a Love Wall being installed by artist James Goldcrown. Passionate protesters swamped Fifth Ave. on Wednesday as Goldcrown was putting up his love-themed mural.

The window gets unveiled Nov. 15.

Michael Townsend, 41, of Weehawken, New Jersey, was in the neighborhood for a job interview. He said the new security measures are "chilling."

"They don't want to hear us." Townsend said. "They don't want to acknowledge there's a lot more to America than the people who support Trump. So they're going to shut this whole place down."

It was unclear how many blocks of 5th Avenue would have to be closed to accommodate stepped up security at the 5th Avenue and 56th Street tower overlooking Central Park. (Susan Watts/New York Daily News)

"I've had so many conversations, from people who are afraid, to those being condemned. We need to fight and we need to take a stand."

Paul Rossen, 54, a comedy club manager selling NOT MY PRESIDENT buttons on the corner of 5th Avenue and 56th Street, said he had mixed feelings about the lockdown.

""The first thing they did was a damn good idea, with the dump trucks surrounding the buildings," Rossen said. " I think there has to be a balance between incredible risk and being left alone. Airports are a great example. Everyone is getting searched and no one is complaining."

"So far, being kept only one block away, understandable. I've been protesting out here six months, most of it right in front of Trump Tower. All I can say is the balance between free speech and danger must be considered.

"Three blocks seems like a bit much. If that happens, they're going to enjoy a lot more protests. I don't see how that helps anyone."

New Security Concerns At Trump Tower After Election, Officials Say

Newsday (NY), November 14, 2016

With Donald Trump as the next president of the United States, life for New Yorkers is not going to be the same — at least from a security standpoint.

The NYPD and U.S. Secret Service are coming to grips with the reality of protecting Trump and his family when they stay in the Big Apple at the president-elect's glitzy Trump Tower at 725 Fifth Ave.

Police held an internal briefing Monday on the types of security challenges they may face and cops will be meeting with the Secret Service later this week, an NYPD spokesman said. See alsoWho else voted for Trump like LI did?See alsoVoters guide resultsSee alsoMap: See how America voted

Protecting Trump when he stays at his Manhattan residence "will have a big impact on us, bigger than we may know," said Robert Strang, head of the Investigative Management Group, an international security firm with offices in Manhattan and Miami. "We have had visits quite often from Obama and Bush, and it is disruptive, no questions. Streets are closed and traffic is jammed and people detoured blocks away. I have a feeling this will be part of our city life."

The 58-story Trump Tower, built in 1983 with a glass facade, is an added security burden because the building will likely need structural retrofitting and reinforcement to withstand a blast, whether from a small package explosive or a car or truck bomb, security officials said. Built nearly two decades before the Sept 11, 2001, terror attacks, the structure didn't have to conform to the stricter city building codes of today.

Already, the city has installed sand-filled sanitation trucks in front of the building as a temporary measure to block any vehicles attempting to ram it. Fifty-sixth Street between Fifth and Madison avenues is likely to be closed to all traffic whenever Trump is in town, said NYPD spokesman Stephen Davis. Fifth Avenue, said Davis, is likely to have two lanes closest to the tower blocked off as well, perhaps on a permanent basis. That would leave three lanes for traffic.

The tower's glass facade, common on many Fifth Avenue buildings, could sustain damage in an explosion, sending shards over a wide distance. Some experts said that as much as 50 percent of injuries to civilians in previous terrorist explosions were caused by flying glass.

Car bombs against buildings can also cause a complete or partial collapse, said Israeli security expert Arye Kasten of MIP Security. Kasten said one way of remedying that would be to increase the distance between a potential explosion and the building by putting up barriers such bollards — thick posts, usually made of concrete or steel. Strang said any costs would ultimately be borne by the federal government.

Police officials said that a blast assessment, a common study done by many building owners, was likely done on Trump Tower years ago but may have to be re-examined. These studies take into consideration intelligence information, known threats and a structure's vulnerability, said Prof. Ted Krauthammer, head of the Center For Infrastructure Protection and Physical Security at the University of Florida.

"They are very specific for each location," said Krauthammer about blast assessments.

A spokeswoman for the Trump Organization said the company would not comment on security matters.

Anti-Trump Message Takes Darker Turn With Calls For Assassination

Fox News, November 14, 2016

The online vitriol directed at President-elect Donald Trump is getting worse, and critics say social media companies should do more to rein it in.

Since Trump's stunning Election Day victory last week, social media hashtags like #AssassinateTrump and #Killtrump have proliferated. Over the weekend, a protester near Trump Tower held aloft a sign calling for future first lady Melania Trump to be violated, echoing a trending hashtag #RapeMelania.

"This is another example of social media platforms being used to radicalize people," said Eric Feinberg, of GIPEC, a software company that monitors illegal activity and terror-related social media accounts told FoxNews.com. "Terror groups such as ISIS have long utilized this strategy to recruit and radicalize.

"Now anti-Trump anti-government groups are using the same tactic to recruit, radicalize and compensate to cause civil disobedience and unrest in our cities while overburdening the workload of law enforcement in these cities," he added.

Within the social media realm—particularly on Twitter—dozens of calls to kill Trump have been circulating, with some even calling for both Trump and Vice President-elect Mike Pence to be assassinated by their Jan. 20 inauguration.

Those who support Trump took to Twitter as well, mostly to voice anger over the social media platform's perceived hypocrisy. They noted hashtag #HillaryForPrison was blocked during the campaign, while #AssassinateTrump was not.

"So it's ok to trend #AssassinateTrump, but anti-Hillary hashtags were removed immediately," reads one tweet from @TrumpTrain09.

"Twitter censors pro-Trump trends but allows garbage like "Rape Melania," #AssassinateTrump, #NotMyPresident, etc., to trend," reads another tweet from @DukeNukemSez.

Some users said Twitter could bear the blame if something bad occurs.

"If something ever happens to @realDonaldTrump b/c of the stupid trend #AssassinateTrump, @twitter employees shd be charged as an accessory," reads one tweet from @Ima_Deplorable.

Social media is not the only place where the violent rhetoric has surfaced since Election Day.

In Oakland, Calif., last week, demonstrators rioted and graffiti saying "Kill Trump" was found spray painted in several places according to the New York Post.

Sources told the newspaper that the Secret Service intends to investigate all social media postings deemed to contain credible threats while adding that there is a difference between one saying that they intend to kill the president and someone suggesting that someone else should. Generally, indirect threats are not prosecuted.

Start-up Puts CEO On Leave After Online Posts About Assassinating Trump

By Mike Freeman

Los Angeles Times, November 14, 2016

The chief executive of San Diego cybersecurity start-up PacketSled Inc. has been put on administrative leave after election night posts on social media about assassinating President-elect Donald Trump.

Matt Harrigan, who founded PacketSled in 2013, wrote the comments on his Facebook account as election night unfolded. The account has since been deleted, but his comments were copied and posted on the website Reddit.

On Monday, Packetsled issued a statement saying Harrigan had been placed on leave.

"PacketSled takes recent comments made by our CEO seriously," it said. "Once we were made aware of these comments, we immediately reported this information to the Secret Service and will cooperate fully with any inquiries."

Harrigan's posts on election night included one saying, "I'm going to kill the president. Elect," according to the Reddit copy of his Facebook comments..

After a friend responded "You just need to get high," Harrigan wrote, "Nope, getting a sniper rifle and perching myself where it counts. Find a bedroom in the White House that suits you…. I'll find you."

On Sunday, Harrigan turned to Twitter to apologize, saying his comments were meant as a joke.

"My humble apologies that a flawed joke has become public/out of context. My poor judgement does not represent the views of @packetsled customers, investors or the officers of @packetsled," Harrigan wrote in a series of tweets. "I have no malicious intention towards the #POTUS, and apologize to all for my lack of judgement and offensive commentary. I wish you all well."

Efforts to reach Harrigan and PacketSled were unsuccessful. The company makes forensics software that detects where a cyberattack is coming from, what files are being targeted and which devices are being affected, among other things.

The company raised $5 million in a first round of venture capital funding in July, led by San Diego's Keshif Ventures, with Blu Ventures and JHS Ventures participating.

Fairview Park Man Tweets Donald Trump Assassination Threat, Feds Say

Cleveland Plain Dealer, November 14, 2016

CLEVELAND, Ohio — A Fairview Park man has been charged in federal court with tweeting an Election-Night threat against Republican President-elect Donald Trump.

A criminal complaint unsealed Monday says that Zachary Benson made the posts on Twitter early Wednesday morning, right before most major news outlets declared Trump the winner.

"Diplomacy. F---ing fools. I hate you all. I want to bomb every one of your voting booths and your general areas."

"My life goal is to assassinate Trump. Don't care if I serve infinite sentences. That man deserves to decease existing."

A U.S. Secret Service agent interviewed Benson late Wednesday. He admitted to making the threats and was apologetic, the complaint says.

Benson is charged with making threat to a successor to the presidency. He turned himself in Thursday and made his first appearance in front of a judge on Monday. Preliminary and detention hearings are scheduled for later this week.

In his interview with the Secret Service, Benson said he was at a restaurant on Election Night with his father and a friend. They had a few drinks and food before going home, the complaint says.

Benson said he was in his room watching election returns on TV when he tweeted the threats, the complaint says. He said he never had any intentions behind the tweets "and was just frustrated thinking about how President-elect Trump's policies could affect BENSON's job," according to the complaint.

He said he knew he went too far and deleted the tweets when he woke up in the morning, the complaint says. He said he isn't a violent person, but rather anti-social and introverted.

John Gibbons, Benson's attorney, did not immediately return a phone call.

If you would like to comment on this story, please visit Monday's crime and courts comments section.

DC Delegate Pushes To Protect Bikers, Pedestrians During Inauguration Prep

The Hill, November 14, 2016

Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.) wants to ensure that cyclists and pedestrians have access to safe bike lanes and sidewalks during preparations for the presidential inauguration.

In a letter to the U.S. Secret Service, National Park Service (NPS) and the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT), Norton requested a meeting with officials to discuss potential accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians during the construction of grandstands for the inauguration parade.

Construction has already begun in the D.C.-area, resulting in barriers, a large fenced-in area and temporary closures around Pennsylvania Avenue and Lafayette Park.

"Cycling and walking have become important forms of alternative transportation to work and activities," Norton wrote. "With presidential inauguration preparations beginning near the White House, there needs to be a way for people who use Pennsylvania Avenue and Lafayette Park to continue to use this route while construction proceeds."

Norton is calling for a two-month detour that will allow cyclists and pedestrians to access safe pathways in the area.

She also noted in her letter that she successfully worked with NPS and the Secret Service to allow DDOT to construct a bike lane near Lafayette Park, connecting bikers from Vermont Avenue NW to 15th Street NW.

"As with the Lafayette Park bike lane, the Secret Service and NPS will need to work together and consult with DDOT," Norton said. "I ask that the appropriate officials come to my office to discuss these inauguration preparation closures and ways to accommodate our cyclists and pedestrians."

NATIONAL PROTECTION AND PROGRAMS

Senate Panel Takes Comments On REAL ID

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

Airport officials on Monday told a Washington state Senate panel that thousands of passengers may be turned away from the state's airports starting in 2018 if it doesn't move quickly to ensure compliance with a federal law that requires driver's licenses and ID cards to have security

enhancements and be issued to people who can prove they're legally in the U.S.

The Senate Transportation Commission held a work session on REAL ID in order to hear from airport officials, airlines and other groups in advance of the next legislative session that begins in January.

The 2005 federal law sets minimum standards for government-issued identification such as driver's licenses that are required to enter certain areas in federal buildings or board commercial airplanes.

Those standards include requiring applicants to provide proof of identity and legal US residency and requiring states to use counterfeit-resistant security features in the IDs.

Washington is among just a handful of states that aren't in compliance with the REAL ID act and don't have an extension from the federal government, meaning millions of residents who currently have standard Washington driver's licenses now need additional ID for access to some military bases and will eventually be required to show additional documentation for air travel unless the Legislature acts.

"We all know what a difficult issue this is, but I believe that we can't wait any longer to address this matter," said Senate Transportation Committee chairman Sen. Curtis King, R-Yakima.

Only 24 states are fully compliant with REAL ID. But Washington is one of only three states that are not compliant and currently without an extension or a grace period for enforcement. Eventually, Washington residents who only have standard licenses will need additional ID in order to board commercial aircraft.

Under the latest schedule released by the federal government late last year, unless lawmakers pass a law that puts the state in compliance or gets an extension from the government, Washington residents will need additional identification to board commercial flights starting on Jan. 22, 2018. Residents of other states that currently have extensions will have until Oct. 21, 2020.

"We need to be able to move passengers through our airport safely and efficiently," said Wendy Reiter, director of aviation security at Port of Seattle, which operates Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. "If in January 2018 our state's standard issue driver's license is not accepted by the Transportation Security Administration, the impact to our operations will be significant. On a given day, we may be having to turn away thousands of passengers."

Washington is the only state in the country that does not require proof of legal presence in the U.S. to get a standard state driver's license or ID. However, the state does offer, voluntarily and at an extra cost, enhanced driver's licenses and IDs that require proof of U.S. citizenship and are valid under the federal law.

Republican Sen. Don Benton of Vancouver, a member of the committee, expressed frustration that the state hasn't yet taken action.

"We have got to have a secure driver's license in this state," he said. "A government ID card should only be provided to citizens of the country. Period. I hope this Legislature and my colleagues have the intestinal fortitude that it takes to get it done this year."

A previously proposed plan to the Legislature that was never officially introduced would create a two-tiered licensing system that would keep the current enhanced license but would also create a standard state license that would indicate it is not valid for federal purposes. King said that a REAL ID bill will be introduced early next year but specifics have not been decided.

Andres Mantilla, chairman of the Washington state Commission on Hispanic Affairs, said marked licenses would be a "scarlet letter" for some populations.

"The more tiers that are made available, the more avenues there are for potential discrimination of our community," he said.

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TERRORISM INVESTIGATIONS

Three Minnesota Men Sentenced For Trying To Aid Islamic State

Reuters, November 14, 2016

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

The Latest: 10 Years For 3rd Recruit To Islamic State Group

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The Latest on sentencings in Minnesota for men convicted of plotting to join the Islamic State group (all times local):

3:10 p.m.

A federal judge has sentenced a Minnesota man who was part of a conspiracy to join the Islamic State group in Syria to 10 years in prison.

Zacharia Abdurahman (ab-dur-ah-mahn) drew the harshest sentence of the three defendants who appeared before U.S. District Judge Michael Davis in Minneapolis on Monday. While Abdurahman pleaded guilty, he did not cooperate with the government against the other members of what Davis called a "terrorist cell."

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Three More Would-be ISIL Fighters Due In Mpls. Court For Sentencing Tuesday

Minneapolis Star Tribune, November 14, 2016

Sentencing in Minnesota's ISIL terror recruitment conspiracy case is expected to resume Tuesday morning with three more defendants at the federal courthouse in downtown Minneapolis.

The three men set for hearings today — Adnan Farah, Hanad Musse and Hamza Ahmed — pleaded guilty but did not assist the government in its case, and could get stiffer sentences than those sentenced Monday, two of whom cooperated with the prosecution. The three who appeared on Monday got sentences ranging from time served to 10 years in prison.

The sentences handed down by Senior U.S. Judge Michael Davis this week are the first since he introduced the country's only terrorism disengagement and deradicalization program earlier this year in an approach to find more information on handling young, would-be foreign fighters.

A yearlong FBI investigation of terror recruitment in Minnesota led to the convictions of nine young Somali-Minnesotans — and charges against two men who made it to Syria — on charges of conspiracy to support the Islamic State in Syria and the Levant (ISIL). Six pleaded guilty and three were convicted during a trial in Minneapolis last spring, which also included charges of conspiracy to commit murder abroad.

Prosecutors are seeking 15 years in prison for each man, noting that their terrorism convictions automatically elevate the range of possible penalties. In consecutive hearings Tuesday, Davis will sentence:

• Farah, 19, who pleaded guilty shortly before he was scheduled to stand trial alongside his older brother, Mohamed Farah. His attorney asked that he be released to a counseling program.

• Musse, 21, who was stopped in New York while trying to board a plane in 2014. He pleaded guilty and later wrote Davis a letter saying, "I am against terrorism.'' He is asking for 72 months in prison.

• Ahmed, 21, who was pulled off a flight in New York that would have eventually taken him to Istanbul in 2014. He pleaded guilty last April and has asked for a reduced but unspecified sentence that would include a release program drawn up with community members.

Man Who Tweeted FBI Death Threats Works Security At U.S. Bank Stadium « WCCO

WCCO-AM Minneapolis, November 14, 2016

MINNEAPOLIS (WCCO) — A friend of those sentenced on Monday tweeted death threats against federal employees in response to the arrests last year. Khaalid Abdulkadir is currently on probation.

Abdulkadir calls himself a regular American-Somali kid. One who got caught up when friends were arrested for plotting to join ISIS.

"As teenagers we're always on social media, we talk to a lot of people. We post a lot of tweets," Abdulkadir said.

One of the threats reads in part, "Kill them FBI and expletive Judge." Court documents show he admitted the threats were meant to intimidate.

"Yes I did admit to sending these tweets but I do not recall any of them," Abdulkadir said.

Abdulkadir said he has no knowledge of ISIS recruiting in Minnesota. But the 20-year-old admits there is a disconnect with Somali-American Muslim teens.

"When you're in the middle of the old culture and the new culture that we're in right now being American Muslim, American Somali kid you try to figure your own self out, maybe someone that gets the best of you sometimes," Abdulkadir said.

Court documents show Abdulkadir connected with known terror suspects from Minnesota over social media. He told WCCO he doesn't recall it.

Instead, he calls life on probation tough. He's required to wear an ankle monitor.

"It's hard to see when I try to get a different job or put myself in a different situation that I'm being targeted as a terrorist," Abdulkadir said.

"Have you ever been interested in joining ISIS?" WCCO Reporter Jennifer Mayerle asked.

"No," Abdulkadir said.

"Have you ever thought about leaving Minnesota for that cause?"

"No."

He currently has two jobs.

"I work at U.S. Bank Stadium as a security guard and I'm also working at a home care," Abdulkadir said.

Abdulkadir is responsible for checking what people bring into the stadium. He said his punishment taught him a lesson.

"It opened my eyes to be honest and it changed my life around too, the way I think, the way I see stuff," Abdulkadir said.

As part of the plea, Abdulkadir's charge was reduced from a felony to a misdemeanor. He faced 25 years in prison. The judge sentenced him to three years probation, with conditions. We're told he did violate at least one of those by lying about where he was going.

FBI Signs Key Contract For Social Media Surveillance

By Eric Lieberman

Daily Caller, November 14, 2016

The FBI has reportedly reached an agreement with a data analysis company to acquire information pertaining to people's social media content.

It's set to sign a contract with Dataminr in order to obtain its Indicators and Warnings capability, "which will permit the FBI to search the complete Twitter firehose, in near real-time, using customizable filters," according to the Federal Business Opportunities official government page.

The FBI apparently wants the capacity to scan Twitter in a more expeditious and effective way so it can detect any terrorist communications or signs of a terror attack. This will likely set up the perennial security versus privacy debate.

The social media platform claimed in August that it terminated more than 235,000 accounts in just six months. "This brings our overall number of suspensions to 360,000 since the middle of 2015," Twitter announced in an official blog post. "As noted by numerous third parties, our efforts continue to drive meaningful results, including a significant shift in this type of activity off of Twitter."

But the FBI will purchase roughly 200 licenses for Dataminr's Advanced Alerting Tool in order to revamp its intelligence collecting capabilities.

Twitter originally blocked intelligence agencies from using Dataminr services in May, according to nextgov.com, but this contract only provides access to a portion of the analytics.

The FBI Just Got Its Hands On Data That Twitter Wouldn't Give The CIA

The Verge, November 14, 2016

The FBI has a new view into what's happening on Twitter. Last week, the bureau hired Dataminr, a Twitter-linked analytics firm, to provide an "advanced alerting tool" to over 200 users. Twitter owns a 5 percent stake in Dataminr and provides it with exclusive access to the full "firehose" of live tweets, making it a valuable resource for anyone looking for illegal activity on the service.

"Twitter is used extensively by terrorist organizations and other criminals to communicate, recruit, and raise funds for illegal activity," the FBI wrote in a contracting document. "With increased use of Twitter by subjects of FBI investigations, it is critical to obtain a service which will allow the FBI to identify relevant information from Twitter in a timely fashion."

In order to identify that information, Dataminr agreed to provide its tool "to search the complete Twitter firehose, in near-real time, with customizable filters." "Twitter is used extensively by terrorist organizations and other criminals."

However, the FBI contract seems to violate a key clause in Twitter's Developer Agreement, which specifically forbids using the provided data to "investigate, track or surveil Twitter's users." In practice, that has often meant banning third-party companies found to be reselling data.

Earlier this year, Twitter revoked API access to a tool called Geofeedia, citing the same clause in the Developer agreement, after a reports showed the tool had been used by police to target protestors in Baltimore. Facebook was also a Geofeedia customer, and used it to catch an intruder in Mark Zuckerberg's office.

This isn't the first time Dataminr has run up against Twitter's anti-surveillance clause. In May, Twitter revoked CIA access to Dataminr, a move that was taken as part of a larger ban on US intelligence agencies using the product. "Data is largely public," Twitter said in a statement at the time, "and the U.S. government may review public accounts on its own, like any user could."

The Verge has asked Twitter to clarify whether the FBI constitutes a similar violation of the developer agreement. The company did not immediately respond. -Source: Public Posting, Request for Quote; Justification of Single-Source

Alleged Attack Plotter Lied On Passport Application

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

CINCINNATI (AP) – New court filings indicate a southwest Ohio man accused of plotting attacks against a U.S. military official and a local police station had hoped to travel to Syria and attain martyrdom but lied on a passport application and hid his plans from his parents, who had wanted him to be a chemist.

The filings made ahead of Munir Abdulkader's sentencing, scheduled for Friday, reveal more details about the West Chester man's purported plans, The Cincinnati Enquirer (http://cin.ci/2eoXSIE) reported.

The documents indicate that the January 2015 arrest of Christopher Cornell, who was accused of plotting to attack the U.S. Capitol in support of the Islamic State and later pleaded guilty to charges, was among factors that prompted Abdulkader to change his plans about traveling and focus on domestic targets.

Investigators say the 22-year-old Abdulkader communicated with a member of the Islamic State and plotted to abduct and kill a military employee and attack a police station that wasn't identified.

He pleaded guilty in March to attempting to kill officers and employees of the United States, material support of a foreign terrorist organization and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a violent crime.

He was arrested in a Mason parking lot in May 2015 after buying an AK-47 rifle in an arrangement set up by a confidential government source.

A former CIA operations officer who has written extensively about terrorist organizations claims Abdulkader was unfairly set up, the newspaper reported. In a document filed in court, Marc Sageman argues that the FBI's use of that confidential source gave Abdulkader means to commit an attack and that he wasn't enabled to carry out without the government's involvement.

That argument doesn't fly with prosecutors. They argue that Abdulkader had been in contact with an Islamic State operative before the confidential informant contacted him. U.S. Attorney Benjamin Glassman also suggested that Sageman, the author of a book titled "Misunderstanding Terrorism," is biased and "rewrote the facts."

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Trump's Most Important New Partner: The Intelligence Community

By Michael V. Hayden

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

Michael V. Hayden, a principal at the Chertoff Group and visiting professor at George Mason University's Schar School of Policy and Government, was director of the National Security Agency from 1999 to 2005 and the Central Intelligence Agency from 2006 to 2009.

I don't envy the president-elect's intelligence briefers. Candidate Donald Trump stormed through the election as a primal force of dystopia, anger and accusation. More often than not, there was little effort to back up accusations with fact. Many of them were, in fact, not true.

Hence, we were told we could "take out terrorist families" because the 9/11 hijackers' families were aware of the attack and fled North America just prior to the hijackings. Or that the president of the United States actually "founded ISIS"; he didn't make errors in policy and set the conditions for the Islamic State terror group to emerge, he founded it. And Mexicans (rapists, mostly) are still streaming across our southern border. Most Muslims "hate us" (check out that 9/11 celebratory video from New Jersey).

Then the candidate disregarded intelligence that Russia was hacking the emails of the Democratic National Committee claiming, "I don't think anybody knows it was Russia that broke into the DNC" and "Our country has no idea."

With that record, a fair question is: What role will facts and fact-bearers play in the Trump administration. What happens when he is told that Syrian refugees are already extremely vetted? Or when his intel briefer dishes up that the Russians really aren't targeting the Islamic State?

What controls — new data or preexisting mythology? For many authoritarian populists (think the leaders of Turkey, Venezuela and Russia), it's the latter.

The intelligence community sometimes makes mistakes, but it strives to create a fact-based, inductive view of the world. From as much data as it can acquire, it works to create general conclusions. Not surprisingly, there are often tensions with policy makers who tend to be deductive, trying to apply their vision to specific situations.

And there are special issues when data-based conclusions collide with vision-based expectations. We had long and serious discussions in 2007 when a draft estimate assessed that Iran had stopped work on an aspect of its nuclear weapons program. I suspect a similar dynamic unfolded in the Obama administration when evidence pointed to the rebirth of al-Qaeda in Iraq in the face of claims that the organization was "on the run." The unpleasant fact is always contentious.

I've had my debates with presidents and vice presidents over intelligence estimates. I've argued over facts and analysis. But all this was done under the broad mantle of empiricism, the belief that truth emanated from evidence and experience, not from a priori reasoning, intuition or faith — even faith in self.

The president-elect has powerful instincts that seem to have served him well during the campaign. But instinct only goes so far. The president-elect does not know more about the Islamic State than the generals.

So now, as the weight of the office should become apparent, how much will the president-elect accept that he needs intensive briefings and readings to supplement a thin personal database on global affairs?

What kind of attention span will he have for issues that are complex, nuanced, historical and seemingly endless: "So that's it for the Islamic State, Mr. President-elect. What next? Jabhat al-Nusra? Boko Haram? AQAP? Or should we cover Sunnism vs. Shiism?"

How much humility will be on offer — as in the president-elect admitting a lack of knowledge in order to better learn? How much will he listen to absorb, rather than to rebut? Last summer's comment about reading the briefers' body language to divine their opposition to administration policy was not encouraging.

Most important, which of the president-elect's existing instincts and judgments are open to revision as more data is revealed?

One important sign will be who attends briefings with him. In August, candidate and staff questioned the integrity and competence of the intelligence community even before their first session.

Better now if the candidate enlists folks to help him leverage the output of a 100,000-person, $53 billion annual enterprise largely designed to serve him and make him wiser.

For its part, the intelligence community needs to understand how the president-elect learns and how contrarian ideas are best served up to him. Not an easy task.

And the intelligence community needs to stand its ground, even, or especially, when it is irritating the client in chief. Simply writing down an unwelcome assessment or saying it once is not enough.

Many factors legitimately influence decision-making, including a president's intuition. Intelligence is rarely the sole determinant of an action. Yet good intelligence should create the basis, and set the outside boundaries, for rational choices.

That's the tough task before the president-elect's intelligence briefers, and they owe its accomplishment to their professional ethic, to the nation — and to the new president.

Read more about this topic:

Jackson Diehl: The two immediate tests for Trump's foreign policy

Robert D. Kaplan: On foreign policy, Donald Trump is no realist

CYBER NEWS

Teenager's Malware Disrupted 911 Call Centers In 12 States

FedScoop, November 14, 2016

Several U.S. 911 emergency call centers said they were flooded with fake phone calls late last month.

Emergency 911 call centers located in at least 12 different U.S. states, including Arizona, Washington and California, were recently the target of a widespread distributed denial of service attack that disrupted normal services, Department of Homeland Security officials tell CyberScoop.

While local media outlets in some cities reported the occurrence of separate emergency call center outages, CyberScoop has learned that multiple incidents are linked to a single actor.

DDoS attacks launched in late October were aimed at public service answering points, or PSAPs, in multiple geographic areas. PSAPs are call centers responsible for police, firefighting, and ambulance services.

Several U.S. 911 emergency call centers said they were flooded with fake phone calls late last month. The immense volume of connection requests nearly put authorities in Arizona "in immediate danger of losing service to their switches," according to an official statement. Operators could not distinguish fake, incoming requests from genuine calls for help.

Each DDoS attack relied upon a network of infected iPhones. Once compromised, the smartphone would automatically and repetitively send calls to the nearest emergency call center.

A teenage hacker arrested in Arizona's Maricopa County is supposedly responsible for originally creating and then sharing the malware used to infect the devices. This virus — which when downloaded would gain total access of a device — was spread through people sharing it on social media and several other websites, investigators said. One of the websites that hosted the computer virus had reached nearly 150,000 page views before being shut down.

The 18-year-old arrested in Arizona is named Meetkumar Hiteshbhai Desai, according to charging documents. He claimed that his intentions were "to make a non-harmful, but annoying bug." He was booked on three counts of computer tampering.

An FBI spokesperson and The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office declined to comment.

A release from the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office reads: "[Desai] told investigators he had an online friend that provided him with a bug that they thought they should look into and tweak. Meet looked at the bug and discovered that he could manipulate the function and add annoying pop ups, commands to open email, and activate the telephone dialing feature on iOS cell phones by utilizing a java script [sic] code that he created."

The teenager's computer virus spread like wildfire because it was shared multiple times over by social media users on Twitter and YouTube, among other platforms. As a result, in a short period of time, the malware-laden link was quickly clicked numerous times by different people across the internet in different U.S. states.

On Oct. 26, Olympia, Wa.-based media outlet The Olympian reported that a Thurston County man had been arrested for sharing a link containing Desai's malware. Charges against the unnamed man have yet to be made public. He reportedly told investigators that he was unaware of the damages caused.

"We believe the cyberattack in Thurston County was connected to other similar occurrences throughout the nation," said Keith Flewelling, executive director of Thurston 911 Communications. "We are taking all reasonable and available precautions to mitigate cyberthreats. Cybersecurity is a high priority for the State of Washington's E911 Coordination Office."

DHS first began investigating the string of emergency call center outages shortly after original reports came from a local agency. Since then, DHS has been disseminating relevant information through multiple partners including the FCC, the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials, the National Emergency Number Association, the National Association of State 911 Administrators, and the

National Fusion Center Association, along with all major telecom companies.

"The Department of Homeland Security continues to work with federal, state and private sector partners to mitigate the effects of recent Telephone Denial of Services attacks affecting Public Service Answering Points in various states," said DHS spokesperson Scott McConnell.

Homeland Security's Secret Project To Change How We Think About Cybersecurity

MuckRock, November 14, 2016

In 2014 MuckRock user Scott Ainslie received an unexpected response from the Department of Homeland Security. Despite requesting documents for a DHS files related to a series of foreign cyberattacks codenamed "Operation Aurora," they responded with a video clip and 840 pages of documents relating to a different Operation Aurora that DHS conducted in 2007.

Run by the DHS Control Systems Security Program, that operation was focused on hacking into a 27-ton generator — 4,000 pounds heavier than an M3 Bradley tank — and opening its circuit breakers long enough for the machine to slip out of sync. This caused the generator to experience "tremendous over-torque stresses," and do what happened in the video below:

Blow up.

This test, which lasted all of three minutes, took almost a full year to plan, was all done to prove the existence of a cybersecurity flaw called the "Aurora Vulnerability." This vulnerability deals with what are called digital protective relays which manage circuit breakers in generators, motors and other parts of power grid substations. All of America's infrastructure relies on these protective relays to make sure the machines that run our country don't go out of sync.

What this project proved is that hackers could override our infrastructure's defense mechanisms and turn it against us, affecting facilities like oil refineries, water plants, and chemical factories.

And that the US government is on the case, blowing up generators and spending over two million dollars on a single project trying to figure out how to solve this potentially catastrophic design flaw. Which is why the response – or lack thereof – to the project is so confounding.

In order to fully cover what this document says about US cybersecurity efforts and the way the government approaches threat modeling, we will be following up on the Aurora Test documents in the coming weeks. Next week, we'll be looking at how MuckRock even got hold of these records with a story about an "accidental" FOIA release and what happened next. It wasn't pretty.

TSA Abandons PreCheck Expansion Search Over Cybersecurity Concerns

Fox News, November 14, 2016

Plans for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to expand the enrollment options for its PreCheck program have been abandoned recently due to concerns over cybersecurity.

According to Politico.com, TSA officials have been working over the last year to partner with private companies to expand the PreCheck application network-- but the increase in cybersecurity risks has forced the agency to call off its search.

The TSA was hoping to reach a goal of 25 million people enrolled in the PreCheck and Global Entry program by 2019 set forth by the Department of Homeland Security, but the agency is not willing to risk the security of its members to meet those numbers now.

The TSA PreCheck program currently has an estimated 4 million participants.

Part of the setback includes the issue that TSA couldn't guarantee that sensitive testing data would be protected by the private companies it was working with on the PreCheck program. The testing had originally called on private companies to pre-screen large numbers of applicants for criminal background checks and citizenship verification.

"While risk mitigations were included in the current RFP testing approach to protect the sensitive data during testing, the TSA has determined it will no longer accept the risk associated with sharing test data," TSA officials said in a statement.

TSA isn't the only organization pushing for increased enrollment in the PreCheck program, as the U.S. Travel Association continues to advocate for travelers to sign up to help speed up the flier process of moving through screening lines at airports across the country.

SEC Weighs Cyber Risks To Proposed 'Flash Crash' Database

The Hill, November 14, 2016

The SEC is weighing cybersecurity concerns as it decides whether to approve plans for a new program intended to address flash crashes in the market.

Regulators will meet on Tuesday to decide on the program, known as the consolidated audit trail (CAT). The program would create the largest database of securities transaction information in the world when completed. The Securities and Exchange Commission data system is being built to help regulators understand market actions following the 2010 flash crash, an incident in which stock markets plummeted and rebounded in the span of roughly 30 minutes.

According to the official website, the CAT will maintain data on over 100 million customer accounts and "will ingest

58 billion records of quote, order and executions … for equities and options on a daily basis."

The national securities exchanges and associations that self-regulate the financial industry created and submitted finalized plans for the CAT in late April. Those self-regulatory groups include the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority and stock exchanges such as the New York Stock Exchange.

Industry security issues.

Industry officials expressed their grievances in a series of comment letters, many of which highlighted what they see as a lack of detail in the plan's cybersecurity measures.

George Gilbert, counsel at the Investment Council Institute (ICI), told The Hill Extra there were two key principles that warrant further explanation.

First, it's important to know the security program is dynamic and is being tested and evaluated on a constant basis to discover weaknesses. Also, a third-party investigator should frequently audit the security program to improve its effectiveness.

"The proposal read just a little bit static," Gilbert said. "You want a security protocol that's going to develop and mature over time."

Second, it's critical to designate controls on who can access data and from where.

"Maintaining the physical security of the data is the heart of this issue," Gilbert said. "Additional access points provide multiple opportunities for people to manipulate data, which renders it exponentially more difficult to guarantee data security."

David Bellaire, president of the Financial Services Institute, told The Hill Extra he has concerns about how CAT overseers would proceed in the event of a data breach.

"We don't know whether [the SEC] will allow participants to suspend CAT submissions in the case of an ongoing breach and we don't know what their process will be to review incidents concerning what, if any, corrective actions need to be taken," he said. "Another aspect is that we think the SEC should work with the platform provider to make it clear as to who bears the liability risk if the platform is breached and investor data is obtained."

Purposely opaque.

The self-regulatory groups' submitted plan was purposely vague. The SEC required them to provide only a basic outline of security measures under its rules.

The Financial Information Forum's (FIF) comment letter said the problem with a generalized plan is that it is difficult to determine the regulators' objectives.

"As currently stipulated, it is unclear whether a provision related to data security has been omitted because it is too detailed … or whether it is missing because it is not intended as a requirement for the Plan Processor," the letter stated.

Janet Early, a senior consultant at the FIF, told The Hill Extra her organization wasn't seeking details of the plan that would jeopardize security; they just want a more focused outline from the regulators.

"The outline provided in the plan did not contain enough specifics to satisfy us in terms of knowing where the emphasis was going to be placed or not placed," she said. "We don't need to know the specific encryption algorithm, but we did need to know more specifics included in the plan."

The self-regulatory organizations did propose to amend sections of the plan that previously excluded SEC staff from heightened data access standards, including making them execute a "Safeguard of Information Affidavit," which would hold individuals personally liable for data misuse.

What To Look For In Cyber Policy During Trump's First 100 Days – FCW

Federal Computer Week, November 14, 2016

A former Pentagon official said the incoming administration must retain a focus on improving cybersecurity for critical infrastructure.

President-elect Donald Trump must hit the ground running with policy that supports gains in cooperation between the public sector and private critical infrastructure providers if his administration is to stay ahead of growing cybersecurity threats, according to a former federal official.

"He needs to ensure he's prepared to respond to a cyberattack on infrastructure," said Paul Stockton, former assistant secretary of defense for homeland defense and Americas' security affairs and now managing director of Sonecon, a security and risk management services provider. "He can't wait until deep into his administration. He had to do it from his first day."

When Stockton was assistant secretary from 2009 to 2013, he advised Defense Department leaders on policy, strategy and implementation issues, including countering weapons of mass destruction, cyber operations, homeland defense activities, antiterrorism, continuity of government operations and mission assurance, as well as defense support for civil authorities.

In an Oct. 3 speech, Trump said he would make cybersecurity "an immediate and top priority" for his administration. He vowed to tackle the issue with a "cyber review team" made up of military, civilian and private-sector experts who would examine the vulnerability of government systems.

The team "will proceed with the most sensitive systems first, but ultimately all systems will be analyzed and made as secure as modern technology permits," Trump said. Although his remarks covered cybercrimes against private industry and federal systems, they did not specifically mention critical infrastructure threats.

In an interview with FCW on Nov. 10, Stockton said the threat to critical infrastructure is perhaps the most pressing

cybersecurity issue for the president-elect. The federal government's relationships with private critical infrastructure providers is improving thanks to enhanced information sharing that reaches beyond traditional critical infrastructure providers into more specific areas, he added.

Stockton said Trump's transition team must pay close attention to existing public/private partnerships and the protection structures they've established and understand how they work. Trump's transition leaders "should be prioritizing their effort," Stockton said. "It's important they be prepared on the first day. It's imperative."

In their first days in office, new presidents can be tested by foreign actors, natural disasters and other crises. In today's environment, Stockton said, the threats can as readily arise in the cyber realm as in physical form, and an attack on critical infrastructure could be particularly tempting because it could produce both cyber and physical results.

In the first 100 days of Trump's administration, the former business mogul's relationship with Russia is another touchstone for cybersecurity officials and the general public.

"Watch how Trump handles allegations of Russian intervention" in the U.S. election, Stockton said. During his campaign, Trump publicly encouraged Russia to hack rival Hillary Clinton's email. Although he later said he was joking, the episode sparked questions about his relationship with Russian officials.

How Trump handles questions about that relationship could indicate how he might handle future state-sponsored cyber intrusions. "They need to send a message internationally on how they will handle hacks," Stockton said.

He added that "Trump should continue to strengthen partnerships with critical infrastructure. He will inherit an effective critical infrastructure architecture. How he uses it is up to him."

Amber Rudd Signs Order Extraditing Hacker To US

By Jane Croft

Financial Times, November 14, 2016

Full-text stories from the Financial Times are available to FT subscribers by clicking the link.

Adult Friend Finder And Penthouse Hacked In Massive Personal Data Breach

Over 412m accounts from pornography sites and sex hookup service reportedly leaked as Friend Finder Networks suffers second hack in just over a year

By Samuel Gibbs

The Guardian (UK), November 14, 2016

Adult dating and pornography site company Friend Finder Networks has been hacked, exposing the private details of more than 412m accounts and making it one of the largest data breaches ever recorded, according to monitoring firm Leaked Source.

The attack, which took place in October, resulted in email addresses, passwords, dates of last visits, browser information, IP addresses and site membership status across sites run by Friend Finder Networks being exposed.

The breach is bigger in terms of number of users affected than the 2013 leak of 359 million MySpace users' details and is the biggest known breach of personal data in 2016. It dwarfs the 33m user accounts compromised in the hack of adultery site Ashley Madison and only the Yahoo attack of 2014 was larger with at least 500m accounts compromised.

Friend Finder Networks operates "one of the world's largest sex hookup" sites Adult Friend Finder, which has "over 40 million members" that log in at least once every two years, and over 339m accounts. It also runs live sex camera site Cams.com, which has over 62m accounts, adult site Penthouse.com, which has over 7m accounts, and Stripshow.com, iCams.com and an unknown domain with more than 2.5m accounts between them.

Friend Finder Networks vice president and senior counsel, Diana Ballou, told ZDnet: "FriendFinder has received a number of reports regarding potential security vulnerabilities from a variety of sources. While a number of these claims proved to be false extortion attempts, we did identify and fix a vulnerability that was related to the ability to access source code through an injection vulnerability."

Ballou also said that Friend Finder Networks brought in outside help to investigate the hack and would update customers as the investigation continued, but would not confirm the data breach.

Penthouse.com's chief executive, Kelly Holland, told ZDnet: "We are aware of the data hack and we are waiting on FriendFinder to give us a detailed account of the scope of the breach and their remedial actions in regard to our data."

Leaked Source, a data breach monitoring service, said of the Friend Finder Networks hack: "Passwords were stored by Friend Finder Networks either in plain visible format or SHA1 hashed (peppered). Neither method is considered secure by any stretch of the imagination."

The hashed passwords seem to have been altered to be all in lowercase, rather than case specific as entered by the users originally, which makes them easier to break, but possibly less useful for malicious hackers, according to Leaked Source.

Among the leaked account details were 78,301 US military email addresses, 5,650 US government email addresses and over 96m Hotmail accounts. The leaked database also included the details of what appear to be almost 16m deleted accounts, according to Leaked Source.

To complicate things further, Penthouse.com was sold to Penthouse Global Media in February. It is unclear why

Friend Finder Networks still had the database containing Penthouse.com user details after the sale, and as a consequence exposed their details with the rest of its sites despite no longer operating the property.

It is also unclear who perpetrated the hack. A security researcher known as Revolver claimed to find a flaw in Friend Finder Networks' security in October, posting the information to a now-suspended Twitter account and threatening to "leak everything" should the company call the flaw report a hoax.

This is not the first time Adult Friend Network has been hacked. In May 2015 the personal details of almost four million users were leaked by hackers, including their login details, emails, dates of birth, post codes, sexual preferences and whether they were seeking extramarital affairs.

David Kennerley, director of threat research at Webroot said: "This is attack on AdultFriendFinder is extremely similar to the breach it suffered last year. It appears to not only have been discovered once the stolen details were leaked online, but even details of users who believed they deleted their accounts have been stolen again. It's clear that the organisation has failed to learn from its past mistakes and the result is 412 million victims that will be prime targets for blackmail, phishing attacks and other cyber fraud."

Over 99% of all the passwords, including those hashed with SHA-1, were cracked by Leaked Source meaning that any protection applied to them by Friend Finder Networks was wholly ineffective.

Leaked Source said: "At this time we also can't explain why many recently registered users still have their passwords stored in clear-text especially considering they were hacked once before."

Peter Martin, managing director at security firm RelianceACSN said: "It's clear the company has majorly flawed security postures, and given the sensitivity of the data the company holds this cannot be tolerated."

Russia Investigating Microsoft After Kaspersky Antitrust Complaint

International Business Times, November 14, 2016

Russian antitrust authorities are investigating Microsoft for possible abuse of dominance after antivirus maker Kaspersky Labs filed a complaint with the country's Federal Antimonopoly Service (FAS). In its complaint, Kaspersky accused Microsoft of "using its dominating position in the market of operating systems to create competitive advantages for its own [antivirus] product."

In a lengthy blog post Thursday, Kaspersky CEO Eugene Kaspersky said Microsoft gave independent antivirus developers only one week to make their software compatible with Windows 10, and even in the case of compatible antivirus being installed, the operating system kept prompting users to activate the inbuilt Windows Defender antivirus, which would automatically disable any third-party security software.

Kaspersky even quotes from George Orwell's "Animal Farm" ("All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.") to drive home the point that Microsoft violates its own policy on the number of antivirus applications that can simultaneously run on its OS. He also says the inbuilt security program in Windows 10, Defender, "is far from the best protection you can get."

That claim is echoed by various reviews and comparisons. According to av-test.org, Windows Defender scored a 3.5 on 6 for Windows 10, while at least a dozen third-party antivirus programs, including Kaspersky, scored 5.5 or higher on the protection scale in benchmarking carried out in October. Various other compilations of the best antivirus programs available, such as by PC magazine or PC Antivirus Reviews, do not list Windows Defender in the top 10 (they all feature Kaspersky).

PC Magazine even says: "Whichever Windows version you're using, your computer is theoretically under the protection of the built-in Microsoft Windows Defender. However, our hands-on tests and independent lab tests show that you're better off with a third-party antivirus solution."

An employee works near screens in the virus lab at the headquarters of Russian cyber security company Kaspersky Labs, Moscow, July 29, 2013.

Photo: REUTERS/Sergei Karpukhin

Taking up the Kaspersky complaint, Russia's FSA said it is investigating Microsoft. Anatoly Golomolzin, deputy head of FAS, said a statement: "Since Microsoft itself develops antivirus software — Windows Defender that switches on automatically if third-party software fails to adapt to Windows 10 in due time, such actions lead to unreasonable advantages for Microsoft on the software market. Our task is to ensure equal conditions for all participants on this market."

The fact that Windows has security flaws is no news, but the point was driven home recently when Google publicly announced a vulnerability in the OS after Microsoft did not fix the issue even a week after being informed of it by Google.

The Redmond, Washington, company has been at odds with Moscow the last few months. Russia announced in September it would start replacing some Microsoft products with local software to reduce reliance on foreign technology. The company also blamed Russian hackers from exploiting the vulnerability exposed by Google.

Kaspersky: Microsoft Is Thwarting Third-Party Antivirus Makers

PC Magazine, November 14, 2016

Kaspersky says Windows 10 is too aggressive at disabling other antivirus programs; Russia is investigating.

Microsoft is trying to prevent antivirus companies from offering their software for Windows 10, according to complaints filed in the European Union and Russia last week.

Following a complaint from antivirus software maker Kaspersky Labs, Russia's Federal Antimonopoly Service (FAS) opened an investigation into Microsoft's practices related to Windows Defender, the built-in antivirus software in Windows 10.

The Russian investigation claims Microsoft has reduced the timeframe for third-party developers to ensure their software is compatible with Windows 10 from two months to six days. If the software doesn't meet certain requirements within that timeframe, it's replaced with Windows Defender.

"Since 'Microsoft' itself develops antivirus software—Windows Defender that switches on automatically if third-party software fails to adapt to Windows 10 in due time—such actions lead to unreasonable advantages for 'Microsoft' on the software market," FAS Deputy Head Anatoly Golomolzin said in a statement. "Our task is to ensure equal conditions for all participants on this market."

Russian cybersecurity expert Eugene Kaspersky said his company, which is one of the largest third-party antivirus providers, has filed similar complaints with the EU.

"The trend is clear: Microsoft is gradually squeezing independent developers out of the Windows ecosystem," Kaspersky wrote in a blog post. He cited several troublesome aspects to how Windows 10 handles antivirus software, such as automatically deactivating third-party antivirus programs when users upgrade from a previous operating system.

Kaspersky also claimed that Windows Defender alerts users that it is turned off if they have a separate compatible antivirus product. The pop-up alert makes it easy for users to turn on Defender and uninstall their other program without realizing it, Kaspersky wrote.

Microsoft did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Kaspersky's claims and the Russian investigation. But the company on Friday boasted about Windows 10's built-in security capabilities, including increased detection and blocking in Windows Defender.

"Windows Defender, which is enabled by default, can respond to new threats faster using improved cloud protection and automatic sample submission features to block malware 'at first sight,'" Microsoft wrote in a blog post. "We've also improved Windows Defender's behavioral heuristics to help determine if a file is performing ransomware-related activities, and then detect and take action more quickly."

Tesco Was Warned Before Hack

Computer Business Review, November 14, 2016

Reports say dark web chats described the bank as a cash machine

Tesco Bank was warned about criminals boasting on the dark web that they could easily steal money from the online bank in the weeks before it revealed that 9,000 accounts were breached and £2.5m stolen.

Reports in the FT.com said Cyberint, a security firm said it had found and warned Tesco Bank about conversations found on forums claiming that it was a 'cash milking cow' and that it was 'easy to cash out.'

There is no evidence that he boasts and the subsequent large scale hack were linked.

Last week it issued prepared statements acknowledging the hack, apologising and saying that money had been refunded.

The FT reported that another company, Codified security said its researchers found vulnerabilities but were rebuffed when they tried to contact the bank.

Tesco told the FT that it received lots of approaches from consultants.

Other reports in the Sunday Times said that the money stolen had been used by a gang purchasing thousands of low priced goods using contactless mobile phone payments in Brazil and the US.

CBR asked experts what the Bank had to do next and if it were likely that any arrests would be made?

Tesco Issued the following statement on Nov 8th.

Tesco Bank announces full service has resumed for customers

Tesco Bank today confirmed normal service has resumed following the temporary suspension of online transactions from current accounts.

The Bank also confirmed that personal data was not compromised as a result of fraud that took place over the weekend of 5-6 November and that online transactions had been suspended to prevent criminal activity.

Tesco Bank CEO, Benny Higgins commented:

"Our first priority throughout this incident has been protecting and looking after our customers and we'd again like to apologise for the worry and inconvenience this issue has caused.

"We've now refunded all customer accounts affected by fraud and lifted the suspension of online debit transactions so that customers can use their accounts as normal. We'd also like to reassure our customers that none of their personal data has been compromised."

Tesco Bank has now confirmed around 9,000 customers were affected by these fraudulent transactions and all customers affected were fully reimbursed by the evening of Tuesday 8 November. The total cost of refunding these customers is estimated to be £2.5 million.

Tesco Bank confirmed it is continuing to work closely with the authorities and regulators in their criminal investigation of this incident.

Notes to editors

Tesco Bank has 7.8 million customer accounts across the UK. 136,000 customers hold current accounts with the Bank, of these 9,000 were identified as being victims of fraud.

Although services such as mobile banking, cash withdrawals, chip and pin payments, existing bill payments and direct debits have continued as normal throughout this incident, Tesco Bank suspended online debit transactions as a precautionary measure on Monday 7 November. This suspension has now been lifted and normal service was resumed for customers on Tuesday 8 November.

In The Lame Duck, How Congress Makes Cybersecurity A Non-Partisan Priority

Forbes, November 14, 2016

Mr. Franzetti is cofounder and Chief Strategy Officer for Risk Cooperative, a strategy, risk and capital management firm.

Senator Richard Blumenthal is one of seven senators who sponsored the amendment to elevate the issue of cybersecurity. (Photo by Mark Wilson/Getty Images)

With a lame duck session of Congress looming, federal lawmakers are scrambling to push key legislative items through last-minute. One key area of concern is cybersecurity.

Recent headlines have exposed a wide array of victims, ranging from both corporate to government entities. Stoking concerns is the ongoing controversy surrounding Russian hacking of Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton's campaign emails and the DNC, in a perceived effort to influence the outcome of the U.S. presidential election. Against this backdrop, several members of Congress have introduced amendments to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to strengthen cybersecurity. Yet, is this enough?

It is without a doubt that the nature of war has changed. For centuries, war has been waged on battlefields and televised around the clock. Now, the theatre of war has shifted and is being waged on computer servers, in homes and at places of work. Not even our most secure government institutions are exempt—exposing troves of private, classified and sensitive information, putting at risk our economic, social and national security.

Watch on Forbes: Scared About Trump Wielding FBI And NSA Cyber Power? You Should Be

Foreign aggressors are brazenly infiltrating U.S. institutions and political elections systems

—like the recent breach of state voter registration databases in Arizona and Illinois where more than 200,000 voter records were stolen by Russian hackers

—shaking the nation's long-relished standing as an impenetrable global superpower.

Several cybersecurity amendments have been introduced to the NDAA, including a Senate amendment that directs the president to elevate Cyber Command to a Combatant Command (currently it lies subordinate to strategic command). This elevated status will allow resources to be deployed strategically, enabling faster responses to potential threats.

Senator Richard Blumenthal, one of seven senators who sponsored the amendment, stated, "Cyber attacks are an ever-growing threat to our national security." Blumenthal continued, "As the Internet touches more aspects of our work and daily lives, our military must be equipped to defend and protect our nation. Elevating CYBERCOM to a Combatant Command will enhance its ability to protect Americans from cyber threats."

Yet, the hard truth is that even with this elevated status of Combatant Command, our cyber infrastructure and resilience is still vulnerable. The hard truth is we have fallen behind and have become yet another nation that's vulnerable, ill-prepared and struggling to protect itself against foreign cyber militants.

The current administration is now evaluating a counter response to stymie the recent attacks. However, in this new age of cyber warfare, one thing has been made abundantly clear: Past attacks against U.S. targets have exposed our unpreparedness, identifying and shutting down infiltrators at a pace that's ineffective in mitigating damage, and leaving our citizens exposed and vulnerable.

Knowing this, highly sophisticated foreign hackers are waiting in the wings, plotting their next offensive, and looking to seize on our complacency in protecting our IT infrastructure.

It's unclear what final cybersecurity measures will take shape in the final NDAA, as the bill is currently being reconciled between the two chambers, but what is clear is that what has been offered does little to nothing to help prepare our frontlines and most vulnerable assets. Foreign aggressors are shifting their focus to smaller, independent businesses, state governments and other soft targets that can trigger disastrous ripple effects across our economy.

To become truly cyber resilient, we need a proactive national mandate, not just a reactionary and retaliatory mentality. Just as in any other time of war, the country must come together to develop a national response, moving beyond the stagnate political climate in Washington, and invest in increasing the cyber preparedness of our states.

State governments, businesses and communities across the country must be united in making the case for a unified, national response, built around four pillars crucial to protecting Americans.

1. Cyber security must be looked at as a national security risk, not a state-level issue. Amendments offered to the NDAA, such as the Senate amendment, help to address

this issue by elevating the status of cyber risk; however, it falls short in that it focuses its powers in mostly reactionary measures. Much like our infrastructure, cybersecurity must be viewed in the light of national security. States need the support of the federal government to not only combat these threats, but to endure their financial consequences. Many states have limited budgets and lack the necessary resources to deal with this threat on their own. They often cannot develop and sustain a viable strategy to deal with as fast-moving targets as cyber threats, leaving many aspects of their infrastructure and municipalities at risk.

2. Standardized levels of security, protocols and cyber resilience programs must be enacted nationwide. A select few states have taken the initiative to enhance their cyber resiliency by establishing statewide cybersecurity programs. Working in conjunction with the private sector, they are assessing their vulnerabilities and taking measures to beef up their front-line defenses and monitoring. While commendable, this uncoordinated approach will result in a dizzying patchwork of standards and responses. Additionally, the rollout on a state-by-state basis leaves large parts of our interconnected IT infrastructure at risk. Standardized requirements need to be enacted to ensure each state can withstand an attack and its key services and infrastructure remain intact.

3. Cyber warfare is an ever-evolving enemy, so too should be its response. Hackers lurk in the shadows, often lying dormant for months or years within an organization's system before being detected, as noted in the OPM report where intruders were stated to have been in their systems for nearly a year. As such, merely enacting security protocols or conducting an annual sweep is not enough. Ongoing training and systems monitoring need to be a central pillar of any cyber readiness strategy. While hackers are becoming more sophisticated daily, so too is the technology being designed to combat them. Local governments need to leverage the innovative technologies being developed by the private sector to keep pace with an ever-shifting enemy, and to limit the damage a possible attack can have.

4. Governments cannot deal with this alone—an alliance between the public and private sectors is needed. Cyber-attacks have the potential to levy crippling consequences to millions of Americans, from financial costs to irreparable reputational damage. Whichever cybersecurity measures are attached to the NDAA must work with private sector companies at the state level to help bridge the talent and resource gap. They must look to partner with industry experts and leverage innovative risk mitigation tools, including insurance, to address the threat and costs to mitigate breaches. Early identification and response of a breach is the key to not only making our nation safer, but also to reducing the costs associated with its remediation. Leveraging the insurance markets can offset the financial burden of an attack to the private sector rather than at the state and, ultimately, the taxpayer level.

Cybersecurity has emerged as a national priority, and this election cycle has elevated the national discussion as presidential candidates spar on a daily basis about security breaches from foreign aggressors. Federal lawmakers have an opportunity in the lame duck to move beyond partisan gridlock to put the American people first, and develop a bipartisan national response that's coordinated among all levels of government.

America has always been viewed as a resilient nation, able to endure and withstand attacks to the homeland—now it's time that we extend that same resiliency to our cyber infrastructure.

Virginia Veterans To Get Free Cybersecurity Job Training

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) – Virginia is trying to help veterans get jobs in the cybersecurity industry.

That's the goal of a new initiative in Gov. Terry McAuliffe's administration called "Cyber Vets Virginia."

Veterans interested in working in the cyber field in the state will have the opportunity to participate in a free cyber training program.

The administration says the 12-to-15-week training will be done mostly online but have weekly classroom sessions. Registration will begin in January and training is expected to begin in April.

McAuliffe says there are currently 17,000 open cyber jobs in the state. He says veterans are "extremely well-suited to help close the workforce gap in this growing industry."

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Army, HackerOne To Launch Bug Bounty Challenge

ExecutiveGov, November 14, 2016

The U.S. Army has partnered with HackerOne to create a bug bounty challenge that will engage eligible hackers in efforts to uncover security vulnerabilities in the military branch's systems.

HackerOne said Saturday Hack the Army is the first of a series of challenges that the

Defense Department plans to launch following the Hack the Pentagon bug bounty pilot.

Hack the Pentagon participants worked to identify 138 vulnerabilities during the 24-day program.

DoD selected HackerOne and Synack last month to create a contract vehicle that will help department components and services facilitate bug bounty programs.

The Defense Digital Service helps drive bug bounty initiatives at DoD with support from Defense Secretary Ashton Carter, HackerOne noted.

Army Announces Its Own 'Hack The Pentagon'

C4ISR & Networks, November 14, 2016

Following an announcement last month that the Defense Department will be expanding its revolutionary bug bounty program

, which provides monetary compensation to outside hackers that discover and disclose vulnerabilities on DoD networks, the Army unveiled its iteration of this innovative initiative.

"The Army is reaching out directly to a group of technologists and researchers who train in figuring out how to break into computer networks they're not supposed to — people we might normally have avoided and much of the department still does actually," Army Secretary Eric Fanning said during a Nov. 11 news conference in Austin, Texas.

Fanning also described plans to take Hack the Army, which will launch at the end of November, further than Hack the Pentagon. "[T]he websites and computer databases we're inviting hackers to test won't be publicly released until our partner HackerOne invites a group of hackers to the bug bounty later this month," he said, referencing one of the military's commercial partners in this effort. "Each of these sites is essential to our day-to-day recruiting mission. While Hack the Pentagon focused on static websites, Hack the Army will be composed of dynamic content and mission-critical websites that we rely on to recruit the best fighting forces in the country. These assets have deep ties to the Army's core operations."

"I'm also happy today to announce a change that was just secured last night that makes Hack the Army different from Hack the Pentagon," Fanning announced, thanking the Defense Digital Service, which led Hack the Pentagon, for its persistence in pursuing the change. DDS was stood up by Secretary of Defense Ash Carter to bring in outside talent and replicate the tech culture of Silicon Valley firms to solve challenging problems for the department.

"We have secured legal approval to open this up to active-duty military personnel, reservist and guard, as well as civilians, government civilians," Fanning said. These personnel with have to register and be vetted just as outside members of the program were during the Hack the Pentagon program.

Government and military personnel "weren't allowed to participate in Hack the Pentagon," Fanning said. "We've got a number of people inside the military, inside the government who want to participate as a way of contributing to this important mission and also honing their own skills."

NATIONAL SECURITY NEWS

Rudy Giuliani Says Defeating ISIS To Be Early Focus Of Donald Trump's Foreign Policy

At WSJ CEO Council, former New York City mayor suggests several times that he would be interested in secretary of state post

By Damian Paletta

Wall Street Journal, November 14, 2016

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

How Trump Can Gut Obama's National Security Policies On Day One

NBC News, November 14, 2016

President Obama made aggressive use of the CIA and Special Operations Forces to hunt and kill al Qaeda, ISIS and other terror groups. But he also imposed a set of rules designed to regulate the conduct of U.S operatives — banning torture, for example, and minimizing the risk of civilian casualties in drone strikes.

President-elect Trump, who campaigned against those rules, would be able to undo most of those rules in his first hour in office.

In fact, if he chooses to do so, Trump can quickly reshape large swaths of American national security policy, much of which is governed by executive orders and presidential policy guidance that can be overridden by the president's signature. That includes U.S. sanctions on Russia, and its recent rapprochement with Cuba.

"The range of unilateral presidential authority is astonishingly broad," said Steven Aftergood, who directs the project on government secrecy at the Federation of American Scientists. "If you look at the presidential policy directives issued by Obama, they cover topics as diverse as biological weapons, nuclear weapons policy, intelligence surveillance policy, cyber operations, maritime security, arms-transfer policy, and on and on. And because it is based on presidential authority, it can also be revised and reshaped by a new president."

An MQ-9 Reaper drone. SSgt Brian Ferguson / Department of Defense

Many of those policy documents are technical and uncontroversial, but Obama's counterterrorism rule book was a signature issue in Trump's campaign, as the target of his ire. Accusing Obama of not being ruthless enough, Trump advocated "bombing the hell out of" ISIS, bringing back interrogation techniques "worse than waterboarding," and even killing the families of terrorists.

Days after Obama took office in 2009, he signed executive orders banning the CIA from engaging in harsh interrogation techniques and from operating detention

facilities, something it did under George W. Bush after the 9/11 attacks.

The torture ban later was enacted into law, but not the prohibition on the CIA operating so-called "black sites," or secret detention facilities.

Many current and former CIA officials say they would never again engage in harsh interrogations — even if ordered to do so — for fear they would be punished when the political winds changed under a new administration. But Trump easily could rescind Obama's orders and direct the CIA to capture and humanely interrogate terror suspects in secret overseas, something many Republicans have urged. Human rights groups oppose such a move, saying captured terrorists should be brought to justice in U.S. courts. Trump also has some wiggle room via executive order on what constitutes torture, despite the change in the law.

Trump's comment about killing the families of terrorists, which would amount to a war crime, is not taken seriously by many national security scholars.

What could have more impact, national security scholars say, is the policy guidance Obama issued on targeted killing in 2013. That guidance established a policy under which a drone strike should only be undertaken against a terrorist target outside a war zone if there is a "near certainty" that no civilian will be harmed.

Trump could rescind that policy with little political cost, said Stephen Vladeck, a national security expert at the University of Texas School of Law. And the results would be hard to measure from the outside, since the strikes in question are classified. If more civilians were killed in covert CIA drone strikes, the U.S. would likely not acknowledge that, and journalists may or may not even learn about it.

Obama also signed an order calling for the closure of the prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, but Congressional action has blocked him from doing so.

The real estate mogul could quickly make a major impact in other areas of foreign and security policy, as well.

In 2014, in the wake of the Edward Snowden leaks, Obama issued a policy document tightening the rules on surveillance. One rule banned U.S. spy agencies from disseminating information about foreigners to other countries' intelligence agencies without considering their privacy. Trump didn't much discuss surveillance during the election, other than to call for more spying in American mosques.

Campaigning in Florida, he promised Cuban-Americans he would roll back Obama's efforts to lift trade and travel restrictions relating to Cuba, all of which were accomplished with executive action. Trump could easily, for example, close the newly opened U.S. embassy in Havana.

Perhaps the most closely watched of Trump's early foreign policy decisions have to do with Russia. The new president could use his authority to lift some of the sanctions put on Russia in response to its seizure of Crimea, something Trump said he would consider doing during the campaign. This prospect has alarmed people in Eastern Europe, particularly in those countries along the Russian border whose residents fear Russian aggression.

Democrats in Congress have little ability to curb Trump's exercise of executive power, just as Republicans were unable to stop Obama's. Their only consolation, one senior Democratic congressional national security aide told NBC News, is that "He has said contradictory things. Nobody has a clue what he will do."

Trump Weighs Foreign Policy, Security Team

Few locks on key posts as names swirl

By Guy Taylor

Washington Times, November 14, 2016

Names are already circulating over whom President-elect Trump will pick for his Cabinet's top national security and foreign policy posts, but there are more questions than answers at this point as uncertainty swirls over who will fill key posts at both the Pentagon and State Department.

While sources say former Sen. Jim Talent and current Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker are likely to get tapped to head the Pentagon and State Department, core strategy shifts are expected to be closely orchestrated from within the White House, with retired Army Lt. Gen. Michael T. Flynn the probable pick for national security adviser.

"The ultimate power is going to rest with Trump and his inner circle," said Michael Rubin, a resident scholar with the conservative-leaning American Enterprise Institute, arguing foreign policy success or failure will depend whether Mr. Trump's closest advisers can stay on message in implementing any major policy shifts.

"If he is going to be successful," Mr. Rubin said, " … he is going to have to delegate responsibility for issues like Iran, Russia, China, trade and immigration to key aides and allow them to implement the policies without uncoordinated White House statements throwing their work into disarray."

That could be a challenge for Mr. Trump, if his penchant for late-night tweeting and provocative — at times contradictory — statements on foreign policy and national security during the campaign continue over into his presidency.

Beyond his promise to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, the president-elect "has given only hints of how he might approach foreign policy," said Daniel Serwer, a Middle East Institute scholar, who heads the Conflict Management Program at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies.

Mr. Trump has "emphasized the importance of an improved relationship with Russia to a rapid military defeat of the Islamic State and the need for 'extreme vetting' of Muslim immigrants to the United States," Mr. Serwer noted in an

analysis circulated to reporters Monday. "He has also suggested he would re-institute torture and might kill the families of terrorists."

"While he may walk back some of these intentions once in office, much will depend on whom he names to key posts, especially those positions relevant to the tumultuous Middle East."

But if the president elect's initial staff picks are any indication, his team could prove a marked break with the bipartisan foreign policy establishment that has long dominated Washington, an establishment that had harsh words for Mr. Trump during the presidential campaign.

On Monday, Mr. Trump was said also to be considering Richard Grenell to be U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. If confirmed, he would become the first openly gay person to fill a Cabinet-level foreign policy post.

Mr. Rubin suggested that Gen. Flynn, who was President Obama's Defense Intelligence Agency chief from 2012 to 2014 but later made headlines criticizing the president and others inside the White House, could prove a polarizing force in the new administration.

The retired general, Mr. Rubin quipped, "has a poor record of shooting his mouth off that he makes even Joe Biden seem like a paradigm of judgment and tact."

But Gen. Flynn is also popular among many in Washington. Michael O'Hanlon, a senior defense and foreign policy fellow at Washington-based Brookings Institute predicted that the retired general would be a team player and natural fit inside the Trump White House.

"I am a Mike Flynn fan and friend, even if we favored different candidates in the recent presidential race," said Mr. O'Hanlon. "I don't think Flynn had a long career as a micromanager," he added.

He noted that the retired general had a track record "serving people above him," including former Gens. Stanley A. McChrystal and David H. Petraeus.

"His reach is broad. And of course he's been close to Donald Trump for the better part of a year or more," Mr. O'Hanlon said. "I think he could do pretty well in that role of national security adviser."

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Lavrov And Kerry Agree To Continue Consultations On Syria

Reuters, November 14, 2016

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Iran-Backed Shiites Join Iraqis In Mosul Fight, Put U.S. Commanders In Bind

By Carlo Muñoz

Washington Times, November 14, 2016

U.S.-backed Iraqi troops are fighting side by side with Shiite paramilitary forces backed by Iran for the first time in the campaign to take back Mosul, deepening U.S. fears that Tehran is claiming a greater role in the critical battle to oust Islamic State militants from Iraq's second-largest city.

Over the past week, Iraqi government units have quietly advanced alongside units of the Popular Mobilization Forces, the large coalition of Iraqi paramilitaries comprising primarily militias supported by Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps. They are jointly advancing on the northern Iraqi city of Tal Afar, less than 50 miles west of Mosul, Pentagon officials confirmed Monday.

Those units are trying to cut off possible escape routes for Islamic State fighters between western Mosul and the Syrian border, as Iraqi and Kurdish forces continue to press into the city's northern, eastern and southern borders.

But this mingling of Iraqi government troops and the Shiite militias could put U.S. commanders in the uncomfortable position of having to provide American air support for militias with clear links to the Iranian regime, something Washington fiercely opposes.

U.S. commanders have made clear that no American assets would be used to assist or reinforce advancing militias fighting under the banner of the Popular Mobilization Forces, a U.S. defense official told The Washington Times. That policy will remain in place despite the presence of Iraqi troops within the militia's ranks, the official said.

It is unclear how U.S. forces would respond if the Iraqi troops embedded with the militias called for American airstrikes, since American assets are tasked with defending Iraqi and coalition forces.

"That is going to be a challenge," the official said.

Potential responses by U.S. forces to attacks on embedded Iraqi troops with the militias would not be limited to American fighters and bombers, a second U.S. defense official said. Armed American drones and U.S. artillery batteries in and around Tal Afar also could be used to defend Iraqi forces fighting alongside the militias, the official said Monday.

"The Iraqis have [jet] fighters too," the official noted.

The militias, which are not officially part of the Iraqi armed forces but fall under the command of Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, have played an integral role in the fight against the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL. They have played a major role in the recapture of the major Iraqi cities of Ramadi and Fallujah from the terrorist group's control.

U.S. commanders in Iraq have deferred to Baghdad's decision to incorporate the Shiite-dominated militia groups into the Mosul fight and remain optimistic that those forces

will adhere to Iraq's chain of command and not to their Iranian advisers.

But the militia's victories, particularly in Fallujah, have been tainted by reports of egregious human rights abuses and sectarian violence against Sunni civilians by the Shiite groups allied with Tehran after the city fell.

Separately, Islamic State fighters on Monday appeared to be trying to divert the pressure building on their Mosul stronghold by launching suicide attacks in Fallujah and the Shiite holy city of Karbala.

Two suicide car bombs ripped through Fallujah's city center, killing two Iraqi police officers and injuring 17 others, including civilians, The Associated Press reported. It was the first attack in the city since Iraqi forces liberated it from Islamic State control in June.

The attacks in Fallujah and Karbala, along with Islamic State assaults on Kirkuk, Sinjar and Rutba last month, forced Iraqi commanders to move troops from the Mosul operation to quell those attacks, which placed more responsibility on the militia's shoulders.

But Baghdad's decision to include Iraqi military units into the militia's offensive was a positive sign that the paramilitary groups were refraining from such sectarian attacks in the Mosul offensive, Pentagon officials said privately.

Pressure from the Popular Mobilization Committee, the government-sanctioned commission tasked with overseeing the militias, as well as Iranian military advisers on the ground to avoid any sectarian violence, has resonated with both Sunni and Shiite militia leaders.

"Soleimani has put the fear of God into them," regarding the consequences of any attacks on Sunni civilians by Shiite militias, said the official, referring to Iranian Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, commander of the Quds force, the special operations wing of Iran's military spearheading Tehran's mission in Iraq.

"I think [the partnership with the Popular Mobilization Forces] is a positive step," the official said.

U.N. spokesman Farhan Haq revealed Monday that some 54,000 civilians have fled their homes in the weeks since the formal campaign to recapture Mosul from Islamic State forces began last month, including more than 6,000 in the past four days. About three-quarters of the displaced people are being sheltered in camps set up by the United Nations and its humanitarian partners and one-quarter are been housed in host communities, the AP reported.

Mr. Haq said the World Food Program has provided assistance to more than 100,000 people fleeing the conflict, including a distribution to 25,000 people on Sunday in Gogjali, the first neighborhood retaken inside Mosul.

• This article is based in part on wire service reports.

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Islamic State Claims Suicide Attacks As Mosul Campaign Makes Slow Progress

By Maher Chmaytelli

Reuters, November 14, 2016

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Islamic State Used Fake Tanks To Confuse Airstrikes

By John Bacon

USA Today, November 14, 2016

Iraqi military units liberating villages on the march to Mosul say they have seized wooden tanks and even replica soldiers used to draw coalition airstrikes away from real targets.

The mock-ups were found in a warehouse in the village of Bawiza, north of Mosul, along with real armored vehicles and explosives, Iraqi army spokesman Lt. Col Abbas al-Azaji said.

"Militants used wooden tanks and cars to cause a diversion for the planes during the military operation," al-Azaji said. U.S. Air Force Col. John Dorrian, a spokesman in Baghdad, confirmed that the coalition had been tracking the Islamic State's use of decoy vehicles before the discovery.

Dorrian, however, said the tactic was not as alarming as when the militants set fire to sulfur plants and oil wells.

The Iraqi military, which is leading the effort to retake Mosul from Islamic State forces, says its forces have pushed to within sight of Mosul neighborhoods, Reuters reports.

Iraq's Shiite-led government says it has assembled 100,000 troops including its own military, Kurdish peshmerga fighters and mostly Shiite militias. The ground attack is backed by U.S. coalition airstrikes. Militants are slowing the assault with sniper attacks, suicide car bombs and roadside bombs.

South of Mosul, Iraqi troops recaptured the ancient city of Nimrud, Iraqi Lt. Gen. Abdul-Amir Raheed Yar Allah said. The Assyrian city, once a center for civilization that dates to 13th century BC, was captured by the Islamic State in 2014. A global outcry erupted last year when the militants bulldozed much of the city's archaeological site to destroy ancient symbols they viewed as idolatrous.

UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova condemned the destruction, describing it as "yet another attack against the Iraqi people, reminding us that nothing is safe from the cultural cleansing underway in the country."

"The Ninth Division of the Iraqi army has liberated the town of Nimrud completely and raised the Iraqi flag over its buildings after the enemy suffered heavy casualties," Allah said in a statement.

Mosul, a Sunni-majority city, is considered the last major outpost for the Islamic State in Shiite-dominated Iraq. The militants rolled into Mosul two years ago as part of an effort to carve an extremist Sunni state out of a swath of Iraq and Syria. The Islamic State has steadily lost ground in recent months, however, leaving the movement to rely on suicide bombings elsewhere in the country and random acts of deadly global terrorism as its "victories."

On Monday, a suicide bombing hundreds of miles from Mosul in the Shiite holy city of Karbala killed six civilians, the Iraqi government said.

Some Iraqi victories on the road to Mosul have been problematic. The advocacy group Human Rights Watch issued a report Sunday accusing the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government's forces of unlawfully destroying Arab homes and sometimes entire villages in areas retaken from the Islamic State.

Kurdish authorities told the Associated Press they abide by human rights laws. Kurdish official Dindar Zebari said some villages were severely damaged in fierce fighting when villagers fought alongside the militants.

"There was a large presence of IEDs placed in these areas," Zebari said. "I have to say this was a huge cause of the destruction following the liberation process."

Russian Fighter Jet Crashes Near Its Aircraft Carrier In Mediterranean, US Officials Say

Fox News, November 14, 2016

A Russian fighter jet crashed in the Mediterranean Sea shortly after launching from its aircraft carrier near the coast of Syria Sunday, two U.S. officials told Fox News.

Three Russian MiG-29 fighter jets took off from their Soviet-era aircraft carrier, Admiral Kuznetsov, and flew in the direction of Syria. Once airborne, one of the Russian jets appeared to have mechanical difficulties and turned around in the direction of the aircraft carrier.

The Russian jet splashed down in the water while attempting to land. A Russian rescue helicopter picked up a parachute and the pilot, who'd bailed out safely, Russian defense officials said.

The MiG-29 was designed in the late-1970s to counter the U.S. Air Force's F-15 and F-16. It entered service in the early 1980s.

The news of the crash came a day after state media claimed Russia was preparing its Tu-95 and Tu-160 long-range bombers for imminent strike missions in Syria.

The Russian Tu-95 "Bear" and Tu-160 "Blackjack," according to their NATO call signs, have been operating in Syria since 2015 and are based at Engels Air Force base in southern Russia near Kazakhstan. The Blackjack is a supersonic variable-sweep wing long range bomber and more advanced than its 1950s-era Bear counterpart, which is propeller driven.

Last week, Fox News was first to report Russia was close to launching a new round of airstrikes in Syria from the aircraft carrier in the Eastern Mediterranean and southern Russia using long range bombers.

Hand Grenade Drone Adds To IS Arsenal Around Mosul

AFP, November 14, 2016

Arbid (Iraq) (AFP) – The Islamic State group drone hovered in the sky over the advancing Iraqi forces before dropping a grenade, the jihadists' latest move to weaponise small off-the-shelf aircraft.

Down below, the grenade exploded on the roof of a building where Iraqi police forces were sheltering as they advanced some 10 kilometres (six miles) south of Mosul, the last IS-held Iraqi city.

No one was injured, according to an Iraqi officer, but the incident nonetheless represents another escalation in the war of commercially available drones that is playing out as Iraqi forces battle the jihadists.

Masters of invention, IS jihadists have booby trapped household appliances and turned cars into armoured suicide bombs as they try to stymy the Iraqi forces.

Now they seem to have found another way to try to slow the progress: weaponising the $1,000 drones that they normally use to spy on their foes.

"We have recorded three incidents," police Lieutenant Colonel Hussein Moayyad told AFP.

The jihadists appear to have used an add-on – similar to those intended to help fisherman drop their hooks farther out at sea – to release the drone's payload, Moayyad said.

They rig the grenade so the pin is pulled free when the explosive device is dropped, arming it.

While this attack was relatively primitive and – for now – pretty ineffective, IS drones have already proved more deadly in other ways.

Last month a hobby plane rigged with explosives killed two Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga fighters and injured two French soldiers.

According to a US defence official, the incident unfolded on October 2 when a small plane with a styrofoam body was either shot down or crashed in Arbil in northern Iraq.

Two Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga fighters grabbed it and took it back to their camp to inspect and photograph it, when it blew up.

– Duelling drones –

IS is flying drones to spy on Iraqi forces – so Iraqi forces are sending up their own devices to spot the enemy as well.

Moayyad watched a screen inside a specially converted armoured bank van he has turned into a mobile drone control centre.

"Now I am entering the dangerous zone, this is where Daesh is," he said, using an Arabic acronym for IS as he manoeuvered the drone's remote control to focus on jihadist positions some five kilometres (three miles) away.

Like the IS operation, the Iraq police have also cobbled their drone programme together with shop-bought equipment and ingenuity.

Moayyad – who has a masters degree in computing – modified drones bought in Dubai and Turkey to give them greater range, longer battery life and the ability to film at night.

When he spots enemy movement, he coordinates with the Iraqi artillery, air force or sometimes the US-led coalition bombarding IS from the sky.

In eastern Mosul, Iraqi special forces soldiers are using drones for the same purpose.

"There were three car bombs coming out from Al-Bakr toward our positions that we spotted with our drone and hit with our tanks," Staff Lieutenant Colonel Muntadhar Salem recently told AFP, referring to an area in the city.

In total, Moayyad said, the Iraqi police force drones – superior to the ones IS use – end up costing somewhere around $26,000.

But despite having superiority over the jihadists, he said the Iraqi forces could do with equipment that can let you take control of unknown drones, especially now that IS is arming them.

"Maybe they could get bigger drones," Moayyad said.

"And if they manage to use chemical weapons on them, then this is more scary, of course."

Ouster Of Extremists From Iraqi Town Leaves Bitter Divisions

By Susannah George

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

QAYARA, Iraq (AP) – On the main shopping street of the town of Qayara, murals put up by the Islamic State group that told people how to dress and behave have been hastily painted over. New signs touting nationalism and unity now line a main highway since Iraqi forces drove the extremists from the Tigris River Valley town in August.

Deeper inside Qayara, however, fresh graffiti has appeared on some streets, revealing bitterness, anger and lasting fissures among the population.

"Blood for blood," reads the Arabic script spray-painted outside a destroyed home on the town's northern edge. Neighbors said the house belonged to a man who joined IS when the group first rose to power in 2014. Slang and obscenities against the owner also are written on a partially destroyed garden wall.

When Qayara was retaken by Iraqi security forces, it was hailed as an early triumph over the extremists as the country prepared for the long-awaited offensive to liberate the second-largest city Mosul that began Oct. 17.

But for some residents, the ouster of IS doesn't feel like victory.

Government services have failed to return. Oil wells set ablaze by the militants continue to burn uncontrollably. Violence persists, with residents carrying out revenge attacks in the wake of the brutal reign by the militants.

Mahmoud Shaker, who lives down the street from the destroyed house, said a group of local tribal fighters and policemen reduced it to rubble a few weeks after IS militants were pushed out of Qayara.

"We know this wasn't done legally, but for us, this is justice," the 25-year-old Shaker said. It was "common knowledge" that the man who lived there was a senior IS leader, he added, although he said he personally never saw the man commit a crime.

"Before the town was retaken, he fled with his family to Mosul," Shaker said.

On the edge of Qayara, Ala Hussein has lived under darkened skies for months. A short distance from her home, several oil wells have been burning uncontrollably since June.

The IS fighters first torched some of the wells as Iraqi forces began the operation to retake Qayara, hoping the thick, black smoke would obscure the town from warplanes of the U.S.-led coalition. In late August, as it became clear they were losing the town, the militants lit the rest of the wells before fleeing north toward Mosul.

Hussein's garden is covered with sticky, black droplets of oil that fall like light rain from the clouds of smoke. One of her fruit trees has died, and another is covered with a plastic tarp to try to save it. Her children's hands and feet are stained black by the pollution.

In the fields around the town, grazing sheep and cows all have turned a dark gray from the soot.

Firefighters show up every few days, spraying the flames with water and occasionally trucking in sand to try to snuff out the blaze, Hussein said, but it never improves.

"This is not liberation. We haven't yet had the taste of freedom," she said. "Where is our government? We don't have a government."

In central Qayara, doctors at a small clinic that serves as the only working hospital treat patients by the light of mobile phones. Dr. Abdul Salam Ali Ahmed said he can only afford enough fuel to turn on his generators for three hours a day.

When the hospital receives casualties from the ongoing Mosul operation 40 kilometers (25 miles) to the north, those

who can't be saved must be buried within hours because there is no refrigeration to preserve the bodies.

A sign in the hospital's front hallway says that newborns cannot be issued birth certificates.

"The Ministry of Health hasn't sent us the required paperwork yet," Ahmed said. "We just keep our own records for now."

The central government in Baghdad has sent intelligence officials to Qayara to screen civilians for any ties to IS. A detention center has been set up in a mosque and an adjacent office houses an interrogation room.

Unlike the destruction of homes, their work is achieving justice through legal methods, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

"It's better than tribal revenge," one of the intelligence officers said. "When we arrest someone it's safer for him. It protects him."

Since the operation to retake Mosul began last month, they have detained thousands of people, with hundreds formally arrested and sent to Baghdad, the officials said.

At a cluster of homes near the oil fires, a young man flaunted a video on his phone that he said was taken in Qayara after its liberation. The video showed the corpses of IS fighters being abused by residents. It also showed a group of children punching and kicking one of the bodies.

Hussein, the woman whose house was covered by oil, believes that the Iraqi security forces were complicit when Islamic State militants overran northern and central parts of the country more than two years ago.

Many of the security forces fled in the face of the militants' advance, and some blame Iraq's political leadership with facilitating the fall of Mosul by ignoring months of warnings that the group was growing in power.

"The government sold us to Daesh in the first place," Hussein said, using the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State group.

"And now they want to accuse us of being terrorists!" she said, cursing both the militants and the government with an obscenity.

Associated Press writers Salar Salim and Mstyslav Chernov in Qayara, Iraq, contributed.

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Afghan Leader Defies Parliament By Telling Sacked Ministers To Stay

Reuters, November 14, 2016

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ICC Prosecutor: US Forces May Have Tortured In Afghanistan

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) – International Criminal Court prosecutors say that a preliminary probe indicates that members of the United States armed forces and the CIA may have committed war crimes by torturing detainees in Afghanistan.

The prosecution office said in a report issued late Monday that U.S. armed forces personnel "appear to have subjected at least 61 detained persons to torture" in Afghanistan, mainly in 2003-2004.

The report adds that CIA operatives may have tortured at least 27 detainees in Afghanistan and elsewhere mainly in the same time period.

Prosecutors say they will decide "imminently" whether to seek authorization to open a full-scale investigation in Afghanistan.

The United States is not a member of the court, but its citizens could face prosecution if they commit crimes in a country that is a member, such as Afghanistan.

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ICC Prosecutor: U.S. Forces May Have Tortured In Afghanistan

By Jim Michaels

USA Today, November 14, 2016

International Criminal Court prosecutors said Monday that a preliminary probe indicates that members of the U.S. armed forces and the CIA may have committed war crimes by torturing detainees in Afghanistan.

Prosecutors would have to clear several hurdles before formally bringing the case before the court in The Hague, Netherlands. The prosecutors said they have not decided yet whether to launch a full-scale investigation but will decide soon, the Associated Press reported.

Even if an investigation is launched, it would be difficult to bring charges. The court does not normally interview

witnesses or gather forensic evidence, Foreign Policy magazine reported recently.

The prosecution office said in its report issued late Monday that U.S. armed forces personnel "appear to have subjected at least 61 detained persons to torture" in Afghanistan, mainly in 2003-2004. The report also said that CIA operatives may have tortured at least 27 detainees in Afghanistan and elsewhere, mainly in the same time period.

The United States is not a member of the court, but its citizens could face prosecution if they commit crimes in a country that is a member, such as Afghanistan, according to the AP.

The U.S.-led invasion into Afghanistan toppled the Taliban from power after the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The Taliban had harbored al-Qaeda militants in the years leading up to the attacks.

US Forces May Have Committed War Crimes In Afghanistan, Prosecutor Says

By Somini Sengupta

New York Times, November 14, 2016

The prosecutor of the International Criminal Court said Monday that she had a "reasonable basis to believe" that American soldiers committed war crimes in Afghanistan, including torture.

The international prosecutor has been considering whether to begin a full-fledged investigation into potential war crimes in Afghanistan for years. In Monday's announcement, the prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, signaled that a full investigation was likely.

Still, the prosecutor did not announce a final decision on an investigation, which would have to be approved by judges, and it is unlikely that the United States will cooperate.

The United States is not a party to the court, which was established to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. But Afghanistan is a member of the court, so allegations of crimes committed in its territory, no matter the nationality of the perpetrators, are widely considered to be fair game.

The international court is under great pressure to show that it is unbiased in its targets for investigation. Almost all of its full-fledged investigations have focused on Africa, and in recent weeks three African nations — South Africa, Gambia and Burundi — have announced their intention to withdraw from the court.

Ms. Bensouda, in an annual report published Monday, said there was a "reasonable basis" for her to open investigations into "war crimes of torture and related ill-treatment, by U.S. military forces deployed to Afghanistan and in secret detention facilities operated by the Central Intelligence Agency." The focus, she said, would be mostly on any crimes that occurred in 2003 and 2004.

The report also said she had found evidence of "torture and related ill treatment by Afghan government forces," particularly by its intelligence agency and the police. War crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Taliban and its affiliated networks would also be a target of investigation, the report said.

The investigation could also set up a potential showdown with President-elect Donald J. Trump, who has said he supports torture as a tool of counterterrorism.

A Small, Shadowy And 'Adored' Band Of Militants Paralyzes Kashmir

By Geeta Anand And Hari Kumar

New York Times, November 14, 2016

TRAL, Kashmir — They hide in the forest, emerging occasionally to lure police officers into villages where they try to kill them with explosive devices. They steal weapons from the security forces. Then they disappear back among the trees.

They are members of Hizbul Mujahedeen, a militant group that has emerged as the face of the independence movement in Kashmir, the Himalayan region that was subsumed into India when it shook off colonial rule in 1947 and that remains at the center of the country's 70-year dispute with neighboring Pakistan.

Relatively few in number, about 200, roughly half of them from local villages, Hizbul Mujahedeen is the larger of two militant organizations and has widespread support from a populace that has lost faith in dialogue to resolve differences with the Indian government.

"They are adored," said Sridhar Patil, head of the regional police in Kulgam district, where crowds have burned a courthouse and a police station. "The younger generation of Kashmir is searching for a good leader, a good role model," he said, and they have settled, for better or worse, on these young men.

Daily life in Kashmir has come close to a standstill since July, when Indian security forces killed the 22-year-old leader of the local militancy, Burhan Muzaffar Wani, who had attracted a broad following through videos he posted on Facebook and WhatsApp. He started the trend of young, charismatic militants, dressed in military fatigues and carrying assault weapons, revealing their names and faces on social media in efforts to spread their message to a wide audience.

The killing of Mr. Wani touched off four months of violence, including bombings, shootouts and attacks by stone-pelting youths, as well as protests by tens of thousands of people.

In a lengthy interview, the young man's father, Mohammad Muzafar Wani, said he had tried hard to influence the path of his son, a handsome youth who gelled

his hair and changed his outfits twice a day, preferring Western-style T-shirts to traditional kurtas.

But in 2010, three weeks after Burhan and his older brother were beaten up by security forces, the brainy boy who got top grades at school dropped the original plan to train as a doctor and instead joined Hizbul Mujahedeen.

"He was not a small child, I couldn't have confined him to home," his father said. "I could have stopped him for a day or two, but not all days."

The Kashmir police have counted 2,400 clashes since July. Schools remain closed, more than 30 of them burned, and public transportation is almost entirely shut down. The state's education minister was holed up in his home for days after receiving a threat.

In all, 70 public buildings have been damaged, most of them destroyed. The carved wooden houseboats on Dal Lake, once popular with tourists, are almost all empty, having had barely a visitor since the trouble began.

Seventy-six people have been killed in the violence, the police in Kashmir say, while local activists put the toll at closer to 100. At least a thousand protesters have been struck in the eyes by pellets fired by police officers, and some have been blinded. Thousands have been wounded, including 6,500 members of the security services. The police have arrested nearly 6,000 people, many for throwing stones.

Kashmir, part of India's only Muslim-majority state, Jammu and Kashmir, was promised some measure of self-determination and autonomy after India was partitioned and Pakistan was formed. That promise was not fulfilled, and since then, India and Pakistan have fought two border wars over the region and have assembled nuclear arsenals.

A violent secession movement arose in Kashmir in the late 1980s, as thousands of militants spilled over the border from Pakistan. India responded by moving tens of thousands of troops into the scenic Kashmir valley and slowly crushing the uprising.

Still, the independence movement persisted, giving rise every few years to violence and protests. Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India made overtures to Pakistan early in his tenure that rekindled hopes for a resolution of Kashmir's future. But he has made no public moves to restart discussions over the region.

"Is people's confidence in dialogue shaken? Yes it is," said Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, a founder of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, a coalition of separatist groups.

The young men who have joined the Kashmir militancy grew up in a militarized land where they were routinely stopped and searched by security forces, and at times brutally beaten, their families say.

Mr. Wani's older brother, Khalid, did not join the insurgency, even after the two were beaten by the security forces. Nevertheless, he was the first to be killed. In 2015, he was shot after delivering a meal to his brother and his comrades, his father said.

The older Mr. Wani, 54, the principal of a government high school in the valley, said he was now focused on trying to keep his only surviving son, 16-year-old Naveed, from following his brother's deadly path into the militancy. "My life is in him," Mr. Wani said, looking over at the lean, bearded teenager who gave monosyllabic answers to visitors' questions.

The current rebel commander, Zakir Rashid Bhat, 22, went through many of the same experiences as his predecessor, said his father, Abdul Rashid Bhat, 56, an assistant government engineer.

Mr. Bhat said his son was arrested and jailed in 2010 for pelting security forces with stones. Mr. Bhat said that he had tried to broker a deal with the police to bring back his son, then 16, who was hiding in another part of the state, in return for leniency.

But not only did the police throw the son in jail for several days until a court granted him bail, they also opened several criminal cases, accusing him of violence and of destroying government property, his father and the Kashmir police say.

The rebel commander's older brother, Dr. Shakir Rashid Bhat, 32, an orthopedic surgeon in the Kashmiri city of Srinagar, tried to explain why his sibling had joined the militancy. "The experience of seeing his father begging police for mercy changed him," he said. "It was humiliating."

In 2012 and 2013, even as Zakir attended an engineering college in another state, he had to return to Kashmir every few months for court hearings. Then, in July of 2013, one month into his summer vacation, he disappeared, leaving a note saying that his parents should not look for him and that he was at peace with himself and with his God, his father said.

Mr. Bhat said his son had left his iPhone, his iPad and cards for his family's three bank accounts, taking nothing except the pants and T-shirt he had been wearing.

In retrospect, the father said, the only clue to his son's radicalization was an increased interest in religion in the days before he left. The youth, whose major passion had previously been his Yamaha motorcycle, suddenly began accompanying his father to the mosque each day during the holy month of Ramadan.

On Saturday morning last week, only hours after an explosive device went off a few miles from the three-story brick house where Zakir grew up, a security officer was on the phone with his father, telling him his son was the prime suspect. Three police officers had been wounded, one critically.

Mr. Bhat, a stocky man who was wearing a brown woolen cape and sitting on the pink-carpeted floor of his living room when the call came through, sounded despondent at

times as he responded again and again that he had no idea of his son's whereabouts.

"If you want to kill me, kill me," he told the officer. "If that ensures safety to your country, do it."

A few miles away, in another village in the Tral area, several dozen children and young men played cricket in a field adjoining the graveyard where Mr. Wani is buried. They stopped playing when visitors arrived, and they crowded around to list the names and academic credentials of the several dozen young men — all militant leaders — who were buried there.

A 6-year-old boy in a blue cape, Muneeb Shah, began leading the crowd in a cheer, egged on by his father, a shawl merchant. "What do we want?" the boy shouted. "Azaadi," the group responded, using the Urdu word for freedom. "For the sake of Burhan," the boy called out next, going down the list of dead militants, one by one.

Local people say dozens show up at the graveyard each day to pay tribute to Mr. Wani, some carrying away clumps of mud from the mound of grass covering his grave.

Security officials worry that the glamorization of militant leaders might draw a larger number of young people into the fold. So far, however, that does not seem to have happened. Only a few, no more than 20, they say, have joined up since Mr. Wani's death.

The police are trying to counter the appeal, in part by aggressively tracking down the leaders and the new recruits. But it is hard to make arrests because the militants operate in the forests around the villages where they grew up. When the police close in, crowds of people rush to the scene and try to stop the security forces by throwing rocks, yelling chants and generally interfering, knowing the officers will resist shooting at them.

"From the front side you are fighting the militants and from the back side you are getting hit by stones," said Mr. Patil, the police chief.

Afghan President Asks U.N. To Add Taliban Leader To Sanctions List

Reuters, November 14, 2016

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

Meeting The Press For First Time Since Trump's Win, Obama Says New President-Elect Is Committed To NATO

By Juliet Eilperin And Greg Jaffe

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

President Obama held his first news conference since voters sharply rejected his candidate and his party at the polls last week, reassuring people at home and abroad that Donald Trump was committed to governing in a more pragmatic fashion than he had adopted on the campaign trail.

"This office has a way of waking you up," said Obama, who met with Trump for the first time last week. "Campaigning is different from governing. I think he recognizes that."

Obama faced reporters crammed into the James S. Brady Briefing Room on Monday before leaving Washington for a week-long foreign trip to Greece, Germany and Peru, where he will meet with more than a dozen foreign leaders with their own set of questions about where the United States is headed under its next president.

The president said one of the most important missions he has in the coming week is to carry a message from Trump that the New York businessman is committed to upholding the NATO and transatlantic alliance.

Obama said he intends to tell European leaders that "there is no weakening" in America's commitment "toward maintaining a strong and robust NATO alliance."

The president declined to answer a question on whether he still saw Trump as unfit to serve in the Oval Office — a criticism he had leveled more than once during the campaign — and instead emphasized that he had counseled the president-elect to reach out to some constituencies that had not supported his presidential bid.

"It is important to send some signals of unity" to minorities, women and other groups "that were concerned about the tenor of the campaign," Obama said.

"And I don't think any president comes in saying to himself, 'I want to make people angry, or alienate half the country,'" Obama added, saying he saw Trump as "pragmatic" rather than "ideological."

"That could serve him well," the president said. He noted that Trump will come into office with "fewer set hard and fast policy prescriptions" than most of his predecessors.

Obama also acknowledged that Democrats need to engage in "some reflection" about the way forward after last week's loss, which was punctated by a poor showing in both rural areas and the outer suburbs in swing states.

"I believe that we have better ideas, but I also believe that good ideas don't matter if people don't hear them," he said. "We have to compete everywhere. We have to show up everywhere."

Pressed repeatedly by reporters on how he viewed Trump's character, the president praised him as a politician rather than as policymaker.

"What's clear is that he was able to tap into, yes, the anxieties, but also the enthusiasm of his voters in a way that was impressive," he said. He observed that Trump was "impervious to events that might have sunk another candidate. That's powerful stuff."

"Do I have concerns? Absolutely," the president added. "He and I differ on a whole bunch of issues."

And Obama cautioned that there are "certain elements of his temperament that will not serve him well, unless he recognizes them and corrects" them.

Going before the the press just after a major election is a rite of passage for the president. In Obama's case, only one of these exchanges has been celebratory. While he could embrace his 2012 reelection victory, both the 2010 and 2014 midterms — and now, the election of his successor — have amounted to serious setbacks.

Six years ago, Obama called the Democrats' congressional losses a "shellacking'; in 2014, he declined to characterize the results, saying instead to the American people, "I hear you."

Obama hopes to use the trip to reassure America's allies and to shore up some of his top international priorities before leaving office. He and other leaders will discuss issues including the global economy, the sanctions Western nations have imposed against Russia in retaliation for its annexation of Crimea, instability in the Middle East and the refugee crisis that has emerged in its wake.

After the news conference, Obama was scheduled to hold a conference call with congressional Democrats, who are still reeling from both the White House loss and the fact that they made just small gains in both the House and Senate.

Trump's victory is sure to dominate Obama's interactions with reporters and foreign leaders in the coming week. On Tuesday, the president will meet with Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, before departing Wednesday for Berlin. During his stop in Germany, he will meet with Chancellor Angela Merkel, as well as the leaders of Britain, France, Italy and Spain. At the end of the week, Obama will head to Lima, Peru, for the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, where he will attend meetings with leaders from Asia and Latin America.

"Look, we certainly expect that the election will be the primary topic on people's minds everywhere we go," said White House deputy security adviser Ben Rhodes in a call with reporters Friday. "We have one president at a time, and so President Obama, of course, will be running through the tape on January 20th" on his top international and domestic priorities.

"We will run through the tape with the implementation of those policies, and then the new team will make their own determinations," Rhodes said. "And we respect that every administration will make its own judgment."

Leaders around the world are pondering whether the international order, with America at the center, can be sustained given the challenge it is facing not just in the United States but in nations ranging from the Philippines to Brazil.

In a sign of how Obama has already shifted into the mode of an outgoing president, he spoke with Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto on Monday about taking "steps to solidify the relationship and institutionalize mechanisms of cooperation" that the two countries have established together, according to a White House statement.

Peña Nieto had initially been critical of Trump's pledge to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, at Mexico's expense, but subsequently softened his tone and invited Trump to meet with him in Mexico in September.

Obama Says Trump Told Him He Supports US Commitment To NATO

By Mike Dorning

Bloomberg Politics, November 14, 2016

President Barack Obama said that Donald Trump told him he can assure European leaders the U.S. will not back off its commitments to the NATO alliance under the Republican president-elect.

Trump questioned the U.S. commitment to the alliance during the presidential campaign, saying that European NATO members should pay more for their own defense. Asked about how the U.S. would respond to a hypothetical Russian attack on one of the Baltic nations in NATO, Trump responded that he would consider their contribution to the alliance before deciding whether to meet the NATO treaty obligation to defend a member state.

But in a White House meeting between Trump and Obama last week, the incoming Republican assured the president of his "great interest in maintaining our core strategic relationships," Obama said at a White House news conference Monday ahead of a trip to Greece, Germany and Peru. Obama said the assurance he will convey to NATO members in Europe is to "let them know there is no weakening of resolve" under the Republican president-elect.

"There is enormous continuity, beneath our day-to-day news, that makes us that indispensable nation when it comes to promoting order and prosperity around the world," Obama said, describing U.S. military and diplomatic relationships in foreign countries. "That will continue."

Vouching For Trump, Obama Says US Will Maintain Alliances

By Kathleen Hennessey

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – Vouching for the successor he never imagined having, President Barack Obama on Monday said the United States under Donald Trump would remain the "indispensable nation" for global security and praised the president-elect for vowing to maintain America's alliances.

"There is no weakening of resolve," Obama said before departing on a three-nation trip that was supposed to be his grand valedictory tour.

Instead, he will now confront concerns about a Trump presidency in Europe and Latin America and have to

reassure nations about a man who Obama only a week ago derided as "woefully unprepared for the job" who "can't handle the nuclear codes."

"There is enormous continuity ... that makes us that indispensable nation when it comes to maintaining order around the world," Obama said at a news conference at the White House. Relationships and policies go beyond presidents, he said, adding that military officials, diplomats and intelligence officers would cooperate with their foreign counterparts as before.

And Obama tried to soothe any fears about the security direction in which Trump wanted to take America, after Trump appeared to question the validity of NATO and other overseas U.S. commitments at various points in his campaign.

During his meeting with Trump, Obama said Trump "expressed a great interest in maintaining our core strategic relationships," including "strong and robust NATO" partnerships.

Even as he visits Germany, Greece and Peru, Obama said his team would accelerate efforts to ensure a smooth transition to the Trump administration.

He stressed that he would try to strengthen the American economy over his final two months, so that "when we turn over the keys, the car's in pretty good shape."

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Trump Will Honor NATO Commitment, Obama Says

By Madeline Conway

Politico, November 14, 2016

President-elect Donald Trump is committed to NATO, President Barack Obama said Monday.

Trump, the Republican president-elect whose unexpected victory last week shocked other world leaders, was often critical of NATO on the campaign trail, going so far as to call it "obsolete." Those statements, coupled with his praise of Russian leader Vladimir Putin – with whom Trump spoke by phone on Monday – have alarmed foreign leaders, especially in the front-line states in Eastern Europe and the Baltics.

Obama, who is preparing to embark on his last trip to Europe as president, said Trump signaled when they met last week that he would not be throwing out the decades-old alliance.

"He expressed a great interest in maintaining our core strategic relationships," Obama said at his first press conference since last week's election. "And so, one of the messages I will be able to deliver is his commitment to NATO and the Transatlantic Alliance."

"I think that's one of the most important functions I can serve at this stage during this trip. is to let them know that there is no weakening of resolve when it comes to America's commitment to maintaining a strong and robust NATO relationship and a recognition that those alliances aren't just good for Europe, they're good for the United States," he added. "And they're vital for the world."

Responding to a question about foreign leaders' concerns about Trump, Obama also made a point to note that the president, while "the spokesperson for the nation," is not the only person affecting U.S. foreign policy.

"The influence and the work that we have is the result not just of the president," he said. "It is the result of countless interactions and arrangements and relationships between our military and other militaries and our diplomats and other diplomats, and intelligence officers and development workers. And there is enormous continuity beneath the day-to-day news that makes us that indispensable nation when it comes to maintaining order and promoting prosperity around the world. That will continue."

Also on Monday, National Security Adviser Susan Rice told AFP that allies could trust the United States to fulfill its treaty obligations, even under a President Trump.

Concerns About Trump Loom Over Obama's Final Foreign Tour

By Josh Lederman

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – It was supposed to be his grand valedictory tour. Now President Barack Obama must use his last major trip abroad to try to calm shocked world leaders about the outcome of the U.S. election, and what comes next when Donald Trump is president.

Trump's unforeseen victory has triggered pangs of uncertainty at home and grave concerns around the world. Though Obama has urged unity and said the U.S. must root for Trump's success, the president's trip to Greece, Germany and Peru forces him to confront global concerns about the future of America's leadership.

"The mood of Greek people for this political change is 'wait and see,'" said Nikos Pappas, a minister of state with close ties to Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, in an interview. He said there was surprise in Greece, as elsewhere, about Trump's victory, but added: "Everybody would be expecting the U.S. government is going to continue to be on our side."

Obama departs Monday on the weeklong trip. Before leaving, Obama planned to face reporters at an afternoon

White House news conference certain to be dominated by questions about the election and its consequences for U.S. policy and Obama's own legacy.

Obama's trip, planned when it seemed certain Hillary Clinton would win, had been designed to reassure the world that the U.S. had regained its footing after a toxic campaign that unnerved foreign capitals, noted Heather Conley, a Europe scholar at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"Now the president has the unenviable task of telling his counterparts and explaining what Europeans are now coining 'the Trump effect,'" Conley said.

For months, Obama lent credence to those concerns as he urged Americans to reject Trump. Standing alongside Singapore's prime minister in August, Obama said Trump was "woefully unprepared" because he lacked "basic knowledge" about critical issues in Europe, Asia and the Mideast. And during a visit to Japan, Obama said world leaders were rightfully "rattled" by Trump.

Now, Obama must reassure the U.S. and other countries that somehow, it will all be OK.

Obama appears to have started the reassurance before he left. On Monday, he spoke with Mexican President Enrique Pe□a Nieto to express his "how much the United States values and depends upon its relationship and collaboration with Mexico," according to a White House statement on the phone call. The language was a striking contrast to Trump's campaign promise to force Mexico to pay for a wall along the border.

Ben Rhodes, Obama's deputy national security adviser, said the president fully expects Trump's election to be a dominant theme of the trip, but would emphasize his plans to keep carrying out his approach until Trump takes over. He said Obama would argue that basic U.S. principles like honoring treaty commitments have historically survived even the most dramatic changes of administrations.

"He'll want to use these conversations with leaders to express that view that given all the important issues that we face, no matter what our preferred choice may have been in the election, right now we as Americans have a stake in seeing this next administration succeed," Rhodes said.

On his trip, Obama is stopping first in Athens, where he'll tour the Parthenon, meet with Tsipras, and give a speech about democracy and globalization that will take on new relevance in light of Trump's election. He'll use his visit to Berlin to show gratitude to German Chancellor Angela Merkel, his closest foreign partner, and to meet with key European leaders.

In Peru, he'll attend a major Asian economic summit in Lima, and also meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Australian Prime Minster Malcolm Turnbull.

For the most part, foreign leaders have politely if cautiously congratulated Trump on his victory. A few have been more effusive, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose perceived sympathies for Trump became an election issue and who now says he wants to fully restore U.S. relations under President Trump.

In Europe, where Obama has sought unity with allies to counter Russia's growing influence, NATO members are alarmed by Trump's suggestions that the U.S. might pull out of the alliance if other countries don't pay more. Many of the same nations are wrestling with whether last year's historic climate change deal can be salvaged after Trump's threats to pull the U.S. out.

Conversely, Trump's "America first" motto has resonated deeply with nationalists and skeptics of globalization who see Trump as a kindred spirit. Trump had dubbed himself "Mr. Brexit" after the U.K.'s vote to leave the European Union.

America's Mideast allies are unsure what Trump's victory means for the nuclear deal with Iran, a foe of U.S. partners Saudi Arabia and Israel, considering Trump's repeated but vague pledges to renegotiate that deal. And misgivings about Trump will certainly follow Obama to Latin America, where Trump has turned off many with his hard-line immigration stance and description of Mexican immigrants as criminals and rapists.

Asian leaders who painstakingly negotiated a landmark free trade deal with the U.S. are swallowing the reality that Congress will not approve the Trans-Pacific Partnership any time soon. Obama planned to meet with TPP country leaders in Peru, but the White House acknowledged the deal is all but dead because Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has ruled out a vote on it before Trump – who vehemently opposes the deal – takes office.

Reach Josh Lederman on Twitter at http://twitter.com/joshledermanAP.

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Trump Casts Long Shadow Over Obama's Last Foreign Trip

By Gregory Korte

USA Today, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — President Obama began his presidency with a series of foreign trips that critics derided as an "apology tour." Now, just a week after voters repudiated that presidency by turning the White House over to a bitter

rival, Obama departs for what might be described as a humility tour.

His visits to Greece, Germany and Peru this week will deal with a wide range of American issues abroad — all of them cast in a new light by one big development back home: the election of Donald Trump.

"Of course, the Europeans are all mouths agape. How did this happen? What does it mean?" said Kurt Volker, the former U.S. permanent representative to NATO in the Bush and Obama administrations who spent election night in Berlin.

The forces that helped elect Trump — anxiety about trade, terrorism and migration — are some of the same forces roiling Europe. "I think it will be a topic on Obama's trip: All of our countries are going though this surge of anti-establishment populism," Volker said.

When Obama was the president elect, he often reminded people that the United States only has "one president at a time." And while White House aides say he'll be "running through the tape" until Jan. 20, they also acknowledged that Trump's election looms over the agenda.

"Look, we certainly expect that the election will be the primary topic on people's minds everywhere we go," said Deputy National Security Adviser Ben Rhodes.

Before Trump's election, Obama described world leaders as "surprised" and "rattled" by the popularity of Trump's isolationist impulses. Obama will Now, he will try to reassure anxious allies that American interests won't change, even if its leadership will. "There are certain things that have endured for decades under administrations of different parties," Rhodes said.

One of the most important, he said, is the NATO alliance itself. But Trump has said he would reconsider the alliance if other member countries don't pay their share of common defense expenditures, 2% of gross domestic product. Only five countries — the United States, Greece, the United Kingdom, Estonia and Poland — meet that benchmark.

Obama will also acknowledge that many western democracies are seeing Trump-like movements.

"On both sides of the Atlantic, we face the task of ensuring that our political institutions and economic policies are responsive to our people, many of whom feel that they have been hurt by globalization and trade," Obama said in an interview published Sunday in the Athens newspaper I Kathimerini. "My message – especially with my visit coming so soon after a hard-fought election campaign in the United States – will be that as our nations confront these challenges together, Americans continue to place enormous importance on our alliance with Greece."

Obama's week-long foreign trip — the last one scheduled before he leaves office Jan. 20 — will stop in three cities:

• Athens. President Obama will express support for Greece's economic reforms in the wake of the euro debt crisis as he meets with Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipris Tuesday. He'll also visit the Parthenon Wednesday.

But the highlight of the visit is a speech on globalization — a speech that was planned before the election result, but will take on new resonance after Trump's victory. "That will include, frankly, acknowledgement of our election results, the Brexit election results," said Rhodes, Obama's chief foreign policy speechwriter. "There are, of course, benefits that have come from globalization and automation, but at the same time, there are challenges as people feel like decisions are made beyond their control."

President Bill Clinton was the last president to visit Greece.

• Berlin. Obama's trip to Hannover in April was supposed to be his last visit to Germany. So the addition of one more final trip — his sixth overall, more than any country except France — underscores the growing importance of Germany Chancellor Angela Merkel. Obama will meet with Merkel Thursday and hold a joint press conference followed by a private dinner.

The leaders of the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Spain will also travel to Berlin for meetings Friday on the Islamic State, Europe's migration issues, Syria and Ukraine.

• Lima, Peru. The European legs were relatively late additions to the president's schedule, and were planned around the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit. President George W. Bush last visited Peru as part of the same summit in 2008.

Obama will meet not only with the 21 APEC countries on Sunday, but also a smaller group of 12 nations who signed on to the Trans-Pacific Partnership Saturday.

White House aides said they understand that Trump's election has changed the equation on U.S. ratification of the deal. "But we continue to think that these types of deals make sense, simply because countries like China are not going to stop working on regional agreements," said Deputy National Security Adviser Wally Adeyemo.

Obama will also hold a town hall for young leaders, and meet separately with Peruvian President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Australian President Malcolm Turnbull.

Obama Visit Raises Greek Government Expectations

Kathimerini (GRC), November 15, 2016

It is clear that Wednesday's speech in Athens by US President Barack Obama, who arrives in the Greek capital Tuesday for a two-day visit, will be addressed to an international audience with the aim of highlighting his

administration's accomplishments and his own legacy before he leaves office in January.

But over and beyond this, Greece's leftist-led government sees the outgoing US president's visit as an opportunity to gain his public support on a range of issues, including its key demand for debt relief, the Cyprus peace talks, and his endorsement of Greece's role in the wider region – within the context of the refugee crisis, the volatility in the Middle East and its geostrategic significance vis-a-vis European energy security.

In an exclusive interview with Kathimerini on Page 2, Obama sets out the main parameters of his visit, which include regional stability, a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem, the need for Greece to stay the course of reforms and for it to get "meaningful debt relief."

The government is banking its hopes that Obama wants to leave office having resolved fundamental international problems, including Greece's debt crisis.

"He wants to complete the eight-year term of his presidency with solutions to a host of issues concerning American foreign and financial policy," government spokesman Dimitris Tzanakopoulos said Monday, while officials in Athens believe that the surprise election of real estate magnate Donald Trump as the 45th US president could actually help Greece achieve its goals. Given that it remains unclear where Trump stands on Greece's debt and the Cyprus issue, Greek officials believe this could actually galvanize the Obama administration to become more proactive on both issues before his term ends in January.

A tangible expression of Obama's support would be his public endorsement, during his visit, of Greece's demand of debt relief. This, government officials believe, would strengthen the hand of Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos at the upcoming and crucial Eurogroup on December 5, where he will make Greece's case.

Obama Confronts Refugee Crisis On His Final Trip To Europe

By Juliet Eilperin And Anthony Faiola

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

When President Obama arrives Tuesday in Europe he will touch down in a country at the center the continent's refugee crisis — Greece — before journeying to one that has helped guide the continent's response — Germany.

The symbolic juxtaposition of the two countries underscores the balance Obama hopes to strike on his last trip to Europe as president. While he plans to buttress Greek efforts to cope with migrants fleeing the battlefields of the Middle East, he must contend with other European Union members' desire to keep more refugees out of their countries.

That task became more complicated after Donald Trump won the White House, in part by campaigning to severely restrict asylum seekers from entering the United States.

"The trip to Greece is about trying to address not just the refugee crisis, but to speak to the broader challenges Europe faces moving forward and to recognize that Greece is a front-line state when it comes to both irregular migration and economic recovery," said Charles Kupchan, the National Security Council's senior director for European affairs.

In Greece, the primary entry point for Middle Eastern migrants, roughly 50,000 asylum seekers remain corralled in refugee camps and United Nations-sponsored accommodations, most of them waiting for E.U. countries to make good on pledges to resettle tens of thousands of refugees in countries across the wealthy bloc. Germany, meanwhile, was the destination of choice for the majority of arriving asylum seekers, and it is still dealing with a backlog of hundreds of thousands of applications for sanctuary.

Greek Migration Minister Ioannis Mouzalas said in an interview Friday that his country expects Obama to emphasize "how important it is to manage the crisis and not close your eyes to such a crisis" during his stops in Athens and Berlin this week.

"It's not a Greek problem, it's a European problem," Mouzalas said.

In Athens, the president will use the city's history as the cradle of democracy as the backdrop to talk about the importance of European unity, but it is unclear how his message will resonate at home after an election that suggests Americans are prepared to turn inward.

Obama also will advocate additional debt relief for Greece, even as he prods Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras to undertake more institutional reforms. But George Papaconstantinou, who served as Greece's finance minister between October 2009 and June 2011, said that with just two months left in office, Obama's words will have limited influence, especially given Trump's victory.

"The reality is that this is postelection, so while it is welcome, it does carry less weight than before," Papaconstantinou said. "This is not 2010, when he was calling [German Chancellor Angela] Merkel to get involved. This is not the same. I don't think this is going to change anything much in Berlin."

Ben Rhodes, the White House deputy national security adviser, said the president's speech will show "the need to recognize the challenges presented by globalization which are manifested in many recent elections, including our own" but still advocate policies to "invest in democratic governance, open markets . . . and combat inequality."

A fragile E.U. deal with Turkey and moves by Balkan nations to seal their borders to migrants has reduced last year's flood of arrivals to a steady trickle. The number of migrants arriving in Greece each day has fallen from an

average of 7,000 a day in October 2015 to 100 now. But the region is still coping with major fallout.

The continent remains divided on how to deal with the historic wave of asylum seekers, and some national leaders are arguing that Europe should turn away most of them. Merkel, who last year famously welcomed refugees to Germany, has in recent months faced steep political losses and a growing public backlash.

In fact, the rhetoric in Europe today echoes the debate over immigration in the United States, with opponents decrying cultural invasion and security risks from the arriving newcomers.

Obama will be retracing the steps (though n far greater confort) of nearly 900,000 migrants who transited last year from Greece to Germany.

Pro-refugee and rights groups called Obama's visit an opportunity to highlight the plight of migrants, particularly the tens of thousands stranded in dire conditions in Greece.

"We think it's a great move. We hope Obama will be bold," said Eva Cosse, Greece specialist for Human Rights Watch. "He needs to be blunt about the situation in Greece and the lack of European Union solidarity to help these people."

According to a recent report from Amnesty International, many migrants trapped in Greece are living in appalling conditions in unheated camps. A further 16,000 people are stuck on Greek islands in severely overcrowded camps.

The rights group's report said there was no effective system to identify vulnerable individuals, such as pregnant women, elderly people, victims of torture, people with disabilities or unaccompanied children, and many are not being provided with the specialized services they need, putting them at heightened risk.

One of the biggest problems is roughly 2,500 unaccompanied minors, some of whom are initially kept in detention by Greek authorities. Roughly half of them, Cosse said, are unaccounted for.

Mouzalas said the conditions in the centers "are not very good, but we make them better every day." He noted that 400 of the unaccompanied minors have the right to be reunified with family members elsewhere in Europe, but these countries have accepted only 90 of them.

"That's a very big focus," he said, referring to unaccompanied minors, adding that younger children are now attending local schools with Greek children.

"If we had not created these camps, these people would have been in the middle of fields in mud, their children would not be integrated in schools, and their sick would not be in hospitals," Mouzalas added.

Still, Yonous Muhammadi, president of the Greek Forum of Refugees, said the global community must act soon or these refugees could be permanently marginalized.

"If we continue this absurdity like this, it means there is no way for the integration of these people into Greek society," Muhammadi said.

While Mouzalas acknowledged that the Greek government was still struggling to handle the influx of migrants, he said E.U. authorities have failed to deliver critical assistance on several fronts. Three years ago Greece did not have an asylum service; it now has one of Europe's largest. But while it has asked other E.U. countries to send more than 400 asylum specialists to Greece, they have dispatched just 30.

Karl Kopp, spokesman for the Germany-based refugee activist group Pro Asyl, said he hoped Obama would focus on the plight of migrants as a counterpoint to rising right-wing sentiment against them. He added that Obama needed to offer a pledge that the U.S. will take in more refugees — but he recognized the limits on an outgoing president.

"Obama won't be able to write the check he would like to write, because he won't be in power for much longer," Kopp said.

Greece Hopes Obama Visit Will Boost Chances Of Debt Relief

Reuters, November 14, 2016

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

Greece, Seeking Dose Of Stability, Is Rattled By Trump's Win

By Liz Alderman And Niki Kitsantonis

New York Times, November 14, 2016

PARIS — Before last week, Greece expected that it might benefit from what was supposed to be a triumphal valedictory lap by President Obama as he lands in Athens on Tuesday to kick off his final world tour.

Mr. Obama has been supportive of Greece's efforts to get its finances in order, and of Europe's bid to keep Greece stable. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras hoped that Mr. Obama, who travels to Berlin on Thursday, might even persuade the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, to offer Greece some debt relief by the end of the year.

But that possibility has all but evaporated with the victory of Donald J. Trump.

Instead, Mr. Obama will arrive in Athens with his legacy threatened and his leverage sorely reduced. His visit has turned into yet another reminder of the ways in which Mr. Trump's ascendancy is changing the calculations of leaders across Europe. Mr. Tsipras is among the most vulnerable of them.

"The expectation was that Obama would relay a message about how impressed he was with Greece's

progress," said Jens Bastian, an economics consultant based in Athens and a former member of the European Commission's task force on Greece. "But given that Trump will assume the presidency, all bets are off."

Indeed, Mr. Trump has urged Europe to take care of its own problems, and he suggested during the height of the Greek crisis that the United States should not get involved.

"I would definitely stay back," he said in an interview last year with Fox Business Network. "Germany is very powerful and strong. I'd let Germany handle it."

"We have enough problems," he said, adding that President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia could ride in "to save the day if Germany doesn't."

For Greece, in the worst case, a failure now to secure debt relief before Mr. Trump is sworn in could spell a new round of political and economic instability, with implications for the wider European Union.

Even before Mr. Trump's victory, Mr. Tsipras's troubles had mounted all year. His popularity plunged after his government snapped in place new pension cuts and tax increases to appease his nation's creditors, further angering beleaguered Greeks.

The risk now is that Greece could re-emerge as a weak link in the eurozone, as pivotal elections in several European countries next year may shift the focus from stabilizing Greece.

Europe's currency bloc already came close to fracturing last year when Mr. Tsipras veered toward pulling out of the euro. Since then, his fragile government has been managing the moribund economy under a new financial bailout with harsh austerity terms.

Under the deal, Mr. Tsipras won pledges from creditors to relieve some of Greece's large debt, and he is angling to strike a concrete accord in early December.

"The danger is that if this drags on to next year, the issue remains open, and that's a nightmare for the Greek government," said Nick Malkoutzis, the editor of Macropolis, a political analysis website. "It will lead to heightened uncertainty and renewed speculation about whether Greece will continue in the eurozone."

While the eurozone has held together despite Greece's troubles, Mr. Trump has also hinted that he sees the shared currency as a potential threat. "Don't forget the whole euro situation was created to compete against the United States," he said in the Fox Business interview. "This was all set up to hurt the United States."

Whether Mr. Trump takes that view to the White House remains to be seen. "He draws a red line," Mr. Bastian said. "But how thick that red line is, is anyone's guess."

With the popularity of Mr. Tsipras's leftist Syriza party plummeting, he has been insisting that Athens is gearing up for a firm commitment on debt relief on Dec. 5, when eurozone officials are to discuss Greece's situation.

The International Monetary Fund, of which the United States is the largest member, has called on Greece's creditors to be flexible, warning that the country cannot meet its budget-tightening goals if the debt load is not reduced. Germany remains skeptical of cutting Athens more slack.

Mr. Obama has repeatedly underlined the need for debt relief and a shift away from austerity, and Greek officials believed Hillary Clinton would have adopted the same stance.

Greece's government spokesman, Dimitris Tzanakopoulos, expressed optimism that the debt issue would be resolved before Mr. Trump assumes office, and he added that the government was not worried about a shift in Washington's stance on the Greek debt issue. "We don't think that there will be any discontinuity," he said.

Others take a darker view.

"Trump's policy will certainly be different to Obama's," Georgios Kyrtsos, a member of the European Parliament from the conservative New Democracy party, told state radio after Mr. Trump's victory. "As regards Greece's debt, I don't think Washington will exercise any pressure for restructuring."

Should creditors decide that Greece has not done enough to satisfy the terms of its bailout, and push a decision on debt relief into next year, the chances of securing a deal become ever fainter.

Negotiations for Britain's withdrawal from the European Union will start in earnest in 2017, draining the appetite of European leaders for having to deal with Greece's problems yet again.

In addition, national elections will be held in Germany, France and the Netherlands, where Mr. Trump's rise has fueled ambitions by right-leaning parties who see in his victory a chance at their own, and who have little patience for extending more financial aid to Greece.

A similar headache awaits Mr. Tsipras amid concerns that Mr. Trump's victory will embolden the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn political group, which remains Greece's third-most-popular party, even though its leaders are on trial for a string of crimes including attacks on migrants.

Golden Dawn hailed Mr. Trump's election as a victory against "illegal immigration" and in favor of "ethnically clean states."

With so much uncertainty washing over Europe, Ms. Merkel may opt to push for preserving as much stability as possible on the Continent while she can.

"Merkel may wish to ensure that, at a time when so much has become unpredictable, stability is guaranteed, which would mean doing a deal on Greece," said Mujtaba Rahman, the managing director for Europe of Eurasia Group, a political risk consultancy.

At the end of the day, he added, Greece's problems are fundamentally an internal European matter, and the question is whether other European leaders are willing to keep funding stability in Greece.

"On the U.S. side, there is likely to be a more laissez-faire approach to let the Europeans get their house in order," Mr. Rahman said. "But on the European end, in a context of extreme concern about voter preferences that are increasingly anti-immigration and establishment, the watchword is stability."

Boris Johnson Praises 'Dealmaker' Donald Trump

By Ester King

Politico Europe, November 14, 2016

Donald Trump could be "a good thing" for the U.K. and for Europe, Boris Johnson said Monday, hours after a number of his EU counterparts held emergency talks on the implications of the tycoon's ascendancy.

The British foreign secretary said the EU should not "pre-judge" Trump, saying the president-elect was someone with whom Europe could do business.

"Donald Trump, as I've said before, is a dealmaker and I think that could be a good thing for Britain but it can also be a good thing for Europe," Johnson said as he arrived for a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels, according to the Telegraph.

"I think we should regard it [a Trump presidency] as a moment of opportunity," Johnson said.

Johnson had snubbed special talks on Trump on Sunday evening, calling the crisis-meeting "stupid," "ridiculous" and "hysterical."

U.K.'s Bridge To Trump? Nigel Farage, Who Pushed 'Brexit,' Posits Himself

By Katrin Bennhold

New York Times, November 14, 2016

LONDON — Britain has long been anxious about its "special relationship" with the United States, but after some choice remarks about Donald J. Trump by members of the governing Conservative Party during the presidential campaign, the relationship needs a bit of nurturing. And who better to tend to that, in his own mind at least, than Nigel Farage, the beer-loving commodities-trader-turned-populist-leader of the U.K. Independence Party.

Mr. Farage, known for his noisy role in promoting Britain's exit from the European Union, was the first foreign politician to meet with President-elect Trump, three months after joining him on the campaign trail. On Monday, a photograph of the two men inside Trump Tower, all grins and thumbs up, dominated the front pages of newspapers in Britain.

As some in Mr. Farage's party suggested him as the next ambassador to the United States, Prime Minister Theresa May's office on Monday was quick to slap him down, saying that there would be no "third person" in her relationship with Mr. Trump.

Responding to the cool reception from the prime minister's office, Mr. Farage told LBC Radio: " It just goes to show they are not really interested in the country or the national interest, they are more concerned about petty party politics and trying to keep me out of everything."

Mr. Farage's unannounced one-man diplomacy is a nuisance for Mrs. May, who reportedly had no prior knowledge of his excursion to Manhattan. Her office played down the fact that she was only the 10th among world leaders to congratulate Mr. Trump after his election last week, with one official emphasizing that France was even further down the list.

Crispin Blunt, the chairman of Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, said an intermediary role for Mr. Farage, a member of the European Parliament who has failed to win a seat in the British Parliament, was "completely implausible." (Mr. Farage, who formally stepped down as the leader of UKIP after the June referendum to leave the bloc, is leading the party on a temporary basis.)

Besides, said the chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, Mrs. May and Mr. Trump had "no urgent business to discuss."

By Monday, however, some senior members of Mrs. May's Conservative Party acknowledged that she did have the urgent business of building links to a new and possibly radically different White House, and they pressed her to use Mr. Farage to rebuild trust.

Relations with Mr. Trump took a blow in December when Boris Johnson, now the foreign secretary, accused the candidate of being "out of his mind" and of "a quite stupefying ignorance" that made him unfit for the presidency.

On Monday, Mr. Johnson struck a more diplomatic tone, suggesting that "there's a lot to be positive about." He added, "It's very important not to prejudge the president-elect or his administration."

But many worried that considerable damage had been done, and that Mr. Farage was best positioned to do the repair work.

"If you have got someone who has got a relationship, then for goodness sake, use it," Edi Truell, a private equity investor and prominent donor to the Conservative Party, told The Times of London. "You could say he represents 52 percent of the population," he said, referring to the proportion of Britons who voted in June to leave the European Union.

Jonathan Marland, a former British trade envoy, told the BBC that "anything we can do at any level to rebuild that relationship will be to Britain's advantage, and if Mr. Farage happens to be one of the people who encourages that relationship, then so be it."

Mr. Farage, who takes credit for being "the catalyst for the downfall of the Blairites, the Clintonites, the Bushites and

all these dreadful people who work hand in glove with Goldman Sachs and everybody else, have made themselves rich and ruined our countries," has already offered one early piece of advice to the president-elect, who has notoriously bragged about forcing himself on women: "Don't touch her, for God's sake!"

"If it comes to it," Mr. Farage said, "I could be there as the responsible adult role, to make sure everything's O.K."

But that was not going to fly with the prime minister. Referring to the phone call with Mr. Trump last Thursday, a spokeswoman said on Monday that the president-elect had invited Mrs. May to visit him as soon as possible and talked about enjoying the same close relationship that Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher had in the 1980s.

In a speech late on Monday, billed as her first major address on foreign policy, Mrs. May said that after the vote to leave the bloc and Mr. Trump's election, "change was in the air." Britain, she said, now had the opportunity to take on a new role as the global champion of free trade and to rethink globalization so it serves not just a privileged few.

Appealing to those left behind by globalization was a favorite campaign theme of both Mr. Trump, a millionaire businessman with a privileged upbringing, and Mr. Farage, who went to an exclusive private school and started out as a trader.

The two men first met in August, when Mr. Farage spoke at a Trump campaign event in Mississippi. After that Mr. Trump promised a "Brexit plus plus plus" to his supporters.

On Saturday at Trump Tower, Mr. Farage and Mr. Trump spent over an hour discussing Mr. Trump's victory, the vote to leave the European Union and the return to the Oval Office of a bust of Winston Churchill, who first coined the idea of a "special relationship" in a 1946 speech.

It was a great honor spending time with Mr. Trump, Mr. Farage said on Twitter after meeting the president-elect on Saturday. Mr. Farage added: "He was relaxed and full of good ideas. I'm confident he will be a good president."

In another post on Twitter, Mr. Farage said that Mr. Trump's "support for the US-UK relationship is very strong," and that "this is a man with whom we can do business."

If his own country spurns his services, Mr. Farage has said, he is open to working for Mr. Trump himself: "I would quite like to be his ambassador to the European Union."

May: UK Must Respond To World Transformed By Brexit, Trump

By Jill Lawless

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

LONDON (AP) – Britain's vote to leave the European Union and the election of Donald Trump have transformed the world in a year, Prime Minister Theresa May said Monday, in a speech arguing that governments must heed people's concerns about the impact of globalization on jobs and communities.

In a major foreign policy speech at the annual Lord Mayor's Banquet in London, May said "change is in the air" and "it's the job of politicians to respond."

She said Britain would champion free trade while managing "the forces of globalization so that they work for all."

The speech comes as the British government tries to build bridges with a U.S. president-elect whose victory has surprised – and even alarmed – many European politicians.

British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said Monday that it's "very important not to prejudge the president-elect or his administration." And May's spokeswoman, Helen Bower, said Downing St. wants "an effective, strong working relationship" with the incoming U.S. president.

May and Trump spoke by phone on Thursday, the day after Trump's victory was announced. But the call has been overshadowed in Britain by Trump's meeting Saturday with U.K. Independence Party leader Nigel Farage, a key player in the U.K.'s decision to leave the European Union.

UKIP issued a gleeful press release accompanied by a picture of the two men, beaming side-by-side in front of a golden elevator at Trump Tower in New York.

May firmly rejected suggestions that she should use Farage – a political foe of her Conservative party – as a go-between with Trump's team.

Bower said that Trump told May "he looked forward to enjoying the same close relationship that (Ronald) Reagan and (Margaret) Thatcher did."

"I don't remember there being a third person in that relationship," Bower noted.

May, who took office when David Cameron resigned after losing the June referendum on EU membership, has stressed the need to help those who feel left behind by the economic and social changes of recent decades.

Years of recession and economic uncertainty since the 2008 global financial crisis have helped fuel resentments that drove the votes for Trump and Brexit.

May told a black-tie dinner at London's medieval Guildhall: "We meet in a world transformed."

She said liberalization and globalization are forces for good, and "free markets and tree trade" are the best way to lift people out of poverty.

But – in a nod to the anti-establishment feeling that fueled Trump's victory and the Brexit vote – she added that governments must help people who have seen "their jobs being outsourced and wages undercut."

"To be the true global champion of free trade in this new modern world, we also need to do something to help those families and communities who can actually lose out from it," May said.

It's unclear whether May's commitment to free trade will be shared by president-elect Trump, who campaigned on promises to bolster U.S. industry and restore U.S. jobs lost to globalization.

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Europeans Agree Defense Plan After Campaign Swipes By Trump

By Robin Emmott

Reuters, November 14, 2016

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EU Ministers Move On Regional Security, Reaffirm Iran Deal

By Lorne Cook And Angela Charlton

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

BRUSSELS (AP) – Top EU diplomats called Monday for more robust European defense and a greater European voice in world affairs as Donald Trump – whose isolationist, protectionist promises have worried many in Europe – prepares to assume the U.S. presidency.

With many question marks around Trump's foreign policy plans, EU foreign ministers agreed at talks in Brussels on the need to strengthen Europe's role in world affairs until the future of trans-Atlantic relations becomes clearer.

In a first concrete step a day after the anniversary of the deadly Paris attacks in which 130 people died last year, the ministers signed off on a sprawling new security and defense plan. But the plan is a far cry from the idea of an "EU army" with a military headquarters that was annoying some EU partners at NATO. It identifies Europe's main tasks as responding to external threats, building the security resilience of partners outside the EU and protecting the 28-nation bloc and its citizens.

"This is a qualitative leap in the European Union's security and defense," EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini told reporters after the meeting. She said that work on taking it forward would begin within weeks.

Dutch Foreign Minister Bert Koenders said, "I think there is a realization this is a strategic moment for Europe right now. We are surrounded by autocratic, assertive or fragile countries. That means we have to take to take more our own responsibilities."

"We are in an uncertain world, and it has not started with the election of Mr. Trump," said French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault. "But Europe must not wait for others' decisions, it must defend its own interests – that is to say the interest of Europeans – and at the same time reaffirming its strategic role on the global level."

His Belgian counterpart, Didier Reynders, said Trump's election was "a possibility for the EU to go further. We need to enhance our capacity in defense and security."

"The EU needs to find a way to have its voice heard in the search for political solutions ... and ensure that it's not simply a conversation between Washington and Moscow, so that we can have the EU really at the table," he said.

In another move Monday, the ministers reaffirmed their support for the Iran nuclear agreement, which Trump has branded the "worst deal in the world" and vowed to renegotiate. They said "the European Union reiterates its resolute commitment" to the part of the action plan that EU heavyweights Britain, France and Germany agreed upon with Iran.

The plan includes lifting "nuclear-related economic and financial sanctions and engaging with the private sector and economic operators, especially banks, to promote growth in trade and investment."

While campaigning, Trump called the pact agreed last year a "lopsided disgrace" and railed against its time-limited restrictions on Iran's enrichment of uranium and other nuclear activity. Trump's exact plans are vague, though, and renegotiating a deal Iran and other partners are happy with would be difficult.

But perhaps Europe's most pressing problem is to understand how Trump wants to deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The EU has imposed sanctions on Russia over its 2014 annexation of Crimea and destabilizing role elsewhere in Ukraine. Any signal from Trump about a warming of U.S. relations with Russia is likely to embolden already-reluctant countries like Germany, Italy and others to push for an end to the sanctions regime.

British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson insisted Monday that Trump's presidency could be a "moment of opportunity" for Europe.

Johnson, who championed Britain's exit from the EU and skipped Sunday night's foreign ministers meeting, said Trump "is a dealmaker and I think that could be a good thing for Britain, but it can also a good thing for Europe. I think that's what we need to focus on today."

Other EU diplomats said they should focus instead on problems closer to home, such as the refugee emergency and economic issues.

Charlton reported from Paris. Sylvain Plazy in Brussels contributed.

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Divisions Emerge In Europe On Whether To Do Deals With Trump

By Michael Birnbaum

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

BRUSSELS — Cracks opened Monday among European nations weighing how to respond to the election of Donald Trump as U.S. president, as leaders struggled to balance their economic and military dependence on the United States with their opposition to many of Trump's ideas about world affairs.

Most European leaders opposed Trump ahead of his election, worrying that he would upend Western security arrangements that have underpinned European stability for 70 years. But now that he is ascendant, that unity is dissipating, as nations make different calculations about how to handle his stunning victory. The splits could make it easier for Trump to maneuver European leaders to his advantage. But they also put the United States in the unfamiliar position of exploiting European disunity rather than campaigning for a stiff, unified European response to challenges as varied as Russia, Iran and the global economy.

The European approaches to Trump run the gamut: In Britain, leaders appear eager to embrace him in a bid to influence his decision-making. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, meanwhile, has said she looks forward to working with Trump so long as he transforms into a principled democrat a bit more like her. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker last week spat that Europe would waste two years as it waited for Trump to learn about the world.

The disunity is a first sign of how the Western alliance may look like under a President Trump: chaotic, unpredictable and even more fractured. Europe has been struggling to hold together after years of economic turmoil, Russia's annexation of Crimea and waves of newcomers fleeing war and economic hardship. Britain's June vote to leave the European Union exacerbated the challenges. But Trump's victory, in his own words, is "Brexit times five."

"Donald Trump, as I've said before, is a dealmaker, and I think that could be a good thing for Britain," British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said as he joined a meeting of European foreign ministers on Monday after blowing off a dinner here the previous evening dedicated to crisis talks on the Trump election. Last week he dismissed European worries about the election result as a "collective whinge-o-rama," using British slang for a complaint fest.

But other European leaders are taking very different messages from the Trump victory. Many have a difficult path to navigate: embrace Trump too easily and they risk emboldening their own anti-establishment forces at home. But by rejecting him, they could cut off support from their most powerful ally and look out of touch with their own voters, many of whom are also concerned about migration, economic stagnation and the downsides of globalization — the same issues that many say galvanized the Trump base.

"The whole question is whether they're going to show unity on all of these matters, or whether they're going to move on this in a bilateral way, each one going to Washington to try to make the best possible deal with the new American president," said Pierre Vimont, a former senior French diplomat who is a senior associate at Carnegie Europe, a think tank.

European foreign and defense ministers gathered Monday in Brussels for a long-planned meeting to discuss efforts to improve security and defense cooperation. The efforts were spurred by Britain's decision to leave the E.U. and gained new urgency after the U.S. election.

But many avoided taking a sharp stand on Trump. French leaders said only that they would move forward with their security plans without waiting for the new U.S. administration to develop its policies.

"Europe should not wait for the decisions of others. It must defend its interests, that is to say, the interests of Europe, and at the same time affirm its strategic role in the world," said French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault, who, like his British counterpart, skipped the Sunday emergency dinner. The snub — blamed on a scheduling conflict — was a subtle way to downgrade France's role in the political crossfire. Leaders of France's euroskeptic, anti-immigrant National Front party said over the weekend that Trump representatives had reached out to them to work together. The party is surging at the polls ahead of the presidential election next year.

Other nations appear eager to use any opening by Trump to ease sanctions against Russia. The Obama administration has pushed unity among the 28 E.U. countries on sanctions ever since Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, but many E.U. diplomats believe that Europe would quickly dismantle at least some of its sanctions if Trump eased U.S. sanctions first. That would be a slap to Eastern European nations, many of which fear Russian aggression, and to Merkel, who has forced unanimity on sanctions at one fractious summit after another.

Merkel is also Europe's most robust challenger to Trump's rise. In the days since his victory, she and her allies increasingly appear to be grappling with the notion that they

may be standing alone in defending the post-World War II Western order, as one partner after another has fallen away.

Germany has traditionally shied away from funding a robust military because of its Nazi past. Now leaders are talking about the need to be more self-sufficient for their own security, fearful of dependence on a United States whose instincts they fear.

"For us, it is clear: Europe needs to take more responsibility for itself," German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen said Monday.

Merkel last week delivered a subtle warning to Trump, saying, "Germany and America are bound by common values — democracy, freedom, as well as respect for the rule of law and the dignity of each and every person, regardless of their origin, skin color, creed, gender, sexual orientation or political views. It is based on these values that I wish to offer close cooperation."

But some European leaders appear ready to dismiss Trump altogether.

"I think that we'll waste time for two years while Mr. Trump tours a world that he is completely unaware of," Juncker told students in Luxembourg last week.

The difference between Juncker and the rest of Europe? As the unelected head of the European Union's vast bureaucratic machine, Juncker faces no voters.

Europe's Trump Panic

Maybe EU leaders should emulate his call for more defense spending.

Wall Street Journal, November 14, 2016

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Obama Predicts Trump Won't Scrap Iran Nuclear Deal As President

By Alex Wayne

Bloomberg Politics, November 14, 2016

President Barack Obama said he doubts President-elect Donald Trump will scrap a deal with Iran to curtail the country's nuclear weapons aspirations because the agreement is working.

When the accord was struck in 2015, "the main argument against it was that Iran wouldn't abide by the deal," Obama said Monday at a White House news conference. "We now have over a year of evidence that they have abided by the deal."

Trump, a Republican, said during his campaign that the Iran agreement was a bad deal and that he would force the Islamic Republic to renegotiate it. He has not addressed the agreement since winning the Nov. 8 election. He and Obama met on Thursday for about 90 minutes to discuss the transition from Obama's administration to Trump's, including current policies Obama hopes will continue after the Jan. 20 inauguration.

"My suspicion is that when the president-elect comes in and is consulting with his fellow Republicans on the Hill, that they will look at the facts," Obama said. "To unravel a deal that's working and preventing Iran from pursuing a nuclear weapon would be hard to explain," particularly if it leaves Iran free to reconstitute its weapons programs, he said.

Obama Warns Trump Against Ripping Up Iran Deal

By Brent Griffiths

Politico, November 14, 2016

President Obama cautioned his successor against re-opening the debate over the Iran nuclear deal, saying that it was easy for Donald Trump to promise he would rip up the deal when he was just a candidate. But now, when the president-elect just "looks at the facts," he will see the deal is working, Obama argued.

"My suspicion is that when the president-elect comes in and he is consulting with his Republican colleagues on the Hill," Trump won't be so eager to revisit the agreement, Obama told reporters at a press briefing before his final overseas trip as president.

Why? "Because to unravel a deal that is working and preventing Iran for pursuing a nuclear weapon would be hard to explain — particularly if the alternative would have them freed from any obligations and go ahead and pursue a nuclear weapon," Obama said.

The United States and other top world powers reached an agreement last year that froze Iran's progress towards a nuclear weapon in exchange for reduced sanctions that were strangling the Islamic Republic's economy. Criticism of the deal cut across party lines, as some key Democrats – such as incoming Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) – opposed it, but the administration was successful in securing enough congressional support for the agreement to proceed.

It is more difficult to undo "something that is working," Obama said, as he repeatedly pointed to former opponents who he said now agree the deal is working and that Iran is not trying to cheat on its obligations.

"When you're not responsible for it, I think you can call it a terrible deal," Obama said. "When you are then responsible for the deal and preventing Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, you are more likely to look at the facts."

EU Ministers Move On Regional Security, Reaffirm Iran Deal

By Lorne Cook And Angela Charlton

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

BRUSSELS (AP) – Top EU diplomats called Monday for more robust European defense and a greater European

voice in world affairs as Donald Trump – whose isolationist, protectionist promises have worried many in Europe – prepares to assume the U.S. presidency.

With many question marks around Trump's foreign policy plans, EU foreign ministers agreed at talks in Brussels on the need to strengthen Europe's role in world affairs until the future of trans-Atlantic relations becomes clearer.

In a first concrete step a day after the anniversary of the deadly Paris attacks in which 130 people died last year, the ministers signed off on a sprawling new security and defense plan. But the plan is a far cry from the idea of an "EU army" with a military headquarters that was annoying some EU partners at NATO. It identifies Europe's main tasks as responding to external threats, building the security resilience of partners outside the EU and protecting the 28-nation bloc and its citizens.

"This is a qualitative leap in the European Union's security and defense," EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini told reporters after the meeting. She said that work on taking it forward would begin within weeks.

Dutch Foreign Minister Bert Koenders said, "I think there is a realization this is a strategic moment for Europe right now. We are surrounded by autocratic, assertive or fragile countries. That means we have to take to take more our own responsibilities."

"We are in an uncertain world, and it has not started with the election of Mr. Trump," said French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault. "But Europe must not wait for others' decisions, it must defend its own interests – that is to say the interest of Europeans – and at the same time reaffirming its strategic role on the global level."

His Belgian counterpart, Didier Reynders, said Trump's election was "a possibility for the EU to go further. We need to enhance our capacity in defense and security."

"The EU needs to find a way to have its voice heard in the search for political solutions ... and ensure that it's not simply a conversation between Washington and Moscow, so that we can have the EU really at the table," he said.

In another move Monday, the ministers reaffirmed their support for the Iran nuclear agreement, which Trump has branded the "worst deal in the world" and vowed to renegotiate. They said "the European Union reiterates its resolute commitment" to the part of the action plan that EU heavyweights Britain, France and Germany agreed upon with Iran.

The plan includes lifting "nuclear-related economic and financial sanctions and engaging with the private sector and economic operators, especially banks, to promote growth in trade and investment."

While campaigning, Trump called the pact agreed last year a "lopsided disgrace" and railed against its time-limited restrictions on Iran's enrichment of uranium and other nuclear activity. Trump's exact plans are vague, though, and renegotiating a deal Iran and other partners are happy with would be difficult.

But perhaps Europe's most pressing problem is to understand how Trump wants to deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The EU has imposed sanctions on Russia over its 2014 annexation of Crimea and destabilizing role elsewhere in Ukraine. Any signal from Trump about a warming of U.S. relations with Russia is likely to embolden already-reluctant countries like Germany, Italy and others to push for an end to the sanctions regime.

Trump and Putin spoke on Monday. In a statement issued after the call, the Kremlin said that Putin expressed readiness to establish a "partner-like" dialogue with Trump's incoming administration.

British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson insisted Monday that Trump's presidency could be a "moment of opportunity" for Europe.

Johnson, who championed Britain's exit from the EU and skipped Sunday night's foreign ministers meeting, said Trump "is a dealmaker and I think that could be a good thing for Britain, but it can also a good thing for Europe. I think that's what we need to focus on today."

Other EU diplomats said they should focus instead on problems closer to home, such as the refugee emergency and economic issues.

Speaking at a conference at Harvard University Pierre Moscovici, European commissioner for economic and financial affairs, said Trump's win was a "political wake-up call" that demonstrates a decline of democratic values and a rise of populist ideas in both the U.S. and Europe.

"I am a politician, as you recall, also a Social Democrat and I want to share with you my worries when I see democrats and our shared values losing ground on both sides of the Atlantic," Moscovici said.

Charlton reported from Paris. Sylvain Plazy in Brussels and Maria Danilova in Washington contributed to this report.

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Trump's Plans To Scuttle Or Amend The Iran Nuclear Deal Remain A Work In Progress

By Tracy Wilkinson

Los Angeles Times, November 11, 2016

President Obama said Monday that the historic accord to curb Iran's ability to develop nuclear weapons — the most

important arms control agreement in decades — is working, and he expressed hope that Donald Trump will keep it intact.

"My suspicion is that when the president-elect comes into office … he will look at the facts," Obama said at a news conference. Abandoning the deal would remove obstructions that blocked Iran's nuclear capabilities and could force the United States to sanction European allies that continued to honor the accord.

"When you are not responsible for it, you can call it a terrible deal," Obama said. "When you are responsible … you are more likely to look at the facts."

The question remains whether the deal, ratified by six world powers and implemented under a United Nations Security Council resolution, will survive under a Trump administration.

As a candidate, Trump targeted the Iran deal with special scorn but wavered on his intentions. He vowed at times to tear it up and at other times indicated he would negotiate stiffer concessions from Iran.

In speeches, he vastly inflated Iran's financial gains from the agreement, suggesting Tehran benefited unfairly. And he complained that it only limited Iran's nuclear weapons program, not its ballistic missiles or other issues of concern to U.S. policymakers.

But the United States enforces separate sanctions related to Iran's ballistic missiles, its support for foreign terrorist groups and human rights abuses. The Treasury Department twice added sanctions to Iranian companies and individuals this year after the nuclear deal went into effect.

"We have seen that this agreement has done what we said it was going to do, which is limit Iran from obtaining a nuclear [weapon]," said Mark Toner, the State Department spokesman. "It wasn't focused on changing Iran's behavior at large. It was focused on preventing it from obtaining a nuclear weapon."

Trump's advisors make clear that revisiting the agreement is a priority for Trump even if the plan ahead is still a work in progress.

"'Ripping up' is maybe a too strong a word. He's gonna take that agreement, it's been done before in international context, and then review it," Walid Phares, a Trump foreign policy advisor, told BBC radio. "He will take the agreement, review it, send it to Congress, demand from Iranians to restore a few issues or change a few issues. And there will be a discussion. It could be a tense discussion."

Another advisor, R. James Woolsey Jr., who headed the CIA from 1993 to 1995 under President Clinton, was more hawkish. Speaking on CNN, he called the deal "the worst single international agreement the United States has ever signed."

Woolsey said the deal was neither implementable nor verifiable.

"It is truly rotten," he said.

Under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, as the deal is formally known, Iran has met its commitments to curtail access to nuclear fuel and technology and is submitting to verification systems set up to monitor its compliance, according to the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency.

U.S. officials and most arms control experts say Washington would be isolated if it withdraws from the deal.

It could put the United States in violation of the Security Council resolution that it endorsed, kill any chance of another diplomatic deal with Iran and hurt U.S. credibility with the five other major powers who negotiated it: England, France, China, Russia and Germany.

Even Israel, which fiercely opposed concessions to the Islamic Republic during the negotiations, has accepted that the deal is working and that Iran no longer poses an imminent nuclear threat.

Worse, according to arms control experts, it could give Iran a free hand to cast off its commitments — and give the U.S. few options short of military force to respond.

"Iran would be free to resume its nuclear program, and it would be difficult to impose new sanctions," said Gary Samore, a former arms control advisor to Obama who now is research director at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard.

The Trump administration "would end up with furious allies and the resumption of Iran's nuclear program," agreed Cliff Kupchan, chairman of the Washington-based Eurasia Group, a risk-assessment firm. "This has gone from a deal that was working to one that is at risk."

The Obama administration argues that the deal effectively closed off all the pathways that Iran could pursue to obtain a bomb: by enriching uranium, producing plutonium or buying technology from other countries.

Under the terms of the pact, Iran removed the core of a heavy water reactor under construction at Arak that ultimately could have produced plutonium, then filled the reactor with cement.

It dismantled or mothballed thousands of fast-spinning centrifuges, which are used to enrich uranium to bomb grade, and it shipped nearly its entire stockpile of enriched uranium to Russia for reprocessing.

U.S. officials said those steps extended Iran's so-called breakout time — the period it would need to build a bomb — from two to three months to more than a year. That's enough time for the world to respond should Tehran decide to rush for a bomb, advocates say.

In exchange, key financial and trade sanctions were lifted from Iran, giving it access to the international financial system and global markets for the first time in years, as well as more than $50 billion in assets frozen abroad since the country's 1979 revolution.

There are several ways a Trump administration could kill or undermine the deal.

The most likely strategy is to make new demands, such as insisting on more intrusive inspections on Iranian facilities or bases, or for a longer period before Iran can again enrich uranium.

Iran would likely refuse — putting the onus on Washington to either abrogate the treaty or continue to abide by it in some form.

Trump also could decline to renew sanctions relief. As the deal is crafted, the suspension of various U.S. sanctions has to be renewed by the president every 120 or 180 days. But other countries, which have largely lifted sanctions, are unlikely to reimpose theirs.

The agreement was harshly criticized by many Republicans, who said Iran could not be trusted and doubted that its nuclear program was truly crippled. A GOP-led effort to block the accord in Congress failed last year amid Republican infighting and a Democratic filibuster.

When Trump met with Obama for the first time at the White House on Thursday, the president spent a good amount of time explaining the complexity of the deal, administration officials say.

"We obviously believe in the importance of the Iran deal, which had significantly rolled back Iran's nuclear program and averts yet another conflict in the Middle East," said Ben Rhodes, Obama's deputy national security advisor.

Administration officials will "run through the tape" with Trump's advisors, he added. "And then the new team will make their own determinations. And we respect that every administration will make its own judgment."

76 Experts Urge Donald Trump To Keep Iran Deal

By Rick Gladstone

New York Times, November 14, 2016

Seventy-six national security experts urged President-elect Donald J. Trump on Monday to reverse his hostility to the nuclear agreement signed with Iran last year and to use it as a tool to ease other tensions with the country.

A report signed by the experts, including former officials from both major political parties, argued that the nuclear agreement had reduced the threat of war in the Middle East.

Mr. Trump has called the nuclear agreement a foreign-policy disaster. He vowed during his campaign to renegotiate or renounce the deal, one of President Obama's signature achievements.

The report stated, "The deal proved that diplomacy with Iran can bear fruit despite skepticism about Iranian sincerity, the inclination of Iran's supreme leader to abide by the deal, or the ability of Iranian hard-liners to sabotage diplomacy."

It urged the incoming Trump administration to use the nuclear agreement as the basis for cooperation on other issues, including a desire by Iran and the United States to eliminate the Islamic State, which has convulsed the Middle East and carried out attacks in the West.

The report was produced by the National Iranian American Council, a Washington group that has advocated improved relations with Iran, even while sharply criticizing Iranian leaders over human rights issues.

"Trump may have been critical of the Iran deal during the campaign, but he will need the deal to remain intact to achieve his other stated goals," Trita Parsi, the president of the council, said in a statement.

Andrew J. Bacevich, a professor of international relations and history at Boston University who endorsed the report, said the question over whether Mr. Trump "seeks to sustain and broaden the opening to Iran, or distances himself from this opportunity, promises to reveal much about his approach to statecraft."

Other prominent experts who endorsed the report included Lawrence J. Korb, a former assistant defense secretary under President Ronald Reagan; Lawrence Wilkerson, who served as chief of staff to former Secretary of State Colin Powell; Chas W. Freeman Jr., a former ambassador to Saudi Arabia and assistant defense secretary for international affairs; and Gary Sick, a Columbia University scholar who served on the National Security Council under Reagan as well as Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter.

The nuclear deal relaxed many economic sanctions on Iran in exchange for reductions in its nuclear efforts and verifiable pledges to keep that work peaceful.

Critics of the agreement said Iran was an untrustworthy partner and had been granted too many concessions.

How easily — or even whether — Mr. Trump can make good on his promise to renegotiate or scrap the agreement remains unclear. It was negotiated among Iran and six major powers including the United States, and was endorsed by the United Nations Security Council.

The countries who joined the United States in signing the deal — Iran, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany — have said they intend to honor the agreement, which would isolate the United States should it withdraw, and would weaken the effect of any unilateral American sanctions.

On Monday, European Union ministers added their endorsement of the agreement.

The agreement, which officially took effect in January, has released hundreds of millions of dollars in impounded Iranian funds and spurred a rush of European business interest in Iran trade and investment deals, generating momentum that would be difficult to reverse.

Should the pact collapse, Iran would presumably be free to develop nuclear weapons, an outcome that many nations, including Iran's Middle East neighbors, say would destabilize the region.

Mr. Trump's repudiation of the agreement would also put him at odds with Russia, risking new tensions after vowing to improve Washington's relationship with Moscow.

11 Arab Nations Accuse Iran Of Sponsoring "Terrorism"

By Edith M. Lederer

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

UNITED NATIONS (AP) – Eleven Middle East and North African countries accused Iran of sponsoring "terrorism" and constantly interfering in the internal affairs of Arab nations, sparking tension and instability in the region.

In a letter to the U.N. General Assembly circulated Monday, the 11 countries cited Iran's support for Shiite Houthi rebels in Yemen and the Shiite Hezbollah group in Lebanon which has sent fighters to support the Syrian government.

They also accused Iran of supporting "terrorist groups and cells" in Bahrain, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and elsewhere.

The Arab nations reiterated a statement by Bahrain's foreign minister in September that the only way forward is for Iran "to comprehensively change its foreign policies and end hostilities."

The letter, organized by the United Arab Emirates, was signed by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, Morocco, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Yemen.

The 11 countries condemned Iran for sponsoring "terrorism" in the region, particularly in Yemen where they said Tehran is supporting the Houthis financially and militarily by training their fighters and illegally sending them weapons and ammunition.

Yemen, on the southern edge of the Arabian Peninsula, has been engulfed in civil war since September 2014 when Houthi rebels swept into the capital Sanaa and overthrew the internationally recognized government.

In March 2015, a Saudi-led coalition of Arab countries began a military campaign against the Houthi forces, saying its mission served in part as a counterbalance to Iran's influence with the Houthis following its nuclear deal with six world powers.

The letter was a response to a statement by Iranian diplomat Abbas Yazdani at the end of the General Assembly's annual ministerial meeting on Sept. 26.

He dismissed as "absurd and hypocritical" accusations by the UAE's foreign minister that Tehran was supporting the Houthis when UAE jet fighters were "bombing innocent civilians in Yemen" as part of the Saudi-led coalition.

Yazdani also accused the UAE and other "accomplices" of "funding and arming terrorists in Iraq and Syria and in many other places," of repeating "baseless claims" to three islands near the Strait of Hormuz that are controlled by Iran but claimed by the Emirates, and of trying to impede the nuclear deal.

The 11 countries reaffirmed support for the nuclear agreement, which capped Iran's disputed nuclear activities in return for lifting international nuclear-related sanctions. But "unfortunately," they said, since the deal was signed last year, "we have seen nothing but increased Iranian aggression in the region and the continuation of support for terrorist groups."

"We remain firm in our resolve," the Arab nations said, "that any interference by the Islamic Republic of Iran in the domestic affairs of Arab states is unacceptable and must be confronted."

The UAE's U.N. Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh accused Iran of "fueling the violence in Yemen, and in other parts of the Middle East."

The 11 countries wrote to the 193-member General Assembly "to warn them about Iran's nefarious behavior, and to pressure Iran to stop funding and arming militias that destabilize our region," she said in a statement.

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Obama: Trump Should Not End Paris Climate Agreement

The Hill, November 14, 2016

President Obama on Monday defended the landmark Paris climate deal that President-elect Donald Trump has threatened to tear up once he takes office next year.

At a Monday press conference, Obama made the case for the U.S. to stay in the international agreement, calling it an important way to convince other nations to work on climate change the way he has during his administration.

That work, he said, has "made our economy more efficient, it's helped the bottom line of folks and it's cleaned up the environment."

He said the Paris agreement "says to China and India and other counties that are potentially polluting: come on board. Let's work together so you guys can do the same thing."

Trump opposes the climate deal, an international agreement to cut greenhouse gas emissions. He says the pact is unfair to the United States because the Obama administration intends to cut American emissions in real terms, while emerging economies like China's continue to expand their pollution, but at a slower pace.

Trump has pledged not only to end the Paris agreement once he's in office, but also indicated he'll aim to grow fossil fuel industries.

Trump cannot formally end the Paris deal because it took effect earlier this month. However, he's reportedly looking for ways out, and since the deal isn't binding, he can effectively ignore Obama's stated goals and pursue his own course.

But Obama said that's not the right approach.

He warned that, with international agreements such as Paris, or the Iran nuclear accord, "the tradition has been you carry them forward across the administrations, particularly if once you actually examine them, they're doing good for us and binding other countries into behavior that will help us."

US Climate Envoy: World Moving Forward With Or Without US

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

MARRAKECH, Morocco (AP) – China and other countries will stay committed to the Paris Agreement on climate change, irrespective of what the next U.S. administration decides to do, the outgoing U.S. climate envoy said Monday.

Jonathan Pershing told reporters at U.N. climate talks in Morocco he doesn't know what President-elect Donald Trump's "outlook" on climate policy will be. But Pershing said his Chinese counterpart, Xie Zhenhua, told him that China intends to move ahead regardless.

"Of course they are going to move forward," he said. "I'm hearing the same from the Europeans. I'm hearing the same from the Brazilians. I'm hearing the same from Mexico, and from Canada, and from smaller nations like Costa Rica and from Colombia."

Trump has called global warming a "hoax" on social media and promised during his campaign to "cancel" the Paris deal adopted last year. But many countries are hoping he will change his mind once in office.

"It is in the interest of the United States to deliver clean energy policies," said European Union Climate Commissioner Miguel Arias Canete.

Canete said he didn't want to speculate on "worst-case scenarios" such as the U.S. withdrawing from the Paris Agreement – the first in which all countries have agreed to take action on climate change.

"I prefer to be an optimist," Canete said.

He dismissed a proposal by former French president and current presidential candidate Nicolas Sarkozy for a carbon tax on American goods imported to the EU if the U.S. withdraws from the climate change deal.

"The European Commission is not thinking of making a proposal on that issue," Canete said.

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2016 "Very Likely" To Be The Hottest Year On Record, U.N. Agency Declares

By Chris Mooney

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

In an announcement timed for the ongoing international climate meetings in Marrakesh, Morocco, the U.N. World Meteorological Organization has affirmed what many scientists had already considered inevitable — 2016, the agency said, is "very likely" to be the hottest year on record. That would mean that the past three years — 2014, 2015, and 2016 — have set ever more impressive temperature records in quick succession.

The agency was able to say as much, despite the year not even being over yet, because of the jaw-dropping heat seen throughout much of the year. Multiple months in 2016 set temperature records, buoyed by a strong El Niño event.

Sixteen "of the 17 hottest years on record have been this century," noted the agency.

Overall, the WMO said, 2016 was 1.2 degrees Celsius warmer on average than temperatures for the preindustrial Earth. That's a highly significant number, in that it puts the planet quite close to the 1.5-degree-Celsius temperature threshold enshrined as an aspirational goal in the Paris climate agreement. Some scientists have said we could cross 1.5 degrees for good by 2030.

#StateofClimate: 2016 set to be hottest year on record. Temperatures approx. 1.2°C above preindustrial era #COP22 https://t.co/muMmlEuy5l pic.twitter.com/iod2pIoA1t

— WMO | OMM (@WMO) November 14, 2016

The agency noted that warmth in the Arctic was particularly extreme in 2016. "In parts of Arctic Russia, temperatures were 6°C to 7°C above the long-term average. Many other Arctic and sub-Arctic regions in Russia, Alaska and northwest Canada were at least 3°C above average. We are used to measuring temperature records in fractions of a degree, and so this is different," said Petteri Taalas, the secretary-general of the WMO, in a statement. The warmth accompanied a host of records, including a peaking of atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations at 407.7 parts per million in May at the Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii and astounding winter warmth, with February and March in particular blowing away global temperature records. This early move to crown 2016 — albeit only in a preliminary way — does not come as much of a surprise. The warmth was so

off the charts in early 2016 that as early as May, Gavin Schmidt, who directs the NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (which manages one highly influential temperature data set), tweeted this:

With Apr update, 2016 still > 99% likely to be a new record (assuming historical ytd/ann patterns valid). pic.twitter.com/GTN9sPL2D7 — Gavin Schmidt (@ClimateOfGavin) May 14, 2016

There were also some oddities in 2016 — one patch of ocean near the Antarctic Peninsula has remained surprisingly cool all year. "The most prominent area of below-normal sea surface temperatures was the Southern Ocean south of 45° South (especially around the Drake Passage between South America and Antarctica, where temperatures were more than 1°C below normal in places)," wrote the WMO.

The El Niño event also brought on a surprising surge in global sea levels, which rose 15 millimeters between late 2014 and early 2016, far outstripping the usual pace of around 3 millimeters per year, the WMO reports.

While the WMO relied on data from NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in proclaiming the 2016 record, these agencies have not announced a formal record yet. They will presumably do so early next year once all the data is in. The WMO said its statement is "provisional" and will be updated in early 2017.

At this point, it seems unlikely that 2017 will set yet another temperature record and exceed that of 2016, especially since the El Niño event has concluded and the world has swung back to La Niña conditions. But that hardly detracts from a record run of temperatures that have coincided with an unprecedented global policy push toward climate action.

U.S. Slams Proposed Israeli Bill On Settlements As 'Troubling Step'

Reuters, November 14, 2016

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

Palestinians Condemn Israel Bill To Legalise Settler Homes

AFP, November 14, 2016

Ramallah (Palestinian Territories) (AFP) – Palestinian leaders on Monday denounced an Israeli bill to legalise several thousand Jewish homes in the occupied West Bank, vowing to take up the issue at the UN Security Council.

They also sharply criticised a separate bill that would limit the volume of calls to prayers at mosques in Israel and Jerusalem, a measure government watchdogs have called a threat to freedom of religion and a provocation.

A committee of Israeli ministers adopted the two bills on Sunday, though they must still be approved by parliament.

The settler bill had been pushed forward by Education Minister Naftali Bennett of the hardline Jewish Home party.

Bennett last week called for an end to the idea of a Palestinian state after Donald Trump's presidential election win in the United States.

"The recent Israeli measures are going to lead to catastrophe in the region," said Nabil Abu Rudeina, spokesman for Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas.

"The Palestinian leadership will turn to the UN Security Council and all other international organisations to stop those Israeli measures."

Palestinian foreign minister Riad al-Malki accused the Israeli government of seeking to "impose facts on the ground and create new realities by legalising the illegal actions that it commits".

UN Middle East envoy Nickolay Mladenov said that the settlements bill and other such issues were "further pouring oil onto the fire."

The bill to legalise Israeli homes in the West Bank was pushed through the committee despite opposition from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

It was drafted in response to a court order requiring the Israeli outpost of Amona, which includes about 40 families, to be evacuated by December 25 because it was built on private Palestinian land.

On Monday, the Israeli high court rejected a government bid to delay the evacuation by seven months.

Netanyahu had feared the bill could jeopardise the government's case.

– 'Unique opportunity' –

He is also concerned it could provoke an international backlash and possibly encourage US President Barack Obama to seek a Security Council resolution on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict before he leaves office on January 20.

The bill would allow for the legalisation of settlements built on private Palestinian land in communities that meet certain criteria.

The Palestinian landowners would be offered compensation in return for the land being seized.

The bill is expected to apply to between 2,000 and 3,000 homes in the West Bank.

Bennett said Monday: "The combination of the changes in the United States, in Europe and the region provide Israel with a unique opportunity to reset and rethink everything.

"It's no secret that I think that the notion of setting up a Palestine in the heart of Israel is a profound mistake," he said, referring to the West Bank.

The international community considers all Israeli settlements in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank to be illegal, whether they are authorised by the government or not.

The government differentiates between those it has approved and those it has not. Settlements like Amona are considered outposts as they have not been given Israeli government approval.

Settlements are seen as a major stumbling block to peace efforts as they are built on land the Palestinians see as part of their future state.

Israel Court Rejects Plea To Delay West Bank Outpost Removal

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

JERUSALEM (AP) – Israel's Supreme Court on Monday rejected a government petition to postpone demolition of a West Bank settlement outpost whose fate could destabilize Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hard-line coalition.

The ruling on Amona comes a day after a parliamentary committee approved a bill that, if adopted, would legalize outposts built without government permission.

The court ruled in 2014 that Amona was built on private Palestinian land and must be demolished by Dec. 25 of this year. In 2006, Israeli police demolished nine homes at Amona, setting off clashes with settlers. Several dozen trailers remained.

Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 war and began building settlements there soon after. Palestinians and the international community view both settlements and outposts as illegal or illegitimate, and an obstacle to Palestinian statehood.

The Israeli bill still needs to pass several stages before it can be adopted. A first reading is expected in parliament on Wednesday.

Yesh Din, an Israeli rights group, has condemned the bill, calling it "a legal stunt designed to legally sanction takeover of Palestinian land in the West Bank."

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Elizabeth Trudeau told reporters on Monday that the U.S. was "deeply concerned about the advancement of legislation that would allow for the legalization of illegal Israeli outposts located on private Palestinian land."

"If this law were enacted it would pave the way for the legalization of dozens of illegal outposts deep in the West Bank," Trudeau said. "This would represent an unprecedented and troubling step that is inconsistent with prior Israeli legal opinion and also break longstanding Israeli policy of not building on private Palestinian land."

"This legislation would be a dramatic advancement of the settlement enterprise, which is already gravely endangering the prospects for a two-state solution," she added.

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Israel Settlement Ruling Sets New Challenge For PM

AFP, November 14, 2016

Jerusalem (AFP) – Israel's high court Monday rejected a government bid to delay the evacuation of a wildcat Jewish settlement in the occupied West Bank, in a fresh challenge for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Amona outpost is under a court order to be evacuated by December 25 since it was built on private Palestinian land, but right-wingers in Netanyahu's cabinet have called for the around 40 families living there to be allowed to remain.

"The evacuation must occur before December 25," the high court said in its ruling. "The court rejects the delay requested by the state."

In what seemed to be a sharp criticism of the government, it said that "the duty to obey rulings is not a matter of choice.

"It is an essential component of the rule of law to which all are bound as part of the values of the state of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state."

Whether the Netanyahu government moves ahead with the demolition of Amona has been seen as a test case of whether it will heed international calls to halt settlement expansion in the West Bank.

The government, which had sought a seven-month delay while it considered where to move the Amona settlers, is seen as the most right-wing in Israel's history.

Key members of Netanyahu's coalition advocate settlement building while openly opposing the idea of a Palestinian state.

"We're aware of the duress of the Amona residents and are acting in different ways to solve the problem," Netanyahu told lawmakers from his Likud party on Monday.

Settlements are seen as a major stumbling blocks to peace efforts as they are built on land the Palestinians see as part of their future state.

Some 400,000 Israeli settlers now live in the West Bank, compared with about 2.6 million Palestinians.

The United States, the European Union and UN officials have warned that settlement building is eating away at the possibility of a two-state solution to the conflict.

Netanyahu is concerned that controversy over settlements could provoke an international backlash and possibly prompt US President Barack Obama to seek a

Security Council resolution on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict before he leaves office on January 20.

– Threat to two-state solution –

Israel's high court ruled in 2014 that Amona, northeast of Ramallah in the central West Bank, must be evacuated.

There are concerns over how any evacuation will play out.

A committee of solidarity with the Amona settlers announced late Monday that "thousands" of supporters would be mobilised to block their evacuation.

In 2006, the demolition of nine permanent houses in the outpost led to clashes between settlers and Israeli forces.

With the Amona deadline in mind, a committee of Israeli ministers on Sunday approved a draft bill to legalise Jewish settlements built on private Palestinian land in communities that meet certain criteria.

The Palestinian landowners would be offered compensation in return for the land being seized.

The legislation is expected to apply to between 2,000 and 3,000 settler homes in the West Bank, which Israel seized in the 1967 Six Day War and which the Palestinians want for a future state of their own.

The bill must still be approved by Israel's Knesset, or parliament.

It had been pushed forward by Education Minister Naftali Bennett of the hardline Jewish Home party, days after he said the idea of a Palestinian state was over after Donald's Trump's election as US president.

Palestinian leaders denounced the bill and pledged to take the issue to the UN Security Council.

Palestinian foreign minister Riad al-Malki accused the Israeli government of seeking to "impose facts on the ground and create new realities by legalising the illegal actions that it commits".

The Palestinians also sharply criticised a separate bill that would limit the volume of calls to prayers at mosques in Israel and Jerusalem, a measure government watchdogs have called a threat to freedom of religion and a provocation.

"The recent Israeli measures are going to lead to catastrophe in the region," said Nabil Abu Rudeina, spokesman for Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas.

The international community considers all Israeli settlements in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem and the West Bank to be illegal, whether they are authorised by the government or not.

The Israeli government differentiates between those it has approved and those it has not.

Those like Amona are considered outposts as they have not been given Israeli government approval.

Right-Wing Israeli Leaders Push Forward Bold New Legislation To Preserve Jewish Settlements

By William Booth And Ruth Eglash

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

JERUSALEM — Right-wing leaders in the Israeli government have seized on the election of Donald Trump to push forward bold new legislation to legalize Jewish settlements in the West Bank built on privately owned Palestinian land.

Believing the time to act is now, as the president-elect begins to shape his foreign policy, top Israeli ministers voted unanimously Sunday in favor of a bill to allow Israeli settlements and outposts that were built on property owned by Palestinians to remain.

The legislation could retroactively offer legal protection to several thousand homes built both in long-established settlements and newer wildcat outposts that even the Israeli military has declared illegal.

Palestinian landowners would be offered money or alternative land parcels in exchange for their seized property.

The move by Israeli leaders is one of the first concrete responses to the Trump election on the international stage.

The president-elect and his advisers have signaled that the incoming administration will be even more supportive of Israel than President Obama has been.

Naftali Bennett, Israel's education minister and the leader of the pro-settler Jewish Home party, said the Trump victory means that "the era of the Palestinian state is over."

The Israeli minister and his allies view the full legalization of the settlements built on Palestinian land as only a first step. Bennett wants Israel to formally annex the 60 percent of the West Bank where the settlements are located.

Speaking to foreign correspondents on Monday, he said the Trump election and shifting politics in Europe "provide Israel with a unique opportunity to reset and rethink everything."

As for the idea that Israel should wait and see where Trump is going, Bennett said it is important for Israel to declare what it wants.

The draft legislation was opposed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who called the move "childish and irresponsible."

Even so, senior members and top ministers of Netanyahu's fellow Likud party approved a bill that their leader considers ill-timed and needlessly provocative.

Netanyahu finds himself in a tight spot.

If the draft legislation is eventually passed by the parliament — not a sure bet — the Israeli leader fears a wave of condemnation by Europe and the United Nations, where pro-Palestinian voices can insist that the settlers are "stealing" Arab-owned land with government approval.

Netanyahu is also wary of what Obama may do in his last months in office. The outgoing president, many Israelis fear, could formally outline what the Americans consider a fair resolution to the long-running conflict, including the parameters for a future Palestinian state. Obama could do this in a speech or by allowing a resolution to pass in the United Nations.

Netanyahu could still stall or derail the legislation, but the clock is ticking.

The move to press ahead with the "legalization bill" was spurred by the Israeli Supreme Court, which ordered that a Jewish settlement called Amona be evacuated and demolished because a portion of it was built on privately owned Palestinian land.

On Monday, the high court rejected government appeals for a delay and gave the Israeli military until Dec. 25 to clear the settlement. Demolition orders against other settlements built on private Palestinian land are also looming.

Today about 400,000 Jewish settlers are living on 125 settlements and 100 outposts in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, on territory that Palestinians want for a future state. Most of the world considers the settlements illegal under international law. The United States calls the communities "illegitimate" and "an obstacle to peace." Israel disputes this.

In the past year, the Obama White House and the State Department have condemned settlement construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem with sharply escalating rhetoric, openly questioning whether the Netanyahu government is truly committed to a two-state solution.

Shai Ben Yosef, a leader of the Ofra settlement, which also is partly built on private Palestinian land, told the Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahrovnot that "Trump's election removes that excuse of, 'Oy vey, what are they going to do to us?' "

He added: "The person about to move into the White House is a man whose motivation to pressure Israel is much smaller. We can reach agreements with him about legalizing the settlements."

Yosef said Netanyahu previously cited Washington as the reason for his insistence that settlements grow slowly. With Trump's election, he said, "our government needs to drop all those old excuses."

The Palestinian government condemned the move to legalize settlements built on private Palestinian land.

Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, vowed that the Palestinians would go to the U.N. Security Council to seek to block the legislation's implementation.

He called the move "a dangerous escalation in the region."

The move is not universally embraced in Israel, either.

Isaac Herzog, leader of the opposition in parliament, said the proposed bill is a "serious stain on Israel's law books, because it authorizes theft and robbery. There is no precedent, nothing like it, in which the Israeli government authorized a law that allows taking land from private people."

Israeli Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit warned that legislation contradicts international law and said he wouldn't be able to defend the bill in front of the high court.

The first of three readings of the bill is scheduled for Wednesday.

Daniel Friedmann, a former Israeli justice minister, said, "Netanyahu really wanted to avoid this."

He said the Israeli prime minister "could stop it if he really wanted to, but he is not in an easy position because he does not want the settlers to think that he is the one who threw it out."

Trump, Putin Agree In Phone Call To Improve 'Unsatisfactory' Relations Between Their Countries, Kremlin Says

By Elise Viebeck, Jerry Markon And Karen Deyoung
Washington Post, November 14, 2016

President-elect Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed in a telephone conversation Monday that relations between their countries were "unsatisfactory" and vowed to work together to improve them, the Kremlin said in a statement.

The statement said the two leaders discussed combining efforts in the fight against terrorism, talked about "a settlement for the crisis in Syria" and agreed their aides would begin working toward a face-to-face meeting between them.

The Russian statement did not indicate who initiated it. Since his victory last week, Trump has received congratulatory calls from a number of foreign leaders. On the day after the U.S. election, Putin sent Trump a telegram covering many of the same themes, including his desire to improve U.S.-Russia relations and establish a dialogue based on "mutual respect and genuine consideration for each other's positions."

Yet the statement, if true, could subject Trump to criticism that he is continuing his controversial embrace of the Russian leader. The president-elect drew rebukes from both political parties during the campaign for repeatedly expressing his admiration for Putin, suggesting at one point that Putin is more worthy of his praise than President Obama.

The call came as Trump faced a growing backlash against his decision to name campaign chairman and former Breitbart News head Stephen K. Bannon as chief strategist at the White House, a choice critics say will empower white nationalists.

During the campaign, Trump had praised Putin as a strong leader and said the United States and Russia should join together to fight terrorists, particularly the Islamic State in Syria. He indicated that closer relations with Russia would

serve U.S. interests by keeping the Kremlin from establishing tighter ties with China.

Trump appeared to absolve Russia from responsibility for its intervention in Ukraine and annexation of Crimea, and he questioned the relevance of NATO, which has charged Moscow with engaging in provocative air and sea actions on the alliance's eastern flank.

Giving Putin a pass on those issues would directly counter the Obama administration's Russia policy, which has sought an international war-crimes investigation of Russia's actions in Syria.

Equally controversial was Trump's selection on Sunday of Bannon. A chorus of advocacy groups, commentators and congressional Democrats has denounced Bannon as a proponent of racist, anti-Semitic and misogynistic views as Trump has begun his first full week as president-elect. Trump named Bannon his chief strategist and senior counselor while also appointing Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus to be his chief of staff.

"President-elect Trump's choice of Steve Bannon as his top aide signals that white supremacists will be represented at the highest levels in Trump's White House," Adam Jentleson, a spokesman for Senate Minority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.), said in a statement Sunday night. "It is easy to see why the KKK views Trump as their champion when Trump appoints one of the foremost peddlers of White Supremacist themes and rhetoric as his top aide. Bannon was 'the main driver behind Breitbart becoming a white ethno-nationalist propaganda mill,' according to the Southern Poverty Law Center."

The statement echoed sentiments from leaders of the Anti-Defamation League, the NAACP, other Capitol Hill Democrats and some Republican Trump critics such as Weekly Standard editor Bill Kristol, who tweeted, "Is there precedent for such a disreputable & unstable extremist in [White House] senior ranks before Bannon?"

A spokesman for Trump accused critics and the media of trying to "divide people" following the election when they raise questions about Bannon's views and history.

Jason Miller, communications director for the Trump presidential transition, said Monday morning that Bannon has done a "fantastic job" since joining Trump's inner circle.

"If you've seen the president-elect since the election, he's taken a very measured tone," Miller said in an interview with CNN's "New Day."

Kellyanne Conway, who worked closely with Bannon as Trump's campaign manager, also defended him.

"He's been the general of this campaign," Conway told reporters as she arrived Monday at Trump Tower in Manhattan to meet with the president-elect. Citing Bannon's résumé as a former naval officer and Goldman Sachs executive, she called him a "brilliant tactician."

Asked whether Bannon needed to explain his connections to the alt-right movement, Conway said: "I'm personally offended that you think I would manage a campaign where that would be one of the going philosophies. It was not — 56 million-plus Americans or so saw something else. . . . You should really focus on the will of the people, which was to elect Donald Trump the president."

House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) sought to calm the fears many Americans still hold about Trump's election, which has been greeted by widespread protests.

"There is a lot of hysteria and hyperbole," Ryan said during an interview Monday with his hometown radio station, 1380 Big AM. "I would tell people to just relax — things are going to be fine.

Trump's naming of Bannon and Priebus set up what could be a battle within the White House between the populist, outsider forces that propelled his winning campaign and the party establishment that dominates Washington.

In appointing Priebus, 44, Trump has brought into his White House a Washington insider who is viewed as broadly acceptable by vast swaths of the party, and he signaled a willingness to work within the establishment he assailed on the campaign trail. But Trump sent an opposing signal by tapping Bannon, 62, who has openly attacked congressional leadership, taking particular aim at Ryan - — who recommended Priebus for his new job.

"I am thrilled to have my very successful team continue with me in leading our country," Trump said in a statement. "Steve and Reince are highly qualified leaders who worked well together on our campaign and led us to a historic victory. Now I will have them both with me in the White House as we work to make America great again."

Bannon's senior White House role has been welcomed by prominent figures on the alt-right.

Richard Spencer, president of the white-nationalist National Policy Institute, wrote on Twitter that "strategist" is the "best possible position" for Bannon in Trump's White House. "Bannon will answer directly to Trump and focus on the big picture, and not get lost in the weeds," he wrote Sunday night.

"He'll be freed up to chart Trump's macro trajectory," Spencer wrote, adding, "The question is: Which way is the arrow pointing? It's pointing towards the #AltRight!"

Groups representing Jews, African Americans and Muslims have vocally opposed Bannon's appointment.

Jonathan Greenblatt, chief executive of the Anti-Defamation League, said via Twitter on Sunday night that the ADL opposes Bannon's appointment to a senior White House role because "he & his alt-right are so hostile to core American values."

Endorsing Greenblatt's message, NAACP President Cornell William Brooks tweeted overnight: "Racism has been

routinized; anti-Semitism normalized; xenophobia deexceptionalized; & misogyny mainstreamed."

The Bannon announcement came as Trump highlighted some of his first priorities in an interview on CBS's "60 Minutes," vowing after he is inaugurated to "immediately" deport up to 3 million immigrants in the country illegally and to simultaneously repeal and replace President Obama's Affordable Care Act. He also repeated his remark that he knows more about the Islamic State than U.S. generals do, saying, "I probably do, because look at the job they've done."

Trump's top two advisers could help him achieve different objectives. Priebus could help Trump notch early legislative victories in a Republican-led Congress and ingratiate himself with the insiders he claims to loathe but who dominate his transition team. A longtime lawyer and Wisconsin political operative, Priebus will work to smooth over residual friction from a campaign during which a number of Republicans refused to endorse Trump, reversed their endorsements or stepped away from him after a 2005 tape surfaced in which Trump is heard saying that he could force himself on women because he was a "star."

Bannon will be the other voice on Trump's shoulder: He helped shape Trump's message on the campaign trail and relishes combativeness. The former Navy officer and investment banker has said the campaign was the American version of worldwide populist movements such as the British vote to sever ties with the European Union.

Bannon's appointment drew sharp criticism from political operatives on both sides of the aisle who see Bannon as being too close to the alt-right and white nationalism. Breitbart has published stories with headlines stating that women faced with harassment online should "log off" and that taking birth control makes women "unattractive and crazy." The site called Kristol a "renegade Jew" in 2015.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, a hate-watch group, blasted the choice of Bannon and cited Breitbart headlines that included a call to hoist the Confederate flag weeks after shootings at a black Charleston, S.C., church and another that said that political correctness "protects Muslim rape culture."

Bannon was charged with misdemeanor domestic violence against his former wife more than 20 years ago; the charges included trying to prevent a victim or witness of crime from reporting, inflicting injury and battery. Bannon was never convicted, and the case was dismissed. His former wife also accused him of making anti-Semitic remarks, according to a court statement obtained by the New York Daily News.

Priebus said negative claims against Bannon do not reflect the man he knows. "He was a force for good on the campaign at every level that I saw all the time," Priebus told MSNBC's "Morning Joe" on Monday.

"I haven't seen any of these things that people are crying out about," he told "Fox and Friends."

Trump surrogate Newt Gingrich blasted the idea Sunday that Trump's campaign catered to the alt-right, calling it "garbage."

In a statement, Bannon said he and Priebus had a "very successful partnership" on the campaign trail. "We will have that same partnership in working to help President-elect Trump achieve his agenda," Bannon said.

Priebus gave a preview of some of the administration's policy priorities: "I am very grateful to the president-elect for this opportunity to serve him and this nation as we work to create an economy that works for everyone, secure our borders, repeal and replace Obamacare and destroy radical Islamic terrorism. He will be a great president for all Americans."

The personnel announcement comes as the contours of the Trump administration are starting to take shape and as he and his team pivot from campaign rhetoric to the nuts and bolts of governing. Trump and his advisers continue to paint a mixed picture of what the administration will look like, and they have been giving answers often at odds with Trump's campaign rhetoric, which included pledges to fully repeal the ACA and get Mexico to pay for a wall along the southern border, and crowd chants of "Lock her up!" about his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton.

On undocumented immigrants, Trump said on "60 Minutes" that his administration will "get the people that are criminal and have criminal records, gang members, drug dealers, we have a lot of these people, probably 2 million, it could be even 3 million. We are getting them out of our country, or we are going to incarcerate. But we're getting them out of our country; they're here illegally."

The remarks are another sign of retreat from Trump's vows throughout much of the presidential campaign to remove all of the estimated 11 million illegal immigrants in the country. By focusing on criminals only, Trump would be mirroring current Obama administration priorities, and experts say his numbers are highly inflated.

Trump also built his campaign around a pledge to build a wall along the U.S. border with Mexico, but he said Sunday he would accept the plan of some congressional Republicans to build a fence in specific places — something he told MSNBC in February would be acceptable for part of the border because of natural barriers.

Trump again said Sunday that he will probably keep in place parts of the Obama health-care law, including provisions that allow children to stay on their parents' health plans until the person turns 26 and prevent insurers from refusing coverage for preexisting conditions. He said his administration would work to repeal and replace the law simultaneously; he said in a different interview Friday that the law might simply be amended.

"And it'll be great health care for much less money. So it'll be better health care, much better, for less money. Not a bad combination," he told CBS's Lesley Stahl on Sunday.

Trump has said that he would appoint Supreme Court justices to overturn the Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion, and in Vice President-elect Mike Pence he will be bringing one of the nation's most antiabortion politicians into the White House.

When asked by Stahl whether he plans to appoint a justice who will overturn Roe v. Wade, Trump said whomever he names will be "very pro-life" and that "if it ever were overturned, it would go back to the states."

Trump also said he is "fine" with same-sex marriage being legal.

The president-elect, who did not release his tax returns during the campaign, told "60 Minutes" he will make them public "at the appropriate time."

Trump said he believes that some of the protesters involved in demonstrations that have taken place in major cities since Trump's victory are "professional protesters" and that people shouldn't be scared of his administration.

"Don't be afraid," Trump said. "We are going to bring our country back. But certainly, don't be afraid. You know, we just had an election and sort of like you have to be given a little time."

When asked of reports of racial slurs, harassment and personal threats against African Americans, gay people, Latinos and Muslims and others by some of his supporters, Trump said he didn't hear it but that he "hates" to hear that.

"I am so saddened to hear that. And I say, 'Stop it.' If it — if it helps. I will say this, and I will say right to the cameras: 'Stop it,' " he said.

Trump's personnel announcements are emblematic of the conflicting signals the new administration has sent since Tuesday's upset victory, in which Trump won the electoral college by sweeping a number of Rust Belt states even as he lost the popular vote. Trump vowed to "drain the swamp" of Washington, but numerous lobbyists and big-pocketed donors are appearing in the power structure he is erecting.

Trump defended himself on "60 Minutes," saying that these people "know the system right now" but that it is going to be phased out.

The president-elect appears to have resumed full use of his Twitter account, which was restricted leading up to Election Day. He took aim at the New York Times, suggesting that a letter sent to subscribers amounted to the paper "apologizing for their BAD coverage of me." The letter did not apologize for bad coverage.

Trump suggested on "60 Minutes" that he might not tweet as much when he occupies the Oval Office — or just not in the way the world has gotten used to.

"I'm going to do very restrained, if I use it at all, I'm going to do very restrained. I find it tremendous. It's a modern form of communication," he said.

Trump Speaks With Putin By Phone

By David M Jackson

USA Today, November 14, 2016

President-elect Donald Trump spoke by phone Monday with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, of whom he spoke fondly during the U.S. presidential campaign.

"During the call, the two leaders discussed a range of issues including the threats and challenges facing the United States and Russia, strategic economic issues and the historical U.S.-Russia relationship that dates back over 200 years," the Trump transition team said in a statement.

The Kremlin said in a statement that Putin congratulated Trump, and pledged to build "dialogue with the new administration on the principles of equality, mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of each other."

The U.S. and Russian leaders also agreed to set up a face-to-face meeting soon.

The two men "agreed to assess the current very poor state of Russian-American relations" and to work for "constructive cooperation on a wide range of issues."

Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton criticized Trump over his praise of Putin during the campaign. She and other Trump critics pointed to a U.S. intelligence assessment that Russian interests were behind the hackings of Democrat Party members and may have tried to influence the U.S. elections.

Putin denied the allegations. Trump also expressed skepticism, and said the United States should seek better relations with Putin and Russia.

The Kremlin said that Putin and Trump "agreed to continue contacts on the phone and in the future to provide for a personal meeting."

The Trump team said that he "noted to President Putin that he is very much looking forward to having a strong and enduring relationship with Russia and the people of Russia."

Putin, Trump Speak By Phone, Aim For Cooperation: Kremlin

By Vladimir Soldatkin

Reuters, November 14, 2016

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

Trump And Putin Talk, Vow New Era Of Cooperation, Possible Meeting

By Tim Johnson

McClatchy, November 14, 2016

Russian leader Vladimir Putin Monday called President-elect Donald Trump and the two assessed what the Kremlin labeled as the "extremely unsatisfactory" state of relations between the United States and Russia, pledging sweeping cooperation.

Trump's office said Putin placed the call to offer his congratulations on Trump's victory. The Kremlin, for its part, spoke of a "possible personal meeting" between the two.

Descriptions by the Kremlin and Trump's office of the call were warm, even effusive, yet coincided with new tensions between Washington and Moscow that have flared to become more severe than at any time since the end of the Cold War.

The Treasury Department put six sitting Russian legislators on a black list for actions it said threaten the peace and security of the Ukraine, a former Soviet satellite state.

Russian special forces seized the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea in early 2014, and later declared Crimea a territory of Russia, an act that led to U.S.-led international sanctions.

Four of the legislators in the Duma, or parliament, represent Crimea or Sevastopol, and most of them helped solidify Russian control after 2014 annexation of the peninsula. Under the action, no U.S. entities can conduct financial transactions with the legislators. Treasury said the action would stay in effect "until Russia ends its occupation of the peninsula."

Trump's office said the president-elect and Putin "discussed a range of issues including the threats and challenges facing the United States and Russia, strategic economic issues and the historical U.S.-Russia relationship that dates back over 200 years."

It said Trump looks forward to "a strong and enduring relationship with Russia and the people of Russia."

Trump has voiced admiration for Putin as a "strong" leader, saying he disagrees with the authoritarian system in Russia but vowing to improve relations with the Kremlin. His regard for Putin, a former KGB operative, has flummoxed long-time hawks in the Republican Party, many of whom regard Russia as a significant U.S. rival determined to thwart U.S. interests abroad.

In the last presidential debate, Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton accused Trump of being a "puppet" of Putin.

U.S. tensions simmer with Russia over its role in the Ukraine and Syria but also over what the Obama administration has said is direct meddling in U.S. elections by Russian state hackers, who it blamed for penetrating the computer networks of the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton campaign chairman during the presidential election campaign.

The Kremlin said the Putin and Trump discussed conflict in Syria, vowing to collaborate "against major common enemy — international terrorism and extremism," according to Tass, a Russian government-owned news agency.

"During the conversation, Putin and Trump not only fell in on the assessment of the extremely unsatisfactory state of the Russian-US relations but also spoke in favor of active joint efforts toward their normalization and bringing them into the track of constructive cooperation on a wide range of issues," the Tass news agency said.

Trump Gets Congratulatory Phone Call From Putin

By S.A. Miller

Washington Times, November 14, 2016

President-elect Donald Trump spoke Monday with Russian President Vladimir Putin and discussed the threats and challenges their two countries face, according to the Trump transition team.

Mr. Putin called Mr. Trump to congratulate him on his historic election victory, the transition team said in a statement.

During the call, the two leaders discussed a range of issues including the threats and challenges facing the United States and Russia, strategic economic issues and the historical U.S.-Russia relationship that dates back over 200 years, said the statement.

Mr. Trump also said that is very much looking forward to having a strong and enduring relationship with Russia and the people of Russia.

Democrats sharply criticized Mr. Trump during the camping for praising Mr. Putin and saying he was a stronger leader than President Obama.

Reports that Russia was behind email hacks that resulted in WikiLeaks publishing embarrassing emails about Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton and the Democratic National Committee prompted allegations that Mr. Putin was trying to interfere in the U.S. presidential election to help Mr. Trump.

Mrs. Clinton warned that Mr. Trump would be a "puppet" of the Russian leader if elected.

Mr. Trump repeatedly said that he does not have a personal relationship with Mr. Putin but that it would be beneficial for the U.S. to have good relations with Russia.

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Trump And Chinese President Hold Cordial First Phone Call

By Javier C. Hernández

New York Times, November 14, 2016

BEIJING — President-elect Donald J. Trump has called China a "currency manipulator," threatened to impose stiff tariffs on Chinese imports and accused the country of

inventing the idea of climate change to hurt American businesses.

But in his first telephone conversation with President Xi Jinping, Mr. Trump appeared to set aside those critiques, vowing that the two nations would have "one of the strongest relationships," according to a statement released by Mr. Trump's transition office, Reuters reported.

Mr. Xi, in turn, told Mr. Trump that "facts have shown that cooperation is the only correct choice" for the United States and China, according to Xinhua, the Chinese state news agency.

In the phone call, which took place on Monday Beijing time, the two men agreed to maintain close communications and to meet at an early date.

Despite the optimistic tone, analysts believe the relationship between Mr. Trump and Mr. Xi could grow tense if Mr. Trump follows through on his campaign promises, including a vow to impose a 45 percent tax on Chinese imports. Already, foreign policy experts in China appear to be nervous about the prospect of a trade war.

An editorial on Sunday in Global Times, a Chinese newspaper known for its nationalistic views, said that trade would be "paralyzed" if Mr. Trump imposed such a tariff. The article threatened a "tit-for-tat" response, saying that sales of American cars, airplanes, iPhones and soybeans would suffer and that China could limit the number of students who go to the United States to study.

"Making things difficult for China politically will do him no good," the editorial said. "Trump, as a shrewd businessman, will not be so naïve."

Mr. Trump is a longtime critic of American trade policies with Asian countries, and his pledge to rethink security commitments in Japan and South Korea has created uncertainty in the region.

China, as a rising superpower, sees both benefits and potential dangers in Mr. Trump's leadership. Some analysts believe his focus on domestic issues might allow China to exert more influence in Asia and the Pacific. Others worry that he may abandon international agreements, such as a landmark accord on climate change reached last year.

Li Yonghui, dean of the School of International Relations and Diplomacy at Beijing Foreign Studies University, said in an interview that Mr. Trump's emphasis on domestic affairs might help ease tensions between the two countries. But he added that Chinese leaders need to prepare for the possibility that Mr. Trump might increase pressure on Beijing, for example, by imposing more restrictions on trade.

"He's very different from the Obama administration when it comes to issues like trade and economics," Mr. Li said. "There's still a lot of uncertainty."

With Odes To Military March, China Puts Nationalism Into Overdrive

By Javier C. Hernández

New York Times, November 14, 2016

BEIJING — It took all of five minutes for Wang Lei, a gruff veteran of the People's Liberation Army, to start humming and stomping his feet.

The curtain had just risen on "The Long March," a new opera celebrating the early days of the Chinese Communist Party, and a rifle-toting chorus of performers dressed as soldiers was rushing onstage at the National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing.

"We come from different places," they sang as they took their places. "Some wear straw sandals. Some wear gowns. Some are barefoot. Some are hungry. We differ in status, but we have the same aspiration: to join the Red Army. To change the world!"

Mr. Wang, 73, seated next to me in the upper balcony, closed his eyes in bliss. "These are the songs of our homeland," he told me at intermission. "They might be lost now, but they reflect the true feelings of the Chinese people."

These are triumphant times for the Communist Party. President Xi Jinping, the general secretary, governs with seemingly unobstructed authority. The balance of power in Asia and the Pacific appears to be shifting in China's favor. Extreme poverty, especially in rural areas, is nearing eradication.

And yet the Communist government seems intensely vulnerable at times as it confronts a slowing economy and a society in the throes of staggering change. In a country still working to find its place in the world, the party whips up nationalism as an elixir. Lately, it has gone into overdrive, inventing new forms of agitprop.

Across China this fall, the party is turning the obscure anniversary of a cherished political touchstone into a cause for passionate celebration. It has been 80 years, we are told again and again, since the end of the Long March, the 6,000-mile retreat of Communist forces that established Mao's pre-eminence and gave the party its soul. More than 80,000 people died in the march, which began in 1934, but the bravery of the soldiers inspired generations of Chinese people to rally behind the party and its leader.

On television, Long March soap operas, documentaries and variety shows abound. Tour agencies offer packages retracing the soldiers' routes. Elementary school students put on virtual reality goggles to relive famous battles. Joggers use a Long March-themed fitness app to measure their steps against the Red Army's.

In Beijing, it is impossible to miss the patriotic fervor. Outside my office, a giant LED screen flashes every few minutes with scenes from "Red Star Over China," a new mini-series about the Long March.

At home in Beijing on a recent Saturday night, I was bombarded with Long March coverage on nearly every TV channel. On one network, a troupe of child performers, dressed in gray military uniforms, sang of the power of the "bright red star to shine through the generations." On a financial channel, commentators offered analysis of the economic impact of the march.

President Xi has been making the case for a "new long march," using the anniversary to rally the public and warn against creeping complacency, especially among the young. "A nation that forgets its origins will find itself in a blind alley," he said in a speech late last month.

On the whole, the spirit of the propaganda campaign is unambiguous: Chinese citizens should seek to emulate the ideals of self-sacrifice and perseverance that the soldiers of the Long March embodied. Above all, the messaging makes clear, people should show unwavering loyalty to the Communist Party.

The Long March allowed the Red Army to escape defeat at the hands of the Kuomintang forces of Chiang Kai-shek in southern China. The Communists regrouped in the north before going on to victory in the civil war in 1949.

Anne-Marie Brady, a professor at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, has challenged the official narrative, which portrays the march as a victory for the Communists and a turning point in their efforts to win over the public. Pointing to testimonials of foreign missionaries captured by Communist soldiers, she argues that it was instead a humiliating moment in which Red Army soldiers ransacked villages and abused peasants.

But by invoking the journey, she said, Mr. Xi is betting that the party's idealized version of history will resonate across generations.

"This is a heroic narrative that is meant to inspire young people in China," Professor Brady said. "Xi wants to remind people what is unique and distinctive about China and to ask, 'How did we get to where we are today? What is this journey that we're on? What are we aiming toward?' "

Mr. Xi has used the Long March more expansively than his predecessors, linking it to his signature slogan of a "China Dream," a call to build a prosperous, more powerful nation with a deeper respect for traditional culture.

The propaganda might help rally the public behind the party as it asserts Chinese military might abroad, in the disputed South China Sea and elsewhere. And the Chinese government has also attempted to draw connections between the Long March and modern-day social issues.

A book released in conjunction with the anniversary promotes the Red Army's support for gender equality. ("Women demand liberation! Who says they are inferior to men?") A concert to mark the anniversary showed the Red Army being greeted by an adoring crowd of ethnic minorities, a stark contrast to the ethnic tensions that plague parts of China today, including Tibet and Xinjiang.

Some hope the Long March will become a call to arms that helps China overcome challenges such as a slowing economy and rampant social inequality.

"Nowadays, the younger generation is very fickle and impetuous," said Xie Haishan, 32, an employee at a social welfare organization in Beijing who attended the opera and a Long March museum exhibit. "Many people are shortsighted and lack the kind of commitment seen during the Long March. That's what we need nowadays."

"The Long March" opera, in development for four years, is a highlight of the government's unfolding spectacle, featuring a cast of nearly 200 and a cymbal-heavy score that blends Chinese folk songs with Italian-style arias. It is one of the grandest political operas to debut in Beijing since the Cultural Revolution, when Mao and his wife, Jiang Qing, made works celebrating the Communist Party a mandatory part of the repertoire at Chinese concert halls.

Yan Weiwen, a prominent tenor who plays the leading role of Commissar Peng, a military official, said the tenacity of Red Army soldiers set an example for all Chinese people.

"The Long March spirit will help Chinese people forge ahead," he said in a telephone interview. "Our lives will only be better if we have conviction and dreams."

Near the end of the opera, as Red Army soldiers confront the scourges of disease and starvation, eating tree bark to survive, a young soldier named Ping Yazi is poisoned by wild vegetables. He becomes lost in a swamp, firing a shot into the air to warn away his fellow troops.

"I'm not afraid of death," he sings, sinking underground. "I'm just reluctant to leave the Red Army."

Soon after, red lights illuminate the theater, revolutionary flags fill the stage, and a song-and-dance routine breaks out. "Long live the Red Army!" the soldiers sing. "Long live the Long March!"

Mr. Wang, the P.L.A. veteran sitting next to me, rose to his feet. He looked to the stage, squinted his eyes and shouted, "Bravo!"

North Korean Government Hasn't Yet Told Its People That Trump Won U.S. Presidency: Report

By Ken Shepherd

Washington Times, November 14, 2016

North Korea's state-run media still hasn't broken the news to the nation that Donald Trump won the U.S. presidency last week, a BBC News employee tasked with monitoring state media reports from around the world said on his Twitter, the Independent newspaper reported Monday.

"It's now Monday in North Korea, and the state media still seem not to have told the population the result of the US

presidential election," Chris Greenway wrote on Sunday morning.

Mr. Greenway, who, according to his Twitter profile bio, has been "[w]atching (and listening to) the world from BBC Monitoring since 1981," says that by contrast it took Pyongyang three days to tell its citizens that Barack Obama won the presidency in 2008.

On its website, BBC Monitoring describes its mission as "translat[ing] and analy[zing] news and information from freely available media sources around the world."

North Korea's literal radio silence on the news may be particularly puzzling as back in June an editorial by state-run media suggested a Trump presidency would be welcomed by the regime.

"North Korean state media have hailed US Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump as a 'wise politician' who could be good for the North," the BBC reported at the time, regarding the DPRK Today editorial hailing Mr. Trump as a "far-sighted presidential candidate."

"Analysts said the editorial was not official policy but probably reflected Pyongyang's thinking," the BBC said.

On Nov. 8, this newspaper reported North Korea was likely planning a ballistic missile test to coincide with its announcing the winner of the U.S. election.

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U.S. On Alert For New Nuclear Or Missile Test By North Korea

By Kirk Spitzer

USA Today, November 14, 2016

TOKYO — Among the pressing issues facing President-elect Donald Trump when he takes office on Inauguration Day will be North Korea's rogue nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs — and a crisis might not wait that long.

U.S. forces and allies in Japan and South Korea are on alert for a new missile launch after recent satellite imagery that showed what appeared to be potential preparations at North Korea's Sohae launch facility.

North Korea has carried out two nuclear weapons tests and dozens of missile tests and launches this year in defiance of U.N. sanctions. Although not all the missile tests have been successful, the North has made significant advances in developing nuclear weapons and the technology needed to mount them to long-range missiles.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said last week it was closely monitoring moves by the North Korean military at its Punggye-ri nuclear test site and other possible missile-launching sites and is prepared to respond to any provocative acts, South Korea's Yonhap News Agency reported.

"North Korea is preparing more launches, and it has also been continuously showing eagerness about nuclear tests and miniaturization of nuclear warheads," Japanese Defense Minister Tomomi Inada said recently in Tokyo.

North Korea's leaders have often timed weapons tests or other provocative actions to key dates and events at home or overseas as a way of drawing attention to its demands.

About 36,000 U.S. and Japanese troops and hundreds of aircraft and warships took part in a major exercise held every two years that ended Friday in and around Japan and the western Pacific that was pegged, at least in part, to ballistic missile defense.

In a statement released last month, U.S. Forces-Japan said training scenarios for the exercise will include "integrated air and missile defense and ballistic missile defense in order to keep pace with the growing ballistic missile threat in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region."

North Korea's advances in nuclear weapons and missile technology make defense planners "nervous and alarmed," said Narushige Michishita, director of the security and international studies program at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Tokyo.

He said the most recent nuclear test, in September, showed North Korea is capable of building a weapon equivalent in power to the atomic bomb used at Hiroshima in World War II.

North Korea has at least 12, and perhaps as many as 20, functional nuclear weapons and is likely to have an arsenal of 50 to 100 nuclear weapons within the next five years, Michishita said.

North Korea has 200 to 320 medium-range Nodong ballistic missiles that can reach major cities in Japan, along with key U.S. military bases there. The longer-range Musudan missile could threaten U.S. bases in Guam and Alaska. North Korea is developing two other missile variants with range to strike parts of the continental USA.

National Intelligence Director James Clapper said last month that persuading North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons program is a "lost cause."

North Korea has been under international sanctions since its first nuclear weapons test in 2006. The reclusive country has conducted five tests altogether, including what it described as a powerful "hydrogen bomb" in January. U.S. experts were skeptical of that claim.

South Korea and Japan held a second round of talks in Seoul on Nov. 9 — and more are needed — to discuss a long-delayed intelligence-sharing pact that would allow the two U.S. allies to share information on North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programs and other potential threats.

Japan, South Korea Sign Preliminary Intelligence-sharing Pact On North Korea

Reuters, November 14, 2016

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

Who Could Stop Nuclear War In The Trump Era? These Scientists.

By Audra J. Wolfe

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

In March, then-candidate Donald Trump shocked nuclear policy experts by suggesting at a town hall meeting that the United States might be able to reduce the defense budget by encouraging its allies, especially Japan and South Korea, to build nuclear weapons. When pressed to clarify his comments by the moderator, CNN's Anderson Cooper, Trump replied, "Wouldn't you rather in certain sense have Japan have nuclear weapons when North Korea has nuclear weapons?" Earlier that same week, Trump told Bloomberg's Mark Halperin that it was important to remain "unpredictable" when dealing with nuclear weapons.

Since the end of the World War II — the only time that atomic weapons have been used in war — the policy of the United States has been to discourage nuclear proliferation, whether through defense treaties, economic sanctions or controlling international sales of uranium. Similarly, the concept of nuclear deterrence depends on rational, predictable decisions about the use of nuclear weapons. Trump's statements naturally caused a flurry of panic over an untested leader with little familiarity with the basic principles of nuclear security having control of atomic weapons. Fear of Trump having "the nuclear codes" became a sort of rallying cry for his opponents.

Americans terrified over this prospect, though, should take comfort in knowing that there is an option for limiting nuclear risk beyond panicking or praying. It may be time to resurrect a Cold War strategy for limiting nuclear risk: back-channel communications among private scientists.

In 1955, a year after the U.S. test of a hydrogen bomb in the Bikini Atoll blanketed the globe with a thin layer of radioactive fallout, a group of scientists issued a manifesto against the development, testing and use of nuclear weapons. This public statement inspired what became known as the Pugwash Conference, an international scientists' movement on behalf of nuclear disarmament. At the height of Pugwash's influence in the late 1950s and early 1960s, scientists from the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and a handful of other non-nuclear countries gathered regularly to discuss the nature of the nuclear threat and ways to reduce it.

Both today and at the time, commentators have held up Pugwash as a model of nonpartisan scientific activism, a shining example of what scientists could accomplish if they worked without the constraints of formal politics. In 1995, the Pugwash Conferences and Joseph Rotblat, one of the movement's founders, received the Nobel Peace Prize for their roles in reducing nuclear tensions at the height of the Cold War.

More recently, the Obama administration hailed the personal relationship between Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz and Ali Akbar Salehi, the head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, as a critical ingredient in the nuclear agreement with Iran. The two men shared a background in physics and engineering and had overlapped at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the 1970s. While Moniz and Salehi obviously represented their respective countries at the negotiating table, their shared technical assumptions provided a platform on which to build political consensus.

Both during and after the Cold War, the U.S. government supported initiatives that brought international scientists together outside formal political channels, whether in the form of academic conferences or cooperative research initiatives, like the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN). Beyond the nuclear realm, scientists have informally assisted U.S. officials in negotiating treaties on issues as diverse as climate change and exploration rights in Antarctica.

This strategy, commonly known as "science diplomacy," has limitations. Scientists are not elected officials, and nothing in their scientific training is designed to prepare them for the subtleties of international political negotiations. The premise of science diplomacy risks putting power in the hands of technical experts whose personal interests may or may not match those of their national governments. And yet: There is no evidence to suggest that the elected head of government — Donald J. Trump — possesses the finesse needed to negotiate a nuclear crisis, either.

In 1955, scientists like Joseph Rotblat hoped to use their personal connections and technical expertise to avert a nuclear apocalypse. For the leaders of Pugwash, the point of an international scientists' movement wasn't so much to displace official negotiations between governments as to keep a line of communication open in the event of a crisis. The idea was that private citizens could maintain personal relationships even if their countries had severed formal relations, in much the same way that bipartisan dinner parties used to grease the wheels of government in Washington.

During the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, for example, the American members of the Pugwash Committee sent their Soviet counterparts a telegram urging restraint and promising to use whatever limited influence they had over U.S. government officials to defuse the situation. The scientists acknowledged that the crisis could be solved only by heads of state but hoped that a mere reminder of their presence might jolt political leaders into recognizing the effects of a nuclear strike.

Whether the president-elect and his advisers realize it, Trump is going to need scientific expertise. His comments as a candidate suggest that he'll scuttle the Iran deal and turn a blind eye to nuclear proliferation, all while engaging in a race with Russia to modernize the nuclear arsenal. It remains to be seen, of course, how many of these ideas will carry over to a Trump administration. In a normal administration, it would be a given that Trump and his advisers would confer with security experts who could provide a reality check on technical questions, from the stages of nuclear proliferation to the effects of modernized nuclear weapons on theories of deterrence. But the Trump campaign has defied expectations in a number of ways, and a Trump presidency is in many ways an open question.

Should Trump decide to go forgo technical advice, Americans (and the world) should take comfort in the fact that scientists, security specialists and nuclear weapons experts from many countries will continue to talk to one another. Pugwash's scientists, too, continue to meet, forging personal links and technical knowledge that can transcend international borders. Back-channel communications among international scientists will always offer hope for preventing a nuclear catastrophe, regardless of who sits in the Oval Office.

Kerry In Oman For Yemen Peace Efforts

AFP, November 14, 2016

Muscat (AFP) – US Secretary of State John Kerry held talks Monday with officials in Oman on efforts to end Yemen's 19-month-old conflict, state media in Muscat said.

Kerry met with Oman's ruler Sultan Qaboos to discuss "the conflict in Yemen and the urgent need to find a durable political settlement to ease the suffering of the Yemeni people", said US State Department spokesman John Kirby.

They welcomed a peace roadmap proposed by UN envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed that was rejected by Yemen's President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, he added.

Kerry also "expressed the United States' deep appreciation for the helpful role Oman played in securing the recent release of US citizens held in Yemen".

Oman maintains good ties with Iran which is accused of supporting Yemen's Shiite Huthi rebels.

Muscat is also a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), led by regional powerhouse Saudi Arabia, which backs Hadi's internationally-recognised government.

It has mediated the release of several Westerners held in Yemen, the latest being an American identified as Wallead Yusuf Pitts Luqman who was transported to Muscat from rebel-held Sanaa on an Omani military aircraft on November 7.

Oman is the only GCC member not taking part in the Saudi-led military coalition bombing rebels in Yemen since March 2015, but it still maintains good ties with Saudi Arabia.

Kerry's visit to Oman was one of his last trips as secretary of state before President Barack Obama's administration steps down in January.

The US chief diplomat has been pushing for a settlement in Yemen, where the deadly conflict between rebels and the government escalated after the Saudi-led Arab coalition intervened on the side of the government.

Oman has also used its links to mediate peace talks between the insurgents and Hadi's government.

More than 7,000 people have been killed and nearly 37,000 wounded in Yemen since March 2015, and the UN says millions are in need of food aid.

Another 21 million people urgently need health services, according to the United Nations.

On Monday, 12 civilians, including a child, were killed in an air raid that targeted a convoy of lorries in central Ibb province, while nine rebels were killed in an ambush in the same region, military and medical sources said.

After Oman, Kerry was to travel on to Abu Dhabi for talks on the Syrian conflict.

Colombia's Revised Peace Accord

New York Times, November 14, 2016

Six weeks after Colombian voters narrowly rejected a peace agreement between the government and the country's largest guerrilla group in a plebiscite vote, President Juan Manuel Santos over the weekend unveiled a revised accord that is a testament to what can be achieved through dialogue and compromise, even in a deeply polarized society.

If the deal holds it will set a strong road map for Colombians to start healing the wounds of a brutal conflict that raged for more than five decades and build a more egalitarian, tolerant society.

The deal, incorporating several suggestions from Mr. Santos's critics, was reached after marathon negotiating sessions in Havana. It is unclear whether the government intends to hold a new plebiscite or simply have Congress approve the agreement.

In an important new concession, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, explicitly agreed to declare and surrender all assets, which will be used to compensate victims of the conflict. The new draft also makes clear that land reform initiatives in the original text will protect the rights of landowners, who will not face arbitrary expropriation of property.

One major structural change is that the only parts of the new deal that would be incorporated into the country's Constitution involve international law. Previously, the government had considered integrating the whole deal into the Constitution, which some critics saw as an end run to making sweeping amendments.

Two tenets of the original agreement — a transitional justice system and a mechanism to allow FARC leaders to

participate in politics — were altered slightly in response to concerns raised by political factions that campaigned against the deal.

The government agreed to forego the participation of foreign jurists in a special tribunal, which would be the centerpiece of the transitional justice system, and have only Colombian judges hear cases. It also established that the tribunal would consider new cases during its first two years and seek to conclude its work within a decade. The new agreement would explicitly give Colombia's highest court the authority to review the tribunal's decisions.

While some critics of the initial deal argued that FARC leaders who had committed grave crimes should not be allowed to run for office, neither the government nor the FARC was willing to cede much ground on this issue. (One minor concession was that the FARC's new political party would get less funding than originally envisioned.) The parties are right to defend this part of the deal. While many Colombians can't stand the idea of seeing war criminals in the halls of Congress, they should realize that it is better to allow them to fight in the political arena than on the battlefield.

Mr. Santos, who days before the plebiscite had displayed confidence that bordered on cockiness, responded to the electoral setback in early October with humility.

"Looking back, the result of the plebiscite gave us a chance to come together, and I want to express gratitude once again for the positive disposition and the good will of all stakeholders," particularly those who voted No, the president said in a speech Saturday night.

The most ardent critic of the original agreement, former President Álvaro Uribe, did not immediately criticize the new version after Mr. Santos briefed him at length about its terms over the weekend. The new agreement would allow Mr. Uribe, long a skeptic — and at times a spoiler — of the peace process with the FARC, to claim credit for having forged a stronger accord. Its successful implementation would depend largely on the willingness of all Colombian leaders to work toward a common good.

NATIONAL NEWS

Obama Holds His First Post-election News Conference

By Gregory Korte

USA Today, November 14, 2016

President Obama will answer questions about the election, the presidential transition and his legacy Monday at a White House news conference — his first since voters handed the White House over to a candidate who promised to dismantle his agenda.

But Obama will also likely make clear that he has things he wants to accomplish before he leaves office. As he often said when he was president-elect, there's only one president at a time.

The news conference may be intended to get domestic politics out of the way before Obama departs Monday night for a weeklong, three-country foreign trip that's expected to be the last of his presidency.

That trip — to Greece, Germany and Peru — will give Obama a chance to reassure allies that bipartisan commitments are more enduring than any one administration. He's scheduled three news conferences during the trip, one on each leg, adding up to an extraordinary one-week stretch in which he'll face the press four times.

Obama had one previous chance to answer questions after his meeting with Donald Trump in the Oval Office last week, but he demurred. "Here's a good rule: Don't answer any questions when they just shout," he told the president-elect.

President Obama Has Nice Things To Say About President-Elect Donald Trump

By Lesley Clark

McClatchy, November 14, 2016

Before the election, President Barack Obama warned that Donald Trump was unfit to serve in the White House.

But now that Trump has been elected and will take office in January, the 44th president even had some favorable things to say about his successor. Speaking at the White House before he leaves on his final trip overseas, Obama said he complimented Trump at their meeting last week.

"We had a very cordial conversation and that didn't surprise me, to some degree because I think that he is obviously a gregarious person," Obama said. "He's somebody who I think likes to mix it up and to have a vigorous debate."

And he said Trump tapped voters' anxiety, but also enthusiasm "in a way that was impressive." The connection that Trump made with voters, Obama said, allowed him to withstand events that might have torpedoed another candidate.

"That's powerful stuff," Obama said.

He also suggested the Republican is coming to the White House "with fewer set hard-and-fast policy prescriptions than a lot of other presidents might be arriving with. I don't think he is ideological. I think ultimately ... he is pragmatic in that way. And that can serve him well as long as he has got good people around him and he has a clear sense of direction."

Obama has sought to make the transition between presidents seamless and said he's urged Trump to reach out to groups worried about the harsh nature of his campaign.

"Because of the nature of the campaigns and the bitterness and ferocity of the campaigns that it's really

important to try to send some signals of unity," Obama said. "I think that's something that he will want to do but this is all happening real fast."

Obama noted Trump has commitments to supporters that helped to win the White House "and he's going to have to balance those over the coming weeks and months and years."

Trump's decision to appoint the pugnacious Breitbart editor Steve Bannon as a senior strategist has infuriated some groups, but Obama held his tongue, saying it wouldn't be appropriate "if I want to be consistent with the notion that we are going to try to facilitate a smooth transition."

Those who didn't vote for Trump have to realize it's up to him to set up his own team, Obama said.

"That's how democracy works. That's how this system operates," said Obama, who nevertheless sounded a rueful note that 43 percent of those eligible to vote had not done so.

Obama said he believes Trump is sincere in "wanting to be a successful president and moving this country forward."

He continued, "I don't think any president ever comes in saying to himself, 'I want to figure out how to make people angry or alienate half the country.' I think he's going to try as best he can to make sure that he delivers not only to the people who voted for him but for the people at large."

And he noted, "the good thing is that there are going to be elections coming up so there's a built-in incentive for him to try to do that."

He noted he had considerable differences with Trump and concerns about him taking office. But he suggested Trump can't make huge changes in a hurry.

"The federal government and our democracy is not a speedboat. It's an oceanliner, as I discovered when I came into office," Obama said, throwing a bit of shade as he asserted that "it took a lot of really hard work for us to make significant policy changes, even in our first two years, when we had larger majorities than Mr. Trump will enjoy when he comes into office."

Obama Urges Americans To Give Trump A Chance

By Stephen Collinson

CNN, November 14, 2016

(CNN)President Barack Obama encouraged Americans Monday to give President-elect Donald Trump some time to get adjusted to the responsibilities of the presidency.

But in his first news conference since last week's stunning election results, Obama warned that some of Trump's expectations will soon be shaken up by the gravity of the job.

Obama said he was certain after meeting Trump last week that his successor and longtime political foe was "sincere" about being president for all Americans but also called on the President-elect to reach out to people who felt anxious after the explosive rhetoric of the campaign, including women and minorities.

"I don't think he is ideological, I think ultimately he is pragmatic in that way and that can serve him well as long as he has got good people around him and he has a good sense of direction," Obama said.

Obama appeared before reporters before leaving the United States on the last scheduled foreign trip of his presidency, to Greece, Germany and Peru. It takes place with many of Obama's subordinates and liberals across the nation still barely able to believe he will be succeeded by Trump, whose volatile character and taboo-busting rhetoric could hardly strike a more overt contrast to the current president.

Obama said he told Trump that his election achievement in tapping into the enthusiasm of his voters was impressive.

"I think he is coming to this office with fewer set hard and fast policy prescriptions than a lot of other presidents might be arriving with. Do I have concerns? Absolutely, of course I've got concerns. He and I differ on a whole bunch of issues," Obama added.

Obama dodged an opportunity to comment on the appointment of firebrand polemicist Stephen Bannon as Trump's senior White House policy adviser, who has been vigorously criticized as a leading member of the alt-right nationalist movement.

Obama said it would not be appropriate for him to weigh in on all of Trump's appointments because it would be incompatible to his desire to provide a smooth transition of power to his successor.

"I think it is important for us to let him make his decisions. The American people will judge over the course of the next couple of years whether they like what they see," Obama said.

He added: "This office has a way of waking you up. Those aspects of his positions or his predispositions that don't match up with reality, he will find shaken up pretty quick because reality has a way of asserting itself."

Obama was repeatedly pressed about Trump's temperament, which he had criticized extensively during the campaign.

"There are going to be certain elements of his temperament that will not serve him well unless he recognizes them and corrects them," Obama said, pointing out the impact that a comment from a US president that is not accurate can have around the world.

"I think he recognizes that this is different," he said.

Affirms US commitment to NATO

Obama also said Monday that the United States would remain the world's "indispensable" power and that Trump had told him he was committed to NATO.

"In my conversations with the President-elect, he expressed a great interest in maintaining our core strategic relationships," Obama said, adding that he had a message from Trump to pass on to world leaders he will meet this week. "One of the messages I will be able to deliver is his commitment to NATO and the transatlantic alliance."

The President said that there were many diplomatic, military and humanitarian levers of US power that made America the indispensable nation in the world and that status would continue.

"There is no weakening of resolve when it comes to maintaining a strong and robust NATO relationship," Obama said.

Transition

Obama had hoped to be handing the reins to a fellow Democrat Hillary Clinton, yet is now preparing the way for Trump, a man for whom he has harbored personal and political animosity, and who has pledged to tear up his legacy as quickly as possible.

Obama, who met Trump in the White House for 90 minutes Thursday, stressed to reporters the importance of a smooth transition process, similar to the one he was offered by former President George W. Bush.

He said the most important point he made to Trump was the importance of setting up a proficient staffing structure, including the chief of staff, national security adviser and White House counsel.

"I hope it was useful," Obama said. "I hope that he appreciated that advice."

He said he told Trump that "gestures matter" and how he reaches out to groups that did not support him were important.

"I think it is important to give him the room and the space to do that, it takes time," Obama said.

Trump may be in more need of assistance than other recent presidential election winners, considering he has no experience whatsoever of governing yet is about to take on what may be the world's toughest job.

Some White House staffers were surprised by the businessman's rudimentary grasp of White House operations but say they will work to get the new administration up to speed before January 20.

Officials described Trump's visit as a wake-up call of sorts, revealing the work to be done with the new White House staff before Trump is sworn in.

Obama argued Monday that despite there being some "deeply disaffected" people, the country he will turn over to Trump is in better shape than it was in when he took office in 2009, amid the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

He said that economic indicators including unemployment were as healthy as they had been in years, and despite challenges in the Middle East, the US was in a strong position against ISIS.

In Complete Reversal, Obama Refuses To Criticize Trump

By Kathleen Hennessey

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama on Monday abandoned his dire warnings and dark predictions about his newly elected successor and urged Americans to give President-elect Donald Trump time to rise to the daunting responsibilities of the office, breaking sharply from his Democratic allies who have quickly condemned Trump's first major decisions.

In his first extended remarks on the election that pounded his party and his legacy, Obama sought to reassure an anxious world and nation about his successor's commitments to alliances, at times appearing almost sanguine about a future Trump administration.

Although he would not explicitly say Trump was qualified for the office, he said he believed the first-time officeholder would do his best to unite the nation, calling him pragmatic. He refused to wade into a political firestorm over Trump's decision to name a far-right conservative media mogul as a top adviser. And he expressed hope that the weight of the presidency will force Trump to overcome his shortcomings.

"He has won. He's going to be the next president and regardless of what experience or assumptions he brought to the office, this office has a way of waking you up," Obama said. "And some of his gifts that obviously allowed him to execute one of the biggest political upsets in history, those are ones that hopefully he will put to good use on behalf of all the American people."

Obama's refusal to criticize his successor was a 180-degree reversal from the rhetoric of his campaign takedowns. Only a week ago, as he campaigned for Hillary Clinton, Obama said Trump was "woefully unprepared for the job" and couldn't "handle the nuclear codes."

Obama's latest remarks bore little resemblance to the calls for resistance coming from other Democrats and many of Obama's supporters. As they come to grips with Trump's surprising win, many Democrats have seized on a call not to accept or "normalize" the actions of a man who ran a divisive campaign that included charges of racism, sexism and other offensive rhetoric and actions.

But Obama, who was the target of some of that rhetoric, has embraced the role of national hand-holder. Both in private and in a brief statement last week, Obama has suggested that Democrats should buck up and move on. He's cast Trump's election as in line with the usual zig and zag of politics.

On Monday, as he prepared to embark on a three-nation trip abroad, Obama went so far as to vouch for Trump and his foreign policies. Although Trump campaigned as a harsh critic of NATO, Obama said Trump sounded a different note when they met in the Oval Office last week.

Obama said the Republican "expressed a great interest in maintaining our core strategic relationships," including "strong and robust NATO" partnerships.

"There is enormous continuity ... that makes us that indispensable nation when it comes to maintaining order around the world," Obama said. Relationships and policies go beyond presidents, he said, adding that military officials, diplomats and intelligence officers would cooperate with their foreign counterparts as before.

Obama acknowledged he had offered advice to Trump, saying he emphasized the need to shift from campaigning to governing, and the importance of resetting the tone after a contentious election.

"I don't think he is ideological," Obama said. "And that can serve him well as long as he has got good people around him and he has a clear sense of direction."

Obama suggested he would continue to offer his advice. He said he would urge Trump "to think long and hard" before making good on his promise to upend Obama's program that deferred deportation for hundreds of thousands of young immigrants who came to the country illegally as children.

Asked about one of Trump's most contentious moves since his triumph, appointing Steve Bannon as chief strategist and senior adviser, Obama said it was up to the president-elect to appoint a team.

"It's important for us to let him make his decisions," Obama said of the choice of Bannon, a man celebrated as a force for the far right. But adding a hint of worry, Obama said he counseled Trump: "It's really important to send some signals of unity."

Whereas Obama hailed Trump's "impressive" ability to speak to voters, he also delivered a subtle critique of Clinton's campaign. He said Democrats must broaden their focus beyond just swing states after an election that left the Senate and House in Republican hands, as well as most of the nation's governor's mansions. He rejected the idea that demographic advantages would lead to all-but-assured victories for the party, saying it must rebuild at the local, state and national levels.

"We're going to have to compete everywhere," he said, reflecting on his own 2008 win in Iowa, a state that went for Trump this time. "We're going to have to show up everywhere."

Clinton kept a relatively light campaign schedule until the final weeks of her campaign, mostly attending smaller events in battleground states. Her campaign focused heavily on motivating the Democratic base of female and minority voters, rather than swaying independents. "Good ideas don't matter if people don't hear them," Obama said.

While Obama is in Germany, Greece and Peru, he said his team would accelerate efforts to ensure a smooth transition to the Trump administration.

He stressed that he would try to strengthen the American economy over his final two months, and all but acknowledged he would not take any dramatic action to close the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in his final weeks in office.

"One of the things you discover about being president is that there are all these rules and norms and laws and you got to pay attention to them. And the people who work for you are also subject to those rules and norms, and that's a piece of advice that I gave to the incoming president," he said.

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Obama Has Given Himself A New Task: Educating Trump

By Michael A. Memoli

Los Angeles Times, November 14, 2016

President Obama spent the better part of a year trying to convince the nation that Donald Trump was not fit to hold the Oval Office. Now, determined to smooth the transfer of power, the president has launched a persuasion campaign aimed at an audience of one: the president-elect himself.

At his first postelection news conference Monday, Obama appeared to be trying to publicly educate his successor, via television news, a medium that Trump was especially attuned to during the campaign.

Obama offered admiration, instruction and even outright flattery, praising the manner in which Trump tapped into voters' anxiety and enthusiasm for change to score a historic political upset.

"He is obviously a gregarious person," Obama said.

Where he once said Trump lacked the temperament to serve as commander in chief, Obama focused on qualities that he said would serve Trump well as president.

"I don't think he is ideological," Obama said. "I think, ultimately, he is pragmatic."

He gently offered a warning: "This office is bigger than any one person. And that's why ensuring a smooth transition is so important."

The turnabout came four days after Obama's first face-to-face meeting with Trump, after which several senior White House officials expressed surprise at the extent to which Trump and his aides seemed unprepared for the task ahead.

Given that apparent gulf between Trump's current state and preparedness to take the oath of office, Obama stepped in.

He balanced compliments with the counsel Trump himself has said he hoped to draw from Obama in the weeks and months ahead, laying out in great detail some of his most significant policy achievements.

Obama acknowledged the shortcomings of the Affordable Care Act but reminded Trump that if he and Republicans fail to deliver an alternative that delivers better results, "then we are going to have a problem."

He mentioned the nuclear deal between Iran and six world powers, including the U.S., as an example where campaign rhetoric falls short of the obligations of governing. To unravel a deal that is preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapons program "would be hard to explain," Obama cautioned.

"Now comes the hard part. Now is governance," Obama said, abandoning the pretense of the news conference to speak directly to Trump.

Obama's approach reflected the extent to which Trump's election imperils his most prized accomplishments. Just as Obama made full use of executive power to advance his goals on the climate, the economy and international affairs, Trump can act swiftly to reverse them.

The effort may already be working. After assailing Obama throughout the campaign as incompetent, Trump said in a "60 Minutes" interview recorded after their meeting that he found the president to be "terrific," and that they had great chemistry.

Yet Obama's welcoming tone was at odds with Democrats still struggling with the shock of electoral defeat. Many doubled down on their warnings about what they see as an incoming administration that is hostile to large swaths of Americans, particularly minorities, fears they say are justified giving Trump's hiring of Steve Bannon to a senior role in the West Wing.

Bannon took a leave from Breitbart News, a right-wing site that's also a platform for the so-called alt-right to espouse racist and anti-Semitic views, to run Trump's campaign. Obama opted against commenting on Bannon's new appointment, saying that to opine on personnel moves would be inconsistent with his promise to "facilitate a smooth transition" to the Trump administration.

Separately, intelligence officials said they were surprised by a request to give high security clearance to some members of Trump's family. Trump's campaign denied that he made the request.

Obama said simply that the presidency is "like no other job on Earth" and that the learning curve "always continues."

Trump may even benefit from taking office with "fewer set hard-and-fast policy prescriptions" than most politicians have, he said.

"This office has a way of waking you up…. Reality has a way of asserting itself," Obama said.

He also shared advice he said he offered to Trump days earlier: It's important to "try to send some signals of unity," particularly to women and minorities, after the bitter campaign.

"That's something that he will want to do. But this is all happening real fast," Obama said. "He's got commitments to supporters that helped to get him here, and he's going to have to balance those. And over the coming weeks and months and years, my hope is, is that those impulses ultimately win out."

Shortly after his news conference, Obama departed for Athens, the first stop on his final scheduled international trip as president. In Greece, then Germany and Peru, he will meet with more than a dozen world leaders and confront the unenviable task of trying to explain Trump's win, which threatens initiatives they had worked on, including the Iran agreement and the global climate accord reached in Paris last year.

While speaking to reporters, Obama reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to NATO, noting it has endured through both Democratic and Republican administrations. He said he could deliver to U.S. allies Trump's stated commitment to continue that, despite his suggestions during the campaign that he would leave behind countries that do not pay their share of dues and his admiration for Russian President Vladimir Putin. NATO was a crucial component of the Western response to Putin's incursions into Eastern Europe.

"One of the most important functions I can serve at this stage, during this trip, is to let them know that there is no weakening of resolve when it comes to America's commitment to maintaining a strong and robust NATO relationship," Obama said.

Just moments before, Trump's transition team announced he had spoken with Putin and shared how he was looking forward to "having a strong and enduring relationship with Russia and the people of Russia."

Times staff writer Christi Parsons in Athens contributed to this report.

Obama Talks Up 'Pragmatic' Trump

By Jordan Fabian

The Hill, November 14, 2016

President Obama on Monday went out of his way to praise Donald Trump, calling him a "gregarious" and "pragmatic" man as he sought to reassure people around the globe who are fearful of the coming transition in power.

Holding his first press conference since the election, Obama chose his words with extreme care, declining multiple times to say whether he still thinks Trump doesn't have the temperament to be commander in chief.

"I don't think he is ideological," Obama said. "I think ultimately he's pragmatic, in that way. And that can serve him well."

The president's glass-half-full view of Trump is a stark change from the campaign, when he described the businessman as an erratic figure who couldn't be trusted with the country's nuclear codes.

Obama expressed hope, however faint, that the Republican would not be able to roll back many of his signature White House achievements.

While Trump might be riding high after his triumph over Hillary Clinton, Obama said the office of president "has a way of waking you up" and that some of the things he promised to his supporters "don't match up with reality."

"Do I have concerns? Absolutely," Obama said. "But the federal government and our democracy is not a speed boat. It's an ocean liner."

During the presidential race, Trump promised to erase Obama's executive actions on "Day 1," quickly repeal ObamaCare and then "renegotiate" the Iran nuclear accord.

The president suggested some of those things are easier said than done, and cautioned that repealing ObamaCare, in particular, could carry a heavy political cost.

"OK, well, what happens to those 20 million people who have health insurance?" Obama asked. "Are you going to just kick them off and suddenly they don't have health insurance?"

The press conference was Obama's first extended public comments since meeting with Trump for roughly 90 minutes in the Oval Office last week. It provided an opportunity for Obama to subtly exert pressure on his successor, while seeking to calm the turmoil that has swept through the country since the election.

It also came just hours before he embarked on his final foreign trip as president, where Trump's victory will likely be the dominant topic among world leaders.

Obama said he would be able to reassure jittery European allies about the president-elect's "commitment to NATO," even though the businessman repeatedly questioned the value of the transatlantic alliance during the campaign.

"There is enormous continuity beneath the day-to-day news that makes us that indispensable nation when it comes to maintaining order and promoting prosperity around the world," the president said. "That will continue."

Obama adopted a measured tone during the press conference, which lasted more than an hour. He consistently referred to Trump, a man he once described as a "carnival barker," as the president-elect.

He pointedly declined to comment on Trump's choice of Steven Bannon for chief strategist and senior counselor. While Democrats have decried Bannon, a former editor at Breitbart, for his ties to the "alt-right" movement and white nationalism, Obama said he would not get into the habit of commenting on Trump's appointments.

"It will be up to him to set up a team that he thinks will serve him well and reflect his policies," Obama said of Trump, while also saying it's important for the president-elect "to try to send some signals of unity and to reach out to minority groups or women or others that were concerned about the tenor of the campaign."

And while Obama had mocked the notion of Trump's populist appeal during the campaign, he credited him Monday with an "impressive" ability to energize supporters.

"He successfully mobilized a big chunk of the country to vote for him and he's going to win," the president said. "He has won. He's going to be the next president."

Asked about the future of the Democratic Party, which now holds little power at the state or federal level, Obama called for reflection from top leaders and a renewed focus on being competitive in every part of the country.

The comments were a subtle dig at Clinton's campaign, which has been faulted for not competing hard enough in traditionally blue states in the Rust Belt that Trump won, such as Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin.

"We have to compete everywhere. We have to show up everywhere," Obama said.

He offered up his own campaign as a model of success, saying he was able to win twice in predominantly white Iowa — a state Clinton lost — because he spent a lot of time talking to voters there.

"Things change pretty rapidly but they don't change inevitably," the president said. "They change because you work for it. Nobody said democracy's supposed to be easy. It's hard."

Obama To Face Reporters For First Time Since Trump's Win

By Julie Hirschfeld Davis

New York Times, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — President Obama will field questions at a news conference on Monday afternoon, the first time he has faced reporters since Donald J. Trump won the election in a stunning upset that has imperiled Mr. Obama's legacy.

Mr. Obama, who during the campaign called Mr. Trump temperamentally unfit and dangerously unqualified to be president, has since said his priority is to lead an orderly transition of power to help Mr. Trump succeed for the good of the country. The president is certain to face sharp questions about Mr. Trump's actions since his victory, including his selection on Sunday of Stephen K. Bannon, a media mogul who has promoted white nationalist, racist and anti-Semitic views, as his chief White House strategist and senior counselor.

The president remarked last week that Mr. Trump's comments and behavior had been more statesmanlike since his election, saying that he had been "encouraged" by the change in tone. Since then, the president-elect used Twitter to complain about postelection protests against him and

object to the way The New York Times has covered him. Mr. Trump's elevation of Mr. Bannon, who was a top adviser to the campaign, has drawn scathing criticism from Democrats and some Republicans who warn that the president-elect is placing a divisive figure with fringe views deep inside the West Wing.

White House officials say that Mr. Obama has not changed his view of Mr. Trump since the campaign this fall, when he condemned Mr. Trump as a bigot who had cozied up to white supremacists and could not be trusted with the nuclear codes. But Mr. Obama has told the American public that he believes that the will of the voters should be respected.

During a 90-minute one-on-one meeting on Thursday in the Oval Office, the president tutored Mr. Trump, who has no government policy or elective experience, on a wide range of domestic and foreign policy matters he will have to deal with his first day in office.

Mr. Obama was set to hold the news conference just before departing for a weeklong trip to Greece, Germany and Peru — his final scheduled trip abroad as president — where he is expecting to face questions from anxious American allies. For months, Mr. Obama assured the allies that Mr. Trump would not win the White House. Now, White House officials say he will tell them that their alliances with the United States transcend any one leader or political party.

Obama: Parts Of Trump's Temperament 'Will Not Serve Him Well'

By Nolan D. McCaskill

Politico, November 14, 2016

President Barack Obama questioned his successor's so-called best asset Monday: his temperament.

While the president-elect has hailed his "winning temperament" as his best quality, Obama warned that the brash billionaire will have to fortify his weaknesses — including his temperament — in the Oval Office because the gravity of being president far exceeds that of being a candidate.

"I think what'll happen with the president-elect is there are gonna be certain elements of his temperament that will not serve him well unless he recognizes them and corrects them," Obama said Monday at a news conference at the White House ahead of a foreign trip to Greece, Germany and Peru.

"Because when you're a candidate and you say something that is inaccurate or controversial, it has less impact than it does when you're president of the United States," he continued. "Everybody around the world's paying attention. Markets move. National security issues require a level of precision in order to make sure that you don't make mistakes."

But the president-elect realizes that, Obama said, as do his constituents.

"He recognizes that this is different, and so do the American people," Obama said.

Trump Will Get Wake-up Call When He Takes Office, Obama Says

By Roberta Rampton

Reuters, November 14, 2016

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

President Obama On Trump Win: "The People Have Spoken"

BuzzFeed, November 14, 2016

President Obama struck a conciliatory tone Monday in his first news conference since Donald Trump's shocking victory, saying that despite his own concerns, "the people have spoken."

Obama engaged in a delicate balancing act in which he expressed concern about Trump while also trying to reassure the public that there would be a smooth transition of power and that the accomplishments of the last eight years would not be unraveled.

"I don't think he is ideological," Obama, who called Trump unfit to be president during the campaign, said. "I think ultimately he is pragmatic."

Obama added that he believes Trump is "sincere in wanting to be a successful president" and that "my hope is he makes things better." Still, Obama went on to say that "there are certain things that make for good sound bites but don't always translate into good policy."

"There are certain elements of his temperament that will not serve him well unless he recognizes them and corrects them," Obama said of Trump.

He later expressed hope that Trump would use the "gifts that obviously allowed him to execute one of the biggest political upsets in history" to help "all the American people."

He declined to weigh in on Trump's appointment of Steve Bannon as chief strategist. Bannon has served as the chairman of Breitbart News, which has been criticized for mainstreaming racist and "alt right" rhetoric.

"Regardless of what experience or assumptions he brought to the office, this office has a way of waking you up," Obama said. "And those aspects of his positions or predispositions that don't match up with reality, he will find shaken up pretty quick because reality has a way of asserting itself."

During his conversation with Trump last week at the White House, Obama said the president-elect also

"expressed a great interest in maintaining our core strategic relationship."

"So, one of the messages I will be able to deliver is his commitment to NATO and the Transatlantic Alliance," Obama said of his upcoming tour abroad. "I think that's one of the most important functions I can serve at this stage during this trip is to let them know that there is no weakening of resolve when it comes to America's commitment to maintaining a strong and robust NATO relationship."

Trump has previously been critical of the US role in NATO, saying this summer that many members of the alliance "aren't paying their bills." And when asked if the US would come to the aid of NATO countries, Trump repeatedly noted "if they fulfill their obligations to us, the answer is yes."

Obama speaks to the media during a news conference at the White House on Monday.

But for all his talk about his incoming predecessor, Obama also used the news conference to repeatedly tout his own record in office, saying the economy is stronger, Guantanamo Bay has fewer prisoners, and the US is "indisputably in a stronger position today that we were when I came in eight years ago."

He also pointed to steps taken to reduce climate change.

"The good news is that what we've been able to show over the last five, six, eight years is that it's possible to grow the economy really fast and possible to bring down carbon emissions as well," Obama said.

President Obama Speaks On Donald Trump At Press Conference

By Maya Rhodan

TIME, November 14, 2016

President Obama addressed concerned about President-elect Donald Trump in his first press conference since Election Day, saying that the massive responsibilities of the presidency would change the businessman's tenor.

In a subtle effort to assuage fears, President Obama suggested Monday that the office of the president has a way of opening one's eyes to the realities of governing and decision making. "Regardless of what experience or assumptions he brought to the office, this office has a way of waking you up," Obama said.

Obama maintained his commitment to ensuring a smooth, peaceful transition of power during his first press conference since Election Day, refusing to weigh in on president-elect Donald Trump's staffing picks and comments the president made about his successor's qualifications on the campaign trail.

Speaking to the press ahead of his final international trip as president, Obama said it was important for the American people to allow Trump to make decisions and settle into the office before judging his presidency. "The people have spoken, Donald Trump will be the next president, the 45th president of the United States," Obama said. "It will be up to him to set up a team that he thinks will serve him well and reflect his policies."

Those who didn't vote for Trump, Obama said, have to recognize that "that's how the system operates."

President Obama said again that he was encouraged by Trump's sober response to his Election Night win and hopes that he'll commit to unifying the country going forward. The two met in the Oval Office the Thursday after the surprising election and during that meeting, Obama said Monday, he advised the President-elect to reach out to communities that may feel disaffected as a result of his win. In the days since the election, protestors have taken to the streets across the country chanting things like "not my president" and "dump Trump." There has also been an increase in racially charged incidents across the U.S. in the wake of the election.

"My advice, as I said to the President-elect, was that campaigning is different from governing," Obama said Monday. I think he recognizes that I think he's sincere in wanting to be a successful president. I think he's going to try as best he can to make sure that he delivers not only for people who voted for him but the people at large."

Obama also said he'd advised Trump to reach out to women, communities of color, and others who expressed concern about the "tenor of his campaign" and the nastiness of the 2016 election. As noted, the president did not weigh in on the announcement that controversial Breitbart News executive Steve Bannon will have a senior role in the Trump administration.

Reports and comments from advocates, Democrats, and civil rights groups signals that some are angered by the President-elect's staffing choices. President Obama said he thinks of Trump as less of an ideologue and more of a pragmatist, something he hopes will benefit him when he's in the thick of it.

The president also said he hopes the president will consider the impact of decisions like completely gutting the Affordable Care Act and reversing deportation deferrals of children who immigrated to the U.S.

Obama Reminds Trump: 'There's Only One President At The Time'

By Nolan D. McCaskill

Politico, November 14, 2016

Donald Trump isn't the president yet, the incumbent president expressed on Monday, telling the press ahead of a foreign trip "there is one president at a time."

President Barack Obama kicked off a news conference Monday by hailing his team's transition efforts and suggested his staff is ready to kick it into high gear.

"As I discussed with the president-elect on Thursday, my team stands ready to accelerate in the next steps that are required to ensure a smooth transition, and we are gonna be staying in touch as we travel," Obama said in his opening remarks before taking questions in the White House Briefing Room before departing for a foreign trip to Greece, Germany and Peru.

"I remember what it was like when I came in eight years ago. It is a big challenge," he continued, before taking what could be perceived as a dig at his successor. "This office is bigger than any one person, and that's why ensuring a smooth transition is so important. It's not something that the Constitution explicitly requires, but it is one of those norms that are vital to a functioning democracy, similar to norms of civility and tolerance and a commitment to reason and facts and analysis. It's part of what makes this country work, and as long as I'm president we are going to uphold those norms and cherish and uphold those ideals."

Obama said his team should be "very proud" that because of the groundwork it's laid, when he hands over the keys, "the car's in pretty good shape." He ticked through his administration's successes, including job growth, rising incomes and historic uninsured rates, among others and said he has told his team to finish strong.

"So my instructions to my team are that we run through the tape. We make sure that we finish what we started, that we don't let up in these last couple of months because my goal is on Jan. 21, America's in the strongest position possible and hopefully there's an opportunity for the next president to build on that," he said. "No. 2, our work has also helped to stabilize the global economy, and because there is one president at a time, I'll spend this week reinforcing America's support of the approaches that we've taken to promote economic growth and global security on a range of issues."

Obama Will Spend More Time With President-Elect Trump To Provide Guidance

By Adam Edelman

New York Daily News, November 14, 2016

President Obama was so shocked at how little Donald Trump and his advisers appeared to understand about the myriad duties and responsibilities the President-elect would be taking on at the White House that he will "spend more time with his successor than presidents typically do" to provide him with additional guidance, a new report claims.

Obama and Trump met inside the Oval Office Thursday in a wide-ranging 90-minute sit-down that ended with the President-elect — who had for years criticized the sitting-commander-chief and who campaigned on vows to dismantle his legacy — stating that he "looked forward to dealing with the President in the future, including counsel."

And Obama — who after the meeting vowed to do "everything we can to help you succeed, because if you succeed the country succeeds" — apparently took Trump up on the offer.

According to a report Monday in The Wall Street Journal, Trump "seemed surprised by the scope" of responsibilities he would be taking on as President and his aides were not even aware that the President-elect would have to hire a full White House staff.

17 photos view gallery Donald Trump's road to the White House as President-elect

As a result, Obama, after the meeting, "realized the Republican needs more guidance," The Journal reported, citing people familiar with the matter, and would plan to "spend more time with his successor."

Representatives for Trump did not immediately respond to questions about the report.

RNC Chair Priebus Is Named Donald Trump's Chief Of Staff

Stephen Bannon to serve as chief strategist and senior counselor to the president

By Michael C. Bender

Wall Street Journal, November 13, 2016

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

Obama: Ready To 'Accelerate' Work With Donald Trump's Team For Smooth Transition

By Carol E. Lee

Wall Street Journal, November 14, 2016

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

Obama Takes Stock At First Post-Election News Conference

By Todd J. Gillman

Dallas Morning News, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON – Donald Trump's election ensures that key elements of Barack Obama's agenda will soon fall. On Monday afternoon, the president holds his first news conference since Election Day and his meeting two days later with the president-elect he'd called unfit and dangerous.

Trump will fill a Supreme Court seat vacant since mid-February, after Republicans refused to hold a confirmation vote on Obama's pick.

He has vowed to begin immediate deportations, targeting immigrants in the country illegally who also have criminal records. Trump says that could impact up to 3 million

people, though many immigration experts believe the number in this category is far lower.

That tracks Obama's enforcement priorities in some ways. But Trump has also vowed to scrap Obama's executive orders protecting 5 million or more immigrants, many of whom were brought into the country as children.

Trump also has vowed to repeal Obamacare, saying he'll replace it with a plan that will provide better coverage at lower cost to taxpayers. He said Sunday night on 60 Minutes that he'll keep certain central elements of Obamacare – requirements that keep children up to 26 on their parents' coverage, and the rule barring insurers from rejecting customers due to a pre-existing condition. Those are popular but costly elements that insurers swallowed only as part of a complex tangle of regulations that made the whole package work financially.

Obama heads later Monday to Athens before heading to Berlin and then Lima, Peru later in th e week for the final planned foreign trip of his presidency.

Earlier Monday, Obama spoke with Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto. The White House readout on their conversation made no mention of Trump, whose visit to meet with Peña Nieto stirred enormous backlash in Mexico two months ago, given his claim that Mexico sends "rapists and murders" across the border, and his insistence that Mexico will pay for a 2,000 border wall.

The White House said the presidents discussed progress they'd made "deepening economic relations, combatting organized crime, managing migration, and strengthening the rule of law to the benefit of the American and Mexican people." And they agreed that the "strong and mutually beneficial partnership" will endure – a potentially optimistic stance, given Trump's intentions.

Obama Urges Trump Not To Endanger Young 'Dreamer' Immigrants

By Lynn Sweet

Chicago Sun-Times, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama said Monday he urged President-elect Donald Trump not to revoke his executive order that gives protections to "Dreamers," immigrant youths in the U.S. illegally through no fault of their own.

At a press conference on Monday, Obama said he "will urge" Trump and his advisers to think "long and hard" before "endangering the status" of the youths, who for all "practical matters," are "American kids."

Trump, who campaigned as an immigration hard-liner, has said he wants to rescind all of Obama's executive orders. That would include Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, DACA, the executive order Obama issued in 2012 that allows "Dreamers" in the U.S. illegally to stay here.

Obama met with Trump last Thursday in the Oval Office to discuss the transition, the organizational challenges of running the federal government and Trump's road ahead.

Obama said he recommended that Trump, in the wake of the bitter campaign, "reach out" to minority groups and women.

Obama also said, "On the deferred action program that we have known as DACA that relates to DREAMers who are currently benefiting from these provisions, I will urge the president-elect and the incoming administration to think long and hard before they are endangering the status of what for all practical purposes are American kids.

"I mean, these are kids who were brought here by their parents. They did nothing wrong. They have gone to school. They have pledged allegiance to the flag. Some of them joined the military. They've enrolled in school. By definition, if they are part of this program, they are solid, wonderful young people of good character.

"And it is my strong belief that the majority of the American people would not want to see suddenly those kids have to start hiding again. And that's something that I will encourage the president-elect to look at."

Obama also signed the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents, DAPA, which covers the youths' parents.

At issue is whether Trump, even if he canceled Obama's executive order, would make deportation of this now-protected class of youths a priority.

The Fall Of The House Of Obama Is Coming, And It's His Own Fault

By Marc A. Thiessen

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

The safety-pin-wearing left is aghast at the realization that President Donald Trump could actually follow through on his promise to "cancel every unconstitutional executive action, memorandum and order issued by President Obama" on his first day in office. He should do it.

Every president reverses some executive actions of the previous president. After President Obama took office in 2009, he revoked a series of executive orders issued by President George W. Bush — including Bush's executive order barring federal funding for embryonic stem-cell research; his executive order implementing the Mexico City Policy, which bars funding for international groups that provide abortions; his executive order interpreting the Geneva Conventions with regard to the CIA's detention of captured terrorists; and several Bush executive orders limiting the power of labor unions in dealing with federal contractors, among many others. Obama also used executive orders to reverse Bush's terrorist interrogation policy and order the closure of the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay.

Obama's actions were not unprecedented. Bush not only reversed executive orders of his predecessor, Bill Clinton, but in 2002 he actually withdrew the U.S. from a treaty Clinton had signed — the Rome Statute creating the International Criminal Court.

The reason Obama's legacy is so vulnerable today is that the 44th president relied more on executive actions — issuing not only executive orders, but also a record number of rules, regulations and agency directives to legislate around Congress and impose his agenda.

After he lost control of the Senate in 2014, Obama announced at his first Cabinet meeting: "We're not just going to be waiting for legislation. . . . I've got a pen and I've got a phone. And I can use that pen to sign executive orders and take executive actions and administrative actions that move the ball forward." On immigration, when Obama could not pass his immigration reform to provide amnesty for entire categories of people not here legally, he tried to impose it on the American people though unlawful executive action — a move The Post's editorial board called a "massive unilateral act" that "flies in the face of congressional intent." When he could not pass his cap-and-trade bill, he used the Clean Air Act to impose it by executive action, twisting the meaning of the law in a manner that even the New York Times said was "stretching the intent of a law decades old and not written with climate change in mind." He took executive actions on everything from gun control and financial regulation to health care and transgender bathrooms.

Now Trump may use his pen and phone to reverse many of Obama's executive actions. And the lame-duck president can hardly complain. If you rule by executive fiat, then you should not be surprised if the next executive undoes your fiats.

Some of Obama's executive actions will be easy to repeal. Trump can, with the stroke of his pen, reverse Obama's orders to close Guantanamo Bay. He can also scrap the Paris Agreement on climate change that Obama signed in September, which is completely non-binding, by simply announcing that the United States will not fulfill its obligations. Obama's executive actions under Title IX denying due process to those accused of sexual assault and requiring schools to allow transgender students to bathrooms that do not match their biological gender are easily reversed. They were issued as guidance that do have any force of law at all, yet the Education Department is enforcing them as if they did — threatening universities with loss of funds if they don't comply. Repealing those won't take anything more than Trump's new education secretary simply saying, "Never mind."

Plus, Obama set a land speed record for major regulations — defined as regulations costing the economy $100 million or more — imposing more than 600 since taking office. Many of those will be difficult to do undo, because they were issued through notice and comment by the agencies. For instance, the Clean Power Plan from the Environmental Protection Agency, which Trump has promised to scrap, can't be undone with a stroke of the pen. The EPA would have to formally revoke it, which could itself lead to litigation. That's why it's so important for Trump to put good justices on the Supreme Court, so they can not only strike down illegal regulations but also set precedents that will be binding on future presidents as well.

If Trump really wants to shake up Washington, he should issue a single executive order on Day One repealing all of Obama's executive orders. Then, he could go back and decide which, if any, to reinstate.

It's not just Obama's executive actions that will soon be reversed. His signature legislative achievement, Obamacare, is headed for repeal — and he has no one to blame but himself. Obama passed his health-care reform without any Republican buy-in or any effort to reach bipartisan consensus. He controlled both houses of Congress, and so he imposed his will over the objection of every single Republican. Now that Republicans control both Congress and the White House, they have no incentive to preserve the law.

From legislation to executive action, the lesson is clear: The value of bipartisan compromise is not just about optics. If you build consensus, then your actions will last. But if you impose your agenda on an unwilling country, it is going to get repealed or reversed when the other party comes to power.

There is wisdom in the scriptural admonition to "be like a wise man who built his house on the rock" instead of the "foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

Obama built his legacy on the sand of unilateralism, instead of the rock of bipartisan consensus. And great will be the fall of it come Jan. 20, 2017.

Read more from Marc Thiessen's archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook.

Obama Says Democrats Must Rebuild Appeal Where Clinton Lost

By Justin Sink

Bloomberg Politics, November 14, 2016

President Barack Obama offered veiled criticism of the Democratic Party after losses in last week's elections, saying that it must rebuild its appeal across the country, particularly in Midwestern states that were overlooked and lost by Hillary Clinton's campaign.

Obama didn't mention Clinton's name in response to a question at a news conference on Monday about how Democrats should regroup after her loss to Republican Donald Trump. But he used his own experience in Iowa to describe how Democrats could have won.

"We have to compete everywhere. We have to show up everywhere. We have to compete on a grassroots level," Obama said. "I won Iowa not because the demographics predicted I would win Iowa," but because "I spent 87 days going to every small town, fair, fish fry and VFW hall."

Clinton lost Iowa and other key Midwestern states that Obama won at least once, including Wisconsin and Ohio, to Trump.

Obama said Trump "was able to tap into, yes, the anxieties, but also the enthusiasm of his voters in a way that was impressive, and I said so to him" in an Oval Office meeting on Thursday.

He added that Trump didn't strike him as ideological. "I think he's pragmatic," Obama said. "That can serve him well, as long as he has good people around him and has a clear sense of direction."Democratic Leadership

Clinton's loss to Trump leaves the Democratic Party without a leader upon Obama's exit and has set off a race to rebuild the party organization, starting with the chairmanship of the Democratic National Committee.

That contest has revealed fissures within the party over whether the center of power should rest with an anti-establishment, liberal wing led by Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, Clinton's primary rival, or with establishment Democrats with more centrist records such as Senator Charles Schumer of New York. He is in line to be Senate Democratic leader.

Possible candidates for the DNC post include Representative Keith Ellison of Minnesota, who is black and the first Muslim elected to Congress; Howard Dean, the former Vermont governor and presidential candidate who was chairman from 2005 to 2009; and Martin O'Malley, the former governor of Maryland who ran for president this year and finished a distant third in the Democratic primaries.

Ellison is backed by Sanders and Warren as well as Schumer and the outgoing Senate Democratic leader, Harry Reid of Nevada.

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Democratic Party Needs To Reflect, 'Show Up Everywhere'

NPR, November 14, 2016

President Obama gave his first press conference after his party suffered a shocking loss at the ballot box just last week, and appeared to needle Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton's campaign for not paying enough attention to rural voters that eventually handed President-elect Donald Trump the upset victory.

"When your team loses, everybody gets deflated, and it's hard, and it's challenging," Obama said. "I think it's a healthy thing for the Democratic Party to go through some reflection."

"We have to compete everywhere. We have to show up everywhere," the president said, noting that when he was campaigning he went to many rural places in a very white, blue-collar state like Iowa and ended up winning twice. Clinton lost the state by 10 points.

"I won Iowa not because the demographics dictated that I would win Iowa," Obama continued. "It was because I spent 87 days going to every small town."

But now the two-term Democratic president is tasked with overseeing a peaceful transfer of power to a man he repeatedly called unqualified to succeed him in the Oval Office.

"This office is bigger than any one person, and that's why ensuring a smooth transition is so important," the president said, taking questions before he departs on a week-long trip to Greece, Germany and Peru to meet with foreign leaders.

Throughout much of the press conference, it sounded like Obama was trying to reassure many worried Americans and leaders abroad about an incoming President Trump. He said that at their meeting last week, the president-elect said he would maintain the U.S.'s commitment to NATO — something the GOP nominee himself questioned on the campaign trail.

"This office has a way of waking you up. Campaigning is different from governing. I think he recognizes that," the president continued, echoing a theme he would return to many times.

"I don't think any president comes in saying to himself, 'I want to make people angry, or alienate half the country,'" Obama said, striking a hopeful tone and adding that he didn't believe Trump was "ideological. Ultimately he's pragmatic."

He was pressed by reporters on some of Trump's recent hires, notably former Breitbart News chairman Steve Bannon to be a senior adviser and chief strategist. Bannon and Breitbart have ties to the alt-right movement, which is associated with white nationalism.

Obama sidestepped a direct question on Bannon, instead simply saying, "It would not be appropriate for me to comment on every appointment the President-elect starts making."

But the president had words of caution for his unlikely successor, too. "Do I have concerns? Absolutely. He and I differ on a whole bunch of issues," Obama said, adding that there are "certain elements of his temperament that will not serve him well, unless he recognizes them and corrects."

Obama On Clinton's Loss: 'Good Ideas Don't Matter If People Don't Hear Them'

He has some suggestions for Democrats' ground game.

Huffington Post, November 14, 2016

President Barack Obama implicitly criticized Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign and the Democratic Party's tactics during a press conference on Monday, arguing that a national press strategy isn't enough to win an election in today's political climate.

In his first press conference since last week's election, Obama was asked what he thinks his party should do to rebuild after Clinton's loss to President-elect Donald Trump.

"I believe that we have better ideas," Obama said of the Democratic Party. "But I also believe that good ideas don't matter if people don't hear them."

Obama continued: "Given population distribution across the country, we have to compete everywhere. We have to show up everywhere."

Obama Knocks Clinton For Not Working As Hard As He Did

By Glenn Thrush And Nolan D. McCaskill

Politico, November 14, 2016

President Barack Obama didn't quite blame his ally Hillary Clinton for causing her stunning loss to Donald Trump last week — but he chided her for not focusing on reaching out to white, non-urban voters like he did in 2008 and 2012.

Obama — about to hand off the presidency to a man whom he declared temperamentally unfit to serve — pointedly declined to endorse Clinton's own explanation for her defeat, instead suggesting that the former secretary of state's failure to "show up everywhere," not just the big diverse cities she targeted in her final campaign push, proved to be her downfall.

Story Continued Below

"How we organize politically I think is something that we should spend some time thinking about. I believe that we have better ideas, but I also believe that good ideas don't matter if people don't hear them," Obama told reporters Monday ahead of a foreign trip to Greece, Germany and Peru. "And one of the issues the Democrats have to be clear on is, given population distribution across the country, we have to compete everywhere. We have to show up everywhere. We have to work at a grass-roots level, something that's been a running thread in my career."

Obama outperformed Clinton substantially in most suburbs and in critical swing areas in the Midwest, like Michigan's Oakland and Macomb counties.

Of the nearly 700 counties that twice sent Obama to the White House, a stunning one-third flipped to support Trump, who also won 194 of the 207 counties that voted for Obama either in 2008 or 2012.

During a candid and bittersweet post-election news conference in the White House, Obama signaled to Democrats a need to emphasize a 50-state strategy, citing his success in Iowa as an outline of an effective campaign.

"You know, I won Iowa not because the demographics dictated that I would win Iowa. It was because I spent 87 days going to every small town and fair and fish fry and VFW hall, and there were some counties where I might have lost, but maybe I lost by 20 points instead of 50 points," Obama said. "There are some counties maybe I won that people didn't expect because people had a chance to see you and listen to you and get a sense of who you stood for and who you were fighting for."

The Democratic Party, which is looking to name a new chairman early next year ahead of the 2018 midterms and 2020 presidential election, must try to replicate that, added Obama, who described the party's introspection as a "healthy thing" and advocated for "new voices and new ideas."

"The challenge for a national party is how do you dig in there and create those kinds of structures so that people have a sense of what it is that you stand for," Obama said, stressing the difficulty of doing so with just a national press strategy. "It's increasingly difficult to do because of the splintering of the press. And so I think the discussions that have been taking place about how do you build more grass-roots organizing, how do you build up state parties and local parties and school board elections you're paying attention to and state rep races and city council races, that all, I think, will contribute to stronger outcomes in the future. And I'm optimistic that will happen."

The president conveyed that optimism by recalling how Democrats rebounded from a dismal showing in 2004, when John Kerry lost his White House bid and Democratic Senate leader Tom Daschle lost reelection.

"Things change pretty rapidly, but they don't change inevitably," Obama said. "They change because you work for it. Nobody said democracy's supposed to be easy. It's hard. And in a big country like this, it probably should be hard."

In 2004, Obama and Colorado Sen. Ken Salazar "were the only two Democrats that won nationally," he continued. "Republicans controlled the Senate and the House. And two years later, Democrats were winning back Congress. And four years later, I was president of the United States."

Obama: Dems Need To Reflect On Election Loss

By Jordan Fabian

The Hill, November 14, 2016

President Obama on Monday encouraged Democrats to reflect on the reasons for their crushing loss to Donald Trump six days ago.

"I think it's a healthy thing for the Democratic Party to go through some reflection," Obama told reporters Monday afternoon, the first time he took questions from the press since Trump's victory stunned the political world.

Despite his self-professed desire not to be "big-footing that conversation," Obama decided to weigh in on the future of his shattered party, which now faces the daunting task of rebuilding.

Not only did Democrats fail to hold onto to the White House – they were unsuccessful in taking back control of the Senate or the House.

Obama said Democrats should not deviate from their "core set of values" around economic fairness, diversity and inclusiveness, but added, "how we organize politically is something we should spend some time thinking about."

He appeared to question Hillary Clinton's decision not to aggressively campaign in Rust Belt states such as Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, that have traditionally been Democratic strongholds.

"Good ideas don't matter if people don't hear them," Obama said. "We have to compete everywhere, we have to show up everywhere."

The president cited his own active campaigning in Iowa, a state he won twice but Clinton lost to Trump, es evidence.

He also sought to reassure Democrats fretting about the prospect of spending the next two years or four years in the political wilderness.

"Things change pretty rapidly, but they don't change inevitably," he said. "They change because you work for it. Nobody said democracy is supposed to be easy. It's hard."

Obama Says Trump 'Pragmatic,' Not 'Ideological,' Won't Revoke Obamacare, Iran Nuclear Deal

By Dave Boyer

Washington Times, November 14, 2016

President Obama predicted Monday that President-elect Donald Trump won't revoke many of Mr. Obama's top initiatives such as Obamacare and the Iranian nuclear deal, in part because Mr. Trump isn't "ideological."

The president said Mr. Trump will soon find out that governing is "the hard part," and he pleaded publicly with the president-elect not to follow through on a campaign promise to repeal an Obama program that has protected young illegal immigrants from deportation.

In a White House press conference, Mr. Obama also said opponents of Mr. Trump who have taken to the streets in protest over his election need to adjust to the "new reality" of the Republican taking over the White House.

"The people have spoken. Donald Trump will be the next president," Mr. Obama said. "Those who didn't vote for him have to recognize that's how democracy works, that's how the system operates."

The president said he has advised the president-elect to make public efforts to bring the country together after the hard-fought and often-bitter campaign against Democrat Hillary Clinton.

"I emphasized to him that in this hotly contested election, gestures matter," Mr. Obama said. "How he reaches out to groups that may not have supported him those are the kinds of things that can set a tone that will help move things forward."

The hourlong session with reporters was Mr. Obama's first extended comment on the election following his meeting in the Oval Office with Mr. Trump last week.

Several times during the news conference, Mr. Obama offered grudging admiration for the victory that Mr. Trump achieved last week. After predicting for more than a year that Mr. Trump couldn't win, the president called it "one of the biggest political upsets in history."

"What's clear is that he was able to tap into, yes, the anxieties, but also the enthusiasm of his voters in a way that was impressive," Mr. Obama said. "And I said so to him because I think that, to the extent that there were a lot of folks who missed the Trump phenomenon, I think that connection that he was able to make with his supporters, that was impervious to events that might have sunk another candidate. That's powerful stuff."

Later, in a conference call with Democratic grass-roots activists, Mr. Obama sympathized with their deep disappointment at Mrs. Clinton's loss.

"Your president feels your pain on this one," Mr. Obama told them. "And in some ways it feels worse because, for a lot of us, I think we didn't see it coming."

But Mr. Obama urged Democrats to stop moping, saying he would give them "a week and a half to get over it."

"The majority of the American people believe in a diverse, tolerant, optimistic, dynamic, inclusive vision," Mr. Obama said. "So don't suddenly veer off into isolation. You've got another few days to feel bad, and then we've got to get busy."

The president's public press conference came just before he departed Washington on his final foreign trip, and he also forecast that Mr. Trump won't alter significantly long-standing U.S. commitments and alliances overseas.

Mr. Obama revealed more details of his only meeting with Mr. Trump to date, saying the president-elect assured him of his desire to maintain "core strategic relationships" abroad, a message Mr. Obama said he will deliver to allies in Europe.

"One of the most important functions I can serve at this stage during this trip is to let them know that there is no weakening of resolve when it comes to America's commitment to maintaining a strong and robust NATO

relationship and a recognition that those alliances aren't just good for Europe," Mr. Obama said. "They are good for the United States, and they are vital for the world."

During the campaign Mr. Trump questioned whether he would continue the U.S. commitment to NATO members who didn't pay their fair share to the alliance, raising concerns, especially in Eastern Europe, which is confronting renewed Russian aggression.

Mr. Trump also promised voters that he would undo many of Mr. Obama's signature initiatives, from Obamacare to the Paris climate change agreement to reduce global carbon emissions to the nuclear deal with Tehran. On Monday Mr. Obama expressed the hopeful view that the president-elect won't wield a partisan ax against his biggest initiatives, many of which were implemented by executive action and could be undone the same way.

"He is coming to this office with fewer set hard-and-fast policy prescriptions than a lot of other presidents might be arriving with," Mr. Obama said. "I don't think he is ideological. I think, ultimately, he is pragmatic in that way. And that can serve him well as long as he has got good people around him and he has a clear sense of direction."

The president also predicted that Mr. Trump will back off some of his campaign promises because he'll find out that Mr. Obama's initiatives are working, and that unraveling them would be more difficult than the president-elect imagined.

"I think on a lot of issues what you're going to see is now comes the hard part. Now is governance," Mr. Obama said.

Addressing Mr. Trump's earlier pledge to repeal Obamacare, the president asked, "Now suddenly you are in charge and you are going to repeal it. OK, well, what happens to those 20 million people who have health insurance? Are you going to just kick them off and suddenly they don't have health insurance?"

Since his election, Mr. Trump has said he would consider keeping some parts of the health care law, such as coverage for pre-existing conditions and allowing children to stay on their parents' policy until age 26.

On the Iranian deal, which Mr. Trump wants to renegotiate, Mr. Obama warned that the issue is "a good example of the gap between some of the rhetoric in this town, not unique to the president elect, and the reality."

"To unravel a deal that's working and preventing Iran from pursuing a nuclear weapon would be hard to explain, particularly if the alternative were to have them free from any obligations and go ahead and pursue a weapon," the president said.

Mr. Obama also made a remarkable plea directed at Mr. Trump and his team to ditch his campaign pledge to kill Mr. Obama's deferred-deportation protections for nearly 750,000 young illegal immigrants. The children are known as "Dreamers."

"I will urge the president-elect and the incoming administration to think long and hard before they are endangering the status of what, for all practical purposes, are American kids," Mr. Obama said. "I mean, these are kids who were brought here by their parents. They did nothing wrong. They have gone to school. They have pledged allegiance to the flag. Some of them joined the military. They've enrolled in school. By definition, if they are part of this program, they are solid, wonderful young people of good character. And it is my strong belief that the majority of the American people would not want to see suddenly those kids have to start hiding again. And that's something that I will encourage the president-elect to look at."

Mr. Obama's overall message to the incoming president was that his administration has improved America over the past eight years, and that Mr. Trump shouldn't mess with success.

"We are going to be able to present to the incoming administration a country that is stronger," Mr. Obama said, noting years of job growth, and asserting that the government is working "more efficiently."

"I think the president-elect rightly would expect that he is judged on whether we improve from that baseline and on those metrics or [if] things get worse," Mr. Obama said. "And if things get worse, then the American people will figure that out pretty quick. And if things get better, then more power to him. And I will be the first to congratulate him."

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Why On Earth Is President Obama Smiling?

By Dana Milbank

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

Why is this man smiling?

President Obama's chosen successor suffered a devastating loss last week to a man who made a primary campaign issue of Obama's "disastrous" management of the country. The Democratic Party is in a shambles, outnumbered in state legislatures, governors' mansions, the House and the Senate. Conservative control of the Supreme Court seems likely for another generation. Obama's legacy is in tatters, as his trade policy, his foreign policy and his beloved Obamacare are set to be dismantled.

And yet when Obama entered the White House briefing room for a post-election news conference Monday afternoon, everything was, if not awesome, then pretty darned good. "We are indisputably in a stronger position today than we were when I came in eight years ago," he began. "Jobs have been growing for 73 straight months, incomes are rising, poverty is falling, the uninsured rate is at the lowest level on record, carbon emissions have come down without impinging on our growth…"

The happy talk kept coming:

"Unemployment rate is low as it has been in eight, nine years, incomes and wages have both gone up over the last year faster than they have in a decade or two… The financial systems are stable. The stock market is hovering around its all-time high and 401(k)s have been restored. The housing market has recovered… We are seeing significant progress in Iraq. .. Our alliances are in strong shape. ..And gas is two bucks a gallon."

It's all true enough. But Obama's post-election remarks seemed utterly at odds with the national mood. Half the country is exultant because Donald Trump has promised to undo everything Obama has done over the last year. The other half of the country is alarmed that a new age of bigotry and inwardness has seized the country. And here's the outgoing president, reciting what a fine job he has done.

This has been Obama's pattern. At times when passion is called for, he's cerebral and philosophical and taking the long view — so long that it frustrates those living in the present. A week after an election has left his supporters reeling, Obama's focus seemed to be squarely on his own legacy.

He didn't mention Hillary Clinton's name once in his news conference, and he went out of his way to praise Trump. On a day when the country was digesting the news that Trump has named as his top White House strategist Stephen K. Bannon, a man who has boasted of his ties to the racist "alt-right," Obama was generous to the "carnival barker" who led the campaign questioning his American birth.

Of the Bannon appointment, Obama said "it would not be appropriate for me to comment," and "those who didn't vote for him have to recognize that that's how democracy works."

Of Trump himself, Obama noted "his gifts that obviously allowed him to execute one of the biggest political upsets in history." He praised Trump as "gregarious" and "pragmatic," a man who favors "a vigorous debate" and was "impressive" during the campaign. "That connection that he was able to make with his supporters," Obama said, was "powerful stuff."

Obama's above-the-fray response to the election result may well be that of a man who believes his approach will be vindicated by history. It may well be, but that is of little comfort now. As Obama retires to a life of speaking fees and good works, he sounded less concerned about what will happen next than with what he had achieved — including a mention, for those who forgot, that he won the Iowa caucus in 2008.

He took a bow for his "smartest, hardest-working" staff, his "good decisions," the absence of "significant scandal" during his tenure. And he speculated that Trump would ultimately find it wise to leave intact the key achievements of his administration: Obamacare, the Iran nuclear deal, the Paris climate accord, trade and immigration.

The deep disenchantment among white, blue-collar voters that propelled Trump won only a passing mention. "Obviously there are people out there who are feeling deeply disaffected," the president said with his cool detachment.

In an election this close — Clinton, let's not forget, won the popular vote — any factor could have made the difference: being a candidate of the establishment in a time of change, resistance to a woman as president and backlash against the first black president, and James Comey's last-minute intervention in the election.

But millions of Americans are justifiably anxious about their economic well-being. And if Clinton and Obama had limited the build-on-success theme during the campaign in favor of a more populist vision and policies, they really would have something to smile about this week.

Twitter: @Milbank

Read more from Dana Milbank's archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook.

Obama Dares Trump To Do Better On Obamacare

By Dan Diamond

Politico, November 14, 2016

President Barack Obama said Monday that President-elect Donald Trump is "pragmatic" — and Republicans' plan to repeal and replace Obamacare will test that approach.

"Obviously, this has been the holy grail for Republicans: We gotta kill Obamacare," the president said at a post-election press conference.

"But now that Republicans are in charge, they gotta take a look" at how the law is saving the government money and benefiting millions of people — both the 20 million covered directly by the law and millions more who receive insurance through employers and are getting extra protections under the health law, whether they recognize it or not.

The president said that he'd applaud Republicans' repeal-and-replace efforts if they can improve the nation's health care system. "If they can come up with something better that actually works, a year or two after they've replaced the ACA with their own plan, and 25 million people have health insurance and it's cheaper and better and running smoothly, I'll be the first one to say that's great," he said. "Congratulations."

But Obama cautioned that Trump and Republicans must avoid rushing to repeal the law and potentially throwing the health care system into chaos and leaving people uncovered. If so, "we're going to have a problem," he said. "I think that's not going to be unique to me. I think the American people will respond that way."

The Trump ObamaCare Panic

The GOP shouldn't blow itself up over the meaning of 'repeal.'

Wall Street Journal, November 14, 2016

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Interest In Obamacare Coverage Surges With Arrival Of Trump Era

By Erin Mershon

Roll Call, November 14, 2016

Insurance agents are facing an uptick in calls from people nervous about losing their health care coverage under a Trump administration, industry officials said Monday.

"With the election, people are hearing about this repeal and they want to know: 'Does this mean it's all going away and we're going to lose everything?'" said Scott Leavitt, an agent in Boise, Idaho. "People are uncertain about what's going to happen because of the election. The point is we don't know."

The day after the election, traffic on the federal Healthcare.gov website spiked, with about 100,000 people signing up for coverage under President Barack Obama's signature health care law. The Department of Health and Human Services plans to release additional enrollment statistics this week, said administration officials.

The open enrollment period started Nov. 1 and is supposed to run through Jan. 31 for 2017 coverage. HHS Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell projected that as many as 13.8 million people would sign up or renew during this year's open enrollment period, up from 12.7 million sign ups and renewals during the previous period.

Leavitt, who says he is a distant relative of former Bush administration HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt, said that customers had been primarily concerned before the election about problems with marketplace plans. Premiums for benchmark silver-level plans are going up on average by 25 percent for coverage next year under the 2010 health care law. More than one-third of counties across the nation were expected to have a single insurer's plans to choose from. Obama administration officials emphasized that subsidies go up as premiums rise and that 77 percent of consumers would still be able to buy coverage for $100 per month or less. But customers who were clearly concerned about diminishing coverage and rising costs were contacting agents for guidance in navigating the difficult terrain.

Now the conversation is shifting.

"In almost every conversation, the question comes up: 'So is this all going to be gone at the end of the year?'" Leavitt said. "It's on the minds of almost everyone. 'What does the future hold now?'"

Insurance company officials, hospitals and other industries that benefit from the health care law's coverage also are concerned. If Republicans do not create alternative coverage to replace the subsidies and mandates that are pillars of the health law, about 22 million people could lose coverage, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

President-elect Donald Trump said in a Sunday interview on CBS' "60 Minutes" that Republicans would "simultaneously" repeal the health law and replace it with a health plan.

"We're not going to have a two-year period where there's nothing," said Trump. "It will be repealed and replaced. And we'll know. And it'll be great health care for much less money."

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., told reporters Monday that the party would do as much as possible to provide a smooth transition.

"This is a top priority and we'll figure out the best structure to be able to make it past the House, the Senate and signed into law in the timing that gives less disruption to the individual, but gives them more choice, gives them lower cost and more options," the California Republican told reporters Monday.

The reconciliation bill that Republicans cleared earlier this year, which Obama vetoed, would have eliminated marketplace subsidies as of Dec. 31, 2017, providing almost two years for insurers and consumers to adjust. However, that timeframe is ambitious, given that Republicans do not yet agree on a consensus replacement bill, congressional debate likely will take months and regulations will need to be written.

Rebecca Adams and Joe Williams contributed to this story.Get breaking news alerts and more from Roll Call on your iPhone or your Android.

Medicare, Medicaid Drug Prices Soar But Reform Less Certain

By Jayne O'Donnell

USA Today, November 14, 2016

Medicaid spending on the 20 drugs with biggest cost increases more than doubled last year, according to federal data released Monday that showed the impact of drug price hikes on government health care programs.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) reported costs from these drugs alone went from $146 million in 2014 to $486 million in 2015 for Medicaid. The price hikes ranged from 140% to nearly 500% during the period.

CMS released its updated drug pricing data "dashboard" for Medicare and Medicaid spending for the first time this year.

The top two Medicare Part D drugs based on spending were also in the top five drugs for Medicaid: The Hepatitis C drug Harvoni and diabetes management treatment and insulin pen, Lantus. Each were associated with more than $1 billion in Medicaid spending.

"Because Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries often live on low- and fixed-incomes, the high and rising cost of

certain drugs takes a significant toll on them.," said Andy Slavitt, CMS' acting administrator in a blog post. "And prescription drug costs don't only hit American seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income families; they also have a significant impact on taxpayers. "

While the fate of the Affordable Care Act is unclear with Donald Trump's election as President, there is bipartisan and broad public support for drug price reform. During the campaign, Trump and former secretary of State Hillary Clinton both expressed support for giving the Medicare program the ability to negotiate prices with drug makers.

More than 73 million are covered by the Medicaid program, which spent about $57 billion on prescription drugs last year. Medicaid's costs are shared by states and the federal government, while the federal government picks up at least half of the cost in every state. The amount each state gets varies based on a formula that considers how much it spends on covered medical services and the average per capita income for each state compared to the national average.

The increases may represent smaller dollar amounts, but there have also been big price increases for generic drugs. Nine of the 20 drugs with the biggest increases for Medicaid were generic drugs. The generic chemotherapy drug Mitomycin, which treats stomach, pancreatic, and other cancers, had an average unit cost increase of 163% for Medicare Part B between 2014 and 2015.

EpiPen's much-publicized price increases did not land the epinephrine auto injectors for allergic reaction in the top 20 increases or spending, but CMS data show that Medicare and Medicaid spending on EpiPens rose by more than 500% from 2011 to 2015.

Other findings:

• The anti-anxiety drug Ativan had an average unit cost increase of 1,264% between 2014 and 2015 in Medicaid. Five other drugs that had unit cost increases of more than 300%.

• The brand name drug Glumetza that manages high blood sugar had an average unit cost increase of 381% between 2014 and 2015. Three other drugs that had increases of more than 200 percent.

•Manufacturer rebates were included for the first time. More than $16 billion in rebates for brand name drugs were collected by Medicare Part D plans in 2014 for an average rebate of 17.5%. The Health and Human Serivces' Office of Inspector General has reported Medicare Part D rebates are generally lower compared to other insurers and employers.

Tell us your healthcare stories at healthinsurance@usatoday.com

Paul Ryan Is Determined To Gut Medicare. This Time He Might Succeed

By Michael Hiltzik, Contact Reporter

Los Angeles Times, November 14, 2016

Bursting with the policy-making power that control of both houses of Congress and the White House gives Republicans, House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) has lost no time in teeing up a favorite goal: gutting Medicare.

In an interview with Fox News Channel last Thursday, Ryan said: "Obamacare rewrote Medicare … so if you're going to repeal and replace Obamacare, you have to address those issues as well. … What people don't realize is that Medicare is going broke, that Medicare is going to have price controls. … So you have to deal with those issues if you're going to repeal and replace Obamacare. Medicare has got some serious problems because of Obamacare. Those things are part of our plan to replace Obamacare."

There's no secret about what specifically Ryan has in mind. He intends to replace traditional Medicare, an efficient program offering guaranteed treatment and featuring rock-bottom administrative costs, with a privatized program. Seniors would get a federal voucher to help them pay premiums charged by commercial insurance plans. Ryan calls this system "premium support."

But since the value of the vouchers would rise at less than the rate of healthcare inflation, and the costs of private insurance typically rise faster than those of Medicare, an ever-larger share of healthcare costs would land on seniors' shoulders. In 2011, when Ryan first proposed this change, the Kaiser Family Foundation calculated that by 2022 healthcare spending would consume roughly half of the typical 65-year-old's Social Security check, compared to only 22% under the existing Medicare system.

Ryan's plan would do nothing to rein in healthcare costs, but would likely increase them, in part because Medicare beneficiaries would be saddled with paying not only for their care, but for the shareholder dividends and executive pay of private insurance companies. The savings Ryan touts would be illusory: they would merely be shifted from government to seniors.

Ryan has surrounded his Medicare proposal with a bodyguard of lies. In his Fox News appearance, he said Medicare is "going broke" and ascribed its problems to the Affordable Care Act. Neither is true.

Medicare faces fiscal problems, but it's not going broke, and according to both the Medicare trustees and the Congressional Budget Office, the Affordable Care Act has in fact alleviated those problems rather than caused them. The trustees reported in 2010 that passage of Obamacare had postponed the projected exhaustion date of the Medicare trust fund by 12 years—to 2029 from 2017. Projections of Medicare spending growth have consistently come down, year after year, at least in part due to changes in the program imposed through Obamacare.

The program's fiscal situation would be "substantially improved," the trustees said, because the ACA instituted new cost controls and provided new tax revenues for the program. Both those features would disappear if the GOP repeals the ACA, as is its intention.

Also at risk as a result of repeal would be an ACA provision closing the Medicare prescription drug "donut hole," which exposes seniors to a sudden jump in out-of-pocket drug expenses once they've exceeded a certain level of benefits. The ACA would close the donut hole by 2020; Ryan is silent on whether, or how, his proposal would manage that hit.

In his Fox News interview, Ryan also took aim at the Independent Payment Advisory Board, or IPAB. This body, created by the ACA, is empowered to recommend changes in Medicare reimbursement rates for doctors and hospitals if the program's projected growth exceeds a target rate. IPAB hasn't actually been created yet, but that's not much of a problem because the Medicare growth rate has been well within bounds.

IPAB has been a major target of conservative ACA critics from the start, for reasons that have never been very clear. The board has no authority to recommend changes in benefits, enrollee costs, or anything other than what doctors and hospitals get paid. Ryan wrung his hands on Fox about this board's ability to impose "price controls on Medicare," but he forgot to mention that it's empowered to step in only once all other efforts to control costs have failed.

The ACA includes all sorts of cost-control provisions aimed at how physicians bill patients and how hospitals manage their treatments, some of which already have yielded evident improvements in how American healthcare is delivered. Ryan's Medicare plan offers no alternatives to these ideas, other than airy promises to "strengthen...health and retirement security" for seniors and to "foster a more patient-centered system," a GOP shibboleth with no discernible meaning.

Ryan's lies and misdirections have been abetted by ill-informed and supine press coverage. In 2011, for instance, the fact-checking outfit Politifact labeled as "the lie of the year" the accusation that Ryan and his fellow Republicans had "voted to end Medicare."

This was a remarkably ignorant finding, contradicted by Politifact's own description of the Republican plan. Politifact acknowledged that for anyone then younger than 55, the vote "dramatically changed the program...by privatizing it and providing government subsidies." It takes a surfeit of obtuseness not to notice that privatizing a government program is tantamount to killing it, and bifurcating it into separate pools of young workers and people 55 and older is a formula for fiscal chaos and, eventually, annihilation. It takes a surfeit of obtuseness not to understand how a voucher program works to increase costs on beneficiaries.

Ryan's assault on Medicare, like other policies likely to be advanced by Republicans in the next few years, will place a premium on informed journalism, as well as concentrated organizing by defenders of programs that have been working very well for Americans and that need improvement, not evisceration. Medicare advocates beat down Ryan's initial sally against the program in 2011, but they need to remain vigilant. And unlike Politifact, reporters and editors covering these programs will need to know what they're talking about. The challenge is on.

Obama Warns Against Pulling U.S. Out Of Trade Deals

By Megan Cassella

Politico, November 14, 2016

President Barack Obama strongly rejected the idea that the United States can and should pull out of free trade deals in order to protect domestic workers.

The president's comments are a direct contrast to President-elect Donald Trump's pledges to renegotiate or withdraw from a number of trade agreements and initiatives.

Speaking Monday at his first news conference since Trump's election, Obama said the greater concern among Americans is not with trade itself but with the need for strong and fair rules.

"When you're governing, it will become increasingly apparent that if you were to just eliminate trade deals with Mexico, for example, you've got a global supply chain," he said. The reason some automobile plants that were about to shut down are able to remain open and continue employing workers, he said, is "because they're bringing in some of those parts to assemble out of Mexico."

"So it's not as simple as it might have seemed," he said.

The comment was a response to Trump's pledge to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement, forged between the U.S., Canada and Mexico. His transition team has said it might pull out of the deal within 200 days of taking office unless certain demands are met, according to an internal transition team document shared last week with POLITICO.

The key to comforting workers, Obama said, is not to shut off all trade but instead to say to workers: "Your concerns are real, your anxieties are real, here's how we fix it."

Obama acknowledged that his administration had been unsuccessful in trying to argue that the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a massive 12-nation trade deal that Trump has threatened to drop out of, would address those concerns through certain provisions to raise labor and environmental standards. "But that's a complex argument to make when people remember plants closing, jobs being off-shored," he said.

Instead, he said, "offering prescriptions that are actually going to help folks in communities that feel forgotten — that's going to be our most important strategy."

He listed raising the minimum wage and offering workers stronger protections among steps that should be taken.

"And I think we can successfully do that," he continued. "It continues to be my strong belief that the way we are going to make sure that everybody feels a part of this global economy is not by shutting ourselves off from each other even if we could, but rather by working together more effectively than we have in the past."

Donald Trump May Find NAFTA Hard To Exit Or Renegotiate

By Kevin G. Hall

McClatchy, November 14, 2016

Twenty-three years ago, the United States, Canada and Mexico all said, "I do." If President-elect Donald Trump keeps his campaign threats to "terminate" the North American Free Trade Agreement, divorcing Mexico and Canada could be both messy and costly.

NAFTA, a trade treaty enacted with congressional legislation, was designed to integrate the three economies and their 530 million consumers into a powerful trading bloc. It offers excruciating detail on how the three countries bind their economies together, but virtually nothing on how to unwind it.

The treaty has a provision allowing any partner to leave after six month's notice, but that's it. The actual legislation only directs the president to get rid of tariffs, the taxes imposed on goods that cross borders.

"It's not clear to me that it gives the president the authority" to undo the treaty, said Matthew Kronby, a trade attorney in Toronto, who during NAFTA's passage represented the Canadian Embassy on legislative issues before the U.S. Congress.

The U.S. Constitution expressly gives Congress the power to regulate foreign commerce. It's unclear if Republicans who control both the House of Representatives and Senate would go along with a NAFTA exit. Free trade has been a central GOP value for decades, and the United States did more than $1 trillion in business with the two countries last year, almost evenly split between the two and each just a fraction behind U.S.-China trade.

Congress passed the NAFTA legislation in 1993 after the treaty was negotiated in 1992 by Republican President George H.W. Bush. It passed Congress 61-38, mostly with Republicans votes, including Mitch McConnell of Kentucky and Pat Roberts of Kansas. Senate passage came with the help from moderate Democrats, including Washington's junior senator Maria Cantwell and Dick Durbin of Illinois

Trump has called the NAFTA the worst trade-deal ever, citing the loss of manufacturing jobs to Mexico. It's a charge experts dispute, with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce insisting that NAFTA has created far more new jobs than the factory jobs lost.

It is one of those 'be careful what you wish for' things … will you be able to sew it back together again?

Laura Dawson, director of the Canada Institute at the Wilson Center

How this plays out matters not just for border states like Texas and California, but also for places such as North Carolina, which exports large volumes of chemicals to Mexico. It matters for farmers in Kansas and across the Midwest, for whom Mexico is the second-largest export market after Japan. Former trade negotiators expect that Mexico would retaliate against U.S. products if Trump attached high taxes to Mexican goods.

Trade today also looks different than it did in the mid-1990s.

"This no longer is Westinghouse building refrigerators on the Mexican side of the border. These are the next-generation turbines of the (Boeing) Dreamliners," said Arturo Sarukhan, Mexico's ambassador to Washington from 2007 to 2013, noting products such as turbines cross the border back-and-forth numerous times during manufacture by General Electric and its suppliers.

The private-sector in all three countries invested billions of dollars on technology to integrate their operations on warehouses at the San Diego border, at distribution centers in cities like Dallas-Fort Worth and on railroads and tracks to carry grains from Middle America to Mexico and move auto parts and vehicles across the United States.

Trump has complained mostly about job losses to Mexico, so he could seek to divorce just the southern neighbor, leaving intact the Canada portion of the NAFTA.

"He could send a letter to Mexico and not send anything to Canada," said Gary Hufbauer, a noted NAFTA expert and veteran researcher at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

But given how much has been invested, an exit could evoke a legal challenge from U.S. companies, Hufbauer and other experts warned.

And whether he scraps all or part of it, there's still the prospect of a constitutional challenge from Congress.

"It is very unclear whether a president on his own can eliminate NAFTA. I don't think there is a definitive answer," said Sarukhan.

If Trump chooses divorce from both trading partners, a pre-existing U.S-Canada Trade Agreement would take effect. It was signed in 1988, and then was superseded by NAFTA.

"The Canadians are protected by this underlying U.S.-Canada agreement," Hufbauer said, adding that roughly 90

percent of two-way trade would fall under that older agreement.

There is still another possibility: The same two-page chapter of NAFTA that has a single paragraph allowing exit has another paragraph allowing for it to be amended. Trump could simply tell Mexico and Canada he wants to reopen the deal.

That too would be risky.

"Canada has been pushing to update the NAFTA for years, and Mexico has as well. There has been resistance in the U.S.," said Laura Dawson, director of the Canada Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, an independent research organization. "It is like a balloon. If you prick any part of it, it could all blow up."

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said last Thursday he's "more than happy to talk" about a renegotiation of NAFTA. Canada would like to undo Buy America provisions in U.S. government purchasing and renegotiate dispute-resolution mechanisms that seem to have favored the United States.

"Once you open a treaty for amendment to deal with one party's concerns, you also have to consider the other parties' concerns," said Kronby, a partner in the trade law firm Bennett Jones. "We're in uncharted territory here."

Obama Blames Congress For Not Closing Guantanamo

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – President Barack Obama says that he's been unable to close the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, because of "congressional restrictions."

In a news conference Monday ahead of his final overseas trip as president, Obama said he still would prefer to have Guantanamo inmates transferred to a facility under U.S. jurisdiction, saying, "we'd do it a lot cheaper. And just as safely."

He hailed efforts to bring down the number of inmates, but with regard to transferring those inmates, he said, "Congress disagrees with me, and I gather the president-elect does as well."

President-elect Donald Trump has said it would be "fine" to try Americans suspected of terrorism at Guantanamo Bay, if possible, and has raised concern about decreasing the number of inmates.

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Veterans Continue To Get Jobs In The Federal Government

By Lisa Rein

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

The Obama administration last year continued its seven-year-old commitment to bringing veterans into the federal government, with former service members making up 44 percent of all full-time hires.

The largest share of veterans joined the Air Force, where they made up 62.1 percent of new employees in nonseasonal, permanent full-time jobs in fiscal 2015, according to federal data released late last week.

Veterans also were well-represented at other agencies, from the Transportation Department (55 percent) to the Social Security Administration (39.3 percent). They made up 46.4 percent of new hires at the State Department and 39.2 percent at the Labor Department.

Overall, including seasonal and full-time jobs, just under a third of new hires into federal agencies were veterans in fiscal 2015, data from the Office of Personnel Management show.

There was good news for disabled veterans, who represented 43 percent of veteran hires and more than 7 percent of total new employees. Federal employment data show that one in four disabled veterans who are employed work for the federal government.

Since Obama pledged in 2009 to give veterans — particularly those who fought in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan — an advantage in the long federal hiring queue, the share of full-time, permanent jobs going to them has hovered around 45 percent.

The government brought on more veterans in fiscal 2015 than 2014. But since hiring and turnover affect the overall number of veterans in the workforce, their share dropped slightly, to 43.7 percent from 47.4 percent.

The picture for veteran hiring into government could change under President-elect Donald Trump. He won the support of a majority of former service members in last week's election. But he also has pledged to shrink the size of government, a shift that would affect veterans and nonveterans alike.

Some bad news for the government: Once veterans get in, they don't stay as long as nonveterans, the data show, even if they've transferred from another federal agency.

The growing presence in government of men and women with military backgrounds has been the most visible federal effort to reward military service since the draft ended in the 1970s.

The effort has fueled culture clashes in some federal offices, though, and resentment from job candidates who did not serve and see their prospects for getting hired diminish. For some federal offices, finding the right fit for veterans who have different jobs skills than their colleagues has been a challenge.

In response to concerns from Pentagon officials, Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) pushed a plan through the Senate this fall that would

have knocked out a key advantage for veterans applying for federal jobs.

The change, in a military policy bill, would have taken away a veteran's right to go to the head of the federal hiring queue not once but twice, because veterans get preference over civilian applicants not just when they apply for their first positions but also when they move between agencies or seek promotions.

Pentagon officials had told McCain and other lawmakers that they were unable to hire qualified candidates for some jobs because of the pressure to hire veterans. But McCain abandoned the proposal shortly before last week's election under pressure from the veterans lobby.

Some agencies brought in fewer veterans to full-time positions than others, with the Environmental Protection Agency at 21.3 percent; the Education Department 15.1 percent and the Department of Health and Human Services 13.2 percent.

Steve Bannon Will Lead Trump's White House

By Pankaj Mishra

The New Yorker, November 14, 2016

"I'm a Leninist," Steve Bannon told a writer for The Daily Beast, in early 2014. "Lenin wanted to destroy the state, and that's my goal, too. I want to bring everything crashing down, and destroy all of today's establishment."

At the time, Bannon was the executive chairman of Breitbart News, the far-right news site. When he became the C.E.O. of Donald Trump's campaign, in August, he told the writer that he had no recollection of the conversation. On Sunday, Trump, in his first personnel decisions as President-elect, named Bannon as his chief strategist and senior counselor and Reince Priebus, the Republican National Committee Chairman, his chief of staff.

The press release from the Trump transition staff said that Bannon and Priebus would be "equal partners." This is a signal to Washington that Bannon will be the most powerful person in Trump's White House. On November 6, 2008, the day after his election, Barack Obama made just one personnel announcement: that Congressman Rahm Emanuel would be his chief of staff. Every staff member in the Obama White House reported to Emanuel, including political advisers such as David Axelrod. Even in the George W. Bush White House, which at first had a weak chief of staff, Andy Card, and a powerful political adviser, Karl Rove, everyone, including Rove, formally reported to Card.

Trump has indicated that, in his White House, Bannon will be first among equals.

Before the announcement, there was speculation that Bannon and Priebus were competing for the job of chief of staff, which, as Axelrod noted yesterday, "has inherent authorities that advisers do not." But with those authorities come responsibilities that can limit the person in the role. Walter Mondale, the second Vice-President to have an office in the West Wing, advised his successors to avoid taking on managerial responsibilities (such as Al Gore's National Partnership for Reinventing Government). The key to influence in any White House is simply to establish oneself as the President's most important adviser. This seems to be the role that Bannon has created for himself.

Bannon, who is sixty-two, has spent his relatively short political career incubating the nationalist right that roared to life in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis and gathered strength through the Obama years. He grew up in Virginia, served in the Navy, went to Harvard Business School, and spent years as a mergers-and-acquisitions dealmaker for Goldman Sachs. In 2008, he became fascinated by Sarah Palin, the Republican Vice-Presidential candidate, and the crowds she attracted. He spent the next eight years making hagiographic films about Palin and other right-wing political figures, and transforming Breitbart, which he took over after the death of its founder, Andrew Breitbart, in 2012, into a center for the insurgent populist movement.

As Kurt Bardella, the former spokesman for Breitbart, told me earlier this year, when I was researching a piece on Bannon, "When Sarah Palin was on the rise, he had found a way to become a part of that circle. When the Tea Party was on the rise, he seemed to be right there in that circle. When it was going to be Ted Cruz, he was there. When it was going to be Ben Carson for a hot second, he was there. He's been someone who's been in pursuit of that pipeline to power for a long time now."

The turning point for Bannon, Breitbart, and the movement that would eventually coalesce around Trump was the 2013 debate over immigration reform. After Mitt Romney lost to Barack Obama, in 2012, the Republican leadership, encouraged by the business wing of the G.O.P. and the Party's consultant class, made comprehensive immigration reform a legislative priority. Fox News became sympathetic to the effort and Priebus, then the chairman of the R.N.C., issued a report declaring that passing immigration reform was necessary for the survival of the Party.

This was the opening that Bannon had been looking for. He despised Fox News and Rupert Murdoch, whom he believes is a "globalist," and he saw Priebus and the Republican leaders in Congress, such as Paul Ryan and Eric Cantor, as "enemies." Breitbart became the hub of resistance to the immigration-reform effort, developing strong ties to Alabama Senator Jeff Sessions, who was leading the opposition in the Senate. More ominously, it started cultivating a little-noticed movement of disenchanted conservatives who argued that the right should promote a restoration of white culture.

Under Bannon, Breitbart, which was read by Republicans across the political spectrum, allowed this so-called alt-right movement to enter the mainstream

conservative conversation. The site published a tag on "black crime." Bannon sent reporters to the Mexican border to cover immigration from the perspective of American citizens who felt victimized by undocumented immigrants. Breitbart writers used traditional tropes of anti-Semitism, attacking international bankers and globalists. "We're the platform for the alt-right," Bannon told Sarah Posner, of Mother Jones, in July, weeks before he became the chairman of Trump's campaign.

Breitbart boosted any political outsider who threatened Republican leaders. In 2013, it cheered Ted Cruz when he helped shut down the government. In 2014, it promoted David Brat, who defeated House Majority Leader Eric Cantor in a primary by attacking his Wall Street ties and alleged sympathy for amnesty. It helped instigate the rebellion against Speaker John Boehner, who resigned from Congress in 2015. Bannon tried to entice Sessions into a race for the White House, but he declined.

During the Republican primaries, Breitbart savaged Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio. By the fall of 2015, the site had become a Trump propaganda machine: "Trumpbart News" to its critics. In March, when Corey Lewandowski, Trump's campaign manager, grabbed Michelle Fields, a Breitbart reporter at the time, when she tried to ask Trump a question, Bannon sided with the Trump campaign, which denied that the incident even occurred. Bannon formally joined the Trump campaign as C.E.O. in August, when Paul Manafort, the former chairman, became mired in a scandal involving financial ties to a pro-Russian party in Ukraine.

During the campaign, Bannon kept an article from Politico over his desk that included some gloating by Clinton staffers about the landslide win that they expected. He believed that Clinton was weaker with Hispanics, African-Americans, and white millennials than Obama was in 2012. And he believed that, with a surge of white working-class support, Trump could win Wisconsin and Michigan, which had voted Democratic since the nineteen-eighties. He was right about all of this.

Bannon injected Trump's speeches with language about global élites and bankers. Clinton "meets in secret with international banks to plot the destruction of U.S. sovereignty," Trump said in an October speech that was so disturbing in its coded anti-Semitism that the Anti-Defamation League spoke out against it. Trump's final TV ad of the campaign combined excerpts from the speech, decrying "those who control the levers of power in Washington," with images of George Soros, Janet Yellen, and Lloyd Blankfein, all of whom are Jewish. "This needs to stop," Jonathan Greenblatt, the head of the A.D.L., said in a statement.

When Bannon has been asked about these racist and anti-Semitic appeals, he has insisted, implausibly, that he favors nationalism, not white nationalism. "If you look at the identity movements over there in Europe, I think a lot of [them] are really 'Polish identity' or 'German identity,' not racial identity," he told Posner. "It's more identity toward a nation-state or their people as a nation." Bannon sees those European movements as allies, and has cultivated ties with far-right parties in the U.K., France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Italy. The first foreign political leader who President-elect Trump met with was Nigel Farage, a friend of Bannon who attended the Republican National Convention and campaigned with Trump in Mississippi, in July. Marine Le Pen, the leader of France's far-right National Front, who is running for President, has already cited Trump's victory as a harbinger of her own. Her niece, Marion Maréchal-Le Pen, a member of the French parliament, tweeted, "I answer yes to the invitation of Stephen Bannon, CEO of @realDonaldTrump presidential campaign, to work together."

The elevation of Bannon to a powerful position in the White House is an epochal event in American politics, one that has been condemned by the N.A.A.C.P., the A.D.L., and many Democratic leaders, including Harry Reid, whose spokesman said in a statement, "President-elect Trump's choice of Steve Bannon as his top aide signals that White Supremacists will be represented at the highest levels in Trump's White House." The Republican consultant John Weaver, who advises Ohio Governor John Kasich, tweeted, "Just to be clear news media, the next president named a racist, anti-semite as the co-equal of the chief of staff." Weaver also wrote, "The racist, fascist extreme right is represented footsteps from the Oval Office. Be very vigilant America." William Kristol, the editor of the conservative Weekly Standard, asked on Twitter, "Is there precedent for such a disreputable & unstable extremist in [White House] senior ranks before Bannon?"

Many observers have rightly focussed on Bannon's interest in smashing the establishment. How will Bannon continue his crusade to defeat Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell and Priebus when he now needs them to pass Trump's agenda? Despite Bannon's hatred for Priebus, they worked closely together to elect Trump. Bannon believed it was an alliance of convenience, similar to Stalin and Churchill working together to defeat Hitler. I doubt Bannon will be as focussed on knocking off Republican leaders as he was when he was throwing rocks from the sidelines. You don't actually have to destroy the establishment if you can force it to bend to your will.

Stephen K Bannon's White House Position Leads To Backlash

By Maya Rhodan

TIME, November 14, 2016

President-elect Donald Trump has tapped Stephen K. Bannon, the controversial executive chairman of Breitbart News, to serve as his chief strategist and senior advisor in

the White House but the appointment has already sparked a fierce reaction from anti-discrimination groups.

Bannon and his website have been linked to the alt-right, an extreme sect of conservatism that's comprised largely of white nationalists, and to many his inclusion is a nod to the extreme stances many Trump supporters touted throughout the campaign.

The former Hollywood producer and managing director at Goldman Sachs was initially believed to be Trump's pick for chief of staff, but that position instead went to chairman of the Republican National Committee Reince Priebus. In response to the Bannon staffing announcement from Trump, several issued statements denouncing his choice.

The Anti-Defamation League, a Jewish advocacy group, said it strongly opposes Bannon. "It's a sad day when a man who presided over the premier website of the 'alt-right'—a loose-knit group of white nationalists and unabashed anti-Semites and racists—is slated to be a senior staff member in the 'people's house," a statement from ADL reads. In a tweet, the Southern Poverty Law Center, which monitors hate crime activity in the U.S, said Bannon was the "main driver behind Breitbart becoming a white ethno-nationalist propaganda mill"

Political consultant and strategist for Ohio Gov. John Kasich's run for the White House issued a rebuke of Bannon on Twitter urging Americans to be "very vigilant."

Democratic Congress members also weighed in. A spokesperson for Democratic Senator Harry Reid denounced the selection of Bannon in statement that reads, "It is easy to see why the KKK views Trump as their champion when Trump appoints one of the foremost peddlers of white supremacist themes and rhetoric as his top aide," said Reid's spokesperson Adam Jentleson, according to Politico. On Twitter, California Democrat Adam Schiff called the selection of Bannon unsurprising, but "alarming."

Bannon has previously denied making anti-Semitic remarks, though he not yet commented publicly on the backlash to his White House appointment.

Trump Chooses Bannon As Chief Strategist, Angering Jewish Groups And Irking Some Republicans

By Lesley Clark

McClatchy, November 14, 2016

President-elect Donald Trump's selection of conservative provocateur Steve Bannon is creating complications for the Republican House leaders his website site has long eviscerated and is sparking fury among Jewish groups who charge that the new chief White House strategist incites hate groups.

Trump on Sunday afternoon named Bannon – the controversial conservative firebrand executive editor of the Breitbart website and CEO of Trump's presidential campaign – as chief strategist and counselor to the president.

The reaction was fast and furious, with some Jewish groups calling on Trump to let Bannon go.

"It is a sad day when a man who presided over the premier website of the 'alt-right' – a loose-knit group of white nationalists and unabashed anti-Semites and racists – is slated to be a senior staff member in the 'people's house,'" said Jonathan Greenblatt, chief executive officer of the Anti-Defamation League.

It also complicated matters for the House Republicans who have been a constant target of Breitbart, the right-leaning website that the Southern Poverty Law Center says has become a favorite with white nationalists and the alt-right.

In May, Breitbart ran a story referring to The Weekly Standard editor Bill Kristol as a "renegade Jew." And a September Breitbart column about Washington Post columnist Anne Applebaum suggested that "hell hath no fury like a Polish, Jewish, American elitist scorned."

In a July interview with Mother Jones, Bannon described Breitbart as a "platform for the alt-right." Also in the interview, he stated, "Look, are there some people that are white nationalists that are attracted to some of the philosophies of the alt-right? Maybe. Are there some people that are anti-Semitic that are attracted? Maybe."

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy defended Trump's right to make his choice at a sometimes testy news conference on Monday, as a reporter read McCarthy headlines from Breitbart, as well as a story about Bannon's ex-wife saying in a sworn 2007 statement during divorce proceedings that he made anti-Semitic remarks when selecting schools for their twin daughters. A spokeswoman for Bannon in August denied that he made the remarks.

"I've always believed in giving somebody a chance," McCarthy said of Bannon. "I don't like to prejudge people from others. Did he say it or are we putting everything that was in Breitbart under him?"

Breitbart has made no secret of its disdain for House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wisc., often questioning his conservative credentials. Ryan said Sunday he'd trust Trump's judgment.

The Congressional Black Caucus called Bannon's appointment a "cold slap in the face to those of us who are working to mend race relations in America." Chairman G. K. Butterfield, D-N.C., said the appointment "sends an alarming signal that (Trump) remains loyal to the animosity and hatred that was the core of his campaign."

Bannon's appointment also raises questions about Trump's promise to be Israel's "biggest friend." Support for Israel has been a target for many on the alt-right. The closing ad of Trump's campaign drew criticism from Jewish groups, who said it played on Jewish stereotypes by railing against

"global special interests" with shadowy footage of several prominent Jews.

But Republican Jews rejected the criticism of Bannon and said they remain confident in Trump, noting that his Jewish-son-in-law, Jared Kushner, is one of Trump's closest advisers. His daughter, Ivanka, converted to Judaism before the couple wed.

"I read these articles they are saying about (Bannon), I have yet to find a quote that I find offensive," said Sid Dinerstein, a Trump supporter and former chairman of the Palm Beach, Fla., Republican Party. "We Republicans have always had a saying that George W. Bush was the best president for Israel. Come back in four or eight years and it will be Donald Trump."

Jay Lefkowitz, who served in George W. Bush's administration, said he didn't know Bannon, but is confident with Trump.

"There's a little bit of hysteria on the subject," he said. "Obviously, the Jewish community was very strongly supportive of Secretary Clinton, and if anything Donald Trump has gone out of his way to assure us of his support."

He noted Bannon ran a news organization: "Part of his mission was to be provocative. But what I expect to see is someone who genuinely wants to focus on real issues."

Others reserved judgment. Republican Jewish Coalition executive director Matt Brooks said he did not know Bannon, but noted he was looking forward to talking with him and "hearing his answers to some of the questions that have arisen."

Trump's selection of Republican National Committee chair Reince Priebus as chief of staff drew mostly plaudits. And Brooks said with Priebus, Kushner and others that Trump "has surrounded himself with the type of people he needs to succeed, and will be a true friend and ally to Jews at home and around the world."

The position of chief strategist is not new to the White House and not without influence: Those who have held similar roles for other presidents include David Axelrod for Barack Obama, Karl Rove for George W. Bush, David Gergen for Bill Clinton and Edwin Meese for Ronald Reagan.

A chief strategist advises a president on a range of issues, both policy and politics, domestic and foreign. He helps the president work with Congress and special interest groups. And he can also help create a big picture vision.

The chief strategist is one of the most crucial aides in a president's first year as he weighs what issues to take on, when to negotiate with lawmakers and whose advice to seek.

"There is no real definition," said George Edwards, a presidential scholar at Texas A&M University, who wrote The Strategic President: Persuasion and Opportunity in Presidential Leadership. "It's whatever the president wants. In this case, it would be a little bit of everything."

The loose definition means that Bannon could be involved with nearly any decision Trump wants him to be involved in. Many strategists were longtime advisers on the campaign trail, though Bannon only joined Trump's campaign in August.

But he made a mark: It was Bannon's idea to invite the women who have accused Bill Clinton of sexual misconduct to be Trump's guests at the second debate with Hillary Clinton.

Sophie Ota and Sean Cockerham contributed to this report.

White Nationalists' 'Man In The White House'? Bannon Appointment Provokes Angry Rebukes

By Evan Halper

Los Angeles Times, November 14, 2016

Donald Trump's effort to rebrand himself as a unifier and open-minded negotiator were drowned out by an angry national backlash over his naming of an enthusiastic promoter of white nationalism as his chief strategist in the White House.

The appointment of Breitbart News media executive Stephen K. Bannon, who served as CEO of Trump's campaign, was met with dismay and loud rebuke from mainstream Jewish and Muslim groups, civil rights organizations and many Republicans. It leaves Republican congressional leaders who have been sanguine about Trump's prospects for unifying the nation scrambling to shift the conversation — or at least to profess they don't know about Bannon's well-documented relationship with the far right.

And it quickly mobilized Democrats to warn that Trump is further empowering the hate groups rejoicing in his victory.

"It is a sad day when a man who presided over the premier website of the alt-right — a loose-knit group of white nationalists and unabashed anti-Semites and racists — is slated to be a senior staff member in the people's house," Anti-Defamation League CEO Jonathan Greenblatt said. The Southern Poverty Law Center said much the same, calling the Breitbart shaped by Bannon "the energy behind an avalanche of racist and anti-Semitic harassment that plagued social media platforms for the entire presidential campaign."

GOP strategist John Weaver, who helped run the presidential campaign of Ohio Gov. John Kasich, tweeted that "the next president named a racist, anti-Semite as the co-equal of the chief of staff." A poster on the neo-Nazi website Daily Stormer wrote: "Bannon is our man in the White House."

Trump supporters scrambled to define Bannon as something other than the right-wing firebrand who turned Breitbart into what former staffer Ben Shapiro describes as a

platform for "white ethnonationalism" and a "cesspool for white supremacist meme makers."

"That's not the Steve Bannon that I know and I've spent a lot of time with him," said Reince Preibus, the Republican National Committee chairman who was named Trump's chief of staff at the same time the Bannon appointment was announced Sunday. "Here's a guy who's a Harvard Business School, London School of Economics, 10-year Naval officer advising admirals. He was a force for good on the campaign at every level that I saw, all the time."

Trump campaign manager Kellyanne Conway recited the same credentials during a short interview outside Trump Tower, additionally citing Bannon's former job as a Goldman Sachs partner and his time in Hollywood. "Brilliant tactician," she said.

But it was clear on Capitol Hill that Bannon represented the side of the Trump campaign Republicans struggled with during the general election, and which they have grown no more comfortable with now that Trump is about to assume power in the White House.

House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) said on CNN that he does not have concerns because "I've never met the guy. … I trust Donald's judgment." House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Bakersfield) told reporters it would be unfair to hold Bannon responsible for all the content produced by Breitbart.

But his imprimatur penetrates every aspect of its coverage, according to some of those who were on the Breitbart payroll as Bannon moved the site from a somewhat more traditionally conservative platform created by founder Andrew Breitbart to what Bannon boasted in July has now become "the platform for the alt-right."

"He was the ideological driving force behind Breitbart and its content," said GOP strategist Kurt Bardella, who said he talked to Bannon almost daily for two years while working as Breitbart's media consultant. "He put himself front and center."

"There was a big personality void when Andrew died," said Bardella, a conservative who parted ways with Breitbart as the site became something he saw as "toxic and perpetually malcontent."

"He was so synonymous with Breitbart. When Andrew went away, Steve stepped in and filled that void. How Breitbart evolved from then to now is a manifestation of that. He was very hands-on."

Other employees have also left Breitbart, citing the same concerns as Bardella. And some journalists quit in protest in the spring after a Breitbart reporter accused Trump's then-campaign manager of manhandling her at a political event and Breitbart responded by publishing an article doubting its own reporter's claim.

Bannon's personal life has been as stormy as his life in politics. An ex-wife accused him of attacking her in 1996, leading to charges of domestic violence, which were ultimately dismissed when prosecutors said they could not located the accuser. Later, in 2007, during divorce proceedings, Bannon's ex-wife alleged that he repeatedly made anti-Semitic remarks as the couple toured Los Angeles private schools for their daughters.

She said Bannon asked the director of the Westland School "why there were so many Hanukkah books in the library." She said in court filings that he was concerned that the Willows Community School "used to be in a temple." As the couple pondered the Archer School for Girls, Bannon's ex-wife alleged in her deposition, he "went on to say the biggest problem he had with Archer is the number of Jews that attend. He said that he doesn't like Jews and that he doesn't like the way they raise their kids to be 'whiny brats' and that he didn't want the girls going to school with Jews."

Bannon, who ultimately sent his children to the Archer School for middle school and high school, has denied ever making any such comments.

Trump's Choice Of Stephen Bannon Is Nod To Anti-Washington Base

By Jeremy W. Peters

New York Times, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — In naming Stephen K. Bannon to a senior White House post, President-elect Donald J. Trump has elevated the hard-right nationalist movement that Mr. Bannon has nurtured for years from the fringes of American politics to its very heart, a remarkable shift that has further intensified concern about the new administration's direction.

The provocative news and opinion website that Mr. Bannon ran, Breitbart News, has repeatedly published articles linking migrants to the spread of disease. Its authors have criticized politicians who do not support a religious test for immigrants to screen out potential jihadists. And it has promoted stories that try to tie Huma Abedin, a top aide to Hillary Clinton who is Muslim, to Islamic militants.

In an interview, Mr. Bannon, 62, rejected what he called the "ethno-nationalist" tendencies of some in the movement. His interest in populism and American nationalism, he said, has to do with curbing what he sees as the corrosive effects of globalization. And he believes his enemies are misstating his views and those of many Trump followers.

"These people are patriots," he said. "They love their country. They just want their country taken care of."

He added, "It's not that some people on the margins, as in any movement, aren't bad guys — racists, anti-Semites. But that's irrelevant."

Mr. Bannon's ascent has quickly become the focus of Mr. Trump's critics, who broadly condemned the choice as divisive, if not racist, on Monday. But it was also a victory of head-spinning dimensions for Mr. Bannon. When he joined

Mr. Trump's sputtering presidential campaign in August, he insisted to his friends that even if Mr. Trump lost, he could at least mitigate any damage to the nationalist movement, which he helped fuel as the head of Breitbart.

Instead, that nationalist movement — it has promoted or enabled anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim and racist sentiments — will now have a champion at Mr. Trump's side in the West Wing. Mr. Bannon will have the opportunity to shape domestic and foreign policy for a president who is taking office with few positions detailed.

The place that Mr. Bannon will occupy in the new administration, as senior counselor and chief strategist to the president, also elevates someone whose mission in politics has been to tear down institutions, not run them, to one of the most powerful roles in the government.

Mr. Bannon's appointment was intended to be a reassuring signal to the vocal and restive part of Mr. Trump's populist, anti-Washington base that is suspicious of power and anyone who holds it. Mr. Trump is their champion, but Mr. Bannon is their check against the Washington establishment and any efforts it makes to soften the new president's resolve.

Mr. Bannon has told people in Mr. Trump's inner circle that the new administration will have a short window of time to push its agenda through and should focus first on the priorities that are expected to be the most contentious.

His influence may be felt initially on the Trump administration's approach to issues like immigration and government ethics reform, which, as chief executive of the Trump campaign, he helped shape as central elements of Mr. Trump's message. Mr. Bannon, whose career has included jobs as a Navy officer, a Goldman Sachs banker and the chairman of Breitbart, is expected to be an unrelenting advocate of many of Mr. Trump's most aggressive plans on immigration. That involves stopping the immigration of Syrian refugees, deporting undocumented immigrants with criminal records and devoting more resources to securing the border.

He has reassured those close to him that he will maintain the direct line to Mr. Trump that he enjoyed during the campaign and that he will be on equal footing with Reince Priebus, who will have the more visible job of White House chief of staff and an appointee who comes directly out of the Republican Party establishment. The question of how Mr. Bannon and Mr. Priebus will work together — or if they can — is one of the largest facing the new White House.

Mr. Bannon, who grew up in a working-class neighborhood in Norfolk, Va., earned degrees from Georgetown and Harvard. He often compares Mr. Trump's political rise to that of Andrew Jackson, the military general and populist hero who took on the political and social elite of his day as the seventh president of the United States.

Mr. Bannon's disgust with the politics of the mainstream Republican Party burns just as hot, if not hotter, than his animus toward liberals. He sees Republicans as the "party of Davos donors" and has scorned them for denigrating Trump supporters as the "vulgarians, the hobbits" and "the peasants with the pitchforks."

While Mr. Trump became the leader of the movement of disaffected Americans who feel lost and disenfranchised in a nation undergoing rapid cultural and demographic change, Mr. Bannon has been a student of global populist trends, carefully tracking the rise of the far-right National Front in France under Marine Le Pen and the remarkable victory of the U.K. Independence Party in Britain's vote this year to leave the European Union.

"Steve saw — and was a thought leader and a visionary about — the issues and the movement that Trump eventually caught onto and espoused," said Larry Solov, the chief executive of Breitbart.

"He's like a field general," Mr. Solov added, "and very much sees the fight for the soul of this country as a war."

But the fight has, at times, has become one with overt racial hostility, fed by websites like Breitbart under Mr. Bannon's direction and by Mr. Trump himself. Breitbart has been especially harsh in its coverage of immigrants and refugees, particularly those from the Middle East and Central America.

Mr. Bannon will take his White House job already at odds with the House Speaker Paul D. Ryan, an ally of Mr. Priebus's who Mr. Bannon has long sought to undermine. When he ran Breitbart, Mr. Bannon promoted Mr. Ryan's opponent in the Wisconsin primary in the website's news stories and radio interviews. Mr. Bannon is personally close to members of Congress like Dave Brat, the Virginia Republican who unseated Eric Cantor, the former majority leader. He has written that the appropriations process under Mr. Ryan was "a total and complete sellout of the American people."

His former colleagues at Breitbart refer to him admiringly as a "honey badger" because of his relentlessness, which they say they expect him to use against Republicans and Democrats in equal measure.

"What drives Steve," said Joel B. Pollak, Breitbart's editor at large, "is the way the political establishment is holding back American politics."

Mr. Pollak added, "He has absolute clarity about what needs to be achieved at any given time."

Trump Allies Defend Steve Bannon

By Louis Nelson

Politico, November 14, 2016

Donald Trump's allies are defending his decision to name Steve Bannon a top White House adviser, while mainstream Republicans have mostly stayed silent on a choice many are decrying as an extremist with disturbing ties to white nationalists.

Bannon, Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus said Monday, is actually "very wise and smart" and "was a force for good on this campaign."

Trump chose Bannon and Priebus as "equal partners," his transition team said Sunday — the Breitbart News boss as chief strategist and senior counselor to the president, and the longtime Wisconsin operative as chief of staff.

"I like to judge people as I see it as opposed to seeing what other people say," Priebus said on "Fox and Friends." "I'll tell you: The Steve Bannon I know is a guy that is really on the same page with a lot of the things — almost everything that I agree with as far as advising President-elect Trump."

In August, Bannon took a leave of absence from running the alt-right media outlet, an aggressively promoter of Trump all throughout the election, to join his campaign. Breitbart has continued to pump out articles attacking Republican establishment figures, including Priebus and House Speaker Paul Ryan, as traitors secretly working on behalf of the Democratic agenda.

Priebus was asked Monday morning if the ideology of Breitbart — which has published stories headlined "There's no hiring bias against women in tech, they just suck at interviews," "birth control makes women unattractive and crazy" and "Bill Kristol: Republican spoiler, renegade Jew" – will arrive at the White House with Bannon.

"The guy I know is a guy that isn't any of those things," Priebus said on NBC's "Today," noting that Bannon's byline had not appeared on any of those articles even though he was overseeing the website at the time. "The guy I know is a guy sitting in an office all day yesterday, talking about hiring and in the last few months, this is a guy who has exhibited none of those qualities. Here's a guy who's Harvard Business School, he was a 10-year naval officer, London School of Economics, I believe. He is a guy who is very, very smart, very temperate."

But on MSNBC's "Morning Joe," Priebus alluded to the fact that Bannon and Breitbart represent an altogether different vision for the GOP, noting that Trump's campaign was ultimately successful "because factions within our party were represented."

On Capitol Hill, House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy — who backed Trump during the Republican primary — dodged questions about Bannon's views, emphasizing that it was up to Trump to choose his own advisers.

"The president-elect always gets to pick his team going forward," McCarthy said during a huddle with congressional reporters. "Steve Bannon and Reince Priebus [Trump's chief of staff] worked very closely together on this campaign... The president has the right to select who he thinks to be able to move through."

McCarthy added: "I don't know Steve. I did talk to Steve yesterday. I talked to the president-elect again yesterday. I talked to Reince."

Trump's own team, meanwhile, swung into action to defend his appointments.

"I've worked closely with both of them. I think it's a great team. And I'll continue to work closely with both of them in some capacity to be decided," Trump's campaign manager Kellyanne Conway told reporters at Trump Tower. "They complement each other. They both have the most important thing: the ear of the boss."

"People should look at the full resume," Conway added – pointing to Bannon's credentials. "He has got a Harvard business degree. He's a naval officer. He has success in entertainment. I don't know if you're aware of that. And he certainly was a Goldman Sachs managing partner. Brilliant tactician."

Conway said she was "personally offended" by reporters' suggestion that Bannon represented the alt-right, or that "I would manage a campaign where that would be one of the going philosophies. It was not. Fifty-six million-plus Americans or so saw something else."

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, a Trump adviser, praised Bannon as a "great strategist" who will keep an eye on the horizon in guiding the Manhattan billionaire through the bitter fights of the next four or eight years. Trump "got a ticket to the dance" by winning the election, Gingrich told Fox News, and Bannon will help him navigate "four to eight years dancing."

"Everybody who wants Donald Trump to succeed should cue off the mainstream media," Gingrich said. "If the mainstream media hates something, it's probably a really good idea. I mean, let's be clear: They are the mortal opponents of what Trump is trying to achieve."

"They now want to come back and say that anything that anybody ever published in Breitbart is Steve Bannon," Gingrich added. "That's baloney."

RNC member Randy Evans, a Trump supporter and Gingrich ally, said on CNN that Bannon would make an excellent chief strategist because, like his predecessor Karl Rove and David Axelrod, he "has a connection with what American – average Americans think."

But Democratic lawmakers were not so eager to let Bannon, and by extension Trump, off the hook. Noting that Breitbart has published news sections on "black crime" and compared Planned Parenthood to the Holocaust, Sen. Jeff Merkley said the appointment of Bannon flies in the face of the unifying language Trump has used since winning the presidency.

"There should be no sugarcoating the truth here: Donald Trump just invited a white nationalist into the highest reaches of the government," Merkley said in a statement. "Bannon has boasted that he made Breitbart News 'the platform for the alt-right,' which is the politically correct term for the resurrection of white nationalism."

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) used similar language to Merkley's in her own statement, writing that "there must be no sugarcoating the reality that a white nationalist has been named chief strategist for the Trump administration." She said Democrats would remain committed to "finding common ground" but added that "we will stand our ground and strongly oppose attempts by this administration to scapegoat and persecute Americans because of who they are, how they worship or who they love."

The Southern Poverty Law Center — an NGO that monitors hate groups — agreed, blaming Bannon for making Breitbart into a "white ethno-nationalist propaganda mill" and calling on Trump to undo his appointment.

Anti-Defamation League CEO Jonathan Greenblatt commended Trump for picking Priebus to be chief of staff, but said Bannon and the alt-right are "hostile to core American values."

"It is a sad day when a man who presided over the premier website of the 'alt-right' — a loose-knit group of white nationalists and unabashed anti-Semites and racists — is slated to be a senior staff member in the 'people's house,'" Greenblatt said in a statement.

Priebus, making the rounds on the morning shows, sought to reassure Americans who are alarmed about Trump's victory and uncertain of his true intentions.

Advertising executive Donny Deutsch, a regular panelist on "Morning Joe," told Priebus that with the campaign behind him, Trump should deliver a speech telling Americans that he would behave differently as president.

"In a street fight, sometimes do you and say things, and I know people are frightened out there. Don't be," Deutsch told the incoming chief of staff, recommending some messaging for the president-elect. "Walk some of that stuff back. He does that, the dominos all fall. It's that simple."

"I think that's good advice. And that's where President-elect Trump heart's at. He doesn't like seeing the things that are on TV right now," Priebus responded. "It's not who he is. It's not what he wants to represent. And he wants people that are out there, even tonight, that are protesting to let him govern. Let him make you proud of our country."

Conway 'Offended' By Criticism Of Trump's Bannon Pick

By Stephen Dinan

Washington Times, November 14, 2016

Trump campaign manager Kellyanne Conway bristled Monday at charges incoming White House strategist Stephen K. Bannon leans too far to the right, saying she was "offended" at the accusations and she wouldn't have been part of an operation with him if she'd seen him catering to the "alt-right."

She said the surprise of Donald Trump's victory has spawned an overzealous reaction, but she urged them to give the president-elect a chance.

Mrs. Conway said Mr. Trump was repaying the loyalty of Mr. Bannon, who was head of Breitbart News before becoming CEO of the campaign and is now the chief strategist for Mr. Trump. Civil rights groups have blasted Mr. Bannon for his leadership at Breitbart, saying he gave voice to radical elements including white nationalists.

"I worked very closely with Steve Bannon. He's been the general of this campaign. And frankly people should look at the full resume," she told reporters at Trump Tower in New York. "He has got a Harvard business degree. He's a Naval officer. He has success in entertainment. I don't know if you're aware of that. And he certainly was a Goldman Sachs managing partner. Brilliant tactician."

Mrs. Conway, who has yet to have an announced role in the new administration, said the transition team is working to fill out Cabinet posts and to lay the groundwork for an agenda. She said the chance to name the next Supreme Court justice is also a priority.

"He's put his list out. And he's promised to take from that list and have somebody with a judicial philosophy in the mold of the late, great Antonin Scalia," she said.

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Kevin McCarthy, House Majority Leader, Defends Donald Trump's Appointment Of Steve Bannon

By S.A. Miller

Washington Times, November 14, 2016

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy on Monday defended President-elect Donald Trump's naming of top adviser Steve Bannon, who has been assailed from the left with accusations that he is a sexist, racist and anti-Semite.

"The president-elect always gets to pick his team," Mr. McCarthy, California Republican, told reporters at the Capitol.

He said that he spoke to Mr. Bannon on Sunday night to get acquainted but that he did not know the man very well. He deferred to Mr. Trump's judgment.

"The president had a right to select who he thinks is best," he said.

Mr. Bannon, who ran Breitbart News before becoming the Trump campaign chairman, has been criticized for giving white supremacists and the "Alt Right" a platform on the news website and allegations by his ex wife that he didn't want his children going to a school with too many Jews.

The allegations about Mr. Bannon echo the accusations hurled at Mr. Trump throughout the campaign, and which have fed protests across the country after the election that have at times turned violent.

Mr. Bannon's opponents pointed to headlines on Brietbart that they say illustrate his hate mongering, including "Birth control makes women unattractive and crazy" and "Hoist it high and proud: The confederate flag proclaims a glorious heritage."

Pressed by reporters about the appointment, Mr. McCarthy said that he believed in celebrating America's diversity and that politics and the news media for too long have been focused on trying to "tear people down."

"You can't judge it all based on one person," he said.

Mr. Bannon was named Sunday as White House chief strategist and senior counselor. Mr. Trump also named Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus as White House chief of staff.

In the statement announcing the appointments, Mr. Bannon and Mr. Priebus were described as "co-equal advisers."

"The president has the right to select the team, just as I do in my office," Mr. McCarthy said.

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House GOP Leader Unfazed By Trump's White Nationalist Adviser

"I know people are trying to create this fear," Rep. Kevin McCarthy said of Steve Bannon.

Huffington Post, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) clashed with reporters Monday as he defended President-elect Donald Trump's choice of Steve Bannon — the Breitbart News executive chairman known for having white nationalist views and for being praised by former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke — as a top adviser in the White House.

During an off-camera sit-down with Capitol Hill reporters, McCarthy argued that Trump "has a right" to name anybody to his inner circle of advisers. He said he didn't want to "pre-judge" Bannon, suggesting the Breitbart executive may not be responsible for the website's racist and misogynistic content, and said other Republicans have told him Bannon is different in person than how he's been cast in the media.

McCarthy also suggested that critics are demonizing Bannon just to scare people: "I know people are trying to create this fear and everything else."

Here's a transcript of reporters repeatedly asking McCarthy how he can defend Bannon, and McCarthy getting testy as the questions keep coming. This has been edited slightly for brevity.

Todd Zwilich of Public Radio International and WNYC: Trump appointed Reince Priebus chief of staff yesterday. At the same time, he appointed what he described as a co-equal adviser, Steve Bannon, as his senior adviser and strategist. Steve Bannon, when he was in charge of Breitbart News, that organization ran headlines that include "Bill Kristol Is A Renegade Jew." Gabby Giffords, your former colleague — "The Gun Control Movement's Human Shield." They had a headline that said "Birth Control Makes Women Unattractive And Crazy." And "The Solution To Online 'Harassment' Is Simple: Women Should Just Log Off."

He had a radio show on Sirius XM where he regularly entertained guests like Frank Gaffney and Pamela Geller, where they regularly trafficked in Islamophobic conspiracy theories, including one that said Huma Abedin was a Saudi agent. And his wife testified under oath in 2007 that Steve Bannon did not want his daughter going to a particular school because they were "too many Jews there." How can this appointment possibly be appropriate for American people watching this White House, and how can it be appropriate for you?

Rep. Kevin McCarthy: Well, the president-elect always gets to pick his team going forward. Steve Bannon and Reince Priebus worked very closely together in this campaign. One thing, when you go through a campaign, especially the campaign we saw on both sides, it's a difficult campaign, but you forge strong relationships. The president has a right to select who he thinks is best to be able to move through. I don't know Steve. I did talk to Steve yesterday. I talked to the president-elect again yesterday, I talked to Reince... The president-elect has to be able to select his best team. There will be a lot of different appointments to go through. What do they say, how many slots does a president have to fill? Is it more than 4,000? There's a lot of people to go through. So...

TZ: Hang on, I'm sorry. This is important. Jewish groups —

KM: Are you saying that other people aren't important?

TZ: They are. I'm going to try one more if I can.

KM: Well I answered your question.

TZ: I've been here for 20 years, so I'm going to try one more if I can —

KM: I haven't been here 20 years, and I'm the majority leader. So I'm going to go ahead —

Another reporter: Do you feel like —

TZ: Jewish groups, Muslim groups, have all criticized this —

KM: Come on, we're moving on.

***

Chad Pergram, Fox News: Do you feel, though, that Republicans are willing to cede moral ground when it comes to the some of things that Donald Trump has said, just because you get the opportunity to pass tax reform, just because you get the opportunity to do Obamacare repeal, some of those issues? Do you feel by associating with people

like Bannon or Trump, and some of the things he said, that you cede that moral ground just for the policy outcome?

KM: Listen. We're less than one week since this election. We're just now coming back into session. The president-elect is putting together his team to go out there. That's the right that he has to do... Our job here is to get this economy moving again and find the abilities that we can work and get the country moving.

CP: But that sounds like you are ceding that moral ground.

KM: For one thing, don't put words in my mouth. I answered your question. The president has the right to select his team, just as I do in my office.

***

Jennifer Bendery, The Huffington Post: Are you comfortable, personally, with the idea of someone like Steve Bannon having Donald Trump's ear?

KM: I do not know Steve Bannon and I take Reince Priebus, who I know very well — his comments to me, based upon what I read there, what people have said, that's not the Steve Bannon that he knows. Reince has said this to me prior to their appointment, within their, in conversations in the campaign in others. I've always believed in giving somebody a chance, from that perspective as well. I don't like to prejudge people from others. Are we going to judge everything — I don't know, I don't have a history of, did he say it or are we putting everything that was on Breitbart under him, so we put everything that's in your papers under you? I just don't know enough there from that standpoint. But everybody that I know that worked with him on the campaign says it's different than who he is —

TZ: Your colleague got shot in the face and he called her a human shield.

KM: OK...

***

John Bresnahan, Politico: You don't want to talk about Bannon, but there's millions of people out there who see an appointment of somebody like Bannon... that they are now in danger, that their citizenship, their status as American citizens is seen as "less than." They're worried about white nationalism, they're worried about the alt-right movement. How do you assure them that Republicans in Congress will protect them from the worst abuses of this movement? They're scared of their own future in this country.

KM [after talking at length about the meaning of a painting of George Washington crossing the Delaware River in 1776]: I know people are trying to create this fear and everything else. Elections is a contest and it gets heated moments. We do not have king or queens... I do not believe the Republican Party, from the basis of what we were created and where we stand for, and the premise of your question, is going to have that fear. And so, I do not know Steve. I do not know what he has said. If he has said that about Gabby Giffords, nowhere would I ever agree with those words. Nowhere would I ever stand behind those words. But Donald Trump has the ability to select who he thinks can move forward. The one thing I will say — in this job, too long we want to tear people down. I've seen things said about me that I fundamentally know are not true, but it's on the Internet so it must be true. I'm tired of that. I don't care if you're a Republican or Democrat, I want to give people the benefit of the doubt.

***

Deirdre Walsh, CNN: But Mr. McCarthy, just like that painting symbolizes something to you, the appointment of Steve Bannon symbolizes something to people who didn't vote for Trump. By you being OK with it and moving forward like he's just a co-equal adviser like Reince Priebus —

KM: Reince is the chief of staff, there's a difference.

DW: No, the announcement came out as co-equal advisers of the president-elect. That's what it said. So that's what he represents and that's a symbol, just like your painting is a symbol. So what do you say to people who are really worried about this person being steps from the Oval Office?

KM: Don't prejudge the new president. Give him an opportunity to govern. If there's something that he proposes that you disagree with, fight it. But why do you prejudge him when the election was less than a week away?

DW: You've never met the guy. What was his message to you?

KM: It was a short one. We're trying to get acquainted.

Donald Trump's Choice Of Stephen Bannon As Strategist Draws Backlash

By Michael D. Shear

New York Times, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — Civil rights groups, Democrats and some Republican Party strategists on Monday denounced President-elect Donald J. Trump's decision to appoint Stephen K. Bannon to a top White House position, warning that Mr. Bannon represents nationalist and racist views that should be rejected by the incoming president.

Congressional Republicans remained largely silent about the decision, choosing to instead praise Mr. Trump's announcement that Reince Priebus, the chairman of the Republican National Committee, will become the new White House chief of staff. In an interview on Public Radio International, Representative Kevin McCarthy of California, the Republican majority leader in the House, said he would "not prejudge" Mr. Trump's choice.

At Trump Tower in Manhattan, where Mr. Trump is said to be continuing work on the transition, Kellyanne Conway, a key adviser, defended Mr. Bannon, describing him as the "general of this campaign" and saying that "people should look at the full résumé."

Ms. Conway added: "He has got a Harvard business degree. He's a Naval officer. He has success in entertainment." She called him a "brilliant tactician."

Ms. Conway rejected criticism that Mr. Bannon has a connection to right-wing, nationalist views or that he would bring them to the White House as Mr. Trump's chief strategist.

"I'm personally offended that you think I would manage a campaign where that would be one of the going philosophies," she told reporters assembled in the lobby of Mr. Trump's office building.

President Obama is scheduled to speak to the nation during a news conference Monday afternoon. Ahead of his appearance, a chorus of critics took to Twitter to lament what they said was a frightening normalization of the fringe views that Mr. Bannon promoted as the chairman of Breitbart News. The site has for years given voice to anti-Semitic, racist and white nationalist ideology.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations said Mr. Bannon's selection "sends the disturbing message that anti-Muslim conspiracy theories and white nationalist ideology will be welcome in the White House."

That view was echoed by the Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks hate groups. It insisted that "Trump should rescind this hire."

"In his victory speech, Trump said he intended to be president for 'all Americans,'" it said. "Bannon should go."

Republicans who had long opposed Mr. Trump's candidacy also took to Twitter on Sunday night and Monday morning to warn that his choice to rely on the advice of Mr. Bannon is an indication of the way that he will govern.

"The racist, fascist extreme right is represented footsteps from the Oval Office," said John Weaver, a Republican strategist who ran the presidential campaign of Gov. John R. Kasich of Ohio and previously advised Senator John McCain of Arizona. "Be very vigilant, America."

But people close to Mr. Bannon came to his defense. Joel B. Pollak, an author and editor at Breitbart, called him an "American patriot who also defends Israel and has deep empathy for the Jewish people."

Mike Huckabee, the former governor of Arkansas and presidential candidate, accused Mr. Bannon's critics of sour grapes. On Twitter, he wrote that Mr. Bannon should embrace the criticism from the Council on American-Islamic Relations, or CAIR.

"Critics of Steve Bannon know he's smarter and tougher than they are," Mr. Huckabee wrote. "When CAIR doesn't like you, that is a good thing."

Mr. Obama, who has said since the election last week that he wants to help Mr. Trump have a successful presidency, will have his first opportunity to weigh in on Mr. Bannon's selection during the afternoon news conference.

Many of the president's supporters are certain to expect that Mr. Obama will condemn the ideology that Mr. Bannon represents, using his remaining time in the Oval Office to defend the values of the coalition that put him there. But Mr. Obama has so far appeared eager not to get into a political or ideological clash with Mr. Trump.

In her comments to reporters, Ms. Conway noted the supportive tone from Mr. Obama and urged critics of Mr. Trump to take the same approach to the president-elect and his appointees.

"Folks should do what President Obama, Secretary Clinton and others are doing, frankly," Ms. Conway said. "Bernie Sanders this morning, I heard Senator Sanders this morning, which is to support this new president-elect and his mission to unify the country and to implement his 100-day plan."

Ms. Conway said that Mr. Trump was having "different meetings, interviews" while he discusses other possible appointments. She said other appointments were likely to be announced this week.

Trump Adviser Steve Bannon Becomes 'The Story'

By David Jackson

USA Today, November 14, 2016

NEW YORK — Donald Trump's new chief of staff, Reince Priebus, did a string of television interviews Monday, but took almost as many questions about the president-elect's other major appointment: chief strategist Stephen K. Bannon.

Trump's critics are bashing the Bannon appointment by saying the website he once headed — Breitbart News — traffics in racism and anti-Semitism, while the president-elect and his aides defend the newly appointed chief strategist and senior counselor to the Trump White House.

"That's not the Steve Bannon that I know and I've spent a lot of time with him," Priebus said on MSNBC's Morning Joe. "And here's a guy who's a Harvard Business School, London School of Economics, (and) 10-year Naval officer advising admirals. He was a force for good on the campaign at every level that I saw, all the time."

Richard Cohen, president of the Southern Poverty Law Center, said Bannon turned Breitbart into a platform for the so-called "alt-right,": which he described as "simply a re-branding of white nationalism and is the energy behind the avalanche of racist and anti-Semitic harassment that plagued social media platforms for the entire presidential campaign."

Bannon left Breitbart for the Trump campaign in August. Larry Solov, Breitbart's chief executive, declined to answer a New York Times question about whether the former Goldman Sachs banker still has a financial stake in the website.

In the meantime, Breitbart plans to capitalize on its increased readership by expanding its Washington bureau and perhaps opening offices in other countries.

In announcing the appointments of Priebus and Bannon, Trump described both as "highly qualified leaders who worked well together on our campaign and led us to a historic victory. Now I will have them both with me in the White House as we work to make America great again."

Kellyanne Conway, the campaign manager for Trump, said Priebus and Bannon would "make a great team" because "they complement each other. They both have the most important thing: the ear of the boss."

Congressional Democrats, meanwhile, pounced on the Bannon appointment. House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Cal., said "there must be no sugarcoating the reality that a white nationalist has been named chief strategist for the Trump administration."

Prominent White House jobs are challenging for anybody, analysts said, especially for those who come from outside the political system – and the criticism of Bannon makes the challenge even tougher.

"First of all, you never want staff to be the story," said David Cohen, a political science professor at the University of Akron who specializes in White House organization. "When the staff becomes the story, it has a negative impact on the White House and the president."

Many analysts see Trump as picking from different sides of the Republican coalition. Priebus represented the party establishment as chairman of the Republican National Committee, while Bannon became a leader of a more aggressive conservatism that opposed various trade and immigration policies.

Breitbart News clearly backed Trump during his presidential bid and attacked numerous Republicans for being insufficiently conservative. That group includes House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., a Priebus ally.

Historian Nicole Hemmer, author of Messengers of the Right: Conservative Media and the Transformation of American Politics, said Bannon turned Breitbart — "and then the Trump campaign" — into an advocate for the alt-right.

Bringing Bannon into the White House is a signal that, "despite his reach-across-the-divide rhetoric, Trump has no intention of distancing himself from the alt-right or the racist, sexist, anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric that shaped his campaign," Hemmer said.

Weekly Standard editor William Kristol, a Trump critic once labeled a "renegade Jew" in an infamous Breitbart headline, asked in a tweet if there is a "precedent for such a disreputable & unstable extremist in WH senior ranks."

Several analysts noted that Trump announced the Priebus and Bannon hires in tandem, and that their different forms of influence with Trump sets up the possibility of competing power centers. The announcement from the Trump transition team said that Priebus and Bannon will be "working as equal partners to transform the federal government."

Republican consultant Bruce Haynes, founding partner of Washington-based Purple Strategies, said Priebus is more likely to the "power center," given the chief of staff's control over personnel and organization, while Bannon will be more of a "sounding board" for the presidency.

"Bannon will provide insight into some aspects of the movement that was behind Trump, but his role is likely to be more advisory," Haynes said. "Bannon won't have the relationships inside the government and the Congress like Priebus has to drive an agenda."

Rick Tyler, a conservative Republican who is an MSNBC analyst, said this can go one of two ways. One is "the healthy way" in which Trump solicits a variety of views and acts on some of them.

"Or it can go the Machiavellian way," he said, "and there will be a power struggle."

Pelosi Says Trump's Chief Strategist Is A 'White Nationalist'

By Yousef Saba

Politico, November 14, 2016

Nancy Pelosi condemned Steve Bannon's appointment as chief strategist in the incoming Trump administration, calling him a "white nationalist" and arguing that his promotion suggested Trump would continue "the divisive vision that defined his campaign."

"Bringing Steve Bannon into the White House is an alarming signal that President-elect Trump remains committed to the hateful and divisive vision that defined his campaign," the California Democrat and House minority leader said in a Monday statement.

"There must be no sugarcoating the reality that a white nationalist has been named chief strategist for the Trump Administration," she added.

Bannon's appointment has been met with criticism, with many Democrats decrying Bannon as an extremist with links to white nationalists.

The House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer also released a statement denouncing President-elect Trump's appointment of Bannon, calling it "deeply disturbing".

"His leadership of Breitbart, which provides a voice to radical white-supremacist groups, allegations about his comments on Jews, and charges of domestic abuse ought to be seen as disqualifying for a role at the White House," Hoyer said in his statement.

Hoyer declared that it is incumbent upon the President-elect to demonstrate to the country that "the vile bigotry and misogyny that in large part characterized his campaign," will not be carried over to his tenure as President. He vowed that

Democrats would stand up for those that "were attacked" and "feel marginalized" by Trump.

Pelosi pledged in her statement that Democrats would try to find common ground "for hard-working families" but asserted that they will strongly oppose "attempts by this Administration to scapegoat and persecute Americans" on the basis of origin, worship, or sexual orientation.

Trump's allies have defended Bannon's appointment to the top White House position, while mainstream Republicans have remained largely silent.

Bannon is the former head of Breitbart News, leaving that position to become chief executive of Trump's campaign. Breitbart News is widely seen as a major platform for the 'alt-right' movement.

Pelosi On Bannon: Trump Brought A 'White Nationalist' Into The White House

By Cristina Marcos

The Hill, November 14, 2016

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) is blasting President-elect Donald Trump's hiring of Breitbart News executive Stephen Bannon as his chief strategist, saying it undermines attempts to unite the country.

Bannon once called his conservative news outlet "the platform of the alt-right," a far-right ideology that promotes white supremacy. Under Bannon, Breitbart ran headlines such as "Bill Kristol, Republican Spoiler, Renegade Jew" and "Birth Control Makes Women Unattractive and Crazy."

In a Monday statement, Pelosi said that Trump's decision to give Bannon, his campaign CEO, one of the most influential jobs in the White House signified the president-elect was elevating a person who had promoted white supremacy. The hire will only increase to fears of minorities who felt attacked by Trump and his supporters during the campaign, she warned.

"After winning the presidency but losing the popular vote, President-elect Trump must try to bring Americans together — not continue to fan the flames of division and bigotry," Pelosi said.

"Bringing Steve Bannon into the White House is an alarming signal that President-elect Trump remains committed to the hateful and divisive vision that defined his campaign," she added.

Pelosi had issued a conciliatory statement last week after Trump's surprise victory, suggesting that she'd be willing to find common ground with his administration on an infrastructure jobs bill.

But like her Senate counterpart, retiring Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), Pelosi didn't hold back in condemning Bannon's hire.

"There must be no sugarcoating the reality that a white nationalist has been named chief strategist for the Trump Administration," she said.

Civil rights groups have also expressed alarm over Bannon's elevation in the upcoming Trump administration.

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) clashed with Capitol Hill reporters earlier Monday as he argued Trump has the right to hire whomever he chooses.

Democrats Decry Bannon Pick: No Place In The White House For A 'White Nationalist'

With Bannon in the White House, "Donald Trump has chosen to champion the positions of neo-Nazis," said one Senate Democrat.

Huffington Post, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — Democrats raised alarms Monday over the naming of Steve Bannon, executive chairman at Breitbart News, as President-elect Donald Trump's chief strategist and senior counselor.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) called the pick an "alarming signal" that Trump "remains committed to the hateful and divisive vision that defined his campaign."

Bannon, known for his white nationalist views, took a break from running Brietbart — which has published headlines like "Racist, Pro-Nazi Roots Of Planned Parenthood Revealed" — to help run Trump's campaign. Trump announced Bannon's new position on Sunday.

"There must be no sugarcoating the reality that a white nationalist has been named chief strategist for the Trump Administration," Pelosi said in a statement Monday.

She urged Trump to bring Americans together rather than continue to "fan the flames of division."

House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) called Bannon's appointment "deeply disturbing."

"His leadership of Breitbart, which provides a voice to radical white supremacist groups, allegations about his comments on Jews, and charges of domestic abuse ought to be seen as disqualifying for a role at the White House," Hoyer said.

Seconds after the House gaveled into session for the first time since September, Rep. Betty McCollum (D-Minn.) spoke first, saying that Bannon "built his media career catering to white supremacists and anti-Semites."

"The fact that Republicans have been silent on Bannon's appointment is a disturbing sign," McCollum said. "It shows that the Republican Party has embraced Trump's campaign agenda of blatant sexism, racial bigotry and religious intolerance."

Sen. Edward Markey (D-Mass.) warned that having Bannon so close to Trump, helping make key decisions, would "poison the well" with Congress and the public and fuel the activities of hate groups.

"If the saying is true and you are the company you keep, Donald Trump has chosen to champion the positions of neo-Nazis, white nationalists and anti-Semites by appointing Steve Bannon," Markey said. "There is no place in our society, let alone the White House, for purveyors like Steve Bannon of hate and violence against any group of Americans."

Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) piled on, saying that Bannon "boasted of Breitbart as "'the platform for the alt-right,' which is the politically correct term for the resurrection of white nationalism."

Merkley noted that after the massacre of nine people at a historically African-American church in Charleston, South Carolina, last year, Breitbart published an article with the headline "Hoist It High And Proud: The Confederate Flag Proclaims A Glorious Heritage."

In a letter to House Democrats on Monday, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.) called on her colleagues to wear a safety pin this week as sign of solidarity with people and groups who fear they may be targeted in post-election hate crimes. The pin, Wasserman Schultz said, is an indication that the people wearing it "stand for safety."

"In the wake of the legitimate fear that has been instilled in the hearts of too many of our fellow Americans, a symbol of safety, unity, and love has been advanced by wearing a safety pin on your lapel," Wasserman Schultz wrote. "We invite you and your staff to join us in fastening a safety pin to your clothing this week, as a demonstration that we stand for safety, healing and unity against bigotry, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and misogyny."

House Republicans have remained relatively quiet about Bannon, instead focusing on the news that Republican National Committee Chair Reince Priebus has been named Trump's chief of staff. House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) said Sunday that because he's never met Bannon, he has "no concerns" about Bannon's new role in the White House.

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) became testy on Monday when reporters asked him about Bannon's white nationalist ties. Dodging every question about whether he was concerned by Bannon's post in the White House, McCarthy only said that Trump has "the right to select his team," and that the president-elect shouldn't be "pre-judged."

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) plans to give a speech on Bannon Tuesday when the Senate returns for the first time since the election.

After the announcement of Bannon's post, Reid's spokesman Adam Jentleson said "it is easy to see why the KKK views Trump as their champion."

Schumer Slams Bannon White House Appointment

By Burgess Everett

Politico, November 14, 2016

Future Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said on Monday that Donald Trump's elevation of Steve Bannon to a senior role at the White House means that many "dangerous and bigoted ideas will have a seat at the table."

In a speech to the Democracy Alliance, a progressive group allied with Democrats, the first Jewish Senate leader laced into Bannon, according to a source. Schumer vowed to stand up to the Trump White House if Bannon's brand of alt-right politics seep into the West Wing.

"If allies or aides to the president say anything that demeans a group of Americans, we won't hesitate for a moment to demand that our new president condemn those comments. And already we have reason to. Steve Bannon's appointment to a senior White House post signals that many of his dangerous and bigoted ideas will have a seat at the table in the White House," Schumer said, according to a source who attended the event. "We will be watching. And everyone here will be ready to actively stand up for one another if ever one group is attacked."

Schumer's ability to work with Trump is critical to any legislation passing: Trump will likely need the votes of at least eight Senate Democrats to pass anything next year because of the 60-vote threshold on most legislation. As the next leader of those Democrats, Schumer will be the point man during any negotiations.

Schumer also said he will "respect the office of the presidency" but will respond if Trump "says anything that demeans women, or Muslims or Latinos or our friends in the LGBT community."

The New York senator joined a growing group of Democrats to condemn the appointment of Bannon, a former Breitbart News executive, to a chief strategist role at the White House. On Monday, the Congressional Black Caucus, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and a host of Senate Democrats attacked Trump for elevating Bannon, who many in the party are calling a "white supremacist."

"His leadership of Breitbart, which provides a voice to radical white-supremacist groups, allegations about his comments on Jews, and charges of domestic abuse ought to be seen as disqualifying for a role at the White House," said House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.).

"Steve Bannon ran a website that trafficked in anti-Semitism and misogyny. He is an unacceptable choice to advise a U.S. president," said Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.),

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), who is retiring at the end of the year, said he will speak about Bannon on Tuesday in a speech on the Senate floor. His spokesman said Bannon's role "signals that white supremacists will be represented at the highest levels in Trump's White House."

Democrats Criticize Donald Trump Over Steve Bannon Appointment

Former head of news outlet linked to the 'alt-right' was named to influential White House post

By Damian Paletta

Wall Street Journal, November 14, 2016

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

The Alt-Right Celebrates Breitbart Chief Steve Bannon's Role To Donald Trump's Strategist

By Matthew Rozsa\

Salon, November 14, 2016

"There has been some waffling on some of candidate Trump's signature positions: build the wall, deport illegals, end birthright citizenship, take a hard look at Muslim immigrants, etc," explained Jared Taylor, who runs the alt-right site American Renaissance, in an interview with CNN. "I suspect one of Steve Bannon's important functions will be as an anti-waffler, who will encourage President Trump to keep his campaign promises."

"I must admit that I was a wee bit surprised that Mr. Trump finally chose Mr. Bannon, I thought that his stable of Washington insiders would have objected too vociferously," wrote Rocky J. Suhayda, Chairman of the American Nazi Party, in an email to CNN. "Perhaps The Donald IS for 'REAL' and is not going to be another controlled puppet directed by the usual 'Wire Pullers,' and does indeed intend to ROCK the BOAT? Time will tell."

"I think that's excellent," exclaimed former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke to CNN's KFile. "I think that anyone that helps complete the program and the policies that President-elect Trump has developed during the campaign is a very good thing, obviously. So it's good to see that he's sticking to the issues and the ideas that he proposed as a candidate. Now he's president-elect and he's sticking to it and he's reaffirming those issues." He later added that "you have an individual, Mr. Bannon, who's basically creating the ideological aspects of where we're going, and ideology ultimately is the most important aspect of any government."

Richard B. Spender, the president of the white nationalist National Policy Institute and widely credited for having coined the term "alt-right," expressed his elation at Bannon's selection on Twitter.

Despite these celebrations, the alt right may not want to embrace Bannon if his rumored problematic personality traits start to crop up. Former Breitbart spokesman Kurt Bardella told Time that Breitbart is someone who would often indulge in "provocative, expletive-laced tirades about any demographic group you can possibly think of. That's just how Steve is." "He is legitimately one of the worst people I've ever dealt with," former Breitbart writer Ben Shapiro told the magazine shortly after Bannon was hired by Trump. "He regularly abuses people. He sees everything as a war. Every time he feels crossed, he makes it his business to destroy his opponent." Breitbart's current staffers have been particularly defensive of their CEO. "So much of the media mocked us, laughed at us, called us all sorts of names," said Alexander Marlow, the site's editor-in-chief, to The New York Times. "And then for us to be seen as integral to the election of a president, despite all of that hatred, is something that we certainly enjoy, and savor."

Breitbart political writer David Horowitz wrote

on Monday

that the notion of Bannon being anti-Semitic was "stupid."

"I can't think of anything stupider than the charge coming from all quarters of the left–including a headline in the pathetically wretched Huffington Post–that Bannon is an anti-Semite," he wrote. "The source? A one sentence claim from an angry ex-wife in divorce court no less, that Bannon didn't want their kids to go to school with Jews. I find that particularly amusing since Bannon wanted to make a film to celebrate this Jew's life."

Bannon has also been accused of anti-Semitism because of the numerous anti-Semitic articles he has posted on his site, including one that called Washington Post columnist Anne Applebaum "a Polish, Jewish, American elitist scorned" and neoconservative pundit Bill Kristol a "renegade Jew."

Meet Steve Bannon, Donald Trump's Controversial White House Pick

Business Insider, November 14, 2016

President-elect Donald Trump on Sunday made good on his promise to shake up Washington by selecting one of the most controversial figures in recent memory to serve as his top political aide.

Steve Bannon, the 62-year-old former CEO of Trump's campaign, will serve as the future president's chief strategist, a job similar to the post formerly occupied by operatives like Karl Rove and Valerie Jarrett.

But unlike Rove and Jarrett, longtime party operatives with deep political ties, Bannon hails from the alt-right political sphere that operated mostly on the fringe of mainstream political discourse before Trump embraced the movement during his presidential campaign.

Since 2011, Bannon has helmed Breitbart News, the far-right website that eschewed traditional Republican Party orthodoxy for antiestablishment white-nationalist positions on issues such as immigration and trade. Under Bannon's leadership, the site frequently assailed Republicans using incendiary rhetoric, labeling Weekly Standard editor Bill

Kristol a "renegade Jew" and targeting Republicans like former House Speaker John Boehner.

The new chief strategist's appointment quickly set off a firestorm of controversy, as many noted Bannon's apparent sympathies for ethnonationalist arguments and rhetoric.

Many critics from members of both parties including Sen. Harry Reid's spokesman, Adam Jentleson, pointed out that Bannon's ex-wife claimed in court that the new chief strategist "doesn't like Jews" and allowed Breitbart to post anti-Semitic articles.

"President-elect Trump's choice of Steve Bannon as his top aide signals that white supremacists will be represented at the highest levels in Trump's White House," Jentleson said in a statement. "It is easy to see why the KKK views Trump as their champion when Trump appoints one of the foremost peddlers of white-supremacist themes and rhetoric as his top aide."

The Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League were among groups condemning Bannon's selection, criticizing his self-professed commitment to providing a platform for the conspiracy theories and racial stereotypes about immigrants on which the alt-right has predicated its movement.

Bannon is in many ways a strange messenger to execute Trump's populist economic message.

He has frequently attacked Republicans and Democrats alike, scheming with other right-wing media figures about how to oust House Speaker Paul Ryan for what Bannon perceived as globalist views on trade and immigration.

But the former Breitbart chief also holds a degree from Harvard Business School, and he made much of his fortune as a banker at Goldman Sachs and as a longtime entertainment producer with Hollywood connections and stakes in shows like "Seinfeld."

Still, many of Breitbart's former employees who worked with Bannon pointed out that he had successfully brought his formerly fringe nativist ideas into the mainstream and favored an unforgiving take-no-prisoners political style that appeals to Trump's aggressive sensibilities.

Former Breitbart spokesman Kurt Bardella, who quit the site this year, described the organization as "completely devoid of reality and facts" and said the site speaks to Americans' "worst divisions and worst fears."

"Breitbart's gone from being the propaganda arm of the Trump campaign to now being the propaganda arm of the federal government," Bardella told CNN on Monday. "That should be very concerning to all Americans."

Bardella speculated that Bannon could use the power of the White House to exact revenge on enemies.

"Steve is a very aggressive, attack-oriented, never-back-down, never show any sign of weakness," Bardella said. "That's his entire modus operandi."

Donald Trump and Bannon with a park ranger in Pennsylvania.

AP Photo/ Evan Vucci

For its part, Breitbart frequently denies charges of racially and ethnically tinged coverage, characterizing its work as populist.

Matthew Boyle, the site's Washington political editor, told Business Insider earlier this year that his news organization did not seek to inflame tensions but to "hold the global permanent political class in contempt."

"We are doing what journalists throughout said mainstream media are supposed to do: Challenge the conventional wisdom, hold politicians' feet to the fire, ask tough questions, report facts that are in many cases inconvenient truths for career politicians, and give a voice to the millions of people worldwide who have had theirs taken away from them by world elites who consider the ordinary person beneath them," Boyle said.

Trump's Disturbing Choice To Put The Alt-Right In The White House

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

ALONG-STANDING practice of the modern White House is a division of labor between a chief of staff, who's in charge of making the administrative trains run on time, and a political adviser, who counsels the president on the electoral consequences of his policies. In that sense, there's nothing particularly new about President-elect Donald Trump's decision to set up two lines of authority beneath him, one headed by Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus as chief of staff, the other by erstwhile campaign chief Stephen K. Bannon as "chief strategist and senior counselor."

What is extraordinary, and not in a good way, is the nature of the latter choice. Mr. Bannon is a leading figure on the euphemistically titled alt-right, a previously obscure element on the far fringe of conservatism — until Mr. Trump's campaign energized and mainstreamed it. On its flagship website, Breitbart News, which Mr. Bannon dominates, the alt-right portrays itself as a middle-class uprising against a corrupt global elite. The movement can be more accurately described as deeply reactionary, rooted in a kind of white chauvinism, with disturbing overtones of anti-Semitism, visible in such Breitbart headlines as "Bill Kristol: Republican Spoiler, Renegade Jew," or articles such as a recent attack on Post columnist Anne Applebaum as a "Polish, Jewish, American elitist."

Mr. Bannon's appointment sends a highly negative signal to all those Americans who did not support Mr. Trump for president but have been willing to give him the benefit of the doubt in deference to the legitimacy of his election. That is to say, his response to the impulse toward unity of the

disappointed half of the United States has been to rub their noses in defeat by elevating a figure they understandably consider threatening.

Mr. Bannon may find himself unwelcome even in what remains of Republican establishment circles, given his extreme ideology and past attempts to foment GOP rebellions in the House of Representatives against Speaker Paul D. Ryan (Wis.) and his predecessor, John A. Boehner (Ohio). Republican leaders have welcomed the appointment of Mr. Priebus on the assumption that he can steer Mr. Trump toward mainstream policies and help restrain Mr. Bannon. Perhaps he will. On the other hand, neither Mr. Priebus nor most leading Republicans have proved able to check Mr. Trump's worst impulses, to the extent they have been interested in doing so; over the past year, Mr. Priebus seemed more interested in playing an enabling, apologetic role for Mr. Trump. Greater strength than that will be needed to resist the forces of intolerance whose representatives are now moving into the White House.

Bannon Could Darken Trump White House: Our View

USA Today, November 14, 2016

With the appointments of Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus as White House chief of staff and Trump campaign CEO Stephen Bannon as chief strategist and senior counselor, the president-elect is keeping voters guessing about which Donald Trump will be running the White House — the deal-making real estate entrepreneur or the flame-throwing Twitter virtuoso.

Priebus is the Wisconsin-vanilla establishment Republican who published the 2013 autopsy of Mitt Romney's presidential campaign calling for GOP outreach to all the people Trump insulted and abused throughout 2016. Bannon joined Trump straight from running Breitbart.com — the slavishly pro-Trump website favored by the white nationalists, xenophobes and anti-Semites known as the alt-right.

Thus, within days of his surprise victory, Trump managed to both guarantee strife within his White House and aggravate the bitter national cultural divide he has tried to calm since he built an election victory by widening it.

Bannon, a former Goldman Sachs banker and Sarah Palin confidant, is a politics and media daredevil who reshaped Breitbart.com from the home of politically incorrect bomb throwers across the conservative movement into something rigid and dark. When a Breitbart reporter was allegedly assaulted by a Trump campaign staffer, Bannon loyally threw the reporter overboard rather than be critical of Trump.

That loyalty paid off with hundreds of millions of page views. So did its provocations. Breitbart referred to conservative strategist and publisher Bill Kristol as a "renegade Jew." It has asked whether you'd prefer your daughter to be a feminist or have cancer, and it has said birth control makes women unattractive and crazy. In August, when Trump hired Bannon, former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke agreed with a white nationalist radio host that their movement had largely "taken over" the GOP. Now the alt-right friendly site is positioned to be the house organ of the Trump administration.

At the other end of the spectrum, Priebus is a behind-the-scenes party functionary who built Wisconsin's Republican Party into a battle-tested machine. He is also House Speaker Paul Ryan's pal, a critical connection for the success of President Trump's agenda. That's a bridge Bannon would be happy to burn, all but shouting "off with his head" when it comes to Ryan keeping his job.

But that didn't seem to faze the speaker when CNN's Jake Tapper asked him about Bannon. "I have no concerns. … I trust Donald's judgment," Ryan said. Ryan and Trump should think again.

The Bannon appointment is salt in the wound for the African Americans, Latinos, Muslims, Jews and other Americans who were Trump's campaign punching bags and still feel wounded and bewildered as Trump transitions from campaigning to governing. As President Obama said Monday, there are big differences between building a government and seeking votes.

The dueling approaches of Priebus and Bannon might have worked on the campaign trail by telling different stories to different voters, but are likely to become a problem when the Trump White House makes tough calls and needs to speak with one voice. Should Trump's bipolar approach to appointments continue in other personnel decisions, Trump could undermine his own presidency.

Regardless of whether the staffing moves turn into a management nightmare, Bannon's presidential appointment recasts Trump's post-election efforts at uniting Americans as window dressing. If Trump is serious about being a president for all Americans, he should reconsider whether an avatar of the alt-right belongs in the West Wing.

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Is Trump's New Chief Strategist A Racist? Critics Say So.

By David Weigel

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

President-elect Donald Trump's new chief strategist and senior counselor, Stephen K. Bannon, has been called a racist, an anti-Semite and a white nationalist. And that's just since Sunday, when Trump announced that he would be giving Bannon, the former head of the far-right web site Breitbart News, a central White House role.

It's true that Bannon has attracted legions of followers who describe themselves as white supremacists. It's less clear whether Bannon's own actions and words prove that he is one too.

Bannon describes himself as a leader of the "alt-right," a loose term describing a far-right ideology that includes opposition to immigration and "globalism."

Shortly after joining Trump's campaign in August, Bannon said in a revealing interview with Mother Jones that, possibly, there were "some people that are white nationalists that are attracted to some of the philosophies of the alt-right." That, he said, could no more define "alt-right" than the presence of extremists on the left could identify their movement.

But by and large, the alt-right is not racist, he said.

"If you look at the identity movements over there in Europe, I think a lot of [them] are really 'Polish identity' or 'German identity,' not racial identity," said Bannon. "It's more identity toward a nation-state or their people as a nation."

Under the site's founder, the late Andrew Breitbart, accusations of racism were dismissed as "cultural Marxism."

Yet some of the highest praise for Bannon's appointment came from white nationalists and white supremacists. According to SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors far-right and far-left activity on the Internet, a trove of comments celebrating the news have posted on Stormfront, a website for the "White Nationalist Community," including this one from a reader called "Pheonix1993:"

"Stephen Bannon: racist, anti-homo, anti-immigrant, anti-jewish, anti-establishment. Declared war on (((Paul Ryan))) Sounds perfect. The man who will have Trump's ear more than anyone else. Being anti-jewish is not illegal."

Additionally, the white nationalist writer Richard Spencer posted this late Sunday on Twitter: "Bannon will answer directly to Trump and focus on the big picture, and not get lost in the weeds. Bannon is not a 'chief of staff,' which requires a 'golden retriever' personality. He'll be freed up to chart Trump's macro trajectory."

Under his leadership, Breitbart became an anti-"globalist" news site clearly aligned with the European far right. It attracts self-described white supremacists with such headlines as "Bill Kristol: Republican spoiler, renegade Jew." It offers a stready stream of opinion essays, such as one by Milo Yiannopoulos in March describing anti-Semitic caricatures as the "long hair and rock 'n' roll" of 2016.

Direct evidence of racist or anti-Semitic statements by Bannon are harder to find. According to a 2007 court statement, Bannon's ex-wife accused him of not wanting their twin daughters attending a California private school because its student body included too many Jews.

The scrutiny will only intensify.

Bannon left Breitbart in August to become chief executive of Trump's presidential campaign. Until then, he had never been part of any political campaign. Little of what he did made sense to political reporters looking for the normal tokens of a winning effort — not the Farage rally, not the surprise news conference with Bill Clinton's accusers.

"Trump has gone from 2012 GOP style loss to a 2008 GOP style loss," wrote Republican pollster Matthew Dowd on Oct. 10.

"The rhetoric that Bannon is feeding Trump makes it increasingly likely that Trump will lose in a landslide," wrote the New Yorker's Ryan Lizza on Oct. 16.

A few weeks, an FBI letter and tens of thousands of WikiLeaked emails later, Bannon is poised to be Trump's chief strategist and senior counselor . Democrats have laced into him, but Republicans, taking the lead of House Speaker Paul D. Ryan, have not mentioned Bannon at all, not even to point out that many Breitbart staffers are Jewish.

And there is talk of more Breitbart reporters joining Bannon at the White House, in roles that do not require Senate confirmation.

Since 2012, when Bannon became Breitbart's chief executive, the site has defied doubts about what it could be without its charismatic founder and survived several tumultuous scraps with former staffers. The latest, just nine months ago, was telling of how Breitbart and Bannon viewed the press. After a Trump victory speech, Michelle Fields, then a reporter for Breitbart, was shoved out of the way by Trump's then-campaign manager Corey Lewandowski. Within a week, she was gone; within a few months, Breitbart was running pieces about her being unable to defend her story.

From the outside, the moves looked chaotic. But chat logs published by BuzzFeed found Breitbart staffers agreeing that the scuffle looked bad but that going to "war" over it would reflect poorly on a greater cause. That cause was the Trump campaign. Bannon had joked a year before he was hired that he was effectively Trump's campaign manager because the Republican front-runner was a "nationalist." He identified Breitbart as a home for the "alt-right" for the same reason.

In Europe, the far right has dealt with the same sort of media coverage as Bannon. Accusations of racism were constant; internal power struggles were seen as proof of the whole project falling apart. But Breitbart, which launched a London branch in early 2014, had seen this before. The site's editor, Raheem Kassam, became chief of staff to Brexit leader Nigel Farage as his United Kingdom Independence Party surged.

The Brexit vote this summer was seen, at Breitbart, as nationalism's great validation. In an analysis by Allum Bokhari and Yiannopoulos, two of the site's U.K. writers, the failure of the "Remain" campaign in Britain — one that united most both of the country's major parties and most of its experts — proved that the masses wanted a revolt against "globalism." Warnings about what the wrong vote would do to markets, or that it would make people think of voters as racists, meant less than nothing to the anti-globalist working class.

"They think about political sovereignty, independence, and national pride," Bokhari and Yiannopoulos wrote. "Elites sneer at these concerns as the foolish, provincial preoccupations of 'low-information voters,' yet they are deeply embedded in human nature, particularly in the search for belonging."

In America, too, Breitbart was the place for news on the revolt against the "globalists." European far-right politicians like Geert Wilders and the Le Pens earned regular write-ups. A typical headline: "Marion Maréchal-Le Pen: Either We Kill Islamism or It Kills Us." Their politics were seen as necessary because of the litany of migrant crimes screaming across Breitbart, such as this headline: "Previously-Deported Illegal Alien Caught on Camera Destroying Trump Signs While 'at Work'"

Coverage like that turned Breitbart into a powerhouse; according to the New York Times, it earned more Facebook impressions on election night than Fox News or CNN. More importantly, Bannon helped shape a Trump message that won the condemnation of the Anti-Defamation League — and helped him in swing states. Trump's closing ad, a two-minute edit of a speech he had given attacking the "global financial powers," struck the ADL as hitting "anti-Semitic themes." In the wider media, it was seen as stirring and populist.

"I played the clip for like five different people and I said, 'Is that anti-Semitic?'" said MSNBC's Joe Scarborough last week. "No. There are dog whistles, but … play that ad to 100 Americans in Middle America, 99 of them will go, 'That's cool.'"

Further on the political fringe, Bannon and Breitbart were credited with honing Trump's message against globalism, and unleashing his say-anything approach to talking about terror and immigrant crime. On Alex Jones's online show, after the election, sometime Trump adviser Roger Stone suggested that Bannon become Trump's chief of staff to keep the momentum of the campaign going.

"I think he has the big picture viewpoint that Trump needs," Stone said. "He knows exactly who the bad guys are. He knows exactly who those who won this victory are."

Newt Gingrich: Steve Bannon Can't Be Anti-Semitic Because He Worked In Finance And Hollywood

"I had never heard of the alt-right until the nutcakes started writing about it," Gingrich said.

Huffington Post, November 14, 2016

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich came to the defense of Steve Bannon on Sunday, relying on Jewish stereotypes to dismiss concerns over the Breitbart News executive chairman's ties to the anti-Semitic alt-right movement.

According to Gingrich, Bannon, who was named Donald Trump's chief strategist on Sunday, can't possibly be anti-Semitic because he's worked for the investment bank Goldman Sachs and in Hollywood — two places stereotypically associated with Jewish people.

CBS "Face The Nation" host John Dickerson asked Gingrich about an article by Ian Tuttle published last week in the historically conservative National Review. Tuttle writes that Trump's political rise has given "unprecedented visibility to the alt-right, a small but vocal fringe of white supremacists and anti-Semites and self-proclaimed fascists."

"I just have to say that's garbage," Gingrich replied. He also made an apparent reference to a recent column by The Washington Post's Dana Milbank that mentioned the fate of the presidential election would be decided early on Nov. 9 — the 78th anniversary of Kristallnacht, a wave of anti-Jewish violence in Germany and German-occupied countries in 1938.

Milbank's column denounced a Trump ad "illustrated with images of prominent Jews," including George Soros and Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein. "Anti-Semitism is no longer an undertone of Trump's campaign," Milbank wrote. "It's the melody."

According to Gingrich:

"This whole notion — it's like The Washington Post had this columnist the other day who pointed out that we're on the anniversary of Kristallnacht, which was the night when the Nazis attacked Jewish businesses. And I'm thinking, 'This is crazy!'

... But the fact is — and you get this all these smears of Steve Bannon. Steve Bannon was a naval officer. He was a managing partner of Goldman Sachs. He was a Hollywood movie producer. You know, the idea that somehow he represents — I had never heard of the alt-right until the nutcakes started writing about it."

While Gingrich may have only recently become aware of the alt-right's existence, there's a reason people are writing about it. There's been a disturbing uptick in hate crimes and racist incidents since Trump's surprise victory, including a swastika drawn on a building with the phrase "make America white again."

Bannon, 62, ran Breitbart News for four years until this August, when he became CEO of the Trump campaign. The ultra-conservative website is known for despicably misogynistic and racist headlines.

Several of Trump's closest aides are trying to normalize Bannon.

"Frankly, people should look at the full resume," Trump's campaign manager, Kellyanne Conway, told reporters at Trump Tower on Monday morning.

Reince Priebus, former RNC chair and future Trump chief of staff, suggested Bannon was "temperate" because of his academic background. "Here's a guy who is Harvard Business School, a 10-year naval officer, London School of Economics, I believe," Priebus said Monday on NBC's "Today." "He's very, very smart, he's very temperate."

Calling out Bannon is a divisive tactic, said Jason Miller, communications director for Trump's transition team, to CNN's Chris Cuomo on Monday.

"What I think is frustrating is when we see so much news coverage — particularly on this network, unfortunately — on the issues that divide us following the election, I think that's irresponsible," Miller said.

"This is going to be a good team that, number one, helped get Mr. Trump through the finish line," he added, referring to Bannon and Priebus. "They put together the plan, they worked seamlessly together, and as we've seen, they've been involved with the campaign and with Mr. Trump for a long time."

This story has been updated with comments from Kellyanne Conway, Reince Priebus and Jason Miller.

Pro-Israel Groups Avoid Denouncing Bannon

Other Jewish leaders blame Trump's chief strategist for anti-Semitism.

By Michael Crowley

Politico, November 14, 2016

Key members of Washington's pro-Israel community, along with Israeli government officials, are avoiding criticism of the controversial Donald Trump adviser Steve Bannon, even as some top Jewish-American leaders and groups including the Anti-Defamation League denounce him for anti-Semitism.

The uproar over Bannon and growing anxiety over signs of anti-Semitism among some Trump supporters has created a political test for some American Jews, particularly those focused on foreign policy. Some described feeling torn between personal disgust and a desire not to pick an early fight with a president whom they hope will be a strong defender of Israel.

"On a personal level I'd like to go bananas about it," said one Washington Jewish activist. "On a professional level it would be malpractice. We don't know what [Bannon's appointment] means."

Although Bannon is not expected to play a major foreign policy role, many American and Israeli Jews are appalled at the ascension to the West Wing of Bannon, a man they say at a minimum condoned anti-Semitism as the editor of the conservative website Breitbart.com and in some of Trump's campaign messaging. Bannon was also accused by his ex-wife of disparaging Jewish people in a 2007 child-custody proceeding.

In a statement on Sunday the Anti-Defamation League called Bannon "hostile to core American values," while other Jewish leaders have charged that Trump's campaign attacks on "global special interests"—including a campaign ad featuring prominent Jews like financier George Soros and Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen—had clear anti-Semitic undertones. The Trump campaign rejects those charges, as do friends and associates of Bannon.

But the American Israel Political Action Committee (AIPAC)—which focuses on U.S. foreign policy, and which sources said is likely mindful of preserving its influence over the incoming administration's Middle East policies—has declined to weigh in.

"AIPAC has a long-standing policy of not taking positions on presidential appointments," said the group's spokesman, Marshall Wittmann.

Asked about reports that that unnamed AIPAC officials were privately outraged over Bannon's appointment, Wittmann added that "any suggestions or rumors to the contrary either privately or publicly are completely false."

In a statement to POLITICO Monday another prominent Jewish group declined to pile on Bannon, but did not defend him.

"I have never met or spoken to Steve Bannon and at the Republican Jewish Coalition [RJC] we look forward to speaking with him soon, getting to know him, and hearing his answers to some of the questions that have arisen," said RJC executive director Matt Brooks. He added that the RJC is "thrilled" with the appointment of Reince Priebus as White House Chief of Staff.

"When looking at all the voices President-elect Trump has around him, from Reince, to Vice President-elect [Mike] Pence, his daughter Ivanka, his son-in-law Jared [Kushner], to Newt Gingrich and Rudy Giuliani, I believe it's clear that the President-elect Trump has surrounded himself with the type of people he needs to succeed, and will be a true friend and ally to Jews at home and around the world," Brooks added.

Kushner is Jewish, and Trump's daughter, Ivanka, converted to Judaism when the two married. Gingrich and Giuliani have been staunch allies of the conservative government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"Steve is fervently pro-Israel, and it is utterly ridiculous to suggest that he is anti-Semitic," David Goldman, a conservative columnist and Bannon friend, wrote on Facebook Monday.

"Trump's election is the best thing that has happened to Israel in many years. It eliminates the risk of a diplomatic stab in the back at the Security Council and sends a dire warning to Iran, the only real existential threat to the Jewish State. The

security of the Jewish people in their homeland is vastly enhanced by the vote on November 8, and Jews everywhere should thank God that the head of state of the world's most powerful country is a friend of Israel with Jewish grandchildren," Goldman added.

Nonetheless, Bannon's critics have cited instances of what they call anti-Semitism on Brietbart.com when Bannon was the site's editor, including a headline calling Weekly Standard editor William Kristol a "renegade Jew" and a column attacking Washington Post columnist Anne Applebaum that conspicuously noted her Jewish identity.

The alarm in the Jewish community extends well beyond Bannon, to include increasingly visible expressions of anti-Semitism, particularly on social media outlets like Twitter, from self-declared Trump supporters. Trump allies say that only a tiny and unwelcome fraction of his supporters hold such views, though many Jewish leaders say that Trump and his aides have done far too little to condemn them.

Netanyahu and his ambassador to Washington, Ron Dermer, have offered only warm words about Trump since Tuesday's election. The day after last week's election, Dermer congratulated Trump with a tweet calling him "a great friend of the Jewish people and the Jewish state."

Many Jewish Democrats and liberal Jews in Israel challenge that view. "For American Jews, Bannon's appointment is the stuff of which Jewish nightmares are made," declared a headline prominently featured on the website of the Israeli newspaper Haaretz Monday.

An Israeli embassy spokesman did not respond to a request for comment.

Netanyahu was not thought to have a strong preference in last week's election. While Hillary Clinton cast herself as a vigorous supporter of Israel, she served for four years in an Obama administration that had poor relations with Israel and pursued policies opposed by Netanyahu like the Iran nuclear deal.

And while Trump made some statements about Israel during the Republican primaries that unsettled Netanyahu's government, in recent months he has adopted a typical conservative Republican line of fulsome support for Israel against its regional enemies like Iran and in the dormant peace process with the Palestinians.

That may lead Israel's government and its strongest backers in Washington to hold their tongues, sources said.

"The Israelis will look at Trump's policies from a very realist perspective," said Daniel Kurtzer, a U.S. ambassador to Israel in George W. Bush's first term. "So unless Bannon influences the foreign policy side of things in a way that is detrimental to Israeli interests, Israelis might turn a blind eye to the internal issues."

Added one Jewish conservative Israel activist in Washington: "I don't understand why AIPAC would care, insofar as Breitbart under Bannon was strongly pro-Israel, and Bannon's White House role is going to almost entirely be domestic."

"I'm just not feeling the outrage," he added. "The Obama administration has spent eight years empowering Iran, promoting the Palestinians, and condemning Israel. If Bannon does something bad, I'll be happy to criticize him. Until then, I'd rather worry about real threats to Jews."

Even the perception that conservatives in Washington and the Netanyahu government are tolerating anti-Semitism in the U.S. could widen the growing split between mostly left-leaning American Jews, who overwhelmingly voted for Clinton, and Netanyahu and his U.S. defenders, sources said.

"The American-Jewish community is totally up in arms about this, but I don't think you'll see strong criticism from Israel," said Ilan Goldenberg, a former member of the U.S. Israel-Palestinian negotiating team under Obama who is now at the Center for a New American Security.

That dynamic, he said will "further cement the philosophical distance between the American Jewish community and Israel."

"Until now the Israeli right, in looking at [the question of anti-Semitism], has tended to accuse the American left of being the problem, because the American right has been quote-unquote supportive of Israel," said Kurtzer.

"But what happens when the American right has within it this strain of anti-Semitism?" he asked.

Civil Rights Group Wary Of Incoming Trump Administration

By Jesse J. Holland

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – The nation's largest civil rights groups on Monday announced plans to closely monitor President-elect Donald Trump administration's policies and actions.

This comes from the NAACP, the National Urban League, the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and the National Action Network.

Wade Henderson is the president of Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. He says they will oppose any proposal that would roll back civil rights.

They also criticized the appointment of conservative media executive Stephen Bannon as Trump's senior counselor.

Melanie Campbell is the president of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation. She said Bannon's appointment will not help unify the country.

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Bannon Mum On Breitbart Ties But Experts See Conflicts Aplenty

By John T. Bennett

Roll Call, November 14, 2016

Stephen Bannon, set to become a top White House aide to President-elect Donald Trump, is mum on whether he will sever ties with the conservative news organization he oversaw. But experts say statutes and traditions should lead him to do just that.

Trump's transition office on Sunday announced Bannon, executive chairman of Breitbart News, will be chief White House strategist and senior counselor to the president. Bannon took a leave of absence from Breitbart when he joined Trump's campaign in August.

His appointment to a senior White House post is raising new questions about his relationship to the news organization.

"No ethics counsel would allow him to continue in any kind of official capacity with Breitbart while he's serving in a senior full-time role in the White House," said Norman Eisen, who was special counsel to President Barack Obama until 2011, overseeing the White House's ethics, lobbying and open government initiatives.

"To the extent that he has Breitbart ownership or financial interests, he's going to have to report those," Eisen said. "Let's say he has a partial ownership interest, he's going to have to recuse himself. And that means he cannot be talking to Breitbart."

Eisen described federal ethics laws as "comprehensive," supplemented by "corresponding statutes," to which there is a "huge compendium."

There are the obvious conflicts that would arise if Bannon trafficked in national security secrets or details about internal administration deliberations on policy issues or infighting.

Since such information would drive traffic to Breitbart's website, helping boost revenue, a continued Bannon relationship with the news organization also could create major — and, experts say, unprecedented — financial conflicts.

"When I was doing that job [at the White House], I didn't let anybody maintain any outside positions," Eisen said. "It creates a very profound conflict when you're wearing two hats. When you're serving the president, you should only wear one hat: a senior adviser to the president."

Other experts echoed Eisen.

"When you're talking about someone with such a large portfolio and ties to potential press entity, the conflicts could be potentially broad," said Lawrence Noble, general counsel of the nonpartisan Campaign Legal Center, which aims to protect the public's voice in politics.

"There are business conflicts [guidelines] that look at whether anything you're doing with your government position that affect your business holdings," Noble said Monday. "There could be other conflicts, since this is an individual coming from a news organization. That includes a potential confidentiality conflict. … Importantly, there are legal conflicts [guidelines] that could be seen as impairing his ability to give impartial advice to the president."

Jason Miller, a Trump spokesman, did not respond to request for comment on Bannon's plans. Alexandra Preate, CEO of a public relations firm handling press inquiries for Breitbart, also did not respond to a request for comment.

Breitbart News embraced Trump's candidacy, and stands to benefit financially from his presidency as his largely conservative supporters seek information from non-mainstream news outlets about his administration.

In July alone, Breitbart his 192 million page views, 31 million unique views and 89 million site visits, according to a company statement.

Its influence in the conservative world cannot be denied. "And we're the number one political Facebook page in the world, with two million more engagements than Huffington Post," Breitbart editor-in-chief Alexander Marlow said in the same statement.

Now, the company's CEO will have the ear of a president of the United States that the Wall Street Journal on Sunday reported is overwhelmed by the scope of his new job. In fact, the newspaper reported President Barack Obama was so shocked by Trump's ignorance of the job that he intends to spend, for an outgoing president, perhaps an unprecedented amount of time with his successor.

That's one reason why many are alarmed about Bannon's influence. Another is the news organization's alleged ties to the so-called "alternative right." Critics say this cohort includes white supremacists, anti-Semites, anarchists.

Breitbart published a "conservative's guide to the alt-right" that says the group has an "addiction to provocation," employs "taboo-defying rhetoric" and is "a movement born out of the youthful, subversive, underground edges of the Internet."

Senior Democrats are reacting harshly to the Breitbart executive's coming move to the West Wing.

"After winning the presidency but losing the popular vote, President-elect Trump must try to bring Americans together — not continue to fan the flames of division and bigotry," House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said in a statement Monday.

"Bringing Steve Bannon into the White House is an alarming signal that President-elect Trump remains committed to the hateful and divisive vision that defined his campaign," Pelosi said. "There must be no sugarcoating the reality that a white nationalist has been named chief strategist for the Trump administration."

Phil Anderson whose firm DC Navigators represented Bannon in 2004 and who worked with Bannon on an independent expenditure political ad against Democrat John Kerry during the 2004 presidential campaign, predicted Bannon will be a White House player in the tradition of Lee Atwater, James Carville, Karl Rove and David Axelrod.

"What he has in common with a series of these counselor to the president-type players is the ability to fuse politics, policy and public relations/media," Anderson said. "It makes you a very impactful player inside the White House."

"It's a perfect role for him," he added. "He's an excellent strategist."

The appointment of someone like Bannon is rare. So, too, was the Trump campaign's tone and tactics, prompting some to question whether the unconventional president-elect will be as unconventional in his enforcement of ethics rules.

Senior officials "normally are asked to give up any board positions or officer positions that establish a fiduciary relationship to a private entity," said Robert Kelner, chair of the election and political law practice at the Covington & Burley, and election and political law firm. "But it's not clear that that's strictly required by law" – though it has been the practice in recent administrations, Kelner added.

It remains to be seen whether Trump will abide by his campaign-trail pledge to rid Washington of its ethically questionable practices or, as Eisen put it, try to "thread the needle through which he could squeeze some exceptions for his senior staff."

"The president-elect has said he would drain the swamp," he said. "It would not be swamp-draining to make those kinds of exceptions."

Kate Ackley contributed to this report.Contact Bennett at johnbennett@cqrollcall.com. Follow him on Twitter @BennettJohnT.

Where Does Breitbart End And Bannon And The New Administration Begin?

By Paul Farhi

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

Stephen K. Bannon helped build Breitbart News Network into the clarion of Donald Trump's anti-establishment political movement with a pugnacious approach that critics have called racist, misogynistic and xenophobic. And then Bannon really went to work for Trump, steering the campaign that made Trump the 45th president.

Now, as Trump ascends to the White House, the question is: Where does Breitbart end and Bannon and the new administration they helped midwife begin?

Trump on Sunday named Bannon his chief White House strategist and senior counselor, a powerful position that acknowledges Bannon's role as the "Trump whisperer," the man with the president-elect's ear. Bannon, a former investment banker, joined Trump's campaign in August and helped guide it to its stunning upset over Democrat Hillary Clinton last week.

Since then, neither Bannon nor staff members at Breitbart have spelled out what their relationship will be after candidate Trump becomes President Trump. But even if Bannon and the website sever all ties, they will face an unusual, and awkward, situation: Bannon would be the former executive of a media organization that openly supported his political patron who will serve the president in a senior capacity while his media organization continues to cover him and his new boss.

"Breitbart will now go from being the propaganda arm of the Trump campaign to effectively becoming a state-run medium," said Kurt Bardella, Breitbart's former spokesman. "They will exist to tell the narrative of the Trump presidency to their audience to ensure their alternate reality they successfully ran on stays intact regardless of the situational reality and condition of this country. There is no separation between Breitbart and the Trump White House."

Bannon remains on Breitbart's masthead as its executive chairman, although his day-to-day involvement as its chief editorial strategist (and host of its daily satellite radio program) were mothballed when he officially joined Trump's team over the summer.

He also remains chairman of the Government Accountability Institute, a think tank that supported the research behind "Clinton Cash," by GCI president Peter Schweizer. The book detailed Bill and Hillary Clinton's business and philanthropic interests, including the role of foreign governments in supporting the charitable Clinton Foundation.

Beyond that, much is unclear. Breitbart News, like Trump, has never made its financial records public, so it's not known whether Bannon owns stock in the organization and whether he would sell it to avoid any appearance of a conflict while serving in the White House.

Breitbart News Network LLC — which is based in Los Angeles but operates a newsroom out of a Capitol Hill townhouse that also serves as Bannon's pied-à-terre in Washington — is closely held among a few people, including co-founder Larry Solov and the family of the late Andrew Breitbart, its other founder.

One of Breitbart's primary financial backers is billionaire hedge-fund manager Robert Mercer, whose daughter, Rebekah, is part of Trump's presidential transition team. The

Mercers were reportedly influential in persuading Trump to add Bannon and pollster Kellyanne Conway to his campaign team.

Alexander Marlow, Breitbart's editor in chief, declined to clarify the site's relationship with Bannon in an exchange of emails Sunday. Breitbart's spokeswoman, Alexandra Preate, also would not offer a response. Bannon did not reply to a request for comment.

The most obvious change is definitional. Trump's election has transformed Breitbart from a scrappy, even scabrous outsider — the scourge of what Bannon and Marlow contemptuously refer to as "the establishment" — into the ultimate insider and defender of the status quo.

The "outsider" role was enormously rewarding for Breitbart, which started in 2008 as an aggregator of wire-service articles selected by Andrew Breitbart and Marlow, then a student at the University of California at Berkeley (Breitbart died of a heart attack at age 43 in 2012; Bannon, then a board member, stepped in weeks later as executive chairman). Since then, and particularly this year, it has grown into the home of the rising Trump movement and its shadowy underbelly, the alt-right that is often synonymous with racism and white nationalism.

Last month, it reported that it had reached a new high-water mark for online traffic with 37 million unique visitors, a count that rivals such mainstream news sites as ABCNews.com and CBSNews.com and exceeds LATimes.com. It has also announced plans to expand to sites in Germany and France, adding to its existing international operations in Great Britain and Israel.

On Monday, the site continued to stump for Trump with headlines that attacked his now-defeated, and largely powerless, opponents.

"Clinton Top Aide Huma Abedin Seen Openly Weeping on Streets of New York," read one. Another: "Giuliani: 'Professional Protesters,' Not Hillary Supporters, Marching Across the Nation." And another: "Meltdown Continues: Wave of Fake 'Hate Crimes' Sweeps Social Media."

It also kept up its relentless attacks on immigration and "multiculturalism" that not only echo Trump's views but also those of Europe's far-right political parties, such as Nigel Farage's UK Independence Party in Britain and Marine Le Pen's National Front. A typical headline on the site Monday: "Feds Pull Agents Off Open Border to 'Process' Alien Surge."

Bannon was little known outside political circles until he was appointed to Trump's campaign in mid-August. The spotlight was not flattering; reporters unearthed a police report from 1996 in which one of Bannon's ex-wives, Mary Louise Piccard, accused him of misdemeanor domestic violence, battery and dissuading a witness (Bannon pleaded not guilty and the charges were dropped). Piccard later said in divorce proceedings that Bannon didn't want their daughters to attend an exclusive school in Los Angeles because many Jewish students attended the school and "he didn't want the girls going to school with Jews."

Another media report disclosed that Bannon and another ex-wife were registered to vote in two places, including at a vacant house in Florida that was scheduled to be demolished — a potential violation of election law. The report was particularly ironic, given Trump's claims of rampant voter fraud.

All of which may help explain negative reactions to Trump's appointment of Bannon to a senior role in his administration. On Sunday, Republican strategist and CNN and ABC News commentator Ana Navarro tweeted about Bannon: "A white supremacist Neanderthal in WH w/President's ear is DISGUSTING & TERRIFYING."

Breitbart's biggest star is British blogger and provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos, who helped lead the attacks on female video-game programmers in an online troll war that became known as Gamergate. Twitter permanently banned Yiannopoulos in July after he led a wave of racist abuse of "Ghostbusters" star Leslie Jones.

"They were the house organ for Trump and will obviously remain so," said Ben Shapiro, a former columnist and editor at large at Breitbart.

Bardella and Shapiro ended their association with Breitbart in March after the site publicly doubted and later rebuked one of its own reporters, Michelle Fields, after an incident at a Trump news conference in Florida. Fields said Trump's then-campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, had grabbed her arm and yanked her away from Trump as she sought to interview him at the event.

Trump and Lewandowski denied Fields's assertions and, like Breitbart News, disparaged her. But a closed-circuit recording of the event showed that Lewandowski had done exactly what Fields described.

Media figures such as Bannon sometimes take an informal advisory role in presidential administrations, but only a few have leveraged their influence over a news organization to gain office or become senior advisers, said W. Joseph Campbell, a media historian at American University in Washington. Among others, Campbell said, were newspaper baron William Randolph Hearst, who served two terms in Congress, but he failed in his bids to win the presidency or governorship of New York; President Warren G. Harding, who had been a newspaper publisher in Ohio; and President Lyndon Johnson, who owned radio and TV stations in his native Texas.

Obama Ducks A Question About Steve Bannon

By Nolan D. McCaskill

Politico, November 14, 2016

President Barack Obama on Monday dodged a question about President-elect Donald Trump's appointment of Steve Bannon as his chief strategist and senior counselor, but scolded Americans who failed to vote.

"Without copping out, it would not be appropriate for me to comment on every appointment that the president-elect starts making if I wanna be consistent with the notion that we're gonna try to facilitate a smooth transition," Obama said Monday at a news conference at the White House ahead of a foreign trip to Greece, Germany and Peru. "Look, the people have spoken. Donald Trump will be the next president, the 45th president of the United States. And it will be up to him to set up a team that he thinks will serve him well and reflect his policies."

Indeed, despite trailing in the popular vote to Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton by nearly 1 million votes, Trump clinched the White House on Election Night by surpassing 270 electoral votes.

On Sunday, the president-elect tapped Bannon to serve in the West Wing with Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus, who will serve as Trump's chief of staff. While Republicans lauded the selection of Priebus, Democrats and some conservatives blasted Bannon's appointment as a sop to white nationalists.

While top Republicans largely kept silent on Bannon, Democrats and others slammed the Trump campaign CEO and former executive chairman of the alt-right outlet Breitbart News, casting him as a racist, misogynist white supremacist.

But it's in Trump's power to name whoever he wants to fill his administration, Obama said.

"Those who didn't vote for him have to recognize that that's how democracy works. That's how this system operates," Obama said. "When I won, there were a number of people who didn't like me and what I stood for. And, you know, I think that whenever you've got an incoming president of the other side, particularly in a bitter election like this, it takes a while for people to reconcile themselves with that new reality."

But it's a reminder of the importance of voting, Obama continued, rebuking the millions of voters who stayed home.

"Hopefully it's a reminder that elections matter and voting counts," he said. "And so — I don't know how many times we have to re-learn this lesson because we ended up having 43 percent of the country not voting who are eligible to vote, but it makes a difference."

Rudy Giuliani, John Bolton Are Leading Candidates For Next Secretary Of State

Aides to President-elect Trump are focusing on former New York City mayor and former U.S. ambassador to U.N.

By Damian Paletta And Jay Solomon

Wall Street Journal, November 14, 2016

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

Donald Trump Leaning Toward Extreme Militant John Bolton As Secretary Of State

Huffington Post, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — President-elect Donald Trump is leaning toward naming as secretary of state John Bolton, a bellicose enemy of Russia and Iran who is among the most hawkish members of the Republican foreign policy community, according to two sources familiar with Trump's thinking.

Bolton is the former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, but served less than two years, as Democrats banded together to block his long-term appointment. His time was marked by a rapid uptick in anti-American sentiment among the global diplomatic community. Bolton remains one of the most disliked foreign policy operators on the world stage.

One source said that Tennessee Sen. Bob Corker still had an outside chance of winning the position, if he made a play for it and enough Republicans rallied to his side. The Wall Street Journal reported Monday that Rudy Giuliani is also under consideration for the post.

Bolton would be an aggressive selection for Trump, shattering his pledge to work peacefully with other countries. Bolton, who has called for the bombing of Iran, held high-level roles in three different Republican administrations between 1998 and 2006. He is now a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank whose vice president has described Trump as "an idiot."

Bolton, though an assistant, declined to comment.

If confirmed as Trump's top diplomat, Bolton would be reporting to a commander-in-chief who appears to espouse a worldview that is diametrically opposed to his own. Bolton has repeatedly slammed President Barack Obama for his willingness to engage in limited cooperation with Russia in Syria and Iran.

"While Mr. Obama sleepwalks, Mr. Putin is ardently pursuing Russia's Middle East objectives," Bolton wrote in a 2013 op ed that argued against assuming the U.S. has common interests with Russia in Syria.

In 2014, speculating that Russia was responsible for the downing of a Malaysian plane over Ukraine, Bolton told Fox News, "I think we've got to begin to treat Russia like the adversary that Putin is currently demonstrating it to be."

Two years later, Bolton expressed hope that that Obama wouldn't do anything in his final year in office to legitimize Russia's military efforts in Syria, where U.S. defense officials say Russia is focused on bombing Syrian opposition fighters rather than ISIS. "Until Mr. Obama departs

the White House," Bolton wrote last October, "Washington must not do anything perceived as legitimizing Moscow's new Latakia air base, or the presence of Russian aircraft and cruise missiles in the skies over the region. The suggestion that we exchange deconfliction codes with Russia is what the French call a fausse bonne idee, a superficially appealing bad idea."

Bolton's potential new boss, a man who has extensive financial ties with Russia, is far more likely than Obama to legitimize Moscow's military endeavors in the Middle East. Trump broke with the Republican orthodoxy by suggesting that the U.S. abandon its efforts to fight ISIS in Syria and let Russia take over. "This has happened before. We back a certain side, and that side turns out to be a total catastrophe," Trump said in September, referring to the U.S. support for the opposition groups fighting ISIS and Syrian president Bashar Assad. "Russia likes Assad, seemingly, a lot — let them worry about ISIS. Let them fight it out."

On Monday, as talk of Bolton as secretary of state swirled, Trump called Putin. The two leaders committed to working to normalize relations, a Kremlin readout of the call said. The current relationship, Trump and Putin agreed, is "extremely unsatisfactory."

In 2014, Trump gave $5,000 to John Bolton's Super PAC.

During the presidential campaign, some antiwar critics of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that Trump would be a less hawkish president than Clinton. Trump naming Bolton as secretary of state would call the quality of that analysis into question.

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Trump Considering Woman, Openly Gay Man For Leadership Posts

By Steve Peoples And Julie Pace

Associated Press, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – His nascent administration already under attack, President-elect Donald Trump was considering Monday whether to inject new diversity into the GOP by recommending a woman to lead the Republican Party and an openly gay man to represent the United States at the United Nations.

The moves, among dozens under consideration from his transition team, follow an intense and extended backlash from Trump's decision on Sunday to appoint Steve Bannon, a man celebrated by the white nationalist movement, to serve as his chief strategist and senior adviser.

"After winning the presidency but losing the popular vote, President-elect Trump must try to bring Americans together – not continue to fan the flames of division and bigotry," said House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi. She called Bannon's appointment "an alarming signal" that Trump "remains committed to the hateful and divisive vision that defined his campaign."

His inauguration just 66 days away, however, Trump focused on building his team and speaking to foreign leaders. He remained sequestered in Trump Tower in New York.

Inexperienced on the international stage, the Republican president-elect spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin on the phone. His transition office said in a readout that "he is very much looking forward to having a strong and enduring relationship with Russia and the people of Russia." Trump has spoken in recent days with the leaders of China, Mexico, South Korea and Canada.

At the same time, Trump was considering tapping Richard Grenell as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. He would be the first openly gay person to fill a Cabinet-level foreign policy post. Grenell, known in part for aggressive criticism of rivals on Twitter, previously served as U.S. spokesman at the U.N. under President George W. Bush.

Trump was also weighing whether to select Michigan GOP chairwoman Ronna Romney McDaniel, a niece of chief Trump critic and 2012 presidential nominee Mitt Romney. She would be the second woman ever to lead the Republican National Committee – and the first in four decades.

"I'll be interested in whatever Mr. Trump wants," McDaniel told The Associated Press on Monday, adding that she was planning to seek the Michigan GOP chairmanship again.

Appointing McDaniel to run the GOP's political arm could be an effort to help the party heal the anger after a campaign in which Trump demeaned women. The appointment of Grenell, who has openly supported same-sex marriage, could begin to ease concerns by the gay community about Vice President-elect Mike Pence's opposition to same-sex marriage during his time as Indiana governor.

The personnel moves under consideration were confirmed by people with direct knowledge of Trump's thinking who were not authorized to publicly disclose private discussions. They stressed that the decisions were not final.

Internal deliberations about staffing come a day after Trump made overtures to warring Republican circles by appointing Bannon and RNC Chairman Reince Priebus as his White House chief of staff.

The former media executive, who led a website that appealed to the so-called "alt-right" – a movement often associated with efforts on the far right to preserve "white identity," oppose multiculturalism and defend "Western values."

Priebus on Monday defended the media mogul, saying the two made an effective pair as they steered Trump past Democrat Hillary Clinton and toward the presidency. He

sought to distance Bannon from the incendiary headlines on his website, saying they were written by unspecified others.

"Together, we've been able to manage a lot of the decision making in regard to the campaign," Priebus told NBC's "Today." "It's worked very, very well."

President Barack Obama avoided any direct criticism of Trump's personnel moves during an afternoon news conference, suggesting that the new president deserves "room to staff up."

"It's important for us to let him make his decisions," Obama said. "The American people will judge over the course of the next couple of years whether they like what they see."

The outgoing president encouraged Trump, however, to embrace a unifying tone.

"It's really important to try to send some signals of unity and to reach out to minority groups or women or others that were concerned about the tenor of the campaign," Obama said. "And I think that's something he will – he will want to do."

Trump's hires were, at first glance, contradictory, though they fit a pattern of the celebrity businessman creating a veritable Rorschach test that allowed his supporters to see what they wanted. Priebus, who lashed the RNC to Trump this summer despite some intraparty objections, is a GOP operative with deep expertise of the Washington establishment that Trump has vowed to shake up. He has close ties to House Speaker Paul Ryan, a fellow Wisconsinite.

Bannon, meanwhile, helped transform the Breitbart News site into the leading mouthpiece of the party's anti-establishment wing, which helped fuel the businessman's political rise. Ryan has been one of his most frequent targets.

Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO and national director of the Anti-Defamation League, called Bannon's selection "a sad day."

Bannon, Greenblatt said, "presided over the rise of Breitbart as a haven online" for the "alt-right." The website under Bannon's leadership "trafficked in the some of the worst tropes, not just only against Jews – but the anti-Semitism is real – but also against other minorities, particularly Mexicans and Muslims."

Associated Press writers Thomas Beaumont in Des Moines, Iowa, Ken Thomas in New York, Donna Cassata in Washington and Bill Barrow in Atlanta contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that McDaniel would not be the first woman to chair the RNC and is a Romney niece, not a former sister-in-law.

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Reports: Giuliani Favorite To Be Secretary Of State

By David Jackson

USA Today, November 14, 2016

Former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani campaigns for Donald Trump in Eau Claire, Wis., on Nov. 1, 2016. (Photo: Matt Rourke, AP)

The speculation game for Donald Trump's Cabinet is heating up — and now Rudy Giuliani is getting attention.

The former New York City mayor, who has been discussed for attorney general and defense secretary, is now being talked up for secretary of State, according to reports by the Associated Press and the Wall Street Journal.

Trump spokesman Jason Miller neither confirmed nor denied the reports about Giuliani.

"You can't believe everything you read. I don't want to play the speculation game as far as names. There's a thorough, detailed process that the Vice President-elect and the transition team are going through and the President-elect will make the decision and let us know."

Also reportedly in the mix: John Bolton, the former UN ambassador, and Bob Corker, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The decision could be weeks away and other candidates could surface, the Journal reported, citing unnamed sources.

Trump, Pence To Discuss Cabinet Picks Tuesday

By Cristiano Lima

Politico, November 14, 2016

President-elect Donald Trump and Vice President-elect Mike Pence will meet Tuesday at Trump Tower to review candidates for federal appointments, according to a campaign spokesman.

Transition communications adviser Jason Miller announced Monday night that the pair will be reviewing "a number of names" for cabinet and senior White House positions in the Trump-Pence administration Tuesday.

"There has been a lot of work put in by both the Vice President-elect and a number of members of the transition team," he said, according to a pool report.

"I don't want to put a finite time able. Obviously, inauguration day is not getting further away. And people need to get going. This is an absolute top priority understood by the President-elect and the Vice President-elect."

Though Miller would not say whether any decisions were forthcoming in light of the meeting, he stressed that any gathering between Trump and Pence signified strong deliberations, adding: "If the Vice President-elect is getting together with the President-elect to discuss names, then I would say that it's serious, obviously."

Asked about reports that Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions is the leading candidate to become Trump's secretary of defense, Miller lavished the senator with praise.

"I'm a huge fan of Sen. Sessions and the President-elect will be lucky to have him in any capacity," he said.

On Sunday, Trump announced he had selected Republican National Committee chairman Reince Priebus as his chief of staff and Steve Bannon as chief strategist and senior counselor.

"Steve and Reince are highly qualified leaders who worked well together on our campaign and led us to a historic victory. Now I will have them both with me in the White House as we work to make America great again," Trump said in a statement.

While the selection of Priebus received praise from conservatives, Bannon's inclusion received widespread condemnation, from minority groups to conservative operatives who who fear he will bring extremist "alt-right" ideology into the White House.

Trump Adviser Linked To Turkish Lobbying

By Isaac Arnsdorf

Politico, November 14, 2016

Donald Trump wants to forbid his officials from lobbying for foreign governments, but one of his top national security advisers is being paid by a close ally of Turkey's president.

Retired Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, a vice chair of the Trump transition who is in the running for a top national security post in the new administration, runs a consulting firm that is lobbying for Turkish interests, an associate told POLITICO. Asked if Flynn's firm was hired because of the general's closeness to Trump, the associate, Robert Kelley, said, "I hope so."

Kelley told POLITICO that the client, a Dutch consulting firm called Inovo BV, was founded by Kamil Ekim Alptekin. Alptekin is chairman of the Turkish-American Business Council, known as TAIK, an arm of the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey, whose members are chosen by the country's general assembly and economic minister. In that role, Alptekin was involved in organizing Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Washington earlier this year.

The Turkish government's connection to Flynn's client was first reported by the Daily Caller.

A lobbying registration posted Sept. 30 said that Kelley, a former chief counsel to the House National Security Subcommittee, would lobby on bills funding the departments of State and Defense.

"We're going to keep them informed of U.S. foreign and domestic policy," Kelley said. "They want to keep posted on what we all want to be informed of: the present situation, the transition between President Obama and President-Elect Trump."

Kelley said he didn't know if the client presented a conflict of interest. A spokesman for Flynn said he was too busy to answer questions. The Trump transition and the Turkish-American Business Council didn't answer requests for comment.

The "contract with the American voter" released by the Trump transition pledges to instate "a lifetime ban on White House officials lobbying on behalf of a foreign government."

Flynn wrote an op-ed published in The Hill on Election Day arguing that the U.S. should not provide "safe haven" to Fethullah Gülen, the Pennsylvania-based cleric who the Turkish government has accused of masterminding this summer's failed coup. (Gülen denies the allegation.)

"We need to see the world from Turkey's perspective," Flynn wrote. "What would we have done if right after 9/11 we heard the news that Osama bin Laden lives in a nice villa at a Turkish resort while running 160 charter schools funded by the Turkish taxpayers?"

Flynn compared Gulen to Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran and tied Hillary Clinton aide Huma Abedin to an academic journal that he said promoted "radical Muslim thinkers." (A Washington Post fact-check debunked that characterization of the journal.) He did not disclose his firm's lobbying contract in the article.

Kelley said he didn't know if Flynn's op/ed was related to the lobbying contract. But he suggested reading a recent New Yorker article about Gulen that gave credence to his followers' role in the attempted overthrow.

In response to the op-ed, Gülen's lawyers at Steptoe & Johnson said in a statement, "We hope that Mr. Flynn's op-ed on Mr. Gülen and Turkish-American relations, published before the results of the election were known, is not a statement of policy for President-Elect Trump. The extradition process is a serious one, governed by treaty with Turkey that is clear about the steps that need to be taken in such cases. It should not be a political matter."

The Alliance for Shared Values, a nonprofit affiliated with the Gulenist movement in the U.S., said hiring Flynn's firm appeared to be part of a Turkish government smear campaign against the cleric.

"This is just another example of the Turkish government spending significant amounts of taxpayer dollars to spread falsehoods and persecute any critics without evidence of wrongdoing," it said in a statement.

The lobbying registration didn't say how much Flynn's company was being paid, and Kelley said he didn't know. It's

the first-ever lobbying registration for Flynn Intel Group, which the general founded after leaving government in 2014.

The routing of a government-linked lobbying effort through a European organization smacks of the lobbying scandal that helped bring down Paul Manafort as Trump's campaign chairman this summer. The Associated Press revealed that Manafort, as an adviser to a pro-Russian political party in Ukraine, coordinated U.S. lobbying through a Brussels-based think tank.

Flynn, a former director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, is widely considered a contender for defense secretary or national security adviser. The former role would require a congressional waiver because he has not yet been a civilian for seven years.

Flynn has ruffled national security circles by appearing on Russian state-fund television and accompanying Trump to classified briefings.

Nahal Toosi contributed reporting.

Mnuchin Said To Be Top Treasury Pick Among Trump's Advisers

By Jennifer Jacobs

Bloomberg Politics, November 14, 2016

Former Goldman Sachs Group Inc. partner Steven Mnuchin has been recommended by Donald Trump's transition team to serve as Treasury secretary, according to two people familiar with the process, and the choice is awaiting the president-elect's final decision.

Mnuchin, the campaign's national finance chairman, has been considered the leading candidate for the job. Trump has displayed a pattern of loyalty to his closest campaign allies in early administration selections, and Mnuchin, 53, had signed on at a time when many from Wall Street stayed away.

Before joining Trump, Mnuchin rose through the kind of elite institutions the president-elect spent his campaign vilifying. Mnuchin was tapped into Yale's Skull and Bones secret society, became a Goldman Sachs partner like his father before him, ran a hedge fund, worked with George Soros, funded Hollywood blockbusters and bought a failed bank, IndyMac, with billionaires including John Paulson. They renamed it OneWest, drew protests for foreclosing on U.S. borrowers, and ultimately generated considerable profits, selling the business last year to CIT Group Inc. for $3.4 billion.

Mnuchin, who co-founded hedge fund Dune Capital Management LP, was seen at Trump Tower Monday. Asked by reporters why he was there, he said, "I'm here just helping with the transition this week. A lot of work to do." He had no immediate comment when reached about the Treasury post.

Mnuchin would become the third former Goldman Sachs executive to head the Treasury since the mid-1990s. Robert Rubin and Henry Paulson both ran the Wall Street firm before becoming Treasury chiefs under presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, respectively.

It's a longstanding pattern that has earned Goldman the nickname "Government Sachs," and it currently extends to the Federal Reserve and abroad. New York Fed President William Dudley is the firm's former chief U.S. economist. Bank of England Governor Mark Carney was a managing director at the firm. European Central Bank President Mario Draghi was vice chairman of its international arm.

On Sunday, Trump named another Goldman alumnus, the former Breitbart News chief Steve Bannon, to one of his top posts in his White House, chief strategist and senior counselor.

The investment bank's shares have climbed 15 percent since the Nov. 8 election.

The next Treasury chief's challenges will include a budget deficit that's forecast to widen and require increased debt issuance; an economy that's been stuck in a period of slow growth and exacerbated income inequality; and international partners wary about the new president's approach to trade. During the campaign, the real estate mogul indicated that among his first moves will be a Treasury designation naming China a currency manipulator.

Joining the campaign this year, Mnuchin was charged with a seemingly insurmountable task: Go up against the Hillary Clinton money machine that was out-organizing and out-raising Trump. The campaign had no organized fundraising operation because Trump relied mostly on his own money to get through the primaries.

If Mnuchin is confirmed for the Treasury role, it could save him millions in taxes. A 1989 rule allows him to sell stock tax-free if he reinvests the proceeds in Treasuries or in government-approved funds. The loophole was designed for executives who need to sell shares to comply with conflict-of-interest rules.

Mnuchin owns $97 million of CIT Group, according to a February ownership filing, the latest available. Because he received most of those shares when CIT purchased OneWest Bank in 2015, the exact cost basis that would be used to calculate his taxes isn't immediately clear.

Previous Treasury secretaries have taken advantage of the rule. Henry Paulson was eligible to save about $48 million on roughly $495 million of Goldman Sachs shares when he was nominated to run the department in 2006, the New York Times reported at the time.Goldman Experience

Mnuchin started his career in the early 1980s as a trainee at Salomon Brothers. He went on to spend 17 years at Goldman Sachs, where a mentor showed him how the firm could profit from the savings-and-loan crisis of the 1980s, buying up assets cheap. Mnuchin oversaw mortgage-backed-bond trading at Goldman before becoming the investment bank's chief information officer in 1999. He left in 2002 and

two years later founded Dune Capital, named for a spot near his house in the Hamptons.

The 2008 financial crisis lured Mnuchin back into banking. That summer, he was in his New York office when he saw a TV news shot of customers lined up outside a branch of IndyMac, a California lender, trying to pull out their money.

"This bank is going to end up failing, and we need to figure out how to buy it," he told a colleague, recalling the lessons of the savings and loan crisis. "I've seen this game before."

The bank collapsed that July, just months before Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc.'s failure set off a global emergency. At one of the murkiest moments of the crisis, Mnuchin gathered investors for a $1.6 billion bid to buy IndyMac. He got an agreement that guaranteed the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. would absorb almost all the loan losses after a certain threshold. He renamed the bank OneWest. Within a year, it was profitable.

In October 2011 about 100 protesters marched on his Los Angeles mansion, angry about foreclosures. "Steve Mnuchin," one sign read, "Stop taking our homes." He and his partners completed the bank's sale in August 2015.

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Trump Said To Narrow Choices For Treasury To Mnuchin, Ross

By Ben White

Politico, November 14, 2016

NEW YORK — Donald Trump has narrowed his focus for Treasury secretary to a pair of candidates, former Goldman Sachs banker Steve Mnuchin and billionaire investor Wilbur Ross, people familiar with the matter said.

Mnuchin, who served as a senior adviser and finance chair for the Trump campaign, is the leading candidate, these people said. The people added that they did not believe Trump had finalized a decision on Treasury and that names in play could still change.

People working on the Trump transition team have also reached out to other potential Treasury secretaries including current JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon and Kevin Warsh, a former Federal Reserve governor currently at Stanford's Hoover Institution, people familiar with the matter said. House Financial Services Chairman Jeb Hensarling (R-Texas) has also been mentioned for Treasury. But Hensarling has said he's focused on rewriting financial regulations under a Trump presidency.

Dimon has said in the past that he is not interested in the job. He made it clear to Trump transition officials that he would not be a good fit for the job but would be available to offer help and advice to the new administration, a person familiar with the matter said. Warsh is likely to be more focused on future openings at the Federal Reserve.

A Trump spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the Treasury search. Mnuchin and Ross also did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Mnuchin, a consistent front-runner for the Treasury job, was seen at Trump Tower in Manhattan on Monday.

Treasury secretary will be a critical post in Trump's administration helping design a fiscal policy that calls for heavy new spending on infrastructure and a re-rewrite of both the corporate and individual tax code. Much of the work on these plans will be done out of the West Wing of the White House along with House Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. But Treasury will play a key role in both helping craft and eventually selling the plan to Congress and the public.

Mnuchin, 53, spent nearly two decades at Goldman Sachs, where he was a partner and eventually chief information officer. Mnuchin later launched a successful career as a film mogul, backing major films including "Suicide Squad," which came out over the summer. He is now chief executive of the New York-based hedge fund Dune Capital. Mnuchin received heavy criticism from the left for his role in the takeover of the subprime mortgage business of failed lender IndyMac, which was renamed OneWest and came under fire from regulators for its foreclosure practices.

Mnuchin has said the 2010 Dodd-Frank law, which stepped up regulation of the finance industry, "needs to be looked at." He has also said there are good and bad aspects of the law, according to a Bloomberg profile from August.

Zachary Warmbrodt contributed to this report.

Trump Cabinet Could Have More Texans: McCaul And Hensarling

By Alex Daugherty

McClatchy, November 14, 2016

Donald Trump will likely tap into Texas' deep bench of rock-ribbed Republicans to fill his Cabinet, and two members of Congress are being floated as potential picks.

Rep. Michael McCaul of Austin and Rep. Jeb Hensarling of Dallas are being mulled by Trump for Secretary of Homeland Security and Secretary of the Treasury, joining former Texas governor Rick Perry and agriculture commissioner Sid Miller as potential picks from the Lone Star State.

McCaul and Hensarling will play a big role in implementing Trump's legislative agenda even if they aren't tapped to fill the Cabinet, as McCaul chairs the House Homeland Security Committee while Hensarling leads the Financial Services Committee.

Trump could bring McCaul and Hensarling to the White House, leveraging their experience on Capitol Hill and

conservative credentials to achieve key policy goals in lockstep with a Republican-controlled Congress.

"There are several people with quite a bit of experience in the House that may be on Trump's short list," said TCU politics professor Jim Riddlesperger. "Cabinet members go to Congress and there's a constant interaction with Congress."

McCaul is one of a few names being considered for Secretary of Homeland Security, along with Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions and Milwaukee County sheriff David Clarke.

Sessions is heavily tipped to join Trump's cabinet in some capacity since he endorsed Trump early in the Republican primary, but he could choose to be Attorney General or Secretary of Defense, opening a post for McCaul.

McCaul has made cybersecurity a priority in the past, sponsoring a bill in 2013 that would require the Department of Homeland Security to conduct cybersecurity activities and codify a response plan for cybersecurity incidents involving private companies.

In October, McCaul briefed Trump on national security after the first presidential debate and advised that Russia was using hacked information to influence the election, but Trump didn't believe him.

"I think he has in his mind that there's not the proof," McCaul said during a Texas Tribune event. "Now he hasn't had the briefing I had, but I made it clear that in my judgment it was a nation-state."

Trump and McCaul have one thing in common – both are wealthy.

McCaul is the second wealthiest member of Congress, with a net worth of at least $107 million according to Roll Call. Most of the wealth is listed as investments in the name of McCaul's wife, Linda, the daughter of Clear Channel Communications founder Lowry Mays.

Perry reportedly encouraged McCaul to challenge incumbent Republican Sen. Ted Cruz in 2018, but that was before Trump won the White House.

"I think Michael McCaul, congressman, who is the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, would be a great Homeland Security director," said Texas Lt. Gov. and Trump supporter Dan Patrick to a Houston TV station.

McCaul's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Hensarling, a longtime friend of Vice President-elect Mike Pence, gained notoriety for opposing the $700 billion bailout in 2008.

"How can we have capitalism on the way up, and socialism on the way down?" Hensarling said in a 2008 statement. "If we lose our ability to fail will we not soon lose our ability to succeed?"

The bailout was approved by Congress over Hensarling's objections and immediately signed into law by then-president Bush.

Hensarling is also a vocal opponent of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, which bankrolls American exports.

"The bank leads to an unfair economy," he said. "One-third of Ex-Im's credit exposure benefits Boeing."

Trump also opposes the Export-Import Bank.

Hensarling backed Trump beginning in May before a number of Texas Republicans, and he held a fundraiser with Wall Street representatives at a Utah ski resort six weeks after taking the financial service chairmanship.

Hensarling, who did not immediately respond to a request for comment, told CNN on Friday he would "take the call" from Trump's transition team.

"I have a great job and the job I've always wanted in Congress," Hensarling said. "I'm very excited about Donald Trump's economic agenda for America, fundamental tax reform, getting rid of bank bailouts, getting rid of Dodd-Frank, having better competitive trade deals."

Trump Set To Roll Back Obama Policies On Energy, Environment

By Matthew Daly And Julie Pace

McClatchy, November 14, 2016

President-elect Donald Trump is considering an oil billionaire and a North Dakota lawmaker for top posts as he moves to roll back President Barack Obama's environmental and energy policies and allow unfettered production of oil, coal and natural gas.

Trump has vowed to rescind "all job-destroying Obama executive actions" and pledges to sharply increase oil and gas drilling on federal lands while opening up offshore drilling in the Atlantic Ocean and other areas where it is blocked.

Topping Trump's to-do list is repealing the Clean Power Plan, Obama's signature effort to limit carbon pollution from coal-fired power plants. The plan — the linchpin of Obama's strategy to fight climate change — is currently on hold awaiting a court ruling.

Trump also is targeting recent Obama administration efforts to reduce air and water pollution that have been opposed by Republicans and industries that profit from the extraction and burning of fossil fuels, including a rule to protect small streams and wetlands and ozone regulations designed to cut down on smog.

Those under consideration for energy secretary include Harold Hamm, an Oklahoma oil tycoon and leading proponent of fracking, and North Dakota Rep. Kevin Cramer, an early Trump supporter from a major oil drilling state, according to transition planning documents obtained by The Associated Press.

Venture capitalist Robert Grady, who worked in President George H.W. Bush's administration, is listed as a contender to lead both the Energy and Interior departments.

Cramer told reporters Monday he is happy to stay in Congress, especially "with a friend in the White House. And if another good friend like Harold Hamm would become secretary of energy, I'd feel like I won the lottery."

A coalition of conservative states has challenged both the Clean Power Plan and the water rule, which expanded the definition of waters protected under the Clean Water Act to smaller non-navigable waters and seasonal tributaries.

The administration says the rule would safeguard drinking water for 117 million people, but Republicans and some Democrats representing rural areas say the regulations are costly, confusing and amount to a government power grab. Federal courts have put the rules on hold as judges review lawsuits.

Trump also is likely to move quickly to approve the Keystone XL oil pipeline from Canada, which Obama rejected last year. Trump highlighted the project at a campaign stop in Florida last month and listed it among his top priorities for the first 100 days of his administration.

Karen Harbert, president and CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for 21st Century Energy, said Trump can and will move quickly to overturn Obama's executive orders. From there, he will likely move to approve a new five-year plan that vastly expands offshore drilling and lift a moratorium on coal leasing on federal lands.

"If you have a good offense and a good defense you will win," Harbert said. Whoever Trump picks for key jobs will share his goals of "moving fast, changing the process which is not working now and getting things done," she said.

Obama said Monday that Trump should be in no hurry to make changes, citing U.S. progress on reducing carbon emissions even as the price of gasoline hovers nears $2 a gallon. Trump and his team "may want to take the country in a significantly different direction, but they've got time to consider what exactly they want to achieve," Obama said at a news conference.

Environmental groups don't plan to make Trump's job easy.

"We intend to fight like mad, both in the courts and in the streets, to resist any rollbacks by the Trump administration," said Michael Brune, executive director of the Sierra Club.

Some of those protests have already begun. Groups opposing the construction of an oil pipeline through the Midwest are planning more than 200 protest actions across the country Tuesday.

The Army Corps of Engineers said Monday it wants more study and tribal input before approving the $3.8 billion Dakota Access pipeline from North Dakota to Illinois. The Standing Rock Sioux says the pipeline threatens its drinking water and cultural sites.

Even as they gear up to oppose Trump, Brune said environmentalists may find some common ground with the president-elect. Renewable energy sources such as wind and solar power not only help fight climate change but are creating thousands of new jobs across the country, he said.

"If President-elect Trump is looking for a stimulus in energy he will find it in the solar and wind industries," Brune said.

Trump has said tax credits and other subsidies for wind and solar power "distort" the market, but says the U.S. should "encourage all facets of the energy industry," including wind and solar power, as a way to achieve energy independence.

AP Congressional Correspondent Erica Werner contributed to this story.

Oil And Gas Mogul Hamm Tops Trump Short-list For U.S. Energy Secretary: Sources

Reuters, November 14, 2016

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

Sen. Sessions: I'd Be 'Pleased To Consider' Trump Cabinet Job

By Burgess Everett

Politico, November 14, 2016

Alabama GOP Sen. Jeff Sessions said on Monday he'd be "pleased to consider" a cabinet position in the administration of President-elect Donald Trump.

Sessions was Trump's first Senate endorser, and his name has been floated for a variety of jobs, most notably secretary of Defense.

"Happy to be in the Senate but if I were to be asked I'd be pleased to consider it," Sessions said in a brief interview.

Asked which job in particular he'd be interested in, Sessions demurred: "I'm just not talking about that."

The Alabama Republican is among the most conservative in Congress, taking hard lines on immigration issues and fiscal policy but generally well-liked among his GOP colleagues. He seemed to be chipper mood as he strolled into Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's office, bowing to the GOP leader as he entered for a meeting.

"Remarkable. It's a thrilling time," Sessions said of Trump's win.

Mary Jo White To Step Down As S.E.C. Chief

By Ben Protess And Alexandra Stevenson

New York Times, November 14, 2016

Wall Street regulators began an exodus from Washington on Monday as Mary Jo White, the chairwoman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, announced plans to leave the agency.

The decision makes Ms. White, a former federal prosecutor who has served more than two decades in the federal government, the first major Obama administration

appointee to step down after Donald J. Trump's upset victory last week. Other financial regulators are expected to follow suit in the coming weeks.

The election of Mr. Trump is a game-changer for the S.E.C. — and for that matter, all financial agencies.

Ms. White was expected to leave no matter the outcome of the election. But many Democrats had hoped that if Hillary Clinton won, she would choose a strong proponent of regulation to succeed Ms. White, whose policies often reflected a political middle ground. Now, the agency is almost certain to be pushed to the right.

Mr. Trump has vowed to dismantle Dodd-Frank, the financial regulatory overhaul Congress passed in response to the 2008 financial crisis. And although Dodd-Frank will more likely be watered down than repealed, his appointments will no doubt shift the tone and priorities across financial regulatory agencies.

The president-elect's biggest move on Wall Street could be his choice for Treasury secretary. Mr. Trump's short list is said to include Steven Mnuchin, an investment manager and former Goldman Sachs partner who was Mr. Trump's campaign finance chairman, and Representative Jeb Hensarling, Republican of Texas and chairman of the House Financial Services Committee.

Mr. Hensarling is still being considered, in part because of pressure from Congress, but Mr. Mnuchin is the favorite of Mr. Trump's Wall Street backers, according to someone with direct knowledge but who was not authorized to speak publicly. A decision is expected within 10 days.

Either way, the Trump Treasury Department might rein in the Financial Stability Oversight Council, a collection of regulators who examine financial risks and designate companies as systemically important. The Treasury secretary is chairman of the council and could effectively defang it, according to Ian Katz, a policy analyst at Capital Alpha who predicted that the council might essentially become "a quarterly kaffeeklatsch."

Mr. Trump was elected at a pivotal time for the S.E.C., an agency that had already turned a corner under Ms. White. Unlike Mary L. Schapiro, who inherited a scandal-plagued S.E.C. after the financial crisis, Ms. White needed not to save the agency, but to modernize it, a task that the next administration also will face.

Ms. White's departure, which will take effect at the end of the Obama administration in January, will set off speculation about whom Mr. Trump will select to succeed her. Though such talks have barely begun, the field of potential contenders could include Michael S. Piwowar, a Republican commissioner at the agency.

Paul S. Atkins, a former S.E.C. Republican commissioner who has advocated deregulatory policies, is leading Mr. Trump's effort to select a new chair for the agency and could be a candidate. Anthony Scaramucci, a hedge fund manager who supported Mr. Trump's candidacy, is also advising the transition team.

"As the head of the S.E.C., you've got to get back into reffing the game properly and end the demonization of Wall Street," Mr. Scaramucci said in an interview last week before his appointment to Mr. Trump's transition team.

As other of President Obama's financial regulators step down, the firewall around his Wall Street legacy will start to crumble. Timothy Massad, the chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, is expected to leave by early 2017, though he could briefly stay at the agency as a Democratic commissioner.

An even bigger change could occur at the banking regulators — the Federal Reserve, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency — which became a thorn in the side of Wall Street under President Obama. Martin J. Gruenberg and Thomas Curry, the leaders of the F.D.I.C. and O.C.C., will probably leave office next year when their terms expire, or possibly even sooner.

Daniel Tarullo, the Federal Reserve governor who oversees many of the central bank's regulatory efforts, is not expected to serve out his term through early 2022. He could leave early next year, which would deliver a blow to proponents of Wall Street regulation.

With turnover at the S.E.C., Ms. White's legacy could be in jeopardy as well.

She oversaw a record number of enforcement actions and directed a rapid pace of rule-writing based not only on Dodd-Frank, but on regulations of her own making. Those initiatives were aimed at improving money market fund regulation and the broader asset management industry.

"I think what we've done so far has been quite transformative and really modernized that core responsibility," Ms. White said in a recent interview.

Yet Ms. White has not completed more than a dozen rules, nor has she formalized a plan to require that financial advisers act in their clients' best interests. Now that these initiatives will fall into the hands of a Republican chairman, they may come off the agenda.

As it was, Ms. White, a political independent, drew criticism from liberal lawmakers who view her as the quintessential moderate. Senator Elizabeth Warren, the Massachusetts Democrat who channels the populist outrage over Wall Street excess, even called on President Obama to designate a new S.E.C. leader because the agency had not required companies to disclose political contributions.

In her first public remarks on the subject, Ms. White said in an interview that the criticism "really does come with the territory."

"I think I'm a very constructive recipient of constructive criticism," she said, adding: "It's not like you like people to beat on your head, whoever they are, however baseless it is."

Before the S.E.C., Ms. White was the first woman to become United States attorney in Manhattan, one of the most apolitical jobs in government. Earning a reputation as a tenacious prosecutor with an independent streak, Ms. White embraced the joke that her office was the United States attorney for the "sovereign," rather than Southern, district of New York.

"She's not motivated by any special interest," said Preet Bharara, a prosecutor under Ms. White who is now the United States attorney in Manhattan. "People may disagree from time to time, and, in fact, in any high-stakes environment, it would be unnatural if there weren't disagreement from special interests and adversaries. But she's hyper smart and makes a decision immune from any political wind or political criticism, and I think that's a good way to be."

Ms. White's prosecutorial experience — she supervised the original investigation into Osama bin Laden — raised expectations for her enforcement agenda at the S.E.C.

And in its last fiscal year, the agency brought a record 548 stand-alone enforcement actions. In conjunction with Andrew J. Ceresney, the agency's enforcement director, Ms. White reversed the S.E.C.'s longstanding yet unofficial policy of allowing companies to neither admit nor deny wrongdoing. Seventy-three such admissions have been made since.

Other "firsts" occurred under Ms. White and Mr. Ceresney: the first action against a major ratings firm, Standard & Poor's, and the first action against a company, KBR Inc., for inserting overly restrictive confidentiality agreements that could stifle whistle-blowers. Some of the agency's most novel cases came against private equity firms that failed to disclose fees and conflicts of interest.

Ms. White is known for keeping a workaholic's schedule. Colleagues said it was common for her to hold a 9 p.m. Sunday conference call, before dispatching middle-of-the night emails and placing a 5:30 a.m. call to senior staff.

But she also promoted staff morale by holding coffee and doughnut sessions. Every holiday season, she would give a party for her staff at Rosa Mexicano restaurant, where she would hand out gifts to each of her aide's children.

Ms. White, a partial Yankees season ticket holder whose favorite moment as S.E.C. chairwoman came when throwing out the first pitch at a Washington Nationals game, said her dream job would be the first female baseball commissioner.

"I really don't think about what I'm doing next until I'm done," she said, except, "If you have baseball commissioner to offer me, then I can tell you what my plans are."

SEC Chairwoman White Will Leave Post In January

By Vicki Needham

The Hill, November 14, 2016

Securities and Exchange Commission Chairwoman Mary Jo White on Monday said she will leave her post at the end of the Obama administration in January.

White, who has spent nearly four years as the agency's head, oversaw the bulk of the implementation of the Dodd-Frank financial reform law since taking the helm in April 2013.

"I am very proud of our three consecutive years of record enforcement actions, dozens of fundamental reforms through our rulemakings that have strengthened investor protections and market stability, and that the job satisfaction of our phenomenal staff has climbed in each of the last three years," White said in a statement.

White's term would have run through 2019.

Her departure leaves another key position open for President-elect Donald Trump to fill.

But the SEC took flack from Democrats such as Sen. Elizabeth Warren (Mass.) who called on President Obama to demote White for failing to crack down on Wall Street and to keep corporations from ramping up their political spending.

"My duty has been to ensure that the commission implemented strong investor and market protections, and to establish an enduring foundation for future progress in the most critical areas — asset management regulation, equity market structure and disclosure effectiveness," White said.

During White's tenure, the SEC brought more than 2,850 enforcement actions, the most recorded during any other three-year period in the commission's history. The agency notched judgments and orders totaling more than $13.4 billion in monetary sanctions.

The commission charged more than 3,300 companies and more than 2,700 individuals, including top business leaders.

She also oversaw a first-ever policy to require admissions of wrongdoing in certain cases.

White insisted that the SEC must remain independent.

"That independence is crucial to our ability to protect investors, safeguard our markets and facilitate the capital formation that fosters innovation and the growth that is essential to our national economy," she said.

SEC's White Says She Will Step Aside When Obama Leaves Office

By Benjamin Bain

Bloomberg News, November 14, 2016

Mary Jo White has stepped to the front of the line of financial regulators moving aside for Donald Trump's administration.

White, a political independent appointed by President Barack Obama, said Monday that she will step down as Securities and Exchange Commission chair in January. Her nearly four-year tenure has been highlighted by high-profile

enforcement cases and plagued by internal battles that stalled controversial policies.

With the Senate under Republican control, Trump is likely to have a relatively easy time installing his choices to run the SEC and other agencies, so the vacancy might be filled quickly. The five-seat commission is already two members short and White has essentially represented a tie-breaking vote between Republican Michael Piwowar and Democrat Kara Stein, who split on major issues.

It remains to be seen what tack the president-elect will take in overseeing the financial industry beyond his campaign pledge to dismantle the Dodd-Frank Act, which has dominated regulators' work since it was enacted in 2010. Former Commissioner Paul Atkins, a Republican who left the agency in 2008, is leading the Trump transition team's work on independent regulators like the SEC.

After taking the helm in 2013, White moved to improve morale at an agency that had been assailed by lawmakers over its failure to spot Wall Street abuses in the run-up to the financial crisis. Her outreach efforts included handing out coffee and doughnuts to rank-and-file employees, and walking the halls of the agency's sprawling headquarters to chat with workers.

"I also looked past Dodd-Frank, past the financial crisis, pushed the mission of the agency as hard as I could, which produced truly game-changing rulemaking," White said in an interview. The efforts "strengthened investor protections and our financial system, laying the groundwork for future regulatory regimes and aggressive enforcement, " she said.

Major enforcement actions under White's watch included a September lawsuit accusing hedge fund billionaire Leon Cooperman of insider trading. Policy highlights included pushing through rules designed to make the $18.5 trillion mutual-fund industry more resilient.

The SEC also brought first-of-their-kinds cases such as a settlement with hedge fund Och-Ziff Capital Management Group LLC over allegations it paid bribes to win business and accords with private-equity firms over claims that they didn't adequately disclose fees to investors.

White sparred with Democratic commissioners after siding with Republicans to waive additional punishments for companies settling enforcement cases. She also drew persistent criticism from Senator Elizabeth Warren over what the Massachusetts Democrat saw as the agency's failure to hold individuals accountable for Wall Street wrongdoing.

Warren also chided White for not pursuing rules that would force corporations to disclose their political contributions. The lawmaker last month took the unusual step of urging Obama to remove White from the chairmanship.

The criticism, White said, "comes with the territory. You take a bullet for the agency."

White's ability to take the punches served the SEC well, said Daniel Gallagher, a former Republican commissioner who left the agency in October 2015. Her biggest accomplishment was pushing through regulations in July 2014 that toughened rules on money-market mutual funds, he said.

"The tough persona that she's developed and needed as a prosecutor really helped," said Gallagher, who now serves as president of Patomak Partners LLC.

White's departure in January would leave Piwowar, the sole sitting Republican, as the likely acting chair until a permanent replacement is confirmed by the Senate.

While it's early in the process, a number of names are being floated as possible contenders, according to people close to the transition, finance industry trade groups, congressional aides and SEC staff members. Gallagher and Atkins, who is chief executive officer of Patomak Partners, are both possible contenders as are Proskauer Rose LLP lawyer Ralph Ferrara, a former SEC general counsel; and SkyBridge Capital founder Anthony Scaramucci, who's on the executive committee of Trump's transition team. Representative Scott Garrett, a New Jersey Republican who lost his re-election bid last week, is being pushed as a possibility by Tea Party Republicans.

White, 68, hasn't said what she plans to do next. After serving as the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York under President Bill Clinton, she had a lucrative law career representing banks and other clients. Her husband, former SEC official John White, is a partner at law firm Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP.

SEC Chair To Step Down, Clearing Path For Trump To Eliminate Tough Wall Street Regulations

By Renae Merle

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

NEW YORK – Mary Jo White, the head of the Securities and Exchange Commission, announced Monday that she will step down nearly three years before the end of her term, clearing the way for President-elect Donald Trump to reshape the way Wall Street is regulated.

The SEC, which polices Wall Street and the financial markets, has been a key part of the Obama administration's effort to rein in big banks following the 2008 financial crisis and prevent future taxpayer bailouts of the industry. The agency has pushed for more oversight of hedge funds and other asset managers, and established rules that make it more difficult for big banks to make risky bets on the markets.

White, a former federal prosecutor, is known for a no-nonsense style and attempted to beef up the agency's enforcement efforts over the last three years, pushing for more companies to admit guilt and taking more cases to trial. But progressive Democrats were often critical of her efforts, complaining they did not go far enough.

Trump has already indicated he would usher in a period of deregulation, including dismantling 2010's financial reform legislation, known as the Dodd Frank Act. He appointed Paul Atkins, an industry veteran, who has called Dodd Frank a "calamity," to lead the agency's transition.

Atkins "is a guy in general who wants to let companies do their thing and not get in the way very much," Ian Katz, a financial policy analyst with the research firm Capital Alpha Partners, said of Atkins. "You would see a lighter touch on enforcement and a lighter hand on corporate governance issue broadly."

Atkins served as an SEC commissioner for six years during the President George W. Bush administration. He could not immediately be reached for comment.

In addition to replacing White, Trump will be able to fill two openings on the five-member commission. Trump could also chose to ignore the more than 20-year old tradition of allowing the opposing political party to pick its own representative on the commission, one industry official said, further bolstering his influence over the agency. Also, Thomas Curry, the head of the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, another important Wall Street regulator, has less than six months on his term. Together, the openings should give the Trump administration wide latitude to change the way Wall Street is regulated.

"It is a game changer at the SEC. The commission is going to have a very different agenda over the next four years than it would have," said Edward Mills, a policy analyst at investment bank FBR Capital Markets. "In the long-term it is going to be a big tilt towards free markets.

White took office with high expectations. The SEC had long suffered under the popular notion that it was slow, toothless tiger. White appeared to be someone who might change that reputation. Prior to her appointment, she had been a federal prosecutor who took on the terrorists behind the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993 and the Mafia boss John Gotti.

"You don't want to mess with Mary Jo," President Obama proclaimed while announcing her nomination in 2013.

White moved quickly to set a new tone at the agency. Soon after taking office, she announced the SEC would begin requiring more companies to admit guilt as part of their settlements with the agency. It was a break from the SEC's nearly 100-year history of extracting monetary penalties from companies, which typically would neither admit or deny the charges lodged against them.

"The SEC had more leverage than it realized," White said in a recent interview. Not requiring admissions of guilt could "undermine, at least, the perception of the strength of a settlement, the strength of its deterrence. In certain cases that public accountability, I think, is very important."

Critics would later complain that many large banks were still able to settle SEC cases without admitting guilt and that the agency's toughest actions were reserved for smaller banks.

The SEC also poured resources into improving its technical capabilities, hiring experts who could help it better track stock trading and catch fraud. The SEC's technical capabilities have "really been transformed over the last three years," White said. There have been several cases, including some involving insider trading, that would have been impossible without these advancements, she said. Examinations of trading patterns that used to take months, can now be done in hours, she said.

But in the years since, the SEC has also been overwhelmed by the task of implementing dozens of rules called for under the 2010 Dodd-Frank financial reform law and the 2012 JOBS Act, which aims to make it easier for small businesses to raise money. The 4,000-person agency has tussled repeatedly with Congress and complained that as Wall Street became more complex it needed a bigger budget to keep up

White ultimately became a target of progressive groups who questioned her resolve to crack down on Wall Street. In addition to serving as a prosecutor, White also spent years defending big banks, including Bank of America and JPMorgan Chase, as a white-collar lawyer, they noted. And while White trumpeted that she had secured settlements with nearly 90 high-level executives for financial-crisis related misdeeds, critics noted that officials at some of the country's largest banks had emerged largely unscathed.

Last year, CREDO Action, a liberal advocacy group, sent a "Dump (Mary Jo) Truck" around D.C. to mark the anniversary of the collapse of Lehman Brothers.

Another group put up billboards in the D.C. Metro system depicting White as a superhero missing in action and asking "Where is Mary Jo White?"

White's unpopularity among some progressive Democrats was particularly pronounced when she found herself the target of Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.)

In January, Warren issued a report arguing that U.S. companies get away with crimes that regular people don't because of weak enforcement. The SEC "is particularly feeble, often failing to use the full range of its enforcement toolbox," the report said.

Then in June, Warren and White faced off during a Senate Banking Committee hearing. "A year ago I called your leadership at the SEC extremely disappointing," Warren said. "Today I am more disappointed than ever."

White quipped: "I'm disappointed in your disappointment."

But White's supporters, including many industry officials, say the criticism has been unwarranted.

"As SEC chairs go, Mary Jo has been one of the very best," said Harvey Pitt, who was SEC chairman under former President George W. Bush. "No one in that position will go

un-criticized. But, in my view, the criticism has been completely unwarranted."

SEC Chair Mary Jo White Stepping Down

By Patrick Temple-West

Politico, November 14, 2016

Securities and Exchange Commission Chair Mary Jo White is stepping down from her post two years before her term is up, giving Donald Trump a chance to make his mark on the nation's stock market regulator.

Trump's choice will stand as an early test of his willingness to crack down on the Wall Street abuses that he railed against during the presidential campaign.

Trump got only a fraction of the Wall Street money that Democrat Hillary Clinton received, making him less beholden to the financial industry, as he often boasted on the campaign trail. Yet congressional Republicans would oppose a more aggressive SEC, and business groups have voiced optimism that under Trump the agency would put less emphasis on regulation than on helping companies grow.

In an interview the day before the Nov. 8 presidential election, White did not give a specific date for her last day at the SEC or say where she was headed for her next job. "My plan is to step down around the end of the Obama administration," White said. She had always planned for her departure to coincide with the president's, she said, a move previous SEC chiefs have taken when a commander-in-chief leaves.

White's tenure at the SEC has been marked by withering accusations from Sen. Elizabeth Warren and other progressives that she has been too deferential toward business,

Asked if she felt pressure to leave from Warren, who just last month publicly demanded that President Barack Obama demote her, White, 68, simply said: "Not at all."

As for Warren, Clinton's defeat will thwart her plans to significantly influence the selection of the next SEC chair.

In October, the Massachusetts Democrat tacitly endorsed SEC Commissioner Kara Stein for the chairmanship, without naming her. When Warren wrote to Obama calling on him to demote White, she said the president could immediately fill the post without a Senate vote. Stein is the only Democrat on the commission.

When Obama nominated White as SEC chair in January 2013, he said her experience as a federal prosecutor would translate into tough enforcement for the financial sector. As a former U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, White won convictions for the terrorists who bombed the World Trade Center in 1993 and American embassies in Africa in 1998.

During her time at the SEC, the agency has had three straight years of collecting a record $4 billion or more in enforcement fines from wrongdoers. White also pushed the SEC to adopt a policy of forcing companies and individuals to admit misconduct when they settle enforcement cases with the agency.

But by 2015, many Democrats had soured on her for not advancing a rule to require companies to disclose their spending on political causes. That was a prime reason Warren cited in calling for the SEC chair's demotion.

In a sign of how dramatically the political winds had changed for White, Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) told her at a hearing in June that "you're hurting America" for not advancing the political disclosure rule. In 2013, Schumer had praised White, a New Yorker, "as one of most well-respected and hardest working lawyers in the country."

White's tenure underscores how politically challenging the role of SEC chief has become.

In an interview in September, Rep. Scott Garrett (R-N.J.) characterized White's time at the SEC as "the good, bad and the ugly."

Garrett, who was defeated on Nov. 8 in his bid for reelection, said he was peeved by the direction the agency is going with its review of how to update the disclosures that companies make public. Though the SEC's disclosure-effectiveness review started out as he'd hoped, it has moved "into the area of climate change [and] sustainability," Garrett said.

"Disclosure is supposed to go with what is material information," Garrett said. That echoes a concern raised by the Chamber of Commerce, which does not want the SEC to require companies to publish more information about their environmental, social and governance issues.

In her letter to Obama about White, Warren blasted the SEC disclosure-effectiveness review as gift to the Chamber and its members.

"The SEC and the rules that come out of it are not supposed to be politicized," Garrett said. "It is not supposed to be moving any sort of administration agenda, social agenda, or otherwise."

But Garrett applauded White for stopping the SEC's work on the political spending disclosure rule.

"That's something early on that we talked about," he said. SEC records show Garrett was the first member of Congress White talked to shortly after she started at the agency in April 2013. White met with Warren in June 2013.

Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) reiterated Democrats' concerns with White's reluctance to advance the political spending disclosure rule.

"We are all flummoxed and confused about why she does not want to move on it," Brown told POLITICO before White announced her resignation.

Brown also said the SEC has been too willing to grant companies waivers from penalties that they would otherwise suffer when they settle with the agency for alleged misconduct.

He cited the Wells Fargo scandal as evidence that financial firms don't feel threatened by regulators.

"There seems to be a disincentive for them to behave," Brown said. "I put part of the blame for that on the SEC."

But in a sign that White drove a nonpartisan course during her tenure, Brown and Garrett both commended and criticized her work at the SEC.

Brown complimented White for her work in promoting market stability as a member of the Treasury-led Financial Stability Oversight Council, the uber-regulator created out of Dodd-Frank, and for her leadership in finalizing regulations for money-market funds in 2014.

Both lawmakers said they had a good relationship with White and that she was receptive to congressional concerns.

"Her personality is fine expect she is a Yankees fan," Brown joked.

SEC Chair White To Time Her Exit From Agency With Obama's

By Sarah N. Lynch

Reuters, November 14, 2016

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

SEC Chairman White To Leave Agency, Opening Door To Conservative Shift

Move creates uncertainty as agency would have two of five commissioner seats filled after departure

By Dave Michaels

Wall Street Journal, November 14, 2016

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

Trump's Presidency Raises Questions On The Future Of Wall St. Regulation

By Stephen J. Lubben

New York Times, November 14, 2016

Last week, I posed a provocative question on a financial services discussion board: If the expected overhaul of financial regulations proceeds, do we still need to worry about planning for the failure of big financial institutions, including derivatives clearinghouses?

That is one of many questions that have been raised by the recent election and the call to repeal the Dodd-Frank Act, the financial regulations passed in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. Part of those regulations concerned rules for running most, if not all, derivatives trades through a clearinghouse or central counterparty. But a blueprint for what to do if the clearinghouse itself runs into financial trouble and needs saving has been a point of much discussion among those interested in financial regulation.

Answers to these questions are hard to come by, because although many members of the soon-to-be dominant political party have called for such a repeal, the movement that elected the new president is at least in part based on hostility to the "establishment," which presumably includes the big Wall Street banks that are largely the focus of Dodd-Frank.

At times during the campaign, Donald J. Trump suggested he would reinstate the old Glass-Steagall rules as part of repealing Dodd-Frank. These were the New Deal regulations, in force until the late 1990s, that kept depository banks separate from investment banks and insurance companies. A change like that addresses only a part of the broader scope of the postcrisis overhaul.

For example, what do we do about "resolution," or bankruptcy, for banks? Some have suggested moving all of what is now covered by the Orderly Liquidation Authority, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's new insolvency system for "too big to fail" institutions, into the broader bankruptcy system.

That might work, but often it is also suggested that these big bank cases should be put in front of life-tenured district court judges, rather than bankruptcy court judges who serve 14-year terms, because the cases are apt to be so politically fraught. That would seem to lose most of the benefits of the current bankruptcy system, which operates as well as it does because of the practical, common-sense approach that most of the bankruptcy judges bring to cases. Moreover, district court judges are generalists and spend little of their time thinking about insolvency.

And reinstating Glass-Steagall will not address derivatives. Are we going to go back to the precrisis nonregulation of derivatives? As my opening question asks, does the repeal of Dodd-Frank mean abandoning the move toward transparency in these markets, including the use of central clearinghouses and the required posting of collateral to back up these trades?

There are a host of questions here. For example, are we also going back to the old system of consumer protection in the financial industry?

We will probably have to wait a good while for answers, as the new administration is apt to focus on the more politically charged issues of repealing the prior administration's health care, immigration and environmental regulations. And there is also the matter of the Supreme Court and the many other judicial vacancies left by the Senate's decision to halt judicial confirmations.

In the end, it means several more years of uncertainty for the financial industry. Somewhat ironically, just as the industry was finally adapting to the new regulatory framework, that framework's permanence has been thrown into doubt.

Ousted GOP Lawmaker Eyes Gig As Trump's Transportation Secretary

By Melanie Zanona

The Hill, November 14, 2016

Rep. John Mica lost his tough reelection battle last week, but the Florida Republican already has his sights on a new gig: the head of the Department of Transportation (DOT).

Mica told reporters Monday night that he has had conversations with people connected to President-elect Donald Trump

about potentially joining the administration as Transportation Secretary, including former GOP House Speaker Newt Gingrich, Gov. Rick Scott (R-Fla.) and Trump's deputy campaign manager, David Bossie.

"If given the opportunity, I would be greatly honored," he said. "Everybody's been talking to me. Everywhere I go, it's: 'Are you going to be DOT Secretary?'"

Mica was unseated by Democratic challenger Stephanie Murphy after a career that spanned more than two decades in Congress and included a stint serving as House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee chairman. His once heavily Republican Orlando-area district became more favorable to Democrats since court-ordered redistricting.

The veteran lawmaker, who has long been an avid supporter of Trump, said his experience working with Washington's Metrorail system, Amtrak, high-speed rail efforts and other wide-ranging transportation projects throughout the country would make him a good candidate for the job.

He also has a close relationship with Vice President-elect Mike Pence, whom he called a good friend.

"They got to get a big [infrastructure] package through in a hurry," Mica said, referring to Trump's $1 trillion infrastructure proposal. "I want the ability to make a difference."

Trump's DOT secretary could play a major role in helping him get a massive infrastructure package over the finish line in Congress.

Trump, who has long talked about the need to rebuild the nation's crumbling roads and has lamented about the slow speed of trains in the U.S., may see Mica as a good fit for the task.

But it's unclear whether Trump would be looking to appoint a Democrat to lead the DOT, similar to how President Obama tapped former GOP Rep. Ray LaHood to the role.

Mica, known for his colorful comments on Capitol Hill, quipped that the only category he would fulfill is the "senior citizen" slot.

The Florida lawmaker admitted he wasn't the only name in the mix and has "no idea" whether he has a legitimate shot, but added that his conversation with Gingrich was "encouraging."

Mica already has the support of at least one colleague. When pressed by The Hill on whom he would like to see as DOT chief, Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R-Fla.) immediately pointed to Mica, who was sitting nearby.

"I don't know anybody more knowledgeable. This is a guy who lives, eats, breathes infrastructure and transportation," said Diaz-Balart, who chairs the Appropriations Subcommittee on transportation. "I still go to him for his knowledge."

Trump Mulling Woman, Gay Man For Leadership Roles

By Mark Hensch

The Hill, November 14, 2016

President-elect Donald Trump is considering a gay man and a woman for separate leadership posts in his administration, according to a new report.

Trump's potential picks would add diversity to his appointments. He'll need to name a new Republican National Committee (RNC) chairman after elevating current Chairman Reince Priebus to be his chief of staff. He's also considering picks for the next U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, The Associated Press said Monday.

Trump's transition team is weighing hundreds of candidates for the world's most powerful government ahead of the Republican's inauguration in January.

Trump may tap Richard Grenell as America's diplomat to the U.N., the AP said, making him the first openly gay person to fill a Cabinet-level foreign policy position if confirmed by the Senate. Green previously served as U.S. spokesman to the U.N. under former President George W. Bush.

Trump is also pondering whether Michigan GOP Chairwoman Ronna Romney McDaniel could become the next RNC chair. McDaniel is 2012 GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney's niece and would be the first woman in charge of the national party in decades.

"I'll be interested in whatever Mr. Trump wants," she told the AP, adding that she plans on seeking the Michigan GOP chairmanship again.

The AP said Grenell and McDaniel could help soothe concerns among LGBT and female Americans about Trump's administration.

McDaniel leading the GOP's political apparatus, for example, could placate women who found Trump's rhetoric on the campaign trail demeaning.

Grenell, meanwhile, could calm LGBT fears related to Vice President-elect Mike Pence, who opposed same-sex marriage as the Republican governor of Indiana.

Trump on Sunday named Priebus his White House chief of staff and presidential campaign CEO Steve Bannon as his chief strategist and senior counselor.

Priebus's appointment was widely interpreted as an olive branch to establishment Republicans, while Bannon's was meant to please Trump's grassroots conservative supporters.

Critics from both sides of the aisle, however, greeted Bannon's role with alarm Monday, due to his work as the former chairman of Breitbart News.

Detractors say Breitbart is a platform for the alt-right, an ideology that champions white nationalism, anti-Semitism and distrust of multiculturalism.

Amid Outrage Over Stephen Bannon, F.B.I. Reports Surge In Hate Crimes

By Michael D. Shear, Carl Hulse, Alan Rappeport And Eric Lichtblau

New York Times, November 14, 2016

President-elect Donald J. Trump's picks for top behind-the-scenes advisers are roiling Washington. Now there are statistics to back the rising concerns.

The F.B.I. reported Monday that attacks against American Muslims rose last year, driving an increase of about 7 percent in hate crimes against all victims.

The data, the most comprehensive look at threat crimes nationwide, expanded on previous findings by researchers and outside monitors, who have noted an alarming rise in some types of hate crimes tied to the intense vitriol of the presidential campaign and the aftermath of terror attacks at home and abroad since 2015.

A wave of racially charged assaults, graffiti attacks and other episodes has swept the country since Election Day, prompting Mr. Trump to call for a halt to it during a "60 Minutes" interview broadcast on Sunday night.

In its report Monday, the F.B.I. cataloged a total of 5,818 hate crimes in 2015 — a rise of nearly 340 over the year before — including assaults, bombings, threats and property destruction against minorities, women, gays and others.

Attacks against Muslim Americans saw the biggest surge: 257 reports of assaults, attacks on mosques and other types hate crimes against Muslims last year, a jump of about 67 percent over the year before. It was the highest total since 2001, when the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks saw more than 480 attacks.

Attacks against transgender people also sharply increased, the data showed.

Law enforcement officials acknowledge that the statistics give an incomplete picture because many local agencies still have a spotty record of reporting hate crimes, 26 years after Congress directed the Justice Department to begin collecting the data.

"We need to do a better job of tracking and reporting hate crime to fully understand what is happening in our communities and how to stop it," James B. Comey Jr., the F.B.I. director, said Monday.

Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, who mobilized a movement but not enough votes to win the Democratic presidential nomination, is stepping forward as an alternative to the party's leadership and a stalwart against racial politics.

Taking to his campaign Twitter handle on Monday, he decried the Democrats' loss of white, working-class voters to President-elect Trump.

He added, "The Democratic Party has to stand with working people, feel their pain and take on the billionaire class, Wall Street and drug companies.

But he also said that the new role of Stephen K. Bannon in the Trump White House as senior counselor and chief strategist should make the country "very nervous." The country has battled "discrimination and racism and sexism and homophobia" for hundreds of years, he said in an interview on ABC's "The View" program on Monday, and the country could not afford to move backward.

"We're going to tell Mr. Bannon and any other advisers that we're not going to be turning on each other," Mr. Sanders said. "We're going to be standing together."

In concert, liberal activists staged a sit-in in the office of Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the incoming Democratic minority leader, to demand a leadership position in the next Senate for Mr. Sanders.

Civil rights groups, Democrats and some Republicans on Monday denounced President-elect Trump's decision to appoint Mr. Bannon to the top White House position, warning that he represents nationalist and racist views that should be rejected by the incoming president.

Read the full story.

Mr. Trump has spoken with President Xi Jinping of China, the presidential transition team announced on Monday, and the world likely thought, "Interesting."

According to the announcement, in a call that took place on Monday Beijing time, Mr. Xi congratulated Mr. Trump for "winning a historic election," and the president-elect thanked the Chinese leader for his well wishes.

"During the call, the leaders established a clear sense of mutual respect for one another, and President-elect Trump stated that he believes the two leaders will have one of the strongest relationships for both countries moving forward," the statement said.

No mention of whether Mr. Trump's repeated campaign threats against Chinese trade practices came up, nor his statement that climate change was a hoax perpetuated by the Chinese, nor his get-tough promises on economic relations moving forward.

President Obama will hold a news conference at 3:15 p.m. Eastern time on Monday before heading overseas for a six-day trip. Tune in to nytimes.com for live coverage.

Reince Priebus, who was chosen on Sunday to become Mr. Trump's White House chief of staff, defended the selection of Stephen K. Bannon to serve as chief strategist on Monday and pushed back against suggestions that Mr. Bannon is racist and anti-Semitic.

"That's not the Steve Bannon that I know," Mr. Priebus said on MSNBC, calling him a force for good on the campaign. "I've only seen a generous, hospitable, wise person to work with."

Civil rights groups such as the Anti-Defamation League and the Council on American-Islamic Relations condemned the selection of Mr. Bannon, pointing to the divisive views promoted by Breitbart News, the nationalist website that he runs.

Mr. Priebus said that he agreed that Mr. Trump still had more to do to bring the country together and that it would be healthy for him to deliver a unifying speech to tone down some of the things he said in the heat of the campaign battle.

"He wants to make you proud of your country and serve you," Mr. Priebus said.

Alex Jones, an online broadcast host who has accused the government of grand-scale conspiracies, says that President-elect Trump personally called him to thank him for his support during the campaign.

Mr. Jones made the revelation on a brief clip on his website.

"He said, 'Listen Alex, I just talked to the kings and the queens of the world,'" Mr. Jones recalled, saying that Mr. Trump added, "I want to thank you, your audience."

He said the incoming president promised to come on his program again in the next few weeks. He celebrated that Mr. Trump had triumphed over "hoaxes" such as Obamacare.

Mr. Jones was an early booster of Mr. Trump, who appeared on his program during the end of the primaries. Mr. Jones has charged, among other things, that the Sandy Hook school shooting in Connecticut in December 2012 was a hoax.

Mr. Trump is a highly public scorekeeper of his own accolades and accomplishments and his elevation to the highest office in the land has not changed his instinct to crow about the smallest details. During his interview with "60 Minutes" broadcast on Sunday night, Mr. Trump bragged that since his election, he had gained tens of thousands of new followers on his social media accounts.

"I'm picking up now — I think I picked up yesterday 100,000 people," Mr. Trump said.

In one of the odder moments on the "60 Minutes" interview, Mr. Trump seemed to suggest that the president should be chosen by the popular vote, not the Electoral College. That would mean his rival, Hillary Clinton, would be inaugurated in January.

Lesley Stahl of CBS News was pressing him on whether he still thought the election was rigged, an accusation he made repeatedly in the weeks running up to Election Day. He finally replied:

Mr. Trump's next task is to choose people who will serve as the principal public faces of his administration — the ones who articulate his vision to the public and defend it against critics at home and abroad.

Those jobs include secretary of state, Mr. Trump's emissary to the world; attorney general, who will personalize Mr. Trump's definition of justice; and defense secretary, who will wage war for the new president. He will also have to choose a White House press secretary, who will spar with the news media.

Mr. Trump did not have to ask for Senate permission to pick Mr. Priebus as chief of staff and Mr. Bannon as chief strategist. (And he can name his choice as his spokesman.) But the top three cabinet jobs are all subject to a confirmation vote, and that can lead to trouble.

The president-elect will have to decide whether to send up consensus nominees who are likely to pass bipartisan muster, or to challenge the Washington establishment with novel or contentious picks.

The decision on which way to go may ignite the first internal fight between Mr. Priebus and Mr. Bannon, who see the political world in different ways.

Reince Priebus, Mike Pence And Paul Ryan Form Midwestern Power Center

Trio could carry huge influence over Donald Trump's Washington

By Gerald F. Seib

Wall Street Journal, November 14, 2016

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

Czech Diplomat Backs Ivana Trump As US Ambassador

By Tara Palmer

Politico Europe, November 14, 2016

Ivana Trump "could be very good at diplomacy," a senior Czech diplomat said Thursday as he welcomed Donald Trump's ex-wife's interest in being the U.S. ambassador to the Czech Republic.

Ivana, the Czech-born first wife of the president-elect and mother of his children Ivanka, Donald Jr. and Eric, said in an interview last week that she would ask her ex for the top diplomatic post in her native country — a move welcomed by a senior figure in the prime minister's office in Prague.

"If [Ivana] comes, she would be welcomed and it would be easy for her to connect with the people," Tomáš Prouza, the state secretary for European affairs at the Czech Prime Minister's Office, told POLITICO.

"She would definitely reach out to people easily and could be very good in public diplomacy."

Prouza added: "I don't expect anyone to protest."

Trump has not been shy of appointing family members to to his team. Ivanka, Eric and Donald Jr., and his son-in-law Jared Kushner, were last week added to his transition team.

"I will suggest that I be ambassador for the Czech Republic," Ivana told the New York Post last week.

How Trump Could Divide His Time In The 66 Days Until He's President

By Lisa Rein

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

Depending on when Election Day and Inauguration fall, a president has from 72 to 75 days for transition. As of Monday, Donald J. Trump has 66.

In this compressed period, President-elect Trump must set up a new government and hire about 4,000 people to run it. The transition will bring plenty of other demands: Phone calls to thank donors, congratulatory phone calls from foreign leaders, members of Congress and other supporters. Daily intelligence briefings. Formal political functions. Personnel announcements. Communications with foreign dignitaries. Rest and relaxation.

Modern presidents from Ronald Reagan to Barack Obama have allocated their time differently to these matters, reflecting their personal styles and priorities.

Reagan, for example, retreated to California for much of his transition, splitting his time between Los Angeles and his ranch near Santa Barbara. He held few press conferences. Bill Clinton did intensive public outreach through summits.

These details come from the Presidential Transition Guide produced by the non-partisan Partnership for Public Service, which began meeting over the summer with the Trump and Hillary Clinton campaigns to prepare for a transfer of power when Obama leaves office.

Obama took an extended vacation to Hawaii and stayed away from Washington until his inauguration, except for an initial White House meeting. George W. Bush, whose official transition was delayed by the recount and litigation of his race with Al Gore, flew members of Congress and other leaders to his Texas ranch for meetings.

Clinton made speeches and spoke to the media during his transition. Bush tended toward photo-ops, while Obama relied on web videos to announce policy.

And of the four presidents, Obama took the most vacation time during his transition, while Reagan had the most "weekend and personal time," the transition guide says.

How will Trump do it? Judging by the last week, he may spend most of his time at Trump Tower in Manhattan, where he has just formalized his transition team and is developing a short list for cabinet secretaries.

Lower-level political appointments are being handed by the transition team at the Washington headquarters of the General Services Administration, 1800 F Street.

Trump has not said publicly how often he plans to come to Washington or if he will meet with prospective nominees at one of his golf courses in Florida and New Jersey or at his townhouse apartment in Manhattan. He may take some days off at one of these golf courses too.

Our colleague Marc Fisher, co-author with Michael Kranish of Trump Revealed: An American Journey of Ambition, Ego, Money and Power, gave us some clues to how Trump might spend his time and how he might start the business of governing.

Trump mainly works. He rarely sleeps, as little as two-to-four hours a night. He watches enormous amounts of television all through the night. He's a homebody who rarely leaves Trump Tower or Mar-A-Lago, his Florida retreat. He does occasionally golf with business associates or other celebrities, but has done little of that over the course of the campaign. He spends a lot of time on the phone, and surely is doing a vast amount of that.

He could, in keeping with his pattern on the campaign trail, do rally-style events before his inauguration.

He's not likely to spend a lot of time in meetings.

There's also the question of whether Trump extends an olive branch to Hillary Clinton, and whether she accepts.

The president-elect traditionally meets with his defeated opponent to show "goodwill toward political adversaries," the guide says, and look for areas of common ground.

This happened for Obama and rival Sen. John McCain after Obama's victory in 2008, about two weeks after the election.

McCain flew to the Obama transition office in Chicago.Following the meeting, the men issued a joint statement:

"We hope to work together in the days and months ahead on critical challenges like solving our financial crisis, creating a new energy economy, and protecting our nation's security."

Do's And Don'ts For Federal Workers Ahead Of The Trump Administration

By Lisa Rein

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

The White House is about to change to Republican hands, and 4,000 new political appointees are about to bring a massive culture change to federal agencies led for eight years by Democrats.

In many offices, this handover of power is likely to be greeted with suspicion. The meeting of "politicals" and career civil servants is a Washington institution. And it's often a messy one — messy with mistrust and questions of who is

the better, smarter manager as people hired for their political affiliation and work on the campaign come in to run the government.

With these tensions in mind, we asked John Palguta, a guru in the world of the federal civil service, how these groups can get along after a tumultuous election season.

[John Palguta, a force behind Best Places to Work in the Federal Government survey, retires]

Palguta spent a career in government and then helped develop the influential Best Places to Work in the Federal Government rankings for the nonprofit Partnership for Public Service, where he now consults after retiring this year from his post as vice president.

Before last week's election, Palguta gave a seminar to a group of federal employees on facing a presidential transition. It can be distilled into a survival guide. He says his counsel could apply equally to political appointees.

Palguta's Do's and Don'ts for Surviving — and Thriving — during a Presidential Transition:

And here's what will work to maintain a smooth working environment:

Obama: Proud Administration Was 'Without Significant Scandal'

By Lisa Hagen

The Hill, November 14, 2016

President Obama on Monday touted his administration as one of the most law-abiding and ethical in history.

Holding his first press conference since last week's election, Obama said he has offered advice to President-elect Donald Trump

about ensuring everyone in the White House is "paying attention" to the laws and abiding by them.

"One thing you discover being president, there are all these rules and norms and laws, and you gotta pay attention to them," Obama said. "And the people who work for you are also subject to those rules and norms, and that's a piece of advice I gave to the incoming president."

"I am very proud of the fact that we will — knock on wood — leave this administration without significant scandal," he continued.

"We've made mistakes, there've been screw ups, but I will put the ethics of this administration and our track record in terms of just abiding by the rules and norms and keeping trust with the American people, I will put this administration against any administration in history."

Obama held a nearly hourlong press conference where he discussed Trump's victory and encouraged the Democratic Party to reflect on Hillary Clinton's defeat.

Obama Administration Extends Dakota Access Oil Line Review

By Meenal Vamburkar

Bloomberg News, November 14, 2016

The Obama administration plans to carry out more discussions and analysis before deciding on a permit for the controversial Dakota Access crude pipeline, further delaying work on a segment of the project that's been stalled since September.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which is deciding whether the pipeline can cross federal land near Lake Oahe in North and South Dakota, said in a statement Monday that further talks are warranted given the importance of the lake to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The agency said it'll work with the tribe on a timeline "that allows for robust discussion and analysis to be completed expeditiously."

The delay prevents Energy Transfer Partners LP from finishing work on its $3.8 billion project, which had been stalled by the government since September. It comes a day before opponents are scheduled to hold a nationwide protest at Army Corps of Engineers offices, to call for a permanent rejection of the pipeline. The Army Corps had halted construction and ordered a review of its prior approval of the project after objections were raised by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

The setback may be temporary. While the Army Corps decision prevents the pipeline's completion for now, analysts have said Energy Transfer will probably receive approval to finish the project under President-elect Donald Trump's administration.

Opponents of Dakota Access have argued that it would damage culturally significant sites and pose an environmental hazard where it crosses the Missouri River. Protests have resulted in hundreds of arrests and drawn support from celebrities including actresses Shailene Woodley and Susan Sarandon. The standoff is emblematic of a broader effort by environmentalists to stall oil and gas pipelines, which they argue aren't needed and hurt the the nation's progress in reducing its reliance on fossil fuels.

The Army Corps' denial of a permit follows a September ruling by U.S. District Judge James Boasberg rejecting the Sioux Tribe's request to stop work.

The 1,172-mile (1,886-kilometer) line had been expected to start carrying oil from North Dakota's Bakken shale to markets in Illinois in the first quarter next year. Energy Transfer has said the project is 84 percent complete, and drilling beneath the lake would take 90 to 100 days.

More than 200 actions had been planned for Tuesday with thousands of people expected to participate in the protests nationwide, according to an e-mailed statement from organizers.

Earlier this month, Energy Transfer said it refused an Army Corps' request to voluntarily slow construction until the federal review was complete.

Energy Transfer Partners LP owns the project jointly with Phillips 66 and Sunoco Logistics Partners LP. Marathon Petroleum Corp. and Enbridge Energy Partners LP announced a joint venture in August that would also take a minority stake in the pipeline.

The pipeline would help cut costs for Bakken region drillers, which have had to turn to more expensive rail shipments when existing pipes filled up. Dakota Access, with a capacity of about 470,000 barrels a day, would ship roughly half of current Bakken crude production and allow producers to access Midwest and Gulf Coast markets.

The project previously also came under fire in Iowa, where landowners who objected to its use of eminent domain asked the Iowa Utilities Board to halt the pipeline – but were denied.

Energy Transfer shares were down 0.9 percent at $16.83 at 5:05 p.m. New York time.

Reservation Ranchers Struggle To Keep Buffalo Alive Amid N.D. Pipeline Protests

By Valerie Richardson

Washington Times, November 14, 2016

The anti-pipeline protesters descending by the hundreds on rural North Dakota in support of the Standing Rock Sioux aren't necessarily standing with Beverly Fischer. Or her dead buffalo.

An enrolled tribal member, Mrs. Fischer and her husband, Ernie, are convinced that at least 13 of their bison have been butchered, barbecued and eaten by some of the hundreds of activists trespassing through the livestock pastures of Cannonball Ranch since the protests erupted in August.

In one day, the Fischers had three buffalo drop dead after hundreds of protesters on Highway 1806 panicked the herd in a clash with Morton County law enforcement.

"They're honking their car horns. Then the police are there, and the protesters are yelling and screaming and chanting, and the buffalo are across the ditch in the pasture, and they're just running because they don't know what to do," said Mrs. Fischer.

"They're just running in big circles throughout the pastures," she said. "By the end of the day, three were gone."

The Fischers' plight echoes those of local ranchers, farmers and others whose struggle to maintain their livelihoods has gone largely unnoticed as protesters upend the rural communities along North Dakota's southern border.

The Fischers, who live on the Standing Rock Sioux reservation in Selfridge, North Dakota, also illustrate the growing unease within the tribe over the activists who have increasingly shrugged off the chairman's call for peaceful and prayerful opposition to the project.

"There are a lot of local people being vocal now that don't want these protesters around," Mrs. Fischer said.

The North Dakota Stockmen's Association has offered rewards for information on the rash of livestock depredations during the past two months, including butchered and burned cows and bison, horses and cows shot and killed, and at least 30 missing cattle.

The perpetrators have not been caught, and a number of activists have decried the livestock deaths.

With as many as 2,500 people living in different camps with different philosophies, however, the locals are convinced that some of the more belligerent protesters are responsible.

"These have been cruel and senseless acts against animals and their owners," association chief brand inspector Stan Misek said in an Oct. 28 statement. "We are committed to finding out who is responsible and bringing forth justice for the victims."

For ranchers like the Fischers, catching those responsible for harming their livestock is almost impossible. They live about 43 miles from the Cannonball Ranch, where their herd of more than 600 bison graze over a vast expanse of 8,700 leased acres.

"Some days, we would get three phone calls a day: 'You'd better get up here; your buffalo are being chased,'" said Mrs. Fischer. "They keep riding up from the south of the ranch into the pastures where the buffalo are supposed to be grazing. So our animals are being stressed from being chased."

Even those activists who mean no harm are causing stress for the bison, not to mention the Fischers.

"You've got people trying to walk up to them in the pastures because these people are so peaceful and pacifistic, they think the buffalo aren't going to charge them," said Mrs. Fischer. "We're just damn lucky no one's been killed yet."

For whatever reason, the protesters have also made it their mission to help the buffalo escape by cutting the pasture fences.

"They would just walk out there a mile to where the buffalo are, cut fences, let our buffalo out," said Mr. Fischer. "And then we started seeing within the last month, month and a half, reports of bison getting butchered. We have reports of them catching bison. There's video of them chasing four of them and butchering them."

In the spring, the Fischers had 635 buffalo, but there's no telling how many will be left once the roundup begins. Already a herd of 30 bison, mainly calves and older animals, is missing.

"That herd is in the wind. We don't know where it went," said Mrs. Fischer.

There's also evidence that the protesters are moving from the pastures on the east side of Highway 1806 to the west side, leaving cut fences and campsites in their wake.

"We found tents where the buffalo were supposed to be, where these people were camping, cut fences, trash, debris, and no sign of the buffalo," Mrs. Fischer said.

The Fischers, both 52, say they've found themselves in tense situations with the mostly younger protesters.

"One day I was fixing the fence, and I looked behind me, and they're cutting the fence just as fast as I'm fixing it along the highway," Mr. Fischer said. "I said, 'Hey guys, what's the deal,' and pretty soon there's 75 people on the other side of the fence, and they're yelling at you, that you're a greedy oil person, you stole their land, and everyone's screaming at you."

He said he has been forced to call the Morton County Sheriff's Department on occasion in order to enter the pasture.

"You've got 500, 600 people out there. We want to go in the pasture gate, and they just line it four, five thick across the whole pasture," he said. "The minute they see the cops, then they'll move. They're doing all this protesting, but 20 of them will be sitting there praying and 500 of them will be raising hell."

Their business has taken a significant hit. Last year, the Fischers had the most successful buffalo sale in the nation, but neither of them expects to repeat that success in light of the protests.

"Economically, we've taken a massive blow," said Mrs. Fischer. "I feel that we're not going to get the buyers. There's probably no way they can get to the ranch with all the state roadblocks. And the calves are lighter this year."

She anticipates that most of the bison cows that had been bred will have lost their calves.

"With all this stress going on, I wouldn't be surprised to see easily 75 percent of them are going to be open," said Mrs. Fischer. "Because when a buffalo cow gets stressed, she will absorb her calves. You know what that means? That means no calf crop for me next year. They're open. They're no longer bred. That's a horrible thing."

The Obama administration announced Monday that it would delay a decision on whether to release the final permit for the pipeline, which has been completed in North Dakota except for 1,100 feet at Lake Oahe.

That means more weeks or months of uncertainty for the Fischers and other locals waiting for the situation to play out.

"However this is resolved, I'm still here," said Mrs. Fischer. "I'm Standing Rock. I make my home here on the reservation. And I have to live with the fallout of all the dirty deeds these people have done."

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One Reason Obama Won't Give Clinton A Pardon: She Hasn't Applied For One

By Gregory Korte

USA Today, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — Hillary Clinton will not be getting a pardon from President Obama.

And if Obama is to be kept to his word, neither will former CIA Director David Petraeus, convicted Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard, intelligence contractor Edward Snowden or Pvt. Chelsea Manning, all of whom were accused or convicted of mishandling classified information.

The reason is simple: None of them have applied to the Office of the Pardon Attorney for executive clemency.

Obama specifically addressed "last-minute" presidential pardons at a news conference in August. "The process that I put in place is not going to vary depending on how close I get to the election," he said in response to a question from USA TODAY. "So it's going to be reviewed by the pardon attorney, it will be reviewed by my White House counsel, and I'm going to, as best as I can, make these decisions based on the merits, as opposed to political considerations."

White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest confirmed last week that Obama hasn't changed that philosophy after the election. "I wouldn't speculate at this point about what impact that may have on hypothetical pardon requests that he receives. I'll just say that the guidance that President Obama shared with you is still operative."

Speculation about a Clinton pardon, already rampant before the election, only intensified after the election of rival Donald Trump as president. At one debate, Trump told Clinton it would be bad for her if he were elected "because you'd be in jail." Trump aides have refused to rule out a prosecution after Inauguration Day.

That posture could increase pressure on Obama to pardon Clinton, but there's no indication that she's sought a pardon — or that she would accept one if granted. While some pardons have historically been granted on the grounds of innocence, they're often perceived as a sign of guilt.

"Granting a pardon to Hillary Clinton would be one of the most controversial and misguided clemency decisions that Obama could make," said Jeffrey Crouch, a professor at American University and author of The Presidential Pardon Power. "Pardoning a former member of his administration to spare her from the hassle and embarrassment of judicial prosecution would be against what the framers of the constitution had in mind for the clemency power. It would also violate his pledge not to grant any politically motivated pardons in his last days in office."

Crouch said a Clinton pardon would continue a string of late-term clemency abuses by our last three presidents: George H.W. Bush pardoned several figures in the Iran-Contra affair. Bill Clinton pardoned Democratic donors. And

George W. Bush commuted the prison sentence of Lewis "Scooter" Libby, Vice President Cheney's former chief of staff, who was convicted for lying to the FBI in the investigation of the outing of an undercover CIA operative.

"I think he would prefer not to be remembered as the fourth president in a row who abused the clemency power to protect his political associates or supporters," Crouch said.

There are also practical considerations: The Office of the Pardon Attorney is putting most of its resources into the clemency initiative, Obama's strategy to cut short long mandatory minimum sentences imposed during the "war on drugs."

And there's just not enough time for a new pardon application to get to Obama's desk without taking shortcuts. Pardon applications can often take more than two or three years to process, requiring an FBI background check, character references, and even employment and credit checks.

The White House could speed up the process by putting pressure on the pardon attorney and the FBI. But FBI Director James Comey has already expressed public misgivings about Clinton's use of a private email server to send and receive classified information, although he decided criminal charges were not warranted.

Still, the White House has expedited pardon applications in the past. Former pardon attorney Margaret Love said the White House could put pressure on the Justice Department to speed up the process, as President Bill Clinton did in 1995 with a friend of his mother who was convicted of illegal gambling in 1972.

"I did Jack Pakis, who Clinton wanted to do, in six days," she said. "Quite apart from that, there's absolutely nothing required in particular for a pardon application."

But Love said those hurry-up pardons were "irregular" and would violate Obama's pledge to follow the normal process.

Far more likely are what she called "little people cases" — people who aren't household names but can still carry historic resonance.

Among them: Sala Udin, a former Pittsburgh City Council member and civil rights activist convicted of transporting firearms across state lines in 1970. He was returning home from registering African-Americans to vote in Mississippi when police in Kentucky pulled him over for speeding and found an unloaded rifle. Udin explained that he brought the weapon in case he was "trapped on some lonely, dark road in the South and confronted by Klansmen who threatened to kill me."

His pardon petition has been pending with the Office of Pardon Attorney since 2008.

Those aren't always the kinds of cases that are subject to newspaper headlines and online petition campaigns, which seek to do an end run around the Justice Department and put political pressure directly on the White House.

That's the strategy being employed by Edward Snowden, the former National Security Agency contractor now exiled in Russia to avoid charges that he violated the Espionage Act. His lawyer, Ben Wizner of the American Civil Liberties Union, has acknowledged that his client doesn't meet the Justice Department guidelines to be eligible for a pardon.

"The constitution didn't assign this power to the Department of Justice. It assigned it to the president," Wizner said in August. "I would hope that President Obama would like to resolve this situation on his watch."

Other notable cases that have been waging public campaigns for clemency — but who don't have petitions pending — include former Alabama governor Don Siegelman (corruption), "American Taliban" John Walker Lindh (terrorism), and lifestyle guru Martha Stewart (insider trading).

There are still some prominent names that could — at least theoretically — receive clemency. The Office of the Pardon Attorney confirmed that it has pending applications from former Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick (racketeering, extortion, bribery and fraud), Native American activist Leonard Peltier (murder), former WorldCom CEO Bernard Ebbers (fraud and conspiracy) and singer Ron Isley (tax evasion).

And then there's the exceptional case of Jack Johnson, the African-American boxing champion convicted in 1912 of transporting a woman across state lines for immoral purposes. Several congressional resolutions have urged Obama to grant a pardon to on grounds that the trial was racially motivated.

Until recently, the Justice Department wouldn't even accept a posthumous pardon application — simply returning it to the applicant. "It is the department's position that the limited resources which are available to process requests for president clemency – now being submitted in record numbers – are best dedicated to requests submitted by persons who can truly benefit from a grant of the request," then-Pardon Attorney Ron Rogers wrote to Congress in 2009.

But Acting Pardon Attorney Robert Zausmer confirmed that a petition had been submitted on Johnson's behalf, suggesting an open case. It's now up to Obama whether to make an exception and grant a posthumous pardon.

Five Panels Still Planning Probes Of Clinton Emails

By Julian Hattem And Amie Parnes

The Hill, November 14, 2016

Congressional Republicans are refusing to relent in their investigations into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email

server, despite the former Democratic nominee's defeat in the race for president last week.

It's a strategy that could be risky for the GOP, given the desire by many to move beyond the election and stop harping on an issue that was debated ad nauseum during the campaign.

The Republican Party as a whole appears split on the path forward, with senior leaders such as Rep. Kevin McCarthy (Calif.) reluctant to focus on Clinton's email issues as aggressively as her critics have in the past.

"I'm the majority leader; I set the agenda," McCarthy, the House majority leader, said on "Fox News Sunday." "The agenda is going to be about job creation; it's going to be about reforming and repealing ObamaCare. It's going to be on infrastructure. That's the focus that this election was about."

As for Clinton, "I leave that portion to law enforcement," McCarthy said. "That's just the way I do it. Keep politics out of it."

As many as five separate congressional committees have positioned themselves to continue investigations into Clinton's private email setup from her time as secretary of State.

The House Judiciary Committee "will continue to press for answers to the questions about whether the investigation was thorough and whether there was special treatment given to the political elite," one Republican committee aide said. "At this time, no hearings are planned."

The Senate Judiciary Committee and the House Oversight Committee are also continuing to press on angles of Clinton's email setup, lawmakers and staffers have maintained in recent days.

The House Science Committee had previously examined security arrangements of Clinton's server, but a spokesperson on Monday could not say whether the panel would continue as before. The Senate Homeland Security Committee has also previously looked at the FBI's investigation into Clinton's arrangement. A spokesperson did not respond to an inquiry on Monday.

Law enforcement officials have already made up their minds.

After a yearlong investigation, the Justice Department determined this summer that neither Clinton nor her senior allies had violated federal laws.

New emails discovered on the laptop of former Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-N.Y.), the estranged husband of longtime Clinton aide Huma Abedin, prompted a renewed focus on the probe late in the campaign but ultimately led to naught. Clinton allies have claimed that the FBI's late notice of the newly discovered emails cost her the election.

Republican lawmakers were livid when the Justice Department declined to press charges earlier this year. Multiple committees held hearings on different aspects of Clinton's arrangement, including whether Justice had set a double standard.

The lawmakers, like much of the country, seemed to be anticipating a Clinton victory on Election Day and appeared to be preparing to drag the investigations into her first term as president.

Senate Homeland Security Committee Chairman Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) had openly discussed impeachment proceedings as part of what seemed to be preparation for a full-on assault during a Clinton presidency.

Congressional Democrats have protested the intense scrutiny put on Clinton on Capitol Hill, which they have called a witch hunt similar to efforts from the House Select Committee on Benghazi.

Rep. Elijah Cummings (Md.), the top Democrat on the Oversight Committee, called it "extremely disappointing" that his panel would "continue investigating Secretary Clinton for years to come."

"After everything our country has just been through — and particularly given that Donald Trump and Paul Ryan have both called for healing our nation's divisions — I think the American people deserve more from Congress than to continue squandering taxpayer dollars on these baseless Republican accusations and partisan attacks."

Before the election, one former Clinton aide said that House Oversight Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) and other GOP lawmakers were simply putting on airs to excuse their continued needling of Clinton.

Now they're not so sure.

One longtime Clinton friend called the posture taken by Chaffetz and others "so insulting and infuriating."

"What doesn't he understand? She's a private citizen," one longtime Clinton friend said. "What does he think they're going to go after her for? He and Donald Trump should get together with a fourth-grade civics book. If she did something wrong, we have something called the FBI.

"Someone is going to have to say to them, 'Do you have nothing better to do?' They can't even be gracious winners."

During the presidential campaign, Trump promised to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate Clinton if he were elected. Had he already been president, he said, she would be in jail.

Some Republicans were thrilled at the announcement, though many critics called it a radical promise to jail a political opponent who had been cleared of suspicion.

Trump and his allies have remained mum about their plans for Clinton in the days since the election, and their tone regarding his formal rival has turned increasingly complimentary. The change in tone may suggest that Trump has abandoned the idea.

One longtime Clinton adviser said that what happens on Capitol Hill will ultimately "be a test of President-elect Trump's leadership."

"He can demonstrate that he is magnanimous, not vindictive, in victory and put the word out that this kind of obsession should stop, and everyone must focus on the future, not the past," the adviser said. "If he allows it to proceed, and the congressional leadership also lets it happen, then it bodes ill for bipartisanship and suggests we are in for yet more gridlock and continuation of politics of political destruction."

Hill Dems Demand First Investigation Of President-elect Trump Over Financial Ties

By Stephen Dinan

Washington Times, November 14, 2016

Donald Trump is still two months from being sworn in as president but Democrats are already demanding a congressional investigation into him, saying they fear his massive business empire will influence his decision-making in the White House.

Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, the ranking Democrat on the House Oversight Committee, sent a letter to Chairman Jason Chaffetz officially requesting the probe Monday, saying Mr. Trump poses questions no modern president has faced in terms of unwinding himself from his personal interests.

"Mr. Trump's unprecedented secrecy and his extensive business dealings in foreign countries raise serious questions about how he intends to avoid conflicts of interest as president," Mr. Cummings said.

Mr. Cummings made clear his request was a measure of fairness, or perhaps payback, for the GOP's repeated investigations into President Obama's troubling moments in the White House, such as the 2012 Benghazi terrorist attack, and into Hillary Clinton's email scandal stemming from her time in the State Department

"Now that Republicans control the White House and Congress, it is incumbent on you and other Republicans to conduct robust oversight over Mr. Trump — not for partisan reasons, but to ensure that our government operates effectively and efficiently and combats even the perception of corruption or abuse," Mr. Cummings said.

Mr. Trump's children are slated to continue running his business.

In an interview with CBS's "60 Minutes" that aired Sunday, the Trump family said it doesn't matter if the Trump brand has been harmed.

"Who cares?" Mr. Trump said. "This is big league stuff. This is our country. Our country is going bad. We're going to save our country. I don't care about hotel occupancy. It's peanuts compared to what we're doing."

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Cummings Asks House Oversight Committee To Review Trump's Financial Arrangements

By Nolan D. McCaskill

Politico, November 14, 2016

Elijah Cummings on Monday filed a letter asking for the House Oversight Committee to swiftly review Donald Trump's "financial arrangements" for potential conflicts of interest before he's sworn in as president.

The Maryland Democrat's letter to House Oversight Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) asks that the committee "immediately begin conducting a review of President-elect Donald Trump's financial arrangements to ensure that he does not have any actual or perceived conflicts of interest and that he and his advisors comply with all legal and regulatory ethical requirements when he assumes the presidency."

"We have never had a president like Mr. Trump in terms of his vast financial entanglements and his widespread business interests around the globe," Cummings wrote, noting Trump's refusal to disclose his tax returns. "Mr. Trump's unprecedented secrecy and his extensive business dealings in foreign countries raise serious questions about how he intends to avoid conflicts of interest as president."

Cummings dismissed the notion that Trump will set up a blind trust for his business empire, considering the president-elect has said his children — who were active in his campaign and named to his transition team's executive committee — will take over, not an independent person.

"This is certainly not a 'blind trust,'" he said.

Cummings highlighted the numerous investigations Congress has launched against President Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton throughout Obama's administration, some of which he said "have been used for partisan political purposes," citing House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy's admission in reference to the Benghazi Committee, and called on the GOP-led legislative and executive branches "to conduct robust oversight over" the incoming 45th president.

"Now that Republicans control the White House and Congress, it is incumbent on you and other Republicans to conduct robust oversight over Mr. Trump—not for partisan reasons, but to ensure that our government operates effectively and efficiently and combats even the perception of corruption or abuse," he said.

Cummings, the ranking member on the Oversight Committee, added that there are "several laws" in place to avoid real and perceived financial conflicts of interest that the panel has oversight of.

"For these reasons, I request that the Committee immediately begin a review of these issues and invite

appropriate officials designated by Mr. Trump to hear from them directly about their plans," he said. "It is critical that we conduct this review as soon as possible to ensure that these questions are answered prior to Mr. Trump assuming office."

Liberal Super PAC Seeks Trump Records From Government Agencies

By Nolan D. McCaskill

Politico, November 14, 2016

A Democratic super PAC is filing public records requests with government agencies for documents involving President-elect Donald Trump's presidential campaign and transition team, according to copies of the requests provided exclusively to POLITICO on Monday.

American Bridge 21st Century is asking the General Services Administration, Office of Government Ethics and Office of Personnel Management for a trove of documents involving dozens of people, including Trump's key aides, advisers, surrogates and even his adult children.

"Donald Trump enters the White House with too many conflicts of interest to count, like tapping his children to both run his company and help lead the transition," Jessica Mackler, president of the progressive research group, said in a statement to POLITICO. "With so many opportunities for companies and foreign governments to gain influence over Trump, American Bridge is ready to hold Trump and his administration accountable using every tool we have — starting with making sure Trump isn't using the presidency for his own gain."

The requests seek financial records; call and text message logs from phones paid for with federal funds; email archival IT records; financial disclosure forms and other records related to the team's vetting efforts by government staff of potential appointees for conflicts of interest and other issues; background check documentation; and correspondence with various agencies.

"I am requesting incoming-and-outgoing correspondence between President Trump's transition team and the Trump campaign from May 1, 2016, this search should be processed on a rolling basis and correspondence should be made available as it is processed," the documents read.

American Bridge is looking for any possible conflicts of interest with incoming Trump appointments, in addition to copies of the transition team's expenditures and any reimbursements, and the transition team's memorandum of understanding.

The liberal super PAC submitted a similar records request with the SEC and FAA a month after Trump launched his presidential bid for information regarding the then-Republican candidate and employees of the Trump Organization.

Earlier Monday, House Oversight Committee ranking member Elijah Cummings (D-Md.) filed a letter to Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) asking for a swift review of Trump's "financial arrangements" to be completed before the president-elect is sworn in as president in January.

Trump University Plaintiffs Propose Trial Without Trump

By Josh Gerstein

Politico, November 14, 2016

Lawyers pursuing a federal class-action fraud lawsuit over Donald Trump's Trump University real-estate program are urging a judge to press forward with a trial scheduled to begin later this month, even if that means forgoing any new testimony from the president-elect.

Citing his pressing transition-related obligations, Trump's lawyers are asking that the trial set for Nov. 28 be delayed until sometime after the inauguration, with Trump providing in the next two months a new round of prerecorded testimony to be shown to jurors when the trial takes place.

However, in a court filing Monday, plaintiffs lawyers warned U.S. District Court Judge Gonzalo Curiel that that any further delays in the case risk rolling the case into Trump's presidency and ever more protracted postponements.

"We do know that any delay would be a slippery slope because President-Elect Trump's life is only going to get more complicated and unpredictable as time goes by," lawyers for the former Trump University students wrote. "Plaintiffs have waited more than six-and-a-half years for their day in court, and it would be an injustice to them and undermine the independence and truth-seeking function of the judiciary to ask them to wait until Trump assumes office and the demands of the presidency turn from mere preparation to actual practice....This trial, like so many Trump University student-victims' credit-card bills, is past due."

Plaintiffs' lawyers are urging that the trial go on as scheduled and that both sides be required to work with the more than ten hours of deposition testimony Trump has already given on the subject.

"There is no reason to believe President-Elect Trump has any additional admissible testimony to offer, let alone testimony so important that he would be prejudiced if he is not able to present it at trial," the class-action lawyers wrote.

At a hearing last week, Curiel urged both sides to pursue settlement talks. The plaintiffs' filing refers in passing to the possibility of settlement, but argues that prospect won't be brought any closer by deferring the trial date until sometime after the inauguration.

"No case has ever gotten closer to resolution by postponing trial," the plaintiffs' attorneys observe.

The suit set for trial later this month is one of two class-action lawsuits over Trump University pending in front of

Curiel in San Diego. Both involve claims that the real-estate seminar and mentorship program defrauded students by falsely claiming that instructors were handpicked by Trump and by promoting the idea that the program was part of an accredited university.

The suit set first for trial involves claims students from California, New York and Florida have leveled under strict consumer fraud laws in those states. The follow-on case is nationwide in scope and involves racketeering claims under federal law.

Trump's recent motion, filed on Saturday night, proposes that he give one more round of videotaped testimony to be shown at trials in both federal suits. If a settlement is reached, it would also likely cover both cases.

Trump University also faces a suit New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman brought in that state's courts, alleging that the seminar program continued to use that name there even after being warned that state law prohibits businesses from calling themselves universities unless they are properly accredited.

Trump's lawyers contend that any exaggerations in the marketing of Trump University amounted to mere "puffery." They also say that any misstatements were immaterial since the vast majority of students said in evaluation questionnaires or videos that they were satisfied with the program.

Curiel has seemed eager to get on with the trial and he rebuffed an earlier request for delay due to a conflict with another case being handled by Trump's lawyers. However, it's unclear if the judge fully considered before last week the possibility that Trump would be president-elect as work began to seat a jury in the case.

A ruling on the pending motion is expected quickly.

Donald Trump's Far-Flung Holdings Raise Potential For Conflicts Of Interest

By Eric Lipton And Susanne Craig

New York Times, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — Just a few blocks down Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House sits the Trump International Hotel, one of the newest luxury additions to President-elect Donald J. Trump's real estate empire, and perhaps the most visible symbol of the ethical quandary he now confronts.

The Trump International operates out of the Old Post Office Building, which the federal government owns. That means Mr. Trump will be appointing the head of the General Services Administration, which manages the property, while his children will be running a hotel that has tens of millions of dollars in ties with the agency.

He also will oversee the National Labor Relations Board while it decides union disputes involving any of his hotels. A week before the election, the board ruled against Mr. Trump's hotel in a case in Las Vegas.

The layers of potential conflicts he faces are in many ways as complex as his far-flung business empire, adding a heightened degree of difficulty for Mr. Trump — one of the wealthiest men to ever occupy the White House — in separating his official duties from his private business affairs.

Further complicating matters are Mr. Trump's decision to name his children to his transition team, and what is likely to be their informal advisory role in his administration. His daughter Ivanka Trump joined an official transition meeting on Thursday, the day before Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey was removed from his post leading the effort.

Mr. Trump has said he will eliminate ethical concerns by turning the management of his company over to his children, an arrangement he has referred to as a blind trust.

But ethics lawyers — both Republicans and Democrats — say it is far from blind because he would have knowledge of the assets in the trust and be in contact with the people running it, making it unlike a conventional blind trust controlled entirely by an independent party.

"To say that his children running his businesses is the equivalent of a blind trust — there is simply no credibility in that claim," said Matthew T. Sanderson, a Washington lawyer and Republican who has worked on the presidential campaigns of John McCain, Rand Paul and Rick Perry. "Yes, the American public elected him knowing he has these assets, but unless he deals with this properly there will just be a steady trickle of these conflict-of-interest stories, and it could be a drag on his presidency."

Mr. Trump, as part of his bid for the White House, released information about his financial holdings, which include more than a dozen hotels and golf courses; commercial real estate space, including Trump Tower and 40 Wall Street in New York; and marketing deals in the United States and abroad. But it is unclear how much information was not disclosed, in part because he declined to release even a summary of his tax returns — becoming the first presidential candidate not to do so in 40 years.

Rudolph W. Giuliani, a close adviser to Mr. Trump, said on CNN's "State of the Union" on Sunday that excluding Mr. Trump's family from a role in his businesses "would basically put his children out of work." The public, Mr. Giuliani said, needs to trust Mr. Trump.

"You have to have some confidence in the integrity of the president," Mr. Giuliani said. "The man is an enormously wealthy man. I don't think there's any real fear or suspicion that he's seeking to enrich himself by being president. If he wanted to enrich himself, he wouldn't have run for president."

Hope Hicks, a spokeswoman for the transition, declined to respond to questions about possible conflicts of interest Mr. Trump might face as president. "The Trump Organization will respond accordingly," she said.

A spokeswoman for Mr. Trump's company said in a statement that the Trump Organization was already working to address possible conflicts.

"We are in the process of vetting various structures with the goal of the immediate transfer of management of the Trump Organization and its portfolio of businesses to Donald Jr., Ivanka and Eric Trump along with a team of highly skilled executives," the statement said. "This is a top priority at the organization, and the structure that is ultimately selected will comply with all applicable rules and regulations."

Previous presidents have encountered questions about their financial holdings. Lyndon B. Johnson, through his wife, continued to have ownership of television stations while he was president. George Washington enlisted the Treasury Department to help find a runaway slave. But presidents have often taken steps to prevent ethical questions. George Bush put his stock holdings into a blind trust after he was elected vice president, and Jimmy Carter turned his peanut farm over to a blind trust after he was elected.

As president, Mr. Trump will be exempt from a federal ethics rule that prohibits government employees and members of Congress from taking actions that could benefit their financial interests.

But the president still must comply with a law that requires annual financial disclosures of his assets. The first will not be due until May 2018, although President Obama filed one voluntarily during his first year in office.

Experts said that even if Mr. Trump was exempt from some federal ethics rules, the public will expect him to not use his office to benefit his personal finances.

"He has campaigned on a platform of getting rid of corruption and that Washington is broken and we need new, refreshing change," said Karen Hobert Flynn, president of Common Cause, a nonprofit that pushes for accountability in government. "As president, the American public expects that Mr. Tump will be held to a higher standard."

In a statement on Monday, the General Services Administration said that the agency realized it must examine its Old Post Office lease with Mr. Trump's family-owned business "to allow a path to be put in place to identify and address any potential conflict of interest."

Also on Monday, Representative Elijah E. Cummings, Democrat of Maryland and the ranking member of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, called for an inquiry into how Mr. Trump will handle these potential conflicts.

"The American people have the right to know — they ought to know — exactly whether decisions are possibly being made that would benefit him, his family and his associates directly," Mr. Cummings said in an interview.

The labor dispute in Nevada represents another potential complication. The president appoints all five members of the National Labor Relations Board. But over the past year, the Trump International Hotel Las Vegas has been in a battle with the culinary workers union, at first challenging an effort by hotel employees to unionize. The labor board ruled against him in July. Then the hotel, which Mr. Trump co-owns, refused to begin negotiations with the new union, and the labor board again ruled against it, in November. Other labor disputes with employees are pending.

"Will he as president of the United States of America use the power he has to interfere — given that he has a financial interest in the outcome of these matters?" said Bethany Khan, a spokeswoman for the 57,000-member Culinary Workers Union Local 226 of Nevada.

Perhaps most troubling for Mr. Trump, several ethics lawyers said, is a relatively obscure provision of the Constitution, called the Emoluments Clause, which prohibits any government official from taking payments or gifts from a foreign government, or even from sharing in profits in a company that has financial ties to a foreign government.

Mr. Trump has had business deals with foreign governments or individuals with apparent ties to foreign governments, including multimillion-dollar real estate arrangements in Azerbaijan and Uruguay. His children have frequently traveled abroad to promote the Trump brand, making trips to Canada, the United Arab Emirates and Scotland. Closer to home, the Bank of China is a tenant in Trump Tower and is a lender for another building in Midtown Manhattan where Mr. Trump has a significant partnership interest.

"Doing business with a foreign corporation, be it in Azerbaijan, Turkey or Russia, if is it owned in part or controlled by a foreign government — any benefit that would accrue to Mr. Trump could well be a violation of the Emoluments Clause of the United States Constitution," said Kenneth A. Gross, a political ethics and compliance lawyer in Washington.

There are also more general issues that could prove troubling. For instance, Mr. Trump will nominate the Treasury secretary, yet he owes hundreds of millions of dollars to banks, and he benefits from low interest rates set by the Federal Reserve, an institution he has criticized as political. The head of the Internal Revenue Service is also appointed by the president, and the agency is currently auditing Mr. Trump's taxes and sets tax policy that directly affects his businesses.

But it is Mr. Trump's real estate and financial holdings that represent the most sensitive ethical areas, the ethics lawyer said.

Mr. Trump's children are already deeply involved in the daily operations of the Trump Organization. Ivanka is executive vice president for development and acquisitions, and is in charge of domestic and global expansion of the company's real estate interests. Ms. Trump also has her own clothing, jewelry and footwear lines.

Even this week, Ms. Trump turned her appearance on Sunday on "60 Minutes" — with her father — into a marketing opportunity for her line of jewelry, with one of her employees urging reporters to write about the $10,800 gold bangle bracelet she wore during the interview.

Donald Jr. is also an executive vice president in the Trump Organization, and the company's website says he directs new project acquisition and development in regions "from Eastern Europe to Southeast Asia, the Middle East to South America, mainland China to the United States."

Eric is in charge of the Trump Organization's golf course collection.

"We'll be in New York and we'll take care of the business," Eric Trump said in an interview with "60 Minutes" that was broadcast on Sunday. "I think we're going to have a lot of fun doing it. And we're going to make him very proud."

What's Mike Pence Hiding In His Emails?

By Fatima Hussein

USA Today, November 14, 2016

Vice President-elect Mike Pence speaks during at Veterans Day ceremony in Edinburgh, Ind. Nov. 11, 2016. (Photo: Darron Cummings, AP)

Now that the presidential campaign and most of the furor over Hillary Clinton's email scandal are behind us, the Pence administration is going to court to argue for its own brand of email secrecy.

The administration is fighting to conceal the contents of an email sent to Gov. Mike Pence by a political ally. That email is being sought by a prominent Democratic labor lawyer who says he wants to expose waste in the Republican administration.

But legal experts fear the stakes may be much higher than mere politics because the decision could remove a judicial branch check on executive power and limit a citizen's right to know what the government is doing and how it spends taxpayer dollars.

"It comes down to this — the court is giving up its ability to check another branch of government, and that should worry people," said Gerry Lanosga, an Indiana University media professor specializing in public records law.

In the case, Indianapolis attorney William Groth is appealing a decision handed down by Marion Superior Court in April, which decided that redactions the administration made to a public record could not be second-guessed by the court.

The focal point in the case is a political "white paper" that had been excluded from Groth's public records request.

Pence's legal defense team claims the white paper is attorney work product protected by Indiana's Access to Public Records Act — and at the end of the day, matters of public records are not for a court to decide.

Groth argues the lower court misapplied the law.

"I think governmental transparency is an important concern of anyone who lives in a democracy – the governor cannot put himself above the law," Groth told the IndyStar.

The matter stems from a lawsuit filed after President Barack Obama announced in November 2014 that he was taking new steps to "fix America's broken immigration system." Those steps included offering deferred enforcement of immigration laws for parents of children born in the United States, and for children who entered the United States before they were 16 years old.

The action drew the ire of Republican governors across the country, including Pence, who called the policy a "profound mistake."

Pence, joined in on a lawsuit led by Texas Gov. Greg Abbot in State of Texas, et al v. United States, with the blessing of the Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller. Zoeller's office did not respond to IndyStar requests for comment.

Pence hired Indianapolis law firm Barnes & Thornburg to join the Texas litigation. A representative from the firm — which is also representing Pence in this case — did not respond to IndyStar requests for interview.

In December 2014, Groth requested information regarding Pence's decision to hire outside counsel and the cost to Indiana taxpayers.

"I think joining the lawsuit without the attorney general and hiring that firm was a waste of taxpayer dollars and the people have the right to know how much of their money was spent," Groth said. Groth is known in Indiana for representing the plaintiffs in the 2008 U.S. Supreme Court voter identification case, Crawford v. Marion County Election Board.

Pence produced the documents in the request "but those documents included substantial redaction," according to court documents.

The 57-page response also included an email that Daniel Hodge, Abbott's chief of staff, sent to 30 recipients in various states asking them to join the lawsuit against Obama.

The message included an attached white paper, but the governor failed to produce the document, according to court records.

After a yearlong trial, the Superior Court held that the issue was not a matter for the courts to decide, citing a Indiana Supreme Court case decided just days before.

In a 4-1 ruling, the Indiana Supreme Court ruled in Citizens Action Coalition, et al. v. Indiana House Rep., that under the Indiana Constitution's separation of powers clause the legislature's redactions were nonjusticiable, a legal term that means not for the court to decide. Groth was also the attorney representing the plaintiffs in that case.

Groth appealed in June and the Indiana Court of Appeals will hear oral arguments Nov. 21 at 1 p.m. at the

Statehouse, where each side will be allowed 20 minutes for arguments.

Paul Jefferson, a former professor of state constitutional law at the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law, said the major question for the appellate court to decide is "whether they're going to extend that (Citizens Action Coalition, et al. v. Indiana House Rep.) to the executive branch as a whole."

He said if the court rules in favor of the governor, "that would severely limit the Access to Public Records Act."

It's a fear that even the highest levels of court have warned about.

In the sole dissent of the Citizens Action Coalition lawsuit, Indiana Supreme Court Justice Justice Robert Rucker stated: "The majority's ruling is not only premature, but it unfortunately weighs in on a significant separation of powers issue without an adequate record."

The state's public access counselor, Luke Britt, appointed by Pence in 2013, also fears what might happen if other public officials invoke the Citizens Action Coalition privilege. "After that case, a lot of local government officials were trying to claim a similar privilege — that was one of my fears."

Jefferson said that "this will be interesting in part because it is hard to draw clean lines between what would be and what wouldn't be if excluded from a public records request if the court is going to exempt the executive branch from public records review."

Lanosga, the public access professor, says the outcome of the case will set a precedent on what are appropriate levels of transparency in government.

"It shows no accountability," he said, "that an agency can say things are exempt just because and citizens have no recourse."

Democrats Begin Period Of Soul Searching, Jockeying After Clinton Loss

By Abby Phillip And John Wagner

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

Democrats scrambled on Monday to assess the damage after Hillary Clinton's loss, marking the start of a season of jockeying within the party over who will be its next leader.

On a conference call with supporters late Monday, President Obama congratulated Clinton on a "history-making" race, but he called on his party to assess what went wrong and retool at a grass-roots level.

"We have better ideas but they have to be heard for us to actually translate those ideas into votes and ultimately into action," Obama said.

Meanwhile, Hillary Clinton addressed congressional lawmakers on a separate conference call, acknowledging the impact of her loss.

"No one is sorrier than me," Clinton said, according to a Democrat on the call. "Heartbreaks don't heal overnight, and this one won't."

Clinton noted that the election is one that should be studied, and she urged lawmakers to fight for the party's values harder than ever. She said she is "grateful" that "in the end our vision for America earned more votes."

Yet, Democrats this week are beginning to strategize about how to regroup in the new Trump era, which has left them locked out of the White House and out of power in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Calls for new leadership and ideas have prompted several Democrats to put their names forward to lead the party.

On Monday, the country's first Muslim lawmaker and a prominent liberal voice in the House, Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.), announced that he would run for chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

In a show of strength, Ellison rolled out 40 endorsements, including Senate Minority Leader Harry M. Reid (Nev.) and Reid's expected successor, Sen. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.).

Also endorsing Ellison on Monday were Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Rep. G.K. Butterfield (D-N.C.).

"Democrats win when we harness the power of everyday people and fight for the issues they care about," Ellison said in a statement. "It is not enough for Democrats to ask for voters' support every two years. We must be with them through every lost paycheck, every tuition hike, and every time they are the victim of a hate crime. When voters know what Democrats stand for, we can improve the lives of all Americans."

Ellison was one of the first and few sitting lawmakers who endorsed Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) over Hillary Clinton in the Democratic primary. And he was also one of the Democrats who recognized early on that Trump posed a potentially formidable challenge in this election.

Trump showed unexpected strength in industrial Midwestern states, where he lost by fewer than two percentage points to Clinton. That represented a sea change and a narrow miss for Democrats, especially when compared with Mitt Romney's nearly eight-point loss to Obama in the 2012 presidential election.

"We must champion the challenges of working families and give voters a reason to show up at the polls in 2018 and beyond," Ellison said.

In a news conference on Monday, Obama also acknowledged that Clinton's loss marked the erosion of Democratic support in parts of the country that he had won, in

part because her campaign believed that the path to victory would not go through predominantly white and working-class corners of the electoral map that helped win Trump the White House.

Obama named Iowa as a state he won not "because the demographics dictated" it but because he spent time campaigning in small towns and counties where he was the underdog.

"There's some counties maybe I won, that people didn't expect, because people had a chance to see you and listen to you and get a sense of who you stood for and who you were fighting for," Obama said.

Several other Democrats have put their names forward to lead the party, including former Maryland governor Martin O'Malley, South Carolina Democratic Party Chairman Jaime Harrison and the DNC's national finance chairman, Henry R. Muñoz III and former DNC chair and Vermont Gov. Howard Dean.

On Monday morning during an appearance on MSNBC's "Morning Joe," Dean emphasized that the job is one that should require a full-time commitment, a long-standing criticism of the last full-time DNC chair, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.), who served in the position while also holding a congressional seat.

"You cannot do this job if it's not full-time. Period," Dean said.

Obama's Legacy: Democratic Losses, Party Chaos

Next DNC leader faces battle over strategy

By Stephen Dinan

Washington Times, November 14, 2016

Democrats always had the White House — until last week.

As their majorities in Congress slipped away and they ceded the lead in governorships over the past six years, President Obama and his top lieutenants comforted themselves with the changing demographics that they said would make it impossible for a Republican to win the top job.

Donald Trump punctured that belief in stunning fashion last week, sending Democratic voters scrambling to make sense of their losses and igniting a new battle for the party's soul that promises to last for months.

"We have to take the time to figure out what happened," said Jim Manley, a senior Democratic strategist and director at QGA Public Affairs who said Democrats knew their grip on Congress was tenuous, but were stunned by losing the presidency. "It's obviously much more than cyclical. Something went wrong and we need to figure out what it is and how to stop it."

In the near term, some Democrats are vowing massive resistance to anything Mr. Trump proposes, saying he is an incorrigible racist. Others counsel that their path to power is to hold true to liberal principles while finding places to cooperate with Mr. Trump.

The battle over strategy will play out over the next few weeks as the Democratic National Committee elects a new chairman.

At least three high-powered candidates are eyeing the role: Rep. Keith Ellison of Minnesota, the first Muslim elected to Congress; former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, who flamed out of this year's presidential primary race; and former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, who lost the 2004 presidential primary and went on to serve a term as party chairman.

"We did not motivate enough people to the ballot box," Mr. Ellison said Monday, diagnosing Democrats' disease as he announced his bid. "Let's put the voters first."

The other candidates echoed a similar message: The party needs to energize voters and build a better organization.

Mr. Obama, in a press conference Monday, hinted that the problem was partly operational and partly a result of the candidate the party picked — though he didn't mention Hillary Clinton by name.

"I believe that we have better ideas. But I also believe that good ideas don't matter if people don't hear them," he said. "We have to compete everywhere. We have to show up everywhere. We have to work at a grass-roots level, something that's been a running thread in my career."

The past several years under Mr. Obama have not been kind to Democrats. When he took office in 2009, Democrats had an effective 58-seat majority in the Senate, had a staggering 256 seats in the House and held 28 governorships.

They lost the House and ceded the majority of governorships in 2010, held serve in 2012 with Mr. Obama's re-election, then lost control of the Senate in 2014 and control of the White House this year. All told, Democrats have shed 63 House seats, 10 Senate seats and 12 governorships.

Some political scientists said Democrats' losses are in line with the political cycle.

"Typically, the president's party loses ground in the House and Senate during that person's time in office. This is particularly true in midterms, where the president's party usually does poorly," said Kyle Kondik, managing editor of Sabato's Crystal Ball, the political prognosticators at the University of Virginia.

Even if the losses are cyclical, it's a major letdown for a party that, a little more than a decade ago, was basking in predictions of an emerging, long-lasting Democratic majority, based on the party's ability to build a coalition of expanding minority populations such as black, Hispanic and gay voters, young people and women.

Mr. Obama said Monday that counting on demographics to carry elections is a mistake.

"I won Iowa not because the demographics dictated that I would win Iowa. It was because I spent 87 days going to every small town and fair and fish fry and VFW Hall, and there were some counties where I might have lost, but maybe I lost by 20 points instead of 50 points," he said.

"There's some counties maybe I won, that people didn't expect, because people had a chance to see you and listen to you and get a sense of who you stood for and who you were fighting for," he said.

John B. Judis, one of the political analysts who predicted the emerging Democratic majority in the early 2000s, said that worked for a few elections. But he wrote in a Washington Post op-ed last week that the Great Recession reordered politics in 2008 and awakened the white working class.

"Democrats can't win elections simply by appealing to the identity groups of the rising American electorate," he wrote.

Richard Eskow, a senior fellow at the Campaign for America's Future, said in his postmortem piece that Democrats "lost the presidency on a technicality." He added, though, that some lessons can be learned, including a need for the party to put more distance between itself and Wall Street.

Instead of a war with the left, he said, Democrats need to embrace those like Sen. Bernard Sanders, the democratic socialist who gave Mrs. Clinton a run in the presidential primary.

"The future is the left," he wrote.

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Clinton Was Too Civilized In Defeat

By Richard Cohen

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

Kellyanne Conway and I have a difference of opinion. She thinks that Hillary Clinton, Bill Clinton and other once-important Democrats ought to call off the anti-Trump demonstrations now tying up several square blocks of several cities because, as she said about Trump, "This man is our president." It took her a while, but Conway finally got it right: Yes, that's what the kids are protesting.

I, for one, think Hillary Clinton has been too submissive. In the first place, she has to understand that she did not lose the election — we did. Clinton had no right to concede so nicely, so demurely, so much in the vapid spirit of the "we're all in this together" mantra. Or is it a meme?

Clinton should not have been so civilized. She should not have blamed her defeat on James B. Comey, the addled FBI director who effectively reopened an investigation into Clinton's email server, announcing first that he had done so and announcing second that he had found nothing. Not since Geraldo Rivera opened Al Capone's safe only to find his own ego has so much attention been devoted to so little. Clinton would have been better off cracking Trump's safe, containing — I'd like to believe — crackpot plans regarding immigrants, climate change, relations with Russia, the collapse of NATO, the nuclear arming of Japan, a wall across the southern border, a religious test for immigrants lest a Muslim sneak in, and so much more — enough, I think, to alert the school nurse at Trump University.

Poor Conway. Victory has induced vertigo, and, as she shakes her head, memories fall out. Does she not recall Trump's pledge, affirmed over and over again by His Minister of Vengeance, Rudy Giuliani, to prosecute Clinton for . . . well, anything? Does she not remember how Trump himself would not agree to accept the outcome if, as he expected and justice required, he lost? Does she forget how Trump repeatedly called Clinton "Crooked Hillary" and some Trump people vowed an impeachment?

Conway, the rest of the Trumpsters and, indeed, most of the GOP (Jeb Bush excepted) want this election to be considered like any other — a winner, a loser, that sort of thing. But it was not like any other. It produced a president-elect who's as knowledgeable about government as a dead sparrow. The man comes to lead us after months of lying and threatening, of insulting and intimidating, of floating adolescent schemes that, after the shock of victory, he is reassessing: Maybe not all illegal immigrants will be rounded up; maybe some of Obamacare will be saved. Maybe in due course Trump will learn something about the military's chain of command, particularly the obligation — as solemn as they come — not to obey an illegal order. Maybe, too, he will honor the even greater obligation to treat all Americans with dignity, and that includes Muslims and women and the disabled . . . just for starters.

Conway should understand. The protesters are not Clinton's people. Clinton let them down by losing and then she let them down again by conceding so nicely and then she did it all over again by blaming her loss on Comey. No! She lost because she ran against a liar. She lost because Trump promised jobs he can't produce and a magical restoration of American power, not that he has any idea of what to do with it.

The kids in the street have it right. They do not see themselves as irreplaceable, the people who say they will work for Trump for "the good of the country" or because their expertise is so rare, so exotic, so invaluable that should they take a moral stand and say no, the world would surely end or speaking engagements would dry up, whichever comes first. After all, they self-argue, Trump is not wrong about everything. Bridges, for instance. Who could be against more bridges?

No, the protesters recognize that a demagogue will creak the bed of Lincoln and stare at the ceiling of Roosevelt and look out the balcony named for Truman and not know

what the hell any of them did. They will not see the appointment of Reince Priebus and an army of enablers as comforting, and anyway he will be run over by the furiously ideological Stephen K. Bannon, late of wacko radio and anti-Muslim tirades that were only exceeded by his guests, such as Roger Stone and Pamela Geller.

Cold is on the way and the demonstrations will fade, but the memory will remain. Conway is half-right. Trump is president — hers, not mine and, in four years and with the proper prayers, no one's.

Read more from Richard Cohen's archive.

Read more on this topic:

Alexandra Petri: Don't worry, little girls. Your time will come … someday.

E.J. Dionne Jr.: Trump won. Here's how to fight back.

Paul Waldman: The Trump administration hasn't even started yet, and it's already a fiasco

E.J. Dionne Jr.: Against Trumpian triumphalism

What Does It Mean To Be Progressive?

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

DEMOCRATS ARE licking their wounds, arguing about what or whom to blame and opening a fight over who should next lead the party. That's normal after losing the presidency, both chambers of Congress and all but 15 governorships. They also are beginning to argue about what the party should stand for. That, too, is normal — and potentially healthy. The country will be better off if it has a vibrant, left-of-center party making the case for progressive views.

But what does it mean to be progressive? We don't propose to lay out an agenda here — this is a debate that will and should go on for months, hopefully drawing on new ideas and up-and-coming leaders, and we expect to return to it often. We would, though, like to suggest that in some key areas, the people who are defining themselves as the progressive wing of the Democratic Party — identified with Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) — are embracing principles that are not genuinely progressive.

Specifically: They want to enlarge government entitlements and hand out the benefits as broadly as possible — free college, free health care, expanded Social Security — regardless of need or available resources. They emphasize redistribution over growth. And their ostensible protection of American workers leaves no room to consider the welfare of poor people elsewhere in the world. On all three counts, we think that the higher moral ground and the smarter policy lie elsewhere.

Take free college, a key plank of Mr. Sanders's presidential campaign. Generally two arguments are offered for making such a benefit universal. One is political: If everyone gets a benefit, everyone will press Congress or state legislatures to keep funding it. The other is moral: This is something society should do. We don't make the wealthy pay tuition for high school; why should college be any different?

Our answer — we would argue, the progressive answer — is that there are people in society with far greater needs than that upper-middle-class family in Fairfax County that would be relieved of its tuition burden at the College of William & Mary if Mr. Sanders got his wish. In an era of constrained resources, is the nation serious about helping the "left-behinds" in small-town America, whose plight President-elect Donald Trump supposedly championed? How about the mothers and children who remain trapped in multi-generational poverty in our biggest cities? Government programs should benefit those who most need the hand up.

The same is true of Social Security. You can expand benefits for everyone, as Ms. Warren favors. Prosperous retirees who live mostly off their well-padded 401(k)s will appreciate what to them will feel like a small bonus, if they notice it. But spreading wealth that way will make it harder to find the resources for the vulnerable elderly who truly depend on Social Security.

Here we pause for a moment of preventive self-defense, because the fiscal argument is easy to caricature. When we say that resources are constrained, we are not arguing that the budget has to be balanced tomorrow. We are not arguing against investments in infrastructure, education and research — all of which we favor.

But demographics — the aging of the population — cannot be wished away. In the 1960s, about five taxpayers were helping to support each Social Security recipient, and the economy was growing about 6 percent annually. Today there are fewer than three workers for each pensioner, and the growth rate even following the 2008 recession has averaged about 2 percent . On current trends, 10 years from now the federal government will be spending almost all its money on Medicare, Social Security and other entitlements and on interest payments on the debt, leaving less and less for schools, housing and job training. There is nothing progressive about that.

That is one reason we say that economic growth is also a progressive goal. It's not a sufficient goal; growth must be shared, not vacuumed up by the top 1 percent. It's not in conflict with the goal of redistribution; there's reason to think that inequality can retard growth. But over the course of U.S. history, economic growth has been key to the rising prosperity of all Americans.

What does that mean for policy? Can government spur growth, and if so, how? That is a fraught debate. At a minimum, though, a progressive should favor growth, think twice before vilifying business as a whole and consider the effect on jobs when advocating additional regulations.

Finally, when true progressives think about trade and the world, they ought to keep in mind a statistic that President

Obama cited in his final address to the U.N. General Assembly: The share of people living in extreme poverty in the world fell over the past quarter-century from 40 percent to under 10 percent. That's an astounding achievement for human progress, unique in world history, taking place even as global population grew — and mostly thanks to the globalization of the economy. That trend is good for Americans, economically, because it gives them markets to sell into. But the decrease in human misery also should be celebrated for its own sake.

We understand the political challenges underlying these arguments. Mr. Trump campaigned on proposals that would grow the federal debt far more than any Democrat's program, and his benefits would be targeted — to the wealthy. His proposals on trade would be far more destructive. In opposing every government program and regulation as a job-killer — including, wrongly, Obamacare — the Republicans make a rational discussion of trade-offs almost impossible.

If they attempt to govern on the basis of these proposals, why should Democrats, in the minority, be any more responsible? Far easier to claim to be standing up for the American worker by bashing China or Mexico, declaring that every problem can be solved by soaking the rich and promising government benefits to every voting family.

But if Democrats hope to deserve electoral gains in 2018 and beyond, they will need to do more than oppose Mr. Trump while outdoing him in undeliverable promises. They will need a constructive, 21st-century version of progressivism — one that embraces growth, fairness and opportunity for everyone.

Read more:

Robert J. Samuelson: The dangerous deficits our candidates aren't talking about

Ruth Marcus: Donald Trump's utterly ridiculous budget plan

Charles Lane: Entitlement reform, RIP

Bernie Sanders: Make college free for all

The Post's View: Hillary Clinton for president

A Lament For Obama

By Jamie Stiehm

U.S. News & World Report, November 14, 2016

The president never lost his famous cool charisma for eight years. He came sweeping into the White House and he will fade out like a dream into the sky on Jan. 20. We earthlings will be left with the crass Donald J. Trump as the new big boss. Excuse me, president.

Obama's legacy hangs in the balance. He knows it. He may even know he failed to protect it from being dismantled by the 45th president. Belatedly, he prophesized it would "go out the window" if Hillary Clinton, the Democratic nominee, lost the race.

His worst wrong move was, in retrospect, to appoint James Comey to be FBI director. Clinton herself told supporters that Comey's relentless pursuit of her email trail, clearing her of charges just a few days before the election, stopped her momentum in a close race.

Why a Democratic president appointed a Bush administration high-ranking official to a 10-year post, you tell me. Comey also defied his boss, Attorney General Loretta Lynch, in politicizing Clinton's emails right before the election. The thing is, Obama has always believed he can win Republicans over with the power of his personal charm. No such luck, but Clinton paid a price for this vain flaw. Then again, she set herself up in the partisan fray by having that "damn" private email server, to paraphrase Sen. Bernie Sanders.

Dark times are not just ahead in America; they are already here, with Trump's announcement that the aggressively partisan Stephen Bannon, executive chairman of Breitbart News, will be his chief strategist and counsel. This signal extinguished any hope that Trump would perhaps grow grown-up wings and be a more restrained, reasonable man, as he fleetingly seemed in his initial White House meeting with Obama.

And I must say that for a president to leave the White House, Congress and the Supreme Court in enemy hands – excuse me, the other side's hands – is a failure. That has not happened in a long time. This spells big trouble for the Democratic party, because the head of the party neglected building infrastructure, choosing an effective leader (hint: not Debbie Wasserman Schultz) and cultivating the next generation of candidates. The young president barely campaigned for House Democrats in 2010, the losing tea party tempest year. In the face of a glaring defeat and turnover, Obama said his side got a "shellacking," a fancy word.

Unfortunately, Obama is a solo artist. Let me say it, again, Sam: Governing is a team sport and Obama just wasn't the guy to preserve Democratic party hegemony, which he had going into 2009, his first term (except for the high court). He couldn't even force his own appointment to the Supreme Court this year, and find a way to outfox Mitch McConnell, Senate majority leader. He never understood how much McConnell and other Republicans hated him.

President Ronald Reagan shored up his legacy not only with his personal popularity, but with his Vice President George H.W. Bush winning the next election to replace him in 1988. After having the best year of his presidential life, 2016, the shining bright Obama is facing the dark. His progress on health care, the environment and foreign policy are under threat and siege soon. Obamacare was one of Trump's strongest cards against Clinton.

The populist president Andrew Jackson and the polyglot president Thomas Jefferson each lined up two men

as political protegees to succeed them. Jackson had Martin Van Buren and James Polk waiting in the wings. Jefferson, of course, had James Madison and James Monroe, to complete his Virginia dynasty. Obama is not that kind of shrewd player in power games.

Finally, could Obama have campaigned more, better, harder for Hillary? He was out there, and seriously wanted to see her win. But I did not see him much in the Midwest battleground states she lost that she should have won: Wisconsin and Michigan are blue, usually. In Wisconsin, Obama's old friend in the Senate, Russ Feingold, was fighting hard to reclaim his seat. Obama didn't get there in the last "closing arguments" phase, where his pitch could have made a difference in a highly competitive race

Feingold, a profile in courage for voting against the Patriot Act standing alone, was a vote for the future. He could have helped fend off attacks on Obama's legacy in the Senate, knowing its byways.

But that's not the way it went. Not the way he rolls. So we who won the popular vote for Clinton are left holding the bag. We are losing Obama, the aspirational president with a golden tongue who got some stuff done. The Iran nuclear deal, the Paris Climate Accord, singing "Amazing Grace" at a grief-packed funeral to mourners. He'd like to remind us he rescued the auto industry in Michigan, brought the reeling economy back and (almost) ended the Iraq War.

But this earthy campaign played to Obama's weaknesses. His legacy may be as slim as he is in the end, something like a will'-o-the-wisp.

Rep. Ellison Formally Announces Run For DNC Chair

By Daniel Strauss

Politico, November 14, 2016

Rep. Keith Ellison formally announced his candidacy to be chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

"I am proud to announce my candidacy for Chair of the Democratic National Committee, and if given the opportunity to serve, I will work tirelessly to make the Democratic Party an organization that brings us together and advances an agenda that improves people's lives," Ellison said in a statement released Monday afternoon.

The Minnesota congressman had been laying the groundwork to run for DNC chairman even before the deep losses Democrats suffered on Election Day. In recent days, his efforts have begun to come into public view.

Ellison, who played a prominent role in Sen. Bernie Sanders presidential campaign, has already been endorsed for chairman by Sanders and Sens. Chuck Schumer and Harry Reid, as well as Rep. Raul Grijalva, co-chairman of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. Sen. Elizabeth Warren also said Ellison would make a "terrific" chairman.

In his announcement Monday, Ellison rolled out additional endorsements from prominent Democrats including Sens. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota and Chris Murphy of Connecticut — both supporters of Hillary Clinton's presidential bid — Hawaii Democratic Party chairman Tim Vandeveer, former Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak, and Minnesota Democratic Party chairman Ken Martin, among others.

Rybak had often been mentioned as a possible candidate for DNC chairman himself.

"Having worked on elections and social movements with Keith Ellison for more than two decades, I can say I have never seen him campaign only for himself," Rybak said in his statement. "More a community organization than a politician, Keith has used every campaign to protect every voter's rights, expand our party's base, include those left behind and elevate new leaders. That is exactly what the Democratic Party needs right now."

Ellison's support from Klobuchar and Murphy was viewed as a sign that the Minnesota congressman might be able to attract support from beyond the Sanders wing of the party — his base of support. Many Democratic leaders in Washington and the states fear the chairmanship race could devolve into a repeat of the Clinton-Sanders primary.

"I think there is a great deal to be said for putting an active Sanders supporter in there. I want to go into 2020 without these kinds of suspicions and paranoia," former Rep. Barney Frank, who backed Clinton, said Monday.

Going into the weekend, Ellison was still reaching out to Democrats around the country to gauge support for his prospective candidacy. Virginia Democratic Party Chairwoman Susan Swecker was among those who received a call from Ellison. Swecker said Ellison called and, while he didn't say that he was running, the timing seemed to indicate that.

"We had a nice conversation, I expect to hear from some others," Swecker said Monday of her call with Ellison, who didn't explicitly say that he was running. Swecker said she hasn't decided who she'll support in the DNC race.

Former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean has already announced that he's running for DNC chairman and the field of candidates is likely to expand. Last week, Dean argued that Ellison couldn't adequately serve as both DNC chairman and as a member of Congress.

"You cannot do this job and sit in a political office at the same time. It's not possible," Dean said in an interview on MSNBC. That view is shared by critics of Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz's tenure as DNC chairwoman.

But Ellison's supporters insist that the Minnesota congressman can juggle both jobs.

"I think he's completely equipped to hold both jobs," said former Nevada Democratic National Committeewoman Erin Bilbray, a former backer of Sanders' presidential

campaign. Ellison also supported Sanders in the Democratic primary.

Asked about Dean's bid, Bilbray said she didn't have anything against the former DNC chairman but that there needs to be "fresh leadership with new ideas."

"I believe very strongly that the Sanders base is the future of our Democratic party, that is where the party's going between the millennials and Gen-Xers," Bilbray said. "They want new ideas and I think Ellison represents that. Dean is a good man but he comes from a different era."

Ellison Pushes To Become Next DNC Chair

By Ben Kamisar

The Hill, November 14, 2016

Rep. Keith Ellison has officially jumped into the race to lead the Democratic Party.

The Minnesota Democrat is already working to establish himself as the progressive choice for the Democratic National Committee's (DNC) reckoning after Hillary Clinton's shocking loss to Republican nominee Donald Trump

last week in the presidential election.

"Democrats win when we harness the power of everyday people and fight for the issues they care about. It is not enough for Democrats to ask for voters' support every two years. We must be with them through every lost paycheck, every tuition hike, and every time they are the victim of a hate crime. ... We must begin the rebuilding process now," he said in a statement.

He appeared on MSNBC Monday evening to further promote his bid for the leadership role. He's the first Muslim elected to Congress and is a member of the Congressional Black Caucus.

"The real issue is vision, where are you going to take the party," Ellison said. "My vision is to focus our attention on strengthening the grassroots, put our priority on voter turnout, and to campaign 365 days a year and then talking door to door with people in their neighborhoods and in their communities."

Ellison touted his work ethic in response to a question about former DNC chairman Howard Dean, who is also seeking the job and has said he thinks it should be a full-time position for whoever holds it.

"I have a work ethic that people who know me know that nobody's going to outwork me," Ellison said. "I'm going to be tireless working all the time and I'm going to be making sure that the message gets to the people."

"This is not a job just for one person, we're going to raise and inspire millions of people all over this country, anybody who thinks this is just one guys who is going to do everything, it's not true, my vision will be to empower people across the grassroots."

Ellison already has the backing of a handful of Democratic heavyweights — including former presidential hopeful Sen. Bernie Sanders

(I-Vt.), outgoing Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid

(Nev.) and likely future Senate Democratic Leader Charles Schumer

(N.Y.).

His campaign for leader also released a slew of other endorsements as a show of force, including Sens. Chris Murphy

(Conn.) and Amy Klobuchar

(Minn.), Reps. Raúl Grijalva (Ariz.), Mark Pocan

(Wis.) and DNC vice chairman R.T. Rybak, as well as the Minnesota, Wisconsin and Hawaii Democratic Party chairs.

Ellison is the co-chairman of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and he was an outspoken supporter of Sanders's presidential bid.

Former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley is considering a bid, as well.

Keith Ellison Vying For DNC Chairman

By Rema Rahman

Roll Call, November 14, 2016

Rep. Keith Ellison made official on Monday his candidacy for chairman of the Democratic National Committee as the party looks to reinvent itself after the stunning loss of its presidential nominee Hillary Clinton.

The Minnesota Democrat, who endorsed Sen. Bernie Sanders in the Democratic primaries, is a co-chairman of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, the largest Democratic caucus.

Since Election Day, many Democratic leaders have looked to Ellison, 53, to help rebuild and overhaul the party's focus after Clinton lost to Republican rival Donald Trump.

Democrats also failed to retake the Senate as anticipated, and did not pick up as many seats in the House as party leaders had projected.

Before his formal announcement, Ellison had secured the backing of a host of Democrats in Congress, including Sanders, whose primary campaign caught fire with disenchanted voters, the same group also credited with spurring Trump's campaign. Ellison currently also serves as the chief deputy whip in the House Democratic leadership.

In making his formal announcement, Ellison pointed to high-profile endorsements he's received from figures including Massachusets Sen. Elizabeth Warren, outgoing Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada and likely incoming Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer of New York.

"This election cycle, we did not motivate enough people to the ballot box," Ellison said in a statement. "We must

champion the challenges of working families and give voters a reason to show up at the polls in 2018 and beyond."

Ellison vowed to make connecting with voters a priority "over everything else."

"We must invest in and empower our state and local parties by creating effective field operations, an enhanced and advanced voter file, and a culture of collaboration between candidates," Ellison said. "Let's put the voters first."

Ellison's message comes as Democrats question how their massive fundraising prowess failed to win control of either chamber or the White House.

Former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean also offered to lead the DNC for a second time.

"The [Democrats] need organization and focus on the young. Need a 50-state strategy and tech rehab. I am in for chairman again," Dean wrote in announcing his bid on Twitter last week. Dean previously served as chairman from 2005 to 2009, and his 50-state strategy was credited with helping Democrats retake the House and Senate in 2006.

Elections for the DNC chairmanship are expected by March 1 following a presidential election year, according to its bylaws.

Former DNC Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz stepped down from the post just before the Democratic National Convention in July, just as the party was set to nominate Clinton under a banner of unity.

Her resignation came amid an uproar over purported DNC efforts to discredit Sanders' presidential campaign.

Interim DNC Chairwoman Donna Brazile has also faced criticism over the election outcome.

Contact Rahman at remarahman@cqrollcall.com or follow her on Twitter at @remawriterGet breaking news alerts and more from Roll Call on your iPhone or your Android.

South Carolina Dem Chair Joins DNC Race

By Lisa Hagen And Mark Hensch

The Hill, November 14, 2016

The chairman of South Carolina's Democratic Party on Monday announced he's seeking the Democratic National Committee (DNC) chairmanship.

"Count me in, I'm throwing my hat in," Jaime Harrison said on MSNBC's "The Rachel Maddow Show" Monday night.

"Everything I am is because of this party."

Harrison said he received some pushback when he was still considering a run, but he dismissed his critics and is using his personal story as motivation in his longshot run.

"When you start from nothing and you work and you pour yourself into building yourself up ... you're not going to have anybody stand in your way and say you can't do it," he said.

The state Democratic party chairman has lived and worked in Washington, D.C., for 12 years and said he is taking unpaid leave from his job at The Podesta Group.

Harrison called for a stronger 50-state strategy, which is a nod to former Vermont Gov. and onetime DNC Chairman Howard Dean, who is mounting another bid for DNC chairman.

"We have to go into a 50-state strategy plus," Harrison said. "But we have to ramp that up and make sure that we've investing in all our state parties and we're building the next bench of Democratic talent."

The list of announced and potential candidates for DNC chairman continues to grow in the wake of Hillary Clinton's stunning defeat to Donald Trump.

Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.) announced earlier on Monday that he was formally running and has received a handful of high-profile endorsements that including outgoing Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid

(D-Nev.) and Sen. Bernie Sanders

(I-Vt.).

Ellison appeared on MSNBC Monday evening to further promote his bid for the leadership role. He's the first Muslim elected to Congress and is a member of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Dean announced his bid last week. He led the party as chairman from 2005 to 2009 and oversaw major Democratic gains.

Other potential contenders who have expressed interest are former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley and Labor Secretary Tom Perez.

Tim Ryan Weighs Challenge To Pelosi As Democrats Reel

By Heather Caygle And John Bresnahan

Politico, November 14, 2016

Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Ohio) is considering challenging long-time Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi for the Democrats' top House leadership post, as the party grapples with its Election Day debacle.

"This is very serious. This is not a lark. This is not a stunt of any sort. There are a lot of people who are calling him and want him to run," said a Democratic member who's backing Ryan but asked not to be named.

While Ryan probably can't beat Pelosi, his potential candidacy comes as another group of roughly 30 House Democrats is seeking to postpone Thursday's leadership elections. They want to to conduct a review of Democrats woeful performance, which fell well short of their own expectations. The members are not supporting Ryan's candidacy, although the twin efforts highlight the disquiet within Democratic ranks.

A senior Democratic aide called Ryan's move "a publicity stunt," saying it's doubtful he actually runs. Ryan only paid half of his $200,000 party dues this cycle despite having $500,000 cash on hand, the aide said.

Not so, a spokesman for Ryan responded.

"This is absolutely not a publicity stunt. He never had the ambition to run for leader but after last week's election results and the phone calls he had with his colleagues, he's open to the idea. He's not ruling anything out," the spokesman, Michael Zetts, told POLITICO.

The Democratic lawmaker backing Ryan said support is building for a leadership shakeup after last week and took issue with the dues criticism.

"This is not the time to start taking pot shots," said the member, referencing Ryan's delinquent dues specifically. "We have lost election after election after election and our leadership doesn't even want to discuss it with it. They don't want to hear our concerns."

There is also talk inside Democratic circles about ways to loosen Pelosi and leadership's hold on power. For instance, some rank-and-file Democrats want to make the chairmanship of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee an elected position. Currently, Pelosi appoints someone to that job on her own authority. Other options under consideration would make all leadership positions open to a Democratic Caucus vote, and allowing junior members to have representation at the leadership table.

Other members have floated the idea of a renewed push for term limits for committee leaders, something a Democratic aide said the Congressional Black Caucus would most surely oppose.

"The CBC supports term limits like it supported Donald Trump," the aide said.

But it's not clear if those concessions would even be enough to quiet the discord brewing in the caucus.

"Why do it now? Just to save yourself," one member said. "We have a leader who does everything and everybody else is just there. We need a team of people and we don't have that."

In her 12 years leading the conference, Pelosi has only been challenged once – by former Rep. Heath Shuler (D-N.C.) after the GOP wipeout of the Democratic majority in 2010. Shuler garnered 43 votes, a remarkably strong showing by Pelosi after the party's losses that year.

Ryan has not officially declared a bid for minority leader, and it's still unclear if he will.

"Congressman Ryan is flattered that a growing number of members of the Democratic caucus have called on him to run for leader," Zetts said separately in a statement.

"He understands that many members are deeply concerned about the future of the Democratic party and caucus. He watched many traditional Democrats leave our party and he is concerned that if changes aren't made we will be in the political wilderness for many years to come," Zetts added.

So far, Pelosi has not commented on Ryan's possible challenge.

Ryan could be appealing for some Democrats who worry that the party has moved too far left, leaving behind the working class voters who long made up an integral part of its base.

Youngstown, the old manufacturing city that's so blue-collar Bruce Springsteen wrote a song about it, sits in Ryan's northeastern Ohio district. The Rust Belt district is made up of a predominately white working class, with nearly one-third employed in manufacturing or retail jobs and a median household income of $42,000, according to 2015 Census data.

The area has been represented by a Democrat since the mid-1970s — Ryan won his race overwhelmingly with 68 percent of the vote this year — but leaned toward Donald Trump in the presidential election.

"One thing is clear—the Democratic Party is getting wiped out in rural America. Our party isn't spread out enough for just the urban and suburban vote to carry these states," said Wisconsin Rep. Ron Kind, who spoke to POLITICO late last week before the Ryan news.

"I think we have to have a better message for rural America. That they're not being left behind," Kind added.

Kind isn't alone. Many Democrats voiced frustrations about the party's lack of appeal to working class voters during a caucus call the day after the election.

"We've got to figure out how we take care of it--how we make our diversity our strength. But our diversity is everybody, it's inclusion of everybody," said Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.). "Along the way we've got to make sure we're including working men and women."

Ryan initially signed onto a letter circulated over the weekend asking Pelosi to delay leadership elections, currently set for Thursday. But Ryan took his name off the missive once it became clear he might challenge Pelosi, the top House Democrat for more than a decade.

Ryan would face long odds against Pelosi, a fundraising powerhouse who has a loyal following within the caucus.

But the caucus is rife with infighting as members bicker over what's the best way forward and who should lead them as President-elect Donald Trump prepares to move into the White House and Republicans hold onto their House and Senate majorities.

Democrats only picked up six seats on Election Day despite months of leaders boasting about the potential to gain 20 seats or even take back the House with a 30-seat pickup.

But after last week's election results, many Democrats are privately lobbing fresh criticisms about their leaders, with several questioning what Pelosi's fundraising power means if they only pick up a handful of seats either way.

"When you put the kind of energy we put into this presidential election, and you fight like we fought, and you still lose because people don't believe we are the party that

represents them, something has to change," a Democratic lawmaker said.

GOP Leadership Intact, In Holding Pattern After Trump Win: 'Victory Heals All Wounds'

By S.A. Miller

Washington Times, November 14, 2016

Lawmakers returned Monday to find that the political earthquake from the presidential election had barely registered on Capitol Hill, where the leadership of both parties remained solidly intact.

The meager agenda for the "lame-duck" session, however, foretold the sea change headed for Washington. Republican leaders threw aside plans for big bipartisan bills and set out to do as little as possible before President-elect Donald Trump takes office next year and the GOP seizes control of the executive and legislative branches.

House Republicans kicked off leadership elections with a closed-door meeting to hear speeches from contenders, but the current slate of leaders topped by Speaker Paul D. Ryan, Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy and Conference Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers did not face serious challenges in the vote slated for Tuesday.

The faction of conservative lawmakers who for years vexed the GOP leadership did not rise up this time. Mr. Ryan, facing backbiting for never fully supporting Mr. Trump's run, got a free pass.

"Victory heals all wounds," said Rep. Tom Cole, Oklahoma Republican.

On the other side of the aisle, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi was the most vulnerable to overthrow after failing to significantly chip away at the majority in the election. Nevertheless, the California congresswoman was poised to enter her 15th year at the helm of House Democrats.

Her lieutenants — Minority White Steny H. Hoyer of Maryland, Assistant Democratic Leader James E. Clyburn of South Carolina and Caucus Chairman Xavier Becerra — also appeared secure in their jobs.

A small group of House Democrats called for a delay of the leadership vote scheduled for Thursday, arguing the caucus needs more time to digest the election results and determine how to best position itself to fight Mr. Trump's "potentially dangerous agenda."

The request was spearheaded by Rep. Tim Ryan of Ohio, who is eyeing a long-shot run against Ms. Pelosi but is roundly dismissed by his peers.

In the Senate, the biggest change expected is the assent of Sen. Charles E. Schumer of New York, currently the No. 3 Senate Democrat, to succeed retiring Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky and his leadership crew were headed for re-election to their posts when the chamber's Republicans put it to a vote Wednesday.

Despite the familiar faces in leadership, Mr. McCarthy said the presidential election would profoundly alter Capitol Hill politics.

"It's going to shake this place up," he told reporters at the Capitol. "You've got to give the president-elect credit, because he listened to a voice that people weren't listening to, and he became their voice, and I think all elected [officials] on both sides have got to recognize that."

Mr. Trump's upset victory "[reminds] me the power still rests with the people," said Mr. McCarthy.

Preparing for the new president, Republican leaders cleared the deck of ambitious end-of-year legislation and looked for a clean exit from the 114th Congress.

A stopgap spending bill to keep the government running is in the works, putting off major budget decisions until Mr. Trump takes up residence in the White House.

The government has been operating on a temporary spending measure, known as a continuing resolution, or CR, since the budget year began Oct. 1. That CR expires Dec. 9, which is the deadline for another extension.

"It should be a short lame duck," said a Senate Republican aide.

Despite the shrinking agenda, Mr. Ryan said two bipartisan bills are still on the to-do list for the lame duck.

The speaker said that he wanted action on the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, which seeks to shore up U.S. mental health services by adding hospital beds for people suffering with mental illness and making other reforms.

He also wanted to get the 21st Century Cures Act across the finish line. The bill would provide nearly $9 billion for new medical research, including Mr. Obama's Cancer Moonshot and Precision Medicine Initiatives.

The House and Senate also are looking to finish conference work on the Water Resource Development Act and complete a Defense Department policy bill before adjourning Dec. 17.

The Republican Congress, however, has not finished tussling with the White House.

House Republicans are pushing forward a bill that would give blanket disapproval of all regulations issued by the White House during the lame-duck period.

The White House issued notice that Mr. Obama would veto the bill, known as the Midnight Rules Relief Act.

The White House also issued a veto threat for a bill coming up for a vote Wednesday that would block U.S. financing for Boeing's sale of $25 billion worth of airliners to Iran. The bill by Rep. Bill Huizenga, Michigan Republican, would prohibit U.S. banks from financing the deal and revoke any previously granted approval of the sale by the Treasury Department.

The measure is an early jab at the Iran nuclear deal, which Mr. Trump has vowed to undo.

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Ryan Set To Win Speaker Election

By Rachael Bade

Politico, November 14, 2016

Paul Ryan is poised to win a secret-ballot election Tuesday to serve a second term as speaker, as House Republicans look to move past years of internal bickering and unite behind President-elect Donald Trump.

The Wisconsin Republican, who last week started making calls to fellow lawmakers to lock down support, only needs the backing of a majority of the Republican conference. The bigger hurdle will come in January, when Ryan must garner a majority of lawmakers present — typically 218 votes — to keep his gavel.

Even as the conference hailed Ryan last year for stepping up to fill the leadership void left by former Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio), about 43 lawmakers cast ballots for protest candidate Rep. Daniel Webster (R-Fla.). Sources expect fewer defections this time, a sign that Republicans are eager to show a united front.

Not everyone is happy about the timing of the internal election, however. A number of lawmakers walking into a Republican meeting Monday grumbled that Ryan should have postponed the leadership vote. Three days before the presidential election, POLITICO reported on a letter — authored by Rep. Jim Renacci (R-Ohio) and backed by roughly a dozen Trump supporters and other lawmakers — asking Republican leaders to postpone the election. They've refused to do so.

"I just thing we need a couple days to come together as a conference. I think there were some major differences prior [to the election] and I think we need a couple days to give a chance to come back together," said Rep. Lou Barletta (R-Pa.), a leading Trump surrogate in Congress. Barletta said he's not sure whether he will support Ryan for speaker.

"Do we have to rush into this?" added Rep. Morgan Griffith (R-Va.). "Let's just take a deep breath and give members some time to talk. I just got here at 3:30 p.m.! I've been in the office trying to do all kinds of stuff since I haven't been here in weeks."

Ironically, the speaker's easy path to reelection comes just days after he was seen as at his most vulnerable. Since early October, Trump's most adamant House supporters have steamed over Ryan's decision to distance himself from the GOP nominee. Several members also told POLITICO after the election that should Trump — who weeks ago lashed out at Ryan for keeping him at arm's lenghth — express interest in pushing Ryan out of the speakership, they might have to heed his call.

Trump, however, has shown no desire for revenge at this point.

Following his lead, much of the House Freedom Caucus has also put down their knives. Several members told POLITICO late last week that they plan to support Ryan after considering trying to depose him.

"Paul Ryan is going to end up running for speaker unopposed," Freedom Caucus co-founder Mark Meadows (R-N.C.) said on CNN Monday. "He'll have the vast majority of the Republican Congress, the vast majority of the House freedom Caucus, because the focus is really not on the speaker's race any longer. It's on the American people and making sure that we actually take Washington, D.C. back, give it back to its rightful owner, the American people."

Ryan told House Republicans in an email that "we have an historic opportunity to turn President-elect [Donald] Trump's extraordinary victory into progress for the American people."

"I am running for re-election so that we can continue what we have started and make 2017 a year of action," Ryan wrote. "If we go for it — if we go big and go bold — we can make America so great that it offers our children even more than it offers us."

Ryan and the current leadership team is expected to be reinstalled during a closed-door meeting of the House Republican Conference on Tuesday. The bigger test will be a floor vote in January, when Ryan must garner a majority of members present, typically 218 votes, to re-take the gavel.

Trump has signaled little desire to punish Ryan for keeping him at arm's length during the campaign, though some of his top allies, including Breitbart chief Steve Bannon, indicated during the election they wanted Ryan to be removed the speaker's post.

Ryan's email was part solicitation, part battle cry. Ryan told the conference that Republicans, who will control the White House and both chambers of Congress, have a chance to do something monumental.

He urged them to seize the moment to unify and get something done, which he added "will not be easy."

"We will be challenged, and rightly so," Ryan wrote, but "we cannot be timid about this: the country has voted for change, and we must deliver."

"We have shown that when we go bold, we win," Ryan continued. "Now this agenda will help us hit the ground running as we join forces with the new Trump administration. We need to seize this moment, and come together like never before."

Iran, Spending, Defense: Areas To Watch As Congress Reconvenes

By Jennifer Steinhauer

New York Times, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — Congress returns this week to finish the last of its business before a new year and era begin in Washington. Ebullient Republicans are eager to put some remaining legislation behind them and to try to fund the government through the rest of the year. Here are some areas to watch.

This legislation, which would finance increases in medical research and changes in regulations, is a priority for both the White House and Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky and the majority leader. President Obama would like a bipartisan postelection accomplishment, and many in his party would like to give it to him, especially since the bill addresses the cancer moonshot associated with Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., whose son died of a brain tumor.

"The president's interested in the precision medicine part of that, the vice president is interested in the cancer moonshot part of it, I'm interested in the regenerative medicine part of it," Mr. McConnell said last week. I'd like to see us finish that important new measure this year."

Congress could pass a final version of the annual National Defense Authorization Act, an expansive military policy bill. There are a few contentious issues at play. The House version of the bill has a religious exemption provision for people seeking federal contracts that many Senate Democrats viewed as a government-sponsored discrimination. The bill contains a provision that would permit religiously affiliated federal contractors to refuse to interview a job candidate whose faith differs from theirs. The Senate version had a provision that would for the first time require young women to register for the draft, something the House rejected. These differences must be reconciled.

Congress also may pass an extension of the expiring Iran Sanctions Act, which focuses on Iran's nuclear and missile activities. Its proponents favor so-called snap back sanctions on Iran to prevent violations of the nuclear pact negotiated last year. The Obama administration has feared that if lawmakers stiffen existing sanctions, Tehran would interpret it as a the United States backing down from that deal.

Congressional Republicans are looking for guidance from the incoming Trump administration. A short-term spending bill to keep the government open will expire on Dec. 9. Many lawmakers, including Mr. McConnell, have hoped for a long-term bill to increase government spending and fund the government through the end of the fiscal year, next Sept. 30, or a series of appropriations bills, to keep a funding fight out of Donald J. Trump's hair in the first months of governing. But House conservatives have been pushing for a shorter measure that would do the bare minimum, creating an opportunity for Mr. Trump to slash spending soon after taking office.

"We would like to finish funding the government this year," Mr. McConnell said last week. "Exactly how to achieve that over a three-week period is always a matter for discussion. How to package it, differences in the House versus the Senate. But I would like to wrap up the business of funding the government in this fiscal year, this calendar year."

The Cracks Are Already Starting To Show Between Donald Trump And Republicans

By Amber Phillips

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

President-elect Donald Trump and establishment Republicans did not really get along during the campaign. The last time we counted, earlier this fall, we calculated that House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) disagreed with or denounced Trump on average every week-and-a-half or so.

But the campaign is over, and Republicans and Trump are trying to play nice. In interviews since the election, they've stressed they agree with their president on tax reform, repealing Obamacare and securing the border.

It's not uncommon for the party in the White House to have some disagreements with its own members in Congress. But if you take Trump's campaign promises at his word, Republicans have fundamental disagreements with their incoming president on his proposals to spend billions on infrastructure, deport millions of immigrants in the country illegally and institute more protectionist trade policies.

And the cracks on those issues are starting to show. Here are six areas where Republicans have given Trump's agenda a lukewarm response. 1. Deportation

Trump: "What we are going to do is get the people that are criminals and have criminal records, gang members, drug dealers, a lot of these people, probably 2 million. It could even be 3 million," he told CBS's Lesley Stahl in a "60 Minutes" interview that aired Sunday. "After the border is secured and after everything gets normalized, we're going to make a determination on the people that you're talking about, who are terrific people."

Ryan: "We are not planning on erecting a deportation force," he told Jake Tapper on Sunday's CNN "State of the Union." "Donald Trump is not planning on that."

(To that, hard-right news site Breitbart.com — whose former chief will be a top strategist to Trump — blasted out an article declaring: "Paul Ryan: No Deportations")

Newt Gingrich: "There are going to be substantial deportations. They're called criminals," the former House speaker and Trump ally told John Dickerson on Sunday on CBS's "Face the Nation." "I mean, 2 million people would be a lot of people to deport."

Kevin McCarthy: "Well, I think it's difficult to do," the House majority leader (R-Calif.) said Sunday in response to a question by Fox News's Chris Wallace on whether he'd get

behind Trump's proposal for mass deportations. 2. A border wall

Trump: "Yes." (In response to a question by Stahl: "Are you really going to build a wall?") Trump did say he'd accept some proposals circulating in Congress for some fencing: "For certain areas, I would. But certain areas, a wall is more appropriate."

McCarthy: "You have to put a wall, it could be all virtual with the UAV airplanes as well, but I think that is doable and one of the first things that needs to be done. The terrain is different, so you can't always build in just a specific place, but you can protect it." 3. Trade

Trump: Has repeatedly said he'd like to renegotiate or rip up trade deals. And he has promised to establish tariffs in his first 100 days.

Ryan: "Well, I think there's a better way of dealing with that particular issue," Ryan said on CNN in response to a question about Trump's tariffs plan. "We think there are better ways of dealing with making American products and workers more competitive, and really it's fixing our tax code." 4. Term limits for members of Congress

Trump: "We're going to put on term limits, which a lot of people aren't happy about, but we're putting on term limits," he said on "60 Minutes."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.): "I say we have term limits now. They're called elections. It will not be on the agenda in the Senate," McConnell told reporters the day after the election. 5. Infrastructure spending

Trump: "We're going to rebuild our infrastructure, which will become, by the way, second to none," Trump said on "60 Minutes." During the campaign, Trump pitched a 10-year, $500 billion infrastructure plan. "And we will put millions of our people to work as we rebuild it."

Ryan: In September, Ryan indicated such a plan as proposed by Trump would be too expensive. "We passed the biggest highway bill, the long-term highway bill, for the first time since the 1990s just a few months ago. That's already in place at 10 percent above baseline spending on mass transit and highways."

McCarthy: McCarthy said on Fox News that "there is a place we could find common ground with Republicans and Democrats" on infrastructure. But he seemed unable to explain how Trump's infrastructure spending plan differs from President Obama's 2009 stimulus. "Obama never had infrastructure in his stimulus," he said. (Infrastructure spending was a major part of Obama's stimulus.) 6. Whether Republicans have a mandate

Ryan: "He just earned a mandate, and we now just have a unified Republican government. The opportunity is to go big, to go bold and to get things done," he said in a news conference Wednesday.

McConnell: " I think it's always a mistake to misread your mandate, and frequently new majorities think it's going to be forever," he told reporters Wednesday. "Nothing is forever in this country." Where Trump and Republicans are in agreement

There are a handful of areas that Trump and Republicans seem genuinely in agreement on. They are:

Obamacare: Trump wants to repeal it; Republicans want to repeal it. Trump wants to keep the parts of the law that allow people under the age of 26 to stay on their parents' health-care plans and that require insurance companies to insure people with preexisting conditions. It looks like Republicans do, too.

Ryan on CNN said: "We need to have a solution for people with preexisting conditions. In our plan is allowing younger people up to the age of 26 to stay on their parents' plan."

Secure the border: Republicans and Trump agree this is a priority, perhaps even before deporting immigrants in the country illegally.

Trump on 60 Minutes: "But before we make that determination, Lesley, it's very important — we want to secure our border."

Ryan on CNN: "We think that's first and foremost. Before we get into any other immigration issue, we have got to know who's coming and going in the country. We have got to secure the border."

Tax reform: Ryan's top policy priority appears to be one of Trump's as well.

"We're going to substantially simplify and lower the taxes," Trump said.

Steve Bannon: Trump tapped the controversial Breitbart chief Sunday to make him his chief strategist. On Sunday, Ryan said: "I don't know Steve Bannon, so I have no concerns. I trust Donald's judgment." On Monday in an interview with MSNBC, Trump's incoming chief of staff, Reince Priebus, said Bannon is "a force for good."

But on this key appointment, there is the potential for division between Republicans and Trump.

Hill Republicans were effusive in their praise and congratulations Sunday for Priebus — currently the head of the Republican National Committee and a buddy of Ryan's — getting the top job. But they were nearly silent on Bannon's appointment.

Trump's Supreme Court List: Ivy League? Out. The Heartland? In.

By Adam Liptak

New York Times, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — When Donald J. Trump issued his final list of 21 potential nominees to the Supreme Court in September, he made a vow. "This list is definitive," he said, "and I will choose only from it in picking future justices of the Supreme Court."

Note the plural: justices. So the promise applies not only to the vacancy created by the death of Justice Antonin Scalia in February, but also to any other Supreme Court nominations during the Trump presidency. Given the advanced age of some justices, retirements are a distinct possibility.

Mr. Trump's seemingly set-in-stone list has important clues about the president-elect's judicial priorities, and it also has a few surprises. The list manages both to reassure the conservative legal establishment and to represent a rebellion against it.

In important ways, Mr. Trump's candidates represent a sharp break from the current conservative justices, who all went to law school at Harvard or Yale and who all served on federal appeals courts in the Northeast or in California.

If the list has a main theme, it is that there are plenty of good judges who went to law school at places like Notre Dame, Marquette, the University of Georgia and the University of Miami.

About half of Mr. Trump's candidates sit on state supreme courts, and almost all those who sit on federal appeals courts do so in the heartland. (The exception is Judge Margaret A. Ryan of the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, in Washington.)

The résumés of the justices currently on the Supreme Court, by contrast, reflect a legal profession that is deeply hierarchical, obsessed with credentials and dominated by lawyers on the two coasts. Mr. Trump's list, like his campaign, is a revolt against the elites.

At the same time, Mr. Trump's candidates are, unsurprisingly, committed judicial conservatives. Mr. Trump credited two leading conservative policy groups — the Heritage Foundation and the Federalist Society — with helping to draw up his list.

"You had an awful lot of conservatives during the campaign who were incredibly skeptical, to put it mildly, about Donald Trump," said John G. Malcolm, a Heritage Foundation official who suggested a number of names that appeared on the list. "But they certainly cared a lot about the Scalia vacancy and the direction of the court. And that list was a very, very sober list, and it was greatly reassuring."

The list is a good reflection of Mr. Trump's dual priorities, said William M. Jay, a lawyer with the firm of Goodwin Procter and a former law clerk to Justice Scalia.

"It was consistent with the message he was trying to send: that he was not going to be naming establishment choices but that the establishment might well be happy with the people he chose from Alabama and Iowa and places like that," Mr. Jay said.

The top priority for conservatives, Mr. Malcolm said, was to avoid another disappointment like Justice David H. Souter, who was appointed by President George Bush in 1990 but whose voting record on the Supreme Court turned out to be decidedly liberal.

Mr. Malcolm said his own first choice for the current vacancy was Judge William H. Pryor Jr. of the United States Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit, in Atlanta. "If you are concerned about not wanting another David Souter," Mr. Malcolm said, "he has a real titanium spine in terms of doing the right thing."

Judge Pryor has called Roe v. Wade, the 1973 decision establishing a right to abortion, "the worst abomination of constitutional law in our history," a comment he stood by at his confirmation hearing. He once ended a speech with a prayer: "Please, God, no more Souters."

Mr. Jay also singled out Judge Pryor, who went to law school at Tulane. "While Bill Pryor did not go to Yale," he said, "there is a broad consensus that Bill Pryor is a smart, intellectual and fair judge who most conservatives would happily see on a Supreme Court shortlist."

Brian T. Fitzpatrick, a law professor at Vanderbilt and a former law clerk to Justice Scalia, had praise for Judge Ryan, the military judge, who is a former clerk to Justice Clarence Thomas and a graduate of Notre Dame Law School. "She is just a tough-as-nails, no-nonsense kind of person," he said. "She would be not a wishy-washy kind of conservative. People who don't want any more Souters wouldn't have to worry about her."

Both Mr. Jay and Professor Fitzpatrick said Justice Scalia would have been pleased to be succeeded by one of his former law clerks, Justice Joan Larsen of the Michigan Supreme Court. She went to law school at Northwestern, served in the Justice Department and taught law at the University of Michigan.

"Joan Larsen has a very decent chance," Mr. Malcolm said.

Mr. Trump's list has some striking omissions, among them Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit and Paul D. Clement, who was solicitor general from 2005 to 2008 and often argues cases before the Supreme Court.

Their perceived drawbacks say a lot about Mr. Trump's priorities. Mr. Malcolm, who proposed both men for the list, drew some conclusions.

In Judge Kavanaugh's case, it probably did not help that he went to Yale Law School and sits in Washington. "They may have wanted to send a message that they are an outside-the-Beltway organization," Mr. Malcolm said. "And then the other part of it, not quite as severe, was his opinion in one of the Obamacare cases."

Judge Kavanaugh dissented from a decision upholding the health care law, but he did so on jurisdictional grounds. Ideological purity would have required him to vote to strike down the law on constitutional grounds.

"Some conservatives thought it was John Roberts-esque, trying to thread the needle," Mr. Malcolm said, referring to Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr.'s 2012 opinion upholding the law. "And being John Roberts-esque doesn't make many friends in conservative circles these days."

"For Paul Clement," Mr. Malcolm went on, "the feeling was that we don't want to take any chances on another David Souter. Therefore, we are going to make sure that we are going to appoint a judge and that it's someone who has a written record."

Mr. Malcolm said Mr. Clement could satisfy the skeptics with a stint on an appeals court. "Let him build up a body of work and then maybe nominate him to a second vacancy," Mr. Malcolm said.

But that would require Mr. Trump to enlarge a list he had said was firm. Could that happen? Perhaps.

As his longtime stockbroker Alan C. Greenberg liked to quip: "Donald, your word is your bond. But your memory is short."

Steyer Calls On Obama To Ban Offshore Drilling In Arctic, Atlantic

By Esther Whieldon

Politico, November 14, 2016

Billionaire Democratic activist Tom Steyer is calling on President Barack Obama to invoke largely untested authority to permanently block offshore oil drilling in the Atlantic Ocean and Arctic before Donald Trump takes office.

The involvement of Steyer's NextGen Climate group ups the ante on an under-the-radar campaign environmentalists and Democrats have been waging for months to get Obama to invoke powers that would effectively allow to ban drilling in sections of oceans under federal control.

"The Trump administration has the potential to do serious damage to our climate — but in the last few months of his presidency, President Obama can take concrete steps to secure his environmental legacy," Steyer said in a statement NextGen plans to release Tuesday. "We will continue to support bold action by President Obama to fight for our families, and we will keep pushing back against Trump's dark vision and dangerous plans for our country."

NextGen and White House officials have discussed the possibility of Obama using his executive powers under a section of the law governing offshore drilling that allows him to "withdraw from disposition" any section of the Outer Continental Shelf that has not already been leased for oil or gas drilling. And the group is asking its members to sign a petition calling on Obama to do so.

Whether Obama follows through before the end of his term remains to be seen, but the move seems more likely now that he will be handing power to Trump rather than Democrat Hillary Clinton.

Trump has boasted he will unleash fossil fuel development to accelerate growth and curb regulations on oil and gas development, which has environmentalists grappling with how to prevent him from opening up more areas for offshore drilling.

They are hoping Obama will build on his decision in March to propose withdrawing the Atlantic and some of the Arctic Ocean from oil and gas drilling in the next five-year drilling plan. A final version of that plan is expected to be released soon, but Trump could direct his administration to rewrite it after taking office.

Steyer's group says more permanent protections are available using section 12(a) of the OCS Lands Act. Similar to the Antiquities Act, which presidents can use to create national monuments to permanently protect parcels of land from development, Section 12(a) does not include language that allows future presidents to undo the withdrawal of offshore areas from future leasing.

"We know that this idea has been under serious consideration in the White House, from direct conversations, but we don't know where they are in that process at this stage," said a NextGen Climate America official who requested anonymity and would not say when the conversations happened.

Whether Trump would really be powerless to expand drilling in the face of such a decision from Obama would have to be tested in court.

"No president has ever rescinded an open-ended reserve under this, and so there's no litigation history," John Leshy, a Clinton-era Interior official who now teaches at University of California's Hastings College of the Law, told E&E News earlier this year. He added, "Nobody knows the answer because it's never been tried."

Obama has used the law before. In 2014, he made the waters of Alaska's Bristol Bay indefinitely off limits to consideration for oil and gas leasing. And in 2015, he made parts of the Beaufort and Chukchi seas off limits.

Several environmental groups this year have called for permanent leasing bans in the Arctic and Atlantic, including the Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club and League of Conservation Voters.

Maryland Sens. Ben Cardin and Barbara Mikulski, and more than a dozen other Democratic senators in October, called on Obama to use the same law the permanently ban drilling.

"Using this authority to permanently protect these areas would ensure that important industries in our coastal states such as fishing and tourism are protected, that we do not despoil our beaches and coastlines or the sensitive ecosystem of the Arctic Ocean, and that we align our long-

term federal energy decisions with a climate-safe future," they wrote in a letter to the president.

U.S. Internet Firms Ask Trump To Support Encryption, Ease Regulations

By Dustin Volz

Reuters, November 14, 2016

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

Poll: Americans Believe Trump Can Bring Prosperity, Skeptical He Can Bring Peace

By Steven Shepard

Politico, November 14, 2016

Americans have confidence Donald Trump's administration will improve the economy, but they think the president-elect will do little to mend the environment, heal race relations or even keep the country out of war.

A new Gallup poll released Monday tested 17 different potential goals for the Trump administration and found Americans have the most faith in Trump's ability to handle the economy and keep the country safe from terrorism, though trust in Trump lags that for Barack Obama in 2008.

More than six-in-10 Americans, 62 percent, say Trump's administration will "reduce unemployment and create new jobs," and 60 percent say Trump will "improve the economy."

In November 2008, 64 percent of Americans said Obama's administration would "create a strong economic recovery," and 67 percent said he "reduce unemployment."

Fifty-seven percent of Americans say Trump will keep the U.S. safe from terrorism, a shade lower than the 62 percent who said Obama would keep the U.S. safe eight years ago.

One goal on which Trump is rated far higher than Obama: controlling illegal immigration. Fifty-nine percent say Trump's administration will control illegal immigration, far higher than the 35 percent who said Obama's administration would.

Expectations are more tempered on other goals: improving education (53 percent), improving the health care system (52 percent), appointing good Supreme Court justices (52 percent), cutting taxes (51 percent) and reducing the federal budget deficit (46 percent).

But there's less confidence for Trump on matters of race: Only 44 percent think his administration will improve conditions for minorities and the poor, and just 35 percent think his administration will improve race relations.

Just over a third, 35 percent, believe Trump will improve the quality of the environment, and only 38 percent think he will keep the nation out of war.

And only 39 percent think Trump's administration will heal political divisions in the U.S. – compared to 54 percent who thought Obama would immediately following his election in 2008.

The Gallup poll was conducted November 10-11, surveying 1,000 adults. Each respondent was asked about 12 of the 17 items, meaning the sample size for each item is roughly 700 adults. The margin of error is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

U.S. Businesses Bet On Which Trump Will Govern

Populist Donald Trump or traditional Republican? The view, or combination of views, that emerges from the White House will chart the course of American corporations for the next four years

By Nick Timiraos And Ted Mann

Wall Street Journal, November 14, 2016

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

Trump Can't Repeal The Laws Of Economics

By Lawrence Summers

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

Lawrence Summers is a professor at and past president of Harvard University. He was treasury secretary from 1999 to 2001 and an economic adviser to President Obama from 2009 through 2010.

Following a brief market plunge, the president-elect's speech last Tuesday night was more conciliatory than many expected and emphasized his commitment to infrastructure investment. Investors have, on balance, concluded that the combination of a shift to very expansionary fiscal policy and major reductions in regulation in sectors ranging from energy to finance to drug pricing will raise demand and reflate the U.S. economy.

The result has been a rise in real interest rates and inflation expectations, along with a strong stock market and a strong dollar. Experience suggests, however, that initial market responses to major political events are poor predictors of their ultimate impact.

The late MIT economist Rudiger Dornbusch made an extensive study of the results of populist economic programs around the world, finding that while they sometimes had immediate positive results, over the medium- and long-term they were catastrophic for the working class in whose name they were launched. This could be the fate of the Trump program given its design errors, implausible assumptions and reckless disregard for global economics.

I have long been a strong advocate of debt-financed public investment in the context of low interest rates and a decaying U.S. infrastructure, so I was glad to see Trump emphasize it. Unfortunately, the plan presented by his

advisers, Peter Navarro and Wilbur Ross, suggests an approach based on tax credits for equity investment and total private-sector participation that will not cover the most important projects, not reach many of the most important investors and involve substantial mis-targeting of public resources.

Many of the highest-return infrastructure investments — such as improving roads, repairing 60,000 structurally deficient bridges, upgrading schools or modernizing the air traffic control system — do not generate a commercial return and so are excluded from his plan. Nor can the non-taxable pension funds, endowments and sovereign wealth funds that are the most promising sources of capital for infrastructure take advantage of the program.

I am optimistic regarding the efficacy of fiscal expansion. But any responsible economist has to recognize that, past a point, it can lead to some combination of excessive foreign borrowing, inflation and even financial crisis. As Dornbusch showed, in emerging markets this can happen quite quickly. In the United States the process would take longer.

Even without taking account of the likely costs of the infrastructure plan (which the Trump team badly underestimates) or the proposed defense build-up, the Trump tax reform proposals are too expensive. Many, such as the proposed abolition of the estate tax, will benefit only the high-saving wealthy.

While drastic changes in the proposed domestic program are necessary for it to work, the general direction of increasing public investment, reforming taxes and adjusting regulation is appropriate. The same cannot be said of Trump's global plan, which rests on a misunderstanding of how the world economy operates.

Consider the immediate effects of Trump's victory. The Mexican peso has depreciated about 10 percent relative to the dollar over fears of new protectionist policies, and many other emerging market currencies have also fallen sharply. The impact of this change is to raise the cost of anything the U.S. exports to Mexico and to lower the cost of anything Mexico exports to the United States.

It will also make Mexico and other emerging markets much cheaper relative to the United States for global companies. So U.S. workers, particularly in manufacturing, will face increased pressure.

The plan seems to assume that we can pressure countries not to let their currencies depreciate, as suggested by the intention to have the new treasury secretary name China as an exchange-rate manipulator. This is ludicrous. While there are reasonable arguments that China manipulated its exchange rate for commercial advantage in the past, the reality is that for the past year the country has intervened to prop up its exchange rate. The same is true of most emerging markets. Not even U.S. presidents with political mandates can repeal the laws of economics.

Populist economics will play out differently in the United States than in emerging markets. But the results will be no better. All with a stake in the global economy must hope that now, as has happened often in the past, a U.S. president faced with the responsibility of governing preserves the valid core of campaign economic plans while making major adjustments.

Read more about this topic:

Robert J. Samuelson: Trump's mission impossible?

Squaring Trumponomics With Reality

Corporate and personal tax cuts will boost growth. But debt will rise without reducing budget outlays.

By Martin Feldstein

Wall Street Journal, November 14, 2016

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

Did The Idea Of Free Public Higher Education Go Down With The Democrats?

By Danielle Douglas-Gabriel

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders elevated the issue of college affordability with campaign proposals to make public higher education free for the vast majority of American families, but those prospects have faded with the election of Donald Trump.

Trump policy adviser Sam Clovis made it clear during the campaign that the Republican leader would not support free public higher education, calling the idea "absurd" in an interview with Inside Higher Ed. And with congressional Republicans calling for the federal government to dial back its role in education, the chances of a federal-state partnership to lower the cost of college appear slim.

Proponents of debt-free college, nevertheless, remain convinced that the movement still has legs. They say underlying concerns about skyrocketing student debt and price barriers in higher education are as relevant as ever. And even without federal support, there's enough momentum at the state level to keep the movement alive.

"We woke up Wednesday morning and the anxiety around college prices, around student debt didn't go away," said Mark Huelsman, senior policy analyst at left-leaning think tank Demos, who helped build the framework for the debt-free college initiative. "The movement and the energy around meaningfully addressing college affordability doesn't go away, the tactics just shift."

Though Trump has largely been silent on higher education policy, late in the campaign he promised to work with Congress to ensure universities, especially those with hefty endowments, are making a good-faith effort to reduce

the cost of college and student debt in exchange for federal tax breaks and funding. Exactly what that would entail is unclear as Trump's transition team, which did not respond to requests for comment, has been silent on the issue.

Clovis has argued that there is no need for the federal government to partner with states to make community college free, a plan heralded by President Obama, because two-year schools are already affordable.

There are at least 85 initiatives at the municipal and state level aiming to cover the cost of tuition at community colleges, according to the Upjohn Institute. Tennessee, Oregon and Minnesota have free community college programs, with Tennessee's model getting praise from President Obama as a viable path for reducing higher education costs.

"All we can do is go to the places where the conditions are friendly and see how this model works to the best of our ability," said Sara Goldrick-Rab, a higher education and sociology professor at Temple University. "And then when there are more favorable conditions at the federal level, hopefully we'll have evidence and the case will be strengthened."

State legislatures have been paying greater attention to college costs as local employers demand some form of postsecondary education. Workforce development anchors proposals making their way through solidly red states like Mississippi and Oklahoma. At least another eight states with varying political leanings are considering legislation, while dozens of cities are taking it upon themselves to establish programs, said Celeste Carruthers, an associate professor at the University of Tennessee.

"These programs are gaining popularity at the state level and would be hard to walk back even if there is no support at the federal level," she said. "It is difficult to imagine how this patchwork of very different programs would have coalesced under one federal movement."

Even as the idea of debt-free college gained national attention during the presidential campaign, it created division within higher education. Policy experts bristled at the idea of subsidizing the education of wealthy students and pointed out that tuition was just one of many expenses contributing to exorbitant college costs. Others said public universities simply did not have the capacity to absorb the additional students who would be enticed to enroll, and worried that covering tuition for everyone would be a waste of scarce resources. Clinton's higher education plan called for a $450 billion investment.

"It wasn't a policy that was really ready for prime-time at the federal level," said Matthew Chingos, a senior fellow at the Urban Institute. "There were too many unanswered questions about whether this was the best use of limited public resources. If we're going to make college free, that means doing less for low-income people."

Leaders at private universities also took issue with the idea of the federal government giving public colleges and universities an advantage in enrolling students. Small liberal arts schools fighting against waning enrollment and tuition revenue were especially vocal in their dissent.

Susan West Engelkemeyer, president of Nichols College, wrote in The Washington Post that she had major concerns about the impact free public college would have on private schools like hers, and she encouraged lawmakers to consider alternatives. She said the federal government could instead double the investment in the Pell grant program, a federal financial aid program aimed at families making less than $60,000 a year. Pouring more money into that effort could knock out a substantial amount of the cost of college, she said.

"We could increase Pell 10 times and be under Clinton's estimated costs," she said. "There are ways that we can approach this that are more rational, less disruptive for small privates that are tuition driven and public institutions that rely on out-of-state tuition for their budget."

Pell plays a critical role in the tuition-free proposals in the states, as many of them would cover tuition after the federal grant is applied. While Senate Republicans have backed efforts to expand Pell funding, their colleagues in the House have stymied legislation that would make the grant available throughout the academic year. That not only leaves the prospects for an expansion up in the air, but also calls into question whether the existing funding levels will continue in the next administration.

Globalism: A Far-Right Conspiracy Theory Buoyed By Trump

By Liam Stack

New York Times, November 14, 2016

Donald J. Trump's election victory was powered in part by forceful opposition to what he described as an economic and political system rigged against the American people for the benefit of shadowy forces in the news media, the banks and the government.

President-elect Trump and his allies often describe that system with one word: globalism.

It is a word that conjures many images, none of them good: shuttered factories, unchecked immigration and a distant cabal that, believers say, controls the economy and the media.

Analysts who track extremist groups in the United States have expressed alarm at the use of the word by the president-elect. They say it carries multiple meanings — from benign to sinister — and often serves as a "dog whistle" for racist, anti-Semitic and antigovernment conspiracy theorists.

"Globalism is a principle driver for the fears that animate the radical right in the United States," said Ryan Lenz, the

editor of Hatewatch, a blog published by the Southern Poverty Law Center. “It is the enemy, ultimately.”

Globalism is often used as a synonym for globalization, the system of global economic interconnection that has been critiqued for decades by liberal groups like labor unions, environmental organizations and opponents of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. But for the far right, the term encapsulates a conspiratorial worldview based on racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, according to Mark Pitcavage, a researcher at the Anti-Defamation League.

Lauren Southern, a host on the right-wing Canadian media site Rebel Media, explicitly rejected its use as a synonym for globalization in a video she posted online in September. She said the word meant rule by autocrats — such as President Obama, former President George W. Bush and the United Nations — who value “the false flag of diversity” and “unchecked immigration from the third world.”

“Globalists almost always sneer down their nose at tradition, disdain national culture, laugh at religion and generally despise the West while holding a creepy affection for the third world,” she added. “They want open borders, cheap labor and antinationalism to benefit their business and political visions, and are all too willing to shaft the little people to achieve it.”

Breitbart News, the hard-right website run by Stephen K. Bannon, Mr. Trump’s newly appointed chief White House strategist, frequently attacked globalism and so-called “globalist elites” during Mr. Bannon’s tenure there. But no one may have done more to popularize the idea of a globalist conspiracy than Alex Jones, a far-right radio host who commands an online audience of millions through his Infowars media empire.

He has been called “the most prolific conspiracy theorist in contemporary America” by the Southern Poverty Law Center. Among his claims: the Sandy Hook school massacre in Newtown, Conn., was a hoax and the Sept. 11 terror attacks were an inside job.

Mr. Jones posted his own definition of globalism to YouTube in 2014. In his trademark shout, he described it as a “global digital panopticon control system” engineered by shadowy corporate and political elites. He called it “the total form of slavery.”

The host, who has enthusiastically supported Mr. Trump, hailed the Republican as a “George Washington-level” historical figure. Mr. Trump, who appeared on his show last year, has in turn heaped praise upon Mr. Jones.

“Your reputation is amazing,” Mr. Trump said. “I will not let you down. You will be very, very impressed, I hope. And I think we’ll be speaking a lot.”

So what is Mr. Trump talking about when he talks about globalism? His spokeswoman, Hope Hicks, provided a definition in an email before the election last week:

Far-right groups in the United States began to refer to globalism at the end of the Cold War, when it replaced communism as an idea that was an ever-present danger to the nation, Mr. Pitcavage said. They have also referred to it as the New World Order, and soon they saw its tentacles everywhere.

The shape of that conspiracy had distinctly anti-Semitic overtones, in part because many of communism’s foes had historically seen communism as inextricably linked to Judaism, Mr. Pitcavage said. Members of the far right became fixated on prominent Jews like the businessman and philanthropist George Soros.

Those conspiratorial beliefs were bolstered when former President George Bush celebrated the end of the Cold War in a 1991 speech by saying it was the dawn of a “new world order.” His use of the phrase was taken as proof by many that a globalist conspiracy really was afoot.

“It was very easy for them, especially because he was the one who said it, to take that ball and run with it,” Mr. Pitcavage said. “From that point on, the phrase became the short hand for that kind of globalism conspiracy theory.”

The term’s multiple meanings have made it a powerful political tool, and Mr. Trump’s and his allies’ frequent references to globalism have drawn in a wide and varied audience.

“Anti-globalism is a very efficient net to unite disparate parts of the right” from the mainstream to the extreme, said Brian Levin, the director of the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino.

Professor Levin called globalism “the defining folklore and narrative for the racist right” but said it had also “become a convenient boogeyman to explain the various declines that the United States is perceived to be in.”

Globalism was an important theme in the final weeks of Mr. Trump’s campaign, for example, when he told a rally in Florida in October that his opponent for the presidency, Hillary Clinton, had sat at the heart of a globe-spanning conspiracy with international bankers “to plot the destruction of U.S. sovereignty.”

The Anti-Defamation League criticized the speech for “evoking classic anti-Semitic themes.”

Conspiratorial talk has continued after the election. Mr. Trump referred to a plot against him again last Thursday, when he complained on Twitter that anti-Trump protests were the work of the news media and paid protesters. Lou Dobbs, a Trump ally and host on Fox Business News, later accused Mr. Soros of “inciting riots.”

Many on the far right have celebrated Mr. Trump’s election victory as a momentous blow against the globalist conspiracy.

Last Friday, Mr. Jones claimed on YouTube that Mr. Trump had called him personally to thank him and his audience for their support and to offer to appear on his show

again soon. Ms. Hicks, the Trump campaign's spokeswoman, did not reply to an email seeking comment late Sunday night.

Mr. Jones then pivoted to what he thought was most important: the coming destruction of "the globalists that hijacked the country," primarily the news media and international business people. Soon they would be destroyed once and for all, he suggested.

"This is America battling back to restore humanity and to break the chains," he said. "There's not gonna be any détente. We know you're scum, and we're just here to let you know you're scum."

FBI: Hate Crimes Targeting Muslims Up 67% In 2015

By Kevin Johnson

USA Today, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — Hate crimes increased by nearly 7% last year, including a 67% spike in incidents targeting Muslims, according to the FBI's annual report.

Not since 2001, when the United States was struck by the most deadly terrorist assaults in history, have more incidents been recorded against Muslims.

Overall, the FBI reported 5,850 hate incidents across the country in 2015, compared to 5,479 in 2014. There were 1,244 such incidents rooted in some religious motivation last year, compared to 1,014 incidents the year before.

The statistics come as civil rights groups have been monitoring a spasm of religious and racially charged incidents following the election of Republican Donald Trump as president. The Southern Poverty Law Center, which closely tracks the extremist movement across the U.S., said the "exploitation'' of the Islamic State's attacks last year in Europe and terrorist-inspired strikes in the U.S. likely "fueled anti-Muslim hatred.''

"But what was likely even more important was Trump's attacks on Muslims, including his infamous call for a ban on Muslims entering the U.S.,'' said Mark Potok, editor of the the group's Intelligence Report.

Sunday marked a year since Islamic State terrorists carried out a stunning, coordinated assault in Paris, leaving at least 130 dead.

Less than a month after the Paris attacks and just days after a mass shooting in San Bernardino, Calif., believed to have been inspired by the group, Trump called for a total prohibition on Muslim immigration into the U.S.

Yet the volatile reaction to last week's election continues to expose raw emotions on both sides. In the days since Trump's election, thousands of demonstrators have taken to the streets in cities across the country. While largely peaceful, police made dozens of arrests in Portland last weekend. At the same time, reports of vandalism, harassment and intimidation against racial, ethnic and religious groups were being closely monitored and blamed, at least in part, on the flammable rhetoric Trump espoused on the campaign trail.

"The harassment and discrimination has been widespread, targeting people based on race, ethnicity and national origin, as well as region and sexual orientation, '' ACLU senior staff attorney Heather Weaver wrote. "Not surprisingly, in light of promises to ban Muslims from our country and to single out American Muslims for surveillance, many of the victims have been Muslim.''

In California, San Diego State University officials were investigating Thursday's robbery of a Muslim student wearing a traditional hijab who reported that the suspects made disparaging comments about the Muslim community and referred to Trump.

University President Elliot Hirshman and other school officials characterized the incident in statement as a crime rooted in hate.

"We condemn this hateful act and urge all members of our community to join us in condemning such hateful acts,'' Hirshman said. "Hate crimes are destructive to the spirit of our campus and we urge all members of our community to stand together in rejecting hate."

The investigation was continuing, university spokeswoman Gina Jacobs said Monday.

Asked about the incidents Sunday on CBS' 60 Minutes, Trump said the actions saddened him.

"Stop it,'' Trump said.

Attacks On Muslim Americans Fuel Increase In Hate Crime, FBI Says

By Eric Lichtblau

New York Times, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — The F.B.I. reported Monday that attacks against American Muslims surged last year, driving an overall increase in hate crime against all groups.

The data, which is the most comprehensive look at hate crime nationwide, expanded on previous findings by researchers and outside monitors, who have noted an alarming rise in some types of crimes tied to the vitriol of this year's presidential campaign and the aftermath of terrorist attacks at home and abroad since 2015.

That trend appears to have spiked in just the last week, with civil rights groups and news organizations reporting dozens of verbal or physical assaults on minorities and others that appear to have been fueled by divisions over the election.

In its report on Monday, the F.B.I. cataloged a total of 5,818 hate crimes in 2015 — a rise of about 6 percent over the previous year — including assaults, bombings, threats, and property destruction against minorities, women, gays and others.

Attacks against Muslim Americans saw the biggest surge. There were 257 reports of assaults, attacks on mosques and other hate crimes against Muslims last year, a jump of about 67 percent over 2014. It was the highest total since 2001, when more than 480 attacks occurred in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks.

Attacks against transgender people also sharply increased.

Blacks were the most frequent victims of hate crimes based on race, while Jews were the most frequent victims based on religion, according to the F.B.I. data. But the increases in attacks on these groups were smaller than the rise in attacks against Muslims and transgender people.

Over all, 59 percent of the hate crimes that the F.B.I. recorded were based on the victims' race, ethnicity or ancestry. Religious bias accounted for about 20 percent of all attacks, and about 18 percent of attacks were based on sexual orientation.

Law enforcement officials acknowledge that the statistics give an incomplete picture because many local agencies still have a spotty record of reporting hate crimes, 26 years after Congress directed the Justice Department to begin collecting the data.

"We need to do a better job of tracking and reporting hate crime to fully understand what is happening in our communities and how to stop it," James B. Comey, the F.B.I. director, said Monday. The F.B.I. regards the prosecution of hate crimes under federal jurisdiction as the top priority of its civil rights branch.

Since the election, hate crime monitors like the Southern Poverty Law Center have reported a rash of verbal or physical abuse targeting minorities and others at schools, mosques and elsewhere.

Some supporters of President-elect Donald J. Trump, however, say they too have been victimized.

Short List Emerges For RNC Chair

Priebus expected to have big say in who replaces him as the RNC shapes long-term direction of the party.

By Shane Goldmacher And Kyle Cheney

Politico, November 14, 2016

Donald Trump's campaign manager and deputy campaign manager, Mitt Romney's niece, and a host of other GOP officials are all in the running to become the next chair of a Republican Party that is at the peak of its power.

Reince Priebus, the outgoing chairman of the Republican National Committee and Trump's incoming chief of staff, is expected to have an outsize voice in picking his successor, even though incoming presidents typically choose their preferred party chairman.

People close to Priebus say he would not have left the RNC – which he helmed for a record six years – if it risked falling into the hands of someone he opposed, such as former Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski.

Among the names most under discussion for party chairman are David Bossie, who served as Trump's deputy campaign manager and is an RNC member; Priebus ally Matt Pinnell, the RNC's liaison to state parties; and Ronna Romney McDaniel, the chair of the Michigan Republican Party and niece of 2012 nominee Mitt Romney. She bucked her uncle in backing the nominee this year — even penning a November op-ed in the Deseret News in Utah — winning the appreciation of Trump, who has been heard calling her "my Romney."

Trump's selection of the next RNC chair, while not as immediately impactful as his cabinet choices, will set the long-term direction of a party for whom he became the unlikeliest of standard-bearers earlier this year.

Of the group, Trump knows Bossie the best. He joined the campaign in tandem with Kellyanne Conway and became deputy campaign manager in August, helping lead the team that guided Trump to his shock win last week. Bossie earned enough of Trump's trust to have been granted spending authority, a sign of faith from the billionaire first-time candidate. Bossie would give Trump a populist ally to carry his message inside the party's First Street corridors.

But party insiders see Bossie setting his sights higher — perhaps the role of White House political director, a behind-the-scenes post with a direct line to Trump, and a position where he could be delivering orders to the next RNC chair.

A wild-card pick that members are discussing among themselves could be Conway — a constant presence on television who Trump trusts fully and who could continue to operate her polling business while running the party, something she would have to give up if she joined the administration.

One influential RNC member said picking Conway would give the party a "woman chairman" who "knows how to run a campaign" and that "she's known and liked by most of the members and she's done work in lots of the states."

Other names that are circulating include Pence adviser Nick Ayers, who worked on Priebus' transition to run the RNC six years ago; Matt Moore, one of the youngest party chairs in the nation in South Carolina; John Whitbeck, the Virginia GOP chair; and Joe Nosef, the Mississippi GOP chair.

Priebus' acceptance of the chief of staff post bodes ill for Lewandowski, who has clashed with the establishment wing of the party and would roil Priebus's lieutenants who will remain on the committee. Several members and RNC allies said Trump could ultimately name whoever he wants into the post — even Lewandowski — and that that person would ultimately be ratified by the 168-members of the RNC. California RNC Committeeman Shawn Steel said Trump's

choice would be "widely accepted without dissent by the membership."

But a source familiar with the RNC's inner workings said picking Lewandowski would prove "messy."

Trump and his transition team are, for now, more focused on filling out the top posts in the West Wing and cabinet-level officials than the RNC. Priebus will continue to run the committee until Trump takes the oath of office, meaning a vacancy is still more than two months away.

On a conference call with RNC members on Monday evening, Priebus urged patience. But among RNC insiders, the politicking is underway.

Arizona GOP chairman Robert Graham has courted Trump's favor, and Georgia RNC Committeeman Randy Evans, an ally of Newt Gingrich who helped whip pro-Trump delegates at the national convention in July, is eyeing the position as well. Ned Ryun, who runs the conservative group American Majority, declared himself a candidate for chairman even before the election — a race that was largely predicated on Trump losing. He is neither a current RNC member nor personally close with Trump, making him a longer shot.

Other prospects once mentioned for the post — like Ohio GOP chairman Matt Borges and former Trump rival Carly Fiorina, who have clashed with Trump — appear to have little window to advance now.

Graham said he spoke to Trump on election night and said he hopes to be in the mix. He told POLITICO that the work of the RNC should turn to broadening its base in minority communities – especially in states like Arizona where the Hispanic population is surging.

"The ultimate mission from today going forward has to be not just planning for reelection but fulfilling the promise to making the party bigger and more inclusive as it relates to minority communities," he said. "This is a golden opportunity to hit the refresh button."

Graham credited Priebus for bringing the party "back from the ashes" when he took over in 2011. But he has collided with Priebus privately, especially with his semi-open pursuit of the chairmanship this summer and fall as Priebus weighed running for an unprecedented fourth two-year term.

"I'll support whatever President Trump wants," Graham said. "Period."

Pinnell, who is a former chair of the Oklahoma Republican Party and is currently an aide to Preibus, would be a more seamless and technocratic pick, having worked with the RNC members both as peer and as staff. And, though they've met, he and Trump have virtually no relationship, which works against Pinnell when Trump so strongly prefers people with whom he has a history.

Consideration of Romney McDaniel is the most intriguing – and not only because her uncle became one of Trump's highest-profile Republican detractors all year. She'd be the second woman to run the RNC and the first since Mary Louise Smith in 1974. She also helped lead Trump to an apparent victory in Michigan (the state still hasn't been called, but Trump led by 11,000 votes with nearly all precincts reporting), a state that hasn't gone to a Republican since 1984.

"I think this is a unique opportunity where we have a chairman who actually has won a blue-collar, Reagan Democrat state," said Saul Anuzis, a former RNC committeeman from Michigan. "I think that Michigan and Michigan voters represent the new Republican coalition, the new Trump coalition around the country."

Steel, the California RNC committeeman, said he expected that whoever Trump picks will ultimately be tasked with fulfilling Priebus's vision – from building a "massive field organization year-round" to maintaining the party's digital operation and renewing its focus on broadening the GOP electorate in minority communities.

"It's going to be a full blown expression of what Reince Priebus started building when he became chairman," he said.

Pinnell, Bossie and Romney McDaniel all declined to comment for this story.

Trump May Appoint Michigan GOP's Ronna Romney McDaniel As Party Chief

Detroit Free Press, November 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — President-elect Donald Trump is considering Michigan's Ronna Romney McDaniels to run the Republican Party and an openly gay man to represent the U.S. at the United Nations, moves that would inject diversity into a Trump team.

Trump is weighing whether to select McDaniel, the Michigan GOP chairwoman and a niece of Trump critic and 2012 presidential nominee Mitt Romney. She would be the first woman in decades to run the Republican National Committee.

"I'll be interested in whatever Mr. Trump wants," McDaniel told the Associated Press on Monday, adding that she was planning to seek the Michigan GOP chairmanship again.

Meanwhile, the incoming president is considering Richard Grenell as United States ambassador to the United Nations. If picked and ultimately confirmed by the Senate, he would be the first openly gay person to fill a Cabinet-level foreign policy post. Grenell previously served as U.S. spokesman at the U.N. under former President George W. Bush's administration.

Appointing McDaniel to run the GOP's political arm could be an effort to help the party heal the anger after a campaign in which Trump demeaned women. The appointment of Grenell could begin to ease concerns by the gay community about Vice President-elect Mike Pence's

positions on same-sex marriage during his time as Indiana governor.

The personnel moves under consideration were confirmed by people with direct knowledge of Trump's thinking who were not authorized to publicly disclose private discussions. They stressed that the decisions are not final.

Internal deliberations about staffing come a day after Trump made overtures to warring Republican circles by appointing RNC Chairman Reince Priebus as his White House chief of staff and Breitbart News executive Stephen Bannon as chief strategist and senior counselor.

The two men had made up the president-elect's chief of staff shortlist, and while Priebus received that job, Bannon is expected to wield significant clout. Trump gave top billing to the former media executive, who led a website that appealed to the so-called "alt-right" — a movement often associated with efforts on the far right to preserve "white identity," oppose multiculturalism and defend "Western values."

Priebus on Monday defended the media mogul, saying the two made an effective pair as they steered Trump past Democrat Hillary Clinton and toward the presidency. He sought to distance Bannon from the incendiary headlines on his website, saying they were written by unspecified others.

"Together, we've been able to manage a lot of the decision making in regard to the campaign," Priebus told NBC's "Today." "It's worked very, very well."

Trump's hires were, at first glance, contradictory, though they fit a pattern of the celebrity businessman creating a veritable Rorschach test that allowed his supporters to see what they wanted. Priebus, who lashed the RNC to Trump this summer despite some intraparty objections, is a GOP operative with deep expertise of the Washington establishment that Trump has vowed to shake up. He has close ties to House Speaker Paul Ryan, a fellow Wisconsinite.

Bannon, meanwhile, helped transform the Breitbart News site into the leading mouthpiece of the party's anti-establishment wing, which helped fuel the businessman's political rise. Ryan has been one of his most frequent targets.

Neither Priebus nor Bannon brings policy experience to the White House. Chiefs of staff in particular play a significant role in policymaking, serving as a liaison to Cabinet agencies and deciding what information makes it to the president's desk. They're often among the last people in the room with the president as major decisions are made.

In announcing the appointments, Trump said Priebus and Bannon would work as "equal partners" — effectively creating two power centers in the West Wing. The arrangement is risky and could leave ambiguity over who makes final decisions.

Trump has long encouraged rivalries, both in business and in his presidential campaign. He cycled through three campaign managers during his White House run, creating a web of competing alliances among staffers.

Aide: Lewandowski A 'Legit' Contender For RNC Chair; Ellison Makes DNC Bid Official

Morning Consult, November 14, 2016

Corey Lewandowski, who served as campaign manager for Donald Trump through much of the campaign, is being considered to replace Reince Priebus as chairman of the Republican National Committee, according to a GOP source.

The combative campaign manager-turned-CNN pundit is a "legit" contender for the job, a senior Republican aide said Monday. (Lewandowski resigned from CNN late last week amid reports he's seeking a job in the Trump administration.)

Priebus is heading to the White House to serve as Trump's chief of staff, and Sean Spicer, the RNC's chief strategist, said Monday that both Trump and Priebus "will have an impact" on who the next chairman will be. But, Spicer added, the ultimate decision would be made early next year by the 168 members that make up the RNC.

Another name being floated for the job is Matt Pinnell, the former chairman of the Oklahoma Republican Party. A state party chairman said Monday that Priebus "was a big fan" of Pinnell, who now serves as the RNC's liaison to state parties.

Former Hewlett Packard CEO Carly Fiorina, who ran an unsuccessful campaign against Trump for the Republican nomination, raised eyebrows about her own interest in the job earlier this year when she began reaching out to state party chairs. But her relationship with Trump is rocky after a campaign which featured sparring from the duo.

Republicans said Monday they do not believe there will be much of a fight for the job. It's a different story on the other side of the aisle, with a competition brewing among Democrats after the party's losses up and down the ballot last week. On Monday, Rep. Keith Ellison made his candidacy to lead the Democratic National Committee official.

"We must champion the challenges of working families and give voters a reason to show up at the polls in 2018 and beyond," the Minnesota Democrat said in a statement. "We must build a bench not just for federal candidates, but for state and local candidates across the nation."

Ellison has substantial backing on Capitol Hill, including the endorsements of outgoing Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), his presumed successor Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.). Ellison, a progressive and the first Muslim elected to Congress, serves as a co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

But he's not alone in the race. Former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, who led the DNC's effort ahead of their

successful 2006 and 2008 cycles, has also lobbied for a return to the position, stressing that the chairman should not hold elected office simultaneously. Former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley also voiced interest in the position.

Veteran political strategist Donna Brazile has served as the interim DNC chairwoman since Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.) resigned in disgrace last summer. Wasserman Schultz was seen as favoring Hillary Clinton in the Democratic presidential primary. Brazile has also been at the center of controversy, after leaked emails showed her handing over a prepared question to the Clinton campaign before a town hall.

The Triumphant GOP Is Mired In Crisis After Crisis

By Michael Gerson

Washington Post, November 14, 2016

The Republican Party is everywhere triumphant — House and Senate, executive and legislative, national and state — and yet faces a series of crises.

There is a crisis of identity. Donald Trump now leads a coalition including the Republican establishment — and people who despise the Republican establishment. The insurgent president-elect — lacking relevant experience, adequate personnel and actual policy proposals — cannot exercise power without the help of those he ridiculed.

Trump has chosen to incorporate this conflict into the structure of the West Wing. His chief of staff, Reince Priebus, was the sponsor of the 2013 Republican autopsy report, which called on the party to accommodate America's multicultural future. Trump's chief strategist, Stephen K. Bannon, has made a career out of resisting that future. This is less a team of rivals than an ideological cage fight.

Every good presidential transition should involve betraying a few of your friends. Not everyone who helps a president become president is fit to help him govern. Bannon — whose Breitbart News invited the alt-right into the conservative mainstream and who has made a business model out of spreading conspiratorial nonsense — belongs in this category, along with Sarah Palin, Rudy Giuliani, Corey Lewandowski and the rest of the distracting campaign sideshow.

For the Republican Party, this is also a governing crisis. Trump won office promising to undo globalization, bring back manufacturing jobs and fulfill "every dream you ever dreamed." So expectations are pretty high. But Trumpism, for the most part, consists of cultural signals and symbolic goals, not a set of developed proposals.

Many Republican members of Congress are frankly confused. Are they supposed to follow Trump's lead or supply his agenda? He has embraced massive infrastructure investment, but there is no favored bill or detailed plan. Obamacare must go, but what approach to "replace" does Trump prefer? House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (Wis.) is pushing for tax reform. Does the president-elect have any interest in the topic at all? The biggest frustration reported by Republicans who have met with Trump is his inability to focus for any period of time. He is impatient with facts and charts and he changes the subject every few minutes. Republican leaders need policy leadership — or permission to provide it themselves.

One area where the agenda is unifying and well-developed concerns the reversal of Obama-era executive orders. Republican lawyers have spent the past year and a half working in study groups on reversal language in order to be ready on the first day of a GOP presidency. The action most likely to cause controversy would overturn President Obama's limited amnesty for students brought illegally to the United States as children. Most Republicans think that executive order was illegal; but most Americans will probably find the victims of reversing the order to be sympathetic.

This hints at the long-term political crisis faced by the triumphant GOP. Trump won the presidency in a manner that undermines the GOP's electoral future. He demonstrated that the "coalition of the ascendant" — including minorities, millennials and the college-educated — is not yet ascendant. But in a nation where over half of children under 5 years old are racial or ethnic minorities, it eventually will be. Trump was elected by a 70 percent white electorate. But that was about two percentage points lower than in the 2012 election — and that number has been dropping by about two points each presidential election for decades. Trump's white-turnout strategy is not the wave of the future; it is the last gasp of an old and disturbing electoral approach.

The final crisis faced by the GOP — and just about everyone else — relates to the quality of our political culture. Trump won office in a way that damaged our democracy. He fed resentment against minorities, promised to jail his opponent and turned shallow invective into an art form. If he governs as he campaigned, Trump will smash the unity of our country into a thousand shards of bitterness.

We should hope that the president-elect will be sobered by the responsibilities of high office and discovers hidden resources of charity (even though malice has been the habit of a lifetime). He deserves the space at least to try. But Republicans may end up depending on a younger generation of leaders — Ryan, Ben Sasse, Nikki Haley, Tim Scott, Jeff Flake, Marco Rubio — to demonstrate the possibility of unifying aspiration and civil disagreement. And that would lay the foundation for a lasting and honorable victory.

Read more from Michael Gerson's archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook .

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The Post's View: President Trump

Paul Waldman: The Trump administration hasn't even started yet, and it's already a fiasco

Kathleen Parker: Is the White House already changing Donald Trump?

How A Professor In China Predicted Trump's Victory More Accurately Than Most U.S. Pollsters

By Jessica Meyers

Los Angeles Times, November 14, 2016

Most U.S. forecasters missed the tsunami of alienation and anger that propelled Donald Trump to the presidency. A teacher in southern China nailed it.

Chen Dingding, an international relations professor at Jinan University in Guangzhou, predicted a Trump victory months ago. He correctly guessed that the rogue Republican would earn at least 286 electoral college votes, that a Rust Belt blue state would flip to red, that African American turnout would drop and that Congress would stay Republican.

The 41-year-old saw what many others did not: rural desperation and factory-town fear tugging voters toward the inexperienced outsider.

"All the reasons were there," said Chen. "I don't have any secret information."

Chen considered his outsider status a shield against the bias of a polarized electorate.

"For people in the U.S. the stakes were too high," he said. "Maybe that affected their judgment."

Chen's prediction has made him something of a hero among Chinese scholars. He used no models. He simply spent the last year monitoring polls and reading everything, from alt-right blogs to progressive bulletins.

He believed social pressure prevented voters from sharing their views about Trump. And he sensed their fundamental distrust of Hillary Clinton, a sentiment the Democrat couldn't shake.

Chen found it especially noteworthy that President Obama campaigned for Clinton more than once in Michigan and Pennsylvania.

"The working class in that area is very upset," said Chen, who also runs the China-based Intellisia Institute, a think tank focused on international affairs. "The status quo wasn't acceptable."

Chen grew up in the poor, southeastern province of Jiangxi and moved to the U.S. in 1997 to study. He focused on U.S.-China relations and earned a doctorate at the University of Chicago. The American political process fascinated him, coming from a country where a select group of Communist Party officials handpick their leader. He saw the decline of the Rust Belt firsthand when he drove across the region, and still remembers the shock when a school friend ran for a congressional seat in Missouri and lost the race by just 2,000 votes.

He left the U.S. in 2009 for a job at the University of Macau and moved this May to the Pearl River metropolis of Guangzhou, where he continued to track American elections.

Early this year, he started posting his analysis on WeChat, a popular Chinese social media app. People laughed.

"I just thought he was weird," said Sam Overholt, a 31-year-old Pennsylvania native who works for a PR company in Beijing and follows the scholar's posts.

Then Chen explained how the populist wave sweeping the world — from Britain's vote to leave the European Union to the presidential election of Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines — might carry over to the U.S.

That made sense to Overholt. "I was learning how people in a county next to the one I grew up in were going to vote based on a WeChat group in China," he said.

Yanzhong Huang, who has known Chen for years, questioned his friend's judgment until election night.

Suddenly, Chen made sense. "He talked about certain structural factors like anti-globalization, anti-free trade, anti-political correctness, and the importance of contingency factors like individual scandals," said Huang, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. "He was very consistent."

Chen had doubts, especially after leaked video revealed Trump's boasts about groping women. But he stuck with his analysis.

"Many voters simply ignored mainstream media," Chen said. "They rely on Twitter, and I noticed he had more Twitter follows than Clinton."

Several other scholars also pushed back against the force field of certainty surrounding a Clinton victory. A political scientist at Stony Brook University in New York predicted Trump's success based on primary outcomes and a party pendulum shift that usually occurs every two terms. A Yale professor used economic factors to forecast the Republican's victory.

Filmmaker Michael Moore laid out why Trump would win on his website, noting Republicans focused on traditionally Democratic states in the Rust Belt and white males feared losing power and status.

American pollsters, in their defense, dealt with a tight race. But the Chinese scholar made his forecasts from the other side of the Pacific. And he was right.

For his next prediction, Chen doesn't rule out impeachment.

GAO Poised To Release Review Of Fed's 'Stress Tests'

Office's report scheduled to be released Tuesday around 11 a.m. EST

By Katy Burne And Ryan Tracy

Wall Street Journal, November 14, 2016

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

Jordan Says He Will Continue Push For IRS Chief's Impeachment

By Katy O'Donnell

Politico, November 14, 2016

House Freedom Caucus Chairman Jim Jordan is still pushing to impeach IRS Commissioner John Koskinen as lawmakers return to Washington for the lame-duck session.

Jordan renewed the call for impeachment in a statement to POLITICO Monday criticizing the agency for denying tax-exempt status to the Albuquerque Tea Party group. The decision on the group — one of three stalled reviews the IRS agreed to expedite after a judge excoriated the agency for continued delays in August — came last week.

"After seven years of stonewalling, targeting and harassing the Albuquerque Tea Party, the IRS has yet again blocked the group's non-profit status without any explanation. This decision is a reminder that when a federal judge recently said that targeting was still going on, he meant it," Jordan said.

"This is further evidence that the IRS has not changed its ways, and shows that IRS Commissioner John Koskinen continues in his dereliction of duty. Congress must move forward on impeaching him," he added.

House Republican leaders are reluctant to take up Koskinen's impeachment, which is a non-starter in the Senate. It could also be a major distraction as Congress prepares to work with the incoming Trump administration.

In a recent interview with POLITICO, Koskinen said he hadn't "spent much time worrying" about the impeachment drive.

"I have no idea what's going to happen. There are a handful of the Freedom Caucus members who are, you know, pretty far out on a limb that they think impeachment has to happen," he said. "It was pretty clear when they put the privileged resolution in that there was going to be a motion to table that would have passed, that there were estimates of 30 to 50 Republicans [who] would have voted with the Democrats."

"So in a context where the Senate, Republicans and others, have all made it clear they have no interest in this at all, they don't think there's a case, so this is all really kind of in the politics of the House."

In a response to the August ruling, Koskinen said in a letter to Congress this summer that the D.C. Circuit court was mistaken in its interpretation of a 2013 interim guidance from the agency. The guidance said the IRS was "suspending" the use of lists that flagged certain groups, but Koskinen said the court misinterpreted it to mean "the IRS has not conclusively eliminated" the practice.

"I want to be clear that no matter how you say it – whether it's suspended, eliminated or ended – the IRS stopped this practice long ago and is committed to never using such a list or process ever again," Koskinen wrote in the August letter to lawmakers.

Still, Jordan and other critics of Koskinen quoted from the ruling in a September House Judiciary Committee hearing exploring impeachment.

From:	MORGAN, MARK A.
To:	MCALEENAN, KEVIN K
Subject:	FW: The Homeland Security News Briefing for Wednesday, October 12, 2016
Date:	Wednesday, October 12, 2016 7:02:11 AM
Attachments:	dhsclips161012.doc

I knew this was coming. 359,000 estimated impacted by the hurricane. On top of Brazil's exodus and increased drug exports.

From: CHAVEZ, GLORIA I
Sent: Wednesday, October 12, 2016 6:59:43 AM
To: MORGAN, MARK A.; LUCK, SCOTT A (USBP); HULL, AARON A (b)(6);(b)(7)(C)
Subject: FW: The Homeland Security News Briefing for Wednesday, October 12, 2016

See top article.....U.S. Temporarily suspends removal of Haitians.

GC

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From: (b)(6);(b)(7)(C)
Sent: Wednesday, October 12, 2016 1:59:17 AM
To: BP (b) (7)(E) CHAVEZ, GLORIA I
Subject: FW: The Homeland Security News Briefing for Wednesday, October 12, 2016

From: Bulletin Intelligence
Sent: Wednesday, October 12, 2016 1:57:46 AM (UTC-07:00) Arizona
To: DHS@BulletinIntelligence.com
Subject: The Homeland Security News Briefing for Wednesday, October 12, 2016

The Homeland Security News Briefing

TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF

DATE: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2016 5:00 AM EDT

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Leading DHS News:

US TEMPORARILY SUSPENDS REMOVALS OF HAITIANS. Reuters (10/12) reports, "The United States on Tuesday said it has temporarily suspended deportations of Haitians after Hurricane Matthew ravaged the Caribbean nation last week." Secretary Johnson, speaking at an event in Mexico City, is quoted saying, "We will have to deal with that situation, address it, be sympathetic to the plight of the people of Haiti as a result of the hurricane. ... But after that condition has been addressed, we intend to resume the policy change," a reference to the resumption of standard removal protocol and the end of "special protections put in place after a 2010 earthquake devastated Haiti."

The AP (10/11, Orsi) reports that Mexican Interior Secretary Miguel Angel Osorio Chong "said the Haitian migrants were a subject of talks with Johnson and it was Mexico's responsibility to try to improve their conditions while they are in the country." Osorio Chong "also expressed hope that the United States, which has been processing only about 75 Haitian migrants per day at the San Ysidro crossing in San Diego, may be able to speed that up." Osorio Chong is quoted saying, "Very possibly (their numbers) may rise following the hurricane's passage."

The San Diego Union-Tribune (10/11, 496K) reports, "More than 50 members of Congress signed a letter to President Obama last week asking him to stop deportations to Haiti because of damage from Hurricane Matthew." The letter "concludes that it would be inhumane to deport non-criminals to Haiti, given the hurricane – and unresolved issues from the earthquake" of 2010, which prompted the US to deport "only...serious criminals to Haiti." The Union-Tribune says "the issue has been of particular interest in San Diego, where many Haitians have landed as their first U.S. stop," and goes on to summarize the specific positions of several Congress members and US senators from California.

SECRETARY: US, MEXICO TO "WORK TOGETHER" ON SECURITY, IMMIGRATION ISSUES. An English-language Agencia EFE (ESP) (10/11) article reports Secretary Johnson "said in Mexico on Tuesday that Washington and Mexico City would work together to find new ways to deal with security matters, especially those related to immigration." Mexican Foreign Relations Secretary Claudia Ruiz Massieu "said the two Cabinet officials discussed 'how to better and jointly deal with migratory challenges' and expand 'cooperation on the border, so it can be increasingly more efficient, orderly and safe.'"

JOHNSON: THIRTY-THREE STATES HAVE ASKED DHS FOR ELECTION CYBERSECURITY ASSISTANCE. CNN (10/11, Kopan, 31.54M) reports Secretary Johnson announced on Monday night that DHS has been asked to assist 33 states and 11 county or local election agencies with elections system cybersecurity. Johnson said, "Time is a factor. There are only 29 days until election day, and it can take up to two weeks from the time we receive authorization to run the scans and identify vulnerabilities." He adds, "It can then take at least an additional week for state and local election officials to mitigate any vulnerabilities on systems that we may find." Homeland Security Today (10/11, Kimery) reports Johnson says the DHS' "services include cyber hygiene scans on Internet-facing systems, as well as risk and vulnerability assessments."

Immigration and Customs Enforcement:

DHS TO RUN OUT OF DETENTION FUNDS UNLESS WHITE HOUSE APPROVES TRANSFER. The Wall Street Journal (10/11, Barrett, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) reports that DHS is one month away from running out of funds for detaining undocumented immigrants, which the Journal calls a fresh sign of budget dysfunction in the federal government less than two weeks after Congress's short-term funding through early December. The Journal cites officials saying DHS plans to ask the White House for a quick funds transfer in order to continue detentions. Officials are cited saying that if no more money is made available by early November, it won't be possible to hold newly-captured undocumented immigrants, including those detained in high-priority border arrests. A senior ICE official is quoted saying, "Across the southwest border, we've seen a recent uptick in the number of apprehensions. ... We are growing our [detention] capacity but there is going to be a cost associated with that."

Customs and Border Protection:

HIGH COURT TO HEAR CASE OF MEXICAN SHOT BY BORDER PATROL AGENT. The Arizona Republic (10/11, O'Dell, 1.04M) reports the US Supreme Court "has agreed to hear a case to determine if the family of Mexican teenager" Sergio Adrian Hernandez Guereca, "who was killed by a Border Patrol agent firing into Mexico," has a "constitutional right to sue the agent in the United States." The court "announced Tuesday it would hear the case for this session, which began earlier this month." Hernandez Guereca "was killed in Juarez, Mexico, in 2010 by Border Patrol Agent Jesus Mesa Jr," who fired from the US side "at the unarmed 15-year-old as he peered out from behind a train trestle in Mexico." The Republic adds that "a final decision by the Supreme Court could provide a definitive ruling whether those who are injured or killed by Border Patrol agents while in Mexico can sue for damages in the United States."

The Hill (10/11, Wheeler, 651K) reports that the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals "ruled that Hernández's parents could not sue Mesa under the Fourth Amendment because Hernández was 'a Mexican citizen who had no 'significant voluntary connection' to the United States' and 'was on Mexican soil at the time he was shot.'"

The Los Angeles Times (10/11, Savage, 4.52M) says, "At issue is whether the 4th's Amendment's ban on unreasonable seizures and the unjustified use of deadly force stops at the U.S. border or extends to border areas patrolled by U.S. agents."

Reuters (10/11) reports, "The case was seized on by activists who accused the United States of using heavy-handed tactics in dealing with immigration and human smuggling."

The AP (10/11) says, "The Obama administration, while calling the death tragic, urged" Supreme Court justices "to stay out of the case."

"SOBERING" NUMBERS OF VISA-HOLDERS OVERSTAYED IN FY 2015. The AP (10/11, Spagat) reports that the US government has published "sobering" numbers of the number of visa overstayers in the US, "more than 20 years" after its most recent estimate. DHS "said 527,127 people who were supposed to leave the country in the 2015 fiscal year overstayed." The AP adds, "More people overstayed visas than were caught crossing the border illegally." The AP also says, "Overstays accounted for about 1 percent of 45 million visitors on business and tourist visas from October 2014 to September 2015, according to the long-awaited Homeland Security report."

SALON: ADMINISTRATION "CRACKING DOWN" ON PROFILING, BUT PERMITS FBI, CBP "BROAD LEEWAY" TO PROFILE. Salon (10/11, 608K) says the Administration "has taken the lead in cracking down on" racial profiling in law enforcement, but "it allows FBI agents and border officials broad leeway to profile based on race, religion and national origin when it comes to recruiting informants and policing arrivals." Salon notes that the Department of Justice, in a 2014 ban on federal law enforcement profiling, exempted "interdiction activities in the vicinity of the border, or to protective, inspection, or screening

activities," which Salon says includes the TSA and CBP. Salon cites reporting by the Intercept which "strongly suggests that" CBP officials "are profiling airline passengers based on religion and national origin." Brennan Center for Justice fellow Michael German is quoted saying, "Unfortunately, rather than make a clear ban on racial profiling without loopholes, the 2014 guidance...actually retained the loopholes albeit with much more complex language."

Transportation Security Administration:

CRAMER CALLS ON TSA TO "STOP" GALAXY NOTE 7 DEVICES FROM "COMING ON" AIRPLANES. CNBC (10/11, 2.52M) reports, "CNBC's Jim Cramer said he was fearful to fly on a plane" after Samsung announced it has "permanently ended production and sales of its Galaxy Note 7 due to reports that some of its replacement devices were catching fire." Cramer "on Tuesday compared the Samsung devices to a 'shoe bomber,'" and is quoted saying on "Squawk on the Street," "[Transportation Security Administration], please stop it. ... Stop this phone from coming on our damn planes." Cramer "added that flight passengers should report immediately if they see a person with an activated Note device" and is quoted saying, "If you see something, say something."

ACTIVISTS TURN OFF OIL, GAS PIPELINES IN PROTEST. Reuters (10/12) discusses how "climate activists broke through fences and cut locks and chains simultaneously in several states and simply turned" oil and gas pipelines "off" in order to "draw attention to climate change and to support opponents of the proposed Dakota Access Pipeline." Reuters calls the action "an audacious act of sabotage" that "illustrated how vulnerable pipelines are to low-tech attacks," and cites pipeline operators and experts highlighting the danger of such an action. Reuters goes on to say that since 9/11, the TSA "has asked pipeline companies to carry out a 'security vulnerability assessment' for their assets and to conduct risk assessments that include the 'likelihood of a success of an attack,' and to take steps to mitigate those risks."

Federal Emergency Management Agency:

OBAMA DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY IN SOUTH CAROLINA FOLLOWING HURRICANE. Reuters (10/11, Walsh) reports President Obama on Tuesday declared a state of emergency in South Carolina as a result of Hurricane Matthew's impact. The White House said in a statement that Obama's action makes federal funding available to state and local governments, as well as some nonprofit organizations in specific counties.

HUD Secretary: Will Expedite Federal Disaster Assistance To North Carolina, Florida, Georgia. McClatchy (10/11, Pugh, 60K) reports HUD Secretary Castro "said Tuesday his department will expedite federal disaster assistance" to help homeowners and low-income renters who fled their homes in North Carolina, Florida and Georgia due to Hurricane Matthew. Castro said, "As our sister agencies assess the damage and respond to the immediate needs of our citizens, HUD will offer any assistance possible and stands ready to support the longer term housing recovery efforts."

Lumberton, NC Residents Ordered To Leave Homes Due To Dam Failing. ABC World News (10/11, story 4, 1:50, Muir, 14.63M) reported thousands of Lumberton, North Carolina residents "have been ordered out of their homes" as a dam is "at risk of failing" due to "rushing water ripping a hole in it." ABC's Matt Gutman said, "The entire part of this town is completely submerged. Hundreds of homes in this area. The destruction is so vast that not even our drone can see the edge of this flooding." On NBC Nightly News (10/11, story 3, 2:20, Holt, 16.61M), Miguel Almaguer reported "the lumber river [is] at a record high, pouring into surrounding communities," while Mark Strassmann said on the CBS Evening News (10/11, story 3, 2:15, Pelley, 11.17M) that "the water is waist deep and rising because the river nearby has yet to crest." Strassmann said "most of the stranded have been reached" and remaining efforts are "targeted rescues, responses to tips or calls."

North Carolina Town, Already Struggling, Faces "More Challenging" Future. The New York Times (10/11, Bidgood, Blinder, Subscription Publication, 13.42M) reports the town of Fair Bluff, North Carolina "was drowning" after Hurricane Matthew as "homes were submerged and deserted." The Times says the

“upheaval” caused by the storm “had a special sting here in a town that has tried... to remake itself in the face of economic shifts that have sucked the life out of so many other small towns.” Following the storm, the Times says, “Fair Bluff’s future looks even more challenging.”

HAITI FACES MAJOR DAMAGE, CHOLERA RISK AFTER HURRICANE MATTHEW. All three major networks sent correspondents to the areas of Haiti most heavily damaged by Hurricane Matthew. They all described the damage in the region in strong terms. NBC Nightly News (10/11, story 4, 1:25, Holt, 16.61M) reported Hurricane Matthew’s “wrath” was “all-consuming” on Haiti’s southern peninsula, where “homes are shredded” and “food is scarce.” NBC’s Gabe Gutierrez, touring the area, said, “There’s destruction as far as the eye can see.”

Haiti Faces Major Damage, Cholera Risks After Hurricane Matthew. The CBS Evening News (10/11, story 4, 2:05, Pelley, 11.17M) reported that “hundreds are dead” in Haiti, where seaside towns have “almost disappeared.” Clean water is scarce because “the water supply is contaminated with dead livestock and bodies,” making a cholera outbreak a paramount worry. “A million doses of cholera vaccine are being rushed in” by aid organizations. In an effort to stop the spread of cholera, “sewers are being sprayed with bleach and residents are being hosed down,” CBS’s Vladimir Duthiers said.

ABC World News (10/11, story 7, 1:15, Muir, 14.63M) reported, “The entire region is in ruins. The people here need help. The hospital is in tatters.” Dozens of new cholera patients arrive at overcrowded hospitals every day. Public health officials in Haiti worry that the spread of cholera there “isn’t just an outbreak, but the beginnings of an epidemic.”

Impatience Grows At Delay In International Aid To Haiti. USA Today (10/11, Bacon, 6.42M) reports UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon this week announced a $120 million appeal for funds aimed at “aiding an estimated 1.4 million Haitians struggling to meet basic needs” in the wake of Hurricane Matthew. Several aid organizations said Tuesday that the $120 million would be crucial to fund live-saving recovery programs in the country. All aid workers interviewed by USA Today stressed the need for an exceedingly rapid response to save lives in Haiti. Christy Delafield, spokesperson for the international aid group Mercy Corps in Haiti, said, “If we don’t get assistance to people in time to plant their crops this December and recover some form of income, the problems will become much more entrenched.”

The AP (10/11, Fox, McFadden) reports people throughout Haiti’s devastated southwest peninsula formed makeshift brigades Tuesday to clear debris and try “to regain some semblance of their pre-hurricane lives as anger grew over the delay in aid for remote communities more than a week after” Hurricane Matthew hit the island. “There’s no aid that’s come here,” Israel Banissa, a carpenter, said as he sawed wood to help rebuild his home and dozens of others. “I don’t think they care about the people up here.”

Hurricane Nicole To Hit Bermuda Wednesday. The CBS Evening News (10/11, story 9, 0:10, Pelley, 11.17M) briefly reported, “Hurricane Nicole reformed in the Caribbean today with 80-mile-an-hour winds.” The eye of the storm is expected to hit Bermuda Wednesday night.

US Citizenship and Immigration Services:

WPOST ANALYSIS: IMMIGRATION ATTORNEYS HARD-PRESSED AS ASYLUM APPLICATIONS RISE. In a front-page article, the Washington Post (10/11, A1, Harlan, 10.14M) reports that “just as the massive flow of Central Americans into the US immigration system” is making the work of immigration attorneys “job more urgent, it was also making it increasingly impossible to do.” Across the US, “new migrants from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras were showing up in federal courts designed to hear immigration cases, telling stories about dire and sometimes life-threatening gang violence in their countries,” but “they did not easily meet the traditional standards for asylum, which is reserved for persecuted peoples.” Attorneys “working in immigration courts around the country said in interviews that the ambiguity surrounding these cases has opened the door for a more arbitrary version of immigration justice.”

EB-5 CENTER RUN BY HILLARY CLINTON'S BROTHER SHUT DOWN. Politico (10/11, 1.95M) "Morning Shift" reports, "An EB-5 regional center run by Anthony Rodham, Hillary Clinton's youngest brother, was shut down Sept. 29 by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, according to" a Center for Immigration Studies blog post. Morning Shift adds, "The closing was confirmed in a posting on the USCIS website." Morning Shift notes that centers "can be terminated if they fail to submit required information to USCIS or are deemed no longer to serve the purpose of promoting economic growth."

Immigration:

DOJ TO CHARGE SHERIFF ARPAIO WITH CRIMINAL CONTEMPT OF COURT. ABC World News (10/11, story 8, 0:25, Muir, 14.63M) reported last night that "controversial sheriff Joe Arpaio is facing the possibility of jail time," with "prosecutors revealing they will charge the 84-year-old lawman with criminal contempt of court, for defying a judge's order to end his immigration patrols in Arizona." The Arizona Republic (10/11, Cassidy, 1.04M) says the move by DOJ "has few precedents in US history, as prosecutors endorsed a federal judge's findings that the lawman intentionally violated the judge's orders." DOJ attorney John Keller "said the government will continue to investigate additional allegations against Arpaio, two aides and a defense attorney for concealing evidence – and therefore obstruction of justice – but will not proceed with a criminal case at this time."

The AP (10/11, Billeaud) reports Arpaio "could face up to six months in jail if convicted of misdemeanor contempt," and notes that "the announcement in federal court sets in motion criminal proceedings against the sheriff less than a month before election day as he seeks a seventh term as Maricopa County sheriff." The AP adds that "the 2016 election cycle also has seen Arpaio take a prominent role on the national stage, appearing alongside Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump on several occasions."

Reuters (10/11, Schwartz) reports the case "centers on US District Judge Murray Snow's ruling that Arpaio intentionally violated a 2011 court order barring the sheriff's office from stopping and detaining drivers solely based on the suspicion that they were in the country illegally." Reuters adds that "the stops continued for another 18 months," until "in August, Snow recommended Arpaio face criminal charges for ignoring court orders arising out of the judge's ruling that the sheriff and his deputies were guilty of racial profiling of Latino motorists." The case "was assigned to a different judge after the recommendation."

NBC Nightly News (10/11, story 6, 1:35, Schwartz, 16.61M) reported that Arpaio "admitted his department continued the round-ups, but said he didn't violate the judge's orders intentionally." But "the judge disagreed, saying Arpaio disobeyed because he thought it could help him get re-elected." NBC also reported that "Arpaio has made a name for himself by forcing prisoners to wear pink and live in canvas tents in triple-digit temperatures," and added that "so far racial profiling cases against him have cost Arizona taxpayers nearly 50 million dollars."

RECENT IMMIGRANTS DEFY "POLITICAL JOUSTING" OVER IMMIGRATION ISSUE. The AP (10/11, Boak) says, "Immigrants to the U.S. are now more likely to come from Asia than from Mexico or Latin America," and "are disproportionately well-educated and entrepreneurial" compared to Americans overall. The AP adds, "They are transforming the nation in ways largely ignored by the political jousting over how immigration is affecting America's culture, economy and national security." Due to a "recent influx" of immigrants, the immigrant population as a whole "more and more reflect[s] the extremes of America's economic spectrum, from super-rich tech titans to poor agriculture workers." The AP goes on to discuss the Indian immigrant population of North Carolina.

US Coast Guard:

NON-CRITICAL LIGHTHOUSES AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC PURCHASE "FOR NEITHER THE WEAK OF HEAT NOR STOMACH." The AP (10/11, Schneider) discusses how "about 120 lighthouses no longer critical to the U.S. Coast Guard...have been acquired at no cost by government entities and nonprofits, or sold to private individuals" since becoming available "under the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act of 2000." While "more are auctioned every year...buyers beware: Years of neglect, vandalism, limited access and hammering by the elements often make for labor-intensive money pits that are for neither the

weak of heart nor stomach." Another AP (10/10) article notes, "The General Services Administration first offers the lighthouse to the entities and nonprofits. If no qualified applications are received, the properties are sold."

Secret Service:

SECRET SERVICE CIO DISCUSSES PRIORITIES, GOALS. Federal Times (10/11, 117K) reports, "As the former Marine Corps chief information officer, leading the U.S. Secret Service's IT management was a perfect fit" for Kevin Nally, who "still wanted to serve his country." In an interview, Nally discussed "the immediate changes he made to set up the Office of the CIO for success, his goals for the future, and how IT and cybersecurity are integral to keeping our nation's leaders safe." Nally is quoted describing how his main priority as CIO was to move the agency's information resources management division underneath his office, saying, "To be an effective CIO you need the people and the resources to be a CIO, otherwise I had no control over it." He added, "I needed complete oversight of all IT spending within the Secret Service, so [Director Joseph Clancy] granted me that." Nally also discusses how the "operational" aspect of his job, and specifically communicating with field operatives, differentiates it from other CIOs.

National Protection and Programs:

OKLAHOMA REAL ID EXTENSION REQUEST REJECTED. The AP (10/11) reports, "The Oklahoma Department of Public Safety says the government has rejected the state's request for an extension of time to comply with the federal REAL ID Act." However, the DPS "said Tuesday the U.S. Department of Homeland Security won't begin enforcing the act until after Jan. 29."

The Tulsa (OK) World (10/11, 323K) reports, "Two state legislators say they will press for early 2017 approval of a Real ID bill."

Montana Governor "Warned" State May Not Receive REAL ID Extension. The AP (10/11, Volz) reports, "Homeland security officials have warned Montana Gov. Steve Bullock that the state may not get any more time to comply with" the REAL ID Act. Bullock is quoted saying in an interview, "The Obama administration continues to push what I think is a real misguided effort, this Real ID Act. ... I've written Secretary Johnson to say it's time to suspend your efforts and go back to the Congress and get this fixed because Montana is not going to be in compliance."

Kentucky REAL ID Extension Expires. The Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal (10/11, 349K) reports, "Kentucky still hasn't met certain federal standards for driver's licenses, and an extension it received from the U.S. government expired Monday and hasn't been renewed yet." The state "hopes" DHS "will grant it a new year-long extension but hadn't received any notification about its status as of early Tuesday afternoon." Homeland Security spokesman Aaron Rodriguez "said over 20 states, including Kentucky, had extensions that expired Monday. All of them will be notified this week about whether they will be granted new ones."

Science and Technology Directorate:

STARTUPS SELECTED FOR EMERGE WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM. Homeland Security Today (10/11) reports, in continuing coverage, "Ten startup companies have been selected to be part of EMERGE 2016: Wearable Technology, a program designed to bring startups, accelerators and other strategic partners together in a common research and development effort by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science & Technology Directorate (S&T)." DHS is quoted saying, "As part of the program, the 10 startups will have access to first responder feedback, industry partners and investors, and business development educational resources from mentors around the business world." DHS added, "The access and resources available will assist in early market validation efforts, test and evaluation opportunities, and the establishment of a path to introduce their technologies to a variety of markets, including government sector partners."

Terrorism Investigations:

SAUDI STATE-CONTROLLED MEDIA PUBLISHING "INTENSE RASH OF NEWS ARTICLES AGAINST" US. The Washington Times (10/11, Scarborough, 280K) reports Saudi state-controlled media "have launched an intense rash of news articles against" the US and the new law that allows lawsuits against Riyadh for the September 11, terrorist attacks. The Times says the articles include "anti-Semitic ideas and images," claim the US has "a history of atrocities," and have "revived conspiracy theories" that Washington carried out the attacks.

SUPREME COURT AGREES TO HEAR 9/11 DETAINEES' LAWSUIT. Reuters (10/11, Hurley) reports that the Supreme Court on Tuesday "agreed to hear an appeal by former senior officials during George W. Bush's presidency seeking to block a lawsuit filed by immigrants, mainly Muslims, detained after the Sept. 11 attacks who said they faced abusive treatment." The former officials, including Attorney General John Ashcroft, FBI Director Robert Mueller, and Immigration and Naturalization Services Commissioner James Ziglar, "are aiming to reverse a 2015 ruling by the New York-based 2nd US Circuit Court of Appeals allowing the long-running suit to move forward."

USA Today (10/11, Wolf, 6.42M) reports that "the three combined cases are unusual for two reasons: The Obama administration will be defending President George W. Bush's 'war on terrorism,' and two of the court's remaining eight justices will not take part because of conflicts of interest." USA notes that "if the case is heard before a ninth justice is confirmed, only six justices will participate." USA adds that the government "previously has won six cases challenging its policies in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks, which included the arrest and detention of more than 750 undocumented immigrants."

"SODOMIZED" GITMO DETAINEE TO UNDERGO CORRECTIVE SURGERY. The Miami Herald (10/11, Rosenberg, 776K) reports that "an alleged accomplice in the Sept. 11 terror attacks is to undergo surgery this week for decade-old damage from his 'sodomy' in CIA custody, his attorney says." Defense attorney Walter Ruiz, "a Navy Reserve officer, disclosed the upcoming surgery for his client, Mustafa al Hawsawi, 48, on the eve of resumption of pretrial hearings Tuesday in the case that accuses the Saudi Arabian Hawsawi and four other men of orchestrating the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people." Ruiz said "a case prosecutor informed him of the procedure over the weekend because defense lawyers have been litigating over conditions at the remote prison and, in the case of his client, have specifically sought medical intervention to treat a rectal prolapse that has caused Hawsawi to bleed for more than a decade."

SYRIANS WHO TIED UP BOMB SUSPECT CALLED HEROES IN GERMANY. The AP (10/11, Moulson, Jordans) reports three Syrians who on Monday apprehended Jaber Albakr, "wanted in an alleged Islamic extremist bomb plot," were "hailed as heroes" in Germany on Tuesday, "helping temper anti-migrant sentiment fueled in part by fears of such attacks." Burkhard Jung, the mayor of Leipzig, Saxony – the "heart" of the anti-migrant group PEGIDA – thanked the three men, stating, "A person who at first glance seems to have been obviously dangerous was held by fellow Syrians and handed over to the police. That's a very courageous act."

MARYLAND TERROR SUSPECT ORDERED HELD PENDING TRIAL. The AP (10/11) reports that a judge on Tuesday ordered Maryland man Nelash Mohamed Das to remain held behind bars while he awaits trial on terror charges. "The 24-year-old Das was arrested Sept. 30. Court documents say he was ready to carry out what he thought was an attack on a member of the U.S. military when he was arrested," the AP says. The purported attack was arranged by an FBI informant. "Das' attorney, Julie Stelzig, said in a statement that her client denies the charge against him. She says Das will enter a not-guilty plea," the AP reports. The Washington Post (10/11, Bui, 10.14M) reports that the FBI began investigating Das, a citizen of Bangladesh, beginning in Sept. 2015 after he allegedly began expressing support for ISIL online.

FAMILIES OF VICTIMS, SHOOTER ALLOWED TO TESTIFY AT HEARING OVER ORLANDO 911 TAPES. The AP (10/11) reports that a judge on Monday issued an order allowing relatives of the Orlando nightclub shooting victims, as well as the gunman's family, to testify at a hearing on whether unreleased

911 calls from the incident should be made public. “The city of Orlando and about two dozen media groups have been fighting for four months over the release of all the 911 calls, as well as four calls between Mateen and Orlando police,” the AP says. The hearing is set for Oct. 31.

COLORADO MALL EVACUATED AMID CONCERNS OVER SUSPICIOUS DEVICE. The Boulder (CO) Daily Camera (10/11, Kuta, 140K) reports that a shopping center in Nederland, Colorado was evacuated Tuesday after a possible explosive device was found in a bag left outside the town’s police department. The police department is located in the shopping center. The FBI and local authorities are investigating the device.

FLORIDA TERROR CASE MAY GO TO TRIAL IN APRIL. WPEC-TV West Palm Beach, FL (10/11, Weber, 79K) reports online that the case of three Florida men charge with supporting ISIL may go to trial in April. Two of the men, Dayne Christian and Darren Jackson, are accused of conspiring to supply the third, Gregory Hubbard, with weapons and training. Hubbard was arrested while boarding a flight to Berlin, allegedly en route to join ISIL in Syria. The FBI used a confidential informant in the case. “Prosecutors said Tuesday classified evidence is now being reviewed before release to defense lawyers, hopefully within the next six weeks,” WPEC says. WFLX-TV West Palm Beach, FL (10/11, 1K) provides similar coverage.

Cyber News:

WHITE HOUSE: OBAMA WEIGHING RESPONSE TO RUSSIAN CYBER ATTACKS. Saying the US could be “on the brink of a full-scale cyber war with Russia,” CNN’s Situation Room (10/11, 554K) reported the White House announced Tuesday that it is looking at a “range of possible responses” to Russian cyber attacks on US political systems. However, the White House is also “saying it’s not likely that response will be announced ahead of time and it may never be made public at all.” The White House, the New York Times (10/11, Davis, Harris, Subscription Publication, 13.42M) reports, said the President is weighing a “proportional” response to Russia’s efforts to interfere with the upcoming election. “The president has talked before about the significant capabilities that the US government has to both defend our systems in the United States but also carry out offensive operations in other countries,” press secretary Josh Earnest told reporters. “There are a range of responses that are available to the president, and he will consider a response that is proportional,” he added.

Earnest, Reuters (10/11) reports, said, “It is certainly possible that the president can choose response options that we never announce.” McClatchy (10/11, Johnson, 60K) likewise says “Russia would not be given warning.” CNN (10/11, Kopan, 31.54M), Politico (10/11, Nelson, 1.95M), The Wall Street Journal (10/11, Lee, Paletta, Subscription Publication, 6.37M), and PBS NewsHour (10/11, 264K) similarly report Earnest’s remarks.

In an op-ed for Slate (10/11, 2M), author Fred Kaplan argues that Russia’s formidable offensive cyber capabilities mean “it’s not a good idea to spur a game of escalation.” Kaplan opines that “responding to a Russian cyberattack with a cyberattack of our own doesn’t seem to be a winning game.” Kaplan concludes that Obama could be “taking aim but holding fire as long as they don’t follow through on what they seem to be preparing to do.”

Podesta Accuses Russia Of Hacking His Email, Suggests Trump Had “Advance Warning.” The CBS Evening News (10/11, story 2, 2:15, Pelley, 11.17M) reported WikiLeaks has released 1,200 more private emails sent to and from Hillary Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta. Clinton’s press secretary Brian Fallon called WikiLeaks “a propaganda arm of the Russian government running interference for their pet candidate, [Donald] Trump.” The New York Times (10/11, Chozick, Subscription Publication, 13.42M) reports Podesta on Tuesday said “Russian intelligence officials intent on swaying the election to Donald J. Trump had been responsible for the illegal breach into his account.”

Podesta, USA Today (10/12, Cummings, 6.42M) reports, also claimed that “there is reason to believe the Donald Trump campaign had ‘advance warning’ about the document release and implied there was a degree of coordination between the campaign and Russian intelligence.” Podesta told reporters, “I’ve

been involved in politics for nearly five decades. And this definitely is the first campaign that I've been involved with in which I've had to tangle with Russian Intelligence agencies." They "seem to be doing everything they can on behalf of our opponent," Podesta added.

CNBC Analysis: Russian Election Hacking Likely To Be More Psychological. In an analysis piece, CNBC (10/11, Chemi, Fahey, 2.52M) interviews several cybersecurity experts about the dangers of Russian hacking of US elections systems. The experts "suggested the harm that could be caused by Russian attacks would be more psychological than anything else." Rahul Telang, a professor at Carnegie Mellon University who studies the economics of information security and privacy, says, "The storyline that someone was trying to access these systems is more damaging than any actual damage to the data." CNBC also cites Secretary Johnson's statement Monday that 33 states have sought help from DHS for election "hygiene" scans.

Sen. Wyden: Mail Voting Would Prevent Election Cyber Interference. Morning Consult (10/11, Nasr) reports Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) suggested on Tuesday that if the US could vote by mail in the election there would be no cyber interference. Wyden also discussed encryption saying, "The announcement that the Russian government is responsible for the hacks into American political organizations and election systems is one more reminder how foolish it would be to undermine strong encryption, which is the foundation of digital security."

Continuing Coverage: Trump Denies Russian Role In Hacking Despite Intel Briefing. In continuing coverage, SC Magazine (10/11, Robinson, 301) reports Donald Trump has repeatedly expressed doubt about Russia's role in hacking the DNC despite receiving security briefings implicating Russia before he made those statements.

PROLIFIC BANK HACKER ARRESTED IN RUSSIA AFTER LENGTHY MANHUNT. The Washington Times (10/11, Blake, 280K) reports Joshua Aaron, of Maryland, has been arrested in Russia on an FBI warrant for allegedly "participating in a yearslong scheme described by the Justice Department as 'securities fraud on cyber steroids'" after a "lengthy manhunt." The warrant was issued for Aaron in June 2015 when he was charged with "crimes including conspiracy to commit computer hacking, security fraud and aggravated identity theft." The Times says Aaron may not face charges in the US anytime soon as Russia does not have a extradition treaty with the US. The FBI alleges Aaron participated in a criminal enterprise that "illegally made millions of dollars using sensitive information acquired by hacking into several Wall Street companies including JPMorgan Chase." US Attorney Preet Bhara called the JPMorgan Chase breach the "the largest theft of customer data from a U.S. financial institution in history."

AUSTRALIA RELEASES CYBERSECURITY REPORT. The AP (10/11, McGuirk) details a cybersecurity report released by the Australian government that warns that extremist groups could have damaging cyberattack capabilities in three years. The report says, "It is unlikely terrorists will be able to compromise a secure network and generate a significant disruptive or destructive effect for at least two or three years." Cybersecurity minister Dan Tehan says, "We have to understand that when it comes to cyberterrorism, there is a growing threat." Reuters (10/11) says the first public report from the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) also details a malware attack on the Bureau of Meterology, which may have "originated from a foreign intelligence service." The report "identified the presence of particular Remote Access Tool malware popular with state-sponsored cyber adversaries, amongst other malware associated with cybercrime."

G7 ISSUES CYBERSECURITY GUIDELINES. Reuters (10/11) reports, "The Group of Seven industrial powers on Tuesday said they had agreed on guidelines for protecting the global financial sector from cyber attacks following a series of cross-border bank thefts by hackers." The non-binding guidelines were agreed following the February cybertheft of $81 million from the central bank of Bangladesh after the SWIFT system was hacked. Officials identified creating a common system of terms and baseline understanding of how to address cybersecurity from a risk management perspective, while identifying potential shortfalls. The guidelines "instruct governments to make sure financial regulators are policing the cyber-security readiness of companies and themselves, and that public and private institutions are continually updating their defenses."

Fortune (10/11, 7.04M) reports the 3-page guidelines also "instruct governments to make sure financial regulators are policing the cyber-security readiness of companies. Governments are also supposed to notify one another about joint threats and cooperate to contain computer system breaches." The G7 is made up of seven major industrialized nations – Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United States.

Symantec: Second Hacker Group Targeting Banks Through SWIFT. Reuters (10/11, Finkle) reports Symantec Corp "said on Tuesday that a second hacking group has sought to rob banks using fraudulent SWIFT messages," which is the same method used to steal $81 million from the Bangladesh Central Bank in February. The group, called Odinaff, "has infected 10 to 20 organizations with malware that can be used to hide fraudulent transfer requests made over SWIFT," according to Symantec. Symantec adds that it would share information about Odinaff with the government, banks, and competing cybersecurity firms.

JAPANESE NUCLEAR LAB MAY HAVE BEEN TARGETED BY CYBERATTACKS. The Chicago Tribune (10/11, 2.54M) reports a nuclear lab at the University of Toyama that works on tritium, "a substance used to fuel nuclear fusion reactors, is feared to have been targeted by cyber-attacks over a period of about six months, according to an internal investigation by the university and other sources." The Tribune says some information may have been stolen from the "computer terminal of a researcher at the university's Hydrogen Isotope Research Center." The hacker compressed the files to easily transmit "huge volumes of data." The University's internal investigation "found that about 59,000 data files, which accounted for most of those in a personal computer that was infected with a computer virus, may have been stolen."

AIRLINES INCREASINGLY AT RISK FROM CYBERATTACKS AS THEY DIGITIZE. Fast Company (10/11, Melendez, 2.44M) reports that major airlines will face increasing cybersecurity risks as they continue to digitize. Partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers Mickey Roach says, "We don't have a lot [of hacker attempts] in the airline systems yet where they've been successful," but "We know that they're trying." According to the article, a report last year by the Government Accountability Office "issued a general warning that increasingly connected systems on planes could boost the possibility of cyberattacks or malware." Fast Company reports hackers can possibly cause disruptions not only to in-flight systems, but also ticket systems, maintenance tracking systems, systems that track flight crews, or even access to customers' frequent-flyer accounts.

CONTINUING COVERAGE: YAHOO DISABLES EMAIL FORWARDING FEATURE ON ACCOUNTS. The Christian Science Monitor (10/11, 382K) reports, in continuing coverage, that users hoping to switch services from Yahoo after "back-to-back revelations that hackers had compromised a staggering 500 million Yahoo Mail accounts and that the company had complied with a US government request to open incoming emails for surveillance" are having a difficult time because Yahoo "disabled its automated email-forwarding option" earlier this month.

OPINION: SEC MAY EXAMINE CYBERSECURITY DISCLOSURE RULES AFTER YAHOO BREACH. In an op-ed for The Hill's (10/11, Olcott, 651K) "Pundits Blog," BitSight VP of business development Jacob Olcott argues the SEC may "examine the rules on when companies must disclose cyber risks and attacks" following the breach of Yahoo. Olcott opines the "unprecedented size of the Yahoo breach and the fact that it took the company two years to disclose it is drawing unusual heat in Washington." Olcott says the SEC will likely examine the definition of a "material cyber event," which triggers the disclosure requirement. Olcott concludes that the SEC should create an "education campaign" on existing disclosure laws, "enforce existing disclosure laws, and examine adding additional disclosure guidelines."

RESEARCHERS CLAIM HACKERS CAN VIEW SKYPE CALLS. The Atlantic (10/11, Waddell, 5.12M) reports cybersecurity company Synack released research showing hackers may be able to listen in to video call through Skype. Synack's director of research Patrick Wardle "calls the technique 'piggybacking.'" The Atlantic says piggybacking malware "simply waits until the webcam is active, and then records everything it sees." Wardle says this type of attack is virtually undetectable.

RANSOMWARE ATTACKS UP TO 4,000 PER DAY. McClatchy (10/11, Johnson, 60K) reports Bob

Gregg with the cybersecurity firm ID Experts says their research shows there are around 4,000 ransomware attacks per day. Jeffrey L. Coburn, chief of the major cybercrimes unit of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, "encouraged those hit with ransomware attacks to contact the FBI, which in most cases does not advocate paying a ransom."

National Security News:

RUSSIA RESUMES HEAVY BOMBING OF ALEPPO. The CBS Evening News (10/11, story 6, 2:00, Pelley, 11.17M) reported Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his Russian allies are "fighting to crush the resistance" in Aleppo, and "as always, civilians are doing most of the dying." Medics say eight were killed in bombings in rebel-held areas on Tuesday, while the Syrian government claimed five people young Syrians were killed when a rebel mortar hit a school. The UN and Doctors Without Borders are "pushing for a ceasefire" to allow those seriously wounded to be evacuated from besieged parts of the city, "but so far, the Syrians and the Russians are saying no." According to Reuters (10/11), Russian jets "resumed heavy bombing of rebel-held eastern Aleppo on Tuesday after several days of relative calm." The Russian airstrikes "mostly hit the Bustan al-Qasr neighborhood," killing "at least 25, with scores of wounded."

PUTIN CANCELS PARIS VISIT AFTER FRANCE OFFERS TALKS ONLY ON SYRIA. In what Reuters (10/11, Irish) calls "the latest episode in deteriorating relations between Moscow and the West," Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday canceled a visit to Paris next week after President Francois Hollande "said he would see him only for talks on Syria." Reuters says French officials have "been grappling for ways to put new pressure on Russia after Moscow vetoed a French-drafted United Nations Security Council resolution on Syria." Hollande said Tuesday, "I made it known to Mr. Putin that if he came to Paris, I would not accompany him to any ceremonies, but that I was ready to continue the dialogue on Syria. He decided to postpone the visit." The Wall Street Journal (10/11, Mills, Dalton, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) quotes the French president as saying, "I consider it necessary to have a dialogue with Russia. However, this dialogue must be firm and honest, otherwise it has no purpose and it's a sham."

The AP (10/11, Petrequin, Isachenkov) reports Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed the visit has been canceled, but said "it's up to the French side to explain the reason." The AP notes that France has joined Secretary of State Kerry's "call for a war crimes investigation into Russian and Syrian airstrikes in Syria." The decision to cancel Putin's visit, the Washington Post (10/11, Roth, 10.14M) says, "underscores the increasing divides between the West and Russia over Moscow's military aid to Syria's government."

US DOWNPLAYING ROLE IN MOSUL OPERATION AMID BATTLE PREPARATIONS. The CBS Evening News (10/11, story 4, 2:35, Pelley, 11.17M) reported US and Iraqi troops are preparing to retake Mosul from a US airbase 40 miles south of the city. Maj. Gen. Gary Volesky served in Mosul in 2009, but this time he "insists the American military is only here to advise and assist from this joint operation center and not for combat." Holly Williams said that despite Volesky's assurance, "we're seeing American service members out there very close to the action, and in some cases, losing their lives."

Fox News' Special Report (10/11, 1.53M) reported that new studies show ISIL has lost 30 percent of its territory ahead of the Mosul battle. Fox said US-led airstrikes "played a major role" in retaking the territory, "but today, the State Department downplayed their involvement in the upcoming battle." Meanwhile, it is believed that ISIL "would rather destroy the city than give it up, and fear is growing" that Mosul's residents will be used as cover. According to Reuters (10/11, Georgy, Dehghanpisheh, Rasheed), ISIL militants "have placed booby traps across" the city, "dug tunnels, and recruited children as spies in anticipation" of the offensive.

ERDOGAN: ABADI SHOULD "KNOW HIS PLACE." The AP (10/11, Fraser) reports Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Tuesday that his country "can't be excluded from a possible operation to recapture" Mosul, telling Iraq's leader to "know his place." In remarks the AP says are "likely to add to tensions," Erdogan "also said Turkish troops wouldn't withdraw from a base near Mosul, saying the

Turkish army wouldn't take orders from Baghdad." USA Today (10/11, Dorell, 6.42M) quotes Erdogan as saying of Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, "You are not my interlocutor. You are not at my level. You are not my equivalent. You are not of the same quality as me. Your screaming and shouting in Iraq is of no importance to us. You should know that we will go our own way."

In an apparent response, Reuters (10/11) reports the State Department said Tuesday that foreign forces in Iraq "should be there with the approval of the Baghdad government and under the umbrella of the anti-Islamic State coalition."

ISIL INCREASINGLY USING EXPLODING DRONES ON BATTLEFIELD. The New York Times (10/11, Schmidt, Schmitt, Subscription Publication, 13.42M) reports on an incident last week that "is believed to be one of the first times the Islamic State has successfully used a drone with explosives to kill troops on the battlefield." According to the Times, in the last month, ISIL "has tried to use small drones to launch attacks at least two other times, prompting American commanders in Iraq to issue a warning to forces fighting the group to treat any type of small flying aircraft as a potential explosive device."

OFFICIALS BELIEVE ISIL ADAPTING TO SURVIVE TERRITORY LOSSES. In a 2,931-word article, Newsweek (10/11, Powell, 683K) reports that as ISIL's Caliphate crumbles, "military and counterintelligence officials and diplomats in the United States, Europe and the Middle East acknowledge that the fight now becomes more difficult for the West – and, many contend, more dangerous." Officials admit they are "deeply concerned not so much that the numbers of fighters flowing back into the West will increase but about the type of fighters likely to return." Meanwhile, former DIA official Michael Pregent says the military strategy to defeat ISIL "amounts to 'rubble-izing' predominantly Sunni cities in Iraq and Syria." This approach, he adds, is creating a massive number of refugees, including "350,000 military-age young men in Mosul alone – all asking [the United States], 'What are you doing?'"

PBS (10/11, Childress, 1.14M) reports that while the anti-ISIL coalition has a "strong chance" to defeat ISIL in Mosul, "the victory might not matter much in the overall effort to eradicate ISIS." US officials and analysts "say that there is no link between ISIS's territorial reach and the strength of its global terror network, in part because it has adapted a more versatile, nimble network of operatives, and more effectively distributes its powerful propaganda worldwide." Col. John Dorrian, spokesman for the anti-ISIL campaign, said that while a lot of areas have been liberated from ISIL, the terror group's militants are "still in the periphery, and they would love nothing better than to get in, re-infiltrate some of the areas that they've been pushed out of, and begin to cause problems."

GUNMEN DRESSED AS POLICEMEN KILL 14 IN ATTACK ON SHIITE SHRINE IN KABUL. The Washington Post (10/11, Constable, Salahuddin, 10.14M) reports "gunmen opened fire on Shiite worshipers at a shrine in the Afghan capital Tuesday, killing at least 14 people and wounding more than 40 others during events marking one of the holiest days for Shiite Muslims, authorities reported." According to Afghan Interior Ministry spokesman Sediq Siddiqui, the "last attacker has been gunned down" and the "situation" is "under control." The New York Times (10/11, Nader, Mashal, Subscription Publication, 13.42M) says the gunmen were "disguised as police officers" during the attack.

RUSSIA, CHINA MULL JOINT RESPONSE TO US MISSILE SHIELD. The AP (10/11) reports the Russian military said Tuesday it will cooperate with China "on minimizing a threat posed by US missile defense." Lt. Gen. Viktor Poznikhir of the Russian military's General Staff told a security forum in China that the US missile defense system "will be capable of intercepting Russian or Chinese ballistic missiles." Bloomberg News (10/11, Arkhipov, 2.49M) quotes Poznikhir as saying, "We are working together on ways to minimize possible damage to the security of our countries. The illusion of invulnerability and impunity under the guise of missile defense will encourage Washington to make unilateral steps in dealing with global and regional issues. This could lead to a decrease in the threshold for using nuclear weapons to preempt enemy actions."

MEDIA ANALYSES: GLOBAL US CAMPAIGN COVERAGE BOLSTERS AMERICAN IMAGE PROBLEM ABROAD. Bloomberg News (10/11, Motevalli, 2.49M) reports that "viewers of Iranian state television have been given an unprecedented taste of the seamier side of US politics." Over the last two weeks, the Namayesh channel has shown the first season of "House of Cards," and on Sunday, the main

state TV news network IRINN carried the first-ever live broadcast in the Islamic Republic of a US presidential debate – "one dominated by sleaze and threats." The timing of those broadcasts was "a scheduling gift for officials who understand the power of television news and drama to shape perceptions of a country which for conservatives remains Iran's biggest enemy."

The New York Times (10/11, Buckley, Subscription Publication, 13.42M) reports Chinese state news media "has already declared a winner in the scandal-stained race for the White House: one-party dictatorship." A Monday editorial from Xinhua, the main state news agency, carried the headline, "The American election again plumbs new depths in its bottom line," adding, "In the farce of American politics, these blowups have been coming faster than you can turn the pages of a book." But the Times says that many younger Chinese, particularly those in the middle class, still find "the spectacle of parties competing for support, and of the news media taking on the candidates...uplifting, despite all the dirt." Still, the scandals of the American presidential election "could reinforce the skepticism that democracy has anything better to offer China."

The Global Post (10/11, Kott, 21K) reports that both Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton are unpopular in Turkey. The Turks are worried about Clinton's suggestion in the last debate that she would arm Kurdish fighters to help fight ISIL. Trump is seen as "unstable" and "prone to violence," but most Turkish people know little about his actual policies.

The Washington Post (10/11, Witte, Faiola, Birnbaum, 10.14M) reports in a 1,300-word analysis that America's European allies are concerned about Donald Trump. Foreign leaders "have broken with decades of precedent that calls for studious silence and have openly taken sides in a US presidential election." The prospect "of Trump taking control of the world's greatest power has triggered widespread anxiety in European capitals." A Trump victory could challenge European nations "to bind together to compensate for a likely American turn toward isolationism."

Ignatius: Bullies Are Determining The Course Of Global Events. David Ignatius writes in his Washington Post (10/11, 10.14M) column that watching "Donald Trump skulking behind Hillary Clinton on the debate stage Sunday night" was a "reminder that we are drifting toward a kind of bullboy-world, where power is everything." China has "brazenly" built military bases on disputed territory in the South China Sea; Russia "pillages America's political system and baldly denies it"; and Kim Jong Un "is about to become the leader of a full-fledged nuclear power." Ignatius writes that "historians will have to decide whether Barack Obama's presidency encouraged this fraying of limits," because "for all his decency, Obama conveyed a sense that you could defy the United States and its cherished 'rules-based order' and get away with it." Ignatius adds that Obama's "slowly unfolding but decisive use of power against" ISIL "may partially reverse that reputation." Ignatius concludes that if the US elects Donald Trump for president, we will prove that we are part of this new bullying order.

PENTAGON HINTS AT POSSIBLE RETALIATION FOR YEMEN MISSILE FIRE. In what Reuters (10/11, Stewart, Ali) calls "language that suggested preparations for possible retaliation," the Pentagon on Tuesday warned that whoever fired missiles at a US Navy destroyer off the coast of Yemen over the weekend had done so "at their own peril." Spokesman Captain Jeff Davis told reporters, "Anybody who takes action, fires against US Navy ships operating in international waters, does so at their own peril." Asked whether the Pentagon was developing targets for retaliatory strikes, Davis said, "I'm not confirming that right now." Defense Secretary Carter, the Washington Times (10/11, Muñoz, 280K) reports, said Monday that US warships will continue off the coast of Yemen. Washington remains "determined to preserve freedom of navigation" for US and allied warships in the waterways off the Yemeni coast, Carter said. "We are very capable of taking action against anybody who takes action against our warships" operating in the region or elsewhere, he added.

The Wall Street Journal (10/11, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) editorial blames Iran for the incident, saying it provided Houthi rebels with the missiles fired at the US Navy destroyer. The Journal argues that Iran has become emboldened since last year's nuclear deal and that such attacks are likely to continue.

The New York Times (10/11, Al-Asaadi, Subscription Publication, 13.42M), meanwhile, highlights the plight of children in war-torn Yemen.

ARMS DEALER ALLEGES COVER-UP OVER LIBYA WEAPONS PROGRAM. Fox News' Special Report (10/11, 1.53M) reported that in his first TV interview since the Justice Department dropped charges against him, arms dealer Marc Turi "says the Obama Administration, with the cooperation of Hillary Clinton's State Department tried and failed to make him the fall guy for a 2010 covert weapons program to arm Libyan rebels that spun out of control." Turi believes chargers were dropped "to avoid public disclosure of the weapons program." He claims the weapons from that program eventually landed in the hands of terror groups. When asked if that meant al Qaeda, Ansar al-Sharia, or ISIL, Turi was shown responding, "All of them."

US ENVOY CONFIDENT OF "SIGNIFICANT" UN PROGRESS ON TOUGHER NORTH KOREA SANCTIONS. Reuters (10/11, Brunnstrom) reports Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Russel said Tuesday that he is confident the UN will make "significant" progress on tougher sanctions against North Korea over its nuclear program, despite apparent differences with China. Asked about China's stance in the Security Council, Russel told reporters, "It's very important to get progress; We are determined to get progress." He added, "We won't know how far we will get...but we know there will be a new Security Council resolution and I have great confidence that it will represent a significant ratcheting forward of the sanctions and the constraints on North Korea."

NYTIMES ANALYSIS: "TOUGH TALK BUT LITTLE ACTION" FROM ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER. The New York Times (10/11, Kershner, Subscription Publication, 13.42M) reports Israel has been "challenged by land, sea and air in recent weeks," and security officials are "braced for a wave of violence around the Jewish High Holy Days," providing "a test of how Avigdor Lieberman, Israel's hard-line defense minister, would respond." Although he previously "criticized what he called the government's soft handling of security," Israeli military officials, analysts, and Palestinian experts say Lieberman "has done little to change Israeli policies significantly" since taking office five months ago. Amos Harel, a military affairs analyst for Haaretz, said, "He turned up the volume a bit, but not dramatically."

FARC SAYS IT STILL WANTS PEACE DEAL. The Wall Street Journal (10/11, Forero, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) reports that despite Colombian voters' rejection of the government's peace deal with FARC rebels, the group still wants to make peace. "To fight, you need two, and we've decided we won't be the second party," said Federico Nariño, the nom de guerre for a midlevel commander in the group. The Journal notes that since the deal's rejection by voters, the guerrillas have maintained a ceasefire.

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

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LEADING DHS NEWS

U.S. Suspends Deportations Of Haitians After Hurricane Matthew

Reuters, October 12, 2016

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

US Policy On Deporting Haitians On Hold In Wake Of Hurricane

By Peter Orsi

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

Hurricane Matthew's destruction in Haiti has put on hold a new policy of deporting Haitians who are in the United States without permission but the government intends to return to it in the future, U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson said Tuesday.

Speaking in Mexico City where he held talks with Cabinet officials on border, migration and security issues, Johnson noted that some flights to Haiti have been suspended in the wake of the storm, which has killed hundreds of people.

"We will have to deal with that situation, address it, be sympathetic to the plight of the people of Haiti as a result of the hurricane," he said. "But after that situation, after that condition has been addressed, we intend to resume the policy change that I brought about several weeks ago."

The United States stopped deporting Haitians after the Caribbean country was hit by a devastating earthquake in 2010, freeing them on humanitarian parole instead. But on Sept. 21, Homeland Security began putting Haitians in detention facilities as a prelude to sending them home.

The idea behind the new practice was that "Haitian migrants who come to our country illegally would be treated like immigrants from just about every other country who entered our country illegally," Johnson said.

Thousands of Haitians have been arriving at Tijuana, Mexico, in recent weeks hoping to cross into the United States, creating a migratory logjam at the border. They have also overwhelmed Mexican migrant shelters while they wait, with many of them sleeping outside on sheets of cardboard.

Mexican Interior Secretary Miguel Angel Osorio Chong said the Haitian migrants were a subject of talks with Johnson

and it was Mexico's responsibility to try to improve their conditions while they are in the country.

He also expressed hope that the United States, which has been processing only about 75 Haitian migrants per day at the San Ysidro crossing in San Diego, may be able to speed that up.

"Very possibly (their numbers) may rise following the hurricane's passage," Osorio Chong said.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration had representatives visit Tijuana this week to take stock of the situation.

With the U.S. presidential election in its closing weeks and Mexicans scheduled to pick a successor to President Enrique Pena Nieto in 2018, officials in Tuesday's meetings in the capital had their sights set on future cooperation.

"We have agreed to institute a high-level work group to follow through beyond our governments, beyond the administrations of which we are currently part," Osorio Chong said.

Associated Press writer Elliot Spagat in San Diego contributed to this report.

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Congress Members Say Haitian Deportations Should Cease Because Of Hurricane

San Diego Union-Tribune, October 11, 2016

More than 50 members of Congress signed a letter to President Obama last week asking him to stop deportations to Haiti because of damage from Hurricane Matthew.

The issue has been of particular interest in San Diego, where many Haitians have landed as their first U.S. stop upon fleeing unrest in Brazil — their home since the 2010 earthquake in their homeland.

The letter concludes that it would be inhumane to deport non-criminals to Haiti, given the hurricane — and unresolved issues from the earthquake.

"The decision to resume non-criminal deportations to Haiti will further exacerbate the nation's chaotic situation," the letter says.

Because of the earthquake, until recently the United States only deported serious criminals to Haiti. Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson last month announced that deportations to Haiti would resume, and then Hurricane Matthew hit the island nation, causing hundreds of deaths.

"I share the President's commitment to enforcing our nation's immigration laws, but disagree with his interpretation that conditions have improved enough in Haiti to resume non-criminal deportations, especially in light of the damage from Hurricane Matthew," said Rep. Scott Peters, D-San Diego, who signed the letter. "The federal government also needs to do its part in helping communities like San Diego that are housing Haitian migrants temporarily while they await their asylum trials."

Rep. Susan Davis did not join her San Diego Democratic colleagues Peters and Rep. Juan Vargas in signing the letter. Aaron Hunter, a spokesman for her office, said that Davis supports the sentiment of the letter and would like to see the deportations halted.

Joe Kasper, a spokesman for Duncan Hunter, R-Alpine, said that Hunter is against halting deportations and is concerned about the number of Haitians who entered the U.S. prior to the policy change.

"It's different from entering illegally, but they know there's an easy path for entry, and they are exploiting the system," Kasper said.

Both of California's current senators say they share concerns about Haiti's conditions.

"Haitian migrants have a right to be heard and to make their case about why it would be unsafe to return home at this time," Sen. Barbara Boxer, a Democrat, said in an emailed statement. "If they pass the vetting, they should be given the opportunity to stay until conditions in their country improve."

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, a Democrat, said in an emailed statement, "Haiti is a deeply impoverished country and there is no question as to the devastation caused by Hurricane Matthew. Haitians living in the United States should be granted short-term relief from deportation until the situation in their home country stabilizes."

Kelsey Cork, spokeswoman for Rep. Loretta Sanchez, D-Santa Ana, said that Sanchez, who is running for Boxer's seat, supports the letter, although she did not sign it.

Kamala Harris, California's attorney general, who is running against Sanchez, would also support a hold on deportations, according to Nathan Click, a spokesman for her campaign.

An influx of Haitian migrants began arriving at San Diego's border in May from Brazil, where many Haitians obtained work visas following the earthquake. The migrants were previously allowed into the U.S. with temporary passes, but now when they arrive at the border, they are placed in detention facilities before their removal proceedings.

The office of Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Vista, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

U.S. And Mexico To Seek New Ways To Deal With Immigration

FOX News Latino, October 11, 2016

Mexico City – U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson said in Mexico on Tuesday that Washington and Mexico City would work together to find new ways to deal with security matters, especially those related to immigration.

Johnson said during an appearance with Foreign Relations Secretary Claudia Ruiz Massieu that it was essential for the two countries to work together.

The homeland security secretary noted that each year on George Washington's birthday, a Mexican boy and an American boy exchange a symbolic hug on the international bridge linking Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, and Laredo, Texas.

Johnson said he expected that the tradition would continue regardless of who wins the Nov. 8 presidential election in the United States.

Ruiz Massieu, for her part, said the two Cabinet officials discussed "how to better and jointly deal with migratory challenges" and expand "cooperation on the border, so it can be increasingly more efficient, orderly and safe."

Mexico and the United States have pursued a diverse bilateral agenda, moving away from focusing just on security and incorporating other areas, such as innovation and competitiveness, during the Obama administration, Ruiz Massieu said.

"The mechanisms of cooperation have been institutionalized," Ruiz Massieu said.

The foreign relations secretary expressed hope that the future "will be more promising as we continue building a relationship based on trust, respect and greater understanding."

Johnson later met with Attorney General Arely Gomez to discuss the extradition process, immigration and people trafficking, the Attorney General's Office said in a statement.

Johnson, Ruiz Massieu and Government Secretary Miguel Angel Osorio will participate in a conference on border affairs on Tuesday afternoon.

Election Cyber Threats: More States Request DHS Assistance

By Tal Kopan

CNN, October 11, 2016

Washington (CNN) More states and local election boards have asked the Department of Homeland Security to help with cybersecurity, the department announced Monday night.

The total, which has been steadily rising in recent weeks, has reached 33 state and 11 county or local election agencies, DHS said.

More than two dozen states were known to have requested help before the updated tally.

DHS has been urging states to take advantage of its resources, which include scanning systems for vulnerabilities and recommendations for improving cybersecurity on election and voter registration systems.

The update from Secretary Jeh Johnson warned those on the fence to make a decision.

"Time is a factor. There are only 29 days until election day, and it can take up to two weeks from the time we receive authorization to run the scans and identify vulnerabilities," Johnson said. "It can then take at least an additional week for state and local election officials to mitigate any vulnerabilities on systems that we may find."

While it would be extremely difficult for any hackers to affect the outcome of the presidential election by attacking voting machines, experts say voter registration databases could be more vulnerable to tampering.

Dozens of states have experienced attempts to access those registries, officials said, and roughly 90,000 of Illinois' voter records were stolen by hackers, though no data was altered in the system.

The US government took the unprecedented step Friday of publicly blaming the Russian government for hacking into Democratic Party-affiliated groups in an effort to meddle in the election.

DHS Secretary On Department's Election Cybersecurity Services

Homeland Security Today, October 11, 2016

Thirty-three state and 11 county or local election agencies have asked the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) about its cybersecurity services.

With a month "to go before the November 8 election, we encourage other election agencies to do the same," DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson said on the heels of the Office of Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) Director James Clapper having jointly announced with DHS that Intelligence Community (IC) analysts and investigators are very confident the Russian government directed the recent compromises of emails from US persons and institutions, including US political organizations like the Democratic National Committee, and, perhaps, Democratic Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton's admittedly unsecured and grossly mismanaged private home server on which she kept a variety of highly classified materials.

"Our services include cyber hygiene scans on Internet-facing systems, as well as risk and vulnerability assessments," Johnson said, noting, "We can conduct cyber hygiene scans remotely, and provide state and local election officials with a report identifying vulnerabilities and recommendations to improve online voter registration systems, election night reporting systems, and other Internet-connected election systems."

"Time is a factor," Johnson emphasized Monday. "There are only 29 days until election day, and it can take up to two weeks from the time we receive authorization to run the scans and identify vulnerabilities. It can then take at least an additional week for state and local election officials to mitigate any vulnerabilities on systems that we may find."

"Increasingly, the nation's election infrastructure leverages information technology for efficiency and convenience. And like other systems, reliance on digital technologies introduces new cybersecurity risks. However, the diverse and dispersed nature of our election infrastructure provides inherent resilience and presents real challenges to a coordinated, significant incident having an impact on election results," DHS National Protection and Programs Directorate Office of Cybersecurity and Communications Assistant Secretary Andy Ozment told a House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Information Technology last month.

Ozment said, "Our National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center (NCCIC) helps stakeholders in federal departments and agencies, state and local governments, and the private sector to manage their cybersecurity risks. Consistent with our long-standing partnerships with state and local governments, we are working with election officials to share information about cybersecurity risks and to provide voluntary resources from the department upon request."

"Recent news reports have mentioned cyber incidents in several states this year related to election infrastructure, specifically voter registration databases. Our NCCIC has shared actionable information about these incidents through direct outreach to state and local governments and through the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC), to enhance situational awareness and provide election officials with the information needed to protect themselves from similar incidents," Ozment said. "Importantly, none of the reported incidents contain indications of malicious activity that would impact the ability of voters to cast their ballots."

Ozment told lawmakers that, "Addressing cybersecurity challenges such as these is not new for our department. At the NCCIC, we have three sets of cybersecurity customers: federal civilian agencies; state local, tribal, and territorial governments; and the private sector. The NCCIC has three lines of business to support these customers: information sharing, bet practices, and incident response. Support to state and local customers, such as election officials, is part of the NCCIC's daily operations."

To request cybersecurity assistance, contact the Department of Homeland Security at SLTTCyber@hq.dhs.gov.

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

Federal Government Is Running Out Of Funds To Detain Illegal Immigrants

Shortfall in Homeland Security money for detentions and monitoring of illegal immigration is expected soon

By Devlin Barrett

Wall Street Journal, October 11, 2016

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

CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

Cross-Border Killing Of Mexican By Border Patrol

By Rob O'Dell

Arizona Republic, October 11, 2016

Teenager was shot to death in Juarez, Mexico, in June 2010

Case could have an impact on other cross-border shootings in civil courts

Department of Justice said the evidence was insufficient to prosecute agent

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear a case to determine if the family of Mexican teenager who was killed by a Border Patrol agent firing into Mexico has a constitutional right to sue the agent in the United States.

The Supreme Court announced Tuesday it would hear the case for this session, which began earlier this month.

Sergio Adrian Hernandez Guereca was killed in Juarez, Mexico, in 2010 by Border Patrol Agent Jesus Mesa Jr.

Mesa fired at the unarmed 15-year-old as he peered out from behind a train trestle in Mexico. Mesa was in the United States when he fired the deadly shot.

A final decision by the Supreme Court could provide a definitive ruling whether those who are injured or killed by Border Patrol agents while in Mexico can sue for damages in the United States.

There have been at least six such cases since 2010, including the killing of 16-year-old Jose Antonio Elena Rodriguez. The 16-year-old was shot 10 times by border Agent Lonnie Ray Swartz who fired through the border fence into Nogales, Mexico, in 2012. The family's civil suit is currently on appeal at the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.Border game turns deadly

On June 7, 2010, in Juarez, Sergio and other youths had been running back and forth across the dry bed of the Rio Grande playing a game that involved touching the metal fence on the U.S. side of the international border. To touch the fence, they ran across the dry concrete-covered riverbed that divides the two countries. The Federal Bureau of Investigation and Customs and Border Protection said the border agent Mesa fired in self-defense from the U.S. side after he was surrounded by rock throwers.

But several cellphone videos taken from a nearby bridge later surfaced.

They show a different story.

Mesa wasn't surrounded. He was in the culvert trying to intercept four youths running back to Mexico across the riverbed, grabbing one as the others fled.

In one video, some youths can clearly be seen making throwing motions. But Guereca is not among them. He's visible, peeping out from behind a pillar beneath a train trestle. He sticks his head out; Mesa fires; and the boy falls to the ground, dead, after being struck near the eye.

The Department of Justice said the evidence was insufficient to prosecute Mesa on criminal or civil charges. The Arizona Republic's reporting was cited in the petition to the Supreme Court to hear the case.Family files civil suit

Guereca's family filed a civil suit against the agent. It was dismissed by a Texas federal District Court judge, who said the court lacked jurisdiction since the victim wasn't a U.S. citizen and his death took place on foreign soil. The family appealed and a three-member panel of the the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the family had a right to sue the agent.

In the 2-1 decision, the court used harsh language to describe Mesa's conduct.

"If ever a case could be said to present an official abuse of power so arbitrary as to shock the conscience, the Appellants have alleged it here," the ruling stated.

The court said the family could sue under the Fifth Amendment. The constitutional protection applies along the border because it is an area similar to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, which is not a de facto part of the U.S. but is a location where the U.S. projects "hard power," with a heavy presence of armed federal agents.

Not giving constitutional protections would create "zones of lawlessness" where agents could move in and out of constitutional protections, the ruling said.

That ruling was mostly overturned by the full 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, which upheld the District Court judge's original ruling. The original two judges reversed themselves in the unanimous en banc ruling of all the court justices. They agreed with the full court that the constitutional rights of Guereca and his family were not clearly established in 2010 when the shooting occurred. The case was then appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Supreme Court Takes Up Appeal Of Shooting At US-Mexico Border

By Lydia Wheeler

The Hill, October 11, 2016

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear an appeal from the parents of an unarmed Mexican teenager who was shot to death from across the U.S.-Mexican border by a U.S. border patrol agent.

The case, Hernández v. Mesa, was one of three the court added to its docket Tuesday afternoon. It centers on 15-year-old Sergio Hernández, who was shot to death in 2010 by border patrol agent Jesus Mesa while playing a game with his friends, in which they dared each other to run up and touch an 18-foot fence along the U.S. boarder.

The Fifth Circuit, which reviewed the case with a full panel of judges, ruled that Hernández's parents could not sue Mesa under the Fourth Amendment because Hernández was "a Mexican citizen who had no 'significant voluntary connection' to the United States" and "was on Mexican soil at the time he was shot."

Supreme Court To Decide Whether U.S. Border Patrol Agent Can Be Sued For Shooting Mexican Teenager

By David G. Savage

Los Angeles Times, October 11, 2016

The Supreme Court agreed Tuesday to decide whether a U.S. Border Patrol agent can be sued for shooting and killing a Mexican teenager who was playing with friends in the concrete culvert that separates El Paso, Texas, from Juarez, Mexico.

The shooting of an unarmed 15-year-old named Sergio Hernandez provoked outrage in Mexico in 2010 and set off a prolonged legal dispute over the reach of the U.S. Constitution.

At issue is whether the 4th's Amendment's ban on unreasonable seizures and the unjustified use of deadly force stops at the U.S. border or extends to border areas patrolled by U.S. agents.

Critics long have accused the Border Patrol of using lethal force with impunity, and the court could impose limits on the alleged abuses for the first time.

The appeal to the Supreme Court cited a Los Angeles Times story last year on how the Border Patrol had absolved itself and its agents in dozens of cases of lethal force.

In cases involving Guantanamo Bay prisoners, the justices ruled that the Constitution's protection for habeas corpus extended to alleged foreign terrorists who were held at the U.S. Naval Station in Cuba.

Lawyers for the parents of the slain Mexican teenager argue that the Constitution's protections against excessive force should extend to the border area where U.S. agents patrol.

Hernandez "was killed in a culvert the U.S. officials patrol and effectively control," they wrote in their appeal to the high court.

Last year, the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals tossed out the parents' suit against Border Patrol agent Jesus Mesa Jr.

on the grounds that Hernandez was a Mexican citizen "who was on Mexican soil at the time he was shot."

The Supreme Court weighed whether to take the case for nearly a year.

Last spring, the Justice Department urged the court to deny the appeal and argued that Mesa, the Border Patrol agent, was immune from being sued because he was doing his duty as a sworn law enforcement officer.

But on Tuesday the justices announced they would hear the case and issue a ruling in Hernandez vs. Mesa.

The case stems from the summer of 2010, when Hernandez and three friends "were playing a game in which they dared each other to run up the culvert's northern incline, touch the U.S. fence and then scamper back down to the bottom," the parent's lawyers said in their appeal.

The boys were not trying to sneak into the U.S. and they chose a spot "in plain view" near a busy border crossing, they said.

But when Agent Mesa arrived on a bicycle, the boys ran. He drew his weapon and shot the 15-year-old in the head. They were only 60 feet apart, but Mesa was on the U.S. side of the border and the dead teenager was on the Mexican side.

The next day, the FBI released a statement saying Mesa had acted in self-defense after the boys "began to throw rocks" at him. But cellphone videos of the incident showed the boys were not throwing rocks.

The Justice Department looked into the matter but closed its investigation a year later without taking action.

Steve Shadowen, a lawyer representing the Hernandez family, said the case represents "a very fundamental principle of international human rights law and of our national law. And that is, the executive branch cannot take innocent civilian life without judicial review. That's the very meaning of the rule of law."

Separately, the court said it would hear the government's bid to halt a long-running lawsuit against former U.S. Atty. Gen. John Ashcroft and other top officials from the George W. Bush administration over the detentions of several Muslim men after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

The Justice Department says these officials are immune from such claims, but a divided U.S. appeals court in New York said the suit may proceed.

Only six justices will hear the case. Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan said they had withdrawn, apparently because they were involved with some aspect of this case in the past.

The court's ninth seat has been empty since the death of Justice Antonin Scalia in February.

Times staff writer Joseph Tanfani contributed to this report.

Supreme Court To Hear Mexico Border Shooting Case

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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

Supreme Court Will Hear Appeal In Cross-border Shooting

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court has agreed to hear an appeal from the family of a Mexican teenager who was killed when a U.S. Border Patrol agent fired across the border from Texas into Mexico.

The justices on Tuesday stepped into a case about the rights of people who are harmed by American authorities on foreign soil to have their day in U.S. courts.

The federal appeals court in New Orleans ruled that the parents of 15-year-old Sergio Adrian Hernandez Guereca could not sue the agent who killed him in 2010.

The Obama administration, while calling the death tragic, urged the justices to stay out of the case.

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Visa Overstays Get Short Shrift In Border Security Debate

By Elliot Spagat

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

SAN DIEGO (AP) — More than 20 years had elapsed since the U.S. government estimated how many people entered the country legally and overstayed their visas. The updated numbers, finally published in January, were sobering.

The Homeland Security Department said 527,127 people who were supposed to leave the country in the 2015 fiscal year overstayed, more than the population of Atlanta. And that was only those who entered by plane or ship, not on land.

To put that in perspective, the Border Patrol made 337,117 arrests of people entering the country illegally during the same period, nearly all on the border with Mexico. More people overstayed visas than were caught crossing the border illegally.

An estimated 40 percent of the 11.4 million people in the U.S. illegally overstayed visas, a crucial but often overlooked fact in the immigration debate. That percentage may grow as India and China replace Mexico as the largest senders of immigrants to the United States. Mexicans have long entered illegally through deserts of California, Arizona

and Texas but the absence of a shared border makes that route unlikely for Asians.

Overstays accounted for about 1 percent of 45 million visitors on business and tourist visas from October 2014 to September 2015, according to the long-awaited Homeland Security report. Canada occupied the top slot for overstays, followed by Mexico, Brazil, Germany and Italy. The United Kingdom, Colombia, China, India and Venezuela rounded out the top 10.

The Pew Research Center said last year that more Mexicans were leaving the United States than coming, ending one of biggest immigration waves in U.S. history. Lack of jobs for unskilled labor after the Great Recession is widely cited as a reason but border enforcement played a part.

The Border Patrol more than quintupled to 21,444 agents in 2011 from 4,028 in 1993. The U.S. erected fences along about 650 miles of border with Mexico, nearly all of it in the final years of George W. Bush's administration. Last year, Border Patrol arrests — one gauge of illegal crossings — fell to the lowest level since 1971.

About five years ago, the busiest corridor for illegal crossings began shifting from Arizona to South Texas, where roughly two of every three apprehended are from countries other than Mexico. Large numbers of women and children from Central America turned themselves in to U.S. authorities, triggering lengthy proceedings in clogged immigration courts. Images of children crammed into Customs and Border Protection holding cells made big news in 2014.

"We weren't chasing people. People were walking up, looking for someone in a green uniform," said Customs and Border Protection Commissioner R. Gil Kerlikowske. "There were smugglers that would call 911 and say, 'Hey, we got some people coming across.' It was a border management issue, not a border security issue ... Do you have health care personnel? Do you have food? Do you have clothing?"

The government has taken steps to better track overstays, but it's a tall order without a good checkout system. Airports weren't designed to inspect visitors when they leave. The U.S. and Canada have exchanged names of people from third countries who enter on their shared border since 2013, but Mexico generally doesn't track who enters by land.

Congress has long pressed for biometric screening such as fingerprints, facial images or eye scans on departing visitors, but financial and logistical challenges have been enormous.

"It's tough because we just don't have the infrastructure," said Jim Williams, a former Homeland Security official who oversaw efforts to introduce biometric screening from 2003 to 2006. "It's an open door. You (should) treat it like a house. You want to let people in you trust and you also want to know if they ever left."

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson pledged to have biometric checks on departing visitors at the busiest airports by 2018. But the ambitious target will likely fall to his successor.

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Crossing The Line: Yes, Border Officials And The FBI Can

Salon, October 11, 2016

Amid nationwide protests against police killing black people, these days law enforcement officials are eager to insist that they do not condone racial bias. But while the Obama administration has taken the lead in cracking down on local abuses, it allows FBI agents and border officials broad leeway to profile based on race, religion and national origin when it comes to recruiting informants and policing arrivals.

The rules are complicated, but a closer look reveals a number of startling loopholes.

In 2014, the Department of Justice announced a ban on federal law enforcement profiling based on race, religion and other factors. But it exempted "interdiction activities in the vicinity of the border, or to protective, inspection, or screening activities." That includes the Transportation Security Administration and Customs and Border Protection, which runs screening at airports and land ports of entry and patrols the border.

What's more, the guidelines still allow the FBI and other agencies to target people based on factors like race, religion and national origin under many circumstances — including for recruitment as informants. Targeting, say, Muslims as potential informants might seem benign. In reality, it can allow for invasive questioning and disruptive infiltration.

Muslims frequently complain of harassment by Customs and Border Protection officers at airports who interrogate them about the particularities of their religious beliefs, and Hispanics complain of invasive searches and interrogations in the vast border region with Mexico. Last week The Intercept reported that "CBP assists the FBI in its efforts to target travelers entering the country as potential informants, feeding the bureau passenger lists and pulling people aside for lengthy interrogations in order to gather intelligence from them on the FBI's behalf."

The investigation, based on government documents obtained by The Intercept, strongly suggests that officials are profiling airline passengers based on religion and national origin. People frequently complain that CBP questions them about religion, according to Hugh Handeyside, an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union's National Security Project.

"Those people we hear from are uniformly Muslim," he told Salon.

The border carveout, according to The Washington Post, resulted from lobbying by the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees CBP. According to Handeyside, the homeland security agency is now developing its own in-house guidelines that would govern CBP officials. But it's unclear if and when they will be released.

In an email, CBP spokesman Dan Hetlage said, "No announcements have been made at this time" and did not answer other questions, including ones to simply confirm that new guidelines are indeed being drafted. The FBI did not respond to a request for comment on its use of religion and race in recruiting sources by press time.

While the guidelines state that biased policing is counterproductive and "ineffective," the carveout for what the government deems to be its most important cases "is a wink to law enforcement" that the opposite is true, said Michael German, a former FBI agent who specialized in domestic terrorism and covert operations.

The 2014 guidelines replaced those issued in 2003. According to German, now a fellow with the Brennan Center for Justice's liberty and national security program, its "loopholes basically swallowed the rule they were so broad."

"Unfortunately, rather than make a clear ban on racial profiling without loopholes, the 2014 guidance — while it expanded the types of groups that could no longer be profiled in a positive way — it actually retained the loopholes albeit with much more complex language which in my experience," German said. "Having a rule that takes pages and pages and paragraphs to explain what it prohibits and what it allows is only going to create more error and abuse."

Last year I reported on CBP abuses at the border and the agency initially insisted that "as a matter of DHS and CBP policy, [it] does not racially profile." Pressed as to why they received a carveout, an official suggested that I ask the Department of Justice. Speaking on the condition of anonymity, one CBP official finally told me that race and nationality could be factors, just not the sole factor, in its enforcement work.

As for the targeting of Muslims for recruitment as informants detailed by The Intercept, that appears to be authorized by not only the 2014 provision exempting border enforcement from the profiling ban but also by another stating that "law enforcement officers may use a listed characteristic in connection with source recruitment."

The documents obtained by The Intercept, Handeyside wrote in an email, "reinforce our concerns that the DOJ Guidance permits the FBI to target minority communities for recruitment and use of informants. This practice is constitutionally suspect and stigmatizes entire communities instead of focusing on individualized evidence of criminal activity."

In one blockbuster case, an informant named Craig Monteilh, a convert to Islam, has said he was paid by the FBI to infiltrate and surveil mosques in the Los Angeles area and target Muslims for recruitment as informants. According to a lawsuit filed against the FBI, two agents repeatedly discussed with Monteilh "obtaining new informants within the Muslim community, primarily by getting information on potential informants that could be used against them if they refused to inform — such as immigration issues, sexual activity, business problems, or crimes like drug use."

The agents allegedly instructed Monteilh "to pay attention to people's problems, to talk about and record them, including marital problems, business problems, and petty criminal issues," and "on several occasions talked about different individuals that they believed might be susceptible to rumors about their sexual orientation, so that they could be persuaded to become informants through the threat of such rumors being started," according to the lawsuit.

The case, said ACLU of Southern California attorney Peter Bibring, shows that the abuses in the recruitment of informants can be just as damaging as abusive criminal investigations. This is precisely because law enforcement is "looking for 'good guys' not 'bad guys,'" as the Intercept reported. To convince a "good guy" to inform, promises and threats might come in handy.

"The problem with trying to pressure people into becoming informants is that law enforcement looks for information they can use as leverage even if they have no reason to believe that somebody's involved in criminal activity," said Bibring. "And so the process of seeking informants ends up treating ordinary law-abiding people as criminal suspects."

In recent years, the FBI has been repeatedly accused of using placement on the no-fly list to pressure people to inform. Similarly, agents appear to suggest to immigrants that they can "help with their legal status in exchange for information," The Intercept reported. It's perhaps not surprising that FBI agents might believe that such a fishing expedition would pay off, given that that agency training materials have in the past presented average Muslims as likely to sympathize with terrorism and other such stereotypes.

The Monteilh case points to other possible loopholes in the 2014 profiling guidelines.

One section authorizes profiling in "activities other than routine or spontaneous law enforcement activities," which would include investigations. It states that in these circumstances, "Federal law enforcement officers may consider race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity only to the extent that there is trustworthy information, relevant to the locality or time frame, that links persons possessing a particular listed characteristic to an identified criminal incident, scheme, or

organization, a threat to national or homeland security, a violation of Federal immigration law, or an authorized intelligence activity."

If the FBI believes that "Southern California" qualifies as a locality and Islamist terrorism broadly defined counts as "a threat to national or homeland security," then perhaps these guidelines, which ostensibly bar religious profiling, in practice actually permit the blanket surveillance of mosques across the country's second largest metropolitan area.

"Some of the language is so broad," said German. "A threat to national and homeland security," he said, "could be interpreted in any sort of way." And the authorization of profiling if it is linked to "an authorized intelligence activity," he said, is "simply circular." If the mass surveillance of Southern California mosques is an authorized intelligence activity, then the profiling conducted during the operation would then be as well.

The lawsuit, filed by the ACLU of Southern California and the state's chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations on behalf of Muslims plaintiffs, is now before a federal appeals court after it was thrown out by a lower court judge in response to a government claim that it would jeopardize state secrets.

The operation allegedly ended only when local Muslims reported to community leaders that Monteilh had claimed he had a religious duty to commit violence and that he had access to weapons. One leader, in turn, informed the FBI and instructed the others to contact the local police. Monteilh, after all, looked suspicious.

TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Cramer: TSA — Stop Samsung Galaxy Note 7 Phones From Getting On Planes

CNBC, October 11, 2016

CNBC's Jim Cramer said he was fearful to fly on a plane Tuesday following Samsung's announcement that it has permanently ended production and sales of its Galaxy Note 7 due to reports that some of its replacement devices were catching fire.

Last week, a report said that smoke emitting from an overheated Samsung device led to the evacuation of a Southwest Airlines flight in Louisville, Kentucky. The owner of the device told The Verge it was a replacement Note device.

Samsung said Tuesday that it was asking all carrier and retail partners to stop sales and exchanges of the Note 7 while it investigates the phone's battery problem.

Cramer on Tuesday compared the Samsung devices to a "shoe bomber" and said he would be nervous to fly.

"[Transportation Security Administration], please stop it," Cramer said on "Squawk on the Street." "Stop this phone from coming on our damn planes."

He added that flight passengers should report immediately if they see a person with an activated Note device. "If you see something, say something," Cramer said.

Samsung's shares closed over 8 percent lower after the company announced its plan. Shares of Apple closed 1.74 percent higher on Monday.

Bolt Cutters Expose Vulnerability Of North America's Oil Pipeline Grid

Reuters, October 12, 2016

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FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Obama Declares Disaster In South Carolina After Hurricane Matthew

By Eric Walsh

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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HUD Secretary Julian Castro To Speed Hurricane Matthew Relief In 3 States

By Tony Pugh

McClatchy, October 11, 2016

WASHINGTON – Julián Castro, Secretary of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, said Tuesday his department will expedite federal disaster assistance for North Carolina, Florida and Georgia to help homeowners and low-income renters who fled their homes due to Hurricane Matthew.

President Obama already issued disaster declarations for 24 counties in the three states: Brevard, Duval, Flagler, Indian River, Nassau, St. Johns, St. Lucie and Volusia Counties in Florida; Bryan, Camden, Chatham, Glynn, Liberty and McIntosh Counties in Georgia and Beaufort, Bladen, Columbus, Cumberland, Edgecombe, Hoke, Lenoir, Nash, Pitt, and Robeson Counties in North Carolina.

The declarations allow HUD to offer foreclosure relief assistance and other services to certain families who reside in those counties.

The new assistance efforts include include a 90-day moratorium on forecoclsures; allowing states to redirect federal Community Development Block Grant funding for

housing and other services; having the Federal Housing Administration insure mortgages for storm victims who lost their homes and providing federally guaranteed loans to state and local governments for housing rehabilitation, economic development and repairing public infrastructure.

"Today, our collective thoughts and prayers are with those who are now facing the painful process of recovering from this storm," said Castro. "As our sister agencies assess the damage and respond to the immediate needs of our citizens, HUD will offer any assistance possible and stands ready to support the longer term housing recovery efforts."

For more information about HUD diaster relief efforts, go to http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/info/disasterresources

Hurricane Plunges A North Carolina Town's Future Into Doubt

By Jess Bidgood And Alan Blinder

New York Times, October 11, 2016

FAIR BLUFF, N.C. — Under a clear twilight sky, well after Hurricane Matthew broke up and moved offshore, this tiny town was drowning.

Homes were submerged and deserted after officials evacuated about 400 people by boat and by truck, and Main Street was a canal of waist-high water.

Frank Horne, 79, drove a large tractor slowly through the water inundating the lovingly maintained main drag. Most of the awnings and street lamps were eerily intact, even as merchandise and storm debris floated through businesses like the Ellis Meares & Son hardware store and community pillars like the town hall. At the Ford dealership, every vehicle was partly underwater.

"My granddaughter has a beauty shop right up on the right," Mr. Horne said grimly, pointing toward Carolina Class Salon. "If that hardware store goes, the town's gone. That's the only thing holding us."

Hurricane Matthew's disastrous turn over North Carolina lashed some areas with more than a foot of rain and left behind swelling rivers and streets like rivers throughout much of the region south and east of Raleigh. By Tuesday, emergency crews in trucks, boats and helicopters had rescued more than 2,000 people from houses, porches and rooftops. Here in Fair Bluff, they included James Thomas, 57, who cannot walk because of a spinal cord injury, but was hoisted into a boat by firefighters on Sunday.

The upheaval had a special sting here in a town that has tried, with no shortage of grit and heart, to remake itself in the face of economic shifts that have sucked the life out of so many other small towns. Now, Fair Bluff's future looks even more challenging.

The extent of the damage here and in places like Lumberton, Fayetteville, Goldsboro and Pinetops sank in like a recurring bad dream on Tuesday after a storm that killed 17 people in the state and left commerce and daily life in some areas grinding to a halt.

"Certain parts of the state, we're going through recovery at this point in time," Gov. Pat McCrory said on Tuesday morning. "Certain parts of the state, we're still going through ongoing floods. And now, we have other parts of the state that are about to deal with some very serious circumstances, especially along two of our major rivers."

Mr. McCrory said that a state trooper had shot and killed a man on Monday after a "confrontation" — the authorities later said he had become "hostile" and displayed a handgun — in Lumberton, a site of major flooding north of here. He added that state officials were especially worried about residents farther northeast, in and near Goldsboro, Greenville and Rocky Mount. With flooding expected in the state throughout the week, he urged drivers to use caution.

"There are going to be conditions during the next 72 hours which will be extremely dangerous," Mr. McCrory said.

As residents evacuated and the authorities imposed curfews, officials issued advisories to boil tap water for drinking and school districts canceled days of classes. The airport in Greenville, a city of about 91,000, will be closed until Oct. 20.

"A lot of communities are dealing with terrible flooding," President Obama said on Tuesday night in Greensboro, where he addressed a campaign rally for Hillary Clinton. "Lives have been lost, and so the entire country has been thinking about North Carolina."

The flooding this month has evoked memories of Hurricane Floyd, which devastated parts of the state 17 years ago.

"The scars of the memories of 1999 are still there, and they're fresh," said Tony Sears, the city manager in Kinston, where the Neuse River is expected to approach a record height by Saturday. "And people are thinking back to how difficult of a time that was, and they're anticipating that this time."

In Fair Bluff, with a population of about 900, officials said the water rose further on Tuesday, to levels no one here had seen.

The town has a poverty rate of 33 percent, and its population has decreased over time, with older residents dying off and the young moving away. Some in the area wondered if all of the flooded businesses, most operated by longtime residents, would reopen.

"Because it's so small, income levels are so low here, it's going to be hard for them to justify putting the money back in to reopen their businesses," said Brenden Jones, a candidate for state representative from nearby Tabor City and

an owner of a funeral home in Fair Bluff that was spared from flood damage.

Fair Bluff was incorporated in 1873, with the Lumber River — currently inundating the town — and a railroad as its lifeblood, supporting logging and trade. By the 1970s, it was small but thriving, sustained by tobacco farms and warehouses, said Ken Elliot, 48, who like many people here grew up in a tobacco farming family.

When those tobacco farms began to go under, people found new work. Mr. Elliot became a firefighter and paramedic, and he spent last weekend rescuing his friends and neighbors from the encroaching floodwaters. Others found work in a new plant that makes vinyl building materials.

The town, which has a museum, built a visitors' center and a new river walk, earnestly seeking tourists. And locals fought tooth and nail to sustain a vital Main Street as the town's heart despite pressure from stores like Walmart and Family Dollar.

"That's what keeps this area above water," Mr. Elliot said, adding that the town would pull together once again.

Would everything reopen? "I'm not going to lie," Mr. Elliot said. "That's always a worry."

Others were confident the town would prevail. Kathy Ashley, 55, the vice president of the Chamber of Commerce and Mr. Horne's daughter, said that Fair Bluff was a 19th-century trading post and had shown a penchant for reinvention ever since.

"We got history," Ms. Ashley said. "When the water goes away, we're going to sweep it out and we're going to make our town better."

Critical to the floods' devastation was how surprising they were: Many people did not expect Hurricane Matthew to drop nearly as much rain as it did, and they prepared only for a small storm.

"This is a river town," said Rodney Singletary, 47, a behavior specialist at the county school who took a boat back to his house on Monday to pick up medication for a relative. "We're used to the river. We just don't think that it's going to look like that."

His family had evacuated on foot over the weekend, walking along the railroad tracks as water rose on both sides. "We had to get out of here," he said. "I have to say, I was a little frightened."

At a shelter at West Columbus High School in a neighboring town, Cerro Gordo, Fair Bluff residents described harrowing rescues and domestic crises. Twyla Denise King, 44, worried about the five dogs she had left at home in the evacuation. And Simon Stephens, 33, who called for a rescue of himself, his wife and his two children when the waters rose because he cannot swim, wondered what had become of his house and two cars.

"Words cannot describe it," said Mr. Stephens, a fabricator. "House paid for, cars, one car paid for, only $800 left on the truck."

So when it was time for a shelterwide meeting, Tom Guilliams of the Salvation Army opened with a prayer.

"We thank you for getting us out of the waters and onto the land," he said. "Be with us through the storm."

$120M U.N. Appeal Crucial For Haiti Recovery

By John Bacon

USA Today, October 11, 2016

A $120 million U.N. appeal for Haiti is crucial to fund life-saving recovery programs in the impoverished nation reeling from the destruction of Hurricane Matthew, aid groups said Tuesday.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon this week announced the appeal aimed at aiding an estimated 1.4 million Haitians struggling to meet basic needs. He said the money would finance crucial aide for three months. Almost $70 million would be earmarked for water, sanitation and medical efforts.

"Some towns and villages have been almost wiped off the map," he said. "Crops and food reserves have been destroyed.... A massive response is required."

Matthew stormed through the tiny nation of 10 million people last week, killing hundreds and destroying infrastructure. The lack of clean drinking water has generated fears of a cholera outbreak in a country that has already seen 27,000 cholera cases this year. Haiti was still recovering from a 2010 earthquake that killed 200,000 — more than 55,000 people were still living in tents and makeshift homes — before Matthew roared through.

"With the U.N. now making an appeal for $119 million, we're seeing how serious the world is taking the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew," said Mike Weickert, the head of the Haitian relief response for the aid group World Vision. "At this point, inaction could cost lives."

Save the Children also joined the U.N. in urging a quick response to the disaster wrought by Matthew.

"Right now our biggest concern is cholera. The number of cases is increasing with every new report," said Unni Krishnan, a physician and director of the group's emergency health unit in Haiti. "Flooding and contaminated water caused by the storm pose a huge threat to survivors including thousands of children."

Christy Delafield, spokesperson for the international aid group Mercy Corps in Haiti, said an infusion of U.N. cash could go a long way toward accelerating the recovery — if the money gets to the people quickly enough.

Delafield says recovery involves two phases: immediate needs and long term reconstruction of lives.

"First we need clean water, food, shelter, medicine" she said. "We need to get people back into their homes."

Phase two involves longer-term projects such as repairing infrastructure: Scores of bridges and roads remain blocked by massive debris or washed out. And planting, so that the perilous food shortage does not extend for years.

"This year's harvest is gone. Livestock is gone, farms are gone," she said. "If we don't get assistance to people in time to plant their crops this December and recover some form of income, the problems will become much more entrenched."

Ban said the U.N. is mobilizing across all fronts to support the Haitian people, their government and aid groups in pressing ahead with the recovery. He urged the the international community to show "solidarity and generosity."

"Needs are growing as more affected areas are reached," Ban said. "Tensions are already mounting as people await help."

Delafield and Weickert said their organizations are trying to stimulate the Haitian economy by paying local people in cash to clear roads, cook food in shelters or do other repair and recovery work.

"The best scenario is to employ Haitians to rebuild their lives and transform their own communities," Delafield said. "That's the most sustainable solution."

U.N. Makes Emergency Appeal For Haitians

By Ben Fox And David McFadden

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

LES CAYES, Haiti (AP) – People throughout Haiti's devastated southwest peninsula formed makeshift brigades Tuesday to clear debris and try to regain some semblance of their pre-hurricane lives as anger grew over the delay in aid for remote communities more than a week after the Category 4 storm hit.

A community group that formed in the southern seaside community of Les Anglais began clearing tree limbs from streets and placing them into piles while others gathered scraps of wood to start rebuilding homes destroyed by Hurricane Matthew.

Carpenter James Nassau donned a white construction helmet as he rebuilt a neighbor's wall with recycled wood, hoping to earn a little money to take care of 10 children, including those left behind by his brother, who died in the storm.

"My brother left five kids, and now I've got to take care of them," he said. "Nobody has come to help."

The scene repeated itself across small seaside and mountain villages dotting the peninsula, where people pointed out helicopters buzzing overhead and questioned why they haven't received any help.

Israel Banissa, a carpenter who lives near the small mountain town of Moron, said a Red Cross assessment team stopped outside his village to ask people questions but didn't leave any supplies.

"There's no aid that's come here," he said as he sawed wood to help rebuild his home and dozens of others. "I don't think they care about the people up here."

The U.N. humanitarian agency in Geneva has made an emergency appeal for nearly $120 million in aid, saying about 750,000 people in southwest Haiti alone will need "life-saving assistance and protection" in the next three months. U.N. officials said earlier that at least 1.4 million people across the region need assistance and that 2.1 million overall have been affected by the hurricane. Some 175,500 people remain in shelters.

The National Civil Protection headquarters in Port-au-Prince raised the official nationwide death toll to 473, which included at least 244 deaths in Grand-Anse. But local officials have said the toll in Grand-Anse alone tops 500.

Those who survived the storm still faced great challenges, including going days without food.

Elancie Moise, an agronomist and director for the Department of Agriculture in southern Haiti, said between 80 to 100 percent of crops have been lost across the southern peninsula.

"Crisis is not the word to describe it," he said. "You need a stronger word. It is much worse. There is no food for people to eat."

Food was slowly reaching remote communities, but there was also a growing need for medical supplies.

In the western seaside village of Dame Marie, 300 patients with festering wounds lay silently on beds at the main hospital waiting for medicine a week after the storm hit.

Among them was Beauvoir Luckner, a cobbler and farmer who walked 12 kilometers (seven miles) in three days after a tree fell on his house, crushing his leg and killing his mother. The leg might have to be amputated, but all doctors can do is clean his wounds because the hospital has run out of everything, including painkillers.

"There's no water, no antibiotics," Dr. Herby Jean told The Associated Press. "Everything is depleted. … We hear helicopters flying overhead, but we're not getting anything."

Meanwhile, Luckner lay on a mattress with no sheets, a bandage wrapped around his left leg.

"It took a lot of misery to get here and now that I'm here, there's still misery," he said.

Concern also was growing about an increase in cases of cholera, which has already killed roughly 10,000 people and sickened more than 800,000 since 2010.

Dr. Dominique Legros, a top cholera official at the World Health Organization, said Tuesday that the agency had decided to send 1 million doses of cholera vaccine to Haiti "as soon as possible" and said safe drinking water and treatment of those affected by the disease are top priorities.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told reporters in New York on Monday that a "massive response" was needed to help Haiti emerge from the storm's aftermath. He noted

that crops and food reserves were destroyed and that at least 300 schools have been damaged.

"At least 1.4 million people need assistance at this time," he said. "These numbers and needs are growing as more affected areas are reached. Tensions are already mounting as people await help."

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McFadden reported from Moron, Haiti. Associated Press writer Jamey Keaten contributed to this report from Geneva.

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US CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES

In An Immigration Court That Nearly Always Says No, A Lawyer's Spirit Is Broken

By Chico Harlan

Washington Post, October 11, 2016

ATLANTA — Elizabeth Matherne had been practicing immigration law for four years in the far northern suburbs of this city when a new group of people came pleading for help. A flood of Central American newcomers fleeing violence in their home countries were resettling in Atlanta, applying for asylum and jamming the six phone lines at her office. She'd never seen such demand for her services.

But Matherne only felt rattled. Atlanta was fast becoming America's toughest immigration court, she told the callers, a place where asylum applicants had "lotto number" odds. And that left Matherne with a brutal choice: She could either accept money from cash-strapped clients likely to end up with only debt and deportation orders, or she could stop and risk sabotaging her business — and her cause.

"A crisis of conscience," she called it.

This was the curse of being an immigration lawyer in America's least-forgiving place for new arrivals seeking asylum. Just as the massive flow of Central Americans into the U.S. immigration system was making Matherne's job more urgent, it was also making it increasingly impossible to do.

Across the nation, new migrants from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras were showing up in federal courts designed to hear immigration cases, telling stories about dire and sometimes life-threatening gang violence in their countries. But they did not easily meet the traditional standards for asylum, which is reserved for persecuted peoples. Lawyers working in immigration courts around the country said in interviews that the ambiguity surrounding these cases has opened the door for a more arbitrary version of immigration justice.

Although the immigration court system has long faced differences across its 58 venues — reflecting the backgrounds of immigrants seeking reprieve, the availability of lawyers to help and the views of local judges — the Central American surge has made those variations more stark. Over the past five years, the asylum grant rate — at 48 percent nationally, according to government data — has risen in New York from 76 percent to 84 percent, reflecting a more generous attitude toward not just Central Americans but also other immigrants.

In Atlanta, however, it has fallen from 23 percent to 2 percent.

As a result, in the South's largest city, Central Americans are running into a near-impermeable legal wall.

Before the surge of Central Americans began in 2014, immigration lawyers could choose from a range of cases. But in cities such as Atlanta, they are increasingly forced to take on Central American clients or none at all. That is because the newly arriving men, women and children have been moved to the front of the line by the Obama administration. Central Americans now account for almost half of immigration cases, up from a quarter in 2012. Many other cases have been pushed to 2019.

The Central American surge is changing the profile of border crossings. A decade ago, nearly 9 in 10 people apprehended at the border were Mexican. Today, although the overall number of -border-crossers has declined, 40 percent are from the three most violent countries in Central America.

Cases are typically heard in the court closest to where the migrants resettle, and for many -undocumented Central Americans, Atlanta is a popular destination for its job opportunities

and Spanish-speaking neighborhoods. A separate batch winds up having cases heard via video-conference in the Atlanta court while being detained in a facility in Ocilla, Ga.

For Matherne, practicing immigration law was a little rebellion against the conservative Southern culture in which she grew up. She was raised in Chamblee, Ga., and her father listened to Rush Limbaugh and talked about "illegals" taking over the country. She was pulled onto a different path, selected for a DeKalb County 1990s integration program and bused to a majority-black high school. "It just gave me an ability to put myself in other people's shoes that most white people don't have," Matherne said.

She came to view herself as a spunky fighter who defied conventions: pregnant at 21, married to a Marine veteran at 22, a law degree at 27. She became a public defender in Orlando at 28 and was seen by colleagues as the

most empathetic in the office — every criminal with a redeeming side.

"Elizabeth always thinks she needs to save people, and when she can't save them, it breaks her," said Brandy Alexander, a lawyer who worked with Matherne in Orlando.

Judges 'being so dismissive'

For years, Matherne had carved out a comfortable living by handling a variety of immigration matters — green-card applications, helping spouses stuck overseas, the occasional asylum seeker. The sign that something had changed came with the simple task of trying to spring clients, usually new arrivals held by immigration authorities, from detention.

For years, judges had granted bond without much thought, but that began to change in 2014, as Central Americans — ones that Matherne took on as clients — entered the system.

The soft-spoken Guatemalan whose land had been seized under threat. Denied.

A Salvadoran forced by gang members to perform oral sex at knifepoint, now with a scar across his face. Denied.

An anti-drug detective who defected from a unit in which other men were helping gangs. Denied.

They were men who had thought they had futures in the United States.

"You graduate law school, pass the bar; you think you're given a key to help the world," she said. "I genuinely believed these people could die if they're sent back. And you're talking to somebody" — the judge — "who is not listening."

Though the judges did not need to justify their actions, Matherne and other lawyers had explanations for them. One was legal: Unlike for those fleeing religious persecution, for example, the precedent supporting Central American asylum was shaky, particularly for politically conservative courts in the Southeast. The other was practical: Judges were seeing so many similar cases that they were afraid to open the floodgates. Indeed, the Obama administration had grown so concerned about the influx of Central Americans that it had taken steps of its own — building new detention facilities and carrying out deportation sweeps — to deter future migrants.

Some of the disparities in asylum rates reflect differences in the makeup of those walking through the door. In 2015, Central Americans were almost four times as likely to be denied asylum than granted it. Mexicans tended to lose at an even greater clip. Eritreans and Somalis, almost always fitting the traditional profile of an asylum seeker, fared better. Chinese immigrants, often wealthy enough to have lawyers, were among the most successful, including political dissidents and women who said they faced forced abortion because of the nation's one-child policy.

But differences among immigrants seeking asylum are only part of the reason for the national disparities, lawyers say. Lawyers in New York, Arlington, Va., and Boston — all places with generous approval rates — say they have also seen a massive surge in Central Americans seeking asylum. And they say they tend to win.

In Atlanta, the odds were never easy, but with the tough new reality, Matherne felt there was no conceivable way to reliably win. So for the first time in her career, she started pushing most clients away. She blocked out 10 to 20 hours every week for consultations. Yes, I believe you, she'd say. Your case might have merit in some parts of the country. But it probably won't work here.

The asylum seekers did not have many other options. Only a few dozen of Atlanta's 12,000 lawyers work in immigration. A study published last month found that having a lawyer boosted one's chances of success in immigration court more than fivefold but that only 47 percent of migrants in Atlanta's court had attorneys. That was lower than in any other big city.

"We just don't have the capacity," said Keren Sohahong-Kombet, one person on a list of lawyers that court administrators give to new arrivals.

Among the country's 277 immigration judges — appointed by the attorney general — five work in Atlanta. Compared with those in other cities, they tend to be older. All are men. Four have served since at least the George W. Bush administration. Two are former prosecutors with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency. Their reasons for rejecting most asylum claims remain unknown, and individual judges are prohibited from giving interviews. A staffer at Atlanta's Immigration Court referred all questions to the Justice Department's Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR).

An EOIR spokeswoman declined to specifically address the Atlanta situation but said in a statement that the office "takes seriously any claims of unjustified and significant anomalies in immigration judge decision-making and takes steps to evaluate disparities in immigration adjudications."

A personal crisis

With immigration law, Matherne could stand outside a detention center after a client was released and reunited with a family. Or she could spend dozens of hours preparing a client for an asylum case and rejoice as a judge agreed with her argument. She wrote about her best cases on her résumé. The results were in capital letters: "GRANTED."

But in the aftermath of the asylum surge, Matherne's business turned into what she called a "house of cards." She needed 150 new cases a year to cover her costs, including an employee. Instead, she had a growing folder of hundreds of cases marked "Consultations — Not Retained." Her caseload shrank, her revenue collapsed, and she cut her own salary to zero.

For the first time in her life, she spiraled downward.

Her husband, a tax accountant, could support the family's mortgage payments and groceries. But how could she justify the long hours when she wasn't making a cent? She was either working, she said, or home and too grumpy to talk. Her youngest son was struggling to read — something for which she blamed herself because she carved out so little time for him.

She argued with her husband. She stopped quilting and painting. She saw a psychologist.

"I felt dead inside," she said.

Most of all, she second-guessed her handling of the asylum cases. She didn't want to "con people" or file "bulls---asylum claims" or sustain a career on money from people who were wasting it. (Lawyers typically charge about $5,000 for an asylum case.)

But she also hated to back away.

"You perceive yourself as a fighter," she said, "and yet how are you so unwilling to take this fight?"

Turning away

Matherne was preparing a workshop on how to represent unaccompanied minors when she concluded something ominous: The Central American surge wasn't going away.

In the PowerPoint presentation she put together, she detailed what was happening: thousands of deportations, skyrocketing backlogs in court. Eighty-eight percent of court hearings were conducted in Spanish.

"I saw the storm clouds," Matherne said.

And she decided that her job had deteriorated beyond repair.

"So I started ripping the Band-Aids off," she said.

She talked with her husband. "Start over," he said. "Simple. Do something that will make you happy."

She started to tell callers she was no longer taking cases.

She enrolled for online classes to become a law librarian.

"Others keep going for years as zombies," she said. "I couldn't keep going if I didn't think I could win."

Matherne still shows up in court from time to time with her last clients.

But several months ago, Matherne asked the Immigration Court to remove her from an official list of lawyers who take cases. She had been on the list for six years, but when the court updated its pamphlet, the change was immediate.

Atlanta had one fewer immigration lawyer, and the phone calls stopped.

WikiLeaks And The $15 Minimum Wage

Politico, October 11, 2016

WIKILEAKS ROUNDUP: WikiLeaks released a second batch of emails Monday that, though unconfirmed, appear to be from Hillary Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta. Here's what we found:

Story Continued Below

ON THAT $15 MINIMUM WAGE: Neera Tanden, president of the Center for American Progress, told Podesta in an April 2015 email that "substantively, we have not supported $15 — you will get a fair number of liberal economists who will say it will lose jobs." (For some background, Clinton supports a $12 hourly federal minimum wage, but has said she'd sign a $15 minimum into law if such a bill came to her desk.) Tanden's remarks came after New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio sent the campaign an email about his "Progressive Agenda," which included a call to raise the federal minimum wage to $15 an hour and subsequently index it. In that same email chain, Jake Sullivan, the Clinton campaign's top foreign policy advisor, joked: "John Podesta (and the Red Army) want to support $15!"

Clinton's reluctance to support a $15 federal minimum worried labor leaders. In a Nov. 2015 e-mail, Nikki Budzinski, Clinton's labor outreach director, wrote that executive board members of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, the nation's largest healthcare union, "voiced concern around where the Secretary is on the minimum wage increase to $15 rather then [sic] $12." Budzinski added that she spoke to Peter Colavito, chief of staff at SEIU, who "reiterated that HRC's position on the minimum wage was not a part of their test for endorsement." Colavito, she said, informed her that "in the worst case scenario, their whip count for endorsement does not include 1199 votes." The email came four days before SEIU endorsed Clinton.

The documents suggest that the campaign remained sensitive to Clinton's position on the wage minimum earlier this year. In March 2016, Clinton chief strategist Joel Benenson expressed worry that a speech in which Clinton planned to voice support for the Fight for $15 movement sounded like she supported a $15 minimum wage. "I think we have to choose our language more carefully," he said. "Reporters will not cut us any slack on this." (And indeed, POLITICO did not the following month when Clinton altered her rationale for opposing a $15 minimum to neutralize Bernie Sanders.)

GOOD MORNING. It's Tuesday, Oct. 11 and this is Morning Shift, POLITICO's daily tipsheet on labor and employment policy. Send tips, exclusives, and suggestions to mlevine@politico.com, cschneier@politico.com, thesson@politico.com, and tnoah@politico.com. Follow us on Twitter at @marianne_levine, @CoganSchneier, @tedhesson and @TimothyNoah1.

MORE WIKILEAKS:

— ON THOSE LABOR UNION ENDORSEMENTS: In July 2015, Budzinski told Clinton campaign manager Robby Mook that there was "lots of AFL-CIO internal drama around the [American Federation of Teachers] endorsement." (AFT

was the first national union to endorse Clinton.) "The contingent of unions upset with AFT include: [the Amalgamated Transit Union], [the American Postal Workers Union], [Communications Workers of America] and Nurses." Budzinski described these unions as "on [her] Sanders watch list." (Budzinski's hunch wasn't wrong — all endorsed Sanders during the primaries.)

Another e-mail from Budzinski from June 2015 said that Mook had secured an endorsement from the International Association of Fire Fighters. In that instance there was a proverbial slip 'twixt cup and lip — the union decided not to endorse any candidate. Budzinski also mentioned talks with the National Education Association about an October endorsement (that did go according to plan). Budzinski warned of a "Northeastern Sanders contingent," and when Clinton's national political director Amanda Renteria asked which key issue Sanders was better on with the NEA, Budzinski replied: "I don't think it's one key issue. The guy is a socialist that's able to say things unaccountable to reality. It plays to the activists which I believe leadership is trying to manage."

— ON THE KEYSTONE PIPELINE: Clinton aides worried that her opposition to the Keystone Pipeline would anger North America's Building Trades Unions. In an Aug. 2015 e-mail, Budzinski warned that if Clinton put out a statement saying that she encouraged Obama to oppose the Keystone Pipeline, "politically, with the building trades, this would be a very dangerous posture." Podesta answered: "your [sic] in trouble girl." Renteria requested that Budzinski see a copy of the statement before the campaign sent it out. "Just want to make sure we don't catch anyone by surprise," she said. "We are so close to getting bldg trades and if we do this right, it will be ok even though they won't like it."

HILLARY'S BROTHER LOSES EB-5 CENTER: An EB-5 regional center run by Anthony Rodham, Hillary Clinton's youngest brother, was shut down Sept. 29 by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, according to a Monday blog post by the Center for Immigration Studies (a group backing lower immigration levels). The closing was confirmed in a posting on the USCIS website. Rodham could not be reached for comment.

The EB-5 program allows immigrants to apply for legal permanent residence if they create 10 American jobs or invest $500,000 in a U.S. commercial project. For applicants choosing the investment route, USCIS offers 863 approved "regional centers" to funnel the capital into business projects. The centers can be terminated if they fail to submit required information to USCIS or are deemed no longer to serve the purpose of promoting economic growth. A 2015 Department of Homeland Security watchdog report chastised DHS Deputy Sec. Alejandro Mayorkas for creating an appearance of favoritism toward the Virginia Center and Gulf Coast Funds Management, also run by Rodham.

TRUMP SAYS HE'S "BLUE COLLAR:" Never mind the private Boeing 757, the Fifth Avenue penthouse designed to look like Versailles, and the mansions in Palm Beach, Beverly Hills, Charlottesville, Va., and Bedford, N.Y. Donald Trump sees himself as a typical working American. Speaking at an event in Pennsylvania's Beaver County, Trump said: "I love blue collar workers, and I consider myself in a certain way to be a blue collar worker." Trump began his real estate career with what he's called a "small loan of a million dollars" from his father, Fred Trump, and, the Wall Street Journal reported in September, he had access to tens of millions more. More from the Daily News here.

TALES FROM THE APPRENTICE: The Associated Press reported last week that when Trump was a reality TV boss on "The Apprentice" he "repeatedly demeaned women with sexist language." (The Trump campaign denied it.) The AP story reportedly prompted "Access Hollywood" to forage for its now-famous Trump hot-mic audio, and rumors continue to swirl that the "Apprentice" archives contain similarly lewd or otherwise inappropriate Trump outtakes. Producer Mark Burnett, a Trump friend, has threatened to sue anyone who leaks them, but David Brock, who runs a network of pro-Clinton Democratic groups, has volunteered to pay the legal fees of anyone who does.

Now one such outtake has leaked — or rather, the transcript of an outtake. The Huffington Post's Sam Stein and Dana Liebelson report that during taping of a 2010 episode about the marketing of two country music singers, Trump objected to one, Emily West, because, well … let's let the Donald tell it. ""I assume you're gonna leave this off," Trump says, according to the transcript obtained by the HuffPo. "Don't put this shit on the show, you know. But her skin, her skin sucks, okay? I mean her skin, she needs some serious fuckin' dermatology."

Stein and Liebelson confirmed the gist of the conversation with Cindi Lauper, who appeared on the episode and was present. "Yes, of course," Lauper told them. "Of all people to talk about people's skin! What the hell is going on with his?"

NORTHWESTERN AVOIDS ROUND 2 AT THE NLRB: Last year the National Labor Relations Board declined to rule in a union representation case about whether football players who received grant-in-aid scholarships were employees. Shortly before that decision, an unfair labor charge was filed with the NLRB and the National Collegiate Athletic Association alleging that a prohibition in the school's football handbook barring players from posting potentially "embarrassing" content on social media violated the National Labor Relations Act. That charge was recently dismissed by the NLRB's general counsel.

A memo on the handbook case shows that immediately after the charge was filed Northwestern changed the language in the handbook. The memo, from the NLRB's

Division of Advice, advised Region 13 Regional Director Peter Sung Ohr not to issue a complaint because the school had brought the handbook into compliance with the National Labor Relations Act. Northwestern did this, the memo said, even though it maintained that the players were not employees, and therefore did not fall under the jurisdiction of the NLRA or the NLRB.

So why change the handbook? Jeffrey Hirsch, a law professor at the University of North Carolina School of Law (and former NLRB attorney) explained to Morning Shift that if the complaint had been issued and the handbook case found its way to the NLRB, the board might not have been so accommodating as it was last year. Northwestern "was doing everything they could to make sure the board did not rule on whether [football players] were employees," Hirsch said. Read the full memo here.

CEO FEATS DON'T INSPIRE NEW HIRES: Start a new job and you may get an earful about the founder's journey from cashier to chief executive. But such inspirational tales aren't particularly effective, according to a study in the October issue of the Academy of Management Journal. Employees who are fed them, it turns out, end up no more likely to embrace core company values than employees who are not fed them. What really stirs employees to be stellar team players are inspirational tales about the achievements of lowly co-workers.

NEW DADS CAN'T LEAVE THE OFFICE: More companies are offering new fathers paid paternity leave, but they don't always take it. From Bloomberg's Rebecca Greenfield: "Most organizations don't offer time off for new dads, and those that do give them about half of what new moms get, according to a new survey of more than 300 organizations from the Society of Human Resource Management. New moms receive an average of 41 paid days off, compared with 22 days for dads. When given the benefit, many men take some time off, but usually not more than 10 days. That's just half the time they're offered, on average, according to a survey by Boston College… The message is: Your time off is less important than time off for mothers." More here from Bloomberg.

COFFEE BREAK

— "Group sues Feds over labor violations reporting rule," from The Hill

— "Amid debate, all 2016 Nobel laureates are immigrants," from The Hill

— "Lawsuit: Wisconsin strip club's pay scheme unlawful," from USA Today

— "$1.6 million bill tests tiny town and 'bulletproof' public pensions," from the New York Times.

— "H-2A visa delays hinder Idaho ag," from Magicvalley.com

— "San Diego Caregivers To Get Back Wages, Damages," from KPBS

THAT'S ALL FOR MORNING SHIFT.

IMMIGRATION

Federal Government To Pursue Criminal Contempt Charge Against Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio

By Megan Cassidy

Arizona Republic, October 11, 2016

The U.S. Department of Justice officials have opted to pursue a criminal contempt charge against Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio for violating a federal court's orders in a racial-profiling case.

The move has few precedents in U.S. history, as prosecutors endorsed a federal judge's findings that the lawman intentionally violated the judge's orders.

Arpaio has not yet officially been charged. U.S. District Judge Susan Bolton asked the federal government to write an order to show cause, by Wednesday, for her to sign. That will serve as a charging document for the case to go forward against Arpaio only.

The announcement came Tuesday at the case's first criminal hearing in downtown Phoenix's federal court.

DOJ attorney John Keller said the government will continue to investigate additional allegations against Arpaio, two aides and a defense attorney for concealing evidence — and therefore obstruction of justice — but will not proceed with a criminal case at this time.

Keller said the statute of limitations may have run out for other criminal contempt allegations against Arpaio and the three others.

Bolton is not sure, and asked for a pause on the statute-of-limitations clock for all sides to discuss that issue.

In August, U.S. District Judge G. Murray Snow referred Arpaio, Chief Deputy Jerry Sheridan, Capt. Steve Bailey and defense attorney Michele Iafrate to be charged with criminal contempt of court.

Arpaio's charge stems from a December 2011 federal court order that barred his agency from enforcing federal immigration law. It is alleged that his deputies continued to do so, however, for at least 18 months thereafter.

The other defendants were not involved in this allegation, and therefore will not face immediate charges.

Largely because of Arpaio's age — he is 84 — Bolton ruled that a sentencing cap of six months is appropriate on the contempt charge.

A tentative date is set for Dec. 6. Arpaio's attorney asked for a jury trial.

The other allegations will run on a separate track.

Arpaio was not present at the Tuesday hearing.The racial-profiling suit

The criminal referral is the latest development in a case that began in 2007, when Manuel de Jesus Ortega Melendres, a Mexican tourist legally in the United States, was stopped outside a church in Cave Creek where day laborers were known to gather. Melendres, the passenger in a car driven by a white driver, claimed that deputies detained him for nine hours and that the detention was unlawful.

Eventually, the case grew to include complaints from two Hispanic siblings from Chicago who believed they were profiled by sheriff's deputies, and an assistant to former Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon whose Hispanic husband claimed he was detained and cited while white motorists nearby were treated differently.

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In May 2013, Snow found that Arpaio's law-enforcement practices illegally targeted Latinos. The federal judge ordered sweeping reforms for the office, but for the three years since, the case has continued to attract controversy.

Allegations arose that Arpaio and his aides had defied three of the judge's orders stemming from the case.

First, they were accused of violating a December 2011 injunction that banned deputies from immigration-based policing. Snow also learned of two separate instances involving the collection of video evidence in which his orders had been defied.

While Arpaio and his cohorts admitted violating three of Snow's orders, they insisted the missteps were unintentional. By law, intent could mean the difference between civil and criminal contempt.

Snow found cause for both.

In May, Snow found Arpaio and three of his aides in civil contempt for ignoring the three orders. The order was monumental though not unexpected, as Arpaio and Sheridan already had admitted as much.

It wasn't until August that Snow dealt the blow Arpaio and his attorneys had feared. Arpaio and Sheridan would be referred for charges of criminal contempt as well as perjury, for misstatements made on the stand. Bailey and Michele Iafrate, Arpaio's former defense attorney, also were referred for criminal prosecution, but only for contempt allegations.

Bailey and Iafrate are accused of trying to withhold evidence that was ordered to be turned over to the court.Protesters gather outside courthouse

Outside the courthouse, about 100 protesters gathered. They said they were there to call on the justice system to hold Arpaio accountable.

They rallied near a massive inflatable doll depicting Arpaio in a striped prison uniform.

The crowd started small until a group of students from high schools across Phoenix joined the protest. They held hands and protest signs. Others raised their fists in the air. They shouted: "This is what community looks like!"

Sagal Hassan, 16, said she joined the protest on her fall break to show unity among "brown and black people" who she argues have been racially profiled by Arpaio and the Maricopa County Sheriff's Department.

"I'm here to protest against Arpaio because he should be in jail," she said. "He's not above the law. I am tired of him harassing Latinos and intimidating the Latino community. He needs to be elected out of office."

As Hassan spoke, protesters behind her chanted in Spanish: "Que queremos? Justicia! Cuando? Ahora!" (What do we want? Justice! When? Now!)

Includes information from Republic reporters Dianna Náñez and Michael Kiefer.

Sheriff Joe Arpaio To Face Criminal Charges For Immigration Patrols

By Jacques Billeaud

Washington Times, October 11, 2016

Prosecutors said Tuesday they will charge Sheriff Joe Arpaio with criminal contempt-of-court for defying a judge's orders to end his signature immigration patrols in Arizona, exposing the 84-year-old lawman to the possibility of jail time.

The announcement in federal court sets in motion criminal proceedings against the sheriff less than a month before Election Day as he seeks a seventh term as Maricopa County sheriff. The 2016 election cycle has also seen Arpaio take a prominent role on the national stage, appearing alongside Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump on several occasions.

A judge previously recommended criminal contempt charges against Arpaio but left it up to federal prosecutors to actually bring the case. Prosecutor John Keller said in court that the government will bring charges, with the next step being a court filing possibly in the next day that's akin to a criminal complaint.

Arpaio could face up to six months in jail if convicted of misdemeanor contempt.

Arpaio lawyer Mel McDonald said the sheriff will not be arrested and no mugshot will be taken. He will plead not guilty by court filing and hopes to prevail before a jury.

"We believe the sheriff, being an elected official, should be judged by his peers," McDonald said.

The move is yet another key defeat for the sheriff who became a national political figure over the past decade by aggressively carrying out immigration patrols and attention-getting endeavors such as making prisoners wear pink underwear.

Following complaints by Latino drivers about racial profiling, a judge demanded that Arpaio stop the enforcement efforts. He was later found to have violated the order, causing it to morph into a contempt of court case.

Arpaio has acknowledged violating the order to stop the immigration patrols but insists his disobedience wasn't intentional.

County taxpayers have shelled out $48 million so far in the profiling case, and the costs are expected to reach $72 million by next summer.

U.S. To Seek Criminal Contempt Charge Against Joe Arpaio

By David Schwartz

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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

DIVIDED AMERICA: The Evolving Face Of US Immigration

By Josh Boak

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

RALEIGH, North Carolina (AP) — When Manasi Gopala immigrated to America, she finally got the chance to row crew.

As a child in India, she had dreamed of the sport from watching Olympic telecasts. Now, twice a week, she pulls a pair of oars as her scull glides along tree-lined Lake Wheeler, far from her birthplace of Bangalore.

Gopala is among throngs of educated Indians who have moved in recent years to North Carolina's tech-laden Research Triangle and other areas across America. A 39-year-old software developer, she became a U.S. citizen three years ago.

"America had given me the opportunity to pursue my own life," she said.

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EDITOR'S NOTE — This is part of Divided America, AP's ongoing exploration of the economic, social and political divisions in American society.

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Increasingly, the face of U.S. immigration resembles Gopala.

For all of Donald Trump's talk of building a border wall and deporting 11 million unauthorized immigrants who are mainly Hispanic — and for all of the enduring contention over illegal immigration — immigrants to the U.S. are now more likely to come from Asia than from Mexico or Latin America. And compared with Americans overall, immigrants today are disproportionately well-educated and entrepreneurial. They are transforming the nation in ways largely ignored by the political jousting over how immigration is affecting America's culture, economy and national security.

As of three years ago, Census figures show, India and China eclipsed Mexico as the top sources of U.S. immigrants, whether authorized or not. In 2013, 147,000 Chinese immigrants and 129,000 Indians came to the U.S., compared with 125,000 Mexicans. Most of the Asian immigrants arrived in the United States legally — through work, student or family visas.

Immigrants are also more likely now to be U.S. citizens. Nearly half of immigrants over the age of 25 — 18 million people — are naturalized citizens, compared with just 30 percent back in 2000, according to Census figures.

Simultaneously, more Mexicans without documentation are returning home. The number of Mexicans in the United States illegally tumbled nearly 8 percent in the past six years to 5.85 million, the Pew Research Center found. Border Patrol apprehensions, one gauge of illegal crossings, last year reached their lowest point since 1971.

With the share of U.S. residents born abroad at its highest level in a century, immigrants increasingly defy the stereotypes that tend to shape conversations on the issue. Consider: About 40 percent of Indian immigrants hold a graduate degree. Fewer than 12 percent of native-born Americans do. And earnings for a median Indian immigrant household exceed $100,000 — more than twice the U.S. median.

The result of this recent influx is that America's 40 million-plus immigrants more and more reflect the extremes of America's economic spectrum, from super-rich tech titans to poor agriculture workers.

The changes flash into view on a visit to the political swing state of North Carolina. The proportion of immigrants in the state's population has quadrupled from 1990 to nearly 8 percent. Similar trends have emerged in Georgia, Colorado, Oregon and Washington.

None of these states approaches the more than 20 percent share in California and New York where educated Chinese immigrants are largely concentrated. Yet the transformations are evident in a drive across the dense highways that connect North Carolina's Research Triangle.

Indian immigrants have put their distinctive stamp on this area. Their rising numbers have established a broad community that has made it easier for new arrivals to integrate than it was for prior generations. Asked how they have been received in the community, about a dozen Asian immigrants said they have generally been warmly accepted despite the national furor over immigration.

"Now, you come from India, you don't really have to know anything else," said Pranav Patel, a 57-year-old software developer. "The system is here to help you adjust. There are no real hardships."

When the Hindu Society of North Carolina celebrated India's independence day in August, one prominent outsider did show up: Gov. Pat McCrory, a Republican in a heated re-election campaign that has been fueled in part by a crackdown on illegal immigration.

"This is the best of America," he said, sharing the stage with a life-sized statue of Mahatma Gandhi. "This is the best of India. We work together. We learn together. We can pray together. We love family values together."

Americans' sentiments about immigrants have largely hardened along racial, political and demographic lines. Overall feelings toward immigrant workers remain negative. But sentiment has improved since 2006, possibly a sign that the growth of educated immigrants has begun to reshape attitudes, according to a Pew survey released this month.

Two-thirds of Republicans and 54 percent of whites said they think immigration harms U.S. workers. But a majority of Democrats, Hispanics and the college-educated said they felt immigrants made society better off.

By comparison, almost all economists view immigrants as helpful — even essential — for the nation's continued prosperity. Because of the aging U.S. population causing more retirements, most economists say immigrants are needed so that the workforce increases to sustain overall growth.

The anti-immigrant rhetoric has concerned Gopala. She feels fortunate to no longer be among the millions of foreigners still applying for U.S. residency.

"I got very lucky that my green card was processed when immigration wasn't a bad word," Gopala said.

"America had given me the opportunity to pursue my own life. On the day you're born in India, your life is written. But here, that is not true."

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US COAST GUARD

Buyers Beware: Historic Lighthouses Come With Costs

By Roger Schneider

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

PORT AUSTIN REEF LIGHT, Mich. (AP) — When Lou Schillinger and his volunteer cadre began restoring an 1890s lighthouse more than 2 miles off the Michigan shore in Lake Huron's Saginaw Bay, they first needed to remove 30 years' accumulation of gull and pigeon feces whose depth measured in feet rather than inches.

That was in the mid-1980s, when he reached an agreement with the U.S. Coast Guard to prevent the Port Austin Reef Lighthouse — his "Castle in the Lake" — from being dismantled and lost forever.

"That first summer my dad and I ran out there with a 14-foot rowboat and a 20-foot ladder because there was no access ladder and we just began shoveling manure," said Schillinger, 66, president of the Port Austin Reef Light Association, a nonprofit group that in 2013 took title of the property from the federal government. No keeper had lived in the brick building with its five-floor tower since 1952. The roof was gone.

"We shoveled diligently," Schillinger said. "I'd get friends out there, they would come out and volunteer and they'd show up for one day and they would never come back again because it was such a miserable job."

About 120 lighthouses no longer critical to the U.S. Coast Guard in 22 states and Puerto Rico have been acquired at no cost by government entities and nonprofits, or sold to private individuals eager to preserve the landmarks and maybe tap into their tourism potential since they became available under the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act of 2000. Upkeep was too expensive and their usefulness was in decline with the advent of GPS.

Winning bids have ranged from $10,000 for the Cleveland East Pierhead Light in Ohio to $934,000 for the Graves Light in Boston Harbor. More are auctioned every year, but buyers beware: Years of neglect, vandalism, limited access and hammering by the elements often make for labor-intensive money pits that are for neither the weak of heart nor stomach.

"People who are into this I believe have to have an internal fire, an internal passion, a conviction that these buildings and the history they represent are worth saving," said Terry Pepper, 68, executive director of the Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association.

Port Austin Light was built on a shallow reef. It's accessible only by boat when winds are light, otherwise waves are too choppy to dock and disembark. Pepper's association overcame similar access issues when it renovated a lighthouse on the 160-acre St. Helena Island, seven miles west of the Mackinac Bridge. It took about 20 years and $1.5 million to finish the job in 2005.

Nobody had lived in the 1870s lighthouse since 1922, making it a destination for partiers, scrappers and vandals, said Pepper. His association acquired the lighthouse before the 2000 act and also is restoring the Cheboygan River Front Range Light in Michigan.

"The roof had huge holes in it," Pepper said. "Somebody had lit a fire on the floor in one of the bedrooms on the second floor and embers from that fire dripped down to the first floor and started burning that floor also. Every single window in the lighthouse was gone. All the doors on the inside of the brick lighthouse were gone. Railings on the stairs were gone and the plaster inside the lighthouse had been kicked down."

Pepper estimates the group has spent $1.5 million and "untold thousands of hours of volunteer labor" restoring the St. Helena property, which must meet state and federal standards for historic preservation.

"We who are in this business, with this passion, have to be asking for money all the time," Pepper said, whether it's through grants, donations, selling memorabilia or offering Great Lakes lighthouse cruises.

Pepper is often contacted by prospective buyers because of his knowledge of lighthouses, particularly those in Michigan, where there are 129 — the most in the U.S.

"I will tell people if you end up spending $100,000 to get that lighthouse, that's a lot of money," Pepper said. "But $100,000 is the tip of the iceberg."

Onshore lighthouses are no bargain either.

A volunteer group spent about a decade and nearly $1.9 million to acquire and renovate North Point Lighthouse in Milwaukee. It opened to the public in 2007 and since has attracted more than 80,000 tourists. It has cost more than $1.1 million to run it, mostly paid through entrance fees and events, donations, fundraising and grants.

About 30 miles to the north, Port Washington is in the process of acquiring an 81-year-old light on its breakwater with plans to raise and spend $1.5 million for restoration. And that structure does not have living quarters.

Back on the Port Austin Reef Light, time is measured in decades, not years, of work. Schillinger and his crews put on a new roof. They installed new windows and oak doors, and replaced the chimney. Vandals have been constant. Last fall, they started putting in a dock for easier access by boats, but a nasty late November gale wiped out their work and they had to start over this year.

"We've invested close to half-a-million dollars in that property in time and material over the last 30 years and almost I would say 95 percent of it's all been out-of-pocket or donated time," said Schillinger. He estimated it will take three years and at least $1.6 million more in grants and donations to prepare it for tours and renters who want to experience the keeper's life.

"It's been really been kind of a labor of love for all community members here in Port Austin."

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Non-critical Lighthouses Go To Agencies, Nonprofits, Or Sold

Associated Press, October 10, 2016

More than 100 lighthouses that no longer are critical to the U.S. Coast Guard have been transferred to nonprofit groups and government entities at no cost or sold through public auction under the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act of 2000.

The General Services Administration first offers the lighthouse to the entities and nonprofits. If no qualified applications are received, the properties are sold.

As of February, 41 lighthouses have gone to nonprofits, 22 to local governments, three to state governments, eight to federal agencies and 45 were sold.

Here are the lighthouses in 22 states and Puerto Rico, and the type of transfer, with the gross proceeds for those sold, according to the General Services Administration. The list does not include two lighthouses far offshore in Lake Michigan that recently sold at auction but need to complete closing. The North Manitou Shoal Lighthouse went for $73,000 and White Shoal Lighthouse for $110,000.

ALASKA

Cape Decision Light, 2004, nonprofit

Five Finger Islands Light, 2004, nonprofit

Point Retreat Light, 2003, nonprofit

Sentinel Island Light, 2006, nonprofit

CALIFORNIA

Pigeon Point Light, 2011, state government

Point Pinos Light, 2006, local government

Point Sur Light, 2005, state government

CONNECTICUT

New London Harbor Light, 2009, nonprofit

New London Ledge Light 2014, nonprofit

Peck Pedge Light, 2015, public sale, $235,000

Saybrook Breakwater Light, 2015, public sale, $290,000

DELAWARE

Brandywine Shoals Light, 2013, nonprofit

Fourteen Foot Bank Lighthouse, 2007, public sale, $200,000

Harbor Of Refuge Breakwater Light, 2004, nonprofit

Liston Rear Range Light Delaware 2013, public sale, $22,003

Marcus Hook Light Station, 2010, public sale, $150,000

FLORIDA

Fowey Rocks Lighthouse, 2012, National Park Service

St. Augustine Light, 2002, nonprofit

GEORGIA

St. Simons Island Light, 2004, nonprofit

Tybee Island Lighthouse Complex, 2002, nonprofit

HAWAII

Molokai Light, 2006, National Park Service

ILLINOIS

Chicago Harbor Lighthouse, 2009, local government

MAINE

Baker Island Light, 2011, National Park Service

Boon Island Light, 2014, public sale, $78,000

Cuckold Island Fog Signal/Light Station, 2006, nonprofit

Goose Rocks Light Station, 2006, public sale, $27,000

Halfway Rock Light, 2014, public sales, $283,000

Little River Lightstation, 2002, nonprofit

Lubec Channel, 2007, public sale, $46,000

Moose Peak Light, 2012, public sale, $93,500

Petit Manan Light, 2006, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Ram Island Ledge, 2011, public sale, $190,000
Whaleback Ledge, 2009, nonprofit
MARYLAND
Baltimore Lighthouse, 2006, public sale, $260,000
Bloody Point, 2007, public sale, $100,000
Craighill Channel Lower Range Light, 2005, nonprofit
Hooper Island, 2009, nonprofit
Sandy Point Shoal Lighthouse, 2006, public sale, $250,000
Sharp's Island, 2008, public sale, $80,000
Thomas Point Shoal Light, 2004, local government
Turkey Point Light Station, 2005, state government
MASSACHUSETTS
Baker Island Light, 2014, nonprofit
Borden Flats, 2010, public sale, $56,569
Edgartown Light, 2013, local government
Gay Head Tower, 2014, local government
Gay Head Tower, 2015, local government
Graves Light, 2011, public sale, $933,888
Long Island Head Light, 2010, National Park Service
Minot's Ledge Light, 2014, public sale, $222,000
Straitsmouth, 2013, local government
MICHIGAN
Alpena Light, 2013, nonprofit
Charlevoix South Pierhead Light, 2013, local government
Cheboygan River Front Range Lighthouse, 2008, nonprofit
Detour Reef Light, 2004, nonprofit
Fort Gratiot Light Station, 2010, local government
Frankfort North Light, 2010, local government
Grand Haven Entrance and Inner Lights, 2012, local government
Gravelly Shoal Light, 2015, public sale, $16,000
Gull Rock Light, 2013, nonprofit
Harbor Beach Lighthouse, 2005, local government
Holland Harbor South Pierhead Light, 2010, nonprofit
Ile Aux Galet, 2015, public sale, $23,250
Ludington North Breakwater Light, 2008, local government
Manistique Light, 2006, public sale, $15,000
Manistee North Pierhead Light, 2011, local government
Manitou Island Light, 2004, nonprofit
Menominee North Pierhead Light, 2008, local government
Munising Station, Front/Rear Range Lights, 2002, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore
Muskegon South Breakwater Light, 2010, nonprofit
Muskegon South Pierhead Light, 2010, nonprofit
Ontonagon West Pierhead Light, 2014, nonprofit
Port Austin Light, 2013, nonprofit
Rock of Ages Light, 2013, National Park Service
Round Island Passage Light, 2014, public sale, $65,500
South Haven South Pierhead Lighthouse, 2012, nonprofit
Spectacle Reef Light, 2015, public sale, $43,575
St. James (Beaver Harbor) Light, 2005, local government
Stannard Rock Light, 2014, nonprofit
MINNESOTA
Duluth Harbor South Breakwater Inner, 2009, public sale, $31,000
NEW JERSEY
Great Beds Light, 2011, public sale, $90,000
Miah Maull Shoal Light, 2015, public sale, $90,000
Robbins Reef Light, 2011, nonprofit
Romer Shoal Light, 2011, public sale, $90,000
Ship John Shoal Light, 2012, public sale, $60,200
NEW YORK
Buffalo South Harbor Light, 2011, nonprofit
East Charity Shoal, 2009, public sale, $25,501
Esopus Meadows Lighthouse, 2002, nonprofit
Execution Rocks, 2009, nonprofit
Huntington Harbor Light, 2012, nonprofit
Latimer Reef Light, 2010, public sale, $225,000
Little Gull Island Light, 2012, public sale, $381,000
Orient Point Light, 2012, public sale, $120,000
Oswego Harbor West Pierhead (Oswego Outer Harbor), 2008, local government
Race Rock Light, 2013, nonprofit
Rondout Creek, 2002, local government
Stepping Stones, 2008, local government
West Bank Light, 2010, public sale, $195,000
NORTH CAROLINA
Frying Pan Light Tower, 2003, public sale, $85,000
Currituck Beach Light Tower, 2010, nonprofit
OHIO
Ashtabula Harbor Light, 2007, nonprofit
Cleveland East Pierhead, 2009, public sale, $10,000
Conneaut Harbor W Breakwater Light, 2011, public sale, $46,000
Fairport Harbor W Breakwater Light, 2011, public sale, $71,010
Toledo Harbor Lighthouse, 2006, nonprofit
PUERTO RICO
Cape San Juan Puerto, 2010, nonprofit
RHODE ISLAND
Conimicut Shoal Light, 2004, local government
Hog Island Shoal Light, 2007, public sale, $165,000
SOUTH CAROLINA
Charleston Light, 2008, National Park Service.
VIRGINIA
Newport News Middle Ground Light, 2005, public sale, $31,000
Smith Point Lighthouse, 2005, public sale, $170,000
Thimble Shoal Lighthouse, 2005, public sale, $65,000

Wolf Trap Lighthouse, 2006, public sale, $75,000
WASHINGTON
Grays Harbor (Westport) Light, 2004, nonprofit
West Point Light, 2005, local government
WISCONSIN
Kenosha N Pierhead Light, 2011, public sale, $17,000
Kewaunee Light, 2011, local government
Manitowoc Breakwater Light, 2011, public sale, $30,000
Milwaukee Breakwater Light, 2013, nonprofit
Sturgeon Bay North Pierhead Light, 2014, public sale, $45,500

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SECRET SERVICE

For Secret Service CIO, Cybersecurity Is The Mission

Federal Times, October 11, 2016

After 34 years in the Marine Corps and a short stint in the private sector, Kevin Nally still wanted to serve his country. As the former Marine Corps chief information officer, leading the U.S. Secret Service's IT management was a perfect fit.

Nally

— who was named Secret Service CIO in November 2015

— sat down with Federal Times Editor Aaron Boyd to talk about the immediate changes he made to set up the Office of the CIO for success, his goals for the future, and how IT and cybersecurity are integral to keeping our nation's leaders safe.

Q. What's been your main priority since you became CIO?

A.

The first priority when I got here on Monday the 16th of November was to take some time to assess the current situation within the Office of the CIO. I talked to some key stakeholders — probably about 22 individuals within the headquarters. I got some guidance from [Director Joseph] Clancy, [Deputy Director Craig] Magaw, [Chief Operating Officer George] Mulligan and then made the recommendation to move Information Resources Management Division, which was under [the Technical Security Division] TSD and not under the Office of the CIO.

Mr. Clancy basically said: "Tell me what you need to do to be successful as a CIO." I prepared a brief — probably in the December time frame — I briefed Mr. Clancy and the deputy and Mr. Mulligan and came up with a recommendation to move IRM underneath the CIO. In order to be a CIO, I needed the resources to do that and they concurred.

Q. Why was reorganizing IRM under the OCIO so important?

A.

The reason it was an issue is because the Office of the CIO had approximately eight to 10 people that worked within and they had not had a CIO for probably eight to nine months. To be an effective CIO you need the people and the resources to be a CIO, otherwise I had no control over it.

That's why the director said: "Tell me what you need to do to be a good CIO for the Secret Service and how can we get things better organized." And since they've done quite a bit of realignment within the headquarters previously to me getting here, that was the one thing I really needed to do to be a CIO.

Q. Was it just about headcount?

A.

It was about budget — the IT budget — the people and the assets. Part of that deal was that I needed complete oversight of all IT spending within the Secret Service, so [Clancy] granted me that. Then I recommended that you need one designated approving authority for all the FISMA systems within the Secret Service and he granted me that. So I had complete control over all the IT spending and I was the only DAA [designated approving authority] for the Secret Service and I had the people and the resources to be a CIO for Mr. Clancy.

The mission here is protection, investigations and national special security events, or as we refer to them, SSEs. To properly support those missions, I needed the assets and the people to better support those missions.

I'll give you a great example. I [had] just got back from New York and … the United Nations General Assembly start[ed] next week. My folks have been up in New York since early September and will be there probably until Oct. 4 setting in what I would refer to as a four-star joint task force headquarters. I look at Mr. Clancy as the four-star in charge of the Secret Service and this joint task force goes up there and supports this mission to support the United Nations General Assembly.

The Secret Service is in charge; I'm responsible for the communications and command and control aspect of the United Nations General Assembly. The reason we're in charge is because of the protection. But to put it in context, everyone that comes up to support the SSE works for the Secret Service. So we have the FBI, members from the Department of Defense, we have New York State Police, New York law enforcement, NYPD, New York Fire Department, Coast Guard, port authorities and various other components within DHS, for example Customs and Border Protection and ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] and Homeland Security investigators.

It's just a huge effort behind the scenes to support this SSE. And it feels good to go up there because 50 percent of my job is actually operational. The rest is policy and directives and strategic planning, etc., to support those missions of protection, investigations and the SSEs.

Q. Your position seems like a dual hat, where you are worried about internal operations here at the Secret Service but you also have to worry about the security of those IT networks wherever you go, at those events. As someone who has been in the tech world, how does your work at the Secret Service differ from other CIOs?

A.

Because we're operational. I would compare it to me being the Marine Corps CIO for the past five years. I had a saying in my office that there's nothing more important, 24/7, than taking a call from the field.

I get calls — which is part of my job and I enjoyed it — nights, weekends, etc., to either solve issues or provide guidance on the communications IT/cybersecurity concerns and issues. Easily 50 percent of my job is operational because, not only for the SSEs, but we're responsible for the national capital region, the vice president's residence, what we call the 18 acres for the uniformed division officers who protect the 18 acres around the White House. So communications has to be up, obviously, 24/7 and we do have a joint operations center in this building which I am responsible for as well for the communications and the IT infrastructure.

And cybersecurity plays 24/7 into that. We've got great people. We just finished an assessment of the network that — knock on wood — we're good. We're very conscious to include cybersecurity awareness and training and we have various programs to ensure and encourage people to do that.

This is why I feel it's a really great place to work for men and women — and to include men and women transitioning from the military. To me it's a paramilitary organization: It's operational, you get to deploy, as I call it — I've got 76 men and women deployed right now to New York and some additional to that preparing for the debates. It's just a great place to work because of the mission. And the people here, I'm extremely fascinated with because they're extremely mission focused.

Q. What major initiatives are you carrying over from the last CIO?

A.

There are three big projects: Joint Operations Center, or the JOC, upgrade to make it more modern; we're also upgrading the National Capital Region with new radios, antennae to be able to better collaborate with Metropolitan Police Department, FBI, Customs and Border Protection and various other governmental agencies within the National cCapital Region; and the last one would be what we call EC, enabling capabilities, which is where we're converging our networks' voice, video and data over an IP infrastructure and also we're building a network operation security center, which will hopefully be manned 24/7 in the next year.

I'd also like to caveat: Our telephone system will not completely be voice-over IP. Call me old fashioned but I like to have an analog-type backup system in case the IP network goes down.

Those are the three big initiatives: the JOC, enabling capabilities and the National Capital Region upgrade.

Q. What new initiatives did you start when you became CIO?

A.

When I first came on I didn't put any new initiatives in place. I wanted to assess what was going on, where the service was headed and also wanted to get a handle on, as a consultant, the state of the CIO Office. That's what I wanted to get an assessment on.

For the future, the big thing we're looking at is a different type of cellphone to better support agents and the officers out in the field. We're looking to provide more capabilities for mobile types of operations.

And when we say mobile and providing a seamless transition from the office to the field for the agents and the UD [uniform division] officers, that's globally. So that includes when individuals that we're protecting travel worldwide that they have that capability wherever they are in the world.

Q. What's the next big program you want to place, the next thing you want to change looking forward?

A.

One would be put in a virtual private network. Get rid of the desktops and laptops for everybody and have a virtual network. That's probably the long-term goal.

Part of it, too, is to get the right amount of money for a mission-based budget, to get the money that we actually need to accomplish the mission. The service has been really supportive, we just have to keep the day-to-day fight on — "I need the money to do this" — in order to provide protection to what we feel is not just adequate but meets the needs for the special agents and uniformed division officers out in the field.

And continually push toward a more automated environment. I'd like to take a lot of the paper processes out and make it automated for the service. That's another long-term project and goal: Just to continually improve on the mobile workforce.

We're looking at a thin client, to include the virtual aspect of it. We are actually in the process of building a hybrid cloud [working with commercial vendors] but we're going to keep it here [on-premise]. We're not at this time looking to move to a commercial cloud.

Q. How has technology and cyberspace changed the mission of the Secret Service?

A.

Technology and cyberspace have not changed the mission of the Secret Service. I would say it's probably enhanced the mission of the Secret Service, especially in investigations with cybercrimes.

I am completely impressed with the men and women that actually do work cybercrimes and cyber forensics, of their intelligence and dedication to the mission, of what they are required to do. I don't know when they started to build out those cyber forensics types of capabilities but I do know that it's a very key focus of the director.

Before I got to the Secret Service, I was completely ignorant of all of the cybercrimes that go on, from fraud to credit card fraud to counterfeit to pornography. I just had no idea how much and how good the Secret Service is at doing that. In fact, the only ATM machine I use now is the one in this building.

Q. What is the Secret Service's role in cyberspace?

A.

The mission is protection and investigations and cyber is intertwined within the mission and conducting investigations. I'm not going to sugarcoat it or put a fancy spiel on it. I call the 1811s — which are the agents and the uniformed division officers — I refer to them as the infantry and we're here supporting infantry, so whatever it takes to support them. If cybersecurity is intertwined in supporting their mission, to make sure that their IT assets work and providing the integrity of what they're looking at.

For example, if they're looking at a video screen or looking at something on their phone or their computer, whether it's a tablet, their mobile, etc., is that they can trust what they're looking at.

[We] accomplish that with very smart people and good tools.

Q. Are your tools bought or built in house?

A.

Our tools are both in-house and commercial-off-the-shelf tools.

Q. Cybersecurity is becoming an integral part of the CIO's job. But at the Secret Service, security is the job. Do you have a different view of cybersecurity than your CIO counterparts elsewhere in government?

A.

I don't know if I see it differently, but I look at cybersecurity as intertwined within the mission.

I put it in Marine Corps infantry terms: You set up a defense perimeter and it's a layered defense, but you also have a recon element, which they go out and probe or look with, like, say, a red team or blue team out into the area of operations or area that we're responsible for, and it's all part of the mission. But the mission is protection and investigations and SSEs, therefore the cybersecurity piece of providing the secure, confidential network where they have integrity and it's available is all part of the intertwined mission.

I wouldn't say that my first mission is cybersecurity and then it's protection; protection and investigation and SSEs is the No. 1 mission.

Q. How much of the Secret Service is now dedicated technical issues — cybersecurity and the like?

A.

I would say 100 percent, everything we do is focused on technology because my mission is to support the agents and the uniformed division officers out in the field. They need the IT assets and resources to support the mission. So we design things that go back to the basics I learned when I was a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps as a comms officer: redundant, reliable, secure and flexible. If one of those four key aspects are missing, then I have to look at myself and my staff and say: "How can we improve this?"

Q. When securing an event, what percentage of your field staff are focused solely on technology?

A.

The agents, uniformed division officers, what we call APTs — administrative professional technical personnel, which I'm like an APT — we're all trained on how to use the devices and we're trained to be aware of, for example, spear-phishing or phishing attacks. But the 1811s in the field are focused on protection, they need the IT devices to conduct their protection in terms of collaboration with the other agencies and their other agents. So we are completely focused on IT in terms of support.

I look at it as it has to be working. I think the agents and the uniform division officers demand or expect it to work to accomplish their mission.

Of the people I have working for me, it's probably close to 60 percent that leave here and actually go support [field operations]. But what we also do for IT/comms, cybersecurity professionals, we actually pull others from field offices throughout the globe to help support us, as well.

I may have someone in Chicago that I feel more comfortable with performing certain functions than maybe somebody else, so I will ask him or her to go to New York for six weeks and they do. It's a collaborative effort from throughout the whole Secret Service.

I would say probably 20 percent [of personnel at any given event are working on technical issues]. For example, in New York for the United Nations General Assembly, there's a coordination control center at one location, there's a multi-agency control center at another location, there's a joint tactical operation center at another location, there's operations going on at one of the airports and then there's another huge operation going on at another location down by one of the piers.

For example, the pier, I was down there yesterday and there's over 300 cars, SUVs, that have to be outfitted with radios. It's a huge effort.

Q. How does the CIO's Office and that mission support the overall mission: protecting the presidency?

A.

I believe May 20 was the White House shooting — which there hadn't been one in a while — and I know it was a Friday and happened probably later on in the afternoon-ish time frame. Immediately, literally within seconds, the entire staff was up in the Director's Crisis Center. We were there probably until [11 p.m.], and the communications: perfect.

The voice, video and data worked. We had local TVs on, covering and seeing what they were covering on the news; we had to JOC feeds, the video feeds that were pumped up to the [crisis center] so the deputy director could view what actually happened. The voice, video and data worked great.

It got back to feeling operational — unfortunate circumstance, but in terms of the staff coordination and staff communications and IT communications, not just within this building but throughout the National Capital Region, was a seamless effort.

Q. What would have happened if those things didn't work as they were supposed to?

A.

I don't know. But I have great faith, trust and confidence in the people that work for me that they don't fail. We don't fail.

I may have been sitting in the Director's Crisis Center but I know for a fact I had over 30 people that stayed behind to make sure the mission was accomplished. I had radio personnel, I had video personnel, I had network personnel, I had cybersecurity personnel; they all stayed behind and I don't remember having to ask them, they just did it. That's the dedication of the people that I have.

Q. What lessons have the Secret Service learned from recent hacks and how has the agency adapted?

A.

The visibility hasn't really changed the way we've operated. I firmly believe that we as a nation — and as DHS components — have to focus more on just IT and cybersecurity tools. You may implement Tool A today, the bad guys are going to figure out how to get into Tool A.

I think it gets back to a saying we had in the Marine Corps that the best trained cyber brain was a well-trained IT person. To me, focus on training education for the workforce and making sure that your back doors are closed and your patches are up to date and your techniques and tactics and procedures for making sure your network is secure are up to date. Just don't lax.

I put it in perspective with my folks: The special agent out there working 12-hour shifts, focused for 12 hours, we have to be just as focused on the network to make sure that our patches are up to date or configuration management pieces are up to date and well-coordinated or configuration management boards are synced together. I think that's the key.

Some people do disagree with me out there on this one subject. But I think we keep chasing the latest and greatest cybersecurity tool — gotta have it, gotta have it, put it in your network, etc. — I think that's good but again I put more time into the training, education and making sure that what we currently have is secure.

Q. How do you view the Secret Service from your position in the CIO's Office?

A.

The way I see the Secret Service from the CIO's perspective is I have openings and I don't just need II professionals, I need IT professionals with good leadership skills and diverse skills.

The reason I say that gets back to these national special security events. We work with a multitude of outside agencies and organizations and I am just completely impressed with how the Secret Service brings everybody together to accomplish the mission. Wherever I go and introduce myself to people or get introduced to people that we work with from other agencies or organizations, we get nothing but accolades.

I'll give you a couple examples. At the [Republican National Convention] in Cleveland, I go up a couple days or a week in advance just so I don't get in everybody's way to make sure things are going well. The gentleman that is the operations officer for the Cleveland Indians baseball stadium where we had a setup, I hadn't talked to him more than five minutes and he said: "I want to tell you that I am so impressed with the Secret Service and how you men and women operate." He continually said: "You're mission focused, you're well respected and you work extremely well with others." And he said: "You're the finest organization that I've ever … come across or worked with," and that you hear that throughout.

Another example, when I was in Philadelphia for the [Democratic National Convention] and I was leaving outside, checking out of the hotel, the lady at the hotel said: "You know, I really hate to see the Secret Service leave here in a few days." I said: "Why?" She said: "Because you are the nicest men and women. You're such gentlemen and ladies. It's just a pleasure to have you stay here … and I've never felt more secure than the last couple weeks."

Part of it is a strict hiring process. But I think the men and women here take a lot of pride in what they do and who they represent. I think it's a calling, much like it is in the service; I think it's a calling like going to the priesthood or joining the Marine Corps. Joining the Secret Service is a calling and you take a lot of pride in what you do.

NATIONAL PROTECTION AND PROGRAMS

Government Rejects Time Extension To Comply With REAL ID Act

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — The Oklahoma Department of Public Safety says the government has rejected the state's request for an extension of time to comply with the federal REAL ID Act.

But the agency said Tuesday the U.S. Department of Homeland Security won't begin enforcing the act until after Jan. 29.

Public safety officials say that afterward, federal agencies will be prohibited from accepting driver's licenses and identification cards issued by non-compliant states, meaning those without identification that complies with the REAL ID Act won't be admitted to a federal building, military base or courthouse.

The act was passed to ensure the reliability of driver's licenses, but legislators in Oklahoma and elsewhere believe the government is overreaching.

Gov. Mary Fallin says she will work with state and federal officials to minimize any adverse effects.

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Homeland Security Rejects Oklahoma's Real ID Extension Request

Tulsa (OK) World, October 11, 2016

OKLAHOMA CITY — Two state legislators say they will press for early 2017 approval of a Real ID bill after Oklahoma's request for more time to implement the federal act was denied by the Department of Homeland Security on Tuesday.

"Unfortunately, the federal government is not giving us much of a choice, despite valid concerns that this law is poorly drafted and will have unintended consequences for individual privacy," said Rep. Jon Echols, R-Oklahoma City.

"As a state legislator, it is very important for me to make every effort within the law to protect my constituents, and I believe we can run legislation early next year that will allow us to comply and safeguard our citizens."

He and Rep. Leslie Osborn, R-Mustang, said they plan to introduce the measure.

"We are confident that early next session we will be able to pass legislation that brings our state into compliance," Osborn said.

Even then, Oklahoma-issued driver's licenses and identification cards will be out of compliance for some time, and possibly several years, officials say.

Tuesday's decision by Homeland Security means that beginning Jan. 30, Oklahoma driver's licenses and state-issued ID cards will no longer be accepted for entering secured federal buildings or facilities. These would include federal courthouses and military installations.

Almost a year later, beginning Jan. 22, 2018, Oklahoma driver's licenses and state-issued ID cards will no longer be sufficient identification for boarding commercial airlines, DPS said.

Acceptable identification would include passports and, in most cases, passport cards as well as military identification, some Real ID-compliant tribal identification cards and a few other forms of identification, including "trusted traveler" cards.

The Real ID Act of 2005 incorporated national security recommendations from the 9/11 Commission, including enhanced driver's licenses.

These driver's licenses include a low-power radio frequency identification chip, known as RFID, and a bar code, both of which allow access to digitally stored biographic and biometric information confirming the card-holder's identity.

Oklahoma and several other states have resisted compliance, citing privacy and cost concerns.

DPS has said Real ID will cost $10 million and take several years to implement, while many Oklahomans say they are unconvinced the RFID and bar scanners can be protected from identity thieves.

The Oklahoma House and Senate passed competing Real ID bills earlier this year but were unable to reconcile them in conference committee.

The 2017 legislative session begins Feb. 6.

Feds Warn Montana Over Compliance With Driver's License Law

By Matt Volz

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — Homeland security officials have warned Montana Gov. Steve Bullock that the state may not get any more time to comply with federal driver's license rules, meaning residents may eventually need a different form of identification to board commercial aircraft.

In response, Bullock wrote Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson a letter Tuesday urging him to suspend implementation of the Real ID Act and accept Montana licenses as secure forms of identification.

"The Obama administration continues to push what I think is a real misguided effort, this Real ID Act," Bullock said in an interview. "I've written Secretary Johnson to say it's time

to suspend your efforts and go back to the Congress and get this fixed because Montana is not going to be in compliance."

Montana and several other states oppose requirements in the federal law that include storing images of documents that driver's license applicants present as proof of their identity, such as birth certificates. The state already has been granted two one-year extensions to get in compliance. But a letter sent Sept. 15 by Homeland Security Deputy Assistant Secretary Ted Sobel said states that can't commit to fully complying with the law may not receive any more extensions.

Montana's latest extension expired Monday, and the state has no plans to align its driver's licenses with the federal law.

The state Legislature in 2007 voted unanimously not to comply with Real ID. Bullock and Attorney General Tim Fox have both insisted Montana's licenses are secure without meeting all of the requirements of the federal law.

States that don't get new extensions will have a temporary grace period before their driver's licenses aren't accepted for admission to federal facilities and nuclear power plants. By January 2018, domestic air travelers with licenses from those states will have to show an alternative form of identification to board planes.

Bullock said that leaves more than a year for Congress to change the law, "and I expect Congress to fix it."

The Real ID Act was passed in 2005 to prevent terrorism and identity theft by improving the reliability and accuracy of state-issued identification documents, according to federal officials. State officials say the information that is stored could be breached and could be used to track ordinary U.S. citizens.

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Ky.'s REAL ID Extension Ends, Not Yet Renewed

Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal, October 11, 2016

Kentucky still hasn't met certain federal standards for driver's licenses, and an extension it received from the U.S. government expired Monday and hasn't been renewed yet.

The one-year extension Kentucky previously received, which gave the state more time to work on becoming compliant with the federal REAL ID law, ended Monday, said Ryan Watts, spokesman for the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. The state hopes the U.S. Department of Homeland Security will grant it a new year-long extension but hadn't received any notification about its status as of early Tuesday afternoon.

"Once we receive word from the Department of Homeland Security, we will take action whether we are denied or granted an extension," Watts said.

The REAL ID Act was approved by Congress in 2005 and instituted security standards regarding the issuance of driver's licenses and other kinds of identification.

Earlier this year, state lawmakers approved legislation that would have allowed Kentucky residents to obtain a new driver's license that met the federal requirements, but Gov. Matt Bevin vetoed it. At the time, Bevin said he had supported the bill but axed it due to "tremendous opposition ... across the entire political spectrum for a variety of different reasons."

Even if Kentucky isn't granted a new extension, residents shouldn't experience any immediate effects.

Homeland Security spokesman Aaron Rodriguez said over 20 states, including Kentucky, had extensions that expired Monday. All of them will be notified this week about whether they will be granted new ones, Rodriguez said. To get an extension, states must show that they're taking steps toward becoming compliant with the REAL ID law.

For states that don't receive an extension, enforcement measures for noncompliance will begin in January, Rodriguez said. At that point, Kentucky residents wouldn't be able to use their state-issued driver's licenses to enter secure federal facilities such as the Homeland Security headquarters or nuclear power plants. They would have to use an alternative form of ID.

The biggest impact on Kentuckians would happen in January 2018, when they would need to bring another kind of ID, such as a U.S. passport, to the airport with them in order to take a domestic flight since their state-issued driver's licenses alone would no longer be accepted.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DIRECTORATE

DHS S&T Selects 10 Start-Ups For First Responder Innovation

Homeland Security Today, October 11, 2016

Ten startup companies have been selected to be part of EMERGE 2016: Wearable Technology, a program designed to bring startups, accelerators and other strategic partners together in a common research and development effort by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science & Technology Directorate (S&T).

EMERGE 2016: Wearable Technology is focused on wearable technology that can be modified specifically for first responders as part of a partnership with the Center for Innovative Technology, a nonprofit corporation in Virginia that is a driver of innovation and entrepreneurship; TechNexus, a venture collaborative that works in conjunction with leading corporations and the global entrepreneurial ecosystem; and the Department of Energy Pacific Northwest National

Laboratory, whose expertise ranges from energy and the environment to national security issues.

The program will conclude with opportunities to explore pilot and path-to-market opportunities with the first responder, corporate and investor communities later this year.

DHS said in its announcement that, "First responders have a tremendous need for devices such as body-worn electronics, advance sensors, and integrated voice and data communications embedded within their gear. Wearables can integrate multiple technologies and minimize additional equipment while maximizing effective response efforts."

"This is an important step for S&T to tap into the innovation ecosystem," said DHS Under Secretary for Science & Technology Dr. Reginald Brothers. "We need to find technologies for first responders that can be integrated directly into their existing gear. The entrepreneurial world is on the leading edge of those inventive solutions."

"As part of the program, the 10 startups will have access to first responder feedback, industry partners and investors, and business development educational resources from mentors around the business world," DHS said, stressing, "The access and resources available will assist in early market validation efforts, test and evaluation opportunities, and the establishment of a path to introduce their technologies to a variety of markets, including government sector partners."

Last month, DHS S&T highlight its recent First Responders Resource Group (FRRG) meeting displaying different S&T technology demonstrations first hand.

An all-volunteer working group that includes members of law enforcement agencies, fire departments, emergency medical services, emergency management and other disciplines, the FRRG's goal is to help DHS S&T's maintain focus on the top-priority needs of responders in the field. The members are drawn from the major first responder disciplines and from all regions of the country, according to DHS. Each year, the FRRG gathers to determine priorities for the coming year and discuss progress on current projects.

The 10 selected EMERGE startups are:

Augmate, New York, New York, developed a provisioning and management platform for wearable devices that helps IT departments track users and their devices, collect sensor data, communicate with workers and control approved applications and situational connectivity.

CommandWear Systems, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, developed a software platform that integrates location and biometrics data from devices to provide personnel tracking, two-way text communication and video sharing to facilitate planning, mission execution and review operations among teams.

HAAS Alert, Chicago, Illinois / Detroit, Michigan, has a mobile vehicle-to-vehicle communication platform that uses acoustic sensors to pick up environmental and situational noise, and location data to connect people, vehicles, and things in cities, streamlining the disaster and emergency notification process to keep communities safe.

Human Systems Integration, Boston, Massachusetts, developed an integrated system that includes remote physiological monitoring. The system provide a plug and play wearable situational awareness and communications platform.

Lumenus, Los Angeles, California, created smart clothing that uses LED lighting and connectivity to improve visibility of consumers and industrial workers.

LuminAID, Chicago, Illinois, created durable, low cost, and low profile inflatable solar lamps that can be stored efficiently and easily deployed.

Pear Sports, Los Angeles, California, has a coaching and training application that uses biometric signals like heart rate, VO2 max, location, and environmental data to build training programs that improve the long-term health of users.

Six15 Technologies, Henrietta, New York, produced rugged wearable devices for military and industrial use that stream video and display data using augmented reality overlays for better situational awareness.

Vault RMS, San Diego, California, created a software platform that leverages biometric and situational data from wearable devices and other inputs to build a long-term health profile of workers exposed to health-compromising environments, driving improvements in health, safety and overall worker productivity.

Visual Semantics, Austin, Texas, created software that integrates with cloud-enabled wearable cameras and heads up displays to provide real-time facial recognition and alerts to help first responders more intelligently assess and react to situations in the field.

TERRORISM INVESTIGATIONS

Fury Over U.S. 9/11 Law Hits Fever Pitch In Saudi Press

By Rowan Scarborough

Washington Times, October 11, 2016

Saudi Arabia's state-controlled media have launched an intense rash of news articles against the United States and the new federal law that allows Americans to sue Riyadh over the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

Some columns are particularly harsh coming from a U.S. ally, expressing anti-Semitic ideas and images and accusing the U.S. of a history of atrocities.

Saudi writers have revived conspiracy theories that the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon were carried about by the U.S. government or Israel and the Jews. They accuse Washington of creating terrorism as an excuse

to kill people and advocate pulling away from the close security arrangement with the U.S.

The articles call for the creation of a "superfund" that would bankroll reprisal lawsuits from Saudi Arabia and other countries against the United States.

"These are all government-controlled," said Steven Stalinsky, who directs the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), which compiled the report on the Saudi press barrage. "They will never write anything critical of the Saudi government, royal family. If they have a disagreement with any of the papers, they will fire the editor or writer."

The Obama administration has sought to preserve close ties with the oil-rich kingdom, approving huge arms sales and providing support for Riyadh's sometimes erratic air war against Shiite rebels in neighboring Yemen, where the U.S. is fighting al Qaeda militants operating in the country. President Obama, a strong defender of Islam, was photographed bowing when he met Saudi King Abdullah in 2009.

Overall, both Democratic and Republican administrations have viewed the Persian Gulf nation, for all the bilateral tensions, as a key check against violent Salafi jihadi groups such as al Qaeda and the Islamic State. But events on Capitol Hill last month badly shook the relationship.

The House and Senate passed the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act by wide margins on Sept. 28. Mr. Obama vetoed the measure, citing the principle of sovereign immunity as well as the fear of the kinds of reprisals that the Saudi press is now encouraging. But Congress, saying they were acting in support of the families of 9/11 victims seeking justice, overrode the veto. It was the first Obama veto in eight years that was not sustained by lawmakers.

The law does not target Saudi Arabia specifically but does allow legal suits against any country that has proved to abet terrorist attacks on Americans. It states that a U.S. national "may file a civil action against a foreign state for physical injury, death or damage as a result of an act of international terrorism committed by a designated terrorist organization."

Al Qaeda carried out the 9/11 attacks, and 15 of the 19 terrorists involved were Saudis.

In the 15 years since the attacks, which killed nearly 3,000 people, survivors and some national security figures have expressed suspicion that high-ranking Saudis, even the royal family, supported the plotters or at least were aware of their plans.

Saudi Arabia is home to strict Wahhabi Sunni ideology. The Saudis have acknowledged that wealthy donors funded Islamic terrorists but say they embarked on a long campaign to stem the flow and to preach against extremism.

But the 9/11 survivors' suspicions were augmented by a recently declassified FBI report to a congressional panel investigating the attack in the immediate aftermath. The report documents contacts and financial ties between Saudi officials and the Saudi plotters when they prepared for the strike in California and Florida.

The blue-ribbon commission that conducted a lengthier investigation said it followed the report's leads but could not substantiate that any Saudi official supported the attack or had prior knowledge.

New charges

Even as Saudi Arabia denies those charges, there emerged fresh assertions that the royal family supports terrorism. This time, the source was former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the Democratic presidential nominee.

Out of the State Department in 2014, Mrs. Clinton sent an email to her now-campaign chairman, John Podesta, saying Saudi Arabia and Persian Gulf neighbor Qatar helped finance the Islamic State terrorist group. This is an apparent reference to the two countries' funding arms for virtually any group opposed to their archrival, Syrian President Bashar Assad, including al Qaeda and the Islamic State.

The MEMRI report reproduces a political cartoon in the daily Al-Watan. It shows an American flag-decorated arm sleeve as a hand lights the fuse on a bomb in the shape of Earth.

"The Saudi press published dozens of articles condemning the law, warning about Saudi reactions to it and its political and economic ramifications for Saudi-U.S. relations, and presenting various Saudi options to counter it," MEMRI said.

They included "establishing a Gulf lobby in the U.S.; aiding in the filing of lawsuits against the U.S. around the world; ending Saudi-U.S. security coordination; ending the setting of oil prices in dollars; establishing an independent Saudi weapons industry, similar to the Iranian nuclear program, as a means of pressuring the U.S.; and more."

The official newspaper Al-Riyadh said in an editorial, "According to all opinions, including the U.S. administration's, this law sets a dangerous precedent that exposes the interests of the U.S. and its citizens to danger, as its implementation will not stop at the U.S. borders without infiltrating into other countries as well."

Al-Riyadh also said in an especially harsh indictment of U.S. history that citizens in Vietnam, South Korea, South American and the Middle East will join forces to sue for military interventions in their countries. Several top columnists joined in the condemnation of the new law and the U.S.

In the same newspaper, journalist Abdalla Al-Nasser wrote, "The U.S., which purports to respect human rights, international law and U.N. resolutions, is the first to violate and ignore them. The U.S., with its mentality of arming itself, works to establish its global empire, and to this end uses all methods of violent takeover of the peoples of the earth, particularly in the Middle East."

"The U.S. [first] creates terrorism and then exterminates peoples in the name of the struggle against it. These forms of abuse, violent takeover, deception, and crime are elements of the American identity."

Columnist Adel Al-Harbi wrote, "The U.S. killed hundreds of thousands of Japanese when it deliberately incinerated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Don't their families have the right to sue the murderers? Doesn't Vietnam have the right to sue those responsible for killing over 1 million Vietnamese over a period of 13 years?"

Columnist Hassan Al-Zahirir wrote in the daily Al-Medina that there is evidence that Iran and Israel's Mossad intelligence agency and four "Jewish crime syndicates" carried out the Sept. 11 attacks.

He repeated the discredited story that "this assumption is supported by the [fact] that 700 Jews did not show up for work at the [World] Trade Center [on the day of the attack], and they wouldn't have escaped certain death had they not been warned in advance."

A cartoon in Al-Riyadh showed a figure representing the U.S. looking through binoculars from behind Star of David glasses, as a sinister-looking Jewish man stands behind him.

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U.S. Top Court To Hear Post-Sept. 11 Detentions Lawsuit

By Lawrence Hurley

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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

Supreme Court To Hear 9/11 Detainees' Lawsuit

By Richard Wolf

USA Today, October 11, 2016

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court agreed Tuesday to decide whether former top Bush administration officials can be held liable for the arrest, detention and harsh treatment of Muslims and other illegal immigrants following the 9/11 attacks.

The three combined cases are unusual for two reasons: The Obama administration will be defending President George W. Bush's "war on terrorism," and two of the court's remaining eight justices will not take part because of conflicts of interest. If the case is heard before a ninth justice is confirmed, only six justices will participate.

The federal government previously has won six cases challenging its policies in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks, which included the arrest and detention of more than 750 undocumented immigrants. The latest cases specifically target former attorney general John Ashcroft and Robert Mueller, the former FBI director, for culpability; they in turn claim immunity from prosecution.

Justices do not say why they recuse themselves from cases. But Sotomayor sat on a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit during an earlier version of the case, while Kagan was U.S. solicitor general during its initial prosecution.

The justices also will consider the unusual case of a 15-year-old Mexican boy shot and killed from across the U.S.-Mexico border in 2010 by a Border Patrol agent who claimed he was being attacked with rocks. Videos showed that children were playing a game that involved running to and from the border fence dividing El Paso from Ciudad Juárez.

Because the shooting crossed international lines, both U.S. and Mexican authorities were rebuffed in their efforts to bring the agent to justice. The boy's parents later sued in federal district court in Texas.

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'Sodomized' Guantánamo Captive To Undergo Corrective Surgery

By Carol Rosenberg

Miami Herald, October 11, 2016

An alleged accomplice in the Sept. 11 terror attacks is to undergo surgery this week for decade-old damage from his "sodomy" in CIA custody, his attorney says.

Defense attorney Walter Ruiz, a Navy Reserve officer, disclosed the upcoming surgery for his client, Mustafa al Hawsawi, 48, on the eve of resumption of pretrial hearings Tuesday in the case that accuses the Saudi Arabian Hawsawi and four other men of orchestrating the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people.

Ruiz said a case prosecutor informed him of the procedure over the weekend because defense lawyers have been litigating over conditions at the remote prison and, in the case of his client, have specifically sought medical intervention to treat a rectal prolapse that has caused Hawsawi to bleed for more than a decade.

The disclosure comes days after The New York Times published a detailed account of former CIA and Guantánamo captives grappling with the after-effects of torture.

Monday, before Ruiz's disclosure, the senior Pentagon officer with oversight of the detention center replied this way to a question on whether there were plans to treat torture victims at Guantánamo:

"I think we've said all along that torture does not take place at Guantánamo Bay, no," said Adm. Kurt Tidd, commander of the U.S. Southern Command. "The medical facilities that are provided for detainees is state-of-the-art quality. It's the same level of medical care that's provided to our men and women in uniform."

Ruiz said the surgery would take place at 9 p.m. Friday for apparent "force-protection reasons," an expression that suggests it was scheduled for after-hours at the Navy base hospital, a distance from the Detention Center Zone. He said Hawsawi was denied a request to have a member of his legal team on standby near the surgery. The detention center spokesman, Navy Capt. John Filostrat, would not comment. "I prefer not to discuss the legal aspects of this issue," he said by email Tuesday.

Hawsawi was captured in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, in March 2003 with the alleged mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, Khalid Sheik Mohammed, and was held by the CIA until his delivery to Guantánamo on Labor Day weekend in 2006. He is alleged to have helped the hijackers with money, Western clothing, traveler's checks and credit cards.

He has sat gingerly on a pillow at the war court since his first appearance in 2008. But the reason was not publicly known until release of a portion of the so-called Senate Torture Report on the CIA program in December 2014, which described agents using quasi medical techniques called "rectal rehydration" and "rectal re-feeding."

"Mr. Hawsawi was tortured in the black sites. He was sodomized," Ruiz told reporters Monday evening, advising them to "shy away from terms like rectal penetration or rectal rehydration because the reality is it was sodomy," he said. Since then, he said, he has had "to manually reinsert parts of his anal cavity" to defecate.

"When he has a bowel movement, he has to reinsert parts of his anus back into his anal cavity," Ruiz said, which "causes him to bleed, causes him excruciating pain."

As a result, the five-foot-five-inch man has fasted and at times withered to below the 100 pounds he weighed in on his arrival at Guantánamo from a CIA black site in Septebmer 2006.

In court Tuesday, the judge handling the death-penalty case, Army Col. James L. Pohl, said he was aware of the upcoming medical procedure and asked whether it would interfere with Hawsawi's ability to attend Friday's court hearing. Ruiz replied that the procedure was to be done after court but that Hawsawi would likely voluntarily waive court attendance Friday to rest up for it.

Filostrat, the prison spokesman, would not say whether a specialist in Colo-rectal surgery was coming to this remote base to conduct the surgery, whether the procedure could be done inside the Detention Center Zone or whether any other people at the base of nearly 6,000 residents would be having similar surgery this week.

Prison commanders have emphasized for years the analogous nature of medical care at Guantánamo, says captives get the same treatment as U.S. service members.

The prison commander is having a portion of a closed prison building renovated for use as a medical center. But former CIA captives like Hawsawi are segregated in a clandestine lockup called Camp 7 that has been described at court as having its own medical facility whose capabilities are not known.

Families of eight people killed in the Sept. 11 hijackings were on base this week for resumption of the hearings toward a trial that still has no date set. In the past, relatives of victims of the accused 9/11 plotters have expressed annoyance at the diversion toward the dark sites.

Ruiz said the Saudi has other medical problems dating back to his years in the CIA black sites — including "cervical degeneration," neck damage from being thrown into a wall, an approved interrogation tactic called "walling" — something the lawyer argues should not only be treated but should be explored as part of an eventual trial that could decide whether to execute the five men accused of perpetrating the worst terror attack on U.S. soil.

Lawyers argue that the treatment after capture should disqualify the military court from ordering the alleged plotters' execution.

- The Miami Herald's Sept. 11 trial guide, here.
- Earlier report on the captive's condition, here.

Germany: Syrians Who Tied Up Bomb Suspect Hailed As Heroes

By Geir Moulson And Frank Jordans

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

LEIPZIG, Germany (AP) — Three Syrians who overwhelmed a fugitive wanted in an alleged Islamic extremist bomb plot and handed him over to police were hailed as heroes in Germany Tuesday, helping temper anti-migrant sentiment fueled in part by fears of such attacks.

Jaber Albakr, 22, was tied up and held by three fellow Syrians who alerted police in the eastern city of Leipzig in Saxony. He was arrested early Monday — nearly two days after he evaded officers during a raid on an apartment about 80 kilometers (50 miles) away where police found explosives.

Though Saxony has been the heart of the anti-migrant group Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West, known by its German acronym PEGIDA, residents of the state's largest city were focused Tuesday on the actions of those who apprehended Albakr.

"I immediately thought: hats off to the guys who did that. It was dangerous, after all," said retiree Maria Haubold, dismissing the idea that refugees were a general threat to German society.

"They come over here to live in peace and not to live through the same things they experienced at home, war and poverty," she said.

Leipzig Mayor Burkhard Jung thanked the Syrians, whom authorities are not identifying out of concern they could become targets for retribution.

"A person who at first glance seems to have been obviously dangerous was held by fellow Syrians and handed over to the police. That's a very courageous act," Jung told The Associated Press.

"Many, many refugees are here because they are fleeing the fighters of the so-called Islamic State. That's worth remembering, and this story serves to emphasize that," he said.

Albakr, who had been granted asylum in Germany, was among 890,000 migrants who arrived in the country last year, many of them from Syria.

Worries over the difficulties of integrating large numbers of Muslim newcomers and over the possibility of radicalized migrants carrying out attacks have helped boost anti-foreigner sentiment in recent months.

In July, several people were wounded in two attacks carried out by asylum-seekers and claimed by the Islamic State group; both assailants were killed.

Andre Hahn, a prominent lawmaker with the opposition Left Party, told Bayerischer Rundfunk radio that the men who captured Albakr should be granted asylum as soon as possible in recognition of their courage.

"That would be very important for all honest refugees who need help and who in their absolute majority have nothing to do with the self-styled Islamic State or any terrorist activities," Hahn said.

The Syrians' asylum status wasn't immediately clear.

Albakr met the men who eventually would turn him in after he fled the police raid on an apartment where he was staying in the city of Chemnitz and posted on an internet network for Syrian refugees that he was at Leipzig's main rail station and needed a place to stay, German newspaper Bild reported.

One of the Syrians, identified only as Mohamed A., was quoted as telling the newspaper that he and a friend picked Albakr up and took him back to another friend's apartment, only later seeing police notices on Facebook about the bomb plot suspect.

As Albakr slept on Sunday evening, they discussed with other Syrians on Facebook whether their guest was the fugitive, and then tied him up with electric cords.

"He offered us 1,000 euros ($1,115) and $200 if we let him go. He had that in a backpack together with a knife," the man was quoted as saying. "I am so grateful to Germany for taking us in. We could not allow him to do something to Germans."

On Tuesday nobody answered the door of the apartment in the modest social housing complex where Albakr was apprehended. Neighbors noted that Mohamed A.'s shoes were missing and suggested that he might have been taken to a safe house by police before dawn, in part to evade the notice of TV crews.

Bild columnist Franz Josef Wagner opened his second-page column Tuesday with the words "Dear Heroes."

"I don't know how good your German is and whether you know our Constitution (women and men are equal, freedom of religion etc.)," he wrote. "But beyond language and tradition, you know what good and bad are. That makes you friends."

Even the nationalist, anti-migration Alternative for Germany party appeared relatively muted in its response to the Chemnitz case.

Investigators think Albakr was considering Berlin's airports as potential targets. Hans-Georg Maassen, the head of the domestic intelligence agency, told ZDF television it received information in early September that the Islamic State group was planning "attacks on infrastructure, stations and airports, in western Europe, particularly Germany."

Following the "abstract" tip, Maassen said German authorities "generated a lot of information ourselves, and exchanged a lot of information with partners, until we came to this name and this address."

He and other officials were tightlipped with details of Albakr's suspected contacts with IS, saying that is part of their ongoing investigation.

"From intelligence information, there are good reasons to say that he had relations with IS," Maassen said.

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Man Charged In Islamic State Group Case Ordered Held

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

GREENBELT, Md. (AP) — A citizen of Bangladesh who was living in Maryland and has been charged with attempting to provide material support and resources to the Islamic State group has been ordered held while he awaits trial.

Nelash Mohamed Das of Hyattsville was ordered held during a court hearing Tuesday.

The 24-year-old Das was arrested Sept. 30. Court documents say he was ready to carry out what he thought was an attack on a member of the U.S. military when he was arrested. The supposed attack was set up by a confidential informant for the FBI.

Das' attorney, Julie Stelzig, said in a statement that her client denies the charge against him. She says Das will enter a not-guilty plea.

If convicted, Das faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

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Maryland Man Accused Of Plotting ISIS-backed Attack To Remain In Federal Custody

By Lynh Bui

Washington Post, October 11, 2016

Months before the FBI arrested Nelash Das on charges of plotting a purported ISIS-backed terrorist attack, he discussed in a recorded conversation how he could obtain an illegal gun for the planned crime so that it wouldn't be traced to him.

"We want to do it perfect," Das is heard in the audio telling a man he would later learn was a paid FBI informant. "You want no evidence."

Snippets of Das's exchanges with the informant were played Tuesday at his detention hearing in U.S. District Court in Greenbelt, where a federal judge ordered Das to remain in government custody through the duration of his court proceedings.

The recordings, the government contends, show Das was not the victim of entrapment — as he has asserted in telephone interviews with The Washington Post — but rather a dangerous man who was preparing to murder a member of the U.S. military in support of the Islamic State.

"It's the defendant's own words and actions," Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas Windom told the judge.

Das, 24, of Prince George's County, was arrested Sept. 30 after law enforcement officials found him and a paid FBI source at an address in Prince George's County, where Das had been led to believe that they would kill a member of the U.S. military, federal officials said.

Das plans to enter a plea of not guilty at a future hearing, said Julie Stelzig, his attorney.

Her client is a citizen of Bangladesh and a legal permanent resident of the United States after being admitted to the country as a young child in 1995, federal officials said. From as early as September 2015 to early this year, Das expressed support for the Islamic State and the terrorist attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, Calif., on social media, according to the federal complaint.

After being flagged, the government sent a paid FBI source to pose as a supporter of the Islamic State and befriend Das. The informant eventually told Das the pair could receive $80,000 for launching an attack against a member of the U.S. military, according to a federal criminal complaint.

In telephone interviews with a Washington Post reporter while he was in federal custody, Das said that he is the victim of entrapment and was harassed into taking part in the scheme by the U.S. government.

At Tuesday's hearing, Stelzig also argued Das was coerced into a government-orchestrated plot.

"What the government has thwarted is a terror plot of its own creation," Stelzig said.

Stelzig said the paid confidential informant was a "professional manipulator" who not only lacks training on the rules barring entrapment, but also had a financial stake in the outcome of the case. The informant found the "target" that he and Das planned to attack and drove Das in advance to various locations to buy supplies and conduct surveillance.

Das did not speak at the hearing. He entered the courtroom wearing a maroon detention uniform and waved to his mother sitting in the audience.

Although Das in phone interviews with The Post said he was led to believe that he would only knock on the door of the intended target and not shoot, Windom said that was not the case. Das is heard on tape talking about how he and the informant would shoot the target together before taking turns and that the attack would be the first of many, Windom said.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Thomas M. DiGirolamo said Tuesday that his job at the hearing was not to decide whether Das was entrapped, but whether there was enough evidence to keep him locked up for the duration of his legal proceedings.

"I heard a plan . . . to specifically kill a United States military service man," DiGirolamo said before ordering Das detained. "The government has a strong case against Mr. Das."

Pulse Victims' And Gunman's Family Can Testify On 911 Calls

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Relatives of the Orlando gay nightclub shooting victims, as well as the parents of the gunman, will be given the chance to speak at a hearing on whether all the 911 calls from the massacre can be made public.

A judge on Monday issued an order setting a hearing when relatives of the 49 deceased victims can weigh-in on the impact of the release of calls made by their loved ones from inside the Pulse nightclub.

A notice of the Oct. 31 hearing also was sent to the parents of gunman Omar Mateen.

Mateen opened fire at the Pulse nightclub on June 12, claiming allegiance to the Islamic State group, in the worst mass shooting in modern U.S. history. He was killed after a three-hour standoff during an exchange of fire with SWAT team members.

The city of Orlando and about two dozen media groups have been fighting for four months over the release of all the 911 calls, as well as four calls between Mateen and Orlando police.

The media groups have argued that the release of the records would help the public evaluate the police response to the massacre. The city has said the records were exempt from the state's public records law, both because they were

part of an investigation and because some were graphic calls of patrons being shot and killed.

Last month, the FBI, which is investigating the mass shooting, said that withholding the records is no longer necessary to its probe.

The city subsequently released a transcript of the calls between Mateen and police dispatchers and negotiators, as well as all but 232 calls that it claims are exempt under a Florida law that prohibits the release of a recording depicting a killing or the prelude or aftermath of one. The city has included in the exemption all calls that came into or were made from the nightclub during the massacre.

The media groups, including The Associated Press, said in a court filing this week that the city was applying "an overbroad and unconstitutional interpretation ... to continue to withhold a large swath of records that simply do not qualify for exemption."

The city, in its court filing, said the sound of gunfire and suffering are documented in many of the recordings, and that their release would be an invasion of privacy for the family members of the victims. The recordings are not necessary to evaluate the police response, the city filing said, and lawyers for the city wouldn't be opposed to the media groups receiving a transcript of the recordings.

"Hearing the panic and fear in the voices of the victims would serve no public purpose," the city's filing said.

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Investigators Believe Explosive Device Found At Nederland Shopping Center

Boulder (CO) Daily Camera, October 11, 2016

Caribou Ridge Shopping Center in Nederland remains closed and two streets are closed as the Boulder County bomb squad examines a suspicious device found inside a backpack that was left outside the Nederland Police Department this morning.

Investigators on the scene believe that the suspicious device is in fact an explosive device, according to a news release issued by the town shortly before 5 p.m. The release said that the device has not been rendered safe.

Nederland Town Marshal Paul Carrill said Lakeview Drive and Conger Street also remain closed.

Carrill said earlier this afternoon that the bomb squad has removed the backpack from the police department and is using two robots to examine the contents of the bag. He added that the suspicious device might be a bomb, but the bomb squad is still analyzing it.

A Nederland police officer found the backpack at about 7:50 a.m. "right by the front door" of the police department, 20 Lakeview Drive, Carrill said. The police department is located in the shopping center, which was evacuated.

"A Nederland officer inspected the package and determined that it may or may not be an explosive device," Carrill said.

The Boulder County hazmat team is also investigating the backpack, according to Carrill. Officials from the Nederland Fire Protection District, Boulder County District Attorney's Office, Federal Bureau of Investigation and Boulder County Sheriff's Office are also part of the investigation.

This story will be updated as more information becomes available.

April Trial Possible For Men Charged With Backing ISIS

WPEC-TV West Palm Beach (FL), October 11, 2016

WEST PALM BEACH, Fl. (CBS12) — The trial of three Palm Beach County men, charged with supporting ISIS, is now on a federal judge's April calendar.

On Tuesday at the Federal Courthouse in West Palm Beach, a hearing dealt with the case of defendants Gregory Hubbard, Dayne Christian, and Darren Jackson.

It was Hubbard, a sculptor formerly active in the Palm Beach County arts scene, who agents say they arrested in July, as he boarded a plane in Miami. Agents say the flight was headed to Berlin, a stopping off point on the way to wage jihad in Syria.

Christian and Jackson are accused of supplying weapons and training Hubbard.

The Feds say the men made statements approving of terrorist acts and videos showing beheadings.

The judge and attorneys are already dealing with the fact much of the evidence in the case is classified.

Prosecutors said Tuesday classified evidence is now being reviewed before release to defense lawyers, hopefully within the next six weeks.

At a prior hearing, an FBI agent revealed his agency used a confidential source to make the case. The informant had made $100,000 working for the Feds over the past 10 years, said the agent.

That's a situation that could easily be exploited by defense attorneys.

But a former FBI counterterrorism agent, now West Palm Beach security consultant, Chad Jenkins says agents work closely with prosecutors.

"The FBI goes above and beyond, specifically when they go and report to DOJ (Department of Justice) exactly what they are doing, and every step of the way, so entrapment can't be used," said Jenkins.

Judge Issues Orders In Case Of Terror Suspects

WFLX-TV West Palm Beach (FL), October 11, 2016

A federal judge has ordered the FBI to hand over evidence by January 15 about three Palm Beach County men accused of conspiring with ISIS so the case can go to trial in April.

Agents arrested Gregory Hubbard, Darren Jackson and Dayne Christian in July.

The three accused terrorists are still in jail.

Investigators say Hubbard was on his way to Syria to join ISIS and the other two knowingly helped him train to join the terrorist group.

In court Tuesday lawyers said there are more than 200 hours of taped conversations between the defendants and confidential sources.

Transcribing that information and deciding what is and isn't classified is the biggest hold up.

The judge called this a very serious case and said his goal is to have a fair and open trial.

Although the trial is set for April, there are several other deadlines and hearings between now and then.

CYBER NEWS

Obama Considers "Proportional" Response To Russian Hacking In US Election

By Julie Hirschfeld Davis And Gardiner Harris

New York Times, October 11, 2016

GREENSBORO, N.C. — President Obama is weighing a "proportional" response to Russia's efforts to interfere with this fall's election campaign through hacking, the White House announced Tuesday.

"The president has talked before about the significant capabilities that the U.S. government has to both defend our systems in the United States but also carry out offensive operations in other countries," Josh Earnest, the White House press secretary, told reporters traveling with Mr. Obama on Air Force One to Greensboro, where he was holding a town hall-style meeting with students and campaigning for Hillary Clinton.

"There are a range of responses that are available to the president, and he will consider a response that is proportional," Mr. Earnest said.

Whatever the president opts to do would probably not be announced in advance and may never be acknowledged or disclosed if it is carried out, Mr. Earnest said.

On Friday, the Obama administration publicly acknowledged for the first time that it believed that the Russian government was responsible for stealing and disclosing emails from the Democratic National Committee and a range of other institutions and prominent individuals, most recently Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman, John D. Podesta. The emails were posted on the well-known WikiLeaks site and two newer sites, DCLeaks.com and Guccifer 2.0.

"Only Russia's senior-most officials could have authorized these activities," said a statement from the director of national intelligence, James R. Clapper Jr., and the Department of Homeland Security. The statement did not name President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, but that appeared to be the intention.

Emails from the Democratic National Committee appeared to show party officials conspiring to sabotage the campaign of Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, leading to the resignation of Debbie Wasserman Schultz as chairwoman and the departure of several staff members from the organization.

Much of the Russian efforts in the election appear directed at undermining the campaigns of Mrs. Clinton and other Democrats. Donald J. Trump, the Republican nominee, has called Mr. Putin a better leader than Mr. Obama and suggested a more collaborative relationship between the United States and Russia.

The Russian efforts have become a talking point in the campaign. In Sunday's debate, Mrs. Clinton called Russia's interference in the campaign unprecedented. "And believe me, they're not doing it to get me elected," she said. "They're doing it to try to influence the election for Donald Trump."

In the debate on Sept. 26, Mr. Trump said the identity of the hackers was unknown and "could be somebody sitting on their bed that weighs 400 pounds, O.K."

On Sunday night, he again suggested that Russia might not be to blame for the email releases and said that "they blame Russia because they think they're trying to tarnish me with Russia."

"I know nothing about Russia. I know — I know about Russia, but I know nothing about the inner workings of Russia," Mr. Trump continued. "I don't deal there. I have no businesses there. I have no loans from Russia."

Obama To Consider 'Proportional' Response To Russia Hacking

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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 Says It Will Retaliate Against Russia For DNC Hack

By Tim Johnson

McClatchy, October 11, 2016

The Obama administration plans a "proportional" response to punish Russia for hacking into the Democratic

National Committee and other cyberattacks aimed at disrupting Nov. 8 elections, a White House spokesman said Monday.

Spokesman Josh Earnest said Russia would not be given warning.

"It is unlikely that our response would be announced in advance," Earnest said, without specifying if the retaliation would be a cyberattack or other action.

"The president has talked before about the significant capabilities that the U.S. government has to both defend our systems in the United States but also carry out offensive operations in other countries," Earnest said, according to a pool report. "So there are a range of responses that are available to the president and he will consider a response that is proportional."

The Obama administration on Friday asserted that Russian President Vladimir Putin's government ordered the hacking into various U.S. political groups, including the DNC. The cyberattacks have brought bipartisan calls for retaliation, including a demand by a Texas Republican congressman, Will Hurd, a former CIA officer, that the Russian ambassador to the United States be kicked out.

Russia's Foreign Ministry has decried what it calls "unprecedented anti-Russian hysteria" in the United States.

The hacks, first announced in June, were followed by the release of some 20,000 internal emails from Democratic Party officials on the WikiLeaks website. The leak led to the ouster of Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, the DNC chairwoman, days before the party's national convention.

In its accusation last Friday, the government said the entire U.S. intelligence apparatus was "confident" that Russia was behind the attacks but said hackers were unlikely to interfere further with the upcoming election.

Republican nominee Donald Trump refused in Sunday's presidential debate to recognize that Russia was behind the hack, saying Hillary Clinton used the accusation as a smear.

Trump in late July asked Russia to use its hackers to find thousands of emails that went missing from Clinton's private server, later saying he was using sarcasm.

"She doesn't know if it's the Russians doing the hacking. Maybe there is no hacking," Trump said. "But they always blame Russia. And the reason they blame Russia because they think they're trying to tarnish me with Russia. I know nothing about Russia. I know – I know about Russia, but I know nothing about the inner workings of Russia."

White House: We Will Respond To Russia Hacks

By Tal Kopan

CNN, October 11, 2016

The White House said Tuesday it would respond to Russian hacking of US political groups, after publicly pointing the finger at Moscow for the cyberattacks last week.

The response will be "proportional," press secretary Josh Earnest said, without elaborating. He said the actions would likely not be announced ahead of time and could never be made public.

Speaking with reporters on Air Force One, Earnest said a "range" of responses were on the table.

Last Friday's announcement was the first time the government has publicly blamed another country for hacking with the goal of influencing a US election.

The joint statement from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and Department of Homeland Security said not only were they confident the hacks of Democratic political groups and campaign officials originated from high levels of the Russian government, they said the posting of those hacked emails online was part of the effort.

"The recent disclosures of alleged hacked emails on sites like DCLeaks.com and WikiLeaks and by the Guccifer 2.0 online persona are consistent with the methods and motivations of Russian-directed efforts," the statement said.

Trump seizes on hacked email, alleges collusion

Earnest's discussion of a "proportional" response is the usual language the government uses when describing its cyber actions.

National security adviser Lisa Monaco spoke in general about what the government might do last week at a Washington Post event, before the Russia statement had been released.

"We will respond in a time and place and manner of our choosing, and when we do so, we will consider a full range of tools, economic, diplomatic, criminal law enforcement, military, and some of those responses may be public, some of them may not be," Monaco said.

Pressed by moderator Ellen Nakashima, Monaco said the range of options include private diplomatic channels, intelligence operations, prosecutions and sanctions – all taking into account broader considerations on the world stage.

"We will act responsibly, proportionately, and do so in a time and place of our choosing," Monaco said. "The primary guiding and overarching focus in those discussions is about what is in the national security interest of the United States. That is the North Star for those discussions."

President Barack Obama signed an executive order in April 2015 authorizing a new sanctions power that allows retribution for cyberattacks, but it has never been used.

The promise of retaliation came the same day that a new tranche of emails stolen in a hack of Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman was posted on WikiLeaks, the third such release from the hacked email of John Podesta.

The campaign has not disputed the contents of the emails, but have noted that it would be difficult to determine if alterations were made or context was intentionally omitted.

Moscow's Ambassador to the US Sergey Kislyak, asked about the US accusations, said Tuesday that "it's not correct, and when it comes to the implication to the elections in the United States, it's something I'm not planning to discuss."

Kislyak, who was speaking at The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, then tried to cast doubt on the allegations.

"We've seen a number (of allegations) by the colleagues in US intelligence that weren't exactly proven by the history," Kislyak said, and offered a recent example.

Referring to the bombing of Syrian soldiers by US jets in September, an event US officials described as an unfortunate accident based on faulty information, Kislyak said "we saw statements that the week ago bombardment of the Syrian troops."

He added that the strike "was based on false information."

Democrats have accused Russia of coordinating the release of the emails to benefit Donald Trump's campaign.

Russian media has covered the emails, with government-controlled Sputnik news misconstruing an email to make it seem that Clinton confidante Sidney Blumenthal had argued the Benghazi investigation was legitimate and the attack was preventable.

"Clinton was in charge of the State Department, and it failed to protect US personnel at an American consulate in Libya. If the GOP wants to raise that as a talking point against her, it is legitimate," the email said – with Sputnik attributing it to Blumenthal.

The misinformation quickly appeared as a Trump talking point at a campaign rally later in the day, where he read the sentence aloud.

But Newsweek author Kurt Eichenwald recognized the supposed Blumenthal sentences as part of a lengthy story he wrote.

"The Russians were quoting two sentences from a 10,000-word piece I wrote for Newsweek, which Blumenthal had emailed to Podesta," Eichenwald wrote in Newsweek. "It is impossible to look at the Blumenthal email and not realize that this 10,000 words that follows are from Newsweek," he said on CNN's "New Day" on Tuesday.

The Trump campaign did not respond to a request for explanation why he parroted misstatements published by Russian-controlled news.

White House Says U.S. Will Retaliate Against Russia For Hacking

By Louis Nelson

Politico, October 11, 2016

White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest promised on Tuesday that the U.S. would deliver a "proportional" response to Russia's alleged hacking of American computer systems.

In addition to pledging that the U.S. "will ensure that our response is proportional," Earnest told reporters flying on Air Force One that "it is unlikely that our response would be announced in advance."

"The president has talked before about the significant capabilities that the U.S. government has to both defend our systems in the United States but also carry out offensive operations in other countries," he said as the press corps traveled with the president to a Hillary Clinton campaign event in North Carolina. "So there are a range of responses that are available to the president and he will consider a response that is proportional."

After months of speculation to that end, President Barack Obama's administration officially pointed the finger last week at Russia, blaming it for cyberattacks against political targets in the U.S. Most notably, cyberattacks earlier this summer exposed the inner workings of the Democratic National Committee by making public emails from former Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz and other top officials.

The disclosure of internal emails detailing the preference among the DNC chair and her allies for Hillary Clinton over Sen. Bernie Sanders in the Democratic primary prompted the Florida congresswoman to resign just days before her party's nominating convention in Philadelphia. Other hacks have leaked the personal emails of former secretary of state Colin Powell and Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta.

"These thefts and disclosures are intended to interfere with the U.S. election process," said Jeh Johnson, the secretary of homeland security, and James Clapper, the director of national intelligence, in a statement last week. "Such activity is not new to Moscow — the Russians have used similar tactics and techniques across Europe and Eurasia, for example, to influence public opinion there."

A spokesman for the Russian embassy in Washington unequivocally denied the allegations.

"This is another piece of nonsense! Putin's website is attacked by tens of thousands of hackers daily. Many attacks are traced to the US territory," spokesman Yury Melnik said in a statement last week. "But we don't go blaming them on the White House or Langley every time."

White House Vows 'Proportional' Response For Russian DNC Hack

Intelligence officials say files were leaked to interfere with outcome of presidential election

By Carol E. Lee And Damian Paletta

Wall Street Journal, October 11, 2016

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

Blaming Russia, How Will The U.S. Respond To Pre-election Hacks?

PBS NewsHour, October 11, 2016

HARI SREENIVASAN: Since Friday, the anti-secrecy group WikiLeaks has been releasing e-mails that were hacked from the account of Hillary Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta. The stolen messages detail how the campaign responded to important issues through the race for the White House.

It is unclear who was behind this latest digital theft, but, on Friday, the Obama administration did blame Russia for the hacking of Democratic Party Web sites earlier this year and attempts to breach state election systems, in order to influence the vote for president.

Today, White House spokesman Josh Earnest said there will be a U.S. response to the alleged Russian hacking. He told reporters aboard Air Force One: "The president has talked before about the significant capabilities that the U.S. government has to both defend our systems in the United States, but also carry out offensive operations in other countries. So, there are a range of responses that are available to the president, and he will consider a response that's proportional."

With me now to sift through what all this means in both political and diplomatic terms are the "NewsHour"'s Margaret Warner and Lisa Desjardins.

Lisa, tell me — let's start with what is in the e-mails.

LISA DESJARDINS: Right.

So, this latest dump, so people can keep track, began on Friday. These are about 2,000 e-mails, a little bit more, coming from Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta, obviously a very big player in the Clinton world now and for years.

Now, in these, we see one of the standout notes that we have gotten — there haven't been all that many — is from a Clinton 2013 speech to an Italian bank. You may have seen that quote. In the speech that was referenced in these e-mails, it was purported to say — quote — "My dream is a hemispheric common market with open trade and open borders."

Obviously, that's raised a lot of questions in this year of very heated talk about trade and especially after Clinton herself came out against one of the largest-in-history trade deals, the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

And that's probably the biggest kind of headline that's come out of these e-mails, but also they include a great deal of campaign tactics, including a 71-page briefing, sort of oppo research to some extent on Bernie Sanders. All of this was happening during that very heated primary campaign.

Now, the Clinton campaign themselves is not confirming the authenticity of any of these e-mails. It's very important to say that WikiLeaks has posted these. We know they were hacked, so the authenticity is fair to question.

And the Clinton campaign is pushing back strongly, saying this is from a state actor, and this is obviously an illegal act in politics.

HARI SREENIVASAN: All right, so, Margaret, how did these e-mails come to light in the first place?

MARGARET WARNER: Well, as Lisa said, not only did they come out on WikiLeaks, this latest batch, but there have been two other sources, something called Guccifer 2 and something called D.C. Leaks.

And the U.S. government, intelligence officials and also many cyber-experts have been sure for — at a 90 percent degree of certainty for months that two Russian spy, cyber-spy agencies, one tied to Russian intelligence, one tied to Russian military intelligence, had been behind these.

These have been known for months. FBI Director James Comey did tell the Congress, in fact, he said, "We're trying to determine just what mischief Russia is up to in connection with our election."

So, there is a difference between the hacking and the leaking. And the Russian M.O., U.S. officials believe, is that they do the hacking, and then they give them to others to do the leaking.

HARI SREENIVASAN: All right, so let's talk a little bit about the timing, coincidence or not, in an election year? What's the political fallout?

LISA DESJARDINS: Well, the fallout, first of all, has not been related directly to the content of these e-mails. I think the worst fallout for Hillary Clinton is whenever the topic of e-mails comes up, whenever the idea comes out that maybe she and her strategists are doing things in secret that the public don't know about.

The truth is, there is no indication of any wrongdoing. This is typical campaign operations for the most part in these e-mails. Some, you could say, are not good on style or there's infighting or whatever, but there is really no indication of wrongdoing here.

Instead, this whole concept of e-mails and a shadowy Clinton world is the problem for her, which they say is all sort of a shadow conspiracy. But I think there's a greater issue here, Hari, in that what these e-mails are doing is, it's changing how our political operatives communicate.

For example, I know sources now who will not communicate with me over e-mail, who must communicate by phone. When our leaders aren't able to talk to each other over the most common device they use, that's a success for the opponents of the United States. And that's something that may be happened now already.

HARI SREENIVASAN: Margaret, that statement from Josh Earnest, that the U.S. has the potential for a proportional response, what can the administration do? This was almost one of the first explicit moments where we said we are in an active cyber-war.

MARGARET WARNER: Well, in which we outed somebody, another country.

The only other one ever outed is North Korea. Russia has done previous hacks of U.S. government databases, and so have the Chinese. This time, it was different.

First, the reasons they did it, I was told by a senior cyber-official, had a lot to do with the upcoming debate. Julian Assange had been saying there was going to be a new dump. The administration strongly believes, as Lisa said, that this is all aimed to help Trump and hurt Clinton.

And so this was definitely, at a time a very high tension with the Russians anyway over Aleppo, a way of trying the neutralize Trump from saying, who knows if the Russians are behind it?

Of course he said it again. What's in the kit bag? A lot of things for the United States to retaliate. The name and shame may be the only thing it does, trying the put Russia on notice that, look, you're crossing a line here because you're interfering with, as Lisa again said, the sanctity of the American election system, not just communications, but the real sanctity here, sowing mistrust and doubt.

But, certainly, if the U.S. wanted to turn out all the lights in Moscow, it could, but Russia could do the same to New York. So, the administration has been reluctant to get into any kind of real cyber-war.

HARI SREENIVASAN: Margaret Warner, Lisa Desjardins, thanks so much.

The head of WikiLeaks, Julian Assange, has said they could release 100,000 pages of new material before the election.

Obama Might Adopt A Wait-and-see Approach In Response To Russia's Hacking.

Slate, October 11, 2016

It seems that President Obama will retaliate against Russia for hacking into American voter rolls and the Democratic Party's emails. The question is how he's going to retaliate. The answer isn't at all clear. Cyberespionage and cyberconflict have been going on for decades, but the most basic issues of cyberstrategy—how to align goals, means, and national interests— remain unaddressed.

In a statement last Friday, the director of national intelligence, Gen. James Clapper, and the secretary of Homeland Security, Jeh Johnson, said that "only Russia's senior-most officials could have authorized these activities" and that their intent was "to interfere with the U.S. election process."

This was a big deal. Not long before then, U.S. officials had told lawmakers that the hack was Russian without specifying whether it came from the Kremlin, rogue underlings, or criminals; nor did they speak definitively about motives. If the hacker's identity was unclear and if the hacking might simply be espionage (something we do a lot as well), there would be no basis for retaliation. But the Clapper-Johnson statement—which had to have been approved (if not directed) by the White House—signaled there is no ambiguity: U.S. intelligence agencies have determined with "high confidence" that Vladimir Putin or someone close to him did the deed—and not just to gather intelligence,but to undermine our electoral system. Therefore, action is warranted, and I am told that Obama and his national-security team are weighing specific options.

They (and, therefore, we) are wandering in all-but-untrod territory. When a nation is attacked with more conventional weapons, its leaders either declare war or devise some proportional response—"retaliation in kind," as it's called. The Russian hack is hardly a cause for all-out war, but what would a proportional response be? Hacking Russian voter rolls? For what purpose? Leaking some of Putin's emails? Possibly, depending on what they say, but an American president might not want Putin to know that the National Security Agency is hacking his email (if, in fact, it is), and therefore retaliation of that sort might do more harm to U.S. intelligence than to Putin.

The few times Obama or his aides have publicly discussed these issues, they have said that the United States reserves the right to answer a cyberattack with noncyber means. For instance, after North Korea hacked Sony Pictures, Obama retaliated by imposing new economic sanctions on Kim Jong-un's regime. Did that have an effect? It's unclear. North Korea hasn't hacked into American targets since, not that we know of anyway. Then again, Kim might believe that we retaliated with cyber measures, too. A few days after Obama announced that he would respond to the Sony hack in a time and manner of our choosing, North Korea's internet was shut down for 10 hours. This wasn't hard to do: There are only about 1,000 internet protocals in the whole country, all of them hooked up to a single server in China; and such an attack could be seen as a "proportional" response.

In fact, the United States was not behind this shutdown. However, if Kim and his aides thought otherwise, and if North Korea had a more robust cyberoffensive arsenal, they might have ratcheted up the conflict, hacking yet another American target. Then what would have happened?

In dealing with Russian cyberattacks, it's worth noting that Moscow does have robust cyberoffensive capabilities—not as robust or agile as America's, but that's less relevant than it might seem. Because the United States is so dependent on computer networks, it's not a good idea to spur

a game of escalation with a nation that's skilled at exploiting those networks' vulnerabilities. And Russia is quite skilled at that.

We have bigger and better rocks to throw at other houses, but our house is made of glass that shatters more easily.

When a nation's leaders respond to an attack (any sort of attack), they might have one of several goals in mind: to obliterate the aggressor (in extreme cases); to mete out simple punishment (an eye for an eye); or to strike back in a way that inflicts damage and sends a message—"If you don't stop now, we will hit you much harder, or destroy something you value more, the next time."

Russia's hacking of voter-registration rolls and politicians' emails doesn't warrant obliteration; and it's unclear what kind of cyber counterpunch would compel the Russians to back down. If the cyberconflict escalated, it would play into their strengths and our weaknesses. Again, our cyberoffensive powers are superior to theirs, as President Obama recently boasted; but our society is more vulnerable to even inferior cyberoffensives. We have bigger and better rocks to throw at other houses, but our house is made of glass that shatters more easily.

In other words, responding to a Russian cyberattack with a cyberattack of our own doesn't seem to be a winning game. There might be a place for cyberskirmishing in whatever we do—intensifying and redirecting the cyberespionage that we too have long been conducting. But political and economic pressures—measures that play into our strengths and their weaknesses—are likely to have more impact.

Then again, there's another way of reading the Clapper-Johnson statement. Richard Clarke, former White House counterterrorism chief and now a cybersecurity consultant, speculates that it might be an attempt to deter the Russians from interfering with our election any further. "Maybe Obama has decided not to do anything until after the election," Clarke said in a phone conversation. Maybe, instead, he's waiting to see whether the Russians actually try to alter the election's results, for instance by removing Democrats' names from the registration rolls they've hacked or by altering the transmission of vote counts. Meanwhile, Obama is telling the Russians that he knows what they're doing, who's doing it, and why. The Clapper-Johnson statement said that "senior-most Russian officials" were interfering with "the U.S. election process." Maybe (and Clarke emphasized that he has no inside knowledge of what's really going on inside the White House) the message to the Russians is: We're watching. If there are signs on Election Day that they you're interfering with the election results, then the hammer comes down.

It's still not clear what form that hammer might take. In any case, responding now, in some half-hearted way that the Russians could match, might just provoke them to step up their hacking—might actually impel them to do something on Election Day. It could be that Obama is taking aim but holding fire as long as they don't follow through on what they seem to be preparing to do.

Nobody knows much about "cyberdeterrence"—what it means, what it requires. At this moment, a panel of the Pentagon's Defense Science Board is writing a report on cyberdeterrence, the first official report on the subject, even though cyberweapons have been in existence for decades. We might be witnessing an attempt at forming a cyberdeterrence policy in the midst of an actual international confrontation. Whether it succeeds (if that, in fact, is what it is) may be determined by what happens, or doesn't happen, on Nov. 8.

John Podesta Says Russian Spies Hacked His Emails To Sway Election

By Amy Chozick

New York Times, October 11, 2016

In his first remarks since WikiLeaks began releasing thousands of his hacked emails, John D. Podesta, Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman, said Tuesday that Russian intelligence officials intent on swaying the election to Donald J. Trump had been responsible for the illegal breach into his account.

"I've been involved in politics for nearly five decades," Mr. Podesta told reporters aboard the Clinton campaign plane. "This definitely is the first campaign that I've been involved with in which I've had to tangle with Russian intelligence agencies," he added, "who seem to be doing everything that they can on behalf of our opponent."

Without verifying the authenticity of the emails, Mr. Podesta said that he had spoken with the F.B.I. "as a victim" of hacking. The Obama administration, like Mr. Podesta, believes the Russian government has been trying to help Mr. Trump with its hacking, including the theft of emails of the Democratic National Committee this year.

Mr. Podesta said Mr. Trump had "essentially adopted lock, stock and barrel" a foreign policy that would favor the interests of President Vladimir V. Putin.

Mr. Podesta also cast blame on Julian Assange, the head of WikiLeaks and an avowed critic of Mrs. Clinton. He said WikiLeaks had strategically released the first batch of his emails Friday afternoon to distract attention from the damaging video that had just emerged of Mr. Trump making lewd comments about women.

"It wasn't any coincidence, I think, that within minutes of the 'Access Hollywood' tape coming out, they decided that this was their countermove," Mr. Podesta said.

The hacked emails have not done much to help Mr. Trump in the polls, but they have proved to be a persistent

distraction. Earlier on Tuesday, some newly released emails suggested that a senior Clinton campaign aide had been in touch with government officials about the release of her State Department emails, exchanges that prompted accusations of collusion from Republicans on Tuesday.

The timing of the release of Mrs. Clinton's State Department emails was critical information for her aides, who were devising strategy on how to respond to any story lines that could emerge. But the communication between the campaign and the Justice Department appeared to have simply been updates on a court case related to the emails, information that was publicly available.

Brian Fallon, the campaign's press secretary, told other campaign aides in May 2015 that he had just received information about a case from someone at the department.

"DOJ just filed a briefing saying the gov't proposes releasing HRC's cache of work-related emails in January 2016," Mr. Fallon wrote.

"Get out!???" replied Cheryl D. Mills, a lawyer and longtime adviser to Mrs. Clinton.

The correspondence came months before the F.B.I., which is part of the Justice Department, opened an investigation into Mrs. Clinton's handling of classified emails at the State Department. In July, the F.B.I. director, James B. Comey, said Mrs. Clinton had been "extremely careless" but recommended no charges, which the Attorney General, Loretta Lynch, accepted.

Though the information Mr. Fallon passed on reflected no internal Justice Department thinking, the connection between a senior Clinton aide and the department stoked accusations that the Obama administration had conspired with Mrs. Clinton's camp.

The correspondence released Tuesday showed "a level of collusion which calls into question the entire investigation into her private server," said Jason Miller, a senior adviser to Mr. Trump's campaign. Gov. Mike Pence of Indiana, Mr. Trump's running mate, also brought it up at two events in Iowa.

The day after Mr. Fallon's exchange on the Justice Department's court filing, he provided additional information to other campaign aides on the case. "DOJ folks inform me there is a status hearing in this case this morning," he wrote. "So we could have a window into the judge's thinking about this proposed production schedule as quickly as today."

Mr. Fallon declined to comment on the exchanges. A Justice Department spokeswoman did not respond to requests for comment.

'Trump Campaign Had Advance Warning' About Russian-Backed Wikileaks Dump

By William Cummings

USA Today, October 12, 2016

Hillary Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta's — who had more of his hacked emails released by Wikileaks Tuesday — said there is reason to believe the Donald Trump campaign had "advance warning" about the document release and implied there was a degree of coordination between the campaign and Russian intelligence.

More than 5,000 of Podesta's electronic communications have been released since the first round of the recent Wikileaks document drops.

"I've been involved in politics for nearly five decades. And this definitely is the first campaign that I've been involved with in which I've had to tangle with Russian Intelligence agencies," Posesta told reporters on board Clinton's campaign plane. They "seem to be doing everything they can on behalf of our opponent," Podesta added.

Podesta pointed to Trump adviser Roger Stone, who claimed in August to be in touch with Wikileaks founder Julian Assange, and who repeatedly tweeted about the coming email release in recent months.

"And he confirmed at that time that the information that Assange had came from Guccifer 2.0," Podesta said. Guccifer 2.0 is a hacker, or group of hackers, that U.S. officials have tied to Russian intelligence. "Around the same time, Stone pointed his finger at me and said, I could expect some treatment that would kind of expose me and ultimately sent out a tweet that said 'it would be my time in the barrel.'"

Podesta concluded that it is therefore "a reasonable conclusion, that Mr. Stone had advance warning, and the Trump campaign had advance warning about what Assange was going to do."

Podesta speculates that Russia released the hacked emails to sway the election in Trump's favor because, "they've found somebody who essentially has adopted lock, stock and barrel the Putin foreign policy" or "Mr. Trump's deep engagement and ties with Russian interests in his business affairs."

"We don't know, we can't be certain why the Russian government seems to be trying to interfere in this election in favor of Mr. Trump, but we do know that is in fact what has been going on, the hacks, the leaks, and the ongoing support for one side of this campaign," said Podesta.

Assessing The Threat Of Russia Hacking The US Election

CNBC, October 11, 2016

Much of this year's election cycle has centered around the relationship between the U.S. and Russia, especially U.S. allegations that Russia is using cyberattacks to disrupt the democratic process. But the true nature of the threat is a little different than most Americans imagine.

Last week, the Obama administration accused senior Russian officials of authorizing hacks into the Democratic

National Committee and other targets. They also pointed to "scanning and probing" of online election rolls in some states that seemed to be coming from Russian servers.

The U.S. government may be reticent about retaliating against Russia with its own cyberattacks right now, according to The New York Times, because Russia could come back to disrupt the U.S. elections next month. The Times wrote, "Attacks on online voter registration rolls could sow chaos at polling places, and the election infrastructure has never truly been tested against a power like Russia."

However, several cybersecurity experts we spoke with suggested the harm that could be caused by Russian attacks would be more psychological than anything else. According to a statement released last week by the U.S. intelligence community and Department of Homeland Security, the federal government has determined it would be "extremely difficult" for even a nation-state to use cyberattacks to alter actual ballot counts in America's decentralized election system.

"It's not clear whether these attacks could change the integrity of the data," said Rahul Telang, a professor at Carnegie Mellon University who studies the economics of information security and privacy. "The storyline that someone was trying to access these systems is more damaging than any actual damage to the data."

Most state voting systems still maintain a paper trail and other checks and balances, but it would take only one perceived success to introduce doubt about the process for many Americans. In a September poll by The Washington Post and ABC News, half of Donald Trump's supporters already aren't confident that the "votes for president across the country will be accurately counted this year."

"Russia probably has the ability to hack parts of our election system, but perhaps more importantly, it would be easier to target a particular city and have some success against the integrity or credibility of the election," said Kenneth Geers, senior research scientist at cybersecurity firm Comodo and a former NSA analyst. "You could even imagine a particular city being targeted so it has all Trump votes or all Clinton votes, and all of a sudden the whole system is in question."

It wouldn't be the first time Russian hackers have created doubt in an election. Russia employed similar techniques against former Soviet republics Estonia and Ukraine, said Geers. But there isn't much evidence that hackers could directly access voting machines or even alter election rolls, said Telang. The attacks on election rolls that were discovered in Arizona and Illinois were more about stealing data, he said, not actually changing records.

Art Gilliland, CEO of cybersecurity firm Skyport Systems, disagreed with that detail. "If you can steal the data, you can change it." But he agreed that the biggest risk is psychological. "They could set a tone in the community — can we even trust this? That's the biggest risk."

"The integrity of the voting process strikes right at the heart of our federal government and who we are as a nation." -Marcus Christian, Partner, Mayer Brown

The experts who spoke to CNBC didn't think the U.S. is holding back against Russia for fear of Election Day damage. Russia has an inherent interest in doing things that make problems for the U.S., said Marcus Christian, a partner in Mayer Brown's cybersecurity and data privacy group. If they're planning on interrupting the election, it probably won't help that the United States is trying not to upset them.

"Even if the U.S. withholds attacks against Russia, who's to say they won't indulge in some of these tactics during the election?" Telang asked.

America's diverse election systems across its cities, counties and states bring both pros and cons. The biggest pro is that there isn't one giant national system that could be hacked at once (unlike, for example, Estonia's centralized system). The con is that there may be less-secure systems that could be individually attacked.

Brett McDowell, executive director of the FIDO Alliance — a group of 250 companies that are working to improve user security — said the oldest systems could be the safest, because they may not be on the internet at all.

In a statement Monday, Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson said 33 states have approached the department about getting help with cybersecurity services. DHS is offering voluntary "hygiene" scans and vulnerability assessments for local authorities. Johnson has also suggested the election system should be added to the government's list of critical infrastructure, such as the power grid and national memorials. The department did not respond to requests for comment.

"The integrity of the voting process strikes right at the heart of our federal government and who we are as a nation," said Christian of Mayer Brown. "So whether or not it's designated as critical infrastructure, it's something that has to be protected."

Wyden: Vote-By-Mail Would Protect Against Cyber Interference

Morning Consult, October 11, 2016

Senate Intelligence Committee member and staunch privacy advocate Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) said Tuesday that the hacking of the Democratic National Committee and Democratic and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee strengthens his argument that strong encryption needs to be protected without a "backdoor."

He added that a vote-by-mail system on a national level would help avoid cyber interference in elections. Oregon engages in the vote-by-mail system in which residents vote

entirely through the U.S. Postal Service, instead of polling stations. The state became the first to conduct a presidential election entirely by mail in 2000.

"The announcement that the Russian government is responsible for the hacks into American political organizations and election systems is one more reminder how foolish it would be to undermine strong encryption, which is the foundation of digital security," Wyden said in an emailed statement to Morning Consult. "History has shown us that anytime you build a backdoor for the good guys, bad guys will exploit that security weakness. I'll certainly be making that argument to my colleagues when Congress returns."

The Department of Homeland Security and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence confirmed Friday the Russian government orchestrated the hacks on the DNC and DCCC that led to the publication of party officials' emails on websites like WikiLeaks and DCLeaks.com. "These thefts and disclosures are intended to interfere with the U.S. election process," the agencies said in a Friday statement.

"We should not underestimate how dangerous how attacks on election systems could be," Wyden said. "If a foreign state were to eliminate registration records for a particular group of Americans immediately before an election, they could very likely disenfranchise those Americans and swing the results of an election."

To protect the integrity of a vote, he supports expanding Oregon's vote-by-mail system nationwide.

Wyden's comments on encryption also come after a prolonged debate in the Senate and intelligence communities over encrypted technologies and the government's role when investigating crimes or terrorism. This same issue came to a head earlier this year when the Federal Bureau of Investigation filed a court order compelling Apple Inc. to unlock an encrypted iPhone belonging to one of the San Bernardino shooters. The FBI ended up getting a third-party firm to get in to the phone after prolonged pushback from Apple and the privacy community.

Trump Says Russia's Role In Hacks Unclear, U.S. Intel Community Says Otherwise

SC Magazine, October 11, 2016

Just two days after the U.S. intelligence community expressed confidence that Russia was behind the DNC hacks, Trump raised a skeptical eyebrow.

Although Donald Trump on Sunday again expressed doubt that Russia is behind hacks at the Democratic National Committee and other organizations, as well as the subsequent leak of emails and confidential documents to WikiLeaks, NBC News reported on Monday that Trump had received security briefings implicating the Russians prior to the debate.

"I notice, anytime anything wrong happens, they like to say the Russians are – she doesn't know if it's the Russians doing the hacking. Maybe there is no hacking," Trump said of Clinton at the Oct. 9 presidential debate.

But NBC quoted a senior intelligence official as saying "both candidates have all the information they need to be crystal clear," while noting that "to profess not to know at this point is willful misrepresentation."

Organizations affiliated with the Democratic Party have reported a number of breaches in recent months. The infiltrations are believed to be the work of two different Russian groups identified by CrowdStrike as Cozy Bear (aka CozyDuke or APT 29) and Fancy Bear (aka Sofacyor APT 28), working separately. The former is likely affiliated with Russia's military intelligence service, the GRU, according to CrowdStrike Co-founder and CTO Dimitri Alperovitch in a blog post. This group accessed the DNC network last summer where it monitored email and chat.

But it wasn't until Fancy Bear, which Alperovitch said could be a surrogate of the Federal Security Service hacked into the network and pilfered two files in April that the DNC was alerted to the intrusion. The group was formerly led by Russian President Vladmir Putin, who has spoken favorably of Trump.

"We've had lots of experience with both of these actors attempting to target our customers in the past and know them well," wrote Alperovich, who said CrowdStrike's incident response team was called in by the DNC. "In fact, our team considers them some of the best adversaries out of all the numerous nation-state, criminal and hacktivist/terrorist groups we encounter on a daily basis."

But Trump has repeatedly questioned the veracity of claims that Russia is behind the hacks, most recently telling debate moderator Martha Raddatz that Clinton and the Democrats "always blame Russia. And the reason they blame Russia is because they think they're trying to tarnish me with Russia."

The reality star/businessman turned presidential candidate has been under fire from critics for his praise of Putin and his alleged business dealings with Russian interests. Opponents have speculated that Trump hasn't yet released his tax returns because they might reveal such investments.

The candidate's latest pronouncements came just after the Department of Homeland Security and the Director of National Intelligence issued a joint statement saying they are "confident that the Russian government directed the recent compromises of emails from U.S. persons and institutions, including from U.S. political organizations."

The disclosures of "alleged hacked emails on sites like DCLeaks.com and WikiLeaks and by the Guccifer 2.0 online persona are consistent with the methods and motivations of Russian-directed efforts. These thefts and disclosures are

intended to interfere with the U.S. election process," the statement said, adding that Russia has employed "similar tactics" in Europe and Eurasia. "We believe, based on the scope and sensitivity of these efforts, that only Russia's senior-most officials could have authorized these activities."

Russia has repeatedly denied allegations that it is behind the hacks or that it seeks to influence the U.S. election. Additionally, WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has refused to reveal the source of the emails that he has leaked thus far.

Maryland Man Suspected Of Largest-ever Bank Hack Arrested In Russia: Report

By Andrew Blake

Washington Times, October 11, 2016

A Maryland man accused of participating in a yearslong scheme described by the Justice Department as "securities fraud on cyber steroids" was arrested in Russia on immigration charges several months ago following a lengthy manhunt, Bloomberg reported Tuesday.

Joshua Aaron, 32, was arrested in May after police showed up at his apartment near downtown Moscow and found he had violated the terms of his visa, Bloomberg reported. He was subsequently jailed, fined the equivalent of $80 and ordered to leave the country, according to Bloomberg.

The FBI issued an arrest warrant for the Potomac native in June 2015 upon charging him with crimes including conspiracy to commit computer hacking, security fraud and aggravated identity theft.

Despite being placed on the bureau's "most wanted" list of suspected cyber criminals, however, the accused fraudster won't necessarily stand trial stateside anytime soon: Russia doesn't have an extradition treaty with the U.S., and an FBI spokeswoman told Bloomberg this week that Mr. Aaron was not presently in U.S. custody.

Instead Russia has offered to send Mr. Aaron to the U.S. in exchange for a "reciprocal" act, according to court transcripts seen by Bloomberg. In the meantime, he is presumably free to leave Russia, Bloomberg reported.

Mr. Aaron told Russian prosecutors in a recent court hearing that he did not know he had been charged in the U.S., according to Bloomberg.

The U.S. Embassy did not immediately respond to Russia's request, and declined to comment when contacted by Bloomberg this week, according to the report.

The FBI believes Mr. Aaron participated in a "sprawling criminal enterprise" that illegally made millions of dollars using sensitive information acquired by hacking into several Wall Street companies including JPMorgan Chase — a security breach U.S. Attorney Preet Bhara called "the largest theft of customer data from a U.S. financial institution in history."

Upon obtaining the hacked data, investigators say Mr. Aaron and his partners "used the contact information of millions of American citizens to manipulate the price and volume of traded shares in numerous publicly traded stocks by means of deceptive and misleading email campaigns, and manipulative, prearranged stock trading."

"After causing a stock's price and trading volume to increase artificially during the days or weeks of the email promotional campaign, members of the conspiracy, including Aaron, began dumping, or selling, their shares of the stock in a coordinated fashion, often resulting in huge profits to members of the conspiracy," according to the FBI.

Two Israeli men – Gery Shalon and Ziv Orenstein — were charged alongside Mr. Aaron and extradited to the U.S. earlier this year. Both pleaded not guilty when they were arraigned in June and face a maximum of 20 years in prison if convicted of all counts.

Mr. Aaron entered Russia by way of Ukraine on May 23, 2015, but failed to adhere to the terms of a three-year visa that required him to exit and re-enter Russia every six months, according to Bloomberg. The FBI suspected he was residing in eastern Europe when it filed a federal arrest warrant less than two weeks later.

About 83 million JPMorgan Chase customers had their personal records compromised as a result of a 2014 security breach, prosecutors said.

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Australian Report Warns Of Possible Damaging Cyberattacks

By Rod McGuirk

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — Extremist groups could have the capabilities to launch damaging cyberattacks on Australia within three years, a government report on the nation's cybersecurity said on Wednesday.

Such groups seeking to harm Western interests currently pose "a low cyberthreat," despite demonstrating a savvy understanding of social media and exploiting the internet for propaganda purposes, the Australian Cybersecurity Center report on current threats said.

While their cybercapabilities were "rudimentary" and capable of compromising only poorly secured, internet-connected services, they showed signs of improving significantly in the near future, the report said.

"It is unlikely terrorists will be able to compromise a secure network and generate a significant disruptive or destructive effect for at least two or three years," the report said.

Minister assisting the prime minister for cybersecurity, Dan Tehan, described the threat of extremist cyberattack as "real."

"We have to understand that when it comes to cyberterrorism, there is a growing threat," Tehan told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

Foreign states posed the greatest level of threat to Australia. The intelligence service of an unnamed country hacked into the Australian Bureau of Meteorology last year and used malware to compromise other connected government networks, the report said.

Local media reports said China was behind the attack on the bureau, which is linked through its computers to other government agencies, including the Defense Department.

The report said information had likely been stolen and that the bureau's security controls had been insufficient.

The Australian Cybersecurity Center responded to 1,095 serious cybersecurity incidents in government systems in the 18 months through June 2016.

Alaistar MacGibbon, special adviser to the prime minister on cybersecurity, described the Australian mitigation of the cyberthreat to government and business as "world class."

"But we're never going to be able to stop all the incidents. By the very nature of computer technology, we're constantly evolving our defenses against a constantly evolving attack," MacGibbon said.

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Australia Government Cyber Attack Came From Foreign Intelligence Service: Report

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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G7 Sets Common Cyber-security Guidelines For Financial Sector

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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

G7 Agrees On New Cybersecurity Guidelines For Global Finance

Fortune, October 11, 2016

The Group of Seven industrial powers said on Tuesday they had agreed on guidelines on how to protect the global financial sector from cyber attacks.

Policymakers around the world have become increasingly concerned about financial companies falling victim to cyber criminals in recent years.

"Cyber risks are growing more dangerous and diverse, threatening to disrupt our interconnected global financial systems," according to the guidelines agreed by G7 finance ministers and central bankers.

The guidelines were in a three-page document posted on the Web pages of G7 government agencies. The G7 comprises Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United States.

The guidelines instruct governments to make sure financial regulators are policing the cyber-security readiness of companies. Governments are also supposed to notify one another about joint threats and cooperate to contain computer system breaches.

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"Maintaining trust and confidence in the financial sector significantly improves when entities and public authorities have the ability to mutually assist each other," according to the guidelines.

Second Hacker Group Targets SWIFT Users, Symantec Warns

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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

Cyber-attacks 'Targeted Nuclear Lab'

Chicago Tribune, October 11, 2016

TOKYO – A research center at the University of Toyama famous for its work on tritium, a substance used to fuel nuclear fusion reactors, is feared to have been targeted by cyber-attacks over a period of about six months, according to an internal investigation by the university and other sources.

The possibility of cyber-attacks was discovered in June of this year. Information is feared to have been stolen from the computer terminal of a researcher at the university's Hydrogen Isotope Research Center.

An expert on cybersecurity said: "Pieces of information important to national security were among the data targeted. It is urgent to improve the level of security at universities that store information assets."

Targeted cyber-attacks aim at stealing information from specific individuals and organizations. In this incident, a personal computer used by a researcher specializing in science and engineering studies on tritium was found to have been attacked.

The PC was infected with a computer virus in November last year and had been subject to remote control

until late December. During the period, more than 1,000 compressed files were produced by the malware.

The attacker is believed to have produced the compressed files to more easily transmit the information to the outside. Huge volumes of data were transmitted during the time.

Additionally, in March this year more compressed files were produced and the data they contained transmitted to the outside.

The problem came to light in June when an outside entity notified the research center of the suspicious transmissions.

An examination revealed that the compressed files leaked in March this year contained the results of research into how to remove contaminated water discharged from the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant.

However, the attacker coded the files, preventing authorities from confirming the specific data contained in the large number of compressed files suspected to have been stolen until late last year.

Traces indicate that the attacker searched for the word "IAEA," an acronym for the International Atomic Energy Agency, and documents related to the word.

Emails containing malware used to facilitate targeted cyber-attacks were sent to other researchers at the center around the same time the researcher's PC was infected.

The university has admitted that the cyber-attacks occurred.

An official of the Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Ministry said: "As far as we currently know, no confidential information was contained in the files suspected to have been stolen. However, we have requested the university examine the impact in detail, including what kinds of information were included in the parts of the files that cannot be decoded."

However, authorities determined that other personal information may also have been stolen from the researcher's PC targeted in the cyber-attack. The personal information of 1,493 people belonging to other universities and research institutes with which the University of Toyama has conducted joint studies may have been leaked.

Despite the possibility that the attacker would use the personal information to target a wider range of people, as of the beginning of this month the University of Toyama's research center had yet to notify the people concerned of the potential leak.

The research center conducts basic and applied studies of tritium, which can be a primary fuel source for nuclear fusion reactors. The center has established a reputation for technologies capable of handling highly concentrated tritium.

It conducts studies in collaboration with other research institutes at home and abroad, including the National Institute for Fusion Science and Osaka University.

Itsuro Nishimoto, chief engineering officer of LAC Co., a security service firm, said: "Leaks of personal information from cyber-attacks are often viewed as problematic. But in reality, damage to research achievements and corporate secrets are much more serious. Partly because such damage does not surface in many cases, awareness of the issue throughout society is weak. But people should have a sense of urgency when intellectual properties that are also important for national security are targeted."

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An email sent to a researcher at the University of Toyama's Hydrogen Isotope Research Center, which was the subject of cyber-attacks, contained awkward Japanese sentences, according to sources.

The research center is famous for its studies of tritium, which can be the main fuel for nuclear fusion reactors.

"It's possible it [the email] was written by a foreigner," an official of the university said.

The university's internal probe also found that about 59,000 data files, which accounted for most of those in a personal computer that was infected with a computer virus, may have been stolen.

According to the university's probe, a researcher at the center specializing in science and engineering studies on tritium received the email in question on Nov. 24 last year.

The sender said they were a student at a famous private university in Tokyo and had met the researcher previously at an academic gathering. They asked the researcher to answer some questions related to the sender's ongoing studies.

The email said the questions were in an attached file, which the researcher opened.

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Tritium

The nuclei of the element comprises one proton and two neutrons. Because tritium is heavier than ordinary hydrogen, it is also called tritiated hydrogen. Highly concentrated liquid tritium can cause nuclear fusion reactions, making it an essential fuel for nuclear fusion reactors and raw material for hydrogen bombs.

As Airlines Digitize, They Are Confronted With Increased Cybersecurity Risks

Fast Company, October 11, 2016

Since the start of last year, major airlines including United, American, Delta, Southwest, and JetBlue have all seen flights delayed or canceled due to on-the-ground computer issues.

And while none of the outages have been linked to deliberate sabotage, it's likely that hackers do probe aviation systems looking for potential vulnerabilities, whether in

ticketing systems, air traffic control networks, or computer systems onboard planes, experts say.

"We don't have a lot [of hacker attempts] in the airline systems yet where they've been successful," says Mickey Roach, a partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers who works with cybersecurity issues. "We know that they're trying."

Last year, United reportedly banned security researcher Chris Roberts after he implied he could take control of the plane's digital systems by connecting to a computer accessible from his seat. And while the airline has said the technique wouldn't actually work, a report issued last year by the Government Accountability Office issued a general warning that increasingly connected systems on planes could boost the possibility of cyberattacks or malware entering through computers brought on board by airline staff. It's likely that hackers do probe aviation systems looking for potential vulnerabilities, whether in ticketing systems, air traffic control networks, or computer systems onboard planes.

"For example, the presence of personal smartphones and tablets in the cockpit increases the risk of a system being compromised by trusted insiders, both malicious and non-malicious, if these devices have the capability to transmit information to aircraft avionics systems," according to the report.

Similarly, the GAO warned that plans by the Federal Aviation Administration for more interconnected air traffic control systems would likely require greater attention to cybersecurity—not as necessary in existing systems with limited connectivity. In essence, as aviation technology modernizes and more closely resembles other computer networks, it's vulnerable to the same threats seen in other industries and to a wider range of attackers with the knowledge necessary to inflict damage, says Tim Erlin, senior director of IT security and risk strategist at the security firm Tripwire.

"These traditional systems require physical presence or physical access. They require specialized equipment to access them," he says. "There's a tendency to make an assumption of security through obscurity."

Airlines are making progress, he says, by being more mindful of potential threats and how to prevent them. They're also increasingly sharing information on potential digital threats through organizations like the Aviation Information Sharing and Analysis Center.

"The mitigation strategies are sharing information between all parties and collaboration," wrote Pascal Buchner, CIO of the industry trade group International Air Transport Association, via email.

Even if hackers don't gain access to in-flight systems, they can still potentially cause disruptions, tampering with ticketing systems, maintenance tracking systems, or even the computers that track where flight crews are spending the night, according to Roach. If airlines can't figure out who has a valid boarding pass, whether a plane's had all of its necessary maintenance, or if the flight crew has had enough time off to fly legally, they will be forced to cancel flights.

In other cases, airlines can lose money and face angry customers because of online fraudsters gaining access to frequent-flyer accounts. A Florida man was arrested this spring on charges that he stole more than $260,000 worth of American Airlines miles, and a man said to have knowledge of Air India's frequent flyer systems was arrested in July after he allegedly used a combination of illicitly obtained login credentials and forged paperwork to steal miles and sell airline tickets to travel agents.

"It's a big problem, because what happens is, it's not the major hacking groups that are doing this—usually it's this one-off kind of stuff," Roach says. "People's individual accounts get hacked, they transfer the points out, and then people complain, and [airlines] have to replace the points."

To help curb attacks on consumer-facing systems, last year United became the first major airline and one of the first large non-tech companies to launch a bug bounty program, rewarding hackers who report security flaws in the company's systems. "The presence of personal smartphones and tablets in the cockpit increases the risk of a system's being compromised by trusted insiders, both malicious and non-malicious."

"We did it because our overriding concern in everything we do is to ensure our customers' information is well secured and that their private data is in good hands with us," says Arlan McMillan, the airline's chief information security officer.

Participants who report bugs are rewarded with frequent flyer points, not cash, like some other bug bounty programs, and they aren't allowed to experiment with in-flight systems. So far, McMillan says, the program has delivered valuable results, though he declined to go into detail about the number or nature of detected bugs, or the number of miles paid out. While the company already had standard security measures like penetration testing in place across its servers, bug bounty hunters have still found additional flaws, says McMillan. Participants can earn up to 1 million miles for a severe bug that allows hackers to execute code on United's servers.

"We've found some interesting business logic situations that the moon has to be aligned perfectly for this vulnerability to actually present itself, so very unique cases like that," he says. "My team loves puzzles, and you can think of these types of researchers in very much the same way: They look for puzzles."

Generally, airlines have been quick to adopt new technologies, saving money and giving customers more options in how to do business with them, Tripwire's Erlin says. But many of those technologies also increase the number of ways the airlines' growingly complex processes

can go awry, whether due to out-and-out sabotage or simply unexpected technical flaws.

"In adopting that technology, they've adopted not just the security risks but the operational risks that come with that technology," he says. "The tricky part with IT is there are always new and interesting ways for things for fail."

Amid Fallout From Hack And Spying, Yahoo Disables Email Forwarding

Christian Science Monitor, October 11, 2016

After back-to-back revelations that hackers had compromised a staggering 500 million Yahoo Mail accounts and that the company had complied with a US government request to open incoming emails for surveillance, some users are having a hard time switching to any of Yahoo's competitors.

While it remains unclear how many users intend to leave over the privacy concerns and bad publicity, several told the Associated Press that their ability to do so has been hampered since the beginning of the month, when Yahoo disabled its automated email-forwarding option.

Those who had already set up their forwarding are unaffected, but those who wish to begin forwarding messages now are unable.

"This is all extremely suspicious timing," Jason Danner, who owns an information technology business in New Zealand, told the Associated Press. After 18 years using Yahoo, Mr. Danner is trying to switch.

Yahoo declined to comment beyond a three-sentence notice on its website describing the feature as "under development."

"While we work to improve it, we've temporarily disabled the ability to turn on Mail Forwarding for new forwarding addresses," the undated statement says.

This development comes after the embarrassing announcement last month that a state-sponsored adversary, which the company did not name, had stolen users' names, email addresses, passwords, phone numbers, birth dates, and security questions in late 2014, as The Christian Science Monitor's correspondent Jaikumar Vijayan reported:

In Yahoo's case, the company's failure to disclose the breach for nearly two years suggests that it did not have adequate breach detection and response capabilities or that it remained mum despite knowing about it.

Either way, the consequences are likely enormous. The leak has given hackers 500 million new keys to try and break into organizations says Rajiv Gupta, chief executive officer of security vendor Skyhigh Networks.

Many of the username and password combinations may not work or lead nowhere. But some of them will lead to sensitive information, as users tend to reuse login credentials.

Then, last week, Reuters reported that Yahoo had secretly built a custom software program designed to search all incoming email for terms provided by US intelligence officials, scanning hundreds of millions of its customers' accounts on behalf of the Federal Bureau of Investigation or National Security Agency.

"It is deeply disappointing that Yahoo declined to challenge this sweeping surveillance order, because customers are counting on technology companies to stand up to novel spying demands in court," Patrick Toomey, an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union, said in a statement. Mr. Toomey described the request as "precisely the type of general, suspicionless search that the Fourth Amendment was intended to prohibit."

Already facing a class action lawsuit over its massive hack, Yahoo could face additional legal challenges over its complicity in government surveillance, as the Monitor's Jack Detsch reported last week.

"It does certainly dovetail with our allegations," Stuart Davidson, the lawyer in the class-action case, said. "What I find most interesting is that, if the story is true that Yahoo has been giving the government access to user emails, Yahoo cannot blame criminals this time. This one is all on Yahoo."

Merissa Silk, an American expatriate mobile product manager living in Sydney, said there is an expectation that some surveillance happens in secret all the time.

"But providing the US government unrestricted access – that really, really violates our privacy," she told the AP.

Ms. Silk said she has skipped Yahoo Mail's email-forwarding feature altogether and decided, instead, to leave an out-of-office message that cites "recent data and privacy breaches" then provides customers with her new address.

Why Yahoo's Breach Could Turn The SEC Into A Cybersecurity Tiger

By Jacob Olcott

The Hill, October 11, 2016

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has 500 million new reasons to examine the rules on when companies must disclose cyber risks and attacks.

That's the number of accounts that Yahoo said were hacked in what's being called the largest data breach ever. The company on Sept. 22 blamed a "state-sponsored actor" for the theft of names, email addresses, telephone numbers, dates of birth and encrypted passwords.

While Target, the U.S. Office of Personnal Management and seemingly countless other high-profile attacks have inflamed internet security fears in recent years, the unprecedented size of the Yahoo breach and the fact that it took the company two years to disclose it is drawing unusual heat in Washington.

Six Democratic senators — Patrick Leahy (Vt.), Al Franken (Minn.), Elizabeth Warren (Mass.), Richard Blumenthal (Conn.), Ron Wyden (Ore.) and Edward Markey (Mass.) — signed a letter to Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer asking what did Yahoo know and when did it know it and what is the company doing to prevent future breaches.

The letter came a day after Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.) urged SEC Chairwoman Mary Jo White "to investigate whether Yahoo and its senior executives fulfilled their obligations to keep investors and the public informed, and whether the company made complete and accurate representations about the security of its IT [information technology] systems.

With all this attention on Capitol Hill, the Yahoo case may represent a tipping point in stepped-up action by the SEC to ensure publicly traded companies properly disclose cyber risks and incidents to their shareholders.

Financial losses from cyber crime can be huge, including money stolen, cost of intellectual property taken, recovery cost of repairing or replacing damaged networks and equipment, regulatory fines, litigation costs, reputational harm, reduced competitiveness and failed expansion in emerging markets. Juniper Research has estimated that the cost of data breaches will quadruple to $2.1 trillion globally by 2019.

The SEC saw the threat coming and in 2011 released guidance describing companies' legal obligations in cybersecurity. This guidance, which marked its fifth anniversary on Oct. 11, instructs public companies to disclose hacking incidents to shareholders that could have a material adverse effect on the business. Though written by regulators, the guidance represents a shift toward a market-based approach to cybersecurity, where companies can focus on protecting themselves without prescriptive regulations while being held accountable by their shareholders.

But confusion about what constitutes a material cyber event has led to shortcomings and inconsistency in how businesses report on their cyber health.

And that leaves investors unaware of critical cyber-related risks or incidents.

Some businesses are not aware that cyber incidents are occurring. Though corporate spending on cybersecurity technologies continues to rise, many companies still lack the ability to detect an attack in real time and respond appropriately.

Other companies do not have the accounting processes in place to perform damage assessments to determine the short- and long-term impact of data theft on revenue and profitability.

There is inconsistent understanding and interpretation of the material cyber risk and incident disclosure rules among corporate lawyers, with some using artificially high thresholds for materiality.

When information is presented to investors, it's not terribly useful. Disclosures tend to be boilerplate, vague and inaccurate. The information that would be truly relevant for investors — descriptions of cyber risk management practices, internal oversight by senior executives and board members, as well as quantitative information about cyber incidents and their real or expected financial impact — is rarely reported.

Investors can and should demand greater transparency, just as they have done in other areas of importance. In fact, many of the world's largest institutional investors are conducting direct engagements with their investment portfolios on cybersecurity.

Here are a few steps that the SEC can take to help:

Create an education campaign to raise awareness of the existing disclosure laws, including disclosure obligations and investors' rights to obtain information.

Build on the 2011 guidelines to create consistency in material risk and incident reporting. Working with key stakeholders, the SEC can create a consistent and standard reporting structure for registrants to disclose material information about cybersecurity.

Ask the private-sector Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) to develop recommendations with respect to cybersecurity accounting issues.

Enforce existing disclosure laws.

Consider issuing additional guidelines. Though I believe enhancing awareness of the guidelines is the logical first step, additional guidance may ultimately be necessary to improve the quality and quantity of material risk and incident disclosure.

Because of its massive size, the outrage on Capitol Hill and the attention from the investor community, the Yahoo breach presents an ideal opportunity for the SEC to take a more active role in protecting shareholders.

Hackers Can Listen In On Your Skype Calls

The Atlantic, October 11, 2016

Mark Zuckerberg covers up his laptop's camera with a little piece of tape. After he posted a photo of himself at a desk this summer celebrating Instagram's growing popularity, online commenters seized on the little gray strip above his laptop screen. "You Should Consider It, Too," read a headline on The New York Times, calling Zuckerberg's move a "basic and cheap security safeguard."

The tape trick keeps hackers from secretly recording you through your laptop's webcam. It essentially functions as an off button for the camera, physically preventing it from recording until you take off the tape to make a video call.

But new research suggests that hackers can eavesdrop on those video calls, too, when you think you and the person you're talking to are the only ones on the line.

Patrick Wardle, the director of research at a cybersecurity company called Synack, showed how hackers

might do this at a cybersecurity conference called Virus Bulletin on Thursday. (Wardle used to work for NASA and the NSA.) He calls the technique "piggybacking," because it relies on a computer's user to do most of the legwork: Instead of secretly turning on the webcam without the user's permission, piggybacking malware simply waits until the webcam is active, and then records everything it sees.

The piggybacking process is simple: A malware program quietly running in the background of a computer checks periodically to see if someone has activated the camera. When the camera is turned on, the malware starts recording, too, alongside Skype or FaceTime, and stops recording when the session ends. Finally, the malware sends the recording to the attacker.

The genius of this kind of an attack, Wardle says, is that it's virtually undetectable. When the camera on a Mac laptop starts recording, it also turns on a green indicator light. Disabling that light is almost impossible without physically taking apart a laptop, so if it unexpectedly turns on, it's pretty clear that something's up. But when you initiate a video chat, you're already expecting that green LED to illuminate—so the malware can piggyback on the recording without raising suspicion. It then shuts itself off when the video call is over to allow the light to turn off, too.

In this diagram, "!detected" means "undetected," and "exfil" is short for exfiltrate, or extract. (Courtesy of Patrick Wardle)

Eavesdropping on a video call is probably more useful than recording at random intervals, because that's when people share sensitive or important information. "If you infected my Mac and recorded me all the time, you'd see me sitting at my desk, picking my nose, petting my dog, and occasionally swearing at my computer," said Wardle. "However, when I jump on a Google Hangout to discuss a new [software vulnerability] with a vendor—that's when things get interesting."

As a side project, Wardle creates free Mac utilities that protect computers from the security problems he discovers. To make video piggybacking harder, he created a program called Oversight, which displays a notification every time a program starts recording via the webcam. If the notification says Skype wants access, you can click "Allow." If a fishy-sounding program is trying to access the camera, or if a second notification pops up while you're already on a video call, you can hit "Deny" to shut it down.

Wardle emphasizes that the piggybacking technique doesn't take advantage of any unknown vulnerability or manipulate Apple's operating systems. It uses only legitimate features built into macOS—just in a clever and potentially dangerous way. Does piggybacking malware exist in the wild? It could, Wardle says, but he hasn't seen any examples other than the program he himself built to test his theory.

He did alert Apple to his experimentation, and recommended that Macs send users a notification whenever a program wants to use a laptop's webcam or a microphone. But apart from that, there's not really anything to be done, short of rebuilding significant portions of macOS. "I doubt Apple will do anything about this," said Wardle. "And honestly, I'm not sure they should." (Apple declined to comment.)

In the meantime, keep covering up those webcams—even the FBI director does it—and consider downloading a utility like Oversight that can tell you whether or not you're alone on your next video call.

Hackers Encrypt Hard Drives Of Rising Number Of U.S. Computer Users

McClatchy, October 11, 2016

Foreign hackers attempt to encrypt the hard drives of thousands of American computer users daily in an attempt to extort ransom payments for decryption, cybersecurity experts said Tuesday.

"We're looking at over 4,000 attacks a day," Bob Gregg, chief executive of ID Experts, a Portland, Ore., firm that offers data breach protection, told a cybersecurity summit.

Among the targets of the extortionists are police departments, law firms, retailers, hospitals and individual computer users, said Jeffrey L. Coburn, chief of the major cybercrimes unit of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

If an individual or company adopts minimal security measures, it can thwart the criminal hacker, who does not want the hassle of overcoming barriers to making ransom demands, Coburn said.

The size of ransom demands varies, but Coburn said he'd seen one for $47,000.

"These guys will negotiate, probably not much but they will negotiate," Coburn said. "They want the quick turnaround. … It's financially motivated."

The vast majority of those behind the ransomware attacks are overseas, experts said.

Coburn encouraged those hit with ransomware attacks to contact the FBI, which in most cases does not advocate paying a ransom. The bureau says paying a ransom does not guarantee that hackers will provide decryption keys to let users regain access to their data, and may funnel money to potential terror groups.

NATIONAL SECURITY NEWS

Russian Jets Resume Heavy Bombing Of Eastern Aleppo: Rebels, Monitor

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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Putin Shuns Paris Visit After France Offers Talks Only On Syria

By John Irish

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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

Russia's Vladimir Putin Cancels Paris Trip Amid Differences Over Syria

French President François Hollande had demanded that talks cover only the war in Syria

By Laura Mills And Matthew Dalton

Wall Street Journal, October 11, 2016

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

Putin Postpones Visit To France Amid Diplomatic Tensions

By Samuel Petrequin And Vladimir Isachenkov

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

MOSCOW (AP) – Russian President Vladimir Putin has indefinitely postponed a trip to France after Paris had revised its program for the visit and said it would talk about nothing else but the Syrian crisis.

French President Francois Hollande said Tuesday that Putin put off his visit set for next week after Hollande let him know he wouldn't take part in the opening of a new Russian Orthodox church and was only interested in talks about Syria.

Over the weekend, Russia blocked a U.N. Security Council resolution proposed by France and Spain on ending the hostilities in the war-torn country, blaming Paris for the refusal to discuss a compromise version. And on Monday, French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault called on the International Criminal Court to investigate Russia for possible war crimes in Syria.

"France has a major disagreement with Russia over Syria," Hollande said. "And the Russian veto to the French resolution at the U.N. council has prevented the cessation of the bombings, as well as the proclamation of a cease-fire."

At the same time, he added that he believes that a dialogue with Russia is essential for ending the massacre.

"The main victims are the civilians who live and die under the bombs," Hollande said. "That's the reason why I consider that a dialogue with Russia is necessary. But it should be firm and open. Otherwise ... it's a mockery."

Putin's trip to Paris, which was planned for next Tuesday, was due to take in the opening of a new Orthodox church next to the Eiffel Tower along with a Russian cultural center and an exhibition, but the French side had revised the program, Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

"Regrettably, those events dropped out of the program," Peskov said, saying it's up to the French side to explain the reason.

Peskov said that Putin could visit France at a later date which would be "comfortable" for Hollande.

He denied that the cancellation of Putin's visit to France reflected a growing international isolation of Moscow over its actions in Syria, where Russian warplanes have supported the Syrian army offensive on Aleppo.

"Russia and its president aren't facing anything of the kind," Peskov said.

Ayrault's statement Monday followed U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's call for a war crimes investigation into Russian and Syrian airstrikes in Syria, an appeal Russia has angrily rejected.

Hollande said he was ready to meet the Russian leader at any moment if it helps bring peace to Syria.

Asked about a possible meeting of Russian, French, German and Ukrainian leaders in Berlin on Oct. 19 to discuss the Ukrainian crisis, Peskov said that "preliminary preparation for such a meeting has been underway," but stopped short of announcing it.

Hollande said that the progress on implementing a 2015 peace deal for eastern Ukraine has been too slow. The Minsk agreement, which was brokered by France and Germany, helped end large-scale battles, but smaller clashes have continued to claim lives and a political settlement has stalled.

"We need to progress on the political and security conditions that will enable elections in eastern Ukraine as soon as possible, as the Minsk deals stipulate it," Hollande said, adding that he and German Chancellor Angela Merkel were both willing to have the four-way meeting.

Samuel Petrequin reported from Paris.

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Putin Calls Off Visit To France Amid Western Outcry Over Aleppo Attacks

By Andrew Roth

Washington Post, October 11, 2016

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday canceled a visit to Paris after the French leader

called the recent bombings of the Syrian city of Aleppo a "war crime" and questioned publicly whether it made sense to meet with Putin at all.

The decision to call off next week's trip underscores the increasing divides between the West and Russia over Moscow's military aid to Syria's government in the country's more than five-year conflict.

French officials have said that they want the International Criminal Court's prosecutor to open a war crimes investigation of Russia and Syria's airstrikes in Aleppo, which have become a byword for the grave humanitarian crisis unleased by the Syrian civil war.

Russia says it is targeting only terrorists in Aleppo, and has accused the West of using so-called terrorist groups to seek the downfall of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, a key Russian ally. The attacks on Aleppo expanded sharply late last month after the collapse of a cease-fire plan brokered by Russia and the United States.

The Kremlin confirmed that an Oct. 18 visit to Paris had been canceled, ostensibly because the opening of a Russian cultural and spiritual center had been delayed. But Dmitri Peskov, the president's spokesman, noted that "Putin said that he would be ready to visit Paris when it was convenient" for French President François Hollande.

"We will wait for this convenient time to come," he added.

The canceled visit is the latest diplomatic breakdown between Russia and the West over Syria.

The United States last week halted diplomatic talks with Russia because of the Aleppo bombing, saying Russia had "failed to live up to its own commitments." Russia on Saturday blocked a French–sponsored U.N. Security Council resolution that would have imposed a no-fly zone in Syria. A Russian counter-proposal, also vetoed, would not have halted airstrikes in Aleppo.

Hollande on Sunday questioned whether he should receive Putin.

"I asked myself the question: Is it useful? Is it necessary? Can it be a way of exerting pressure? Can we get him to stop what he is doing with the Syrian regime?" he said during an interview on France's TMC television channel.

He said he would tell Putin that the bombing of Aleppo is "unacceptable" and called the campaign a "war crime."

Putin may still meet with Hollande next week in Berlin as part of discussions with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko.

As Offensive Nears, Islamic State Rigs Mosul With Bombs

By Michael Georgy, Babak Dehghanpisheh And Ahmed Rasheed

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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

Turkey's President Tells Iraqi Leader To "Know His Place"

By Suzan Fraser

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) – Turkey can't be excluded from a possible operation to recapture the Iraqi city of Mosul, Turkey's president said Tuesday, telling Iraq's leader to "know his place."

Recep Tayyip Erdogan's remarks were likely to add to tensions between the two neighbors, which are key U.S. partners in the fight against the Islamic State group.

In a speech delivered in Istanbul, Erdogan also said Turkish troops wouldn't withdraw from a base near Mosul, saying the Turkish army wouldn't take orders from Baghdad. Turkey is training anti-IS fighters to help retake Mosul from the extremist group.

Turkey-Iraq relations became strained after Ankara sent troops late last year to the region of Bashiqa, northeast of Mosul, to train anti-IS fighters there – a move Baghdad has since labeled a "blatant violation" of its sovereignty. Iraq has demanded a Turkish withdrawal, but Ankara has repeatedly ignored the call.

Turkish officials say hundreds of their soldiers are based at Bashiqa, training more than 3,000 Turkmen, Kurdish or Sunni Arab fighters from Mosul. Turkey says about 700 IS militants have been killed in retaliatory attacks against the extremists carried out from the base.

Turkish warnings about possible sectarian clashes in Mosul if the majority Sunni region were placed under Shiite militia control also have drawn Baghdad's ire. Last week, both countries summoned each other's ambassadors while Iraq requested an emergency session of the U.N. Security Council over the presence of unauthorized Turkish troops in northern Iraq.

Speaking to Muslim religious leaders from the Balkans and Central Asia, Erdogan said objections from Iraq wouldn't stop Turkey from participating in any operation to free Mosul and proceeded to make vitriolic remarks against Iraq's prime minister.

"You are not my interlocutor, you are not at my level, you are not my equivalent, you are not of the same quality as me," Erdogan said, addressing Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi. "Your screaming and shouting in Iraq is of no importance to us. You should know that we will go our own way."

Erdogan also said Turkey wouldn't withdraw its troops from the base in Bashiqa, adding that it was al-Abadi himself who had asked Ankara to train fighters there back in 2014.

"Turkey's army hasn't lost enough of its quality to take orders from you," Erdogan said in response to Iraqi calls for the troop's withdrawal. "We would do whatever is necessary as we have done until today."

U.S. State Department spokesman John Kirby said in Washington that the situation in Bashiqa was a matter for the Iraqi and Turkish governments to resolve.

"What we support is continued dialogue between them that can lead to a speedy resolution of the matter. We call on both governments to focus on their common enemy, our common enemy, which is Daesh," he said, using an Arabic acronym for IS.

"Over the coming days and weeks, we believe it's imperative for all the parties to closely coordinate next steps to ensure unity of effort in that counter-Daesh fight.

Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim, meanwhile, again warned that any operation to free Mosul shouldn't lead to any demographic change. Turkish is worried that once Mosul is liberated from IS, Kurds or Shiite groups may take Mosul over and push out Sunni Arabs or ethnic Turkmens.

"We have explained to all of our friends that the operation planned for Mosul should be limited to removing Daesh," Yildirim said.

"If you, after removing Daesh, attempt to change Mosul's demographic structure, you will light the fire of a very big civil war, of a sectarian war. This is our warning," Yildirim said.

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Sparks Fly Between Turkey, Iraq As Battle Looms To Oust ISIL From Mosul

By Oren Dorell

USA Today, October 11, 2016

WASHINGTON — The leaders of Turkey and Iraq exchanged sharp words as they prepare for a military operation to oust Islamic State militants from the terror group's last major redoubt in Iraq.

The latest salvo came from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in response to a demand from Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi that Turkey withdraw its troops from Iraq, where they've been training a multi-ethnic force to participate in the looming battle.

"You are not my interlocutor. You are not at my level. You are not my equivalent. You are not of the same quality as me," Erdogan said, referring to al-Abadi in a speech to Muslim religious leaders from the Balkans and Central Asia. "Your screaming and shouting in Iraq is of no importance to us. You should know that we will go our own way," Erdogan said, according to the Associated Press.

The disagreement is about 2,000 Turkish troops based at a camp named Bashiqa in northern Iraq, where Turkey has been training Sunni Muslim Iraqi Arabs and Kurdish Perhmerga Peshmerga forces for a role in liberating Mosul. Thousands of Islamic State fighters have been digging in for months in the city of about 1 million people, which they've controlled since sweeping across Iraq in 2014.

Turkey's parliament two weeks ago voted to extend its troop deployment in Iraq to combat "terrorist organizations," according to Reuters. That description is broad enough to encompass the Islamic State and Kurdish militants that Turkey hopes to block from gaining power because they're linked to a separatist movement Turkey has been fighting at home.

Iraq's Shiite-led government wants its forces to lead the offensive and condemned the vote.

"We have asked the Turkish side more than once not to intervene in Iraqi matters and I fear the Turkish adventure could turn into a regional war," al-Abadi warned on Oct. 5 in comments broadcast on state TV. "The Turkish leadership's behavior is not acceptable and we don't want to get into a military confrontation with Turkey."

The U.S. State Department on Tuesday urged Turkey to respect Iraq's wishes.

"All of Iraq's neighbors need to respect Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity," State Department spokesman John Kirby said. "We call on both governments to focus on their common enemy, our common enemy, which is Daesh," Kirby said, referring to the Islamic State group by its Arab acronym.

"The campaign to retake Mosul is an Iraqi operation," Kirby said.

The Iraqi-Turkish spat could hinder preparations for the long-expected showdown, which President Obama's special envoy for U.S. operations against the Islamic State said last week was ready to launch.

"We now have all the pieces in place to get (the Islamic State) out of Mosul," the envoy, Brett McGurk, told reporters in a briefing Friday.

The preparations include assembling more than 30,000 fighters including Kurdish Peshmerga, Iraqi Security Forces, about 14,000 local tribal fighters from Nineveh province and local police, McGurk said. The preparations also include a game plan for humanitarian assistance, displaced people and governance, he said.

"We worked very hard and had very close cooperation with our partners in Erbil in the Kurdistan Regional Government and (Kurdish) President Massoud Barzani and the Government of Baghdad to agree on the overall

disposition of forces – where everybody would go, what they will do," McGurk said.

U.S. Says Foreign Forces In Iraq Should Be There With Baghdad's Approval

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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Pentagon Confronts A New Threat From ISIS: Exploding Drones

By Michael S. Schmidt And Eric Schmitt

New York Times, October 11, 2016

WASHINGTON — Kurdish forces fighting the Islamic State in northern Iraq last week shot down a small drone the size of a model airplane. They believed it was like the dozens of drones the terrorist organization had been flying for reconnaissance in the area, and they transported it back to their outpost to examine it.

But as they were taking it apart, it blew up, killing two Kurdish fighters in what is believed to be one of the first times the Islamic State has successfully used a drone with explosives to kill troops on the battlefield.

In the last month, the Islamic State has tried to use small drones to launch attacks at least two other times, prompting American commanders in Iraq to issue a warning to forces fighting the group to treat any type of small flying aircraft as a potential explosive device.

The Islamic State has used surveillance drones on the battlefield for some time, but the attacks — all targeting Iraqi troops — have highlighted its success in adapting readily accessible technology into a potentially effective new weapon. American advisers say drones could be deployed against coalition forces by the terrorist group in the battle in Mosul.

For some American military analysts and drone experts, the episodes confirmed their view that the Pentagon — which is still struggling to come up with ways to bring down drones — was slow to anticipate that militants would turn drones into weapons.

"We should have been ready for this, and we weren't," said P.W. Singer, a specialist on robotic weaponry at New America, a think tank in Washington.

Military officials said the Pentagon has dedicated significant resources to stopping drones, but that few Iraqi and Kurdish units have been provided with the sophisticated devices that American troops have to disarm them. The officials said they have ordered the Pentagon agency in charge of dealing with explosive devices — known as the Joint Improvised-Threat Defeat Organization — to study ways to thwart hostile drones. Earlier this summer, the Pentagon requested an additional $20 million from Congress to help address the problem.

In recent months, the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency both rushed to complete classified assessments about the Islamic State's drone use. And the secretary of the Army, Eric Fanning, recently assigned a special office he had created to respond to emerging threats and to study how to stop drones.

Unlike the American military, which flies drones as large as small passenger planes that need to take off and land on a runway, the Islamic State is using simpler, commercially available drones such as the DJI Phantom, which can be purchased on Amazon. The group attaches small explosive devices to them, essentially making them remotely piloted bombs.

"This is an enemy that learns as it goes along," said Lt. Gen. Sean MacFarland, the top American military commander in Iraq until August.

Of the three known drone attacks in Iraq, only the one involving the Kurdish soldiers caused casualties. "The explosive device inside was disguised as a battery — there was a very small amount of explosives in it, but it was enough to go off and kill them," said a senior American official who had been provided with a detailed report on the episode.

Last week, the Islamic State used a drone strapped with an explosive to attack a checkpoint. The device did not kill anyone but destroyed buildings. On Oct. 1, Iraqi troops shot down a drone that was only a foot long and a foot wide but had a small explosive attached to the top.

"The drone could only hold one small bomb in the middle of it — no bigger load could be on it," said Gen. Tahseen Sayid, a senior Iraqi officer in the area.

The Islamic State first used drones to film suicide car bomb attacks, which militants have posted online. But American and Iraqi commanders said that earlier this year it became clear the group was using drones to help them on the battlefield.

In March, General MacFarland and American military commanders in Baghdad received an intelligence report that the Islamic State had posted surveillance video online that had been taken by a small drone. The video footage showed a newly created series of bases in northern Iraq where American and Iraqi forces were stationed.

Just days after the video was put up, a Katyusha rocket landed in the middle of an outpost of more than 100 American Marines, killing one who was rushing to get others to shelter in a nearby bunker. The strike was so accurate that military officials described it as a "golden shot," and there was speculation that a drone was used in the targeting.

General MacFarland said he did not believe the footage — which did not include positional data like GPS locations — helped militants.

"It couldn't be used for precise targeting," he said in a recent email exchange. "Its value was limited to propaganda."

In the weeks after, American forces in the area unleashed a barrage of retaliatory airstrikes against Islamic State fighters who had launched the drone.

"Whatever capability they had, they lost a lot of it," General MacFarland said, referring to the Islamic State's operations in the area.

Throughout the summer, however, American troops in Iraq and Syria reported seeing small drones hovering near their bases and around the front lines in northern Iraq. In August, the Islamic State called on its followers to jury-rig small store-bought drones with grenades or other explosives and use them to launch attacks at the Olympics. There were ultimately no such attacks at the Games.

On the battlefields in Iraq and Syria, the United States has dedicated resources to take out the Islamic State's drone capabilities. In the past 18 months, the United States has launched at least eight airstrikes that have destroyed Islamic State drones on the ground, according to news releases from the American military command in Baghdad.

Despite these efforts, military analysts believe that drones will continue to be a problem in Iraq, Syria and elsewhere. A new report by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point says that in the future, off-the-shelf drones used by terrorist groups will be able to carry heavier payloads, fly and loiter longer, venture farther from their controller and employ secure communications links. The center provided an advance copy of the report to The New York Times.

"The number and sophistication of drones used is also likely to enhance the scope and seriousness of the threat," said Don Rassler, the center's director of strategic initiatives.

As ISIS's Caliphate Crumbles, Jihadist Tactics Are Evolving

Newsweek, October 11, 2016

On June 10, 2014, the day the black flag of the Islamic State militant group went up over the city of Mosul in northern Iraq, life for an ISIS fighter was good. The seizure of a city of nearly 2 million showed that ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was making good on his claim to set up a "caliphate" across a vast swath of the Middle East. Foreign fighters flocked to a group once famously mocked by President Barack Obama as the "JV team." And why not? After taking Mosul, ISIS fighters were paid $500 a month and given a cellphone and a car. Amid the deepening chaos in the Middle East, Daesh, as the group is called in Arabic, had emerged as the strong horse.

Today, the battle of Mosul, Round Two, looms. The United States, the Iraqi army and Kurdish peshmerga fighters are preparing an offensive to retake the city, likely to begin by the end of October. And ISIS, undeniably, is now weakened, its caliphate vastly reduced in size. The Iraqi government, backed by U.S. airpower and special operations forces, has methodically retaken cities in Iraq's Sunni heartland that had fallen to ISIS: Tikrit, Fallujah, Ramadi and, soon, most analysts believe, Mosul. ISIS today controls nearly 50 percent less territory in Iraq than it did two years ago. The flow of foreign fighters going there has dwindled, and ISIS now conscripts locals for $50 a month—but it has fallen three months behind, former fighters say, in paying even that amount.

It is not only Iraq where ISIS is now in retreat. In Libya, where it had established an important foothold in the central coastal city of Sirte—demonstrating that it could take and hold territory far from Raqqa, its so-called capital in Syria—militia fighters, backed by at least 170 American airstrikes, have nearly retaken the city. ISIS forces are now fleeing to the south. Soon, the "caliphate" will extend not much beyond its stronghold in Syria, and even there, the Syrian Democratic Forces, backed by U.S. special operations forces and airstrikes, have begun to surround Raqqa, cutting off supply lines and preparing the battlefield for an offensive likely to come sometime next year. All of this, to be sure, is a humiliation for Baghdadi.

But demonstrating that ISIS could not create and then hold its "caliphate" indefinitely does not mean it is defeated. The idea that it could sustain its territorial holdings without possessing significant anti-aircraft weaponry to deter U.S. airstrikes was always "fanciful," says a Western military intelligence official. Dislodging ISIS from its strongholds was a necessary first step, but it was the easy part in what will be a long struggle. Military and counterintelligence officials and diplomats in the United States, Europe and the Middle East acknowledge that the fight now becomes more difficult for the West—and, many contend, more dangerous.

ISIS needs to adapt to a rapidly deteriorating military situation, and there is already evidence that it is doing so. Consider, as but one example, what has happened in Mosul—and in particular underneath Mosul—in the two-plus years since it fell to ISIS control. Former ISIS fighters who have recently left the battlefield tell Newsweek that their former comrades in arms have painstakingly constructed their own version of the famous Cu Chi tunnels in Vietnam—tunnels outside of Saigon that during the war there gave North Vietnamese fighters freedom of movement, the ability to protect weapons and ammunition from heavy American bombardment and—critically—an escape route that ensured they would be able to move on to the next battlefield. The former fighters interviewed by Newsweek describe a similarly intricate network of tunnels with rooms, toilets, medical facilities and enough food to sustain a long fight.

Chillingly, the fighters say the roughly 11,000 men set to defend Mosul have chemical weapons—"chlorine and

mustard gas," according to Waleed Abdullah, a 23-year-old Iraqi who left the battlefield last month. Abdullah believes about 3,000 ISIS soldiers will fight to the death. The rest, he says, will escape—via the tunnels—and, as the North Vietnamese did nearly half a century ago, continue the fight. And contrary to numerous reports of deteriorating morale among the ISIS rank and file, Waleed says that among the hardcore fighters, "morale is still very high. They will stay underground for a long time since the tunnels are deep and provide the means of life."

But where will they fight? Current and former intelligence officials in the Middle East, Europe and the United States say their primary fear is that the pace of attacks on soft targets in their regions is likely to increase as the resources and manpower necessary to maintain the "caliphate" shrink. ISIS, in fact, has been planning for exactly this for years. Mubin Shaikh, a former jihadi who has worked with the Canadian government on counterintelligence matters, says, "When the caliphate was establishing, they were talking about the inevitability of Western forces attacking them because they were overrunning territory in Iraq and that had already triggered a U.S. response."

The flow of migrants from Syria, Libya and Iraq to Europe—and the certainty among some security officials that ISIS has slipped its members into that flow—already has Western counterterrorism units stretched to nearly the breaking point. It's about to get worse. Richard Barrett, a former head of counter-extremism at MI6 in the U.K. who now works for security consultancy the Soufan Group, says flatly that "there will a greater threat as ISIS continues to lose territory, as numbers [of fighters flowing back to Europe] will increase and security services will be even more hard-pressed, making an attack more likely to slip through the net. This will lead to greater public anger, more pressure on security services, and it will become a spiral."

The inability to hold territory creates "ISIS 2.0," as a senior Middle Eastern intelligence official puts it. "It means that ISIS adapts and begins to look more like Al-Qaeda," whose top leadership all along warned Baghdadi that he couldn't sustain a caliphate across several countries and was foolish to try. "They may not be able to maintain the physical caliphate, but they can build and maintain networks," the intelligence official adds.

How effective will ISIS 2.0 be? Not everyone shares the grim view that MI6 alumnus Barrett sketches out. Some posit that the loss of territory will diminish ISIS's ability to pull off high-profile, mass-casualty attacks—just as Al-Qaeda's loss of its sanctuary in Afghanistan after 9/11 did. That, as Obama administration officials say, is no small thing. Two key questions going forward will confront the ISIS leadership.

The first is financial. The methodical rolling up of the caliphate that has been Obama's strategy for the past two years has undeniably made it more difficult for ISIS to make money. It has degraded ISIS's access to oil money in both Iraq and Syria, forcing it to turn more to extortion. That, in turn, further alienates populations living under ISIS's thumb. In Al-Qayyarah, Iraq, a town that Baghdad's forces liberated from the group in late August, smoke from a burning, bombed-out oil well that used to generate income for ISIS now blackens the daytime sky. But Abu Ahmad, who lives just 100 yards away from the burning well, says, "I prefer the [smoke] from the well to life under Daesh. Everything was bad and dark under them."

The second issue for Baghdadi and his top lieutenants is one of face: How much does the loss of territory damage the ISIS brand in the eyes of would-be jihadis all over the world? When ISIS was the strong horse, recruiting fighters was easy. During its rise, its motto, repeated endlessly by Abu Mohammad al-Adnani, the group's chief propagandist killed in an airstrike in August, was "Remaining and expanding." Now that they're neither remaining nor expanding, optimists believe the loss of territory "will hurt them, disrupt them and decrease the flow of foreign fighters attracted to the group," says Nada Bakos, a former CIA officer now at the Foreign Policy Research Institute. According to this view, we likely have seen peak ISIS, its ability to pull off significant attacks damaged and the prestige that attended fighting for it seriously eroded.

y U.S. and European counterterrorism officials doubt it will be that simple. Officials concede they are deeply concerned not so much that the numbers of fighters flowing back into the West will increase but about the type of fighters likely to return. According to Rob Wainwright, director of Europol, the European Union's law enforcement agency, at least 5,000 European passport holders went to Syria and Iraq to fight, and only about a third of them have returned. The working assumption in Europe is that many will eventually try to come to Europe.

Gilles de Kerchove, the EU's counterterrorism coordinator, told Newsweek he's particularly concerned about the skills the returnees have learned fighting in the Middle East. "One of the risks is that these guys have learned a lot in terms of weaponized chemical stuff, in terms of using car bombs. I hope this knowledge will not be used here, but we have to be vigilant."

Those concerns are legitimate, say fighters who have recently left ISIS. The flow back to the West has already begun. "It's true that they are losing areas in Iraq and Syria," says Waleed, "but they have other options." He says that in the past two years, ISIS has sent more than 300 "sleepers" from the region to different Western nations. "They first go to Turkey, where they get a fake passport," and then slip out individually via varying routes to the West. One such fighter is from the same town in Iraq as Waleed—Hawijah, south of Mosul—and he had plastic surgery in Turkey "in order to be unrecognized."

U.S. counterterrorism officials argue that military success against ISIS will make this type of transit more difficult, and thus ISIS's ability to carry out even smaller-scale attacks abroad will be more limited. Turkish forces entered Syria in late August, ostensibly to combat ISIS but also, officials in Ankara have acknowledged, to prevent the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (the militia known as YPG) from setting up an enclave on the Syrian border with Turkey. But if the result is that Turkey shuts down its border—as it appears to have done so far—and stops turning a blind eye to ISIS fighters and weaponry slipping in and out of Syria, that's a win for the anti-ISIS coalition.Rubble-izing Sunni Cities

"We'll see," says one senior Middle East intelligence source about whether Ankara's newfound vigilance lasts. The official's wariness is rooted in other facts on the ground that may work to ISIS's benefit, despite the loss of "face" associated with battlefield defeats. As former Defense Intelligence Agency official Michael Pregent says, the strategy to defeat ISIS amounts to "rubble-izing" predominantly Sunni cities in Iraq and Syria.

"Eighty percent of Ramadi was destroyed. Half of Fallujah was destroyed. Now the U.N. and other nongovernmental organizations are already fretting about the massive number of refugees that the Mosul offensive will create," says Pregent. (Some 1.2 million Iraqis remain in Mosul.) "Are we really defeating ISIS? There are 20 million Arab Sunnis in the northern Middle East—350,000 military-age young men in Mosul alone—all asking [the United States], 'What are you doing ?'"

ISIS, remember, arose in Iraq largely in reaction to the strident sectarian leadership of former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, a Shiite who, once the U.S. bugged out in 2009, set about purging Sunnis from the military and senior positions in the Iraqi government. Many Sunnis believe the U.S. has effectively thrown in with Iran and the Shiite militias in Iraq to defeat ISIS. The former Iraqi Baathist intelligence and military officials who make up ISIS's leadership under Baghdadi know that despite the loss of territory, those disaffected young men are ripe for recruiting.

The same is true in Syria, where some 400,000 Sunnis (and counting) have died in that country's civil war, for which there is no end in sight now that the cease-fire negotiated by the U.S. and Russia has quickly fallen apart. The sectarian chaos only increases. Shiite militias from Iraq have been deployed in Syria to fight Sunni rebel groups, including ISIS but also including Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (formerly the Nusra Front) and Ahrar al-Sham—both of which have been active in defending the besieged city of Aleppo from Russian- and Iranian-backed Syrian forces. Through such actions, the Sunni groups have "secured [their] place in the hearts and minds of the Syrian people," according to a recent intelligence report viewed by Newsweek .Remember Us?

Why are those groups significant? They are both affiliates of Al-Qaeda . In the public mind in the United States—and, for a time, within the U.S. government—Al-Qaeda had become an afterthought. Osama bin Laden was dead; his second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, was said to be a doddering, uncharismatic bean counter; and, by 2014, it became clear ISIS was not the "JVs."

But even though ISIS undeniably cut into "Al-Qaeda's share of the jihadi market," as Thomas Joscelyn, senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, puts it, under Zawahiri's stewardship, Al-Qaeda also grew its largest paramilitary force ever—in Syria alone, Jabhat Fateh al-Sham has 10,000 fighters loyal to it. And it has slowly but surely expanded its footprint globally, in the Levant (Greater Syria) region, the Indian subcontinent and West and North Africa.

Doctrinal and strategic differences—as well as big egos, intelligence officials say—keep Al-Qaeda and ISIS from joining forces, and that does not appear set to change anytime soon. Also, Al-Qaeda has not in recent years sought to launch mass-casualty attacks in the West, instead fighting insurgencies in Muslim-majority countries, another reason why resources and attention in the West have gone to the fight against ISIS. But analysts point out, as Joscelyn says, that "Al-Qaeda also has more resources at its disposal today than ever, and more geographic reach." And until last year, it was also running its largest training camp ever—in, of all places, Afghanistan. U.S. and Afghan forces destroyed the base, but in many respects it is beginning to seem like old times in Afghanistan, with the Taliban ascendant on the battlefield and Al-Qaeda still joined at the hip with once and perhaps future rulers there.

Currently, Al-Qaeda's focus has been Syria, where it, like ISIS, seeks to depose Bashar al-Assad. But Russia's intervention—and stepped-up support from the Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps and Hezbollah fighters—has shifted the war's direction.

Counterterrorism officials in the West have begun to wonder whether the law of unintended consequences will come into play. If the Assad-Moscow-Tehran axis looks as if it will prevail, will Al-Qaeda turn its attention elsewhere or fight to the death in Syria? "Their calculation," says Joscelyn, "could change overnight. They haven't used Syria as a launching pad yet, but it doesn't mean they won't." A senior U.S. intelligence official acknowledges as much and says the tempo of airstrikes targeting fighters with Al-Qaeda affiliates has increased in recent months.

The defining feature of the West's war against radical Islamic militants has been its constant shape-shifting; at times, it can seem like whack-a-mole—enemies are killed, others pop up. The fortunes of the opposition wax and—in the case of ISIS now—wane, as they figure out new ways to attack. ISIS, now degraded, as Obama vowed, will necessarily be in transition but perhaps no less lethal. Al-

Qaeda is expanding, patiently, and still has ambitions for large-scale attacks in the West, at a time and place of its choosing. The war grinds on.

In early 2013, on his last day as acting head of the CIA, Michael Morell told Obama, who came to office wanting to end wars, "My children's generation and my grandchildren's generation will still be fighting this fight."

Why Beating ISIS In Mosul Won't End The Threat Of Attack

PBS, October 11, 2016

American and Iraqi forces are preparing for another fight against the Islamic State — this time for control of Mosul, the terrorist group's last major urban stronghold in Iraq.

It will be a bloody, destructive fight: previous battles in Fallujah and Ramadi have left both Iraqi cities almost totally destroyed. The United Nations estimates that more than one million Mosul residents could be displaced in the coming battle.

With American intelligence and air power backing up as many as 12 Iraqi Army brigades, an American-trained counterterrorism force and Kurdish forces known as the "peshmerga," the anti-ISIS coalition has a strong chance of prevailing against the estimated 3,000 to 4,500 fighters that the U.S. military estimates ISIS has on the ground.

There's only one problem: the victory might not matter much in the overall effort to eradicate ISIS.

In the two years since ISIS formed its self-declared caliphate across Iraq and Syria, the terrorist group has become an unprecedented global threat. Even as airstrikes and ground forces have pushed its fighters from various cities and towns, there's no indication that the ground war has diminished the group's ability to keep conducting terrorist attacks in Iraq, Syria and Western nations.

In fact, U.S. officials and analysts now say that there is no link between ISIS's territorial reach and the strength of its global terror network, in part because it has adapted a more versatile, nimble network of operatives, and more effectively distributes its powerful propaganda worldwide.

"Their external operations capability has been building and entrenching during the past two years," Nicholas Rasmussen, director of the U.S. National Counterterrorism Center, told a Senate committee last month. "And we do not think battlefield losses alone will be sufficient to completely degrade the group's terrorism capabilities." Ghosts on the Battlefield

For the past two years, the anti-ISIS coalition has been handing out battlefield losses to the Islamic State. The group currently has lost roughly half of its territory in Iraq, and 25 percent in Syria, Rasmussen said. Punishing airstrikes — now totaling more than 15,000 in the past two years — have cut off supply routes, and made it difficult for ISIS members to move substantial numbers of weapons or fighters. Almost every member of ISIS's original leadership is dead, along with an estimated 45,000 fighters, according to Army Lt. Gen. Sean MacFarland, who leads the task force overseeing the war. And every time coalition forces take back a town from the Islamic State, they gain intelligence that lead to more strikes.

But a recent press conference by the military's spokesman for the anti-ISIS campaign revealed just how difficult it can be to truly eradicate the Islamic State, even from areas coalition forces have reclaimed.

"[A]lthough a lot of these key areas have been liberated, Daesh is still present on the outskirts," said Col. John Dorrian, using a derogatory Arabic name for the group. "They're still in the periphery, and they would love nothing better than to get in, re-infiltrate some of the areas that they've been pushed out of, and begin to cause problems."

The city of Ramadi was liberated from ISIS in 2015, for example. But in recent months, the coalition has been launching regular airstrikes on ISIS fighting positions and checkpoints in the area to keep the group at bay. A Smarter Terror Network

ISIS also doesn't need a massive base of operations for its terror network to prevail. That's in part because it's looser and more agile than Al Qaeda, experts say, which relied on an established, carefully vetted network of operatives.

ISIS takes a broader approach to its membership, even praising attackers on social media who aren't directly connected to the group. And its operatives are resourceful, taking on different roles that make it more difficult to predict their movements or disrupt their plots. One of the men who made bombs for the Paris attacks last November, for example, Najim Laachraoui, later became a suicide bomber himself in the March attack on the Brussels airport.

These changes have led to what Rasmussen referred to as a shorter "flash-to-bang" ratio — the time between when the attack is conceived and carried out. Al Qaeda preferred big, symbolic attacks like 9/11, which take years to plan, considerable funding and multiple key operatives — all of which can make a plot easier to foil. But one lone person with a knife, an ax or a gun, whether directed by ISIS or merely inspired by them, is much harder to catch. The Power of Propaganda

Perhaps ISIS's most powerful weapon is its propaganda, which the terrorist group has been able to wield with unprecedented success. "They're miles above what Al Qaeda was able to do" with technology, according to Mohamad Bazzi, a professor at New York University and longtime Middle East expert, in part because many new ISIS members are from a younger generation.

New technologies, like encrypted messaging apps, have helped keep operatives connected, U.S. officials say. But unlike Al Qaeda, ISIS also conducts much of its work in

the public eye on social media, exhorting followers on Twitter and Facebook, posting pictures of ISIS fighters cuddling kittens or planting flowers in ISIS-held towns to extol the virtues of the caliphate.

Perhaps most importantly, ISIS adapts its messaging to new challenges. As airstrikes and border controls made it more difficult for foreign fighters to travel to the Islamic State, Abu Muhammad al Adnani, an ISIS spokesman until he was killed in an airstrike in August, encouraged supporters to attack wherever they were instead. His words were cited approvingly in a journal apparently kept by Ahmed Khan Rahami, who was apprehended last month on suspicion of planting bombs in New York and New Jersey.

ISIS has now begun using their propaganda to subtly prepare supporters for a defeat in Mosul and elsewhere, said Hassan Hassan, a fellow at the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy. In several publications, including the widely distributed Al Naba newsletter, Hassan said articles describe the next phase of the battle with a phrase in Arabic — inhiyaz ila al-sahraa — meaning "retreat into the desert."

"They keep referring to that phrase," he said. "'We might lose Mosul, Raqqa and Sirte and all these cities, and be on the run, driven into the desert — but that's not the end of the story.' That's the real message they want to convey to everyone."

Perhaps the reason the message sticks, Hassan said, is that ISIS has proven it doesn't need territory to remain a threat. "In my opinion what we're seeing today is not the beginning of the end of ISIS. It's the beginning of a new cycle."

Gunmen Attack Shiite Worshipers In Kabul, At Least 14 Dead

By Pamela Constable And Sayed Salahuddin

Washington Post, October 11, 2016

KABUL — Gunmen opened fire on Shiite worshipers at a shrine in the Afghan capital Tuesday, killing at least 14 people and wounding more than 40 others during events marking one of the holiest days for Shiite Muslims, authorities reported.

Afghanistan's Interior Ministry, which issued the death toll figures, gave few immediate details about how the attack unfolded. But the ministry's spokesman, Sediq Siddiqui, said "the last attacker had been gunned down" and described the situation as "under control."

Earlier, police officials said one attacker had taken an unknown number of hostages, but that Afghan security forces had evacuated most people from the Sakhi Shrine. It is one of the most popular places for Shiites to gather on holidays, and the surrounding area was filled with people.

At least 43 people were wounded, the Health Ministry reported.

Police said at least three attackers were involved, wearing police or military uniforms, and possibly setting off explosions before the gunfire.

A video posted on social media showed the great dome of the Sakhi Shine illuminated by bursts of gunfire, with sounds of screams and wailing in the background.

Officials had warned that violence could erupt on Wednesday, the climactic final day of a month of mourning to mark the death of the prophet Muhammad's grandson in the 7th century. During the commemorations, known as Ashura, Shiite men ritually flagellate themselves in the streets.

They had also advised worshipers not to cover their car windows with paint, a common practice during Ashura that could potentially hide attackers.

The Taliban and other Sunni-led militant factions, including the Islamic State, view Shiites as a heretical branch of Islam.

Five years ago, suicide bombers attacked another Shiite shrine in Kabul on Ashura, killing more than 50 people, and detonated other bombs at mosques in two other Afghan cities.

Officials were also worried because of a recent bombing in the capital's community of ethnic Hazara, who are Shiite. In July, bombers attacked a peaceful protest rally, killing more than 80 people. The attack was claimed by a regional affiliate of the Islamic State.

Gunmen Attack Crowded Shiite Shrine In Kabul

By Zahra Nader And Mujib Mashal

New York Times, October 11, 2016

KABUL, Afghanistan — Gunmen disguised as police officers attacked a Shiite shrine packed with hundreds of worshipers in the Afghan capital late Tuesday and may have taken hostages in a shootout that left at least five people dead and dozens wounded, officials and witnesses reported.

The assault on the Kart-e-Sakhi shrine in western Kabul came on the eve of Ashura, one of the most solemn holidays in the Shiite calendar, commemorating the death of a grandson of the Prophet Muhammad.

Sediq Sediqqi, a spokesman for the Afghan Interior Ministry, said three gunmen had entered the shrine as people were preparing for the commemoration. He said that the police had shot one of the assailants and that "two others are still in the shrine."

Elite Afghan forces cordoned off the area, witnesses said. More than a dozen ambulances were at the site.

Wahidullah Majrooh, a spokesman for the Afghan Ministry of Health, said that the bodies of at least five people had been recovered and that 36 wounded had been transferred to Kabul hospitals. Sixteen of the wounded were women, Mr. Majroh said.

Sayed Yousuf Hassani, a religious scholar who works at the shrine, said that the assailants were dressed in police uniform and that they opened fire indiscriminately.

Jafar Rahimi, 25, a photographer who was at the shrine when gunfire began, described a state of panic.

"We cut off the barbed wire to run away," Mr. Rahimi said. "There was a child, 8 or 9 years old, who had a bullet wound in his hand. We rescued him with us. After we went out of shrine, we heard an explosion. The attackers were inside the shrine and police were outside."

While sectarian violence targeting the Shiite minority in neighboring Pakistan has increased, such assaults in Afghanistan, where most people belong to the Sunni branch of Islam, have remained relatively infrequent.

But a series of recent attacks has raised concern. The predominantly Shiite Hazaras, one of Afghanistan's largest ethnic minorities, have been repeatedly abducted from passenger buses in the south of the country. More recently, a bombing claimed by the Islamic State targeted a large protest of Shiite Hazaras, killing at least 80 people.

Security had been heightened in advance at the shrine and officials said the government was aware of threats to the commemoration.

At a meeting attended by President Ashraf Ghani to plan security measures for the event, the organizers were warned to make it low key this year, with fears that suicide bombers were roaming the city and the commemoration was among their targets.

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Russia, China To Mull Joint Response To U.S. Missile Shield

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

MOSCOW (AP) — The Russian military says it will cooperate with Beijing on minimizing a threat posed by U.S. missile defense.

Lt. Gen. Viktor Poznikhir of the military's General Staff told a security forum in China that the U.S. missile defense system will be capable of intercepting Russian or Chinese ballistic missiles. He argued Tuesday that the missile shield would upset nuclear balance and erode global security.

Like other Russian officials before him, Poznikhir shrugged off the U.S. statements that the missile defense system is intended to fend off threats from North Korea and Iran. He claimed that the U.S. wants the shield to get a capability to strike any country without fearing retaliation.

Poznikhir said Russia and China held missile defense drills this year and will do it again next year.

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Russia Says It's Joining China To Counter U.S. Missile Defense

By Ilya Arkhipov

Bloomberg News, October 11, 2016

Russia said it's working with China to counter U.S. plans to expand its missile-defense network, which the two nations see as targeting their military assets.

The upgrades aim to give Washington the ability to launch a nuclear strike "with impunity," Lieutenant General Viktor Poznikhir of the Russian Armed Forces General Staff said Tuesday at a security forum in Xiangshan, China, according to a transcript of his speech posted on the Defense Ministry's website. The Asian neighbors this year conducted a joint missile-defense exercise of their computer command staff, he said.

"We are working together on ways to minimize possible damage to the security of our countries," Poznikhir said. "The illusion of invulnerability and impunity under the guise of missile defense will encourage Washington to make unilateral steps in dealing with global and regional issues. This could lead to a decrease in the threshold for using nuclear weapons to preempt enemy actions."

Russia's concern about U.S. nuclear capabilities highlights a deepening rift between the Cold War foes as they trade accusations over the war in Syria. While NATO members have stressed that the alliance's global missile shield will be a defense solely against potential attacks from so-called "rogue states," particularly Iran and North Korea, Russia and China have been voicing concerns over their own security.

In May, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that placing parts of the system in Romania and Poland – once Soviet satellites – is threatening peace in Europe and warned that it may trigger a new arms race. China described the U.S. Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system as an "out-and-out strategic" move that threatens its national security, warning about taking "necessary measures to safeguard" its interests. The plan has already soured Chinese ties with South Korea.

According to Poznikhir, the U.S. defense system includes weapons that, if fired from a warship in the Baltic Sea, can intercept ballistic missiles launched from the European part of Russia before a nuclear warhead is separated. U.S. missile defense launchpads can also be used for Tomahawk cruise missiles and there is no guarantee that such systems wouldn't replace Thaad complexes in South Korea, he said.

Iranians Get Lessons In U.S. Politics From Trump, Clinton And 'House Of Cards'

By Golnar Motevalli

Bloomberg News, October 11, 2016

Viewers of Iranian state television have been given an unprecedented taste of the seamier side of U.S. politics, both real and imagined, leaving many in a country where governance is more opaque wondering about the choice facing Americans in November.

Over the last fortnight, the Namayesh channel has shown the first series of "House of Cards," the early episodes of the fictional Frank Underwood's ruthless rise to the White House. A little over a day after Saturday's final program, the main state TV news network IRINN carried the first ever live broadcast in the Islamic Republic of a U.S. presidential debate – one dominated by sleaze and threats.

The timing added up to a scheduling gift for officials who understand the power of television news and drama to shape perceptions of a country which for conservatives remains Iran's biggest enemy, even after the Obama administration oversaw the end of its global isolation.

"It follows a story that the Iranian government has tried to promote about U.S. politicians for a while," said Fouad Izadi, who teaches American politics at the University of Tehran. "That they look nice, wear a tie and may use deodorant but the way they engage in activities is problematic and often very unethical," said Izadi, who added he helped advise broadcasters on whether "House of Cards" should be aired.

The decision to do so was taken by Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, a media corporation that's dominated by hardline conservatives opposed to western influence and which controls domestic television and radio services. Coming as Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump reach a campaign peak, it has been seen as an attempt to put before Iranians a Washington that's riddled with corruption and crawling with oily, career-minded politicians.

"I'd seen the original U.S. version already so I was curious to see how they would dub it here, I don't really trust they've done it accurately," said Mehrdad, a 34-year old teacher from Tehran who declined to give his surname because of the sensitivities of speaking to foreign media. They probably try to "draw viewers to those aspects of the show that highlight the artificial nature of U.S. society," he said.

It's not the first time broadcast authorities have chosen to show films or TV series produced in the West, and Namayesh is also currently showing the 1990s U.S. drama "Early Edition" and a BBC dramatization of the first woman to win a Nobel Prize, physicist Marie Curie. But with the U.S. deep in an election fight characterized by smear and now lewd allegations of sexual misconduct, the impact has been bigger this time.

Like media worldwide, Trump in particular is big news in Iran. Since the emergence of the 2005 video in which he boasted about using his celebrity status to assault women, newspapers have been dominated by photos and caricatures of the Republican candidate.

"Is this the end of the populist?" the moderate-leaning Jahan-e Eqtesad daily asked in a headline emblazoned across a photo of a finger-wagging Trump.

With their own presidential election just seven months away, and the 2015 nuclear deal which ended sanctions on Iran's economy continually under attack from domestic critics of incumbent Hassan Rouhani, most Iranians interviewed in Tehran saw Clinton as the lesser evil.

"I was watching that blond man on TV, on the news — and he says the most violent, awful things," said 60-year-old taxi driver Shahrullah, who also declined to give his family name.

"I don't want Trump to win because he seems crazy and he doesn't really seem to know anything about Iran," said Mehrdad, the House of Cards fan.

Neither candidate fighting to succeed Barack Obama is likely to roll-back the nuclear accord, said Saeed Laylaz, an economist and former adviser to reformist President Mohammad Khatami. But a victory for Trump and his brand of reactionary politics could weaken those close to Rouhani working to lower tensions.

"If hardliners and radicals in the U.S. are in power, then its effect on Iran could mean that hardliners will also gain here politically," Laylaz said.

Rouhani won the top elected office in Iran in 2013 after pledging to end sanctions and improve living standards. The nation's ultimate arbiter – Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei – has supported his diplomatic engagement while seeking to balance the interests of hardliners. Khamenei regularly expresses his suspicions over American intentions in the Middle East.

Others, including Saeed Mohammadi, a 27-year-old post-graduate student taught by Izadi at Tehran university, see little change in the relationship no matter who's in power in Washington.

"There's an erroneous view in our media that Democrats are better for Iran than the Republicans," Mohammadi said. "But the divisions between Iran and the U.S. are so deep that there won't be a fundamental difference between the two parties."

As for the importance of this week's programming, "'House of Cards' is Hollywood, it's fiction," said Izadi, the academic and broadcast authority adviser. "But we're not talking about fiction when we talk about Trump and Clinton, it's reality and it's a sad reality."

For China's Leaders, US Election Scandals Make The Case For One-Party Rule

By Chris Buckley

New York Times, October 11, 2016

BEIJING — The Chinese state news media has already declared a winner in the scandal-stained race for the White House: one-party dictatorship.

The Chinese Communist Party uses every presidential election to excoriate American democracy for its failings and argue that one-party rule works fine for China. But this year has offered an embarrassment of riches for gloating, most recently a 2005 recording of Donald J. Trump bragging about sexual assault.

"The American election again plumbs new depths in its bottom line," read the headline of an editorial from Xinhua, the main state news agency, on Monday.

"In the farce of American politics, these blowups have been coming faster than you can turn the pages of a book," the editorial said.

"The absence of any bottom line in party competition has already evolved into an absence of a moral bottom line," it said. "The voters never see the lowest point, because things just keep getting even lower."

Not everyone in China buys that official viewpoint. For quite a few Chinese, especially middle-class people in their 20s and 30s with more exposure to the world, the spectacle of parties competing for support, and of the news media taking on the candidates, is uplifting, despite all the dirt.

"Those kinds of things shouldn't be allowed to be said," Zhou Xinyu, a website editor, said of the recording of Mr. Trump.

"But I still think the American political system is actually great," Mr. Zhou, 22, said in an interview. "If you look at Chinese politics, you can find many of the same type of people. What type is that? Rich people who feel like they can get away with anything."

Still, the scandals — including Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server and excerpts from leaked speeches that she gave to banking and finance audiences — could reinforce skepticism that democracy has anything better to offer China.

"The Chinese political system has its problems, but American politics is also really dark," said Wu Man, 32, a filmmaker. "I'm a pessimist, and I am particularly cynical when it comes to politics," Ms. Wu said. "There's no real democracy. Or, we can say that democracy is also a system dominated by interests. Trump is representative of that."

That's a theme the Communist Party has taken up with gusto. Even before Mr. Trump's latest crisis, Chinese newspapers and journals were depicting him and Mrs. Clinton as puppets of wealthy elites, competing to do their masters' bidding.

"For a long time, the United States trumpeted the extraordinary excitement of its elections as a symbol of its superior institutions," an editorial in People's Daily, the main Communist Party newspaper, said on Sunday. "It's time for this 'teacher of democracy' to put away its super self-confidence and arrogance."

Chinese politics is far more secretive than the noisy contention of Western democracy. Still, China regularly produces its own eye-popping scandals.

On Sunday, the former Communist Party chief of Yunnan Province in southwest China was given a suspended death sentence after a court found him guilty of taking almost $37 million in bribes and possessing "huge amounts" of other unexplained wealth. But the state news media treats such cases as vindicating the party, showing that leaders are serious about wiping out corruption.

Chinese television has not shown the American presidential debates live, but interested people — and there are many — can follow closely on internet broadcasts and through quick Chinese translations of the debates. Chinese shared photographs of the latest debate online, doctored to look as if Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Trump were in a karaoke standoff.

And Mr. Trump may buck the assumption that Chinese people prefer Republican candidates, because they are seen as more pragmatic. A survey of 3,154 Chinese citizens in April and May overseen by the Pew Research Center found that 37 percent viewed Mrs. Clinton favorably and 35 percent saw her unfavorably, while 22 percent saw Mr. Trump favorably and 40 percent unfavorably.

"Democracy gives everyone free speech, but Trump is a public figure," said Ms. Wu, the filmmaker. "I personally certainly do not like Trump, but I feel that the American people generally are also nationalist and very frightening."

But the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is staying out of the fight. Asked at a briefing on Monday about Mr. Trump's crude boasts, a spokesman, Geng Shuang, said: "We do not comment on remarks made by relevant candidates in the U.S. presidential election."

Post Debate, Trump And Clinton Are Both Pretty Unpopular In Turkey

By Lidia Jean Kott

USA Today, October 11, 2016

For people in Turkey who watched the second presidential debate, one moment stood out that barely registered in the U.S.

The moment? When Hillary Clinton said that, if she were president, she would consider arming the Kurds.

"The Kurds have been our best partners in Syria, as well as Iraq," Clinton explained, saying she thinks they could help the U.S. win the fight against the Islamic State. It's a view she's expressed before.

But people in Turkey feel differently.

"That sends a shiver down the spine of the Turkish government," says Christina Asquith, the editor of our Across Women's Lives coverage — and based in Istanbul.

The Turks and the Kurds have been involved in civil war for almost 20 years. The conflict has waxed and waned as various rebel factions have attempted to separate and create their own state.

"People my age have that memory of a childhood of terrorist attacks just down the street from their houses," says Asquith. "I have small children in elementary school here, so I'm talking to moms. And moms are thinking that they don't want to raise their children through another civil war, like the kind that they went through, and maybe even worse."

Of course Clinton's aim is to decrease the violence in the region by getting rid of the Islamic State.

"And that's a great thing to defeat an organization that is so horrific to women in Iraq and Syria," said Asquith. "On the other hand, she is talking about arming a rebel group ... and arming a rebel group always leads to escalation."

Many people in Turkey feel just as anxious about Trump becoming president. He is viewed as "unstable, prone to violence," and likely "to make it worse," says Asquith. But not a lot is known about his actual policies.

"Whenever Donald Trump is asked about his foreign policy he always says he's keeping it secret because he doesn't want to reveal the secrets of the U.S.," Asquith said. "That is of course concerning to people in Turkey because they don't know what to expect."

In short, both Clinton and Trump are viewed as flawed contenders — at least in Turkey.

"I'm not really sure sure that either candidate is really going to comfort the Turks," Asquith said.

This article originally appeared on GlobalPost. Its content was created separately to USA TODAY.

MORE FROM GLOBALPOST:

Across Europe, Revulsion At Trump But Little Idea Of What To Do About Him

By Griff Witte, Anthony Faiola, Michael Birnbaum

Washington Post, October 11, 2016

LONDON — The man who stands an outside chance of becoming the next president of the United States is "a hate preacher." He is "unfit to hold the office" because of his "stupefying ignorance." His pattern of reckless behavior inspires "a retching feeling."

Those are not the words of Republican nominee Donald Trump's domestic political opponents, eager to take him down in the rancorous home stretch of an almost incomprehensibly acid American election.

Instead, they are the sentiments of Washington's closest allies, who, gazing across the Atlantic, have broken with decades of precedent that calls for studious silence and have openly taken sides in a U.S. presidential election.

From the Baltic Sea to the Mediterranean coast, the prospect of Trump taking control of the world's greatest power has triggered widespread anxiety in European capitals. It has also brought periodic outbursts from leaders who no doubt hope, perhaps in vain, that the views of America's foreign friends will somehow make a difference among American voters.

But what Trump's rise hasn't done is prompt European allies to get ready for the possibility that he could actually win.

"They are taking it seriously," said Xenia Wickett, head of the Americas program at the London-based think tank Chatham House. "But I don't think they're preparing for it."

That lack of preparation leaves Europe dangerously exposed should Trump find a way out of the maelstrom generated by his vulgar comments in a 2005 video and pull off an unexpected victory over Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton in next month's vote.

Europe is already at a vulnerable moment even without a White House resident who has called the most basic tenets of the transatlantic alliance into question, and whose coziness with President Vladimir Putin comes as Russia has made a habit of menacing its weaker European neighbors.

Across the continent, populist movements that share much with Trump's nativist nationalism are on the rise. Britain is on its way out of the European Union. The continent's ability to hang together amid problems ranging from the refugee crisis to terrorism is being tested daily.

But a Trump victory could be the biggest challenge of all, forcing European nations to bind together to compensate for a likely American turn toward isolationism.

Even if Trump opted to maintain the traditional U.S. role as guarantor of European security, his extreme positions may prove so anathema that Europe would have little choice but to distance itself from Washington, said Wickett, a former U.S. National Security Council official under President George W. Bush.

"America would no longer be a country that you would necessarily want to be partnered with," she said.

That shift has already been telegraphed through the scathing words of top European officials — words that could make it difficult to reconcile with Trump if he wins.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier in August called Trump a "hate preacher" who had much in common with Brexit backers and with the German far right. He said they were linked by their exploitation of fears to achieve political goals. This was "incendiary for society," Steinmeier said.

Steinmeier's boss, Chancellor Angela Merkel, has been more circumspect, though she has left little doubt about her true feelings. She has heaped praise on Clinton's "strategic thinking" and commitment to the transatlantic partnership.

"Whenever I had a chance to work with Hillary Clinton, it has been a great pleasure," Merkel told the German newspaper Bild.

As for Trump, all she would say was that she doesn't "know him personally."

Neither, presumably, does French President François Hollande. But that didn't stop him from saying that Trump's "excesses" had given him "a retching feeling."

Britain's Parliament has even gone so far as to debate whether Trump should be banned from the nation's shores. The January session yielded no action, but did exhaust the thesauruses of dozens of lawmakers who struggled to creatively convey just how much they disliked the real estate tycoon.

"Demagogue," "buffoon" and "wazzock" — a semi-obscure Britishism meaning, roughly, "twit" — were among the insults that echoed off the drafty stone walls in the mother of all parliaments.

There's little evidence that Trump's reputation in Britain has improved since then, even though he, unlike Clinton or President Obama, backed the winning side in the country's June Brexit referendum.

Trump has called himself "Mr. Brexit," an apparent allusion to his belief that he can shock the world with victory much in the way anti-E.U. activists did in the referendum.

The most bombastic of those activists, longtime U.K. Independence Party leader Nigel Farage, has become a highly visible Trump ally. Farage spoke at a Trump rally in Mississippi in August and was Trump's guest at Sunday's debate.

Trump has found other friends in the ascendant populist movements of Europe, including Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

Orban, who built a razor-wire fence along the country's southern border to block refugees and migrants from entering the country last summer, has hailed Trump's proposals to crack down on terrorism. "I myself could not have drawn up better what Europe needs," Orban said in July.

But Orban's stand places him firmly in the minority among European leaders. For other nations, particularly the four NATO members that border Russia, Trump is the source of deep, almost existential anxiety.

The Republican nominee has gone back and forth over whether he would come to the aid of U.S. allies if they were attacked, even as Russia has staged provocative military drills and air incursions in the two years following its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine.

Three of Russia's NATO neighbors — the Baltic nations of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia — are together smaller than Missouri and stand no chance of defending themselves in the event of a Russian invasion. In that context, comments from top Trump adviser Newt Gingrich that "Estonia is in the suburbs of St. Petersburg" shook many in the region who have long counted Republicans as their staunchest advocates.

Concern over Trump runs so deep that Latvian lawmakers have started to reach out to Republicans in Congress, eager to build support among a constituency that might be a forceful counterweight to the would-be president's isolationist impulses.

Ojars Kalnins, chairman of the Latvian Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, said Latvian lawmakers were in talks with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) to lead a delegation of Baltic politicians that hopes to speak in front of a Senate committee during the lame-duck session of Congress.

"The Trump comments and the Gingrich comments did prompt us," Kalnins said. "It was a realization that people aren't as attuned to the Baltic states as they used to be."

But those modest steps are about as far as Europe has gone to prepare for a Trump presidency. The prevailing strategy for many diplomats and politicians is to hope he doesn't win, and if he does, to simply wait and see what he will actually do, given his often-contradictory statements.

Some European analysts believe Trump's foreign policy ideas are so radical that he would have trouble stocking the government with enough people committed to carrying them out.

"We expect there would still be cadre diplomats, a lot of people who are not showing the opposition flag to Trump but who are the safe tier of professionals," said Juri Luik, a former Estonian foreign and defense minister who runs the International Center for Defense and Security in the Estonian capital Tallinn.

But Luik also cautioned that Europeans "shouldn't kid ourselves" and noted that in the United States, the president calls the shots on security policy.

Indeed, far from being reassured, European leaders have often gone out of their way to stress just how worried they are.

"Trump is not only a problem for the E.U., but for the whole world," European Parliament President Martin Schulz recently told the German weekly Der Spiegel. "If a man is sitting in the White House . . . with no clue and describes expert knowledge as elitist nonsense, a critical point has been reached: Then an apparently irresponsible man is in a position which requires the highest sense of responsibility."

Faiola reported from Berlin. Birnbaum reported from Brussels. And Karla Adam in London also contributed to this article.

Donald Trump Is One More Bullyboy In A World Of Strongmen

By David Ignatius

Washington Post, October 11, 2016

SEOUL

Watching Donald Trump skulking behind Hillary Clinton on the debate stage Sunday night, muttering about locking her up if he wins, was a reminder that we are drifting toward a kind of bullyboy-world, where power is everything.

You see this coarsening climate of relations around the globe, in the debasement of the norms that make civilized life possible. Dictators push the limits of power in new ways almost daily: China brazenly builds military bases on disputed rocks and sand in the South China Sea and dares anyone to stop them; Russia pillages America's political system and baldly denies it, just as it denies connivance in the shoot-down of a civilian airliner over Ukraine and the bombing of a humanitarian aid convoy in Syria, Meanwhile, our own Middle East "ally" Saudi Arabia, bombs a funeral, yes, a funeral, in Yemen.

The leading bullyboy in this part of the world is North Korean Leader Kim Jong Un. His regime is a calculated act of defiance. He terrorizes his population, shoots his relatives and governs his nation as if by whim. Yet this crackpot dictator is about to become the leader of a full-fledged nuclear power, after bomb and missile tests last month that bring him to the threshold of targeting U.S. territory with a nuclear attack.

Historians will have to decide whether Barack Obama's presidency encouraged this fraying of limits. For all his decency, Obama conveyed a sense that you could defy the United States and its cherished "rules-based order" and get away with it. His slowly unfolding but decisive use of power against the Islamic State may partially reverse that reputation.

Even if Obama had been as implacable as President Andrew "Old Hickory" Jackson, the probing and testing of the United States that always accompanies our transitions of power would already have begun. That's part of what we're seeing now — the bullies giving America a shove — and the process will increase as we move toward Inauguration Day and after.

The Korean Peninsula is the place where the tests may come early. North Korea likes to get ahead of any new administration by baring its teeth. The recent nuclear and missile tests are a statement of Pyongyang's basic calculus: Keep pushing and the world will back off and decide that the cost of stopping North Korea is too steep: Pyongyang will get away with its proliferation, just as Pakistan did.

Dealing with the world's bullies is complicated by having a wannabe member of the club running for president. How does the United States credibly reinforce the rules of behavior among nations when a leading U.S. presidential candidate proclaims his support for torture, religious discrimination, tax dodging and abusive sexual behavior? Comparing Trump to Vladimir Putin may be flattering Trump.

Rebuilding order in the world begins by telling the truth. That was the importance of Friday's blunt statement about Russia's political hacking by Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper Jr. and Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson. They used undiplomatic language: "The U.S. Intelligence Community is confident that the Russian Government directed the recent compromises of emails from . . . U.S. political organizations. . . . We believe, based on the scope and sensitivity of these efforts, that only Russia's senior-most officials could have authorized these activities."

Having named and shamed Russia, what's the United States going to do about it? The Obama administration wisely answered that some of America's response will be visible, and some of it won't. The United States has vastly more power than we normally employ. Let Russia do the worrying for a while. As in the old playground admonition about bullies, don't get mad, get even.

We should admit that the might-makes-right process infects the United States, too, and I don't just mean Trump's nastiness toward women, Latinos, Muslims and others who stand in his way. We have become in many ways a meaner, less-confident, less-generous country. Our use of drones as silent assassins has unfortunately been an object lesson for the rest of the world. We have far from clean hands.

Americans who want a more orderly, rules-based world should also recognize that bullying is a particularly American disease, and not just on the playground. A recent study called "Adult Bullying — A Nasty Piece of Work" by Pamela Lutgen-Sandvik, an associate professor at North Dakota State University, found that nearly 40 percent of U.S. workers have been bullied, and that this rate is 20 percent to 50 percent higher than that in Scandinavian countries surveyed.

The 2016 presidential election is about the candidates, of course. But it's also about the electorate. If we are the nation that elects Donald Trump, we will own that fact — and bear that scar — through our history.

Read more from David Ignatius's archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook.

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The Post's View: Softening on Trump? Remember this.

Paul Waldman: Trump's response to terrorism is both weak and barbaric

The Post's View: The clear and present danger of Donald Trump

Pentagon Hints At Possible Retaliation After Yemen Missile Fire

By Phil Stewart And Idrees Ali

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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

Ashton Carter: Defense Dept. Determined To Keep U.S. Warships Near Yemen Despite Attempted Attack

By Carlo Muñoz

Washington Times, October 11, 2016

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad — American warships will keep operating off the coast of Yemen, despite recently coming under fire by anti-government rebels in the country, possibly taking action against those forces should U.S. service members in the region come into harm's way again.

Washington remains "determined to preserve freedom of navigation" for American and allied warships traversing the waterways off the Yemeni coast, Defense Secretary Ashton Carter told reporters Monday.

"We are very capable of taking action against anybody who takes action against our warships" operating in the region or elsewhere around the world, said Mr. Carter who was en route to a biannual symposium with defense chiefs from Central and South America.

Pentagon spokesman Capt. Jeff Davis upped the ante on Tuesday, saying "anybody who takes action, fires against U.S. Navy ships operating in international waters, does so at their own peril," Reuters reported.

Those comments come in the wake of a failed missile attack on the USS Mason late last week. The missiles were fired from coastal territory in Yemen controlled by Houthi rebels, a Sunni separatist sect in the country that forced former President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi from power in 2015.

The country is also home to al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, also known as AQAP, the group's Yemeni cell which is considered the best-financed and most-dangerous faction currently operating in the region.

Two missiles were fired at the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer while the U.S. warship was conducting routine operations in the Red Sea, Capt. Davis said Monday. When asked Tuesday whether American forces in the region were mulling possible counterattacks against Houthi-held territory, he replied: "I'm not confirming that right now."

Launched from Houthi-controlled territory along the country's western coastline, both missiles fell short of their intended targets, he said.

Pentagon officials were still in the midst of determining whether the attack on the USS Mason was carried out by Houthi rebels in Yemen, Mr. Carter said Monday.

"We will find out the origins of this," he said. "We certainly don't take anything like this lightly. No one should."

Mr. Carter declined to comment on whether U.S. commanders in the region were weighing an adjustment to Washington's approach in Yemen, which until recently had been touted by the White House as a bright spot in the Obama administration's counterterrorism strategy.

Pentagon leaders are "constantly adjusting our force posture in that area in reaction to the entirety of things that are going on" in Yemen and the region writ large, Mr. Carter said.

Earlier this year, Pentagon officials dispatched American military intelligence team remains on the ground in Yemen, supporting the Arab coalition battling al Qaeda's terror cell in the country.

The U.S. military team played an integral role in the operation in May to retake the coastal town of Mukalla in Hadramawt province, located 400 miles southeast of the country's capitol of Sana'a.

Providing intelligence support to Saudi and UAE commanders, the team also coordinated aerial surveillance operations and assisted local commanders in mission planning for the Mukalla offensive.

USS Boxer Amphibious Ready Group and elements of 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit were also anchored off the coast of Yemen at the time, assisting in maritime security operations and coordinating casualty evacuations from Mukalla.

The Boxer and the U.S. military intelligence team were pulled out of the country this summer, according to the Pentagon.

The attack on the USS Mason was the second such strike against foreign vessels steaming through the Red Sea. A United Arab Emirates warship was struck by a missile attack while passing through the same contested waterway.

Abu Dhabi claimed the ship was was a humanitarian aid transport, while Houthi leaders say the warship was conducting combat operations against anti-government rebels in Yemen.

• This article was based in part on wire service reports.

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Iranian Cause And Effect

Tehran's Houthi allies fire at U.S. ships after U.S. sanctions relief.

Wall Street Journal, October 11, 2016

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

A Child In Yemen: "We Sleep Afraid, We Wake Up Afraid"

By Mohammed Al-Asaadi

New York Times, October 11, 2016

Mohammed al-Asaadi is a father of four in Sana, the capital of Yemen, which has been caught in a war between Iranian-backed rebels and Saudi Arabia for more than two years. He is a former journalist now working in communications for Unicef.

My son, Yousef, calls the bombings "fireworks." He sinks in fear when explosions wake us up from sleep. He runs to the person closest to him to hide.

My little boy will be 3 in December, but he is already three wars old.

During one of our evening meetings, I asked my three daughters to write about what is happening around them and posted their words on Facebook. My oldest, Kholud, who is 15, wrote:

When the bombs are close enough, the shock waves shake the house badly, blowing open doors and windows. It feels as if the explosions are inside your ears. My son and youngest daughter — Haneen is 12 — wake up screaming, running in all directions through dark rooms.

This video, taken by a friend, shows a bombing last month that was so close it threw us out of our beds.

My wife and I have agreed on a division of roles. She takes care of our little boy, who sleeps in our room. I take care of the girls in the room next door. The first words we tell them are: "You are fine. We are all fine. The blast is far from our house. Don't panic. We are all O.K. You are O.K."

I gather them all together and we make a group hug. If the night is particularly bad, we all sleep together.

Way back when the war started, I explained to my daughters what this is all about: who is fighting whom and why. They understand that we are not a direct target for any of the fighting parties, but could be collateral damage should we happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

So we limit our movements. My children call this being "under house arrest."

School is the one place I feel they should go, despite all my fears. Simply, I am a strong believer that education is the gateway to a safer future.

Asma, who is 14, is the first to spend money and the last to save it. She loves children and her friends. I cried when I read what she had written for the Facebook post.

Haneen, the 12-year-old, is outspoken and creative. She is always asking what things have not yet been invented because she says she wants to invent something that will benefit everyone.

Once, when I apologized for being late because I was at work helping the children of Yemen, she confronted me: "We are also the children of Yemen." Here is an excerpt from her Facebook essay:

My children were at home on Saturday when the bombs killed more than 100 people at a Sana funeral hall. I was live on BBC Arabic speaking on behalf of Unicef about the cholera outbreak. On my way back home, I saw the lines at one hospital.

My children learned about the attack hours later, once they had finished all their homework.

They always have questions. They asked if any of my friends had been killed.

I told them one: the mayor of Sana. They were in a state of shock. I checked their homework to keep busy. But as soon as they went to bed, an airstrike rocked our house. Two more followed. I moved from their room to the middle of the house. They sleep next to each other on the same mattress, where I can hug them all if an airstrike hits the area.

This is life in a war zone. Every day, you wake up to an unpleasant surprise: the death or injury of a friend or a family member. You witness the destruction of your childhood neighborhood, school and the little shop where you once bought candy.

You have to live without electricity, water, fuel and social services. You don't want to live a life where your utmost achievement is surviving another day and your ultimate pleasure is having an uninterrupted internet connection.

Wars are destructive not only to towns and cities, but also to souls.

U.S. Expects 'Significant' Progress On Tougher North Korea Sanctions: Diplomat

By David Brunnstrom

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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

Tough Talk But Little Action From Lieberman As Israel's Defense Minister

By Isabel Kershner

New York Times, October 11, 2016

JERUSALEM — Israel has been challenged by land, sea and air in recent weeks, as security officials have braced for a wave of violence around the Jewish High Holy Days and the anniversary of the outbreak of Palestinian stabbing, shooting and automobile attacks that began a year ago.

A deadly drive-by shooting in Jerusalem, a spate of stabbings in the West Bank, rockets fired from Gaza into the border city of Sderot, Syrian missiles fired at Israeli warplanes, and a challenge to Israel's naval blockade of Gaza, by a dozen women on a yacht, have all provided a test of how Avigdor Lieberman, Israel's hard-line defense minister, would respond.

Before his appointment in May in a political deal to bolster Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's conservative coalition, Mr. Lieberman criticized what he called the government's soft handling of security. Now, five months after his tough talk, Israeli military officials, analysts and Palestinian experts say he has done little to change Israeli policies significantly.

"He speaks of collective punishment," Amos Harel, a military affairs analyst for the newspaper Haaretz, said of Mr.

Lieberman's threats to penalize the families and communities in the occupied West Bank from which attackers hail. "But if there is a closure of a village, it is not complete. He turned up the volume a bit, but not dramatically."

Some of the West Bank villages from which assailants have come were closed temporarily, and Israel has continued to strip attackers' family members of their permits to work in Israel, and demolished their homes. But this did not start with Mr. Lieberman.

"Part of what Lieberman said is already the Israeli policy, which includes collective punishment," said Ghassan Khatib, the vice president of Birzeit University in the West Bank. "This is not new; it is 60 years old."

The military has long said its strategy has been to try to differentiate between the perpetrators of violence and the rest of the Palestinian population. An Israeli military official working in the West Bank, who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity because of army rules amid the recent resurgence of violence, said that if anything, that policy had been "enhanced."

When rockets fired by militants from Gaza exploded in Sderot in August, and again last week, causing panic but no injuries, the Israeli retaliation was broader than usual. The first time, Israel retaliated overnight with about 50 airstrikes against militant targets in Gaza, not the expected two or three. The second time, Israeli forces hit fewer targets but did so in broad daylight, rather than in the more customary dark of night. In both cases, the target sites appeared to be empty, and nobody was killed.

Before becoming defense minister, Mr. Lieberman, the leader of the ultranationalist Yisrael Beiteinu party and a former foreign minister known for undiplomatic bluster, strongly criticized the handling of Israel's 50-day war in Gaza in 2014. It ended with an Egyptian-brokered cease-fire with Hamas, the militant group that controls Gaza, and without a decisive victory for Israel. Mr. Lieberman accused Mr. Netanyahu's government of pursuing a "defeatist" policy designed to buy quiet instead of overthrowing Hamas.

After last week's strikes, Mr. Lieberman warned publicly that any fire from Gaza would be met with a powerful response. But he added: "We are a responsible and judicious leadership. We are not seeking adventures, and nobody is pushing for an escalation against Hamas in the Gaza Strip."

A senior Israeli military official in the southern command, which includes the Gaza front, recently said that the 50-strike blitz was intended "to test our own capabilities" and "to send a message to the other side." By hitting Sderot, the official said, speaking on the usual condition of anonymity, the militants had crossed "a red line."

The response was not calculated to set off an escalation, he said. "The directive I have is to lengthen for as long as possible the period of calm."

And when the Israeli Navy intercepted the women's flotilla, it tried a less belligerent approach by sending female combat soldiers to board the yacht.

In August, Mr. Lieberman unveiled his plan for combating terrorism and dealing with the Palestinians, describing it as a "carrots-and-sticks" approach. His staff refused to discuss details of the policy, but provided a transcript of a briefing about it that Mr. Lieberman gave to Israeli reporters.

The carrots being offered to those not involved in attacks against Israelis include infrastructure improvements and economic opportunities. "If somebody wants a soccer pitch or a kindergarten, or somebody wants to talk about the economy, trade, business, we are certainly prepared to," he said. "After all, we understand that we are destined to live side by side."

Mr. Lieberman, himself a West Bank settler, also spoke about increasing the number of permits for Palestinians to work in Israel and easing the roadblocks.

At a September meeting at the United Nations, Israeli officials presented more sweeteners, including an upgrade to the Allenby Bridge between the West Bank and Jordan, a children's hospital near Bethlehem, and master plans for building in some Palestinian hamlets in the 60 percent of the West Bank that Israel fully controls, and where almost no Palestinian construction has been allowed. There was also talk of allowing a gas pipeline to Gaza to ease the energy crisis there, as well as selling more water to the Palestinians.

"These are the kinds of common-sense steps that, if implemented, will take us forward in a positive way," Secretary of State John Kerry said at the meeting at the United Nations. "Nobody denies that. But there's no political horizon in any of it."

The incentives have not generated much enthusiasm among Palestinians who want to see the end of Israeli occupation and the creation of a Palestinian state.

Jamal Dajani, the director of strategic communications in the office of the prime minister of the Palestinian Authority, described Mr. Lieberman's strategy as a "new-old policy that has been tried before and failed."

"It should not be a favor to provide a kindergarten to a community, nor a playground," he said. "To win hearts and minds — you are not going to buy that with a soccer field, for goodness sake. This should go without saying."

As for what sticks he would use beyond the usual toolbox of demolishing houses, canceling work permits and stripping certain Palestinian officials of their V.I.P. passes, Mr. Lieberman has been vague.

FARC Says It Still Wants Peace, Despite Colombian Voters' Rejection Of Accord

Guerrillas play soccer, loll in hammocks in remote camp; 'War is over,' commander says

By Juan Forero

Wall Street Journal, October 11, 2016

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NATIONAL NEWS

Susan Ladd: Obama Delivers A Healthy Dose Of Optimism

By Susan Ladd

Greensboro (NC) News & Record, October 11, 2016

After watching Sunday's presidential debate, I felt like I needed to take a bath and vomit to purge my system of any of the nastiness and venom exchanged between the two candidates, which I feared might actually have permeated my being.

It has certainly permeated my psyche as this election has veered into tabloid territory, and debates have become increasingly less civil.

In Greensboro, Obama Says Trump Has Disqualified Himself For Job At 7-Eleven

By David Nakamura

Washington Post, October 11, 2016

GREENSBORO, N.C. — President Obama eviscerated Donald Trump as unfit for the presidency during a raucous rally here for the Hillary Clinton campaign, shrugging off several interruptions from anti-Clinton hecklers as he sought to rally voters in a crucial swing state.

Obama seemed to revel in his ridicule of the Republican nominee, mocking Trump for his loss of nearly $1 billion, his refusal to release his tax returns and his lewd comments about women.

"The guy says stuff nobody would find tolerable if they were applying for a job at 7-Eleven," Obama said during a lengthy speech to a crowd of 7,700 at an outdoor amphitheater. "I also know a lot of casino operators who managed not to lose $1 billion in a year. They say the house always wins. I don't know what happened."

Of the 2005 "Access Hollywood" video of Trump making lewd remarks about women that was disclosed last week, Obama said: "You don't have to be a husband or father to say, 'That's not right.' You just have to be a decent human being."

On Air Force One en route to North Carolina, White House press secretary Josh Earnest said Obama believed that what Trump said he did to women on the video amounted to sexual assault. The president found Trump's remarks "repugnant," Earnest said.

The president has called Trump unfit for the White House several times before, but his remarks here are part of a stepped-up offensive from the president with less than a month left until the Nov. 8 elections and Trump sliding in the polls.

Obama was interrupted three times from anti-Clinton hecklers, including two wearing shirts calling former president Bill Clinton a rapist and one who tore up a Clinton-Kaine sign, as the crowd booed. Security escorted the hecklers out.

Obama took the interruptions in stride. "This is democracy at work. This is great!" he said. Then, recycling a rallying cry from his 2012 reelection campaign, Obama implored the crowd: "Don't boo — vote!"

North Carolina is considered a crucial battleground, and the speech here marked Obama's second appearance in the state for the Clinton campaign. Obama won the state in 2008, the first time a Democrat carried North Carolina in the general election in a generation, but he narrowly lost here to Republican Mitt Romney in 2012.

The president, who had participated in a town hall-style event with ESPN at North Carolina A&T State University before the rally, has targeted his coalition of minorities, women and younger voters. As he did during remarks to the Congressional Black Caucus last month, Obama said his legacy was on the line and challenged the crowd to get out to the polls.

"You have everything to lose," he said. "All the progress we've made in the past eight years is on the ballot. Civility is on the ballot. Justice is on the ballot, equality is on the ballot, democracy is on the ballot. If you want to send a message in this election … turn back the forces of racism and misogyny."

Obama denounced Trump for saying during a debate with Clinton on Sunday that he would put her in jail over her use of a private email system while serving as secretary of state, and for minimizing Russia's alleged role in the hacking of the emails of the Democratic National Committee.

"You threaten to put your political opponent in jail — no trial, no indictment, no lawyers," Obama said. "When you welcome Russian meddling in our electoral process, you're disregarding not just facts or evidence or a free press, you're chipping away at basic values like tolerance and due process and mutual respect. Our democracy doesn't work that way."

Although a number of Republican members of Congress have pulled their endorsements of Trump since the 2005 "Access Hollywood" video was disclosed last week, Obama noted that several prominent GOP officials have still not done so.

"They can't bring themselves to say, 'I can't endorse this guy,'" Obama said. Of those who did pull their endorsement, the president added: "Why'd it take so long for some of them to finally walk away? We saw this coming."

Obama Says Trump's Comments On Women Disqualifying

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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Obama Slams Trump's Comments On Women, Calls On GOP To Abandon Him

By Dave Boyer

Washington Times, October 11, 2016

President Obama's blasted Donald Trump's "terrible" comments about women Tuesday evening during a campaign rally for Hillary Clinton in Greensboro, North Carolina, that was interrupted several times by protesters wearing t-shirts and carrying signs proclaiming, "Bill Clinton is a rapist."

Mr. Obama ridiculed GOP officials who have denounced Mr. Trump's lewd comments on an 11-year-old tape about groping women, but won't withdraw their endorsements of the Republican nominee.

"I too believe in forgiveness and redemption. But that doesn't mean I'm going to elect the person president," Mr. Obama said. "You can't have it both ways. We saw this coming. He's been saying really bad stuff for a while now. What did you think — he was going to transform himself? I'm [age] 55, I know it's hard to change. I know at 70 it's harder."

He urged supporters to vote for Mrs. Clinton, telling voters to "turn back the forces of racism and misogyny."

Of the comments by Mr. Trump that angered many women, the president said, "You don't have to be husband or a father to hear what we heard just a few days ago and say, 'That's not right.' You just have to be a decent human being."

The president also mocked Mr. Trump, who has owned casinos, for declaring a $916 million business loss in 1995 and apparently not paying federal income taxes for years.

"They say the house always wins. I don't know what happened," the president said. "You don't brag about not paying your taxes. That means you're not a responsible citizen. He is not fit to be commander in chief."

Referring to Mr. Trump's promise to deport more illegal immigrants, the president said, "they've probably already paid more taxes than he has."

He portrayed Mr. Trump as anti-American.

"In the middle of a debate, when you threaten to put your opponent in jail … when you welcome Russian meddling in our electoral process … democracy doesn't work that way," Mr. Obama said. "I frankly never thought I'd see the day when we would have a major party candidate who is promoting those notions."

In the battleground state that he lost in 2012 to Republican Mitt Romney, the president enumerated the experience and qualities of Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton.

"She doesn't quit," he said. "She actually knows what she's talking about — which is helpful when you're president of the United States. C'mon, people! This isn't an audition for some show. This ain't a show!"

At least three pro-Donald Trump protesters approached the stage while Mr. Obama was speaking, clearly in view of the president.

"Oh no!" Mr. Obama said as the crowd of nearly 8,000 erupted in jeers and catcalls.

"This is the great thing about politics in America," the president said finally. "It takes all kinds. Folks will just do all kinds of stuff. Those are folks who are auditioning for a reality show. I'm just trying to make a simple point here."

The crowd begins chanting, "Hillary!"

A few minutes later, more pro-Trump demonstrators began shouting in the audience.

"Is somebody hollering again?" Mr. Obama asked, looking into the crowd at the Trump supporters. "Here's the deal. Try to get your own rally."

On a third occasion, a young man approached the stage and pointed at the president angrily, apparently yelling at Mr. Obama, before Secret Service agents hauled him away.

"Thank you," the president said to his security detail. "He was okay, he was okay. You know what? This is our democracy at work. He gets his five seconds of fame."

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Obama Says No "Decent Human Being" Would Defend Trump's Comments On Women

Mic, October 11, 2016

Appearing on the campaign trail on Tuesday, President Barack Obama waded into the controversy surrounding Donald Trump's comments bragging about committing sexual assault, and casting the 2005 comments as representative of Trump's attitude toward women and part of a pattern of insults by the Republican nominee.

"You don't have to be a husband or a father to hear what we heard a few days ago and say, 'That's not right,'" Obama told a raucous audience of 7,000 at North Carolina A&T University in Greensboro, North Carolina. "You just have to be a decent human being to say, 'That's not right.'"

The release of the recording, in which Trump can be heard bragging about how he grabbed women by their genitals, has dominated the campaign since it was published by the Washington Post on Friday. The ensuing fallout has led to a deep fissure among Republican elected officials, many of whom called for Trump to leave the race.

In his first extended remarks on the controversy, Obama argued the recording made Trump unfit for the White House.

"He doesn't have the temperament or the judgment or the knowledge — or, apparently, the desire to obtain the knowledge — or the basic honesty that a president needs to have," Obama said. "And that was true even before we heard about his attitudes toward women."

"Nobody fully understands the demands of this job until you've sat behind the desk," he said, echoing an argument he made at the convention and in previous campaign stops. "Tweeting doesn't qualify you. Sound bites don't qualify you. Insults certainly don't qualify you." Obama shakes hands with supporters after his speech in Greensboro.Source: Jim Watson/Getty Images

Toward the end of his 50-minute speech, Obama went on an extended off-script riff directed at Republican leaders who have disavowed Trump's 2005 comments while declining to rescind their endorsements.

Now you've got people saying, 'Well, we strongly disapprove. We really disagree. We find those comment disgusting — but we're still endorsing him. We still think he should be president. That doesn't make sense to me."

In a thinly veiled reference to House Speaker Paul Ryan and other senior GOP leaders, Obama pointed to the disconnect between distancing themselves from Trump but still supporting his bid.

"You can't have it both ways here," Obama said. "You can't repeatedly denounce what is said by someone and then say, 'but I'm still gonna endorse him to be the most powerful person on the planet.'"

The strategy: The event was Obama's latest appearance on the campaign trail on behalf of Clinton, his former secretary of state and onetime Democratic primary rival. He is expected to headline at least a dozen more events for Clinton over the course of the final weeks of the campaign. President Barack Obama speaks on behalf of Hillary Clinton in Greensboro, North Carolina.Source: Carolyn Kaster/AP

The Clinton campaign is banking on the president's high popularity to motivate turnout among Democrats, particularly the young people and minorities who were key elements of Obama's coalition but have been reluctant to enthusiastically back Clinton's candidacy. Obama is also lending his popularity to candidates further down the ballot, including Deborah Ross, the Democratic challenger for Senate in North Carolina.

Obama's enormous popularity among African-American voters explains his appearance on Tuesday in Greensboro. Clinton is in a tight race with Trump in North Carolina, where the latest polls show the former secretary of state just one or two points ahead of her Republican rival. Obama won the state in 2008 and narrowly lost it to Mitt Romney in 2012.

On Tuesday, Obama made an explicit appeal to voters in the state to work to elect Clinton, casting her as the inheritor and defender of his legacy.

"Turn back the forces of racism and misogyny and send a message for progress," Obama said at the end of his remarks. "Send a message for facts Send a message for reason. Send a message for hope by voting for Hilary Clinton. Send a message about who we are as the American people and make our kids proud."

It's Obama Versus Trump As Clinton Leans On Her 'Cleanup Hitter'

By Mike Dorning

Bloomberg Politics, October 11, 2016

Hillary Clinton's name is on the ballot, but the 2016 race so far has been just as much a contest between Barack Obama and Donald Trump.

Never in modern times has a retiring incumbent been so central to a presidential campaign, a phenomenon embraced by a nominee who initially kept her distance. Crowds sometimes cheer "four more years" when Obama or his wife, Michelle, headline rallies for Clinton.

The outsize role Obama is playing reflects a strategic choice by Clinton to tap an election-year surge in his popularity; the president enjoys 53 percent job approval in the latest Gallup Poll. The Clinton campaign knows that she simply can't get to the White House unless she can appeal to a coalition she has struggled to excite – the African-American, Hispanic, and younger voters who delivered Obama the presidency, said a Democrat close to the campaign and to the Obama administration.

"Barack Obama has essentially put Hillary Clinton on his back and is trying to carry her across the finish line metaphorically," said Democratic pollster Peter Hart, who has polled presidential elections since 1964. "There is no president that has put his prestige and his power behind a candidate more than Barack Obama, and if Hillary Clinton is successful she will owe it to Barack Obama more than any candidate I have ever known."

White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest declared Obama the "cleanup hitter" for Clinton at a recent news briefing. In that role, Obama plans to devote one to two days each week to campaign for her through the election. He heads to North Carolina on Tuesday looking to run up the score on Trump, whose campaign is reeling after last week's release of a 2005 video tape in which he made vulgar comments about women – a development that led many GOP allies to desert him. Obama's Antipathy

More than a year ago, long before Trump was considered a viable nominee, Obama and his advisers already were planning an unprecedented push for Clinton, seeing the election of a Democratic successor as critical to

securing his policy achievements. But Trump's emergence has intensified that fervor, said the Democrat close to the administration who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Obama has an antipathy toward Trump that runs deeper than politics, the Democrat said. The president and his advisers consider Trump antithetical to core Obama values such as a commitment to racial and cultural diversity, a reliance on reasoned decision-making and a willingness to work within global norms.

Following the release of the decade-old video in which Trump boasted about groping women, Obama said the comments offer additional evidence of why he isn't fit for office.

"It tells you that he's insecure enough that he pumps himself up by putting other people down," Obama said at an Oct. 9 fundraiser in Chicago. "It tells you he doesn't care much for the basic values of civility or respect."

The disdain between the men is evident. Trump led the "birther" movement that falsely questioned Obama's nationality early in his presidency, and Obama responded by publicly ridiculing the billionaire at the 2011 White House Correspondents' Association Dinner.Four More Years

During the most recent debate, Trump railed against Obama's foreign policy, health-care program, and handling of racial unrest, repeatedly linking Clinton to the president.

"This country cannot take another four years of Barack Obama, and that's what you're getting with her," Trump said.

The 2016 race has been roiled by protests over police shootings of black men, the fight over the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade accord, anxiety over immigration, economic angst among working-class whites and fears of Islamic State-inspired terrorism at home. Trump and Obama personify those social tensions in the campaign.

The starkly different ways Americans interpret those developments are embodied in North Carolina, a melting pot of southern white conservatives, a sizable black population, and some of the nation's most prestigious universities. Its largest city, Charlotte, has been gripped by protests following a deadly police shooting last month.

Tension between police and the communities they serve will likely be a central theme of a town hall even Obama will attend in Greensboro. The event is hosted by ESPN's The Undefeated, a website devoted to the intersection of black culture and sports, on the campus of North Carolina A&T State University. He'll later attend a rally for Clinton.Trump's Gripes

"It's hard to think of a time when not only the president's legacy but the president himself is as central to the campaign," said Julian Zelizer, a presidential historian at Princeton University.

Trump "talks about 'Crooked Hillary,'" he said. "But his real gripe is not only what the Obama presidency stood for but everything Obama himself stands for."

Traditionally, the presidential nominee emerges as party leader by the summer convention. Yet the most durable moments of July's Democratic convention were speeches by First Lady Michelle Obama and the Muslim parents of a U.S. soldier killed in action. Clinton spent much of August out of the public eye raising money, and was sidelined for several days last month by pneumonia.

"Any president on the campaign trail is likely to overshadow any candidate, especially when they have the campaign skills of Barack Obama," said Democratic political consultant Steve McMahon. "That's not to take anything away from Hillary Clinton; he's an extraordinary and remarkable campaigner."

Few nominees have begun their campaigns as widely recognized as Clinton, a former first lady, U.S. senator from New York, 2008 presidential candidate and secretary of state. Yet Clinton acknowledges her weakness in generating excitement on the campaign trail, and her instinct for privacy further handicaps her connection with voters.

"When it comes to public service, the service part has always been easier for me than the public part," Clinton said in Philadelphia last month. "I confess I don't enjoy doing some of the things that come naturally to most politicians – like talking about myself."'An Insult'

While an incumbent president always wields influence in the contest to succeed him, Obama has had an unusually forceful presence. His role in the campaign will include rallies, fundraising and television, radio and social media appearances. The first lady already has appeared in a television ad. The appearances are directed and organized by the Clinton campaign, White House aides said.

Obama's predecessor, George W. Bush, by comparison was so diminished in his final year that he left public response to the worst financial crisis since 1929 to his treasury secretary, Hank Paulson, and the two presidential candidates, Obama and Republican nominee John McCain. Bush didn't even attend the 2008 Republican convention.

Ronald Reagan in 1988 and Bill Clinton in 2000 kept similarly low profiles in the campaigns of their vice presidents, George H.W. Bush and Al Gore. Though Gore distanced himself from Clinton because of the Monica Lewinsky sex scandal, Bill Clinton and many Democratic strategists, including some Obama advisers, think that may have cost Gore the election.

While Obama's popularity has been rising, the nominees are more despised than admired: only 43 percent of Americans have a favorable view of Clinton and 36 percent of Trump, according to the Real Clear Politics average of polls conducted Sept. 27 through Oct. 9.

Obama's criticism of Trump has been a continuing thread in his speeches this year, spanning remarks in Springfield in February on the U.S. political discourse to his final address to the United Nations General Assembly on

Sept. 20, in which Obama warned that "a nation ringed by walls would only imprison itself."

Obama is becoming more vehement as the election approaches. Should African Americans fail to turn out to support Clinton in large numbers, he told the Congressional Black Caucus this month, he would "consider it a personal insult – an insult to my legacy."

Before it's here, it's on the Bloomberg Terminal. LEARN MORE

Barack Obama Lays Into Trump At North Carolina Rally

By Maya Rhodan

TIME, October 11, 2016

President Obama derided Donald Trump's recently unveiled boasts about sexually assaulting women that the candidate brushed off as "locker room talk" during a campaign stop in North Carolina on Tuesday.

"You don't have to be a husband or a father to hear what we heard just a few days ago and say that's not right," Obama said. "You just have to be a decent human being."

President Obama's remarks came amid the continuing fallout from the release of a tape on which the Republican nominee can be heard bragging about being able to grab women "by the p-ssy" because of his celebrity status. En route to the events in North Carolina on Tuesday, White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said the president found the tape "repugnant" and called Trump's statements "worthy of sharp condemnation." Obama briefly addressed the comments during a fundraising event in Chicago on Sunday, calling them the remarks of an insecure man who has made a habit out of degrading women.

Obama reiterated that sentiment on Tuesday, rattling off many comments Trump has made throughout the campaign attacking women, minorities, a Gold Star family, and a disabled reporter.

He called Trump unprepared and unwilling to prepare—restating his belief that Hillary Clinton is the most qualified person to ever run for the office.

"Tweeting doesn't qualify you. Soundbites don't qualify you. Insults certainly don't qualify you," Obama said. "Nobody can fully know what it's like to manage a global crisis… but I tell you, nobody's been closer to those decisions than Hillary."

At times felt like Obama was reciting an anti-Trump comedy routine, laughing and egging on the raucous Greensboro audience and adding a southern twang to his speech. The president actually sniffed his hand after mentioning a radio host who has claimed Obama and Secretary Clinton are both "demons" who smell like "sulfur." He mocked the nominee's business practices and said not paying taxes makes Trump an irresponsible citizen, not "smart" as he said at the first presidential debate. Obama also chided the Republican Party as a whole for perpetuating a "long list" of conspiracy theories about his presidency and rejecting his policy agenda throughout his administration, saying their actions laid the groundwork for Donald Trump's nomination. The president even flat out asked why it took so long for so many members of the GOP to walk away.

"He's been saying really bad stuff for a while now," Obama said. "What did you think he was just going to transform himself?"

Early in the speech, President Obama was interrupted by two protestors who appeared to be wearing t-shirts that alluded to former President Bill Clinton and rape, showcasing the contentious nature of this campaign. During a speech on Monday, the Republican nominee promised to bring to light salacious scandals from the Clintons' past if more "inappropriate" recordings or tapes involving him are released.

"This is the great thing about politics in America. It takes all kinds. Folks will just do all kinds of stuff," the president said in response to the protestors. "Those were some folks who were auditioning for a reality show." When more protestors interrupted later and the president told them to get their "own rally." The president was interrupted three times.

Tuesday's appearance was his second in North Carolina this cycle. Before the event, Obama participated in a town hall discussion at North Carolina A&T University hosted by ESPN and the Undefeated on race, sports, and his My Brother's Keeper Initiative.

President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama have proven to be powerful surrogates on the campaign trail, especially the First Lady, who has delivered emotional appeals to young people on college campuses in battleground states including North Carolina and Pennsylvania.

The president made it clear on Tuesday just how badly he wants Secretary Clinton to secure the presidency, repeating his campaign trope that this election will determine the nation's future for generations to come. The president insisted that the choice between the two candidates is clear, telling the crowd they've got "everything to lose" this November.

"If you want to send a message this election, send a resounding message," Obama said. "Send a message about who we are as the American people and make our kids proud."

Obama, In North Carolina, Is Expected To Urge Blacks To Vote For Hillary Clinton

By Julie Hirschfeld Davis

New York Times, October 11, 2016

GREENSBORO, N.C. — President Obama on Tuesday is expected to sharpen his appeals for support of Hillary

Clinton as a way to safeguard his legacy and strengthen the Democratic nominee's standing in a heavily African-American area of a state that was crucial to his election victory in 2008.

During a town hall-style appearance at North Carolina A&T University, a historically black institution, and later at a rally for Mrs. Clinton at an amphitheater here, Mr. Obama is scheduled to speak directly to the coalition that elected him, including many black voters and young people. He has argued that they hold the power to carry forward his agenda by backing his chosen successor.

Mr. Obama is making the case at a critical moment both for himself and for Mrs. Clinton — about a month before Election Day, a little over a week before North Carolina opens early voting and with only a few months remaining for the president to cement both his place in history and the fate of his favored projects. One of those, My Brother's Keeper, the president's initiative to support young black men, is a scheduled topic of discussion of the town hall session, sponsored by the ESPN website called The Undefeated.

The appearance is Mr. Obama's first public campaign stop since an 11-year-old video emerged on Friday of Donald J. Trump, the Republican presidential nominee, boasting in lewd terms of his ability to kiss and grope women with impunity because of his fame. The revelation further roiled what was already a remarkable and unpredictable presidential contest.

North Carolina, where a recent New York Times Upshot/Siena College poll found Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Trump tied for support, with each holding 41 percent of likely voters, has become a focal point of the race. Mr. Obama won the state in 2008 in large part on the strength of blockbuster turnout by African-American voters, young people and women who cast ballots early. But he lost it in 2012, when his margins of victory in urban centers shrank and he lost ground with white voters.

Mrs. Clinton's campaign has intensified its effort to galvanize that Obama coalition in recent days, concerned in particular about a lack of enthusiasm for her candidacy among African-American voters. Mr. Obama, in turn, has begun to argue ever more insistently that the election is as much about him — the first black president — as it is about his successor.

In a radio advertisement released on Monday by the Democratic National Committee, Mr. Obama lists his accomplishments, including the creation of millions of jobs and the enactment of the health insurance law providing coverage for millions of Americans who did not have it. "It all gets rolled back if we don't stand with Democrats this election," he warns.

"We know that the strength of America comes from folks of every background working together to make our union just a little more perfect," Mr. Obama says in the advertisement, which the Democratic Party said would be broadcast in communities across the country that have a large minority population. "So get fired up one more time," he adds, resurrecting a signature catchphrase of his 2008 bid.

As he worked to increase Mrs. Clinton's chances, Mr. Obama was also trying to shape the contours of his own legacy. On Tuesday, the White House announced that the president had created more federal grant programs to support his initiatives and draw additional corporate backing for them.

Sprint said it would provide free devices and high-speed data service to one million high school students, and 40 large American companies including FedEx, Gap Inc. and McDonald's announced that they would participate in a program called #FirstJob to recruit and hire more young people who are unemployed and not in school.

Mr. Obama plans to make the My Brother's Keeper Alliance, a spinoff of the project he started in 2014, a central component of his life and work after the presidency. A White House official said the alliance would work with employers to carry out the new hiring program and begin an online community to promote it.

In Greensboro, Obama Criticizes Trump For Leaked Comments About Women

By Colin Campbell And Bryan Anderson

Raleigh (NC) News & Observer, October 11, 2016

President Barack Obama campaigned for fellow Democrat Hillary Clinton Tuesday evening, slamming Republican Donald Trump as "unfit to lead this country."

Speaking to a capacity crowd at an outdoor amphitheater, he addressed Trump's lewd comments about women from a leaked 2005 audio tape.

"You don't have to be a husband or father to hear what we heard a few days ago and say 'that's not right,'" Obama said. "You just have to be a decent human being."

Obama says there's a stark contrast between Trump and the Republican presidential candidates he faced in 2008 and 2012, John McCain and Mitt Romney.

"I never thought that if they were in the Oval Office, America would spin out of control," he said. "I just thought they represented a different political party and a different philosophy. That is not the case with the current Republican nominee."

Obama blamed the Republican Party for creating the political environment that allowed Trump to secure the GOP nomination.

"If you've been only about obstruction, if in order to score political points you tell your voter base crazy stuff – like I wasn't born here, or that I'm a Muslim," he said. "You repeat it over and over again, and so your only agenda is negative. ... Over time you produce a nominee who is all about obstruction and insults and makes up his own facts."

The president also took aim at North Carolina Republican Sen. Richard Burr, who said he's forgiven Trump for his lewd comments. He called on the crowd to support Burr's Democratic opponent, Deborah Ross, who he noted is "certainly not going to keep standing with Donald Trump."

"I too believe in forgiveness and redemption, but that doesn't mean I'm going to elect the person president," Obama said. "You can't repeatedly denounce what's said by someone, but say 'I'm still going to endorse him to be the most powerful person on the planet.'"

Obama spent more of his speech criticizing Trump than he did praising Clinton. He said the former secretary of state and senator is the most qualified person to run for president in history.

"Nobody fully understands the demands of this job until you've sat behind this desk," he said. "But nobody's been closer to those decisions than Hillary. I saw her in the Situation Room where she argued for Bin Laden mission. She understands that the decisions you make in this job mean life or death."

Obama's appearance highlights North Carolina's role as a key swing state for the Clinton campaign. The latest RealClearPolitics polling average has Clinton leading Republican Donald Trump by 2.6 percentage points here.

Trump's campaign is also focusing on North Carolina. He's planning a Friday rally at the same Greensboro venue – White Oak Amphitheatre – as the Obama event, as well as a rally Friday night in Charlotte.

Both vice presidential candidates will be in the state Wednesday – Republican Mike Pence at the North Raleigh Hilton and Democrat Tim Kaine at Davidson College near Charlotte.

More than 9,000 Clinton supporters attended the Obama event, and many of them had to watch from an overflow facility.

Ashley Koonce is a 26-year-old former English teacher who said she's the great-great-granddaughter of slaves, and it means a lot to her to see an African-American president. She said she's excited about the possibility of the first female president.

"It means anything is possible," she said. "When I was in kindergarten, they told us that we could become president, but we didn't really believe them. But now, it can really happen. It just really means that anything can happen."

N.C. A&T State University senior Nhandi Johnson, 21, said she'd previously supported Sen. Bernie Sanders but plans to vote for Clinton because of her dislike of Trump.

"I'm going to vote for Hillary Clinton because I can't let the other guy win," she said.

Johnson says she's concerned that Clinton is a politician who might not put her words into action. She hoped Obama would persuade her otherwise.

"It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for us," she said of the Obama event. "I never really got to see the president in real life, so it's one of those opportunities where you just don't pass it up. I want to hear what he has to say about Hillary Clinton to make me feel better about voting for her in the upcoming elections."

While most of the crowd loudly cheered Obama, his speech was interrupted three times by protesters who were escorted out of the event.

The first came as two women walked to the front row and flashed t-shirts that called former President Bill Clinton a rapist.

Obama quipped that "this is the good thing about politics in America. It takes all kinds. Folks will just do all kinds of stuff."

Another disturbance involved a man who stood up, turned to face the audience and ripped a blue Hillary Clinton campaign sign in half.

As the audience booed, Obama reminded them to vote, not boo.

Before the rally in Greensboro, Obama visited N.C. A&T State University to participate in a student forum about the My Brother's Keeper initiative and the role of historically black colleges and universities.

ESPN's "The Undefeated" hosted the town hall meeting, "A Conversation with the President: Sports, Race & Achievement," which was scheduled to air at 10 p.m. Tuesday night.

My Brother's Keeper launched in 2014 to address opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and to connect young people to strong mentorship networks.

Obama Mocks Republicans For Standing By Trump

By Nolan D. McCaskill And Sarah Wheaton

Politico, October 11, 2016

President Barack Obama relished the GOP civil war that has broken out over Donald Trump, openly mocking Republicans who are refusing to rescind their endorsements even as they condemn the nominee for talking cavalierly about sexual assault.

"The fact that now you've got people saying: 'Well, we strongly disapprove. We really disagree. We find those comments disgusting, but we're still endorsing him. We still think he should be president.' That doesn't make sense to me," Obama said Tuesday during a Hillary Clinton rally in Greensboro, North Carolina.

"You can't have it both ways here," he continued. "You can't repeatedly denounce what is said by someone and then say, 'But I'm still gonna endorse them to be the most powerful person on the planet and to put them in charge.'"

On a day when Trump lashed out House Speaker Paul Ryan and the Republican establishment more broadly for abandoning him with just four weeks until Election Day, Obama joined in, blasting Republicans for their obstruction throughout his administration and pinning the monster they created on them.

"I just wanna make that point because there are still a number of Republican elected officials, some of whom I know and I'm sure are embarrassed and say, 'Wow, that was a really terrible thing he said,' but they can't bring themselves to say, 'I can't endorse this guy,'" Obama told the energetic crowd of more than 7,000 people. "And by the way, why did it take so long for some of them to finally do walk away?"

Obama hammered Republicans who have continued to put politics first, even in the wake of the 2005 "Access Hollywood" videotape leaked last Friday to The Washington Post in which Trump boasts in incredibly crude terms about sexually assaulting women with impunity because of his celebrity.

"I mean, we saw this coming. He's been saying really bad stuff for a while now," Obama said. "What did you think? He was just gonna transform himself? I mean, I'm 55. It's hard for me to change. I know at 70 it's gonna be harder."

The president slammed Trump on myriad issues, including taxes, his threat to jail Clinton ("no trial, no indictment, no lawyers") and the rhetoric from his supporters — specifically conservative radio host Alex Jones, who suggested that Obama and Clinton are demons.

"There's only one candidate in this race who understands that democracy in a big, diverse country doesn't work if you constantly demonize each other — and I mean that literally, by the way," he said. "I was reading the other day. There's a guy on the radio who apparently — Trump's on his show frequently. He said me and Hillary are demons. Said we smell like sulfur. Ain't that something? Now, I mean, come on, people. Democracy does not work if you just say stuff like that or — and apparently there are people who believe that stuff, and they're listening to it constantly."

Obama argued that you don't have to be a husband or father to find Trump's demeaning rhetoric toward women wrong and stressed how different Trump is compared to the Republican nominees who challenged him for the White House in 2008 and 2012, with whom he disagreed with politically but didn't doubt their fitness to be commander in chief and represent the country on the world stage.

"That is not the case with the current Republican nominee. He doesn't have the temperament or the judgment or the knowledge or apparently the desire to obtain the knowledge or the basic honesty that a president needs to have," Obama said. "And that was true even before we heard about his attitude toward women."

Even on the trail, Obama said, the real estate mogul has been candid with some of his offensive views about minorities, Muslims, people who are disabled and a Gold Star family.

"You don't have to be a husband or a father to hear what we heard just a few days ago and say, 'That's not right.' You just have to be a decent human being to say that's not right," Obama said. "And if it makes you mad, if you say, 'That's not somebody I want representing the United States of America,' you can do something about it, North Carolina."

It was Alpha Obama, offering an alternative masculinity to Trump's "locker room banter." The president swaggered onto the stage, fresh off a town hall focused on "race, sports and achievement" set to air on ESPN later Tuesday. He'd met with participants in the My Brother's Keeper initiative, a program Obama started, in part, to help connect young black men with mentors and role models. The White House, in recent days, has delighted in the president's near-record approval ratings, pointing to his squeaky-clean personal life and status as a role model, in contrast to Trump.

Obama even offered a family-man version of the Republican candidate's braggadocio: "That's why I got all this gray hair. I've been busy. But Michelle said I still look good," Obama said, as the crowd screamed and swooned. "Now my daughters, on the other hand … They said: 'Well, you're dad cute. You're like cute for a dad,' you know, which is — that's the best you're gonna do."

And even as he faced hecklers, Obama responded with breezy, good-natured condescension.

"Here is the deal," he said. "Try to get your own rally. If you cannot get your own rally then don't come to somebody else's."

But mostly, he directed his condescension at Trump.

"I also don't know a lot of casino operators who managed to lose almost a billion dollars in a year," Obama said. "They say the house always wins. I don't know what happened.

The chief executive of the federal government also appeared to endorse the hypothesis that Trump has not paid federal income taxes.

"I don't know folks who used that failure then to avoid paying federal incomes taxes for our troops and our vets and our roads and our schools," Obama said. "You don't brag about not paying your taxes. You don't say that makes you smart. No, that means you are not a responsible citizen."

And he painted a clear contrast between the two candidates vying to succeed him, noting: "Tweeting doesn't qualify you. Soundbites don't qualify you. Insults certainly don't qualify you" for the Oval Office.

"One candidate has a foundation that's saved countless lives around the world. The other took money that people gave to his charity to buy a six-foot-tall painting of himself," Obama said. "I'm not kidding. One candidate traveled more countries than any secretary of state before her. The other is

Donald Trump. So when he asks you what do you have to lose, the answer is you've got everything to lose."

Obama Takes Issue With Trump And His Supporters In Congress

By Darlene Superville

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

Exposing the nation's sharp political divisions as Election Day nears, supporters of Republican Donald Trump repeatedly interrupted President Barack Obama on Tuesday as he urged North Carolina Democrats to take advantage of early voting and cast their presidential ballots for Democrat Hillary Clinton.

Obama also delivered a sharp indictment of Republicans who continue to support Trump's bid despite hearing him on a recently released video recording from 2005 talking in vulgar terms about making unwanted sexual advances toward women.

"The fact that now you've got people saying, 'Well, we strongly disapprove. We really disagree. We find those comments disgusting. But we're still endorsing him. We still think he should be president.' That doesn't make sense to me," Obama told several thousand people at a raucous outdoor rally.

"Now I hear then some people saying, 'Well, I'm a Christian so I'm all about forgiveness because nobody's perfect,'" Obama said. "Well, that is true. I am certainly not perfect ... and I, too, believe in forgiveness and redemption, but that doesn't mean I'm going to elect the person president."

House Speaker Paul Ryan said he was "sickened" by Trump's comments on the recording, and he rescinded an invitation for Trump to join him at a weekend rally in his Wisconsin congressional district. But Ryan has not pulled his endorsement of Trump, as some other Republicans have. Still, he has told fellow House Republicans he would not defend Trump or campaign with him and would focus on protecting the House GOP majority.

Obama said some Republicans were trying to have it both ways.

"You can't repeatedly denounce what is said by someone and then say, 'But I'm still going to endorse him to be the most powerful person on the planet' and put them in charge," he said.

Several minutes after Obama started speaking, a young man and a woman who appeared to be Trump supporters moved toward the stage and revealed T-shirts that said "Bill Clinton Rapist." They were quickly escorted out by security.

Immediately before Sunday's presidential debate in St. Louis, Trump appeared with three women who have accused former President Bill Clinton of committing sexual crimes against them. Clinton was never charged in those cases. The women later attended the debate.

Obama joked that the protesters were "auditioning for a reality show." Trump is the former host of the NBC reality show "The Apprentice."

After the president resumed speaking, someone could be heard shouting "Bill Clinton is a rapist." Minutes after that outburst, a man ripped up one of the blue "North Carolina Together" placards that attendees were given to wave during the rally.

"This is our democracy at work. This is great," Obama said, as the largely supportive crowd began to boo.

Obama contrasted Clinton's experience, qualifications and penchant for "sweating the details" with Trump, who Obama said doesn't have the temperament, judgment, knowledge or "basic honesty a president needs to have. And that was true even before we heard about his attitudes toward women."

Obama also criticized Trump for threatening during Sunday's debate to jail Clinton for using nongovernment email servers when she was secretary of state in Obama's first term, without the benefit of a trial or due process.

Obama said the U.S. has stood "in contrast and in opposition" to those kinds of ideas and, "I frankly never thought I'd see the day when we'd have a major party candidate who would be promoting those kinds of notions."

He urged those in audience to vote, saying "you've got everything to lose" in the Nov. 8 election and that civility is on the ballot, as well as respect for women, tolerance and even democracy.

"If you want to send a message in this election, make it a resounding message: Turn back the forces of racism and misogyny," Obama said.

The stop in North Carolina, parts of which are experiencing record flooding in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew, marked the first of three appearances the president has scheduled this week in battleground states in the White House race. The president canceled a Clinton campaign event last week in Miami because of the approaching storm. Polls indicate the presidential race is extremely close in North Carolina.

On Thursday, Obama is scheduled to travel to Pittsburgh to address a White House event on the future of innovation in the U.S. and around the world. That evening, he is scheduled to address the Ohio Democratic Party's annual dinner in Columbus. He campaigns again for Clinton in Cleveland on Friday.

Obama opened his remarks by reflecting on Hurricane Matthew's toll of death and destruction in North Carolina.

"Thoughts and prayer are with the folks who are still dealing with rivers that are overflown, homes that are being flooded," he said. He urged everyone to "look out for each other, no matter what."

Obama spoke to Gov. Pat McCrory by telephone on Tuesday, the White House said. He also signed a federal disaster declaration for the state on Monday.

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Protesters Shout 'Bill Clinton Is A Rapist!' At Obama Rally In North Carolina

Business Insider, October 11, 2016

President Barack Obama encountered a raucous crowd in Greensboro, North Carolina, on his latest campaign outing in support of Hillary Clinton.

"I think I gotta take off my jacket, because we have some work to do," Obama said, as the audience cheered.

While thanking the crowd and looking ahead to life outside the White House, the president joked that he and Michelle Obama were getting ready to pack up.

"Our lease was only for eight years, and we're already looking around ... Bo and Sunny haven't ruined any of the carpets, because we want to get our security deposit back."

The event took a sharp turn early, when two protesters walked in front of the crowd, screaming "Bill Clinton is a rapist" while wearing shirts that bore the same phrase.

Donald Trump, the Republican presidential nominee, helped revive the sexual assault allegations against the former president in recent days, even as he was accused of promoting the same in a leaked 2005 audio recording published on Friday.

Trump doubled down on the attacks over the weekend, inviting some of Bill Clinton's accusers to the second of his three debates with Mrs. Clinton.

It is one of many feuds in which Trump is currently engaged, which includes a bitter war against his own party, just weeks ahead of election day.

Obama dismissed the protesters: "Those were some folks who were auditioning for a reality show ... If you can't get your own rally, don't come mess up somebody else's rally."

And then he leaned in on Trump: "He doesn't have the judgment, or the temperament, or the knowledge — or even the desire to obtain the knowledge ... that a president needs to have."

"When [Trump] asks you what do you have to lose, the answer is you've got everything to lose."

White House Calls Trump Tape An Example Of 'Sexual Assault'

By Dave Boyer

Washington Times, October 11, 2016

President Obama's spokesman said Tuesday that a tape of Republican Donald Trump making lewd boasts about groping women 11 years ago constitutes "sexual assault" in the view of most Americans.

"The president found the tape as repugnant as most Americans did," White House press secretary Josh Earnest told reporters traveling aboard Air Force One. "There has been a pretty clear statement by people all along the ideological spectrum that those statements constituted sexual assault. That's why many people I believe have concluded that those statements are worthy of sharp condemnation."

Mr. Trump, who has apologized, said his vulgar comments about grabbing women's genitals were only words, while he maintains that former President Bill Clinton actually committed sexual assaults on at least three women years ago.

At a Democratic fundraiser in Chicago on Sunday, Mr. Obama said Mr. Trump has been "degrading women."

"It tells you that he's insecure enough that he pumps himself up by putting other people down. Not a character trait that I would advise for somebody in the Oval Office," Mr. Obama said.

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Obama Found Trump's Talk Of Sexual Assault 'Repugnant'

By Nolan D. McCaskill

Politico, October 11, 2016

Donald Trump's comments about sexually assaulting women with impunity are "repugnant," the White House said Tuesday.

Asked during a gaggle aboard Air Force One what President Barack Obama thought of the Republican presidential nominee's remarks, which emerged last Friday in a leaked 2005 "Access Hollywood" tape, White House press secretary Josh Earnest said Obama found the comments as unacceptable as other Americans did.

"The president found the tape as repugnant as most Americans did," Earnest told reporters.

Earnest also said there's a broad consensus that the rhetoric revealed in the tape comprised sexual assault. "There has been a pretty clear statement by people all along the ideological spectrum that those statements constituted sexual assault," he said. "That's why many people I believe have concluded that those statements are worthy of sharp condemnation."

Earnest also quoted his mother as he derided Republicans who have abandoned Trump, hoping to save their majorities in Congress.

"What my mom would say in this situation is, 'You reap what you sow,'" he said, adding that this is "not something from which they'll quickly recover."

Obama himself condemned Trump's language on Sunday in Chicago. "One of the most disturbing things about this election is just the unbelievable rhetoric coming at the top of the Republican ticket," Obama said. "I don't need to repeat it. There are children in the room."

Obama, who will stump for Clinton in North Carolina later Tuesday, noted Sunday that Trump is a candidate who has demeaned and degraded women and insulted minorities, immigrants, troops and veterans.

"That tells you a couple things. It tells you he is insecure enough that he pumps himself up by putting other people down," said Obama, who added, "Not a character trait that I would advise for somebody in the Oval Office."

Marco Rubio Stands By Donald Trump After Tape

By Patricia Mazzei

Miami Herald, October 11, 2016

Florida Sen. Marco Rubio said Tuesday he's not revoking his endorsement of Donald Trump, despite Trump's lewd and vulgar comments in a 2005 recording about groping women without their consent.

"I ran against Donald Trump. And while I respect that voters chose him as the GOP nominee, I have never hesitated to oppose his policies I disagree with," Rubio said in a statement. "And I have consistently rejected his offensive rhetoric and behavior. I disagree with him on many things, but I disagree with his opponent on virtually everything.

"I wish we had better choices for President. But I do not want Hillary Clinton to be our next President. And therefore my position has not changed."

Rubio denounced the tape Friday after its publication in The Washington Post, calling Trump's remarks "impossible to justify."

In the now-infamous tape, Trump brags about kissing women and grabbing them by the genitals: "When you're a star, they let you do it."

Sunday in a debate against Hillary Clinton, Trump apologized but dismissed what he'd said as "locker-room talk" as opposed to sexual assault. He maintained he'd never acted on his words.

Rubio's Democratic opponent, Jupiter Rep. Patrick Murphy, spent the weekend demanding that Rubio disavow Trump, accusing him of "cowardice" for remaining silent.

"Marco Rubio stsands for nothing but his own pursuit of power," Murphy said in a statement after Rubio upheld his Trump endorsement.

Rubio delayed further dealing with Trump by visiting areas hit last week by Hurricane Matthew. But by Tuesday, facing the prospect of attending public events where he'd be hounded with Trump questions, Rubio's campaign issued the statement maintaining his endorsement.

A Rubio campaign source, however, told the Miami Herald the senator "will not be going to any presidential campaign events" for Trump or his running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence.

"Marco's totally focused on his own race," the source said.

On Saturday, Rubio and Pence are both slated to speak at a GOP dinner in Tampa. But that was put together by the Republican Party of Florida, not Trump's team.

Florida polls show Clinton leading Trump and Rubio leading Murphy, which suggests a significant number of voters plan to split the ticket and pick a Democrat for president and a Republican for Senate. For Rubio, standing by Trump risks alienating some of those Clinton voters.

But dumping Trump might have hurt Rubio with base Republican voters — a potential problem for his reelection and his future ambitions within the GOP. Rubio has not rejected seeking the presidency again in 2020 or 2024.

A Real Clear Politics average has Rubio ahead of Murphy by 4.4 percentage points.

Few Florida Republicans have rescinded their support for Trump. A notable exception is U.S. Rep. Tom Rooney, a Rubio friend, who said over the weekend, "If I support him for President, I will be telling my boys that I think it's okay to treat women like objects — and I'll have failed as a dad."

Marco Rubio Stands By Donald Trump Despite Lewd Tape

Huffington Post, October 11, 2016

Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) is still supporting GOP nominee Donald Trump, despite the emergence of a 2005 audio recording in which the real estate mogul boasts about predatory sexual behavior toward women.

"I ran against Donald Trump. And while I respect that voters chose him as the GOP nominee, I have never hesitated to oppose his policies I disagree with. And I have consistently rejected his offensive rhetoric and behavior," Rubio said in a statement released by his office on Tuesday.

"I disagree with him on many things, but I disagree with his opponent on virtually everything. I wish we had better choices for President," the senator added. "But I do not want Hillary Clinton to be our next President. And therefore my position has not changed."

On the 2005 recording — which was reported by The Washington Post — Trump claimed he tried to have sex with a married woman and said he could grab women "by the pussy" because he is a celebrity. The tape sparked a wave of GOP defections over the weekend, and some lawmakers even called on Trump to drop out of the race entirely.

On Monday, House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) essentially conceded the White House a month before votes had even been counted when he told the GOP conference he

could no longer defend the nominee, instructing members to handle the fallout as they saw fit.

Rubio's decision to stand behind Trump comes amid a competitive re-election fight against Rep. Patrick Murphy (D-Fla.). The Democratic congressman over the weekend called Rubio a "coward" for not withdrawing his endorsement of the GOP nominee.

But Rubio faces challenges on his right flank as well. Trump carried the Sunshine State primary earlier this year by an overwhelming margin — beating out its home state senator by 23 percentage points. If he rescinds his endorsement, Rubio risks angering Florida voters who supported Trump, a person he once called a "con man" who shouldn't have access to the nuclear codes.

The move could also hurt him beyond November's election. The senator is widely expected to run for the GOP presidential nomination again in 2020.

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Billy Bush Is Exiting NBC's 'Today' Over Trump Tape Scandal

By Stephen Battaglio

Los Angeles Times, October 11, 2016

Billy Bush will not be returning to the "Today" show.

Bush, 44, who was suspended indefinitely Sunday after he was heard in a leaked 2005 video engaging in lewd, sexist conversation with Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, is in negotiations to exit NBC News, according to people familiar with the discussions.

An NBC News representative declined to comment.

In the tape, made while Bush was co-host of NBC's syndicated news magazine "Access Hollywood," Trump obscenely boasts about his ability to grope women with impunity because he is a celebrity. Bush is heard chuckling and encouraging Trump even as the reality show star crudely talked about how he tried to have sex with then "Access" co-host Nancy O'Dell.

Bush, 44, issued an apology for his behavior, saying he was "younger, less mature and acted foolishly in playing along."

Some female producers and personalities who work on the show have made it known that they do not want to work with Bush, according to one person close to the program is not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and requested anonymity.

There was also an outcry on social media from female "Today" fans, many of whom threatened to boycott the show if he returned.

NBC News said Bush was off the air pending "further review." The company was said to be looking into his past behavior as an NBC employee. He joined "Access Hollywood," which is part of NBC's syndication arm, in 2001. Bush is the nephew of former President George H.W. Bush and the cousin of former President George W. Bush and former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush.

The decision to remove Bush happened swiftly, demonstrating an effort to get past the controversy that broke when the tape was revealed by The Washington Post last Friday.

Bush only joined NBC News in August as co-host of the 9 a.m. hour of "Today" with Al Roker and Tamron Hall, and the fact that he is fairly new to the tightknit staff did not work in his favor.

"He doesn't have enough time there to warrant anyone of substance going out of their way to help him," said another person inside NBC who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The relationship between viewers and morning show hosts are among the most intimate in television. Although some members of NBC News management were willing to forgive Bush, there was concern he would be rejected by some audience members appalled by his behavior with Trump.

Angry viewers can result in declining ratings and revenue for "Today," an unacceptable scenario for the most profitable franchise on NBC.

Bush's offense risked alienating the female viewers who make up 68% of the audience who watch the 9 a.m. hour of the "Today" show, which is more conversational and entertainment-oriented than the two-hour flagship that precedes it.

The 9 a.m. hour is also an incubator for the higher-profile anchor chairs. Savannah Guthrie was part of the 9 a.m. team before she was asked to replace Ann Curry in 2012.

Bush's arrival led to speculation that he was being groomed to eventually succeed Matt Lauer, who has been in the 7-to-9 a.m. co-anchor chair since 1997. NBC News executives likely do not want Bush to occupy the 9 a.m. seat if he has no future on the program.

Bush has long wanted to be a part of the "Today" family. After 12 years as co-host of "Access Hollywood," he was finally given the chance by Noah Oppenheim, the executive in charge of "Today."

He got off to a rough start during NBC's coverage of the Olympic Games in Rio. Bush had the first interview with Ryan Lochte after the gold medal-winning swimmer and three of his teammates falsely claimed they were robbed at gunpoint. Lochte perpetuated his story during the interview with Bush.

After it was determined that Lochte was lying, Bush tried to excuse the swimmer's actions, which prompted co-host Al Roker to chastise him on the air. The exchange went viral.

But that was nothing compared to the airtime and Web traffic for the raunchy bus ride conversation with Trump, which appears to have brought an abrupt end to Bush's morning-show ambitions.

It's the second time in recent weeks that "Today" has suffered collateral damage from Donald Trump's presidential campaign.

Lauer recently found himself in the crosshairs of critics and Hillary Clinton supporters after his performance as moderator of NBC's "Commander in Chief Forum." The popular morning show co-anchor was criticized for failing to correct Trump for saying he was opposed to the Iraq war and was perceived as being far tougher in his questioning of Clinton.

While pundits and editorial writers had harsh words for Lauer, the controversy was related to his interviewing skills and not his personality. Though Lauer and NBC News executives were taken aback by the vitriolic reaction, the forum had no bearing on the "Today" ratings in the following weeks. "Today" is in first place in the morning among viewers in the 25-to-54 age group coveted by advertisers who buy commercial time on TV news shows.

This article was updated with new details about Billy Bush's exit from the "Today" show.

This article was originally published Oct. 10 at 5:20 p.m.

Billy Bush Negotiating Exit From NBC After Lewd Tape

By John Koblin

New York Times, October 11, 2016

Four days after the explosive Donald J. Trump "Access Hollywood" tape was made public, Billy Bush was negotiating his exit from NBC.

Mr. Bush and NBC are working out the terms of his departure from "Today," which may come in the next few days, according to two people briefed on the plans.

It would be a swift fall for Mr. Bush after a brief tenure as a host in the 9 a.m. hour of the show. He joined "Today" this summer.

In the videotape from 2005, which was filmed during the taping of an "Access Hollywood" segment, Mr. Bush laughs and goads Mr. Trump as he speaks about women in vulgar and lewd terms, claiming he tried to have sex with the woman who was then Mr. Bush's co-host.

Mr. Bush, 44, apologized on Friday evening, and throughout the weekend NBC officials maintained they had no plans to discipline him. As late as Sunday morning, the plan was for Mr. Bush go on "Today" on Monday and address the controversy, saying something along the lines of the statement he released on Friday, in which he said he was "ashamed.''

But the backlash was significant. Mr. Bush's Facebook page was deluged with thousands of angry comments. Two women that Mr. Bush and Mr. Trump discussed in the tape — the former "Access Hollywood" host Nancy O'Dell and the "Days of Our Lives" actress Arianne Zucker — released statements over the weekend expressing their disappointment.

Given the tape's incredible visibility, it was likely that Mr. Bush would remain part of the news cycle for the near future. "Today" is in competition with ABC's "Good Morning America" and the fallout from the videotape could have affected NBC's ratings in the morning hours, particularly among women, who represent a significant portion of the show's viewership.

By Sunday night, NBC had suspended Mr. Bush. Noah Oppenheim, the executive in charge of "Today," told his staff in an email, "there is simply no excuse for Billy's language and behavior on that tape."

NBC News officials also learned in recent days that at the Olympic Games this summer, Mr. Bush bragged to some staff members about a videotape involving bad behavior by Mr. Trump. The New York Post first reported this on Monday night.

"Access Hollywood" personalities like Natalie Morales, Kit Hoover and Nina Parker have offered Mr. Bush support this week ("The Billy that I know — and a lot of people would say this — has the biggest heart of anybody and he is a good person," Ms. Hoover said), but few other people have defended him. Complicating matters, Mr. Bush did not have a particularly warm relationship with many of the other stars of "Today."

That point was underscored in August when Mr. Bush landed what looked to be the scoop of the Olympics: The first in-person interview with the swimmer Ryan Lochte as he described being robbed at gunpoint in Rio de Janeiro. As Mr. Lochte's story disintegrated in the following days, Mr. Bush was hesitant to condemn him.

During a segment of "Today," Mr. Bush contended that Mr. Lochte "lied about some details." Al Roker quickly stepped in to dress down his colleague, saying pointedly, "Billy, not some details," before adding, "He lied."

Billy Bush And NBC Working On Separation Agreement

By Elahe Izadi

Washington Post, October 11, 2016

"Today" show co-anchor Billy Bush, who has found himself in the middle of a firestorm related to his appearance in a video that featured Donald Trump making lewd remarks

about women, is working on a separation deal with NBC, according to people familiar with negotiations.

Bush had been previously suspended over his remarks on a 2005 tape The Washington Post published Friday that captured Donald Trump on a hot microphone making extremely lewd comments about women and talking about groping them. Trump was with Bush to film an "Access Hollywood" segment plugging an upcoming soap opera cameo, and Bush — then a host on the news-entertainment program — is heard laughing, joking with Trump and talking about ogling women.

On Monday, the "Today" show briefly mentioned the suspension during its telecast. By Tuesday, digital billboards outside of the show's 30 Rockefeller Center headquarters didn't appear to carry Bush's likeness.

Bush has remained quiet in the fallout. "Obviously I'm embarrassed and ashamed," he said in a statement Friday, his only public comment about the tape. "It's no excuse, but this happened eleven years ago — I was younger, less mature, and acted foolishly in playing along. I'm very sorry."

Bush, 44, worked for radio before transitioning to an NBC affiliate in New York. The nephew of President George H.W. Bush and cousin to President George W. Bush joined "Access Hollywood" in 2001. He also frequently appeared on the "Today" show. In May, the network announced Bush would join the morning program as a full-time co-anchor, appearing on the 9 a.m. hour typically featuring light entertainment and celebrities.

"He brings boundless energy, a great interviewing style and a deep knowledge of pop culture," a network executive said back in May.

But by August, tensions among "Today" show personalities were clearly on display. Bush's on-air argument with weatherman Al Roker about the controversy surrounding swimmer Ryan Lochte's alleged robbery during the Rio Olympics went viral. Bush had landed the first interview with Lochte, before the American swimmer's version of the story began to unravel.

Then came the release of the Trump tape, which became perhaps the most seismic event of the election season, setting off a wave of Republican lawmakers either distancing themselves from their party's nominee or calling on him to step down.

Many of Trump's remarks on the 2005 tape were recorded by a hot microphone while he and Bush were not seen on camera, but aboard a bus emblazoned with an "Access Hollywood" logo. Several people are heard laughing as Trump talked about failing to seduce a married woman.

"I'm automatically attracted to beautiful — I just start kissing them. It's like a magnet. Just kiss. I don't even wait," Trump says. "And when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything."

Bush responds: "Whatever you want." Then Trump says: "Grab them by the p—y."

At one point, Trump and Bush apparently seem to notice actress Arianne Zucker, who was waiting to escort them to the "Days of Our Lives" set.

"Yes! The Donald has scored. Whoa, my man!" Bush says. He then calls Zucker "hot as s—" and then urges another woman to move out of his line of vision so he could ogle Zucker's legs.

Once Trump and Bush exit the bus and are on camera, Bush tells Zucker, "How about a little hug for the Donald? He just got off the bus." He then asks, "How about a little hug for the Bushy? I just got off the bus."

The tape's publication also raised questions as to why NBC wasn't the first outlet to broadcast it. "Access Hollywood" does not fall under NBC News, which is the department that oversees "Today" and was aware of the footage for days prior to The Post's report.

The news division first discovered the tape's existence when contacted by "Access Hollywood" producers and was waiting for lawyers to review the material before publishing it. NBC News also agreed to let the entertainment program break the story first.

But the delay in publication led to NBC being scooped by another outlet. And then People cited an unnamed source on Tuesday suggesting that NBC had considered editing Bush out of the tape altogether. An NBC News spokesman said there had "there absolutely was never a consideration by NBC News to edit the tape."

Bush's comments also seemed to spell trouble for "Today," both with viewers and guests. The show "is going to have a real problem booking female guests while Billy Bush anchoring," Anthony Quintano, who ran the show's social media accounts until last year, tweeted.

Paul Farhi contributed to this report.

Trump In '92: No Jail Time For Rapist Mike Tyson

By Ben Kamisar

The Hill, October 11, 2016

Newly resurfaced audio from 1992 shows Donald Trump arguing that Mike Tyson shouldn't be sent to jail after he was convicted of rape.

The release of Trump's interview with radio shock jockey Howard Stern by CNN comes days after The Washington Post published 2005 audio of the future GOP presidential nominee talking about groping women without their consent.

In the earlier audio, Trump laments Tyson's conviction as a "travesty" and says "I hate to see what's happened to him."

He proposes that the world heavyweight boxing champion should donate the proceeds from his upcoming fights in order to avoid jail time, a figure he pegs as between $20 million to $30 million per fight.

"My concept is for the state of Indiana, maybe $20 million, a lot of money, the proceeds from his next fight, his next two fights for rape victims," Trump says.

"I think that's a lot better than having Mike Tyson serve jail for 10 years or something. I think it's gonna do a lot more in terms of a cause."

Trump went on to add that while he's never seen Tyson acting inappropriately around women, he's seen questionable conduct from women directed at Tyson.

"I've seen women going around touching him. He walks in a room and the women start grabbing him and grabbing his ass and grabbing anything else they can grab on him," Trump says.

Tyson was found guilty of raping an 18-year-old woman in 1992. He served less than three years of a six-year sentence in an Indiana prison.

Trump has touted Tyson's endorsement while on the stump and had to shoot down rumors that he invited the boxer to speak at the Republican National Convention after Bloomberg Politics reported Tyson would attend.

"Iron Mike Tyson was not asked to speak at the Convention though I'm sure he would do a good job if he was. The media makes everything up," Trump tweeted in July. Tyson did not end up attending the event.

Clinton Opposition To Asia Trade Pact 'Close Call': Hacked Emails

By Amanda Becker

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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

Police Use Surveillance Tool To Scan Social Media, A.C.L.U. Says

By Jonah Engel Bromwich, Daniel Victor And Mike Isaac

New York Times, October 11, 2016

A Chicago company has marketed a tool using text, photos and videos gleaned from major social media companies to aid law enforcement surveillance of protesters, civil liberties activists say.

The company, called Geofeedia, used data from Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, as well as nine other social media networks, to let users search for social media content in a specific location, as opposed to searching by words or hashtags that would be less likely to reveal an exact location.

Geofeedia marketed its abilities to law enforcement agencies and has signed up more than 500 such clients, according to an email obtained by the American Civil Liberties Union. In one document posted by the union, as part of a report released on Tuesday, the company appears to point to how officials in Baltimore, with Geofeedia's help, were able to monitor and respond to the violent protests that broke out after Freddie Gray died in police custody in April 2015.

Geofeedia appears to have used programs that Facebook, Twitter and other social media companies offered that allow app makers or advertising companies to create third-party tools, like ways for publishers to see where their stories are being shared on social media.

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram say they have cut off Geofeedia's access to their information. But civil liberties advocates criticized the companies for lax oversight and challenged them to create better mechanisms to monitor how their data is being used.

"These platforms should be doing more to protect the free speech rights of activists of color," Matt Cagle, a lawyer with the A.C.L.U. in Northern California, said in an interview. "When they open their feeds to companies that market surveillance products, they risk putting their users in harm's way."

Instagram and Facebook terminated Geofeedia's access to their data in September, while Twitter shut off access on Tuesday. The response from the companies suggested that Geofeedia was using data from the companies in a way that was not allowed under their developer agreements.

Jodi Seth, director of policy communications at Facebook, said that Geofeedia had access to data that had been made public on the social network, and that access was subject to the limitations in its platform policy. That policy asks developers to "provide a publicly available and easily accessible privacy policy that explains what data you are collecting and how you will use that data."

It also asks that they "obtain adequate consent from people before using any Facebook technology that allows us to collect and process data about them."

Twitter said that based on the information found by the liberties union, it was "immediately suspending Geofeedia's commercial access to Twitter data."

Phil Harris, chief executive of Geofeedia, said in a statement that his company "provides some clients, including law enforcement officials across the country, with a critical tool in helping to ensure public safety while protecting civil rights and liberties." He said the firm has policies to prevent "inappropriate use of our software."

Mr. Harris added that the company understands that given how quickly digital technology changes, Geofeedia "must continue to work to build on these critical protections of civil rights."

In addition to law enforcement agencies, the company has marketed its services to journalists as a way to find people at breaking news events for interviews and social media content. The New York Times used Geofeedia on a trial basis, but has not had access since 2015.

The civil liberties union said it first learned about the agreements with Geofeedia from responses to public records requests to 63 law enforcement agencies in California. Those records, the liberties union said, revealed a significant expansion of social media surveillance.

"Posts on social media platforms can reveal information about our location, our religion, the people we associate with," Mr. Cagle said. "Users of social media websites do not expect or want the government to be monitoring this information. And users should not be at risk of being branded a risk to public safety simply for speaking their mind on social media."

As Silence Follows Bronx Mother's Killing, Commissioner Focuses On Trust

By Benjamin Mueller And Al Baker

New York Times, October 11, 2016

In his first major policy address as New York City's police commissioner, James P. O'Neill on Tuesday invoked the unsolved killing of a young mother on a South Bronx playground as symptomatic of past failures in policing and as a guide to building trust among black and Latino city residents.

In pointed terms, Mr. O'Neill said the silence surrounding the June shooting of the mother, Jessica White, offered a warning against a style of policing that had at times "lost focus of how to best achieve our most basic duty: that's keeping people in this city safe."

Years of heavy-handed tactics, he said, had reduced crime but also opened painful wounds in minority neighborhoods, leaving a legacy of fear and distrust that was now exacting a price: an unsolved killing, witnesses choosing not to talk, neighbors tearing down wanted posters.

"This is not the New York any of us wants, or aspires to be," Mr. O'Neill said during a breakfast speech to city business leaders, elected officials, top prosecutors and police chiefs. "The clear message is: We need every member of the public to help us. This is a shared responsibility."

He charted a response in which patrol officers would share their email addresses and cellphone numbers; detectives would focus more on violent crimes and long-running criminal schemes; and the police would do more to acknowledge the pain left in black and Latino neighborhoods by a zero-tolerance approach to enforcing the law.

Ms. White's killing, in a housing project where tenants fear cooperating with the police, showed how drug and gang violence can ensnare innocent residents and how people feel of Panel a public safety system that they say neglects poor, black and Latino residents. Ms. White was hit by a stray bullet as she went to gather her three children from a play set.

The killing and its aftermath were described in a recent New York Times article as part of a series about murders in the Police Department's 40th Precinct.

Mr. O'Neill put the onus on neighborhood residents to come forward with information about the hooded gunman who killed Ms. White. But in promising a renewed effort to protect witnesses, open up confidential channels of communication and push for more cameras on public buildings, he touched on some of the shortcomings that residents say plague places like the South Bronx, among the poorest areas in the country.

"Has the N.Y.P.D. failed Jessica?" Mr. O'Neill asked. "Or has the entire city failed Jessica? That's a very tough question for anyone to answer."

The 20-minute address, hosted by the Association for a Better New York, a business group, amounted to a searching reflection on Mayor Bill de Blasio's mandate to fashion a form of neighborhood policing that is equal parts crime-fighting and building trust.

Mr. O'Neill, who succeeded William J. Bratton last month, said that the police had to go beyond eliminating unnecessary enforcement activity, and heal old wounds in minority neighborhoods with a fundamentally more responsive approach.

"While the N.Y.P.D. achieved what many said was unachievable — making New York the safest big city in America," he said, "we have to acknowledge that we did so sometimes at the expense of vital support of some of the communities we swore to protect."

He did not address the inequities that Ms. White's neighbors and relatives believe have hampered the investigation into her death, including the omission of a $10,000 Mayor's Reward for tips, and a lack of money for new lights in public areas troubled by high crime.

Mr. O'Neill was asked at a later appearance at the Police Academy in Queens whether the department would rethink staffing levels in high-crime precincts where detectives carry caseloads above what is advised. He said the department was constantly evaluating deployment levels, and that the recent addition of 1,300 officers "gives us an opportunity to put more people into the Detective Bureau."

His most tangible proposal in the speech was a public-relations campaign that would encourage New Yorkers to participate in the fight against crime. He said the effort — funded by the Association for a Better New York and the nonprofit New York City Police Foundation — would show how the department was changing and would acknowledge the experiences of residents.

"It's an opportunity for the community to see what a cop's job is like," Mr. O'Neill said later on Tuesday. "It's also

an opportunity for the police to see what the neighborhood looks like in the community's eyes."

At one point, Mr. O'Neill compared the silence around Ms. White's murder to the 1964 killing of Kitty Genovese in Queens. When an audience member challenged him on the comparison, Mr. O'Neill acknowledged that the problem in 2016 was not so much neighbors failing to act in the moment of a murder, but rather a fear of retaliation that made them reluctant to cooperate with the police.

The audience member, JoAnne Page, president of the Fortune Society, which helps ex-convicts re-enter society, said afterward that the speech made her "optimistic."

She said Mr. O'Neill's campaign would be valuable if people's experiences on the streets matched its promise, adding: "What's going to matter is the interaction that this person has, on this day, with the police."

Obama Pushes US Goal To Send Humans To Mars By 2030s

By Josh Lederman And Seth Borenstein

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – President Barack Obama sought Tuesday to reinvigorate his six-year-old call for the U.S. to send humans to Mars by the 2030s, a mission NASA has been slowly and quietly trudging away at.

The White House was calling attention to government contracts awarded to six companies to build prototypes for "habitats" that could sustain human life in deep space. One such privately developed habitat – an inflatable room -is already attached to the International Space Station. Obama also said that within two years, private companies like SpaceX and Boeing will taxi astronauts to the space station with NASA as a customer.

"These missions will teach us how humans can live far from Earth, something we'll need for the long journey to Mars," Obama wrote in an op-ed on CNN's website . He said the ultimate goal is for humans eventually to stay on the red planet "for an extended time."

NASA officials and outside space experts said there is little new in what's coming out of the White House on Mars, something NASA has taken to calling its "Journey To Mars ."

"There's nothing big here at all, unless you haven't been paying attention," said former George Washington University space policy chief John Logsdon. "It's a re-focusing of the fact that he set these goals and NASA has been pursuing them."

Alan Ladwig, a former top NASA official in the Obama and Clinton administrations, said he likes the intent, "but it's a bit late in the term to shine a light on the humans to Mars exploration."

The president planned to discuss the initiative further when he meets with scientists, engineers and academics at an innovation summit Thursday in Pittsburgh.

Obama first set a goal in 2010 to send humans to Mars by the 2030s, but the initiative has attracted little attention since then. Numerous Government Accountability Office reports have warned of the challenges in meeting that goal, most notable a lack of substantial U.S. government funding

Obama did not elaborate on what a Mars mission would cost or how the U.S. would pay for it. But he said it will require years of patience, testing and education.

"The question is why and how does this support U.S. national interests," said Scott Pace, a NASA associate administrator during the George W. Bush administration and space policy chief at George Washington University. He said returning to the moon instead of going to Mars makes more sense for both commerce and international cooperation.

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Barack Obama: America Will Take The Giant Leap To Mars

By Barack Obama

CNN, October 11, 2016

(CNN) One of my earliest memories is sitting on my grandfather's shoulders, waving a flag as our astronauts returned to Hawaii. This was years before we'd set foot on the moon. Decades before we'd land a rover on Mars. A generation before photos from the International Space Station would show up in our social media feeds.

I still have the same sense of wonder about our space program that I did as a child. It represents an essential part of our character – curiosity and exploration, innovation and ingenuity, pushing the boundaries of what's possible and doing it before anybody else. The space race we won not only contributed immeasurably important technological and medical advances, but it also inspired a new generation of scientists and engineers with the right stuff to keep America on the cutting edge.

That's one of the reasons why, in my first address as President to the American people, I vowed to return science to its rightful place. In our first few months, my administration made the largest single investment in basic research in our history, and I went to the Kennedy Space Center to call for reimagining and reinvigorating our space program to explore more of our solar system and look deeper into the universe than ever.

In the years since, we've revitalized technology innovation at NASA, extended the life of the International Space Station, and helped American companies create private-sector jobs by capitalizing on the untapped potential of the space industry.

Last year alone, NASA discovered flowing water on Mars and evidence of ice on one of Jupiter's moons, and we mapped Pluto – more than 3 billion miles away – in high-resolution. Our space telescopes revealed additional Earth-like planets orbiting distant stars, and we're pursuing new missions to interact with asteroids, which will help us learn how to protect the Earth from the threat of colliding with one while also teaching us about the origins of life on Earth. We've flown by every planet in the solar system – something no other nation can say. And we continue to drive down the cost of space exploration for taxpayers.

This week, we'll convene some of America's leading scientists, engineers, innovators and students in Pittsburgh to dream up ways to build on our progress and find the next frontiers. Just five years ago, US companies were shut out of the global commercial launch market. Today, thanks to groundwork laid by the men and women of NASA, they own more than a third of it. More than 1,000 companies across nearly all 50 states are working on private space initiatives.

We have set a clear goal vital to the next chapter of America's story in space: sending humans to Mars by the 2030s and returning them safely to Earth, with the ultimate ambition to one day remain there for an extended time. Getting to Mars will require continued cooperation between government and private innovators, and we're already well on our way. Within the next two years, private companies will for the first time send astronauts to the International Space Station.

The next step is to reach beyond the bounds of Earth's orbit. I'm excited to announce that we are working with our commercial partners to build new habitats that can sustain and transport astronauts on long-duration missions in deep space. These missions will teach us how humans can live far from Earth – something we'll need for the long journey to Mars.

The reporter who covered the moon landing for The New York Times, John Noble Wilford, later wrote that Mars tugs at our imagination "with a force mightier than gravity." Getting there will take a giant leap. But the first, small steps happen when our students – the Mars generation – walk into their classrooms each day. Scientific discovery doesn't happen with the flip of a switch; it takes years of testing, patience and a national commitment to education.

President Eisenhower knew this: In 1958, he devoted great resources to science and math education around the same time he created NASA. And it's why I'm proud that we've passed important milestones in STEM education. For the first time, more than 100,000 engineers are graduating from American schools every year, and we're on track to accomplish my goal of training 100,000 excellent new STEM teachers in a decade.

When our Apollo astronauts looked back from space, they realized that while their mission was to explore the moon, they had "in fact discovered the Earth." If we make our leadership in space even stronger in this century than it was in the last, we won't just benefit from related advances in energy, medicine, agriculture and artificial intelligence, we'll benefit from a better understanding of our environment and ourselves.

Someday, I hope to hoist my own grandchildren onto my shoulders. We'll still look to the stars in wonder, as humans have since the beginning of time. But instead of eagerly awaiting the return of our intrepid explorers, we'll know that because of the choices we make now, they've gone to space not just to visit, but to stay – and in doing so, to make our lives better here on Earth.

US Will Send People To Mars By 2030s, Barack Obama Says

By Hanneke Weitering

SPACE, October 11, 2016

President Barack Obama delivers a speech about his vision for the future of space exploration at Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida, on April 15, 2010. Credit: NASA/Bill Ingalls

President Barack Obama wants NASA to send astronauts to Mars by the 2030s and eventually into deep space, he wrote in a CNN op-ed published today (Oct. 11).

"We have set a clear goal vital to the next chapter of America's story in space: sending humans to Mars by the 2030s and returning them safely to Earth, with the ultimate ambition to one day remain there for an extended time," Obama wrote in the op-ed. The president went on to discuss government partnerships with commercial partners to "build new habitats that can sustain and transport astronauts on long-duration missions in deep space," possibly referring to NASA's Next Space Technologies for Exploration Partnerships or "NextSTEP" program.

The president's announcement echoed his earlier vision for space exploration that became law in 2010, but placed new emphasis on venturing beyond Mars. [Photos: President Obama and NASA]

His message comes shortly before Obama is set to host America's top scientists, engineers and students at the White House Frontiers Conference in Pittsburgh on Thursday (Oct. 13). The purpose of the conference is to find ways to improve science, technology and innovation in the United States and to "find the next frontiers," the president wrote.

In response to the op-ed, NASA Administrator Charles Bolden wrote a blog post on the agency's website about

Obama's revamped vision for space exploration and discussed two NASA initiatives "that build on the president's vision and utilize public-private partnerships to enable humans to live and work in space in a sustainable way."

The first initiative Bolden discussed is the "NextSTEP" program, which is laying the groundwork for missions to deep space by asking private companies to design space habitats. The second initiative has NASA fostering innovation on the International Space Station. For example, the space agency has asked the private sector to come up with ways to dock at and utilize the orbiting laboratory. NASA has committed to keeping up its current level of support for the station through 2024.

Obama wrote in the op-ed that the U.S. space program "represents an essential part of our character — curiosity and exploration, innovation and ingenuity, pushing the boundaries of what's possible and doing it before anybody else. The space race we won not only contributed immeasurably important technological and medical advances, but it also inspired a new generation of scientists and engineers with the right stuff to keep America on the cutting edge."

Near the beginning of Obama's presidency, he visited Kennedy Space Center and delivered a speech in which he called for "reimagining and reinvigorating our program to explore more of our solar system and look deeper into the universe than ever. … In the years since, we've revitalized technology innovation at NASA, extended the life of the International Space Station and helped American companies create private-sector jobs by capitalizing on the untapped potential of the space industry."

To sustainably settle the final frontier, Bolden wrote that the U.S. must continue "to take advantage of investment and innovation in both the public and private sectors."

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Obama Gives New Details About Sending People To Mars

By Daniel Victor

New York Times, October 11, 2016

President Obama said Tuesday that collaboration with private space companies would be crucial to the goal of humans reaching Mars by the 2030s.

The statement came in an opinion column published on CNN.com.

In 2010, Mr. Obama set a target of reaching an asteroid by 2025 and Mars by the mid-2030s, while calling for the private industry to lead the way.

His column on Tuesday, along with a joint blog post by senior White House and NASA officials, offered new details on how the United States expects to get there.

"If we make our leadership in space even stronger in this century than it was in the last," Mr. Obama wrote, "we won't just benefit from related advances in energy, medicine, agriculture and artificial intelligence, we'll benefit from a better understanding of our environment and ourselves."

In the blog post, John Holdren, a senior White House adviser, and Charles Bolden, the NASA administrator, said that seven companies had received awards to develop habitats that could eventually sustain astronauts on deep space missions to destinations like Mars.

NASA will also allow private companies to add their own modules to the space station, they said.

In the next decade, they said, work aboard the International Space Station will move to a new stage that will "demonstrate and test technologies for the first time in cis-lunar space, the area around the moon, where our astronauts are days or weeks away from Earth, rather than hours."

The post continued, "This work serves as necessary preparation for eventual missions that will take humanity even further, to Mars and beyond."

Plenty of challenges remain in getting to Mars, but NASA could have the help of at least two billionaires in private industry.

Elon Musk, the founder of SpaceX, wants to make humans a "multi-planetary species," while Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon and the space company Blue Origin, has designed rockets that NASA could eventually use.

Making Human Settlement Of Space A Reality

White House, October 11, 2016

Today, President Obama outlined a vision to CNN for the future of space exploration. Echoing what he said in the 2015 State of the Union address, the President wrote, "We have set a clear goal vital to the next chapter of America's story in space: sending humans to Mars by the 2030s and returning them safely to Earth, with the ultimate ambition to one day remain there for an extended time." Later this week, many of the Nation's top innovators will come together in Pittsburgh at the White House Frontiers Conference, where they will further explore, among other things, how American investments in science and technology will help us settle "the final frontier" – space. But today, we're excited to announce two new NASA initiatives that build on the President's vision and utilize public-private partnerships to enable humans to live and work in space in a sustainable way.

In April 2010, the President challenged the country – and NASA – to send American astronauts on a Journey to Mars in the 2030s. By reaching out further into the solar system and expanding the frontiers of exploration, the President outlined a vision for pushing the bounds of human discovery, while also revitalizing the space industry and creating jobs here at home.

To achieve these mutually-reinforcing goals, the President instructed NASA to develop spacecraft and technologies geared toward sending astronauts to deep space, while at the same time partnering with American companies to build a strong space economy. Following the President's vision, NASA has worked over the past 6 years to help catalyze a vibrant new sector of the economy by enabling the commercial transportation of cargo and soon crew from American soil to the International Space Station. And today, Americans are working at more than a thousand companies across virtually every state to support commercial space initiatives and with them, the growth of a new commercial market in Low Earth Orbit.

On the International Space Station, we're working "off-the-Earth, for-the-Earth," leading a broad international coalition of countries and companies in conducting research and demonstrating technologies that hold great promise for everything ranging from sending human beings to Mars to improving eye surgery to purifying drinking water and making communities more resilient when natural disasters strike.

This work aboard the space station is the heart and soul of the first stage of NASA's Journey to Mars; a stage we call "Earth Dependent." It is focused on developing technologies and capabilities in earth orbit, where it is still fairly easy for us to directly support humans. But over the next decade, we'll enter the "Proving Ground" stage, where NASA, leading the way with the international community, will demonstrate and test technologies for the first time in cis-lunar space, the area around the moon, where our astronauts are days or weeks away from Earth, rather than hours. For example, in the mid-2020s, NASA's Asteroid Redirect Mission will send a robotic spacecraft to a nearby asteroid to test out important exploration technologies such as solar-electric propulsion, conduct scientific and planetary defense experiments, and then return a boulder from the asteroid to an orbit around the Moon for astronauts to study. As the title of this stage indicates, this work serves as necessary preparation for eventual missions that will take humanity even further, to Mars and beyond.

And that brings us to the first thing we're excited to discuss today. NASA has already begun laying the groundwork for these deep space missions. In 2014 we issued a "broad agency announcement" or "BAA" asking private partners for concept studies and development projects in advanced propulsion, small satellites, and habitation as part of the newly created Next Space Technologies for Exploration Partnerships or "NextSTEP" program. Six companies received awards to start developing habitation systems in response to that "NextSTEP" BAA. The idea is that these habitats or "habs" would evolve into spacecraft capable of sustaining and transporting astronauts on long duration deep space missions, like a mission to Mars. And their development would be achieved through new public-private partnerships designed to build on and support the progress of the growing commercial space sector in Earth orbit. The work done by those companies was so promising that earlier this year, we extended the NextSTEP hab program into Phase 2 and opened it up to new entrants. In August, six companies were selected to produce ground prototypes for deep space habitat modules. Learn more about the six selected prototypes.

At the same time that we're working to extend our reach into deep space, we're also continuing to innovate closer to Earth, by expanding our partnerships with commercial space companies. And that's the second initiative we are focused on today. Recently, NASA asked the private sector how it might use an available docking port on the ISS. One of the potential uses of such a port would be preparation for one or more future commercial stations in Low Earth Orbit, ready to take over for the Space Station once its mission ends in the 2020s. The private sector responded enthusiastically, and those responses indicated a strong desire by U.S. companies to attach a commercial module to the ISS that could meet the needs of NASA as well as those of private entrepreneurs.

As a result of the responses, this fall, NASA will start the process of providing companies with a potential opportunity to add their own modules and other capabilities to the International Space Station. While NASA prepares for the transition from the Space Station to its successors, the agency is also working to support and grow the community of scientists and entrepreneurs conducting research and growing businesses in space. A vibrant user community will be key to ensuring the economic viability of future space stations.

For humanity to successfully and sustainably settle the "final frontier", we will need to take advantage of investment and innovation in both the public and private sectors. Neither will handle this immense challenge on its own. The NextSTEP and ISS initiatives are excellent examples of how the two sectors can work together to extend humanity's reach into space. Make no mistake, the Journey to Mars will be challenging, but it is underway and with each one of these steps, we are pushing the boundaries of exploration and imagination for the Nation.

Obama Says Work Has Begun On Habitats To Help Humans Reach Mars

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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

Why Obama May Have Picked The Wrong Planet

By Brian Fung

Washington Post, October 11, 2016

In the 1960s, President John F. Kennedy made history when he kicked America's space program into overdrive, resulting in history's first manned mission to the moon. And President Obama wants to do something similar: launch a major expedition to an unexplored body in the solar system, jump-start a frenzy of economic and scientific activity to help get us there, and claim lots of credit for creating jobs as well as promoting science and technology.

On Tuesday, Obama published an op-ed at CNN laying out his vision (once again) for visiting Mars.

"We have set a clear goal vital to the next chapter of America's story in space: sending humans to Mars by the 2030s and returning them safely to Earth, with the ultimate ambition to one day remain there for an extended time," he wrote.

The Obama administration has been pursuing a visit to Mars for years. But Obama may be overlooking an easier target, if the arguments of one NASA researcher (and numerous supporters) are to be believed. While Mars may seem to be an attractive destination, we should consider sending people to Venus instead, these people argue.

Obama's essay conjures images of NASA habitats on the Red Planet like we saw in the film "The Martian." But that future is a long way off: As the actual author of "The Martian" has said, it's far more likely that NASA's first manned Mars mission will involve humans orbiting a few times and coming back. Even Elon Musk says he'll be creating a "cargo route" to Mars long before he sends actual people to land there.

You see, Mars is a challenging destination. It's far away, the gravity is a fraction of Earth's — posing additional health hazards beyond the lack of atmospheric radiation shielding — and you have to be suited up just to breathe outside.

By contrast, Venus is a lot closer to Earth than Mars is. At their closest points, Venus is only 25 million miles away, compared with Mars's 34 million miles. The shorter distance means you'd need less time and fuel to get there, reducing the cost. And although Venus's surface temperature is hot enough to melt metal, and the crushing pressure will squish you like a bug, the upper atmosphere is actually rather habitable.

"At about 50 kilometers above the surface the atmosphere of Venus is the most earthlike environment (other than Earth itself) in the solar system," wrote Geoffrey Landis, a NASA scientist, in a 2003 paper. Landis has spent much of his career dreaming up ways to make a human trip to Mars actually feasible, so he knows what he's talking about.

At high altitude, Venusian temperatures are hot but not unbearable, and the barometric pressure drops to the equivalent of one Earth atmosphere. You'd have droplets of sulfuric acid to worry about, but only if your skin is directly exposed.

It helps that NASA has already taken steps to research a manned mission to Venus. The project, known as HAVOC, looks like this:

Proponents of colonizing Venus say the logical endpoint would be floating cities in the clouds — just like in "Star Wars." These colonies could be filled with breathable oxygen (which we may be able to create right from Venus's own atmosphere) and made of durable materials that can withstand the acid. Even if the colony's walls were breached, you wouldn't have an explosive decompression like you would on Mars, because the pressure in Venus's atmosphere would prevent a rapid leak of air.

So if sending humans to Venus makes so much sense, why aren't we paying more attention to it? Perhaps that's because, according to PBS, humans are obsessed with landing on things as a way to claim them. Planting a flag is a lot more dramatic than throwing one out an airlock.

And who knows? Perhaps what we learn from sending manned missions to Venus could make colonizing Mars not just a little bit easier, but a lot.

"If you did Venus first, you could get a leg up on advancing those technologies and those capabilities ahead of doing a human-scale Mars mission," Dale Arney, a member of the NASA team behind the HAVOC project, told IEEE Spectrum in 2014. "It's a chance to do a practice run, if you will, of going to Mars."

The Last 100 Days: Obama Still Has Lengthy To-do List

By Gregory Korte

USA Today, October 11, 2016

WASHINGTON — As the nation's attention has shifted to the campaign to elect the next president of the United States, the man who is already president isn't done yet.

With 100 days to go in his presidency, President Obama still has the power to usher in long-lasting policy changes through regulation, executive orders, and the pardon power.

Presidents actually have a lot of things that they can do," said Kenneth Mayer, who studies executive orders at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. "What was once considered to be a low point of presidential activity actually has high levels of presidential activity."

How outgoing presidents use that authority can depend in large part on who is elected to succeed them. But whether Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton is elected Nov. 8, Obama has been attempting to solidify changes in policy before his successor takes over.

In some areas, Obama's late-term executive actions are simply the "culmination of years of work," White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said earlier this year.

But in other areas, the White House has a clear strategy of making his policies as difficult as possible to undo.

"When it comes to our Cuba policy, for example, we've made no bones about the fact that we are seeking to lock in that change in approach toward Cuba," Earnest said.

Obama has had more vetoes than signing ceremonies this year, and outgoing presidents are often at a low point of their influence over Congress.

But the White House is still pushing to get congressional approval on a number of priorities — especially on issues where Republicans may be even more leery of a Clinton presidency. Those include the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal, which Clinton helped negotiate but now opposes, and the Supreme Court nomination of Merrick Garland, who may prove to be more moderate than a first-year Clinton nominee.

Congress also punted on the 2017 spending bill, passing a stopgap measure last month while they negotiate a new spending bill by Dec. 8. The White House is pushing for Congress to fund a number of its priorities, including a fix of the lead-contaminated water system in Flint, Mich., and Vice President Biden's cancer "moonshot."

If the first 100 days of a presidency is all about the legislative agenda, the last 100 are usually about executive action.

In the last few months, Obama has signed a number of executive orders that will make permanent — at least, unless rescinded by a future executive order — policies that were already in effect during his presidency. He formalized the Atrocities Review Board that had already been operating since the early days of his administration, ordered more transparency on drone strikes, and created a structure to continue his work on global entrepreneurship after he leaves office.

"If there is an opportunity for us to routinize that approach to dealing with these complicated issues, the president believes the country would benefit from that," Earnest said on the drone strike policy. "After all, because that routinized approach didn't exist when President Obama took office, it required a lot of work to figure out how to most effectively deal with this policy challenge and be transparent about it."

A new president could rescind any one of those executive orders — but likely at a political cost.

"In a strict formal legalistic sense it is true: The next president can step in and amend or overturn something this president did unilaterally," said William Howell, a professor of political science at the University of Chicago who has studied the last 100 days of presidents' terms. "But there also can be a change on the politics that surround a particular policy."

Once enacted, transparency measures are difficult to rescind without creating attention, for example.

Obama is also under pressure from liberal-leaning groups to take executive action on any number of issues, including an order requiring federal contractors to disclose their political spending, and allowing taxpayer funding of abortion in violation of the long-standing Hyde Amendment.

And then there's Guantanamo Bay, an issue that has dogged Obama throughout his presidency. Congress has continuously blocked Obama's efforts to close the military prison for terrorist suspects in Cuba, so the president has pursued a strategy of transferring prisoners in an attempt to get the population to near zero before he leaves office.

Regulations usually spike in election years, although Obama himself is the exception to the rule. In 2012, the White House slowed down its review of regulations until after the election.

But this year, the Obama White House has approved 112 significant regulations through September, according to the American Action Forum, a conservative advocacy group. In 2008, the Bush White House had approved 89 through the same time frame.

But the average length of time the White House has taken to review those regulations was a longer-than-normal 68 days, suggesting that the White House could be waiting until after the election to approve new regulations.

There are 31 significant regulations awaiting approval from the White House, with most coming from the Department of Health and Human Services and the Environmental Protection Agency.

In the pipeline are rules that would decrease the allowable emissions for heavy duty trucks and increasing the amount of fuel coming from renewable sources. Both are aimed at helping the United States meet its commitments under the Paris climate accord — a non-binding agreement that relies largely on executive action to implement. Clinton has promised to keep that commitment; Trump has said he would cancel it.

"Obviously, an administration has authority to publish anything it wants, and if a regulation gets published in the midnight period, there's nothing inherently wrong with that," said Sam Batkins, the AAF's director of regulatory policy.

"What is concerning is when you see a surge in regulations, especially when you have a new administration coming in of a different political party," he said. "There's a concern that the rules aren't being vetted."

Incoming presidents of both parties have dealt with that surge by ordering a moratorium on enforcing new regulations for the first 60 days. Obama's chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, went even further, sending a memo ordering agencies to withdraw any regulations that hadn't gone into effect by being published in the Federal Register.

But unlike executive orders, regulations are even more difficult to reverse — requiring the agency to do just as much

work to deregulate as it took to regulate in the first place, leading to a sort of regulatory inertia.

One textbook example: In December 2000, the Clinton administration enacted a new regulation reducing the levels of arsenic allowable in water supplies by one-fifth. President George W. Bush tried to reverse that regulation, but Clinton had already redefined the status quo: Bush was perceived as trying to increase the level of arsenic by five times. After an outcry, the Bush administration relented to the Clinton standard.

The ability to "grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States" is one of the most absolute constitutional powers a president has. But Obama largely neglected it for the first six years of his presidency, waiting almost two years to issue just nine pardons.

But Obama has sought to "reinvigorate" that power in his last year — granting record-setting numbers of commutations in order to shorten the sentences of drug offenders. The clemency initiative was an effort to jump-start criminal justice reform efforts in Congress by highlighting the long drug sentences enacted during the 1980s and 1990s.

Obama has also said he hopes to grant a number of pardons comparable to his successors — but pledged that he would not let "political considerations" play a role in any last-minute pardons he might grant.

"The process that I put in place is not going to vary depending on how close I get to the election," he said in August, with the Justice Department vetting clemency applications before they come to the White House.

Hoping To Extend 'Let Girls Learn' Beyond 2017, The Obamas Lay Out A Road Map

By Juliet Eilperin and Krissah Thompson

Washington Post, October 11, 2016

White House officials on Tuesday presented what they believe are the reasons for educating young women overseas and unveiled a number of new financial commitments to the effort totaling more than $5 million.

The move was part of a campaign to ensure that President and first lady Michelle Obama's signature Let Girls Learn initiative lasts long after they leave office.

The new pledges from the private sector include $2.5 million from a program by the public health group Rise Up to enable girls in Malawi to finish school and delay marriage; a $1 million donation by Newman's Own Foundation to support Peace Corps initiatives and the Kibera School for Girls in Kenya; $500,000 from the Central Asia Institute to provide services for girls in Afghanistan; and $400,000 from Endeavor Energy and $200,000 from Water Charity and the National Peace Corps Association to fund Peace Corps volunteers' work.

Tuesday's announcements mean that in a year and a half, Let Girls Learn has amassed more than $1 billion in support for federal programs to educate girls in 50 nations around the globe.

The initiative has been a special focus of Michelle Obama, who in the past 18 months has promoted it with intensity. She pointed out that she has no budget for programs or authority to pass laws, but by raising awareness she has been able to make global girls' education a priority of the federal government, establish partnerships with corporations and work with other developed countries, including Japan, Canada and Mexico.

"This is personal for me," Obama told a group of girls from around the world gathered for a conversation hosted by Glamour magazine at the Newseum. "I wouldn't be here — not just in this chair, but in the life that I have — without my education."

The first lady, joined by teenage actress Yara Shahidi, spoke for more than an hour with dozens of young women, some of whom were brought into the conversation via Skype from Jordan, Peru, Tanzania and Britain.

The conversation was part of a White House celebration of the International Day of the Girl, which boosted the program. Tina Tchen, who serves as assistant to the president and the first lady's chief of staff, said in an interview that Let Girls Learn has developed into a "whole of government" operation led by the National Security Council that includes the Departments of State, Labor and Agriculture as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Peace Corps and the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

The initiative has become one of the Obamas' more prominent development programs, in the way that the President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief helped define part of the legacy of George W. Bush and his wife, Laura. The program has been the impetus for Michelle Obama's overseas trips in recent years, and while visiting East Asia last month President Obama announced that Let Girls Learn will start up in Laos and Nepal.

"They both have spent a lot of time with young people, both in the United States and around the world," Tchen said. "They both obviously have a global presence and recognition as leaders that will position them however they choose to move forward on these issues in the post-presidency."

The first lady has leveraged her office, as well as social media and the administration's ties to a range of private groups, to boost public awareness of the program and the estimated 98 million adolescent girls who are denied educational opportunities worldwide.

In January, she spoke to a gathering of the Association of Magazine Media. After that appearance, the administration secured a commitment from 65 magazines to donate advertising space promoting Let Girls Learn. The magazine

association said it was the largest donation of ad space in history.

CNN trailed Michelle Obama on a trip to Morocco, Liberia and Spain this summer. On Wednesday, the cable network is scheduled to air a documentary about the first lady's trip that explores the stories of some of the girls she met there.

Forty-four of the young women Obama met while in Morocco and Liberia were flown to Washington to participate in activities coinciding with the International Day of the Girl on Tuesday, as well as a multi-day program arranged by the State Department.

The group includes Raphina Felee, a 20-year-old Liberian who met Obama during the first lady's visit to Monrovia this summer to promote Let Girls Learn. Felee grew up in a refugee camp in Guinea and now lives with her uncle and his family in Kakata, a town surrounded by rubber plantations in southwestern Liberia. She juggles household chores with attending school.

A young woman from Tanzania told Obama about the barriers that girls in her country face, including being raped or attacked by thieves on the way to school, or being subject to female genital mutilation and early marriage. The first lady called such stories "heartbreaking" and said they inspired her to start Let Girls Learn.

To make the case for maintaining the program under the next administration, the White House has issued an eight-page fact sheet outlining the national security benefits of investing in adolescent girls' education. Aspects of the initiative have attracted some new funding, including $25 million for USAID's Let Girls Learn Challenge Fund and $30 million for the Peace Corps.

Obama said the Peace Corps is key because the program has "focused on attacking these barriers from the ground up — working with local leaders, parents themselves and working with the girls."

She also shared with the young women participating in the conversation her own story of growing up in a working-class family in Chicago and told the girls that she, too, had been underestimated.

"You see me now as the first lady, but there are still doubts. There are people who questioned whether I would be a good first lady . . . people who questioned whether I was strategic enough or whether my initiatives would have an impact," she said. "All throughout my life there are people who have underestimated me."

Court Gives President More Power Over Consumer Agency Chief

By Stacy Cowley

New York Times, October 11, 2016

In a significant blow to the authority of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, a federal appeals court ruled on Tuesday that the agency's structure was unconstitutional but also offered a fairly simple remedy: Give the president the power to fire the agency's director at will.

The highly anticipated ruling from a three-judge panel of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit directly addressed a longstanding criticism of the consumer watchdog agency: that its structure improperly gives too much power and autonomy to a sole director.

Other independent federal agencies are typically headed by a commission, the court noted in its ruling. But the 2010 legislation that created the consumer bureau, the Dodd-Frank Act, gave the bureau's director — who is now Richard Cordray, President Obama's pick — an unusual degree of independence. Once nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate, the director, who serves a five-year term, can be removed only for cause, defined as "inefficiency, neglect of duty or malfeasance."

The appeals court panel, citing "the threat to individual liberty" posed by an independent agency with a leader with such unchecked power, struck down that structure.

But the court stopped well short of the remedy sought by the plaintiffs and other critics of the watchdog agency, who have argued that the bureau should be shut down if its structure was found to be unconstitutional.

Instead, the court simply chose to sever the provision saying that the director could only be fired for cause and left the rest of the law that created the bureau intact.

"The president now will have the power to remove the director at will, and to supervise and direct the director," the court wrote in its ruling, written by Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh. "The C.F.P.B. therefore will continue to operate and to perform its many duties, but will do so as an executive agency akin to other executive agencies headed by a single person, such as the Department of Justice and the Department of the Treasury."

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is expected to appeal to the full circuit court, which tilts Democratic. Or, alternatively, the agency could directly ask the Supreme Court to review the case.

"The bureau respectfully disagrees with the court's decision," said a spokeswoman for the agency, Moira Vahey. "The bureau believes that Congress's decision to make the director removable only for cause is consistent with Supreme Court precedent, and the bureau is considering options for seeking further review of the court's decision."

As the case wends through the courts, the agency will continue its work, Ms. Vahey said. "Congress has charged the bureau with ensuring that the markets for consumer financial products and services are fair, transparent, and competitive and with protecting consumers in these markets

from unlawful practices," she added. "Today's decision will not dampen our efforts or affect our focus on the mission of the agency."

Judge Kavanaugh and the other two judges on the panel, A. Raymond Randolph and Karen L. Henderson, were all appointed by Republican presidents. Judge Randolph concurred with the decision and Judge Henderson concurred in part and dissented in part.

Republicans in Congress have consistently wanted to abolish the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, arguing that it represents regulatory overreach. In its five years of existence, the agency counts among its major accomplishments stricter rules on mortgage lending and a number of enforcement actions against consumer abuses. The agency recently levied a record fine against Wells Fargo for setting up unauthorized accounts on behalf of its customers.

As part of its ruling, the court sided with the case's plaintiff, the PHH Corporation, a mortgage lender, and threw out a $109 million fine that the consumer bureau levied against PHH for accepting what it said were illegal kickbacks. PHH responded with a lawsuit challenging the bureau's statutory authority to impose the penalty.

The court agreed with PHH's claim that the bureau had overstepped its bounds, and threw out the penalty.

CFPB Director's Power Trimmed By U.S. Appeals Court Ruling

By Andrew M Harris

Bloomberg News, October 11, 2016

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau survived a constitutional challenge and will remain in business, though a federal appeals court reduced the power of its director and tossed out a $109 million penalty against a mortgage company.

The long-awaited decision was a blow to the controversial agency, which was created in the wake of the financial crisis to regulate mortgages, credit cards and other financial products directed at consumers. Ever since, it has been the subject of almost constant criticism from Republicans and the financial industry over its efforts to reign in lending practices.

The appellate court found the CFPB to be "unconstitutionally structured" and that the power vested in Director Richard Cordray--who could only be fired by the president and for cause--was a "gross departure from settled historical practice."

But the court rejected calls to dismantle the agency, instead voiding the for-cause provision and making the director removable by the president for any time and for any reason. "The CFPB therefore will continue to operate and to perform its many duties, but will do so as an executive agency akin to other executive agencies headed by a single person, such as the Department of Justice or the Department of the Treasury," the court ruled.

Moira Vahey, a CFPB spokeswoman, said the agency is reviewing the court's opinion and declined to immediately comment.

In addition to ruling on the structure of the agency, the court threw out a CFPB decision imposing a $109 million penalty on a New Jersey mortgage servicing company, PHH Corp.

The court's decision comes only a month after the CFPB drew praise from Democrats, including presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, for its role in fining Wells Fargo & Co. $185 million to resolve allegations that bank employees opened deposit and credit-card accounts without customer approval to satisfy sales goals and earn financial rewards. The bank agreed to pay $100 million of that to the CFPB.

Democrats had hailed the enforcement action as a victory for the CFPB and used it to emphasize the need for the agency. They attacked Republican lawmakers who support legislation that would undo the 2010 Dodd-Frank Act and with it, the bureau.

The agency had punished PHH Corp. for referring customers to insurers who then purchased reinsurance from a PHH subsidiary. CFPB determined those payments were part of an illegal kickback scheme. PHH said the law creating the CFPB gave an unaccountable director too much authority.

PHH's lawyer, former U.S. Solicitor General Ted Olson, told appellate judges during arguments in April that CFPB Director Richard Cordray "ran roughshod over clear provisions of federal law." He called the bureau's punishment of PHH "draconian," remedial and unauthorized.

Dico Akseraylian, a spokesman for Mount Laurel, New Jersey-based PHH, did not immediately reply to a voice-mail message seeking comment.

The case is PHH Corp. v. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 15-1177, U.S. Court of Appeals, District of Columbia Circuit (Washington).

Court Deals Setback To Obama On Consumer Board

By Dave Boyer

Washington Times, October 11, 2016

In a setback for President Obama, a federal appeals court curtailed the power of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Tuesday, ruling the agency violated the Constitution with a structure that gives too much unelected authority to its sole director.

The highly anticipated ruling by the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit said the consumer watchdog agency, forged by Democrats five years ago, violates the

Constitution's separation of powers and was an example of a "gross departure from settled historical practice."

But rather than shutting down the agency, as a mortgage lender in the case requested, the court said the CFPB should operate by allowing the president to remove the director at will rather than for cause.

"The CFPB therefore will continue to operate and to perform its many duties, but will do so as an executive agency akin to other executive agencies headed by a single person, such as the Department of Justice and the Department of the Treasury," the court said.

The court threw out the CFPB's $109 million penalty against New Jersey-based PHH Corp., a fine which was imposed by Director Richard Cordray after the agency accused the lender of arranging for kickbacks from insurers. Mr. Cordray's stiff penalty came after an administrative judge had found that PHH violated the law and ordered the company to pay back $6.4 million of illegal financial gains.

Circuit Judge Brett Kavanaugh said the structure of the CFPB "poses a far greater risk of arbitrary decision making and abuse of power, and a far greater threat to individual liberty, than does a multi-member independent agency." The judge said CFPB has a "novel" structure with a single person leading it, unlike other independent agencies whose leaders must answer to commissions.

"In light of the consistent historical practice under which independent agencies have been headed by multiple commissioners or board members, and in light of the threat to individual liberty posed by a single-director independent agency…We therefore hold that the CFPB is unconstitutionally structured," the court said.

The CFPB was created in the Dodd-Frank legislation after the 2008 financial crisis, aimed at regulating mortgages, credit cards and other consumer financial products. Democrats such as Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Mr. Obama have championed the agency, while Republicans have criticized it as an abuse of power and executive overreach.

John Eastman, professor of law and former dean of the Chapman University School of Law, called the ruling "a major step in the right direction of restoring separation of powers."

"Our Constitution simply does not allow for unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats to wield as much power as Congress tried to delegate to the CFPB," Mr. Eastman said. "Our Constitution vests 'the executive power' in a unitary president so that all executive functions are supervised by the one person in the executive branch who is directly accountable to the people."

Theodore B. Olson, counsel to PHH, said the ruling "vindicates" the firm and also clarifies that CFPB is bound by a three-year statute of limitations in the disputed enforcement action. CFPB asserted it could bring a complaint at any time in the future.

"The CFPB's numerous and clear legal errors in this case are not surprising given the unconstitutional level of the director's insulation from any democratic accountability," Mr. Olson said. "As the court recognized, the Dodd-Frank Act attempted to give a single individual historically unprecedented power over regulated entities, in violation of the bedrock separation of powers principles enshrined in the Constitution."

Kyle Hauptman, executive director of the nonprofit Main Street Growth Project in Arlington, Virginia, agreed with Judge Kavanaugh that the agency's structure posed "a threat to individual liberty."

"The CFPB operates like the unaccountable agency that it is. Main Street deserves real consumer protection, not just job protection for the CFPB's director," Mr. Hauptman said.

Consumer groups were enraged, accusing Judge Kavanaugh of pursuing an ideological agenda.

"He cut his teeth in the conservative political movement and as a partner at one of the most popular law firms in corporate America — a place that bragged about its work surrounding 'white collar crime,'" said Karl Frisch, executive director of Allied Progress.

He said he expects the full D.C. circuit to review the case and he predicted the ruling will be overturned.

Richard Hunt, president and CEO of the Consumer Bankers Association, said Congress could resolve the leadership issue by creating a commission to run the CFPB instead of a sole director.

"We applaud the court's decision to repeal the amplified penalty on PHH," Mr. Hunt said. "At the same time, the decision puts the CFPB under the direct control of the Administration to resolve the Constitutional question. This means the CFPB would no longer be an independent agency, as originally intended."

He added, "We agree with the DC Circuit Court of Appeals when it said in the decision 'the deliberative process and multiple viewpoints in a multi-member independent agency can help ensure that an agency does not wrongly bring an enforcement action or adopt rules that unduly infringe individual liberty.'"

"For this reason, we still assert a five-person, bipartisan board would preserve the bureau as a strong, stable and effective regulator that would give the banking system certainty and consistency, regardless of a President Trump or Clinton," Mr. Hunt said.

• Stephen Dinan contributed to this report.

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Appeals Panel Deals Setback To Consumer-Watchdog Agency

Federal three-judge panel rules structure of CFPB is unconstitutional, but rejects idea of shutting down agency

By Brent Kendall And Yuka Hayashi

Wall Street Journal, October 11, 2016

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

Court Strikes Consumer Watchdog Structure

Salt Lake (UT) Tribune, October 11, 2016

The ruling came from a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. It will not affect the CFPB's operations, but the president's power over the director would be expanded.

The ruling handed a victory to the banking industry, which has viewed the agency as a thorn in its side and accused it of overreaching in its regulation of consumer financial activities. The agency has taken legal action against banks, mortgage companies, credit card issuers, payday lenders, debt collectors and others. The CFPB says that over five years it has recovered $11.7 billion that it returned to more than 27 million harmed consumers.

The agency has been a political lightning rod since it was created by Congress in a major financial overhaul law in 2010 to protect consumers from harmful banking and lending practices. Wall Street interests, the banking and consumer finance industries and Republicans in Congress have fiercely opposed and criticized the agency.

The idea for the agency was conceived by Elizabeth Warren, now a Democratic senator from Massachusetts and a fiery critic of Wall Street. President Barack Obama had considered naming her to head the CFPB, but her nomination likely would have run into deep opposition from the Republicans in Congress. Richard Cordray, a Democrat and former Ohio attorney general, has run the agency since it began operating in 2011.

As the agency's director, Cordray exercises more power than would be the case with a five-member commission, which is often the structure atop independent federal agencies. The members of such commissions normally are split between the political parties.

"The director of the CFPB possesses enormous power over American business, American consumers and the overall U.S. economy," the appeals court ruling said. "That combination of power that is massive in scope, concentrated in a single person and unaccountable to the president triggers the important constitutional question at issue in this case."

The government had argued that the agency's structure and powers are constitutional.

The case involves allegations that New Jersey mortgage lender PHH Corp. was involved in a scheme to refer customers to certain mortgage insurance companies in exchange for illegal kickbacks. The CFPB ordered PHH to pay $109 million in illegal payments it had received. PHH claims its conduct was legal and challenged the bureau's structure as unconstitutional.

In making its ruling, the appeals court said the constitutional problem can be solved by taking out the "for cause" removal provision of the 2010 law. That gives the president the power to remove the director at will, and to supervise him or her.

"The CFPB therefore will continue to operate and to perform its many duties, but will do so as an executive agency akin to other executive agencies headed by a single person, such as the Department of Justice and the Department of the Treasury," the ruling said.

The Obama administration could seek a rehearing of the decision before the full appeals court, which would be the next step in the legal process. The full court has a majority of judges appointed by Democratic presidents, while all three judges on the panel that issued the ruling were named by Republican presidents.

"The bureau respectfully disagrees with the court's decision," CFPB spokeswoman Moira Vahey said in the statement. "The bureau believes that Congress' decision to make the director removable only for cause is consistent with Supreme Court precedent, and the bureau is considering options for seeking further review of the court's decision."

"In the meantime, as the court expressly recognized, the bureau will continue its important work," Vahey said.

U.S. Court Rules CFPB Structure Unconstitutional; Bureau Can Still Operate

By Lisa Lambert and Nate Raymond

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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

Court Deals Blow To 'Unconstitutionally Structured' Consumer Finance Protection Bureau

By Lorraine Woellert

Politico, October 11, 2016

An appellate court overturned the CFPB's $109 million fine against mortgage company PHH Corp. and called the agency "unconstitutionally structured," a decision that will re-ignite efforts to redesign and rein in the bureau.

"The director enjoys more unilateral authority than any other officer in any of the three branches of the U.S. government, other than the president," wrote the three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia.

"This is a case about executive power and individual liberty," the court wrote. "Because of their massive power and

the absence of presidential supervision and direction, independent agencies pose a significant threat to individual liberty and to the constitutional system of separation of powers and checks and balances."

The CFPB had fined PHH for referring customers to insurers who purchased reinsurance from a PHH subsidiary, a practice the agency likened to illegal kickbacks. PHH sued, saying the agency had overstepped its authority.

The court underscored what it called "the important but limited real-world implications" of the decision. "The CFPB will continue to operate and perform its many critical responsibilities, albeit under the ultimate supervision and direction of the president."

Lights Out For The Second-Most-Powerful Man In D.C.

An appeals court rules that future presidents can say 'you're fired' to the government's top regulator of consumer finance.

By Thomas M. Boyd

Wall Street Journal, October 11, 2016

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

The Unconstitutional Mr. Cordray

A federal appeals court overturns one-man regulatory rule.

Wall Street Journal, October 11, 2016

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

Appeals Court Rules Part Of Obama's Dodd-Frank Law Unconstitutional

By Ken Klukowski

Breitbart, October 11, 2016

Companies on the receiving end of CFPB decisions have challenged its constitutionality. On Oct. 11, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit agreed with those challengers, striking down part of one of Obama's signature laws, one strongly supported by Clinton.

Judge Brett Kavanaugh wrote for the three-judge panel in PHH Corporation v. CFPB:

This is a case about executive power and individual liberty. The U.S. Government's executive power to enforce federal law against private citizens – for example, to bring criminal prosecutions and civil enforcement actions – is essential to societal order and progress, but simultaneously a grave threat to individual liberty.

The Framers understood that threat to individual liberty. When designing the executive power, the Framers first separated the executive power from the legislative and judicial powers. "The declared purpose of separating and dividing the powers of government, of course, was to 'diffus[e] power the better to secure liberty.'" Bowsher v. Synar, 478 U.S. 714, 721 (1986) (quoting Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. v. Sawyer, 343 U.S. 579, 635 (1952) (Jackson, J., concurring)). To ensure accountability for the exercise of executive power, and help safeguard liberty, the Framers then lodged full responsibility for the executive power in the President of the United States, who is elected by and accountable to the people. The text of Article II provides quite simply: "The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America." U.S. CONST. art. II, § 1. And Article II assigns the President alone the authority and responsibility to "take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed." Id. § 3. As Justice Scalia explained: "The purpose of the separation and equilibration of powers in general, and of the unitary Executive in particular, was not merely to assure effective government but to preserve individual freedom." Morrison v. Olson, 487 U.S. 654, 727 (1988) (Scalia, J., dissenting).

Kavanaugh notes with alarm the vast powers of the "headless fourth branch of government" of agencies that are independent from presidential control, and thus not answerable to American voters. He continues, "Because of their massive power and the absence of Presidential supervision and direction, independent agencies pose a significant threat to individual liberty and to the constitutional system of separation of powers and checks and balances.

Although he criticizes independent agencies, he acknowledged that the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of such agencies in 1935, when the Court started its massive lurch to the left, in that case overruling prior precedent from 1926, which had held that the president must always be able to remove executive officers.

What's different about the CFPB—and leaving the D.C. Circuit free to make a ruling not dictated by the Supreme Court's decisions in this area—is that all previous independent agencies were "headed by multiple commissioners," making each one "at least accountable to and by their fellow commissioners or board members."

Until the CFPB, which is "headed by a single person," completely unaccountable to anyone.

The court expressed concern that "the CFPB possess enormous power over American business, American consumers, and the overall U.S. economy." After surveying the contours of this power, the panel concluded, "That combination of power that is massive in scope, concentrated in a single person, and unaccountable to the President triggers the important constitutional question at issue in this case."

Senior Judge Raymond Randolph joined Kavanaugh's opinion, but wrote separately to make additional points, including that parts of the controlling precedent in this case might be changed by the Supreme Court.

Judge Karen LeCraft Henderson wrote separately to say that she agreed with the parts of the majority opinion rejecting on statutory grounds the CFPB's arguments in this case, and as such did not believe the court should reach the constitutional issues in the case.

The Obama administration may petition the full D.C. Circuit to rehear the case en banc, where a liberal majority could reverse the panel decision. Either way, this case is likely to go to the U.S. Supreme Court in the next year.

The case's outcome there could very easily turn on who is elected president on Nov. 8.

Ken Klukowski is senior legal editor for Breitbart News. Follow him on Twitter @kenklukowski.

Unshackled, Trump Unleashes Aggressive Attacks On Own Party

By Steve Peoples, Jonathan Lemire And Jill Colvin

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

The "shackles" gone, Donald Trump stepped up his fierce attacks on his own party leaders Tuesday, promising to teach Republicans who oppose him a lesson and fight for the presidency "the way I want to."

Exactly four weeks before Election Day and with his campaign floundering, the businessman reverted to the combative, divisive strategy that propelled him to victory in the GOP primary: Attack every critic – including fellow Republicans. Those close to Trump suggested it was "open season" on every detractor, regardless of party.

"It is so nice that the shackles have been taken off me and I can now fight for America the way I want to," Trump said in a tweet that brought new concern – near panic in some cases – to a party trying to stave off an all-out civil war before Nov, 8.

In another series of tweets, the Republican nominee called House Speaker Paul Ryan "weak and ineffective," Sen. John McCain "very foul-mouthed" and "disloyal" Republicans "far more difficult than Crooked Hillary."

"They come at you from all sides," Trump declared. "They don't know how to win – I will teach them!"

Rage against fellow Republicans from the face of the 2016 GOP exposed a party slipping from mere feuding into verbal warfare with advance voting already underway in roughly half the states. Polls suggest Trump is headed toward a loss of historic proportions if he doesn't turn things around.

His scorched-earth approach, days after his sexual predatory language caught on tape triggered a mass Republican defection, threatened to alienate even more supporters.

"Fighting for the sake of fighting is not really very helpful," said former Trump adviser Barry Bennett.

Trump has acknowledged the possibility of defeat in recent days, but on Tuesday he tried to shift the blame for his struggles on Republican defections and an election system that may be "rigged" against him. On Monday, he warned of potential voter fraud in heavily African-American Philadelphia, a claim for which there is no evidence but one that could challenge Americans' faith in a fair democratic process.

At the same time, Trump's campaign is considering whether to feature Bill Clinton accusers at his upcoming rallies. Trump shocked the political world before Sunday's debate by appearing with several women who had accused the former president of sexual impropriety decades earlier.

The aggressive shift is in line with the philosophy of recently hired campaign chaiman Steve Bannon, whose conservative website has long fueled attacks on Republican leaders and perpetuated popular conservative conspiracy theories. Bannon is now leading the campaign's messaging.

The approach has done little to endear Trump to anxious party leaders. At least 40 Republican senators and congressmen have revoked their support for the embattled Republican nominee – with nearly 30 of them urging him to quit the race altogether.

Republican Speaker Ryan, in a Monday conference call with congressional Republicans, said he would no longer campaign with Trump. He said he would focus instead on ensuring Clinton doesn't get a "blank check" with a Democratic-controlled Congress, all but conceding that Trump would lose the presidential contest.

Yet Trump's aggressive shift is popular among his most loyal supporters who continue to flock to his rallies by the thousands.

"He's fighting for us," said Megan Johnston, 54, who was among an estimated 2,000 people who packed into a high school gym to see him on Monday near Pittsburgh. She shrugged off his sexually aggressive comments in the 2005 video and pointed at Democrat Hillary Clinton's shortcomings.

"He said what he said and he apologized. She should be in jail," Johnston said.

As the GOP battled itself, Clinton focused on climate change in swing state Florida alongside former Vice President Al Gore.

Gore, whose 2006 documentary "An Inconvenient Truth" focused on global warming, said Clinton would "make solving the climate crisis a top national priority."

While Trump devoted much of his fire to fellow Republicans on Tuesday, he did not ignore his Democratic opponent.

His campaign released a new ad that focuses on Clinton's recent bout with pneumonia. The ad features images of masked gunmen and nuclear weapons as a sick Clinton stumbles toward a vehicle.

"Hillary Clinton doesn't have the fortitude, strength or stamina to lead in our world," the narrator declares.

Meanwhile, Trump's campaign and the Republican National Committee declared that hacked emails released by

WikiLeaks on Tuesday showed collusion between the Clinton campaign and the Department of Justice during a civil investigation into the former secretary of state's email server.

The evidence does indicate there was communication between the two about a court hearing date. But such dates are not inside information. They would have been publicly posted in advance on the court's docket.

The emails show that in May 2015, Clinton spokesman Brian Fallon alerted other staffers that the Justice Department was proposing to publish Clinton's work-related emails by January in response to requests by news organizations. Fallon, a former Justice Department spokesman, wrote that unspecified "DOJ folks" told him there was a court hearing planned soon in the case.

The name and email address of the person who shared the information with Fallon had been deleted.

As some Republicans fought to focus Trump's anger on Democrats, another longtime Trump ally openly considered walking away.

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie said he was still grappling with Trump's comments from the video, calling them "indefensible." He said he still supported Trump "at this point" but was thinking about that.

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Trump Says 'Shackles' Are Off, Assails House Speaker, McCain

By John Whitesides And Susan Heavey

Reuters, October 11, 2016

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

Trump Says He's 'Unshackled' And Declares War On GOP Leaders

By Billy House

Bloomberg Politics, October 11, 2016

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump unhooked himself from the party's leaders Tuesday, saying he is now "unshackled" and taking a swipe at House Speaker Paul Ryan as "weak and ineffective" after Ryan said he would no longer defend Trump.

"Our very weak and ineffective leader, Paul Ryan, had a bad conference call where his members went wild at his disloyalty," Trump tweeted, referring to a Monday conference call where some House conservatives challenged the speaker over Trump.

Twitter: Donald J. Trump on Twitter

Trump has long expressed disdain for the Washington establishment, but he took it to a new level Tuesday by signaling he may go after Republican Party leaders directly as he tries to salvage his embattled campaign: "It is so nice that the shackles have been taken off me and I can now fight for America the way I want to."

Twitter: Donald J. Trump on Twitter

"Disloyal R's are far more difficult than Crooked Hillary. They come at you from all sides. They don't know how to win – I will teach them!" he tweeted later Tuesday.

Twitter: Donald J. Trump on Twitter

The exchange intensified divisions within the party four weeks before Election Day as the Republican nominee tumbles in the polls and Ryan shifted his focus to preserving GOP majorities in the House and Senate.'Zero Support'

Trump's tweets came a day after Ryan effectively disavowed him without formally pulling his endorsement – and a poll showed Trump trailing Hillary Clinton by double digits ahead of November's election.

A 2005 video that surfaced Friday of Trump bragging about groping women prompted a wave of Republican lawmakers to withdraw their support in a last-ditch effort to save their control of Congress. Others, including Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus and vice-presidential nominee Mike Pence, are standing by Trump.

Trump tweeted Tuesday that a lack of support from Ryan has made it "hard to do well," in an apparent acknowledgment of the political damage of increasing GOP infighting.

Twitter: Donald J. Trump on Twitter

"With the exception of cheating Bernie out of the nom the Dems have always proven to be far more loyal to each other than the Republicans!" Trump said in another follow-up tweet.

Twitter: Donald J. Trump on Twitter

He also lashed out at Arizona Republican Senator John McCain, who pulled his support from Trump on Saturday.

"The very foul mouthed Sen. John McCain begged for my support during his primary (I gave, he won), then dropped me over locker room remarks!" he tweeted Tuesday afternoon.

Twitter: Donald J. Trump on Twitter

By late Tuesday morning, Trump's campaign released one of its most aggressive campaign ads so far against Clinton. Painting a dire picture of terrorists on the rise, the narrator says she does not have "the stamina to lead" over video of her coughing and stumbling at an event in September. Trump decided against turning the health scare into a campaign issue at first, but approved the message as his poll numbers sank.Unified Democrats

As the Republican Party fractures, Clinton is pulling in prominent Democrats to campaign for her in battleground states in a show of unity.

She's appearing in Miami Tuesday with former Vice President Al Gore. Her husband, former President Bill Clinton

was dispatched to Iowa this week and Vice President Joe Biden was hitting Nevada.

President Barack Obama is appearing Tuesday in Greensboro, North Carolina and heading to Ohio on Friday to raise money for the state's Democratic Party organization. First lady Michelle Obama will be in New Hampshire on Thursday.

Many House Republicans, meanwhile, worry that Trump is damaging their party's prospects to retain control of the Senate and to keep their sizable majority in the House.

"It will be very difficult for Trump to win," said Representative Charlie Dent of Pennsylvania, a leader of House Republican centrists. He told his colleagues on the Monday conference call that it was time to distance the party from Trump.'Soul of the Party'

In the long run, said Dent, "there is a battle going on for the soul of the party."

"There will be a reckoning after the election," he added.

Some House Republicans appear torn over how to proceed. Representative Dennis Ross of Florida, a senior deputy majority whip, says he understands that Ryan is doing this because the speaker believes it is the best way to protect the House majority.

"But we need to defeat Hillary," said Ross, citing the future direction of the Supreme Court and other important issues tied to the White House race.

And conservative Republican Steve King of Iowa said Tuesday that Ryan has only increased the chances that Clinton will win the presidency.

"If we let him sink, we'll all sink with him," King said in a radio interview, adding that the party might be forced to rebuild after this election, and that the establishment wing "could simply be amputated out."

At least a few Republicans openly cheered on Trump's new approach.

"Sometimes I wonder that our Constitution is not only broken," Maine Governor Paul LePage told a Maine radio station, according to NBC News, "but we need a Donald Trump to show some authoritarian power in our country and bring back the rule of law because we've had eight years of a president – he's an autocrat, he just does it on his own, he ignores Congress and every single day, we're slipping into anarchy."

Other prominent Republicans made clear that they're still backing Trump, including Florida Senator Marco Rubio, who lost to Trump in the GOP presidential primary.

"I wish we had better choices for president," he said Tuesday in a statement. "But I do not want Hillary Clinton to be our next president. And therefore my position has not changed."

Bruce Ash, an RNC member from Arizona, insisted that RNC members were fully behind Trump and that Ryan made a mistake by giving up on Trump, adding that the speaker reacted "with his stomach and heart, rather than with his mind."'Head Down'

By contrast, Ash said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has approached this "very politically astutely," because he "put his head down, waited for the bullets to fly and the circus to pass by."

McConnell on Monday simply declined to address the presidential race at all during a public appearance in Kentucky.

Either way, the split leaves Senate Republicans running for re-election in a very complicated spot. Vulnerable candidates have split in their approach to Trump, with nearly a third of the chamber's Republicans now saying they won't vote for him.Role Models

Even those who remained in Trump's corner, like Richard Burr of North Carolina, made sure not to repeat New Hampshire Senator Kelly Ayotte's gaffe last week that Trump was "absolutely" a role model for children.

"Both candidates proved they are not role models for the next generation, but we don't get to pick now any additional folks to run, so we have to pick who we best think meets the way forward in the future," Burr told reporters in North Carolina Monday.

Roy Blunt of Missouri remained one of the most pro-Trump of the vulnerable senators, quickly praising him for apologizing for his remarks on the 11-year-old tape, even as a number of his colleagues – Ayotte, McCain, Rob Portman of Ohio and others took the opportunity to leap off the Trump train.

Senator Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania, who is being challenged by Democrat Katie McGinty, faulted both Trump and Clinton and hasn't said which candidate he'll support.Unclear Odds

Whether candidates can distance themselves from Trump and still prevail is unclear.

"As Trump's numbers crater many House and Senate Republicans will find themselves on the wrong side of polling trends," said Joshua Huder, a senior fellow at the Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University. "They can only distance themselves so much."

Nationally, Clinton has about a 5-point edge on Trump in a race that includes third-party candidates, according to the RealClearPolitics poll average. The forecaster FiveThirtyEight on Monday gave Clinton an 82.9 percent change of winning in its polls-only model, approaching her high of 89.2 percent in mid-August. FiveThirtyEight gave Democrats a 52.6 percent change of winning back the U.S. Senate.

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Trump Declares War On Establishment Republicans

By David Jackson
USA Today, October 11, 2016

WASHINGTON — Ripping the band aid off deep divisions within the Republican Party, Donald Trump declared war Tuesday on GOP members who have turned against him and vowed to continue campaigning as he sees fit.

"It is so nice that the shackles have been taken off me and I can now fight for America the way I want to," Trump said during a tweet storm that targeted House Speaker Paul Ryan and other members of a skeptical Republican establishment.

Later, the Republican presidential nominee tweeted: "Disloyal R's are far more difficult than Crooked Hillary. They come at you from all sides. They don't know how to win — I will teach them!"

Trump's newly aggressive attacks on other Republicans underscore a massive breach within the party, one that makes it even harder for the GOP to hold control of the Senate and perhaps the House, much less win the presidency.

"The GOP has a suicide bomber as their nominee," said Texas-based political consultant Matt Mackowiak.

Trump erupted a day after Ryan told House Republicans he would no longer defend or campaign with the GOP nominee in the wake of the fallout over a tape in which Trump is heard making vulgar comments about women.

"Our very weak and ineffective leader, Paul Ryan, had a bad conference call where his members went wild at his disloyalty," Trump tweeted Tuesday.

Ryan's office responded with a terse statement: "Paul Ryan is focusing the next month on defeating Democrats, and all Republicans running for office should probably do the same."

Since the Friday release of a 2005 recording showing Trump making lewd comments about women, a steady stream of Republicans who once bought into his candidacy have now called on him to exit the race. Meanwhile, new polls show Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton building a steady lead over Trump, both nationally and in key battleground states.

In addition to Ryan, Trump lashed out Tuesday at a prominent Republican who pulled his endorsement, 2008 presidential nominee John McCain. Tweeted Trump: "The very foul mouthed Sen. John McCain begged for my support during his primary (I gave, he won), then dropped me over locker room remarks!"

Trump has also responded to the political storm by stepping up his attacks on Clinton and her husband, former president Bill Clinton. He has spotlighted women who have accused Bill Clinton of sexual harassment and assaults and claimed that Hillary Clinton tried to silence them.

Tuesday morning, though, Trump aimed most of his fire at his own party.

"Despite winning the second debate in a landslide (every poll), it is hard to do well when Paul Ryan and others give zero support!" Trump said as part of his Tuesday tweet storm.

Trump has also suggested that more tapes of him could still be coming, and that he is prepared to respond in kind.

"If they want to release more tapes saying inappropriate things, we'll continue to talk about Bill and Hillary Clinton doing inappropriate things," Trump said in Ambridge, Pa., Monday.

Some Republicans warn the growing civil war within the GOP will have ramifications well beyond the Nov. 8 election.

Rick Tyler, a former spokesman for Republican presidential candidate Ted Cruz, defined the GOP split as one between "the establishment and some principled conservatives" against what he called the "Breitbart Wing" of the party, named for the conservative news website. Steve Bannon, a long-time Breitbart executive, is a top adviser to Trump and has been a frequent critic of the current Republican leadership, saying they have been ineffective in battling President Obama's administration, as well as the Clintons.

"The Trump campaign knows they are going to lose and are consolidating his base to create a lucrative post-election anti-Hillary organization," said Tyler, an MSNBC analyst. "That same organization will blame the establishment for the loss and attempt to take over the GOP from the RNC (Republican National Committee) down."

Democrats, and some Republicans, said Trump has spent too much time appealing to white males who are opposed to free trade, suspicious of globalism, and resentful of what they call "open border" immigration policies. Meanwhile, his critics say Trump is ignoring and even alienating growing segments of the electorate, notably women and Hispanics.

Liz Mair, a "Never Trump" Republican consultant, said the New York businessman has never been a real Republican and defies the party's "core values" on issues like equal opportunity, limited government, lower taxes and on foreign policy.

All Republicans should cut ties with Trump, she said, "so we can end the increasingly unbelievable fiction that this long-time backer of Hillary Clinton, espouser of liberal policies ... is somehow one of us."

Mackowiak said the potential damage to the Republican Party is impossible to calculate, especially if Trump loses the Nov. 8 election big and takes the Republican Senate and House with him.

"The brand damage Trump may do to the GOP could last an entire generation," he said.

Trump says he is building a "movement" of people who have been sold out by an establishment that has backed job-killing trade deals and does not care about illegal immigration.

In a Monday speech in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., Trump vowed to press on during the last month of the election.

"I'm going to make three, four, five stops a day," Trump said. "I may be limping across that finish line, but we're going to get across that finish line."

Donald Trump Says The Shackles Are Off — And His First Target Is His Fellow Republicans

By Noah Bierman And Evan Halper

Los Angeles Times, October 11, 2016

Enraged by Republican politicians who've abandoned him, Donald Trump lashed out against his own party on Tuesday, airing grievances against conservatives who won't support him — an unprecedented embrace of intraparty warfare by a presidential nominee.

It was a remarkable turn, just four weeks from the election. Trump signaled throughout the day that pursuing his personal feud with top establishment Republicans such as House Speaker Paul Ryan or Arizona Sen. John McCain, a former presidential nominee, would take priority for him over preserving what unity is left in the Republican Party.

His bitter outbursts, expressed through public tweets and at a closed-door fundraiser in San Antonio, intensified the panic among Republicans that his presence atop the ticket could sink them up and down the ballot come November. Such chatter only irritated Trump further, moving the famously unrestrained candidate to declare he would be embracing an even more caustic and outrageous campaign style.

"Disloyal [Republicans] are far more difficult" than running against Clinton, Trump tweeted. "They come at you from all sides. They don't know how to win — I will teach them!."

During the fundraising event, Trump continued to rant, declaring, "Sometimes it's harder to beat our own party than it is to beat the person on the other side," according to audio of the event obtained by the Texas Tribune.

Trump accused Ryan of "opened borders and amnesty and bad budgets" as well as disloyalty.

"I wouldn't want to be in a foxhole with a lot of these people, that I can tell you, including Ryan," Trump said on Fox News' "The O'Reilly Factor."

To cap it off, Trump used strong language to declare himself free from whatever filters remained: "It is so nice that the shackles have been taken off me and I can now fight for America the way I want to."

As if to make good on his promise, Trump then released a jarring campaign advertisement. Feeding into conspiracy theories on the right about Hillary Clinton's health, the video implies she is an invalid too weakened by illness to protect America.

"This is the Trump that everybody was concerned about," said Chip Felkel, a longtime Republican operative based in South Carolina. "All of the misgivings, all the people who had doubts that he would make a good nominee … it wasn't just about protecting their interests in terms of Washington. It was about knowing that he's unmanageable and that he is about Donald Trump, and that he is not about the GOP."

The path Trump is pursuing has also intensified concern among Republicans about the enduring legacy of Trumpism, and the prospects for rebuilding the party's splintering factions after November.

Trump's rage was touched off by a call Ryan held with House members on Monday in which he distanced himself from Trump and released his caucus from any obligation to support the nominee. Ryan did not withdraw his endorsement, but he said he will not be campaigning for Trump or focusing any effort in the final days of the race toward getting him elected.

Like other Republicans, Ryan had expressed disgust with the recently disclosed recording from a decade ago in which Trump boasted, using vulgar terms, that celebrities like him could grope women at will. The disclosure of the recording last week intensified the ongoing GOP mutiny. Among those who announced they were done supporting Trump was McCain, a Vietnam war hero who loaned his support to the nominee even after Trump mocked him for being a prisoner of war. McCain is campaigning for his own reelection, leading by double digits in polls.

"The very foul-mouthed Sen. John McCain begged for my support during his primary (I gave, he won), then dropped me over locker room remarks!," Trump tweeted. Trump has wavered between expressing remorse for the lewd comments on the videotape and dismissing them as inconsequential, even as other Republicans express shock and offense.

President Obama piled on at a rally for Clinton in Greensboro, N.C. "You don't have to be a husband or a father to hear what we heard just a few days ago and say, 'That's not right,'" he said. "You just have to be a decent human being to say that's not right."

Even loyal Trump supporters are dismayed by the direction the nominee is heading.

"He's wasting some time precious time," said Barry Bennett, a former senior campaign advisor to Trump. "Going after the speaker — who most Americans don't even know who he is — and John McCain, is just a waste of time."

Bennett said the campaign has been able to rein Trump in at times — with prepared texts and talking points at his rallies. "No one has ever really been able to stop him on Twitter," he said. "He would argue that it's what made him successful. I just think he's mistaken."

Trump also tweeted, "Our very weak and ineffective leader, Paul Ryan, had a bad conference call where his members went wild at his disloyalty."

The Trump campaign then made the case that his latest approach is a success, by sending the media an article conservative commentator Pat Buchanan penned on his website titled, "The Donald Lives!"

But the polls tell a more worrisome story for Republicans. Surveys taken after the recording was disclosed show Hillary Clinton opening what many Republicans worry is an insurmountable lead. The data crunchers who forecast elections at the FiveThirtyEight website give Trump a 17% chance of winning, as of Tuesday afternoon.

Many Republicans in Congress are scrambling not to get dragged down with him. But whatever path they choose is fraught with peril. Not standing with Trump brings the risk of a backlash from his supporters that could cost them their seats.

"I don't like the Republicans who are trying to divide the us," said Carol Patterson, a 71-year-old retired teacher and Trump supporter from Indian Trail, N.C. "You want them to understand if they leave Trump, they're giving it to Hillary."

Michael Steel, who worked as an aide to former House Speaker John Boehner as well as on Ryan's 2012 vice presidential campaign, said members of Congress would have to weigh the political consequences of their choices at the district level, and consult their own consciences.

"Everybody's battening down the hatches," he said. "It's going to be a hell of a ride."

This article was updated with comments from Donald Trump and President Obama.

This article was originally published at 2:40 p.m.

Trump Declares War On The Republican Party Four Weeks Before Election Day

By Sean Sullivan

Washington Post, October 11, 2016

Donald Trump declared war on the Republican establishment Tuesday, lashing out at House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (Wis.), Sen. John McCain (Ariz.) and other GOP elected officials as the extraordinary turbulence within the Republican Party intensified four weeks from Election Day.

One day after Ryan said he would no longer campaign on Trump's behalf, the GOP nominee said as part of a barrage of tweets that Ryan is "weak and ineffective" and has provided "zero support" for his candidacy. Trump also declared that "the shackles have been taken off" him, freeing him to "fight for America the way I want to."

Trump called McCain "foul-mouthed" and accused him with no evidence of once begging for his support. McCain is no longer backing Trump.

In perhaps the most piercing insult of all, Trump said his party is harder to deal with than even Democratic rival Hillary Clinton, whom conservatives loathe.

"Disloyal R's are far more difficult than Crooked Hillary," he wrote via Twitter, his preferred platform for igniting rhetorical fights against his foes. "They come at you from all sides. They don't know how to win — I will teach them!"

The bevy of attacks directed at his fellow Republicans for his more than 12 million Twitter followers highlighted the fierce backlash that Ryan and his allies are bracing for during the final stage of a campaign that already has wreaked havoc on the party.

In backing away from Trump, Ryan and others are hoping to insulate themselves and their majorities on Capitol Hill from the baggage weighing down the nominee's flagging campaign. For many, the breaking point was a 2005 video reported by The Washington Post on Friday in which Trump is heard making vulgar comments about physically forcing himself on women.

But in doing so, they are already absorbing counterattacks from Trump and his army of supporters. Many Trump boosters say they have been emboldened by the fight and are determined to exact punishment on the party establishment's down-ballot candidates.

"I do think he's going through one of those phases where he's going to get his rebuttals out there for the circumstances that have unfolded starting yesterday morning. And I understand why he would feel frustrated," Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) said on CNN speaking of Trump, whom he supports.

Trump dispensed with his Twitter attacks Tuesday during a light day on the campaign trail. He is raising money in Texas in the afternoon and plans to hold a rally in Panama City Beach, Fla., in the evening.

Ryan said Monday that he would no longer defend or campaign with Trump. McCain pulled his support completely on Saturday in the wake of the 2005 video. Dozens of other Republican elected officials have gone even further, calling on Trump to leave the race.

"Paul Ryan is focusing the next month on defeating Democrats, and all Republicans running for office should probably do the same," Ryan spokesman Brendan Buck said in a statement responding to Trump's attacks Tuesday.

While Ryan is wagering that turning his attention away from Trump will save many Republican House colleagues, some Trump loyalists are trying to ensure that the plan backfires.

Trump spokeswoman Katrina Pierson tweeted Monday that she could not keep her mobile phone charged "due to the mass volume of texts from people" who plan to vote for Trump but not other Republicans on the ballot.

Diana Orrock, a Republican National Committeewoman from Nevada, said she is not voting for Republicans who

don't support Trump — including Rep. Joe Heck (Nev.), who is running for a seat that is critical in the battle for the Senate majority.

"We just had part of our Nevada delegation who's running withdraw their endorsement for Trump and I am going on the record and withdrawing my support for them," Orrock said on CNBC. "Let the chips fall where they may."

Some Republicans have agonized over how to deal with Trump during the final weeks of the race. Sen. Marco Rubio (Fla.), who ran against Trump in the GOP primary and is running for reelection in a key battleground state, issued a statement Tuesday saying he continues to support the nominee, whom he once called a "con man."

"I disagree with him on many things, but I disagree with his opponent on virtually everything," Rubio said. "I wish we had better choices for President. But I do not want Hillary Clinton to be our next President. And therefore my position has not changed."

The sentiment that Trump is far from ideal but is better than the only realistic alternative is one many of his backers are clinging to as justification for maintaining their support.

"You don't go after somebody who is, as Ronald Reagan would say, your 80 percent friend. What you do is stand with them," Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) said Tuesday in an interview with Fox Business Network. "And it is not helpful to have this kind of drama going on. What you need to do is say we have a binary choice."

Donald Trump Declares Himself Freed From Republican Party 'Shackles'

GOP nominee laments party's disloyalty, says Democrats are more loyal

By Michelle Hackman

Wall Street Journal, October 11, 2016

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

Trump, Unbound

Deserted and detested, the GOP nominee feels free to tell people what he really thinks.

By Eli Stokols And Glenn Thrush

Politico, October 11, 2016

Democrats get a kick out of saying that Donald Trump is "unhinged," but the candidate views himself as finally being unchained.

It may seem odd that a 6-foot-2-inch id in a red power tie would feel like his biggest problem was some infringement on his freedom to express his innermost thoughts, but people close to the flailing GOP nominee say he's viewed the staggering setbacks over the past four days as license to loosen up, be himself, and wage a personal war against the unified forces of the liberal media and dying GOP establishment.

Venture onto the pro-Trump right-wing Breitbart website and a Trump-Pence ad pops up: "It's Us Against the World," it proclaims, but there's no Pence, just two Trumps — the glowering candidate and his image in a mirror.

"He hates all these guys, anyway, never liked kissing their butts, so he's inclined just to say good riddance," said a top Republican who has known Trump for years.

As his fortunes sour, anger is trumping cogent calculation, and his defiance appears to be increasing in proportion to his decline in the polls. As Republican support was eroding over the weekend, Trump's campaign worked together talking points for surrogates as part of a defiant effort to attack those lawmakers for bailing on him. After he tweeted Sunday that they're all pathetic, Newt Gingrich suggested after Sunday night's debate that they would regret jumping ship so quickly. Campaign manager Kellyanne Conway accused some defecting Republican lawmakers of being sexual harassers themselves.

On Monday, Katrina Pierson — an unwavering Trump TV warrior who wears a necklace made of bullets and seldom deviates from talking points — tweeted that she couldn't keep up with texts from friends vowing to vote only for Trump but not disloyal down-ballot Republicans.

And by Monday night, Trump iterated his anti-media script, indulging the crowd's hate for reporters by letting supporters scream for two minutes at the press penned into the venue.

By Tuesday morning, Trump wanted to make sure everyone knew he was ready to come out of his shell. "It is so nice that the shackles have been taken off me and I can now fight for America the way I want to," he tweeted.

"It's got to be liberating to see some of the baggage fall off the train," said Michael Caputo, a New York Republican operative and former Trump campaign staffer who has known the candidate for years. "A lot of the support was thin or disingenuous. None of these Republicans were even helping. In fact, some were breathing his name in fear for what it would do for their own reputations. It shows the true nature of the Republican Party."

Inside Trump Tower, the candidate's team is girding itself for more and possibly even more damaging opposition dumps. And there is consensus within the candidate's roguish inner circle of Steve Bannon, the Breitbart CEO who's long had House Speaker Paul Ryan in his cross hairs, and David Bossie, who spent decades attacking the Clintons, to fight fire —be it from the media, Democrats or from Ryan and fellow Republicans — with a blowtorch.

"He's picking fights because he does not like it when anyone questions him, whether it be Rick Perry in the primary, Susana Martinez in the primary, Ted Cruz, Paul Ryan—he doesn't like when anyone questions him," said Austin Barbour, a GOP strategist in Mississippi. "He handles that very poorly, and that's what he's doing right now."

Trump spent the weekend in seclusion, bearing the brunt of nationwide criticism and watching Republicans desert him en masse, some withdrawing their endorsements and others calling for him to step aside after his lewd comments caught on video capped a two-week slide in the polls. He emerged to deliver a more pugilistic, no-holds-barred performance on the debate stage Sunday, with women who have accused Bill Clinton (who is not running for president) of sexual abuse or harassment.

But even scoring what many characterized as a base-settling win on Sunday night, Republicans and Democrats alike view Trump's quest for the White House as essentially lost — Monday morning's NBC poll showed Clinton opening up an 11-point lead over Trump in a four-way race.

Knowing it, he is now behaving like a lame-duck candidate, intent on settling scores, going after the Clintons with a vengeance and scorching vacillating establishment types who are (in Trump's view) knifing him to save their own corrupt hides. His campaign is expected to bring Bill Clinton's accusers onto the trail and sources close to the GOP nominee indicate that more sordid allegations about the Clintons' personal lives may be only days away.

"This campaign is going to be so terrible," Caputo acknowledged, "we're all going to smell like it for the next seven to eight years."

For Republicans, it's already far more terrible than imagined. The first returns from public and private polling taken over the past week show a massive drop-off in GOP down-ballot support, leading many strategists to concede the likelihood of a Democratic Senate and the long unthinkable possibility of also losing the House — a frightening realization that precipitated Ryan's distancing and the dozens of senators and members of Congress who pulled their endorsements over the weekend.

"Look at Paul Ryan today: He is acknowledging what we all know, the race for the White House is over," said Sarah Isgur Flores, a GOP operative who guided Carly Fiorina's presidential campaign. "Now, it's just a question of collateral damage. A lot of our Senate candidates were running well ahead of Trump, but that doesn't mean they can withstand a 15-point fallout."

Republicans worry not about whether Trump can make up ground but what additional damage he will do — especially with signs that Trump, far from concerning himself with collateral down-ballot damage, would be content to gloat over a lost House GOP majority he could blame on Ryan and others who abandoned him.

"Now that the reins are off with Trump and they do seem to be coming off, there's going to be more statements, maybe more videos for the next 29 days," Flores said. "At this point, most senior Republicans are looking to Nov. 9 to assess damage and figure out if there's a way to move forward."

But the crackup of the fragile coalition also gives Trump an excuse, someone to blame for his likely loss — even though it's more of a self-fulfilling prophecy than causal factor.

"No one can be surprised that Trump is doing things that are destructive for the party and that he only has himself to blame for it, for the state of his campaign and Republican chances," said Kevin Madden, a GOP operative in Washington. "But he's not going to take any of that blame. He's going to blame it on everybody else. But it's not because of this tape or anything Paul Ryan or the establishment or the RNC did or didn't do. It's because of his own actions. Many people predicted this, that he represented a systemic threat to the party and that's exactly what's played out."

Indeed, the establishment set of the GOP has already cast the blame.

"If he loses a presidential election that was so gob-smackingly winnable — if he loses to Hillary Clinton — it doesn't matter if he blames establishment Republicans or a cavalry charge of unicorns," said Michael Steel, a Republican strategist who worked for former Speaker John Boehner. "He will have lost to Hillary Clinton."

Donald Trump Attacks Paul Ryan And 'Disloyal Republicans'

By Alan Rappeport

New York Times, October 11, 2016

Donald J. Trump lashed out at House Speaker Paul D. Ryan on Tuesday morning in a barrage of Twitter posts deriding the highest-ranking Republican for being weak, disloyal and a bad leader.

The early morning attack escalated the war between the Republican presidential nominee and the party establishment figures that have abandoned him since the emergence of a 2005 video that showed him demeaning women in lurid terms. That was the last straw for Mr. Ryan, who told Republicans in Congress that they should feel free to stop supporting Mr. Trump if they felt it would improve their prospects on Election Day.

On Tuesday, Mr. Trump was still seething over Mr. Ryan's refusal to stick with him.

Mr. Trump also appeared to be laying the groundwork to blame Mr. Ryan and Republicans who oppose him should he lose next month, complaining that it is "hard to do well" without the support of his own party. Democrats, he said, are more loyal to their own kind.

Mr. Trump has increasingly been trying to fire up his base of supporters by making incendiary allegations against Hillary Clinton and her husband. At a rally on Monday night, he reiterated his promise to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate Mrs. Clinton if he is elected president and he warned that if more videos of him exhibiting vulgar behavior

become public he will redouble his attacks on Mrs. Clinton's family.

The Trump campaign has also released a new advertisement that features footage of Mrs. Clinton having a coughing fit and a scene of her collapsing into a vehicle when she came down with pneumonia last month.

Mr. Trump had initially avoided using Mrs. Clinton's illness against her, but recently mocked her stumble publicly and said it was more evidence that she lacked stamina. He suggested on Tuesday that he now felt emboldened by his campaign's new leadership team and the fact that he was no longer trying to please establishment Republicans by restraining himself.

Donald Trump's New Attack Strategy: Keep Clinton Voters Home

The Republican nominee has given up the conventional wisdom of trying to reach voters far outside his core of support

By Monica Langley

Wall Street Journal, October 11, 2016

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

Trump Throws Off 'Shackles' With Attacks On GOP, Clinton

By Jordain Carney

The Hill, October 11, 2016

Abandoned by many in his party, Donald Trump is embracing open warfare against his Republican critics and making clear he intends to hold nothing back in the final weeks of the presidential race.

Trump set the tone with a tweet early Tuesday morning, declaring himself a candidate unbound.

"It is so nice that the shackles have been taken off me and I can now fight for America the way I want to," he wrote.

He quickly made good on that promise, starting new fights with House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), and releasing a campaign ad that questions the health of his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton.

"Disloyal R's are far more difficult than Crooked Hillary. They come at you from all sides. They don't know how to win – I will teach them!" he said on Twitter. "With the exception of cheating [Sen.] Bernie [Sanders, I-Vt.] out of the nom the Dems have always proven to be far more loyal to each other than the Republicans!"

Trump is blasting GOP critics with renewed vigor following the announcement by Ryan he can no longer defend the nominee and will focus on Republicans in congressional races.

That statement, made on a conference call, shattered an uneasy truce between the top elected Republican official and Trump, who is now accusing the party of undermining his campaign.

"Despite winning the second debate in a landslide (every poll), it is hard to do well when Paul Ryan and others give zero support!" Trump tweeted.

Trump added that Ryan is a "very weak and ineffective leader," citing reports that some Republicans were furious with the Speaker's decision.

After attacking Ryan, Trump took aim at the "very foul mouthed" Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), who retracted his endorsement of the businessman over the weekend.

"[He] begged for my support during his primary (I gave, he won), then dropped me over locker room remarks!" Trump said on Twitter.

Congressional Republicans are scrambling to distance themselves from Trump after The Washington Post released audio from 2005 of Trump making sexually explicit comments about groping women.

Though it's too soon to tell the full impact of the controversy on down-ballot races, 49 percent of voters said in an NBC/Wall Street Journal poll that Democrats should control Congress.

Several Republicans over the weekend withdrew their support of Trump while others called for him to step aside from the White House race for the good of the party.

With his back against the wall, Trump released an ad Tuesday that shows Clinton coughing and being helped into a car after stumbling as she left a 9/11 memorial ceremony.

"Hillary Clinton doesn't have the fortitude, strength or stamina to lead in our world. Don't let her fail us again," the ad says.

Trump's tactics threaten to plunge the GOP into intraparty warfare ahead of the elections, with potentially catastrophic results for the Republican majorities in the House and Senate.

A spokesman for Ryan tried to lower the temperature Tuesday, arguing it would be better for the party if Republicans focused their attacks on Democrats.

"Paul Ryan is focusing the next month on defeating Democrats, and all Republicans running for office should probably do the same," the spokesman said.

The friction comes at a time when Trump's national support appears to be plunging.

A poll from NBC News and The Wall Street Journal released Monday gave Clinton an 11-point lead nationally.

Though Trump would likely face an uphill climb to close that gap, Trump communication adviser Jason Miller dismissed the poll as an "outlier."

"I love the fact that NBC seems to now be getting into the business of breaking the news and then also having the polls magically pop up," he told Fox News's Megyn Kelly on Monday evening.

Trump and his supporters have fueled talk for months that the election could be stolen from him because the polls are "rigged." The candidate doubled down on that warning during a rally Monday in Pennsylvania.

"I hear these horror shows, and we have to make sure that this election is not stolen from us and is not taken away from us," Trump said. "And everybody knows what I'm talking about."

Donald Trump Bashes Paul Ryan And Declares War On GOP

Huffington Post, October 11, 2016

Donald Trump again attacked House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) on Tuesday, calling him a "very weak and ineffective leader" and criticizing the GOP for its lack of loyalty, after Ryan told House Republicans he would no longer defend his party's presidential nominee.

Trump tried to spin the lack of support from his own party as a good thing on Tuesday, saying it would allow him to campaign the way he wanted to.

And then he threw some shade at the GOP, and continued rolling out tweets through the afternoon.

After a 2005 video emerged featuring Trump making vulgar comments about women, Ryan told House Republicans on Monday that he would no longer campaign with Trump, but wouldn't withdraw his endorsement. He also told members that he would instead focus on preserving a Republican majority in Congress and they should do what is needed to best defend their seats. Over the weekend, a number of Republicans denounced Trump and some even called for him to remove his name from the GOP ticket.

Ryan reportedly will not respond to Trump's tweets.

Trump and Ryan were also scheduled to appear at the same event in Wisconsin on Saturday, but Trump did not appear after The Washington Post published a report with the video on Friday.

Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, the GOP nominee for vice president, told NBC News

on Tuesday that he disagrees with Ryan's "focus in this campaign." Just last month, Pence visited Capitol Hill, where he praised Ryan and talked about how the speaker's vision for America aligns with Trump's.

"I truly do believe Republican leaders should join millions of Americans and support the Republican nominee," Pence said Tuesday.

Not all of the Republicans on Monday's conference call seemed so concerned about Trump's comments. Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.) said he was willing to sacrifice his seat to block Hillary Clinton from getting to the White House, and Rep. Trent Franks (R-Ariz.) said the comments weren't as important as appointing a conservative Supreme Court justice.

Trump, who also attacked Ryan on Monday, has long had public tension with the House speaker. Ryan said he wasn't ready

to endorse Trump in May, Trump in turn declined to endorse

Ryan's re-election. The two did eventually endorse each other.

This post has been updated with additional Trump tweets and Mike Pence's reaction.

HUFFPOST READERS: What's happening in your state or district? The Huffington Post wants to know about all the campaign ads, mailers, robocalls, candidate appearances and other interesting campaign news happening by you. Email any tips, videos, audio files or photos to scoops@huffingtonpost.com.

Donald Trump Is Blowing Up The Republican Party

By Chris Cillizza

Washington Post, October 11, 2016

Tuesday marks four weeks until the 2016 election. And the Republican presidential nominee is in the midst of blowing up his own party.

The news came — as it so often does with Donald Trump — via Twitter.

Trump followed that tweet with this one:

And this one:

Let's stop for a second. This is the Republican presidential nominee. Attacking his own party. Promising to teach his party leaders a lesson. Pledging to take the "shackles off."

I've spent the better part of the past two decades covering politics — day in and day out. And, I can say without hesitation I have NEVER seen anything close to this. And I expect I never will again.

Republicans knew that this version of Trump — angry, cornered, vengeful, selfish — was always a possibility when they made the decision to line up behind him rather than attempt complicated measures to unseat him at the party convention. Trump had shown his petulance and I'll-just-take-my-ball-and-go-home-ism during the primary season whenever things weren't going his way. He would turn on Republicans who weren't for him, attacking them as losers or out of touch with the party's voters — or both.

But, there was a belief — it appears to be more of a blind hope in retrospect — that Trump could be managed, that he could be brought to heel either by the likes of Speaker Paul D. Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell or by campaign managers Paul Manafort and/or Kellyanne Conway. That Trump could be made to understand that it was about more than him, that the entire party depended on him running a credible and serious campaign.

Back in June, as he sought to assure the party amid a self-inflicted controversy regarding Judge Gonzalo Curiel, Trump uttered these words: "I understand the responsibility of carrying the mantle. I will never let you down." That speech, as I wrote at the time, was Trump's transparent attempt to say to Ryan, McConnell and lots of other skittish Republicans that he got it — he understood he needed to be good not just for himself but for the broader GOP.

It was clear even then, however, that Trump was saying what someone else had convinced him he needed to say — and that it wasn't what he really believed. And, in the end, the real Trump always broke through. He got rid of Manafort, a move seen as Trump re-establishing his renegade personality at the heart of the campaign. Conway appeared to hold sway with Trump for an extended period of time this summer — a period which coincided with his rise in the polls — but now it's quite clear that the campaign manager, chief strategist, message guru and pollster is Trump.

What appears to be happening is the Breitbart-ization of Trump's campaign, adopting a strategy of full-on attack against everyone who doesn't see the world as he does — including Republicans. (That move isn't totally out of the blue. Breitbart chief Stephen Bannon is a close Trump adviser.) Trump is effectively turning the guns on his own troops, a move that might be personally satisfying to him but that will result in near-certain carnage for lots of Republicans.

The promise to be unshackled means that this is going to get worse for Republicans. Maybe far worse. Trump will undoubtedly "go there" more often against Bill Clinton — as he did in the second debate — but will also do everything he can to embarrass Republican politicians who he believes have betrayed him (and their constituents). People I talked to over the weekend said the election for Republicans seemed headed for an every-man-for-himself mentality. But, it might be even worse than that now. You can try to run from Trump but (a) it might not work since we are so close to the election, and b) there's no promise that Trump will let you do it without attacking you by name.

This is an absolute worst-case scenario for Republicans. Had Trump turned against them months ago — or had his poll numbers dipped then as they have now — extricating themselves from the dumpster fire might have been painful, but it was possible. Now it's almost certainly too late to do any real distancing from the nominee even as he is promising more unpredictability and more intraparty attacks.

It's unclear how badly Trump can hurt his chances or those of his party downballot. But, the disaster scenario — an electoral college wipeout, losing the Senate and the House — now has to be on the table.

Exclusive: USA TODAY Survey Shows That A Quarter Of Elected Top Republicans Won't Endorse Trump

By Paul Singer

USA Today, October 11, 2016

Twenty-six percent of Republican governors and members of Congress are refusing to endorse GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump, according to a survey by the USA TODAY Network.

Of the 31 Republican governors, 54 GOP senators and the 246 Republican members of the House (331 total), the survey identified 87 who are not endorsing Trump's candidacy as of late Tuesday.

It is an extraordinary demonstration of the fracture Trump's candidacy has revealed in the Republican Party. There is no precedent in modern American political history for elected officials of either party to refuse en masse to support their presidential nominee. It shows that Trump will have to wage a national campaign without the fleet of surrogates and supporters that every other presidential contender has relied on for decades to help bring voters to the polls. And it illustrates how hard it will be for the GOP to rebuild if Trump loses.

Some of these elected officials rejected Trump months ago; many turned on him since the release of a 2005 tape of Trump making lewd comments about women; and some simply refuse to say whether they will or will not vote for their party's presidential nominee.

By way of comparison, in September 2012, The Hill newspaper wrote that only "a handful" of Republican lawmakers were declining to support GOP nominee Mitt Romney, naming only three. Of those, only one, Justin Amash of Michigan, is still in Congress. Amash has refused to endorse Trump as well, and tweeted Saturday, "He should have stepped aside long ago."

This is one reason why Trump on Tuesday took on the party in a series about tweets about Speaker Paul Ryan and other Republican leaders.

Sen. Ben Sasse of Nebraska was the first Republican senator to say he would not vote for Trump, saying in a February Facebook post, "if Donald Trump ends up as the GOP nominee, conservatives will need to find a third option." Nineteen of his GOP Senate colleagues have now joined him. Eleven Republican governors are also not on "Team Trump," and 56 members of the House have declined to support him, according to the USA TODAY Network tally.

Trump's "offensive comments make it very difficult for any candidate to support him," said Fred Malek, a longtime Republican strategist and finance chair for the Republican Governors Association. "Therefore you have an unheard of number looking to their own election prospects and feeling they are better served by not supporting him."

Malek said he believes the remarkable number of dissenters in the party represent concerns about Trump, not a deeper fissure in the party, and that the party will be able to reunite in the next election cycle even if Trump loses.

Tyler White, a political science professor at the University of Nebraska, disagrees. "We are seeing a diversity in the Republican Party that we are not used to," White said. Democrats have a reputation for being fractious and hard to organize; Republicans have been the party "with a reputation of being in lock step with one another, and decisions are made by the 'adults' in the party."

What has changed, White said, is "this giant debate going on within the Republican party about who their base really is. Is it based on immigration and cultural issues. or is to the the group that is more focused on national security and fiscal responsibility?"

Ryan's time as House speaker illustrate the challenge of trying to bridge that divide. Ryan took the speakers' gavel only after conservative hard-liners pushed out his successor, John Boehner of Ohio. Ryan hesitated in endorsing Trump, saying first that he wanted to make sure Trump shared the policy agenda of House Republicans; he later endorsed Trump but continued to scold the candidate for inflammatory comments. On Monday, Ryan did not withdraw his endorsement, but said he would not campaign with Trump and he urged other Republicans to do whatever was best for their own re-election.

Contributing: Holly T. Moore

Donald Trump Knocks John McCain As 'Very Foul Mouthed' Turncoat

By Seth McLaughlin

Washington Times, October 11, 2016

Donald Trump directed some of his Twitter rage at Sen. John McCain of Arizona, who withdrew his support for the GOP presidential nominee over lewd remarks he made about women over a decade ago.

"The very foul mouthed Sen. John McCain begged for my support during his primary (I gave, he won), then dropped me over locker room remarks!" Mr. Trump said on Twitter Tuesday.

Mr. McCain said in a debate Monday that he might write in Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina.

"He's an old, good friend of mine and a lot of people like him," he said, before turning to Mr. Trump and Hillary Clinton. "The fact is I can't, seriously, I cannot vote for either one."

Mr. McCain stuck with Mr. Trump last year after the New York businessman ridiculed the idea that he is a war hero for getting shot down over Vietnam and being imprisoned for nearly six years.

"He's not a war hero," Mr. Trump said. "He was a war hero because he was captured. I like people who weren't captured."

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Pence 'disappointed' With Ryan's Rebuke Of Trump

By Ben Weyl

Politico, October 11, 2016

Mike Pence said he was "disappointed" with House Speaker Paul Ryan's decision to effectively abandon Donald Trump's presidential campaign, offering some modest backup for his running mate, who has lashed out at Ryan over the past day.

"Paul Ryan is my friend but I respectfully disagree with his focus in this campaign," he told NBC News' Kelly O'Donnell Tuesday on a campaign swing in Iowa. "I truly do believe Republican leaders should join millions of Americans and support the Republican nominee. … Certainly we're disappointed."

Ryan made an extraordinary announcement on a call with House Republicans Monday that he would no longer defend Trump. Instead, Ryan told GOP lawmakers he would focus all his efforts on protecting a newly endangered House GOP majority — and said he won't campaign with the controversy-plagued Republican nominee.

That's led Trump to level harsh criticism at one of the Republican Party's most prominent figures.

"Despite winning the second debate in a landslide (every poll), it is hard to do well when Paul Ryan and others give zero support!" Trump tweeted Tuesday. "Our very weak and ineffective leader, Paul Ryan, had a bad conference call where his members went wild at his disloyalty."

Pence and Ryan are longtime friends and allies — Ryan introduced Pence at the Republican National Convention in July. Pence said that Ryan did let him know in advance about his decision to cut Trump loose.

While Other Republicans Have Fled Donald Trump, Mike Pence Is Doubling Down On Their Campaign

By Noah Bierman

Los Angeles Times, October 11, 2016

The crowd beneath the high rafters at the agricultural center was eager to purge its frustration, chanting "Lock her up!" in reference to Hillary Clinton, more than 20 minutes before Indiana Gov. Mike Pence took the stage.

Many were upset, and worried, that Donald Trump had suffered one of his rockiest stretches, Republicans fleeing his presidential campaign just as it reaches its most crucial phase.

That left Pence, Trump's running mate, to expand his role as Trump's chief validator in the conservative movement, with a particular focus on evangelicals. The reserved Midwesterner, whose profile has been dwarfed by Trump's reality television persona, is now the most prominent establishment conservative speaking on Trump's behalf, with all the risk and reward that entails.

Pence, who expressed his own misgivings over the 2005 video in which Trump boasted that celebrities were free to assault women, reclaimed his larger role with relish, once he decided that he would stick with Trump. He spoke about his faith and the power of forgiveness. He credited Trump with apologizing, calling him a "big man." He compared his own family and life story to Trump's, saying they shared immigrant grandfathers and a calling to honor the biblical invocation to give back.

"If, occasionally, you bow the head, you bend the knee, it'd be a good time to do it," he said near the climax, after appealing to the crowd to urge their friends to vote. "I still believe with all my heart that if His people, who are called by His name, will humble themselves and pray, He'll hear again from heaven and He will heal our land."

The 400 or so people jammed into the wood-paneled event room rose to their feet, some yelling "Amen," before meeting Pence at the rope line or walking off toward their cars.

Pence had said he was offended by Trump's words and actions, and some had speculated he might leave the ticket. Instead, he emerged Monday with full-throated support.

He joins Trump on an increasingly shrinking island. House Speaker Paul D. Ryan, the highest-ranking elected Republican, declared he would no longer defend Trump, and other Republican leaders withdrew their endorsements after the video emerged. Trump fired back Tuesday, calling Ryan "weak and ineffective" and tweeting that "it is hard to do well when Paul Ryan and others give zero support!"

That coincided with a series of tweets in which Trump spoke out against Republican defectors and declared the "shackles have been taken off me and I can now fight for America the way I want to." The aggression intensified concerns among Republicans that Trump would stoke and even larger battle within the party in the final weeks of the election and its aftermath.

If Pence has any regrets about sticking with Trump, he has swallowed them. Whatever the calculations — political, personal or philosophical — Pence has decided to tie his political fate with Trump's.

As he crossed from North Carolina's urban center in Charlotte to its rural edge by the Great Smoky Mountains, Pence showed his ability to sell Trump on his terms, smoothing Trump's unorthodox and sometimes profane populism to fit Pence's more establishment brand of conservatism.

He speaks with disciplined command, altering his rhythm and raising his voice to signal applause lines like a practiced politician, a much more traditional oratorical style than Trump's. Even the music at his rallies fuses Trump's favorites like Elton John and the Rolling Stones with country hits more common to Republican rallies such as Rodney Atkins' "These Are My People" and Toby Keith's "Made in America."

"The stakes of this election go far beyond whatever the media's focused on in any given day," Pence said in Fletcher, further inoculating Trump from the bad news he has been suffering.

Pence emphasized Trump's tax cuts and opposition to environmental regulations and Obamacare that have won approval from traditional conservatives, spoke little about immigration policies that propelled Trump to the nomination and promised Trump would usher in trade deals that are "good for American workers," avoiding Trump's sharper descriptions of other countries ripping off Americans.

In between, he delivered the type of red-meat attacks for which running mates are known: on Clinton's handling of foreign policy in Syria, Libya and Iran; her private email server; and her paid speeches to Wall Street executives in which she said successful politicians need to hold both a public and a private position to be effective.

"When she was confronted about that during the debate, we got a lecture on Abraham Lincoln," he said, drawing laughs with a new line he tested out twice on Monday. "As a member of the party of Lincoln, I would really prefer if dishonest Hillary did not associate herself with Honest Abe."

Many who come to see Pence say Trump remains their strongest attraction. But if they are wavering, as some did after the troubling video, Pence may bring some of Trump's flock back to the fold.

Buck Caldwell, a retired fork lift company owner who wore a "Deplorable Lives Matter" T-shirt, a reclamation of Clinton's labeling of "half" of Trump supporters as a "basket of deplorables," spent the weekend crying on his wife's shoulder, begging her not to abandon Trump after she saw the video, he said.

She urged him to attend the Pence rally in Charlotte, so she could think about it some more. On the way in, she signed a pledge card promising to vote for Trump, Caldwell said.

"Pence is easygoing, middle of the road conservative," he said approvingly.

Sarah Swanson, a 25-year-old schoolteacher at the rally, said she was also comforted as well.

"I'm a little bit wary of Trump," she said. "But after Mike Pence joined him, that was kind of the thing that sealed my support."

Like many here, she used the word balance, contrasting Trump's bombast with Pence's religious, calm, collected and experienced profile.

That led some establishment Republicans over the weekend to suggest, a bit fancifully, that Trump should drop out and let Pence take his place. But even supporters at Pence rallies scoffed at the idea. Maybe Pence, who served in Congress before becoming governor, can run for president someday, they said. But not now.

"Trump is a wrecking ball and we need that," said Barb Murray, a 63-year-old who said she was a housewife. "Then Pence can follow behind and balance it out."

The story was updated with comments from Trump.

The story was originally published at 9:50 a.m.

An earlier version of this article said Mike Pence referred to his and Donald Trump's immigrant fathers. He said their grandfathers immigrated, not their fathers.

Carson Defends Ryan From Trump's Attacks

By Jonathan Easley

The Hill, October 11, 2016

Top Donald Trump adviser Ben Carson came to House Speaker Paul Ryan's defense on Tuesday and criticized the Republican presidential nominee for exacerbating an intraparty feud less than a month before the election.

"Paul Ryan is being very pragmatic," Carson said in an interview with The Hill. "He recognizes that if Donald Trump loses, Hillary Clinton needs a firewall so she can't do whatever she wants. He wants to make sure to keep the firewall there, so he's devoting his energy to doing that."

Trump laid into the Wisconsin Republican in a series of tweets on Tuesday morning, calling the Speaker "weak and ineffective" and vowing to run the rest of his campaign against GOP leaders and the Republicans who have abandoned him.

Ryan held a call with the GOP conference Monday saying he would no longer defend Trump and that Republicans up for election should do what they need to do to win — even if that means cutting Trump loose.

Trump is furious over the slight, and he and his campaign signaled they would not let the matter go.

Republicans abandoned Trump in droves over the weekend after an explosive video surfaced of the nominee making obscene remarks. Some are panicking that the chaos at the top of the ticket will cost majorities in the Senate and potentially the House.

Carson said that Trump should focus on winning his own race rather than feuding with GOP leaders.

"The way forward is for them to both pursue their respective goals," Carson said. "Trump should concentrate on the issues and stop allowing himself to be dragged off into the hinterlands. … Let Paul Ryan concentrate on the House. It's critical; you need that fail-safe mechanism."

"He'll realize soon enough that he shouldn't be attacking Ryan and that his energy needs to be on the issues, because that's how he wins," Carson continued. "If he would concentrate on those things he would win in a walk. It's hard for him."

Carson acknowledged that the GOP appears to be in the throes of a divisive civil war and warned that it could doom the party on Election Day.

"Basically what's happening is our country is a train about to go off a cliff, and there's a fight going on in one of the cars," Carson said.

"Traditionally Republicans always find a way to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory," he said. "This might be the most graphic example of it, although there's still hope. It's a matter of whether folks will be willing to look at the big picture and not just at their own feelings."

Exclusive: Trump Campaign CEO Wanted To Destroy Ryan

By Jonathan Swan

The Hill, October 11, 2016

Steve Bannon, the chairman of the right-wing news outlet Breitbart who became CEO of Donald Trump's presidential campaign, gave explicit orders to his staff to destroy Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.).

On editorial conference calls, the Breitbart chairman would often say "Paul Ryan is the enemy," according to a source who worked with Bannon at the news organization.

In December 2015, weeks after Ryan became Speaker, Bannon wrote in an internal Breitbart email obtained by The Hill that the "long game" for his news site was for Ryan to be "gone" by the spring.

In the Dec. 1 email, Breitbart's Washington editor, Matt Boyle, suggested to Bannon via email that a story promoting Ryan's planned overhaul of the mental health system would be a good way to "open a bridge" to Ryan.

Bannon wasn't keen on the idea.

"I've got a cure for mental health issue," Bannon wrote to Boyle. "Spank your children more."

"I get that," responded Boyle, "but this is a place where we can open a bridge to Paul Ryan --- we're playing the very long long long game Steve."

Replied Bannon: "Long game is him gone by spring."

Bannon's disregard for Ryan has been recorded in other reports, but this is the first time emails have emerged that showed him setting a timeframe for trying to get rid of the Speaker.

Bannon is now giving Trump advice as his campaign CEO.

Trump on Tuesday unleashed a series of tweets directing scorn at the Speaker, who on Monday said he would

no longer defend Trump and would instead focus on electing Republicans to the House.

"Our very weak and ineffective leader, Paul Ryan, had a bad conference call where his members went wild at his disloyalty," Trump wrote in one tweet.

"Disloyal R's are far more difficult than Crooked Hillary," Trump tweeted two hours later. "They come at you from all sides. They don't know how to win — I will teach them!"

A source close to the Trump campaign said Bannon is not advocating attacking Ryan and it's Trump himself driving the attacks.

It's undeniable, however, that Bannon will play a key role in these final weeks before Election Day.

A former Breitbart staffer said Bannon used to rage against Ryan all the time.

Bannon views Ryan as a leader of an elite globalist cabal determined to sell out America by opening its borders on immigration and trade.

"Bannon has Alex Jones-level paranoia about Paul Ryan," the source said, referring to the right-wing radio host and conspiracy theorist who runs the pro-Trump website Infowars.

"He goes on these amazing rants," the source added of Bannon. "He thinks Paul Ryan is part of a conspiracy with George Soros and Paul Singer, in which elitists want to bring one world government."

Bannon did not respond to a request to comment for this story, but an influential figure in the conservative movement who knows Bannon told The Hill there's nothing unusual about this anger towards Ryan.

"Many high-level donors and party activists that were not necessarily early Trump supporters are very disappointed in Speaker Ryan," the conservative figure said, "for not fully supporting the party's candidate at this most critical time in our country."

Another source close to Bannon predicted that more Republicans would follow the lead of California Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, who called Ryan "cowardly" for saying he'd no longer defend Trump.

"Ryan's agenda is not in line with the American worker. It's in line with the Wall Street wing of the permanent political class," the source close to Bannon said.

"But it's not just Ryan," the source added, to characterize Bannon's thinking. "Every institution in American politics has been exposed as fraudulent and working against the American people."

"Trump is running against the evil empire," the source continued. "The entire machine stands against him, and Paul Ryan is the face of the evil empire. But so is Hillary Clinton and so are her allies throughout the mainstream media."

Establishment Republicans in Washington are terrified about how dirty the war is set to get between Trump and Ryan, now that Bannon is firmly in the driver's seat.

Bannon believes Ryan masterminded a failed plot to bring down Trump. Bannon thinks this is partly because Ryan wants to rid the Republican Party of populism and partly because he thinks Ryan wants to improve his chances of running for president as a GOP savior in 2020.

During Breitbart's July coverage of Ryan's contentious primary race against Wisconsin businessman Paul Nehlen, Bannon's website ran a story suggesting Ryan was hypocritical for building a "border wall" around his Janesville mansion when he refused to fully support Trump's proposed wall along the southern border.

When Ryan opposed Trump's plan to ban Muslims from entering the U.S., Breitbart accused the Speaker of hypocrisy because he wanted no "religious test" for who gets admitted into the country yet sent his children to a Catholic school that uses a religious test in its admissions process.

Ryan ultimately won his primary in a landslide, but not before Breitbart dedicated significant resources to defeating him. Bannon dispatched his top reporter, Boyle, to Janesville to write about the race.

On Monday, Breitbart published a story with the headline: "Falwell: Lewd Trump tape part of GOP coup against Donald, no 'coincidence' it came right before Paul Ryan joint appearance."

"Breitbart has always been the tip of the spear in the conservative grassroots world," a source close to Bannon told The Hill on Tuesday.

People who've worked with Bannon say it's foolish to underestimate the lengths Bannon will go to destroy the GOP establishment.

"He's an instrument of destruction," said Ben Shapiro, a former Breitbart staffer who fell out with Bannon.

"Bannon has always wanted to burn everything down," he added, "and any chance he has to wriggle this into a way to destroy Paul Ryan, he'll absolutely do it."

Asked about Trump's Tuesday tweets against Ryan, a spokesman for the Speaker said: "Paul Ryan is focusing the next month on defeating Democrats, and all Republicans running for office should probably do the same."

Ryan spokesman Zack Roday stressed that Ryan made it clear on his call with House Republicans on Monday that "he's not conceding the presidential race."

Asked whether Ryan was maintaining his endorsement of Trump, Roday said: "There is no update in his position at this time."

In the meantime, buckle up.

Bannon's strategy is for Trump to "get around" the party and the establishment media that opposes him and speak directly to the American worker, a source familiar with Bannon's thinking said.

What that exactly means is still unclear, but the unshackled Trump strategy can be seen in Bannon's

orchestration of former President Bill Clinton's sexual assault accusers turning up to the debate Sunday.

The Trump team has also cut a new ad, titled "Dangerous," that shows footage of Hillary Clinton coughing, being helped up steps and collapsing into her SUV.

For the last few weeks, one thing is sure: Trump will be campaigning Breitbart-style, with Breitbart's chief provocateur by his side.

"This is the scene from King Kong," says Shapiro, "where the Republican Party thought that they had captured King Kong and chained him and they put him on stage for everyone to fear the awesome might of King Kong."

"And then King Kong breaks free," Shapiro adds, "and starts trampling people in the audience."

Glenn Beck Says Opposing Trump Is 'Moral, Ethical' Even If It Means Clinton Wins

By Liam Stack

New York Times, October 11, 2016

Glenn Beck, the fiery conservative media personality and former Fox News host, says that he briefly considered voting for Hillary Clinton and called opposing Donald J. Trump the "moral, ethical choice" — even if doing so leads to Mrs. Clinton winning the presidential election.

His comments were made after the release on Friday of a 2005 recording of Mr. Trump boasting about sexual assault that set off a war between the presidential nominee and a broad swath of the Republican establishment, including Paul D. Ryan, the House speaker.

Reacting to the recording, Mr. Beck wrote over the weekend that each person "must decide what is a bridge too far" and said he supported calls for Mr. Trump to withdraw from the presidential race.

"It is not acceptable to ask a moral, dignified man to cast his vote to help elect an immoral man who is absent decency or dignity," Mr. Beck wrote on Facebook. "If the consequence of standing against Trump and for principles is indeed the election of Hillary Clinton, so be it. At least it is a moral, ethical choice."

Mr. Beck was a high-profile symbol of the Tea Party movement whose show on Fox News ran until 2011, when he founded TheBlaze TV, a subscription-based online streaming network. He left the Republican Party in 2015 after accusing it of being insufficiently conservative.

Mr. Beck has spoken at length over the years about his dislike for Mrs. Clinton and was an ardent Trump opponent during the Republican primary campaign, likening him to Adolf Hitler and advocating on behalf of Senator Ted Cruz. With Mr. Trump in the general election, though, Mr. Beck said in an interview on Sunday with Vice News that he had considered voting for Mrs. Clinton.

"I will tell you that it has crossed my mind to vote for Hillary," he said in the interview, which aired Monday night. "It has crossed my mind. I think Donald Trump is so unstable, so dangerous, that it has crossed my mind."

In the end, though, Mr. Beck said that he decided against voting for Mrs. Clinton. He said that he would instead back a little-known third-party candidate, Darrell Castle of the Constitution Party. "I reject the notion of a binary choice," he wrote on Tuesday on his personal website. "I will not vote for the 'lesser of two evils.' "

On Facebook, Mr. Beck said he wanted his fans to know that "the world does not end" if Ms. Clinton wins the election. He said pushing back against a Clinton White House through protests, the media or "political and procedural maneuvering" would be a worthy effort, but warned conservatives that they would be morally tainted by a vote for Trump.

"If one helps to elect an immoral man to the highest office, then one is merely validating his immorality, lewdness, and depravity," he wrote.

After The Debate, Conservatives Get The Call To Protest: 'The Leftist Media Are Out Of Control'

By Jennifer Harper

Washington Times, October 11, 2016

Media Research Center President Brent Bozell has monitored liberal bias in the news for decades. But now, he's even surprised at the sheer escalation of bias as the presidential election draws nigh.

"The leftist media are out of control and the American people know it and are furious. These so-called news journalists are doing everything in their power to affect the outcome of the election. In 30 years I've never seen anything like this," says Mr. Bozell, who is troubled by an incident in which a fan of GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump was assaulted during a protest against the "leftist agenda" at CNN.

It is of note that fans of Sen. Bernard Sanders, organized under the mantra "Occupy CNN," also rallied against the network earlier this year for not covering Mr. Sanders' presidential campaign. Libertarian nominee Gary Johnson's backers also demonstrated against the network for the same reason.

"Protesters went to the CNN affiliate in Hollywood to protest, and at least one was assaulted. Enough is enough. We have never done this before, but we are calling on people to organize and publicly protest against their local network news affiliates around the country. The media will never hold themselves accountable, so now it's up to the people to rise and protest. And if any protester is assaulted again,

conservatives have every right to defend themselves appropriately," says Mr. Bozell.

"This is a real test of the American people. Will they let the elite liberal media focus them only on anti-Trump messages while hiding the Hillary Clinton secret speeches stories?" says Newt Gingrich, a former presidential candidate himself.

CRUZ STAYS STEADY

"This is an election unlike any other. Hillary Clinton is manifestly unfit to be president. The policy she is advancing is the continuation of eight years of Barack Obama. I am supporting the Republican nominee because I think Hillary Clintonis an absolute disaster."

— Sen. Ted Cruz, confirming he continues to back Donald Trump, in an interview Tuesday with Gil Lamb Advertising in Mule Shoe, Texas. The former presidential hopeful also praised the beef brisket tacos he had enjoyed at a local restaurant.

AND WHILE THE NATION SQUABBLES

"Russia is looking to expand its military presence and has its eye on Cuba and other Latin American countries. Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Russia has come up with a list of countries where it's considering opening military bases. They include Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Vietnam," writes Franco Ordonez, a reporter with McClatchy News who based his report on information from RIA Novosti, Russia's state-owned news agency.

"The talks are under way," Mr. Shoigu advised reporters in Moscow.

KEENE INSIGHT

For those seeking insight on the fate of the Second Amendment: The Heritage Foundation hosts an event Tuesday focused on "Shall Not Be Infringed: The New Assaults on Your Second Amendment," a new book by David A. Keene, former chairman of the American Conservative Union and current opinion editor for The Washington Times.

"Although the Supreme Court ruled the 2nd Amendment guarantees an individual right to 'keep and bear arms,' various political leaders have promised to challenge this Constitutional freedom, even vowing to make it a litmus test for Supreme Court justice nominees," the organizers advise. "Gun control advocates continue to insist that the Court was wrong and should reverse this finding, thereby, stripping American gun owners of the Constitutional protection that has thus far made it impossible to ban gun ownership."

Mr. Keene will address troubling politics and problematic anti-gun proposals. See the event streamed live at noon ET at Heritage.org.

STILL FEELING THE BERN

Former presidential hopeful Sen. Bernard Sanders has a hefty, 464-page book titled "Our Revolution: A Future to Believe In" to be published one week after Election Day. His senior advisers Becky Bond and Zack Exley have been busy as well. The pair have written their own account of the campaign trail, titled "Rules for Revolutionaries: How Big Organizing Can Change Everything," recounting their experiences recruiting several hundred thousand volunteers.

The authors say their work will "overturn the old playbook that has dominated politics for decades." The book arrives from Chelsea Green Publishing on Nov. 18.

THE PERILS OF ARMCHAIR ANALYSIS

The 2016 election has been a showcase for a shrill news media, endless spectacle and much "armchair analysis" of the presidential candidates. Dean McKay, a professor of psychology at Fordham University, notes that pundits and the public at large frequently "analyze" presidential candidates.

"Donald Trump in particular has repeatedly been subject to a range of clinical-sounding psychological analyses," says Mr. McKay, deeming the instant psychoanalysis of public figures both "wrong and unfair," for three major reasons.

"It's impossible to know someone's real motivations without a confidential interview. Armchair analysis stigmatizes mental illness among the general public. The analysis says more about the person conducting it than about the candidate," the professor explains.

"It is not possible to understand someone's underlying motives simply from what is said in public. The temptation is great, since the tendency is for people to try and guess what other people are thinking, or what their motives might be," Mr. McKay continues.

"When armchair analysis is conducted, the one reaching the conclusions can very easily fit their narrative to their own pre-conceived biases. It is all too simple to selectively choose the aspects of behavior that fit the narrative and ignore information that does not. This is a problem that therapists who are well trained must guard against, and they too frequently fall prey to this problem. There is no reason to believe that the public would not be victim to these same biases as well."

POLL DU JOUR

• 70 percent of "global consumers" say their mobile devices make their lives better.

• 66 percent say face-to-face interactions are being replaced by electronic versions.

• 56 percent "can't imagine life" without mobile devices.

• 53 percent feel anxious when their mobile devices are not close at hand.

• 47 percent prefer texting to talking.

Source: A Nielsen survey of 30,000 adult consumers in 63 countries conducted March 1-March 23 and released Tuesday.

• Complaints and accolades to jharper@washingtontimes.com.

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In Storm-hit Florida, Hillary Clinton And Al Gore Tie Hurricane Matthew To Climate Change

By Patricia Mazzei And Amy Sherman

Miami Herald, October 11, 2016

Hillary Clinton brought Al Gore to Miami on Tuesday to underscore her message that she will fight climate change, unlike Donald Trump, who has said he's "not a big believer."

"We cannot risk putting a climate denier in the White House," she declared.

Clinton mentioned increased damage from last week's Hurricane Matthew due to higher sea levels. But it was former Vice President Gore, ever the academic, climate-change science evangelist, who scored the Miami disaster trifecta. He tied global warming to Matthew — "from a tropical storm to a Category 5 hurricane in just 36 hours, that's extremely unusual" — and to the faster spread of the Zika virus.

"Mother Nature is giving us a very clear and powerful message," he intoned.

What seemed to amuse the crowd most at Miami Dade College's Kendall Campus, however, was Gore's painful recollection of the 2000 presidential election in Florida.

""Your vote really, really, really counts," the former nominee said. "You can consider me as an Exhibit A for that."

Some in the audience of 1,600 — the older ones, Gore joked — groaned. He lost the state, and the race, by just 537 votes.

"You won! You won!" people chanted.

Said Gore: "I don't want you to be in a position years from now where you welcome Hillary Clinton and say, 'actually, you did win...."

By the end of the rally, the supporters in attendance had heard him repeat himself so frequently that they recited in unison: "Every vote counts."

Several hecklers interrupted Clinton, accusing her husband, former President Bill Clinton, of being a "rapist." They were escorted out of the arena. One wore a Trump T-shirt. Another carried a printout of Bill Clinton's face with the word "RAPE."

"My friends, please," Hillary Clinton said calmly, continuing as the crowd drowned out the demonstrators, "let's focus about what's really important in this election."

Unlike previous campaign rallies, Clinton's event felt especially infused with Miami references. She mentioned high-tide flooding on the streets of Miami Beach — which is inevitably invoked on all matters climate change — but also on the streets of the Miami neighborhood of Shorecrest. Gore also name-dropped Fort Lauderdale and Delray Beach.

The college venue drew fans of Clinton's primary rival, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who made climate change a central plank of his campaign platform.

University of Miami student Rachel Siegel said she backed Sanders in March, but now "it is my duty as a Democrat to support Hillary."

"It baffles me there are still women who support this man after he said those words," she said, referring to a tape released Friday showing Trump making vulgar comments about grabbing women sexually. "I can't mentally comprehend that."

"I'm kind of nervous — I don't want Donald Trump in office," said Viviara Wallace, a 19-year-old Miami Dade College student. "He is a liar. He is not a very solid man. He is very emotional. I don't trust anybody who gets mad on Twitter and goes on a Twitter rampage."

At least one person attended because of Gore: Marian Azeem-Angel, a no-party-affiliated 18-year-old Miami Dade College student studying environmental science.

"He is the one I'm most excited about," she said. When Azeem-Angel heard Gore was coming, she confessed, "I got heart palpitations."

"Environmental topics a lot of people feel are out of reach, but he can help educate people — you don't need to be extremely knowledgeable on the subject to get involved," she said.

Trump, she said, is "someone who says global warming is a hoax, that it's not happening, is just in denial. There is no much science. We need to start facing it and dealing with it."

Clinton, Gore Target Young Voters In Miami

By Alan Gomez

USA Today, October 11, 2016

MIAMI — Despite a relationship that grew strained over the years, Hillary Clinton enlisted Al Gore Tuesday to help make her case in the state that cost him the presidency 16 years earlier.

Gore's appearance, the first of several expected in the final weeks of the presidential election, was part of a two-pronged strategy by the Democratic nominee to more strongly address climate change and to reach the young voters who aren't showing the kind of enthusiasm that they exhibited for her former rival, Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont.

Gore's main message was on his signature issue, saying that Clinton would make solving climate change an issue of "top national priority," while Republican nominee Donald Trump's policies would send the country, and the world, toward a "climate catastrophe."

His second point took him back to his 2000 presidential bid and Florida's notorious recount that ended his bid for the White House.

"Your vote really, really, really counts. You can consider me as an Exhibit A of that," he laughed as the crowd started chanting "You won, you won."

Gore and the Clintons used to be close, with Gore serving as Bill Clinton's vice president for eight years. But Gore distanced himself from the former president after his revelations about his affair while in the White House, keeping Clinton at arms length throughout the 2000 campaign.

The former vice president did not endorse Clinton until July of this year after she'd secured the Democratic nomination and didn't back her in her 2008 primary campaign against then-Illinois senator Barack Obama, endorsing Obama not long after he'd clinched the party's nod.

On Tuesday, Clinton said Gore was the first politician in Washington to take the issue seriously and read off his 30-year record of addressing the dangers. She said Hurricane Matthew was more destructive because of the higher temperature of the waters that fed it and that Florida was particularly at risk of rising sea levels. She listed the ways her administration would transition the U.S. to renewable energy.

And, of course, she pointed out how Trump has called climate change a hoax perpetuated by China.

"You would think, if you look at the facts, if you listen to the science, that even the most committed climate skeptic would say, 'OK, I agree, something's happening here, we need to take it seriously,'" she said. "But unfortunately there are still too many people in Washington, on the campaign trail, who won't face what's happening right in front of us."

Thousands of students and supporters filled a gymnasium at Miami-Dade College, a 90,000-student community college where many of South Florida's Hispanic students attend. And while many attending Tuesday's rally were supportive of Clinton, they also had thoughts on why the former secretary of State is struggling to reach them the same way Sanders did.

Mel Ramos, 18, a freshman whose parents are Cuban and Salvadoran, said Sanders inspired that kind of following because of his intense focus on issues that mattered to them, such as LGBT rights and affordable college tuition. Ramos said Clinton supports many of those issues, but doesn't seem as interested, or as genuine, as Sanders did when he was challenging her for the Democratic nomination. When asked if she would now vote for Clinton, she responded: "I guess."

"He wanted a lot of things that young people liked," Ramos said.

A poll released by the Pew Research Center on Tuesday underscored that problem for Clinton. The poll found that Clinton holds a 58% to 19% edge over Trump among registered Hispanic voters, but that leads shrinks to 48% to 15% among Hispanic Millennials, those between ages 18 and 35.

The question now is whether surrogates like Gore pushing his message about climate change, one that many Millennial voters say is extremely important to them, could help widen that gap. One potential problem, though, is that the Millennials they're trying to attract were infants when Gore left the vice presidency and ran for the White House.

Before Tuesday's rally, Marilyn Machuca, 19, only referred to him as "the speaker."

"Climate change is not an issue you face every day," said Machuca, a Clinton supporter. "The speaker is well informed on the issue."

But can Gore inspire the kind of enthusiasm seen during Sanders' campaign? "I don't think so," Machuca said.

Al Gore: "Your Vote Really, Really, Really Matters"

By Kathleen Hennessey

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

Usually, he's Al Gore, Nobel Peace Prize winner or climate advocate. On Tuesday, he was Al Gore, cautionary tale.

The former vice president and almost-president held himself up as a warning for complacent or disengaged Democrats as he campaigned for Hillary Clinton in South Florida. With Clinton listening on stage, the told the crowd of young people, some of whom were toddlers when he lost his bid for the White House by the thinnest of margins, that elections can be close – very close.

"Your vote really, really, really matters," Gore said. "You can consider me as an Exhibit A."

The crowd chanted back, "You won!" It was a reference to Gore winning the popular vote in the 2000 presidential contest by about 540,000 votes – but ultimately lost the presidency to George W. Bush.

The moment on stage between two political figures with piles of baggage was billed as a moment to talk about Clinton's commitment to fighting climate change. The Democratic presidential candidate is hoping the issue will help her win over young voters who prioritize the issue but have been very slow to warm to her bid.

She showered praised on Gore's advocacy work and promised to seek his consul in office.

"I can't wait to have Al Gore advising me when I am president of the United States," she said.

But Gore can hardly come to South Florida, home of the hanging chad, without addressing the ghost of his past life in politics.

After the messy recount in 2000 and a shocking Supreme Court decision, Gore lost the Florida race by just 537 votes. The results sent Bush to the White House and Gore into years of self-imposed political exile.

Many Democrats still believe the race was yanked out from under them by a combination of a conservative-leaning

court, biased state officials and the more than 97,000 votes tallied for Green Party candidate Ralph Nader.

With unprecedented levels of disapproval for the both Clinton and Republican rival Donald Trump, the threat of the third-party candidate spoiler is back this year. Clinton's team for weeks has been trying to cut into the unusually high levels of support – often in double digits in polls – for Green Party candidate Jill Stein and Libertarian Gary Johnson. They've tried to present a positive message, offer stark contrasts on policy, soften Clinton's image and, more recently, scare voters about the possibility of nail-biter.

But pushing skeptical voters to the polls isn't as easy when Trump's campaign appears is sinking. Clinton has been increasingly direct as just tries to warn against overconfidence or a resignation.

"I don't trust the polls," Clinton said Tuesday in an interview with WMBM, a gospel station in Miami. "He is still trying to win this election."

Clinton said called Florida was "the key" to the winning.

Gore has been resistant to re-engage in politics, even as his role advocate for climate change policies has won him credibility and influence on the left. He waited to endorse Clinton until late July, just before she formally received the nomination at the Democratic National Convention, which he did not attend.

Still, Clinton's campaign was eager to create a memorable moment between the two, viewing it as a rare chance to break through the onslaught of Trump headlines with an event that might strike a chord with older Democrats and offer a moment to tell the story anew to younger ones.

"I don't want you to be in a position years from now where you welcome Hillary Clinton and say, actually you did win," Gore said. "Elections have consequences. Your vote has consequences."

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Al Gore: "Consider Me Exhibit A" For Why Each Vote Matters

By Nolan McCaskill

Politico, October 11, 2016

Former Vice President Al Gore introduced himself to Florida millennials on Tuesday, telling them that his near miss in the 2000 presidential election is "exhibit A" for why it's so important to vote.

Campaigning with Hillary Clinton in Miami, Gore highlighted two messages he wanted to share with the former secretary of state's supporters.

"No. 1, when it comes to the most urgent issue facing our country and the world, the choice in this election is extremely clear. Hillary Clinton will make solving the climate crisis a top national priority," Gore said. "Very important."

Donald Trump, whom Gore referred to as "her opponent," would take America "toward a climate catastrophe," he said.

"Here's my second message: Your vote really, really, really counts — a lot. You can consider me as an exhibit A of that group. Now, for those of you who are younger than 25, you might not remember the election of 2000 and what happened here in Florida and across the country," Gore said, prompting boos from the crowd.

"For those of you older than 25, I heard you murmuring just now. But take it from me, it was a very close election," Gore said, as supporters began to chant "You won! You won!"

"Here's my point: I don't want you to be in a position years from now where you welcome Hillary Clinton and say: 'Actually, you did win. It just wasn't close enough to make sure that all the votes were counted or whatever," Gore added.

Gore, who was VP in former President Bill Clinton's administration, famously lost his 2000 White House bid versus George W. Bush in a case that went to the Supreme Court in a dispute over Florida's votes, the winner of which would exceed the 270 electoral vote threshold necessary to clinch the presidency.

He ultimately retreated from politics after the high court ended his bid by deciding in a 5-4 case to discontinue the state's recount.

Gore was among the biggest and longest holdouts to endorse Hillary Clinton's campaign. He didn't do until July, tweeting ahead of the Democratic National Convention that he would be voting for Clinton.

The former vice president urged supporters to register to vote ahead of the state's deadline, which was extended to Wednesday in the wake of Hurricane Matthew. He repeatedly stressed that votes and elections matter.

"Elections have consequences. Your vote counts," he said in one instance. "Your vote has consequences, and in this election, the future of Miami and cities up and down the West Coast and East Coast of Florida are on the ballot as well."

"Please, take it from me: Every single vote counts. Every single vote counts," he said in another. "If you are not registered to vote, do so today. If you are on the fence about whether to vote, remember what is at stake in this election, and if you think your vote does not matter, take it from me: Your vote can make all of the difference in this election. Vote early. Vote early, and don't let your friends sit this election out."

Gore outlined the need for a president who prioritizes the climate crisis — "a president who gets it, who cares about it, who's internalized it, who's passionate about it, who's

determined to lead our country and with our country to lead the world at the key moment when we really do have the opportunity to solve this climate crisis and make our country stronger and more prosperous at the same time," he said.

Gore acknowledged that he was stumping for Clinton because "every vote counts." "That's why I am here and that's why I will vote for Hillary Clinton," he continued. "I know that my vote counts. I know that your vote counts."

He told skeptics who are wary that they can solve the climate crisis to remember that "the will to change and build a brighter future is itself a renewable resource" — a line Clinton extolled as the two shook hands and hugged to conclude the rally.

"That's a great line! I love that!" Clinton told the former VP.

Clinton opened the rally emphasizing the importance of climate change in remarks that lasted nearly a half-hour. She introduced Gore as "a climate change leader and an all-around great guy" and praised him for being "one of the world's foremost leaders on climate change."

She also ridiculed Trump, who has claimed that climate change is a hoax created by the Chinese and threatened to tear up the Obama administration's global climate pact. Clinton warned voters not to elect a climate change denier — to the White House or any other office.

"On the ballot is not just my name. It's every issue you care about," she said. "It's our values as a country. Climate change needs to be a voting issue. We need to elect people up and down the ballot at every level of government who take it seriously and are willing to roll up their sleeves and get something done. Please, we cannot keep sending climate deniers and defeatists to Congress or statehouses and certainly not to the White House."

'I'm The Last Thing Standing Between You And The Apocalypse'

By Mark Leibovich

New York Times, October 11, 2016

There can be days in this presidential campaign, if not weeks or months or maybe the entire thing, where you find yourself completely lost in dueling or blurry realities. It's easy to get caught up in whatever is dominating a given moment. Everything gets so big and loud, and the candidates — famous to begin with — cease to even exist as human beings in front of you.

Early this month, I went to Toledo, Ohio, to meet with Hillary Clinton, to sit down with her for a while and take the measure of her ordeal. It was five weeks before an unnervingly high-stakes Election Day. Every campaign produces candidates declaring that "the most important election of our lifetimes" is at hand. Usually this is true only for the person running (no doubt 2012 was the most important election of Mitt Romney's lifetime). But this year's stakes feel legitimate. This is not only for the milestone that Clinton's election would achieve, and all the cultural Rorschach tests, gender dynamics and political scar tissue embedded within. It's because of Donald Trump, an astonishing figure unlike any who has ever come close to assuming power in this country. "Near existential" is how Tim Kaine recently described this campaign, and it did not come off as complete hyperbole.

Clinton had a rally scheduled in a run-down section of Toledo, the northwest Ohio city that ranked as the fourth-most economically distressed of the nation's 100 largest. It is home to many of the struggling white working-class men who have made Ohio such tough terrain for Clinton and surprisingly fertile for her billionaire opponent. Clinton has trailed consistently in polls here, even though Barack Obama carried Ohio twice. I drove through town, passing block after block checkered with Trump signs, listening to screed after screed on talk radio about the malevolence of Obama and Clinton, and it sent me into one of those echo-chamber vortexes where I began to wonder if any Ohioans would be voting for Clinton at all.

At the same time, we were in the midst of a stretch in which journalists and political "professionals" had concluded that Trump was in a death spiral. Since tanking in the first debate at Hofstra University a week earlier, the blustering mogul had endured — or rather perpetuated — a series of self-immolations that included a fat-shaming Twitter assault on a Latina beauty queen (one of those things you never thought you'd write during a presidential campaign, and yet it barely registers a blink), a few pages of his 1995 tax return finding its way to The New York Times and the ensuing revelation that Trump had declared a $916 million loss, which could have enabled him to avoid paying 18 years' worth of federal taxes. By the time this article went to press, Trump was facing a blizzard of new revulsion over a 2005 video obtained by The Washington Post in which the candidate is heard making lewd and lecherous claims about his treatment of women to the television host Billy Bush. Scores of high-level Republicans withdrew their support, and Speaker of the House Paul Ryan said he was finished defending Trump and would instead focus on House and Senate races. The G.O.P. seemed as close to the brink of an all-out civil war as any major party has been in decades, especially this close to an election.

Trump had plummeted in polls nationwide and in battleground states in the days after the first debate at Hofstra, with the exception of Ohio, where a poll published on the day of the Toledo rally by Quinnipiac University showed Trump leading Clinton by five points — the only state to show Trump gaining post-Hofstra.

After Clinton's event at an old train station, I was escorted up to an office where she was finishing an interview

for “Good Luck America,” a political news show on Snapchat. The waiting area was arrayed with cushioned chairs, tables and reception desks. It felt like a doctor’s office. I took a seat next to Dan Schwerin, Clinton’s speechwriter, and Brian Fallon, the campaign’s national spokesman. Aides kept shuttling in and out of the conference room that housed “H.R.C.,” a longstanding shorthand for the candidate in memos that over time has graduated to a spoken identifier (“What does H.R.C. think?”). As had been the case since the first debate, the mood in the Clinton orbit was buoyant. Fallon mentioned that he wished the bad Trump stories could be spread out a little bit, allowing voters to hold and fully savor each in turn, rather than being force-fed them day after day.

After a few minutes, another press aide, Nick Merrill, popped his head out of the conference room, faux-squinted in my direction and said the doctor would see me now. I had not talked to Clinton in person for more than a year. She was warm and animated, but her eyes hung heavy, and she appeared somewhat worn down, no doubt still feeling some lingering aftereffects of pneumonia. In the same way that presidents seem to age eight years for every four they spend in the White House, you can see the toll this campaign has taken — the surprising challenge of Bernie Sanders, the email story and F.B.I. investigation and Trump’s nothing-off-limits pelting. She sat down next to me at a conference table, slumped back in a swiveling desk chair. Her contempt for Trump was clear from the outset, far more intense than it appears even in speeches and debates. It went well beyond the competitive fervor with which one general-election candidate tends to speak about another. “It does feel much different,” she said. “If I were running against another Republican, we’d have our disagreements, don’t get me wrong, and I would be trying to make my case vigorously. But I wouldn’t go to bed at night with a knot in the pit of my stomach.” She enunciated her T’s (“knoT in the piT”) as if she were spitting out the words.

“I had the opportunity to meet a lot of presidents over the years,” Clinton said. “I’ve had my disagreements with them. But I never doubted for a nanosecond that they got up every morning trying to figure out what was the best path forward for the country.” At least, she added, “they were serious people.”

That sense of high moral purpose is evident throughout the campaign. Whenever I visited Clinton’s campaign headquarters in Brooklyn, the youthful energy and confidence of the staff was leavened by a detectably uneasy undercurrent. Either they are helping elect the first female president, assuring her place in history, or they will be the people who lost to Donald Trump. “There is a dread that people have about what it would actually mean if he were to actually be elected,” John Podesta, Clinton’s campaign chairman, told me. As much as Obama’s team and supporters wanted to see the president re-elected in 2012, Podesta said, “they didn’t feel that the country was going to fall into the abyss if Mitt Romney was president of the United States.”

Given that, I asked Clinton if Nov. 8 scared her. “No, not really,” she said slowly. I clarified that I was talking about the prospect of her losing. She knew what I was talking about. “I’m not going to lose,” she said. She shot me a knowing grin.

This is the standard politician’s answer when asked to contemplate defeat — even candidates who are down 30 points — but Clinton seemed to mean it. “I don’t go there,” Clinton said. Trump is such an unnerving figure, partly because in getting this far he has already defied so many predictions, largely on the strength of his ability to command the media fun house. This has been the enduring, defining characteristic of the race. His mania for being seen and heard and mentioned has proved exceptionally well suited, maybe codependent, to the current age.

To Trump, ubiquity is power and success, and at least until recently that equation held true. His ability during the Republican primaries to talk, tweet or insult his way into the middle of seemingly every news cycle reinforced the notion that he was simply bigger than the rest of those politicians. He believed that the extent of most people’s discernment was what they chose to fill their screens with — that it almost didn’t matter if it made them think the worst of him or, say, Mexicans. He barely bothered with policy papers or major “issue” speeches or round-table discussions. Cable would never have covered that anyway, certainly not live. People would grow bored. He was always talking about how boring Clinton was, especially her substantive snooze-fest debates against Sanders. For Trump, boring is the worst. It is disgusting. It is the anti-yuge.

Trump coined a grand and nostalgic slogan, “Make America Great Again,” easily the most recognizable campaign calling card since “Yes We Can.” When I talked to Clinton, she told me how pleased she was with her own slogan, “Stronger Together.” She was especially proud of how it came out of a deliberative process: grinding out ideas and really figuring out what it was she wanted to stand for. I mentioned that it hardly rolls off the tongue, sounding more like a CrossFit slogan than a rallying cry. “It’s clunky, but it works,” I said, and she nodded.

“It works,” she said with a hint of defensiveness, “in part because I really believe it, O.K.? How do we get people to overcome these barriers?”

Clinton has worked closely with (and married) some of the most gifted orators and “explainers” of recent political memory — Obama, Joe Biden and Bill. All three are deft at relaying big themes and small narratives alike. Clinton, for her part, is stubbornly cautious and on script, banking on the notion that real-life concerns of voters and tangible benefits of her proposals will win out in the end over spectacle. “At the end of the day, people are going to vote on Nov. 8,” she told

me. “And like it or not, issues will actually be part of governing.” Her approach doesn’t make for the best TV, but her years in public life have made her wary of any exposure, especially when she does not control it. Scrutiny is dangerous, and disclosure is rarely rewarded. If Trump views the media as a vehicle to express his id, Clinton is all superego. She has been happy to leave that field to him, even if it makes her boring, or even ignored.

The Clintons have fully inhabited the political-media revolutions of the last four decades. Bill Clinton’s campaigns for governor of Arkansas were relatively simple, small-scale and stable productions, conducted via traditional television, news radio and print outlets. But from the moment the Clintons went national in the early 1990s, their ambitions have met head-on with a series of transformative new media adversaries. His presidency was the first to suffer a sustained assault from conservative talk radio, particularly in its first term, when Rush Limbaugh was establishing himself as the most influential radio host of his generation. The Monica Lewinsky scandal and Clinton’s subsequent impeachment were driven heavily by revelations on a new website, the Drudge Report, and covered exhaustively by the emerging force that cable news was becoming.

Hillary Clinton’s first presidential run in 2008 was badly outmaneuvered by Obama’s campaign in the race to master the internet as an organizing, outreach and fund-raising tool. Her current enterprise has been deft in using social-media tools as a way of reaching supporters, disseminating opposition research and occasionally engaging with Trump. But for the most part, the dizzying new level of scrutiny and saturation made possible by the digital age only made Clinton retreat further into caution.

When I spoke to her over the Fourth of July weekend in 2015 in New Hampshire, Clinton had clearly been thinking about the impact of new technology on human development and how people communicate. We were talking about mental health and substance abuse, two issues that a lot of voters in New Hampshire were raising with her. She described a meeting with a group that had developed online mental-health programs. One woman predicted to her that a big challenge in mental health over the coming years would be “how to undo the damage that the internet has caused young people.”

It’s striking to me now that Clinton’s main interest in these new media technologies was not so much as a political tool but as a policy concern for the citizenry. Clinton described “the insidious, pernicious comparisons” that online communities can foster in young people, and the temptation to “put out an identity online before it’s ever formed” in real life. Thinking about this exchange 14 months later, after what feels like a generation’s worth of lines crossed and taboos shattered, her concern seems strangely prescient.

Trump, of course, both shares and feeds his audience’s addiction to stimuli and entertainment. Early in the campaign, during the Republican primaries, he would pretty much say yes to anyone who wanted to put him on TV or in a magazine. He was indefatigable in reaching out to reporters, lobbying for coverage. He can be undeniably fun and, to a point, seductive. My first encounter with Trump, more than a year ago, came in an unsolicited note that said simply, “Mark, It’s Time for a Cover!”

Clinton, on the other hand, proceeds with immense caution. When we first spoke last July, she agreed to our meeting on the maddening proposition that we do it off the record. I went along, reluctantly, as it was my only entree (she agreed later to put parts of it on the record). Her hesitancy to give interviews and allow media access has barely subsided over time. When I asked Robby Mook, Clinton’s 36-year-old campaign manager, how his candidate had adapted to the insane rules of engagement that this campaign has “normalized” (to use a 2016 buzzword), he essentially said that she hadn’t. “Hillary approaches this campaign through the portal of wanting to fix problems,” Mook told me. “And so politics for her is, first and foremost, not an exercise in communicating to the masses. It’s about finding the right solution and then going after it.”

Clinton is, in other words, the anti-Trump. She is not a political novelty, nor is she especially entertaining as a media personality or in front of big groups. She and her campaign know this and have been smart about not pretending otherwise. Trump’s big shadow and outrage machine have even allowed her to become slightly and perhaps blissfully lost; to fade, if not into obscurity, at least into a background that cuts the glare of the scrutiny to which she has been so averse. In a sense, she is daring voters to study her positions, listen to her answers and not look to her for entertainment or emotional impact. In 2016, that can seem almost risky.

“I’ve laid out all of these policies, and look, people kind of made fun of it, because ‘Oh, there she goes with another policy,’ “ Clinton told me. “I’m trying to run a campaign that presents an alternative case.” It’s telling that a candidate with the name recognition, résumé and baggage of Hillary Clinton is nonetheless left to present her campaign as an “alternative case.”

“My husband and I laugh sometimes about the ‘Antiques Roadshow,’ “ Clinton told me, referring to the PBS show about antique appraisers that she watches devoutly. “Sometimes we feel like we are the antiques on a roadshow when it comes to politics.”

I started traveling with the Clinton campaign this Labor Day, supposedly the “unofficial kickoff to the general election.” In every election season, political geniuses are always identifying seemingly random events, like some cattle call in Iowa, and declaring them to be “unofficial kickoffs.” But Labor Day had the genuine feel that a switch was being flipped inside the Clinton campaign. It was unveiling a new

plane, a white and powder blue 737 that slightly resembled the old Pan Am jets. A "Stronger Together" slogan adorned the side, with a blue-arrowed "H" logo painted across the tail.

Consigned to the back was the traveling press. Like most presidential-campaign corps, Clinton's comprises an aggressive bunch of mostly 20-something reporters, camera people and network "embeds" charged with tracking everything remotely newsworthy that a candidate might do on a given day. They are descendants of the "Boys on the Bus" generation, whom Tim Crouse made famous in his unforgiving account of "pack journalism" as it existed during the 1972 presidential campaign. Today's pack is distinct in fundamental ways: There are many more women and minorities in the group (as in, there are more than almost none); there is considerably less drinking, and no one smokes; and while reporters 40 years ago paid their dues and scrapped like hell to cover a presidential campaign, many of today's cast members are in their first journalism jobs. They are competitive but collegial. Their tech savviness is astounding (actually it made me scared). It's easy to see why a control-freakish enterprise like the Clinton campaign might be terrified of an army of smartphone dynamos who are just dying to tweet out what color cough drops the candidate was popping (Halls, yellow).

By Sept. 5, Clinton had gone 275 consecutive days without holding a news conference. With the campaign now unofficially kicked off, it was time for her to tend to this pesky constituency. Shortly before the plane left Westchester County in New York for Cleveland, where she would be holding a Labor Day rally, Clinton made her way to the press section in the rear of the plane. Forty or so reporters maneuvered themselves over chairs, armrests and one another to capture this "casual" hello for posterity.

"I was just waiting for this moment," she said, deploying the kind of slightly nervous icebreaker you might use on a doctor before a colonoscopy. "I'm thrilled," she continued. "No, really. I wanted to welcome you onto the plane. I think it's pretty cool, don't you?"

When no one spoke up to answer, the candidate jumped in herself. "You're supposed to say yes," she said.

The Labor Day rally took place in a mostly African-American neighborhood of Cleveland, where Clinton was joined by her running mate, Tim Kaine. He spoke for a few minutes, and then Clinton came out to wish everyone a happy Labor Day. "We were trying to figure out where we could be," Clinton said. "And we all said, 'Let's go to Cleveland!' " It went downhill from there. Clinton unleashed a few coughs between sentences, which soon degenerated into a full-on fit.

Clinton tried to continue her speech, gamely if not wisely; in hindsight, Kaine should have grabbed the mike for a few minutes while Clinton recovered. She popped lozenges and gulped water. In a different political climate, some pundit might identify the coughing fit as potentially "humanizing" or, at worst, "bad optics." But 2016 is not much for humanity. You could sense dread in the crowd — and see cringing eyes among the Clinton staff — over what would become of this moment. This is your brain on Trump. He had been suggesting for weeks that Clinton was not in good health, a conceit stoked by a Greek chorus on the internet and a few well-placed "medical experts" on cable (paging Dr. Giuliani). The coughing fit was all over TV that afternoon and inspired a screaming Drudge headline about Clinton's "violent coughing fit."

Clinton's trachea cleared well enough for her to get through the Cleveland speech. What had become clear in this new phase of the race was that she would be devoting big parts of her events to ridiculing Trump more methodically than she had before.

But Trump, though a rich target, is also a tricky foil. People inside the Clinton orbit mourn the familiar shirts and skins of going up against a more conventional Republican nominee. They dealt in familiar Republican themes and operated within certain boundaries. You hear a surprising amount of Romney nostalgia: Several Clinton aides I spoke to brought him up in almost wistful terms, as well as John McCain and George W. Bush. They are now fondly recalled as familiar predators in the political habitat, like the characters from that old cartoon "Ralph Wolf and Sam Sheepdog." Ralph and Sam show up to work, punch the clock and greet each other amiably before starting their daily game — Ralph trying to corral sheep while Sam thwarts him. Each episode ends with the adversaries punching out their timecards and bidding farewell to each other until the next installment. It goes without saying that many people are supporting Trump because they're tired of Ralph and Sam and all the same old cartoon animals. They're ready for a bigger, badder wolf to deport all the sheep and then slap his name in gold on the side of the barn. They're dying to watch that show.

Back on Hill Force One, Clinton made another visit to the press cabin, this time for an official "gaggle" — or did it count as a news conference, which would officially end her 275-day drought? This set off a debate among the press corps and campaign, until eventually it was agreed upon that yes, this counted as a formal "availability" session with the press, or "avail," as it is known in the bubble. Breaking news: drought over.

Clinton revealed in the session that she had increased her intake of antihistamine. She spoke in greater depth about her allergies, which prompted a pointed follow-up question ("Madam Secretary, is it pollen?"), a broader one about whether she was concerned about all the health-related conspiracy theories ("There are so many, I've lost track") and another about whether she thought these health rumors were sexist ("Hmm, interesting"). Whenever she is asked questions that touch on possible sexism and double standards, Clinton

tends to assume a slow, sarcastic and vaguely disdainful voice. She declared the topic "interesting"; she would "leave it to others" to determine. On whether she is being treated differently as a female candidate, Clinton suggested that it would be a great topic, in the future, for "a lot of Ph.D. theses and popular journalism writing." She then wrapped things up, disappeared behind her curtain and left us to our "popular journalism writing."

The flight back to Westchester was marred by a near-international incident. A few of the reporters in the back started engaging in an old traveling press-corps high jinks of rolling an orange up the aisle in an attempt to reach the candidate's seat. The tradition dates at least to the Reagan years, and supposedly counted Nancy as a fan. In some iterations, the reporters would write out a question on the orange that the candidate might reward with an answer. This particular evening, the appointed citrus was a clementine, and a young TV embed scrawled out the question: Would Clinton rather have dinner with Trump or Vladimir Putin?

After a few failed rolls, the fruit suffered a violent collision with a seat leg that resulted in a citrus explosion all over my laptop. Finally, one reporter successfully propelled the clementine into the candidate's sanctum up front. A few minutes later, it came back with "Putin" circled. Juicy. Next stop, Twitter: "Clinton Prefers Putin as Dining Partner to Trump."

But wait a minute. The Clinton people thought this clementine bowling was off the record. Citrus is classified! An argument ensued. Varun Anand, an affable young campaign aide assigned to "wrangle" the traveling press corps, looked stricken. He engaged in a somewhat plaintive discussion behind me with Monica Alba, a campaign reporter for NBC ("Varun, you have no case," she said). Anand then summoned some muscle in the person of the more senior press babysitter, Nick Merrill, who strolled back unto the breach.

"O.K., so I was back here a few minutes ago, and everyone was laughing and throwing an orange around," Merrill said, assessing the situation. "And now I come back again, and suddenly everyone is really tense." Correct. In any case, Merrill clarified that the clementine had not actually reached Clinton, but rather he picked it up first and read the question aloud. To which Clinton remarked that she had once eaten dinner with Putin. Merrill then circled "Putin" and rolled back the clementine.

Everyone tweeted out Merrill's clarification. The tension lifted; Merrill headed back to the front cabin and, as he passed my seat, said, "I can't wait to read four paragraphs of this stupidity in your magazine story."

Clinton recently told a rally crowd in North Carolina that her many years in politics had taken a toll on her. "I've built up some defenses," she said, in a line that was, for her, self-revelatory. "When it comes to public service," she said, "I'm better at the service part than the public part." Clinton has thought a great deal about the isolation that public life can foster. This can even be exacerbated by new technology tools — like smartphones — that can theoretically nurture connections but can also depersonalize encounters between citizens and public figures.

Outside her plane after a speech in Tampa, Fla., a few days earlier, Clinton stopped for a few minutes under a wing to chat and take pictures with the photographers in her press entourage. This produced a classic through-the-looking-glass scene: Clinton posing for pictures with the photographers who normally photograph her, while the rest of her media contingent stood along the stairs photographing her posing for photos with her photographers.

In her conversation with the photographers, Clinton talked about how the phenomenon of "selfies" has transformed her encounters with voters. She was always adept at drawing quick connections with people she met on rope lines. Even in the briefest of exchanges, they would tell her their stories. I had observed Clinton in many rope lines over the years, and I can attest that she's effective in those settings, though not at the level of her flesh-pressing demon of a husband. I watched her during the Democratic primaries in 2008 as she greeted a crowd of voters in Charleston, W.Va. One woman described to Clinton a litany of her life's struggles in the space of a few seconds (her husband's diabetes, their lack of health insurance); the candidate nodded through squinted eyes, signed an autograph on a napkin and hugged the woman, who walked away in tears.

"I got a lot out of these short meetings, holding somebody's hand, having somebody tell me about their problems, addiction, losing a job," Clinton told me when I spoke to her in Toledo. "I thought of it like an ongoing educational experience." She misses that, she said, because now such encounters are driven by one all-encompassing goal: the selfie.

"It's a loss," Clinton said. She understands why people want selfies. "It makes my time at the event with them real. Put it on Facebook, and show it to everyone who follows them on Instagram, everyone they can reach." She prefers the handwritten notes she used to get a lot more of, everything from little scraps of paper to several-page stacks of loose-leaf. They all bore the script of individual Americans wanting to tell her about their lives.

Clinton told me a story from when Chelsea was 5. She heard her parents discussing Reagan's much-criticized visit in May 1985 to a German military cemetery at Bitburg, the final resting home of many Nazi soldiers. Chelsea, whose favorite movie then was "The Sound of Music," asked for her mother's help in writing a letter to the White House. "Dear President Reagan," it began. "I've seen 'The Sound of Music.' The Nazis are not nice people. Don't go to their cemetery." Reagan went to Bitburg; Chelsea received no response.

After Bill Clinton was elected, his wife vowed that every letter sent to the White House, especially from a child, would receive a response. I have no idea how well they actually executed on this, but Clinton was making a bigger point here, about the importance of connection and the sharing of stories in a political world overrun by snapshots, caricatures, fragmentation and reality distortion.

"This sounds a little extreme to say, but it's like an evolutionary development, right?" Clinton told me. Your communities should begin small, she said, in terms that precisely echoed those set out in her 1996 book, "It Takes a Village." You form identities in your family, she said, and then in your neighborhood and in wider communities. "It was all person to person, and you learned to deal with people, for better or worse," she said. She contrasted this with modern social-media cultures. People use the terms "friends" and "followers" to describe people they have never met, whose identities they think they know but may not even be real. "And you are having emotional and intellectual experiences," Clinton said, "that are unlike anything that's ever happened in the entirety of human history."

Like the culture it is playing out in, this presidential campaign has existed in a racing progression of flash images and snap judgments. Personal narratives get lost, while a candidate's can become warped through the vertigo. We might be as interconnected as ever but starved for connections, Clinton says. Trump, perhaps tellingly, is not much for hearing voters' stories. He rarely does retail stops and hates shaking hands. He tweets at all hours and constantly watches himself on television. He is in so many ways the anti-Hillary.

At the end of our conversation in Toledo, I asked Clinton if she thought the resentment sowed and fissures exposed in the course of this campaign would make the United States an even harder country to govern. "No, we face some hard choices," she began, and I immediately smirked — "Hard Choices" was the title of her 2014 memoir on her years as secretary of state, and I figured she was clicking into huckster and sound-bite mode. But then she veered in a direction that surprised me.

"There are some difficult trends, which are not primarily political," Clinton told me. "They are more cultural, psychological, and we just have to deal with them." Earlier she had mentioned the 1985 book "Amusing Ourselves to Death," by Neal Postman, about how television has oriented politics more and more toward entertainment. She also cited the historian Christopher Lasch, the author of "The Culture of Narcissism." The authors, she said, "were trying to come to grips, before the internet, trying to understand what was happening in our society, that we are experiencing a level of alienation, disconnectedness."

She told me that her primary objective as president would be to encourage connectedness, to have actual conversations. Clinton has always preferred to build narratives from a granular level: start with details and allow a message to emerge more slowly. In college in the late 1960s, she resisted revolutionary change in favor of grinding out incremental progress inside the system. She has no patience for messianic rhetoric and hyperbolic slogans and grandiose speeches. It can make her an awkward fit in this campaign environment, harder to break through and determinedly not dazzling.

But Clinton said that the key to building connectedness lies in a leader's ability to knit together a sense of common destiny from the ground up. "It requires real storytelling," she said. "And I think as president, I can tell that story. It's harder as a candidate." I had often heard the exact opposite. In Obama's first term, his aides lamented that it was much easier to tell stories and drive a message in a campaign context than from the White House. As president, they said, you are constantly reacting to things and largely at the mercy of events — "governing in prose," as opposed to "campaigning in poetry," to adapt the old line from Mario Cuomo.

Clinton envisions a model more suited to her skills and comforts. It also could portend a very different style of president — without the sweeping themes of Barack Obama, the moral certainty of George W. Bush or the explanatory clarity of Bill Clinton. Can Hillary Clinton do a better job inspiring people from the White House than she has from the campaign stage? Would it become easier or harder to do without Trump around to embody everything she has ever opposed and scare the daylights out of her base? "Don't blow this" is what Clinton hears most often these days, she told me, or variations thereof. As it has turned out, Clinton, who began her campaign intent on breaking the last barrier — the glass ceiling — has found her most compelling rationale in her own role as a barrier, a bulwark against the impossible alternative. As I was leaving our interview, she smiled, looked me in the eyes and left me with a casual reminder. "As I've told people," she said, "I'm the last thing standing between you and the apocalypse."

Emails Show Hillary Clinton Campaign's Response To Fallout

New WikiLeaks release shows the political team's communications

By Byron Tau And Colleen McCain Nelson

Wall Street Journal, October 11, 2016

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

Clinton Camp Appeared To Have Contacts With DOJ On Email Case

By Julian Hattem

The Hill, October 11, 2016

An official within Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton's campaign appeared to have discussions with sources inside the Department of Justice (DOJ) about ongoing open records lawsuits regarding the former secretary of State's emails, according to an email released on Tuesday.

In an email from May 2015, Clinton campaign spokesman Brian Fallon said that "DOJ folks" had "inform[ed]" him about an upcoming status conference in one of the lawsuits regarding Clinton's private email setup.

The information about an upcoming court event would have been public knowledge and open for all to attend. And it's unclear whether the people Fallon spoke to at the Justice Department were officials who regularly communicate with the public.

However, the fact that Fallon — a former spokesman with the Justice Department — remained in contact with anyone from the department is likely to renew allegations that the Obama administration maintained an especially cozy relationship with Clinton's presidential campaign.

On Tuesday, Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump said the connection was "unbelievable."

Wow. Unbelievable. https://t.co/RcBPCcmwnD— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) October 11, 2016

The email "shows a level of collusion which calls into question the entire investigation into her private server," Trump spokesman Jason Miller said in a statement on Tuesday.

"The Department of Justice must release all communications with the Clinton campaign and her allies as soon as possible in order to definitively prove their investigation was completely above board."

The email from Fallon was contained in a collection of more than 1,000 messages allegedly stolen from campaign chairman John Podesta and posted to WikiLeaks on Tuesday.

Trump may be pointing to the message in an effort to redirect attention to the email release, following an increasingly bitter split from top leaders in the Republican Party and intense scrutiny over taped comments that appeared to show the nominee bragging about sexual assault.

Trump and other critics of the administration have lambasted the Justice Department for its decision not to press charges against Clinton or her allies for mishandling classified information. They were especially incensed by an apparently impromptu June meeting between Attorney General Loretta Lynch and former President Bill Clinton on the tarmac at the Phoenix airport.

Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus also attacked the apparent connection, suggesting that the GOP senses a vulnerability for Clinton as Trump struggles in the polls.

"Emails showing the Department of Justice was giving Hillary Clinton's campaign inside information about an ongoing investigation into her email server is deeply disturbing and raises even more questions about Bill Clinton's tarmac meeting with Attorney General Loretta Lynch," Priebus said in a statement.

"Instead of facing consequences for her actions like others have, she's been protected at every turn by the Obama Administration so she can continue the failed policies of the last eight years."

The criminal investigation connected to Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server was separate and distinct from the myriad open records lawsuits filed in federal court accusing the State Department of unfairly withholding material related to Clinton's time in office. Critics have accused the department of dragging its feet in response to those demands.

Personal lawyers for Clinton have been involved in some of the Freedom of Information Act lawsuits, but her campaign has not been involved.

Government officials have suggested that WikiLeaks is publishing material stolen by Russian hackers as part of an effort to undermine the presidential election.

"You are no media organization," Fallon told the organization Monday on Twitter. "You are a propaganda arm of the Russian [government], running interference for their pet candidate, Trump."

White House: No Political Interference In Clinton Email Probe

By Jordan Fabian

The Hill, October 11, 2016

The White House on Tuesday denied there was any political interference in the investigation into Hillary Clinton's private email server after newly leaked emails showed discussions between a campaign aide and Department of Justice (DOJ) officials.

"Both the attorney general and the FBI director have made clear that the investigation of Secretary Clinton's use of a private email server was conducted without regard to partisan politics," White House press secretary Josh Earnest told reporters aboard Air Force One.

Earnest noted Attorney General Loretta Lynch and FBI Director James Comey made similar claims while testifying to Congress under oath.

"They indicated that there was no influence from political actors on the investigation," he said. "I'd rely on the public statements of individuals who are responsible to affirm the independence of that investigation."

The spokesman would not comment on whether it was appropriate for Clinton campaign aides to communicate with DOJ officials in the midst of the probe.

Earnest's comments came in response to a May 2015 email from Clinton campaign spokesman Brian Fallon, who told other campaign aides that "DOJ folks" had informed him about an upcoming conference in an open records lawsuit related to Clinton's private email server.

That suit is separate from the federal criminal probe into Clinton's use of a home email server while secretary of State.

Republicans pointed to communication between Fallon and officials from the Justice Department, where he used to work, as evidence that the administration was in cahoots with the Clinton campaign.

GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump called the report "unbelievable."

Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus accused the Justice Department of giving the Clinton campaign "inside information about an ongoing investigation into her email server," even though information regarding an upcoming court conference would have been public knowledge and open for people to attend.

Still, Priebus said the revelation shows that "instead of facing consequences for her actions like others have, she's been protected at every turn by the Obama administration."

The Fallon email was part of a trove of emails allegedly stolen from Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta and posted Tuesday on Wikileaks.

Trump Camp Claims Hacked Email Shows 'Collusion' Between Clinton Campaign, Justice Department

By Josh Gerstein

Politico, October 11, 2016

Donald Trump's campaign is saying a hacked email reveals 'collusion' between Hillary Clinton's campaign and the Justice Department that tainted the criminal investigation into Clinton's private email set-up, even though the message predates that probe.

Trump adviser Jason Miller leveled the charge after an email posted by WikiLeaks showed Clinton spokesman Brian Fallon telling colleagues that someone at the Justice Department — where Fallon worked in a similar capacity just a couple months earlier —advised him of an imminent court hearing to discuss the schedule for the release of Clinton's emails in a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit.

"DOJ folks inform me there is a status hearing in this case this morning, so we could have a window into the judge's thinking about this proposed production schedule as quickly as today," Fallon wrote to other high-level campaign aides on May 19, 2015.

However, the email came two months before the FBI opened a criminal investigation into the email arrangement and the handling of classified information found on Clinton's server. Notice of the hearing, involving a FOIA case brought a Vice News reporter, was on the federal court's public website and the session was open to the public.

"Today's report that Clinton's campaign was in communication with the Obama Department of Justice on the email investigation shows a level of collusion which calls into question the entire investigation into her private server," Trump communications adviser Jason Miller said in a statement. "The Department of Justice must release all communications with the Clinton campaign and her allies as soon as possible in order to definitively prove their investigation was completely above board."

Fallon doesn't say in the email who at Justice shared the information about the hearing on the lawsuit, but the FOIA cases have been handed by lawyers from Justice's Civil Division, while the FBI investigation was overseen by Justice's National Security Division, a distinct unit. Officials there began probing Clinton's email arrangement in July 2015, after receiving a referral from the Intelligence Community Inspector General.

Asked Tuesday about the Trump camp's claim, White House spokesman Josh Earnest said he wouldn't address it specifically because it emerged from hacked emails.

"I'm not going to comment directly on the stolen emails of a private citizen," Earnest said.

However, the spokesman maintained his previous stance that there had been no interference in the probe.

"Both the attorney general and the FBI director have made clear that the investigation of Secretary Clinton's private email server was conducted without regard to partisan politics," Earnest said, adding that FBI Director James Comey stated that there was "not even an attempt by the White House to influence that investigation."

Federal government employees are generally prohibited from engaging in partisan political activity while at work, but one ethics expert said Tuesday that restriction does not bar all communications between officials and campaigns.

"Sounds like the type of communication I would routinely have with the [Republican National Committee] when I worked at the White House: giving them a status update," said Richard Painter, a former White House ethics lawyer under President George W. Bush.

Painter also said it would be appropriate for Justice Department lawyers to advise Clinton's aides or lawyers of what position the government was taking on FOIA requests for her emails.

"Mrs. Clinton's office is certainly entitled to know what the U.S. is going to do in these [FOIA] cases to the extent the government is willing to share that," said the former government ethics lawyer, now a law professor at the University of Minnesota. "I don't think the fact that a former official is running for office changes that a lot. You do need to be somewhat careful that you are not engaged in advocacy

or trying to coordinate with a political campaign a strategy for litigation or something like that."

Fallon's message to his colleagues took place just after the Justice Department submitted a court filing saying State wanted to hold off until January 2016 before releasing in one fell swoop the vast majority of the roughly 30,000 emails Clinton submitted to State in December 2014.

Some Clinton allies may have welcomed the idea of holding the emails back for months, but doing so would also have created fear that the long-delayed avalanche of messages might contain highly damaging revelations that could bury her campaign. Clinton's official stance was that she was "eager" to see the emails released quickly.

At the May 2015 hearing, U.S. District Court Judge Rudolph Contreras ruled that the messages would be released periodically. He ultimately ordered monthly releases running from June of that year through this past January.

A Justice Department spokesman did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the Trump campaign's charge.

Fallon had no comment in response to a query from POLITICO, but he did retweet a comment ridiculing an NBC News reporter's tweet calling attention to the email in question.

"This 'find' by NBC News is truly inane. Anybody can confirm a lousy status conference. Absolute garbage inference being peddled," criminal defense lawyer @bmaz wrote on Twitter.

Another former Obama administration Justice Department spokesman, Matthew Miller, also dismissed the report.

"Lame. A status hearing is publicly available information. Nothing confidential or secret here," Miller tweeted.

The FBI ultimately closed their investigation of Clinton's email arrangement without recommending any charges against her or anyone else. Messages the FBI recovered that were not in the batch Clinton turned over to State in 2014 are now in the process of being released by the State Department, but most are not likely to emerge until after the election.

The Fallon email was contained in a chain of messages released Tuesday by WikiLeaks after apparently being hacked from a Gmail account used by Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta.

WikiLeaks: State Dept Coordinated Email Release With Clinton Campaign

By Kevin Daley

Daily Caller, October 11, 2016

The Department of State provided a detailed readout of official email traffic it was about to release in response to Freedom of Information Act requests to Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign.

The emails concerned speeches former President Bill Clinton gave abroad, and did not include any traffic from Hillary Clinton, according to new emails released by WikiLeaks.

"All — DOS is soon releasing another round of documents and email traffic (not hers) in response to Judicial Watch's FOIA request on DOS's process for reviewing WJC's speaking engagements," Heather Samuelson wrote March 17, 2015. Samuelson has been a Clinton aide since the early 2000s and served as White House liaison during Hillary Clinton's tenure as secretary of state. Maura Pally and Craig Minassian of the Clinton Foundation; Philippe Reines, a longtime Clinton adviser; press secretary Nick Merrill; communications director Jennifer Palmieri; Cheryl Mills, Clinton's chief of staff at State; and Tina Flournoy, President Clinton's former chief of staff, are included on the email.

"It's 116 pages with approx. 50 sponsor/subsponsor requests," the email continues. "No objections by DOS in this batch, but some lengthy internal discussions among DOS officials that I highlighted below."

The State Department advised that it is standard practice to share documents subject to FOIA requests with outside organizations, if those organizations have equities in the requested materials.

"The State Department does not comment on alleged leaked documents," State Department spokesman John Kirby told The Daily Caller News Foundation. "But generally speaking, when processing documents for release through the Freedom of Information Act, it is standard practice for the State Department to refer documents to private companies and other outside organizations – including the Clinton Foundation – if the Department believes proprietary information may be contained in the documents."

"Outside entities are routinely given a chance to review documents and provide input to the Department about proprietary information that may need to be protected from public release," he added.

[dcquiz] The email also includes several items flagged by department officials which may have been of interest to the Clinton campaign. This includes an invitation former President Clinton received to speak at a climate change conference in Turkey, for which he would have been compensated by the Turkish government, and another speaking engagement paid for by the Canadian government. President Clinton declined the former invitation, but accepted the latter.

"Jen — happy to give you more background on prior releases since it's your first go around," Samuelson wrote to close out the email, in reference to Palmieri. (RELATED: White House Coordinated With Clinton Team On Email Fallout Talking Points)

The revelation comes one day after The Daily Caller learned the Clinton campaign coordinated with the White House on talking points concerning the fallout surrounding Clinton's use of a private email server during her tenure as Secretary of State.

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Leaks Show Clinton Inner Circle Grappling With Email Issue

By Michael Biesecker, Julie Bykowicz And Chad Day

Associated Press, October 11, 2016

Hacked emails show that Hillary Clinton's campaign was slow to grasp the seriousness of the controversy over her use of a homebrew email server and believed it might blow over after one weekend.

Two days after The Associated Press was first to report in March 2015 that Clinton had been running a private server in her home in New York to send and receive messages when she was secretary of state, her advisers were shaping their strategy to respond to the revelation.

Among the emails made public Tuesday by WikiLeaks was one from Clinton campaign spokesman Nick Merrill, who optimistically suggested that the issue might quickly blow over.

"Goal would be to cauterize this just enough so it plays out over the weekend and dies in the short term," Merrill wrote on March 6, 2015.

It did not, and became the leading example of Clinton's penchant for secrecy, which has persisted as a theme among her campaign critics and rivals throughout her election season. Clinton did not publicly confirm or discuss her use of the email server until March 10 in a speech at the United Nations, nearly one week after AP revealed the server's existence.

WikiLeaks began releasing on Friday what it said were years of messages from accounts used by Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta. He has acknowledged his emails were hacked. Podesta warned that messages may have been altered or edited to inflict political damage but has not pointed to any specific case of this.

Months after Merrill's message, the campaign was still preoccupied with emails. In May 2015, Clinton spokesman Brian Fallon alerted other staffers that the Justice Department was proposing to publish Clinton's work-related emails by January in response to requests by news organizations. Fallon, a former Justice Department spokesman, wrote that unspecified "DOJ folks" told him there was a court hearing planned soon in the case. The name and email address of the person who shared the information with Fallon had been deleted.

Donald Trump on Tuesday called Fallon's email "unbelievable," and his supporters said it showed collusion between the Obama administration and Clinton's campaign.

The dates of court hearings would have been publicly posted in advance on the court's docket. Fallon did not respond to a request for comment from AP. The Justice Department declined to discuss Fallon's email.

It wasn't immediately clear who hacked Podesta's emails, though U.S. intelligence officials last week blamed the Russian government for a series of breaches intended to influence the presidential election.

Through its Twitter account, the Russian Embassy in Washington has denied any role in the cyberattacks, suggesting U.S. officials are just "whipping up" anti-Russia hysteria.

The messages stolen from Podesta's account describe how Clinton's closest advisers considered responding to key events during the campaign, including the discovery of her email server and her congressional testimony over the deadly 2012 attacks on a U.S. diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya.

In emails from March 2015, Merrill suggested a strategy – ultimately nixed by Clinton herself – of having comedian Larry Wilmore and Bill Clinton joke during an event for the Clinton Global Initiative charity in Coral Gables, Florida, before having Clinton join them on stage.

Merrill laid out the scenario in emails to Podesta and other aides: "Wilmore could sit down with WJC and Chelsea and say something like 'Thanks for having me here, it's a pleasure. And I should tell you, I just emailed HRC (I hear she's a big emailer), and asked if she'd join as well. (Laughter).'" He added that Hillary Clinton could then walk out "to applause."

"It would be just light-hearted enough while giving her the opportunity to address this seriously, be a little conciliatory as discussed, and then get back to a discussion about CGI etc.," Merrill wrote in the email.

In the end, Hillary Clinton's team drafted talking points Clinton used at the news conference at the United Nations.

Clinton said she "fully complied with every rule that I was governed by" and that "there is no classified material" among her work-related emails.

Both of those statements were later proved false.

The State Department's internal watchdog concluded in an audit released that Clinton ignored clear written guidance that her email setup broke federal record-keeping rules and could leave sensitive material vulnerable to hackers. The FBI's recently closed investigation concluded that more than 100 emails exchanged through Clinton's private server

contained information that was later determined to be classified.

As the email controversy escalated in the summer of 2015, Clinton herself seemed slow to grasp the continuing political damage. Communications director Jennifer Palmieri in August expressed concerns that Clinton "wasn't in the same place" on the issue as some on her campaign staff.

At the time, the political aides were working out details of revealing that Clinton had directed her staff to hand over her server and a thumb drive with copies of her emails to the Justice Department. Palmieri was writing other campaign aides to arrange for a Univision reporter to ask "a few questions on emails" during an interview that would otherwise focus on college affordability.

"As you all know, I had hoped that we could use the 'server moment' as an opportunity for her to be viewed as having take a big step to deal with the email problem that would best position us for what is ahead," Palmieri wrote. "It is clear that she is not in same place."

Clinton's email practices were not the only controversy her campaign's brain trust was addressing.

On October 2015, speechwriter Dan Schwerin circulated among top Clinton advisers a draft of her opening statement to the House Select Committee on Benghazi, to be delivered the following week.

The draft itself wasn't attached in the emails published Tuesday, but other messages showed how it was shaped, including a section referring to Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens, who was killed in the Sept. 11, 2012, attack.

"We might consider softening the 'Chris did not believe retreat was an option – and neither do I' line," wrote Katherine Turner, a law partner of Clinton's personal attorney David Kendall. "I don't think we want to suggest that there was a commitment to be there at any and all costs."

Following Clinton's tense Oct. 22 testimony, Podesta proposed in an email that she could publicly joke, "I used to be obsessed with Donald Trump's hair, that was until I got to spend 11 hours staring at the top of Trey Gowdy's head," a reference to the slicked-back white coif of the South Carolina Republican who chairs the committee.

Other Clinton aides shot down the idea.

"I love the joke too but I think HRC should stay above the committee," adviser Jake Sullivan replied, "and especially above personal insults about it. She's got every inch of the high ground right now."

Palmieri replied: "Wow. You people are a bunch of ninnies."

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Hillary Clinton Is A Frail Failure, Donald Trump Warns, But He 'Will Protect You'

By Nick Corasaniti

New York Times, October 11, 2016

As his campaign battles to stave off defections from within the Republican Party, Donald J. Trump has released a new ad attacking Hillary Clinton as "Dangerous" on foreign policy grounds and portraying her as physically incapable of meeting the demands of the presidency.

Grainy dark clouds swirl over the White House, before a male narrator warns of rising worldwide perils: "Iran promoting terrorism," symbolized by street fighting in the Middle East; "North Korea threatening," by a parade of mobile missile launchers; "ISIS on the rise," by rows of prisoners about to be executed and masses of militants on the march.

Then, as the voice-over hyperbolically claims that "Hillary Clinton failed every single time as secretary of state," Mrs. Clinton is shown in a Breitbart-style highlight reel of clips and photos: wearing glasses as she gave congressional testimony last year about the Benghazi, Libya, attacks; in close-up as she coughed during a speech last February; slipping as she climbed a few steps the same month; and nearly collapsing as she left a 9/11 memorial observance while suffering from pneumonia.

"Hillary Clinton doesn't have the fortitude, strength or stamina to lead in our world," the ad declares, over a now-familiar photo of her reading her smartphone while wearing sunglasses. "She failed as secretary of state. Don't let her fail us again," it warns, before signing off with a promise: "Donald Trump will protect you. He is the only one who can."

Playing on fear, the ad starkly casts the election as a test of corporeal strength, and turns Mrs. Clinton's efforts to campaign while sick into an insinuation that she is physically unwell, attacking her person rather than her policies with a heavily gendered argument that Mr. Trump often delivers from the campaign trail.

Throwing around accusations like "failure" and frailty is easier than backing them up, which the ad does not do. Despite her recent bout of pneumonia, Mrs. Clinton's doctor has pronounced her both physically and mentally fit to serve in the Oval Office.

According to the campaign, the ad will be shown nationally and in battleground states, where Mr. Trump has reserved about $40 million in television time through Election Day.

With four weeks until the election, Mr. Trump is occupying himself with a right-wing conspiracy theory about Mrs. Clinton's health — one likely to rile up many of his most fervent supporters, but equally likely to turn off many of those he is struggling to win over, particularly suburban women, with its strongman-style conceit that he is "the only one who

can" protect imperiled Americans from being ravaged by the nation's enemies.

Trump's Threat To Jail Clinton Also Targets Democracy's Institutions

By Max Fisher And Amanda Taub

New York Times, October 11, 2016

When Donald J. Trump told Hillary Clinton at Sunday's presidential debate that if he were president, "you'd be in jail," he was threatening more than just his opponent. He was suggesting that he would strip power from the institutions that normally enforce the law, investing it instead in himself.

Political scientists who study troubled democracies abroad say this is a tactic typical of elected leaders who pull down their systems from within: former President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, the fascist leaders of 1930s Europe.

Today's United States, unlike the countries in those cases, has strong institutions and norms that prevent any president from going that far, these experts stress. But Mr. Trump's threat to jail his opponent for her deletion of thousands of emails sent from a private server while she was secretary of state, they warned in interviews on Monday, would chip away at the things that make American democracy so resilient.

Mr. Trump's comment was "a threat to the rule of law, a threat to the stability of our institutions, a threat to basic agreements that are necessary for democracy to function," said Adrienne LeBas, a political scientist at American University.

"For those of us who work on authoritarian regimes and hybrid regimes," she added, referring to a kind of government midway between democracy and dictatorship, such as Turkey, "this sort of thing is just eerily familiar."

Mr. Trump's remark, then, could be interpreted as a threat not only to Mrs. Clinton, but also to the police agencies, prosecutors and courts that normally apply the law. By suggesting that he alone could determine her fate — appointing a special prosecutor on a case the F.B.I. has already dismissed and predetermining the outcome — Mr. Trump seemed to disregard these institutions as illegitimate.

Professor LeBas called this "the absolute personalization of power," in which leaders consolidate authority under themselves — something she had seen in "Zimbabwe, Togo, Ethiopia, cases like that, where there are explicit threats to imprison opponents."

She said the closest parallel was Mr. Chávez, who came to power in 1999 by arguing that elites had corrupted Venezuela's democracy. Rather than strengthening institutions, he took their power for himself and persecuted opponents, all while riding a wave of populist support.

Sheri Berman, a professor of political science at Barnard College in New York, emphasized that leaders like Mr. Chávez were able to seize so much power because their states were very weak — something that is not true of the United States.

"Our institutions are strong enough to prevent him from doing anything truly horrific," she said of Mr. Trump.

But many Americans wrongly perceive their country's democratic features as inviolable facts of life, she warned, when they are actually only as strong as the institutions and norms that uphold them. No president is strong enough to collapse those norms, she said, but one could erode them.

"The rhetoric alone is extremely dangerous," she said, because it "undermines people's belief in our democratic institutions and process."

Strongmen typically come to power in democracies, Professor Lebas said, by telling citizens to "distrust institutions and procedure — that what is needed is to burn it all down."

Mr. Trump has claimed that the F.B.I. gave Mrs. Clinton "immunity" over her use of a private email server while she was running the State Department. He has also hinted that Mrs. Clinton could steal the election through vote-rigging.

Paul Staniland, a political scientist at the University of Chicago, said these kinds of attacks "can undermine the whole idea of democratic elections, where each side agrees that whoever won will then rule."

He said he had been unnerved by the degree to which Mr. Trump's threat on Sunday echoed authoritarian leaders. "This is something that, as someone who studies the developing world and political violence, is kind of freaky," he said.

Professor LeBas said Mr. Trump was unlikely to succeed in jailing Mrs. Clinton, much less consolidating power in the manner of Mr. Chávez or Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary. But even invoking their playbook can have "real consequences," she said, adding, "There's a great deal that Trump could do with executive power if he's elected."

When Professor Berman was asked where language like Trump's might lead, her thoughts immediately turned to the ascensions of Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy — events she has studied extensively — not because she believes that Mr. Trump would or could mimic them, but because of the parallels in how they rose within a democracy by promising to tear it down.

"I'm a little paranoid," she conceded. "You spend enough time studying interwar Europe, you begin to have a kind of apocalyptic view of politics."

Mr. Trump's language sends a message to his supporters that the system as a whole is irredeemably flawed.

"What's really dangerous here is taking people who are already disaffected or alienated," she said, "and making them

believe that democratic institutions either don't work or only work for people in power."

Professor LeBas said Mr. Trump's two intertwined arguments — that American institutions can't be trusted and that extralegal action is justified — have, when made in other countries, led to violence. Supporters see the state as too corrupt to enforce order, so they take it upon themselves.

Mr. Trump, she pointed out, has already encouraged supporters at his rallies to violently eject protesters. He went even further in suggesting that gun rights advocates might take matters into their own hands to stop Mrs. Clinton from appointing judges they do not like.

"Vigilante justice is not that long ago in this country," Professor LeBas said. "I'm talking about the South; I'm referring to the K.K.K. All of that is very recent."

Mr. Trump, in threatening to jail his rival, was not just echoing authoritarians like Mr. Chávez or President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. He was also promising to take what is often one of the first steps by which a democracy becomes more authoritarian.

"It kind of reminds me of Bangladesh," Professor Staniland said, referring to the country's history of political violence and instability. "Thailand is like this, too. You have this real sense that whoever wins the election will go after the loser."

Even if leaders succeed only rarely in using the state to punish their rivals, he said, "that can quickly spiral out of control," turning politics into a zero-sum game for control over the institutions of law and order.

"If I believe the other party will purge me and my supporters if I lose the next election, then I have powerful incentives to try to do everything I can to win the next election," Professor Staniland said.

Professor Berman said American democracy was strong enough to prevent such a sudden transformation, but she still worries that voters take this for granted.

"Democratic institutions, like all institutions, can corrode and erode over time," she warned, saying of Mr. Trump, "Even if he couldn't become an Orban, much less a Mussolini, he could do damage so that the next person that comes along has even more leeway."

Professor LeBas was more blunt. "Our institutions and our democratic orientations and attitudes," she said, "are far weaker than we think they are."

The Man Behind The Tapes That Could Sink The Donald

By Todd S. Purdum

Politico Magazine, October 11, 2016

He's a former British paratrooper and one-time Beverly Hills nanny who made a fortune inventing reality TV with Survivor and producing shows for every network. He's a devout Christian who, with his wife Roma Downey, has generated blockbuster religious programming, raised money for displaced Christians in Syria and Iraq and counts prominent evangelicals among his allies.

He's also a past donor to Democratic political campaigns, chief among them Barack Obama's, and his closest family friends and mentors include the Hollywood uber-liberal Jeffrey Katzenberg.

And now, because of the accident of his collaboration with Donald Trump, for whom he created The Apprentice—the franchise that launched Trump's political career—Mark Burnett is sitting squarely on top of what could be the hottest story in American politics, with no apparent prospect that he will ever tell it. Or let it be told. To the world, that might look as if Burnett is covering for the man whose Trump: The Art of the Deal he has said helped inspire him to reboot his own life in what would prove to be a phenomenally lucrative way.

But one longtime Hollywood executive who knows Burnett well and considers him a friend says that, contrary to some media reports, Burnett is not supporting Trump politically and has, in fact, long been privately appalled by the mogul's crudeness. "They made a lot of money together," the executive says. "That's all."

What's holding Burnett back, insiders explain, is nothing more than the keen business acumen, airtight contractual arrangements and salesmanship that have propelled him to the top of his profession.

Since last weekend, when Bill Pruitt, a former Apprentice producer, tweeted in the aftermath of Trump's lewd and abusive comments about women in old Access Hollywood outtakes that "there are far worse" Trump comments in the Apprentice archives, the most fevered parlor game from Hollywood to Washington to New York has been when or whether such material might surface.

Another former Burnett producer, Chris Nee, later claimed on Twitter—in a tweet since deleted—that she had heard from Apprentice producers and crew that Trump had been heard using the "N-word," and that the contractual penalty for any Burnett employee who disclosed proprietary information about the show was $5 million. (Nee later said she had only heard rumors of Trump's words.) And the Associated Press reported that former crew members, staffers and contestants on the show said Trump used demeaning and sexist language about female contestants, ranked them by breast size and talked about which ones he'd like to have sex with.

After a 48-hour furor in which various Hillary Clinton supporters offered to raise the money to compensate any whistleblower, Burnett and MGM, which acquired his production company for more than $500 million over the past two years and installed him as its head of its television arm, sought to douse the flames in a statement late Monday.

"MGM owns Mark Burnett's production company and The Apprentice is one of its properties," the joint statement says. "Despite reports to the contrary, Mark Burnett does not have the ability nor the right to release footage or other material from The Apprentice. Various contractual and legal requirements also restrict MGM's ability to release such material." Burnett's office did not return messages from POLITICO seeking further comment.

Stiff penalties for unauthorized disclosure are standard practice for reality television series—in which suspense and surprise are crucial elements of the shows. Moreover, as the star—and a partner—in The Apprentice, industry experts say, Trump himself might well have the legal right to control the release of any outtakes or other unused material, including written transcripts, which are routinely used as an aid in editing and shaping the shows.

"Big stars—and here Trump is in that category—are often given that benefit," says one top studio lawyer, who is not involved in The Apprentice and has no firsthand knowledge of Trump's deal with Burnett.

Another longtime television executive, involved with a rival reality show, notes that whatever Burnett's political or personal beliefs, it would be highly damaging to his standing in the industry—where he has a reputation as the sharpest of deal-makers—if he released proprietary material. "There's no upside to it," the executive says. "You erode any trust that anyone ever had in you. Who would ever want to work with you again?"

But the pressure shows little sign of abating. On Tuesday, the civil rights lawyer Gloria Allred and representatives of the California branch of the National Organization for Women and the California Democratic Party Women's Caucus marched to MGM's headquarters in Beverly Hills to present an open letter demanding release of the tapes as "a civic duty."

For its part, NBC has taken pains to explain that Burnett's company delivered each episode of The Apprentice to the network as a finished package, and controls the raw footage. But since it was the success of The Apprentice that helped revive NBC's moribund primetime lineup more than a decade ago, that leaves the network's news division, already under fire for moving slowly to release the Access Hollywood footage, which the network does control, in an awkward spot.

"Ethically, I think it's a very 21st century moment," says one veteran Hollywood producer who has also worked with Burnett. "Will there be whistleblowers within the company who have access to the data and leak it. If you're NBC News, aren't you just hammering your bosses to get it?"

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Burnett, 56, once summed up his philosophy by saying, "I'd rather go for it than not have done it. Falling on my face is not painful to me."

In fact, his rise to the top of the television heap might once have seemed improbable. He grew up the only child of Ford Motor Company factory workers in suburban London and at 17 joined the British Army, eventually becoming a section commander in the parachute regiment (the equivalent of a U.S. Army Ranger). He saw combat duty in the Falkland Islands war, and in 1982 struck out for the United States, where a friend had emigrated some years before.

He found work as a nanny and housekeeper—first in Beverly Hills and then in Malibu—but once joked that he was so bad at his cleaning duties that the family he worked for had to hire a housekeeper to clean the house, "including my room." He worked for a time in an insurance office of the family that employed him, but found he could make more money by selling second-quality designer T-shirts on Venice Beach on the weekends. (He'd buy them for $2 each and sell them for $18.)

In 1991, he joined a French adventure competition, later buying the format rights and bringing his first show—Eco-Challenge, a race contest over grueling terrain—to American cable TV, first on MTV and ESPN, and eventually on the Discovery Channel.

In 2000, he got his big break with Survivor, a summer replacement show on CBS. The series was a smash and the rest is history, from The Apprentice, to Shark Tank, Sarah Palin's Alaska, Rock Star, Pirate Master and The Voice. Form his earliest days on Survivor, Burnett began direct negotiations with would-be advertisers, many of whom gave him commitments before his shows ever hit the air.

Burnett has said many times that he was inspired to take the initial risk of becoming a TV entrepreneur—to "Jump In" as he titled his 2005 book—in part by having read The Art of the Deal in his shirt-selling days. He would later convey that enthusiasm to Trump—never a man to look askance at flattery—when pitching him for what would become The Apprentice. Burnett knew the story of Trump's renovation of Wollman Rink in Central Park and could recite it back to The Donald chapter and verse. A symbiotic partnership was born almost on the spot.

"He's one of the kings of the hill," says another longtime television production executive, speaking on condition of anonymity so as not to antagonize a rival. "And not surprisingly, he's very much about Mark Burnett."

Burnett has long since punched virtually every ticket in the business, producing such awards shows as the annual People's Choice Awards and the Primetime Emmys, earning a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and playing host an annual Christmas party in early December that draws the cream of the industry. People who have worked with Burnett, who was raised by a Presbyterian mother and Catholic father, say he apparently became more religious after getting together with the Irish-born Downey, a devout Catholic who wears her faith on her sleeve and starred for nine years in the

CBS series Touched by an Angel. The couple married in 2007, several years after his divorce from his first wife, Dianne, with whom he has two sons, and they have been active in religious and charitable causes at home and abroad.

Not all his creative ventures have succeeded. His and Downey's 2013 miniseries documentary version of the Bible for the History Channel was a global sensation, tapping the market for religious programming. But their remake of Ben-Hur this summer was one of the year's biggest and most expensive big screen duds and failed to find favor with its target audience. That was a blow to the bottom line of MGM and Paramount Pictures, which distributed the movie, and to Burnett's brand but not to his bottom line; he remains, by most accounts, a millionaire a couple of hundred times over.

Burnett has distilled his business approach in an epigram: "Having the same sales pitch is stupid. Always adjust what you're saying based on the person you're hoping will give you their money." Indeed, he has produced almost every kind of reality programming, for every conceivable audience.

In Hollywood this year, Burnett's long and close professional association with Trump has not gone unnoticed. There were reports—later staunchly denied by Burnett's representatives—that he would have a hand in planning for the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, and various reports—also flatly denied—have persisted that he was backing Trump's campaign.

"Many have asked, who is to blame for Donald Trump?" Jimmy Kimmel said in his opening monologue at the Emmy Awards last month. "And I'll tell you who. He's sitting right there. That guy. Mark Burnett, the man who brought us Celebrity Apprentice. Thanks to Mark Burnett, we don't have to watch reality shows because we're living in one. If Donald Trump gets elected, and he builds that wall, the first person we're throwing over is Mark Burnett."

When cameras panned to Burnett, he laughed and took the joke in stride, and when asked about it later in the press room, after winning an Emmy himself for The Voice, Burnett said, "I'm sure Donald is thrilled. I bet he's emailing Jimmy now…How much free media can any one person get?"

Perhaps paradoxically, given all the focus on Trump, one of Burnett's closest friendships is with Dreamworks founder Jeffrey Katzenberg, a major Clinton supporter. The two worked together on The Contender, a boxing reality series starring Sylvester Stallone and Sugar Ray Leonard. Two years ago, when one of Burnett's sons was hospitalized with a brain tumor, Katzenberg and his wife Marilyn reportedly visited him every day.

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For now, the question of just what might be in The Apprentice vaults remains a matter of conjecture—if informed and fevered conjecture. After his initial tweet—As a producer on seasons 1 & 2 of #theapprentice I assure you: when it comes to the #trump tapes there are far worse. #justthebeginning.—former producer Pruitt went silent and has declined requests to elaborate, perhaps bound by a non-disclosure clause himself.

At least one apparently authentic transcript of unaired material has surfaced, in The Huffington Post. In those excerpts, Trump is heard using vulgarities to describe the skin of one contestant, Emily West, an aspiring musician who later appeared on America's Got Talent. "Her skin sucks, her skin sucks, OK?" Trump is quoted as saying at one point. Cyndi Lauper, who was part of the team managing West, told The Huffington Post that, "Yes, of course," Trump had said such things.

Interestingly, in the transcript, Trump is recorded as saying, "I assume you're gonna leave this off…" when making such comments, as if realizing himself that they would not look good in the light of day.

Hollywood is a town that thrives on gossip and leaks every bit as much as Washington, so it wouldn't be surprising if more Trump outtakes surface as they did in the Washington Post on Friday—no matter the potential financial or legal penalty. As the veteran studio lawyer told me, "This is the time when things like this show up in envelopes in the mailboxes of people like you. As my grandmother liked to say, "Any three people can keep a secret if two of them are dead.'"

Todd S. Purdum is senior writer at Politico and contributing editor for Vanity Fair, as well as author of An Idea Whose Time Has Come: Two Presidents, Two Parties and the Battle for the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Republicans Tell Trump To Quit Claiming Rigged Election

The struggling GOP nominee is urging supporters to fight the system, and officials nationwide are fuming over it.

By Darren Samuelsohn

Politico, October 11, 2016

It's not just the Democrats who are frustrated by Donald Trump's "rigged election" talk.

Republicans have started warning their increasingly ostracized nominee to stop stoking his supporters with claims that the 2016 election will be stolen, daring him to show proof or put a lid on it.

"Somebody claiming in the election, 'I was defrauded', that isn't going to cut it," said former Sen. Kit Bond, a Missouri Republican who earlier in the campaign had endorsed Jeb Bush and then Marco Rubio. "They're going to have to say how, where, why, when."

"I don't think leading candidates for the presidency should undercut the process unless you have a really good reason," Sen. Lindsey Graham, the South Carolina

Republican who gained little support for his own 2016 White House run, told POLITICO.

Trump and his running mate Mike Pence have been flogging for months the notion that Hillary Clinton supporters could tamper with voting to the point that they win the White House. Their campaign website is recruiting poll watchers, and longtime Trump adviser Roger Stone has been raising unlimited funds from corporations and individuals in a bid to "fight a rigged system" that benefits the Democrats.

And Monday, at a post-debate rally in crucial Pennsylvania, Trump kept the vote rigging argument alive: "Watch other communities because we don't want this election stolen from us," Trump said. "We do not want this election stolen from us."

Such sustained and super-charged rhetoric, coming on the heels of a heated debate over restrictive voter ID laws across the country and the U.S. government's Friday announcement accusing Russian hackers on orders from the Kremlin of trying to meddle with the election, has raised alarm bells in election offices nationwide.

States already bracing for record turnout in the presidential race are also dealing simultaneously with an unprecedented series of cyber threats, including what the Homeland Security Department has confirmed as attempted hacks on more than 20 voting registration systems across the country. While the balloting itself is largely seen as safe from cyber sleuths because the bulk of the actual voting process takes place offline, the state officials doing the grunt work complain that charges of election rigging, on top of the complaints they hear about ballot security, make their jobs that much tougher.

"I think both sides are being very political," Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp said in an interview.

Unfounded rumors about vote rigging, spreading in viral speed on the internet, have even forced state officials to play the role of fact checkers. One fake news article moved so quickly last week that Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted felt compelled to issue a statement attempting to debunk a widely-circulated story that purported to show "one dozen black, sealed ballot boxes filled with thousands of Franklin County votes for Hillary Clinton and other Democratic candidates."

"This post is both false and intentionally misleading," Husted said of the article posted on christiantimesnewspaper.com. He pointed out that the picture accompanying the story was a "slightly doctored version of a photo used in a 2015 article about election results in the United Kingdom."

"A Christian myself, I take offense to reading such unbelievable lies from a publication alleging Christian ties," Husted said. "It was a deliberate attempt to deceive and mislead. We already get enough of that from the candidates."

Indeed, Husted has said that the presidential campaign rhetoric around vote rigging and other election security matters threatens to undermine whichever candidate wins on November 8.

"I for a long time have been critical of people in both political parties who have tried to undermine public confidence in our election, rather by saying the election is going to be rigged or suggesting that people are being disenfranchised," Husted said.

Election officials note that widespread voting fraud has been repeatedly debunked, and they point to a series of media accounts and government watchdog reports saying so. Among the most notable: student journalists at the Carnegie-Knight News21 program found in a 2012 study just 10 cases of voter impersonation dating back to the 2000 election. That's one example out of every 15 million possible voters. And again in August, the media group released new findings on voter fraud cases in five states – Arizona, Georgia, Kansas, Ohio and Texas – that examined hundreds of allegations and found few actual prosecutions.

One of Trump's most frequent suggestions surrounds urging his supporters to visit "certain areas" on Election Day as poll watchers to ensure Clinton supporters don't vote multiple times. His underlying premise: The two most recent presidential elections where President Barack Obama essentially skunked his GOP rivals in urban ballots.

But the Philadelphia Inquirer, following the 2012 election, reported Obama's unanimous victory over Mitt Romney in 59 different majority-minority areas shouldn't be a surprise considering the demographics of the region and the fact the country's first black president was running for reelection. The Cleveland Plain Dealer came to a similar conclusion when it studied how Obama won so conclusively in east Cleveland.

In a recent interview, Obama's 2008 opponent, John McCain marveled at his own challenges when trying to connect with African American voters.

"I didn't get a single vote in the whole inner city of Philadelphia," the Arizona GOP senator told POLITICO. "I thought maybe they could find one."

But McCain also said he's far more concerned about a different kind of threat to the security of the presidential election, and it wasn't Trump's charge of possible vote rigging. Namely, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee said he was alarmed about what the Russian hackers might be up to.

"The most disturbing comment I've ever heard in recent years was when [NSA Director] Admiral [Michael] Rogers said before our committee, 'I don't know what I don't know.' So I sure as hell don't know what capabilities they have," McCain said.

Obama himself has called Trump's suggestion of a rigged election "ridiculous" in an August press conference.

"Of course the elections will not be rigged. What does that mean?" he said.

The president went on to liken the Republican nominee to a sore loser in sports. "I've never heard of somebody complaining about being cheated before the game was over, or before the score is even tallied," Obama said. "So my suggestion would be go out there and try to win the election. If Mr. Trump is up 10 or 15 points on Election Day and ends up losing, then maybe he can raise some questions."

Trump's backers, including Stone, were indeed nudging a more vocal set of arguments surrounding vote rigging back during the summer when polling showed the Republican well within striking distance of Clinton. For his part, Pence has told Trump supporters during public rallies that their concerns about a fraudulent election were "well-founded."

"People need to be very concerned about voter fraud," Pence told CNN in late August, noting that in his home state of Indiana there have been voter fraud prosecutions for more than a decade. Poll watching, he added, was a form of "vigilance I think is essential to any kind of vibrant democracy."

To be sure, Trump has some Republican sympathizers.

"I think anything is possible especially with electronic voting and everything," said Sen. Richard Shelby, an Alabama Republican. "We've got millions of people voting. And we've got a lot on the outcome."

Lanhee Chen, a former Romney 2012 policy adviser, said he doesn't dispute the notion that there is some degree of voter fraud that takes place every election cycle across the country. But he argued that such occurrences aren't so rampant that presidential candidates should be making those charges with what amounts to a bullhorn from the stump.

"Ultimately, is it enough to compromise an election? Probably not," Chen said, adding: "Credible Republicans have to be a note of sobriety and we do have to respect the outcome of the election."

NYC Election Commissioner Admits 'all Kinds Of Fraud' In Undercover Video

'Your vote isn't really counting'

By Douglas Ernst

Washington Times, October 11, 2016

The conservative nonprofit group Project Veritas has released an undercover video of a Manhattan Democratic representative on the city's Board of Elections lamenting "all kinds" fraud, including voter fraud.

Commissioner Alan Schulkin unwittingly spoke to a member of Project Veritas last December at a United Federation of Teachers holiday party. Footage released Tuesday in conjunction with a piece by the New York Post shows him blasting fraud that New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio's municipal ID program has cultivated in the city.

"He gave out ID cards, de Blasio. That's in lieu of a driver's license, but you can use it for anything," Mr. Schulkinsaid Dec. 15. "But they didn't vet people to see who they really are. Anybody can go in there and say, 'I am Joe Smith, I want an ID card. It's absurd. There is a lot of fraud. Not just voter fraud, all kinds of fraud … This is why I get more conservative as I get older."

Mr. Schulkin added that "certain neighborhoods in particular" have unregistered voters bused around the city to vote multiple times. He would not say which neighborhoods, but when prompted on minority areas he replied, "Yeah, and Chinese, too."

"Your vote isn't really counting, because they can go [into the polling station] with a burqa on and you don't know if they are a voter. Your vote gets discounted because they come in with a burqa on and they can vote."

Mr. Schulkin told the Post for its story that he should have said "potential fraud" instead of "fraud," and that he was "just trying to placate" the Project Veritas employee when they met.

"She was like a nuisance," he told the newspaper.

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Trump's Tax Plan Would Shower The Rich, Clinton's Would Soak Them

By Brian Faler

Politico, October 11, 2016

When it comes to taxes, voters face a stark choice this November, a pair of new reports shows.

Hillary Clinton wants to raise taxes by $1.4 trillion while Donald Trump would cut them by $6.2 trillion.

The wealthy would be the big winners under his plan, the centrist Tax Policy Center said Tuesday, with the top 1 percent seeing an average tax cut of $215,000. The rich would bear nearly all of her tax increases, the group said, with the top 1 percent seeing their tax bills climbing by an average $118,000.

Trump would cut business taxes by more than $2.6 trillion; Clinton would increase them by $130 billion.

Her plan, with a mix of tax hikes on the rich and tax cuts for certain targeted groups further down the income ladder, would make the tax code a lot more complex. Trump's plan would simplify the code, the group said, though he would introduce new complications, especially when it comes to taxing small businesses.

"They really couldn't be more different," said Len Burman, head of the group. "In almost every meaningful respect, these plans are mirror images."

The new assessments come after both candidates have made substantial changes to their tax plans, and tangled over the proposals in recent debates.

Trump has almost completely rewritten his plan, making it much closer to one offered by House Republicans, while Clinton has offered a succession of new changes. Among them: a brand new proposal to double a child tax credit to $2,000 for children under the age of five, which the Tax Policy Center figures would cost $209 billion.

The Trump campaign denounced the study as "fraudulent."

Calling the Tax Policy Center "deeply biased," and accusing it of "gross malfeasance," Trump Policy Director Stephen Miller said in a statement: "The Trump plan is revenue neutral, massively cuts middle-class taxes and has huge childcare benefits for low- and middle-income families."

Clinton adviser Jacob Leibenluft said: "This report is further evidence of the clear choice for voters," saying the Democratic nominee would require "the wealthy, Wall Street and large corporations to pay their fair share."

The differences between the two plans begin with the winners and losers.

Though Trump accused Clinton in Sunday's debate of plotting to "massively" raise "everybody's taxes," the report shows that the top 1 percent would actually pay 92 percent of the tax increases she proposed. That would reduce their after-tax incomes by 5 percent.

She'd go even harder after the top 0.1 percent, where incomes begin at $3.7 million. They'd pay an additional $805,000 on average.

By contrast, though Trump has said his plan is focused on the middle class, the report shows he'd give the most to the wealthy. While the top 1 percent would receive an average tax cut of $215,000, the top 0.1 percent would pocket an additional $1.1 million.

People at every income level would see a tax cut under Trump's plan, the group said, with those in the middle of the income spectrum seeing an average $1,010 tax cut. Those at the bottom would see their taxes fall by $110.

Some people within those groups, such as single parents and families with multiple children, would see their taxes go up though because of Trump's plan to junk the head-of-household filing status as well as personal exemptions.

Clinton's plan would leave those in the bottom 80 percent of earners mostly unchanged. Under her plan, people in the middle one-fifth would see a $110 tax cut, the analysis shows, while those at the bottom would get an additional $100.

Trump's plan is much more focused on revamping the business tax code, promising to cut rates to 15 percent, from 35 percent, and allowing manufacturers to immediately write off the cost of their investments.

But his plan to cut taxes to 15 percent on so-called pass throughs (in which business owners pay taxes on their profits through their individual returns) as well as corporations — even as he charges a top individual rate of 33 percent — would create a strong incentive for the rich to dress themselves up as small businesses in order to tap the lower rate, the group said.

"The revised Trump plan does not specify any rules or enforcement mechanisms that might limit the number of employees who would redefine themselves as sole proprietorships or other pass-through businesses in order to benefit from the 15 percent business tax rate," the report said. "We have assumed that eventually half (50 percent) of high-wage workers would become pass-through entities."

Clinton has a far more limited business tax plan that focuses mostly on shutting down ways multinational corporations can avoid paying U.S. taxes. She wants to crack down on "inversions," where companies shift their headquarters abroad in order to duck the tax man, and so-called earnings stripping. She would impose an "exit tax" on businesses that move abroad. Those changes would generate $100 billion, the Tax Policy Center.

Her plans actually would have a bigger direct effect on the real estate industry than Trump's, thanks to her proposal to crimp like-kind exchanges. That allows real estate developers to defer capital gains taxes, sometimes for decades, by trading properties. Clinton would only allow the postponement of $1 million in gains annually.

Clinton's tax plans would technically reduce the debt by $1.6 trillion over the decade, once reduced interest payments on the debt are included. But she wants to use that money to pay for a host of new spending initiatives, which means her plans overall would be a wash for the budget, said Burman.

"Clinton's proposal is clearly designed not to have much effect on the budget," he said. "It's a net tax increase, but I think she's earmarked all of that to pay for new spending, so she's been criticized by budget hawks as not doing anything to get us off our unsustainable fiscal path but at least she doesn't make things worse."

By contrast, Trump's plan would balloon the debt by $7.2 trillion, once increased interest payments are included. Trump has said he'd offset the cost of his plan with spending reductions though he hasn't said how, and has ruled out cutting large chunks of the budget.

Clinton's plan is hardly what many tax reformers had have in mind, the report shows. Her plans to create three new minimum taxes, for example, would make an already opaque code even more complex.

"Clinton's proposal is complicated, especially for individuals," Burman said. "Three new alternative minimum taxes will make it hard to figure out what their tax situation is."

The group did not do a so-called dynamic analysis, examining the plans' effects on the economy, though it predicted Trump's plan would hurt growth in the long term. That's because his run up in the debt would force the government to borrow more, which would push up interest

rates. The group hopes to put out its economic analyses of the plans in the next couple days.

"We will put out those estimates as soon as we're sure they're right," he said.

Donald Trump's Tax Plan Cuts Wider Than Hillary Clinton's

By Stephen Dinan

Washington Times, October 11, 2016

Hillary Clinton wants to sock the very wealthy with an $800,000-a-year tax increase. Donald Trump says they should get a $1.1 million tax cut.

The poor, meanwhile, make out about the same no matter who is in the White House: a $100 tax cut under Mrs. Clinton and a $110 cut under Mr. Trump, according to an analysis released Tuesday by the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center, which crunched the numbers and said Mr. Trump is more generous to taxpayers but does far more damage to federal revenue.

Indeed, Mr. Trump would open a $6 trillion gap in the federal budget over the next decade, and Mrs. Clinton would raise $1.4 trillion more in revenue. Almost all of that would come from those who make more than $3.7 million a year, the top 10th of a percent of American workers.

Mrs. Clinton tried to sweeten her plan for the poor and middle class on Tuesday, saying she would expand the child tax credit for families with children younger than 5, doubling the maximum credit from $1,000 to $2,000 per child.

Mrs. Clinton said that is just "a down payment" and more relief is on the way.

"Hardworking, middle-class families are struggling with rising costs for child care, health care, caregiving and college," Mrs. Clinton said. "This new tax credit will make their lives a little bit easier and help restore fairness to our economy."

Adding the child credit helped improve Mrs. Clinton's numbers, which show only a modest tax cut for most Americans.

Indeed, most taxpayers would get less than a couple of hundred bucks extra from the IRS under her plans. Those making $48,000 to $83,000 — the middle class — would average $110 extra, and those making $83,000 to $143,000 would average an extra $40 in 2017.

Mr. Trump is far more generous, with those in the middle getting an additional $1,010 in tax relief and those making $83,000 to $143,000 receiving an extra $2,030.

The biggest changes come for the wealthiest. Under Mr. Trump's plan, the top 20 percent — those making more than $143,000 — would pay an average of $16,660 less. Under Mrs. Clinton, they would pay $6,690 more.

Those differences end up playing out in the federal budget, where Mr. Trump — absent giant spending cuts — would dramatically deepen deficits.

The Trump campaign has said his tax cuts would be deficit-neutral, which would mean those spending cuts would have to come from somewhere. The liberal-leaning Center on Budget and Policy Priorities said the cuts would likely come from programs that help the poor because the wealthy don't use those programs to the same extent.

Jacob Leibenluft, an economic adviser to Mrs. Clinton's campaign, said the Trump plan amounted to "massive giveaways to the richest Americans."

Stephen Miller, a senior adviser to Mr. Trump, dismissed the Tax Policy Center plan as fraudulent and said releasing it "wasted everyone's time." He said the Tax Policy Center — a joint operation between the Urban Institute and the Brookings Institution — is biased toward Mrs. Clinton and that the study didn't calculate the economic benefits of cutting taxes for the wealthy.

Mr. Trump has said that lower taxes will mean more jobs and a bigger economy, reducing the $6.2 trillion in revenue lost because of the rate cuts.

"The Trump plan is revenue-neutral, massively cuts middle-class taxes and has huge child care benefits for low- and middle-income families," Mr. Miller said.

He also said the Tax Policy Center ignored some of the details of the Trump plan.

The center said Mr. Trump's aides did not cooperate, so they had to make a number of assumptions they shared with the campaign. It said Mrs. Clinton's campaign did cooperate and shared details of her proposed child tax credit even before it was announced.

Overall, Mr. Trump's plan would cut the number of tax brackets and slash rates across the board. The marginal rate on the highest income bracket would drop to 33 percent. His plan cuts the corporate income tax rate to 15 percent, caps the level of deductions taxpayers can claim and eliminates the head-of-household filing status, but adds breaks for child care and increases the earned income tax credit.

Mrs. Clinton's plan would impose a number of hikes on high-income households, including a 30 percent minimum tax that phases in beginning at $1 million. Among her many other tweaks are eliminating an Obamacare tax that would hit union members particularly hard and rules that would make it tougher to defer capital gains taxes.

Scott Greenberg, an analyst at the Tax Foundation, which is releasing its own analysis this week of the Trump and Clinton plans, said they generally match up with the Tax Policy Center's analysis: The Trump plan would generally reduce taxes, with most of the gains going to well-off taxpayers, while Mrs. Clinton's plan is a net tax increase, though many families would pay less.

Mr. Greenberg said Mr. Trump does deserve credit for trying to take some of the complexity out of the tax code.

"Only one of the candidates in the race has even given lip service to the concept of tax simplicity, and that's Trump," he said. "Clintons' tax plan would unabashedly make the tax code more complicated."

One of the consequences of cutting deductions and eliminating the head-of-household filing status, though, is that it could "cause many large families and single parents to face tax increases."

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Analysis: By 2025, Most Of Donald Trump's Tax Cuts Would Go To The Wealthiest 1% Of Americans

By Max Ehrenfreund

Washington Post, October 11, 2016

Donald Trump has called for historic tax relief for the rich, which would likely add trillions of dollars to the national debt. Hillary Clinton would ask the wealthy to pay much more than they do now, and she would use the money mostly to lessen the burden on middle-class families with small children.

A pair of new analyses published Tuesday afternoon by the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center emphasize the extreme contrasts between the two candidates when it comes to taxes. In a campaign that has been defined by conspiracy theories, racial innuendos and sex scandals from decades past, the new data is a reminder that the election puts serious money at stake for many American households.

Where Clinton would increase taxes on corporations and investors, Trump would drastically reduce them. He has called for eliminating the estate tax, which Clinton hopes to increase. The Democratic presidential nominee would expand the credit for children, while her Republican rival would eliminate an important tax advantage for families.

"They really couldn't be more different," Leonard Burman, the director of the center, told reporters in a conference call Tuesday. "In almost every meaningful respect, these plans are mirror images."

Trump's plan

By 2025, about 51 percent of the benefits of Trump's tax plan would accrue to the wealthiest percentile of taxpayers, according to the Tax Policy Center's analysis. Those wealthy taxpayers would save $317,000 on average each year, increasing their incomes by more than 14 percent.

Less affluent taxpayers would also benefit, but less so. A typical family would save a little less than $1,100 a year in taxes – an increase of 1.5 percent in their income. Families with single parents or multiple children, however, could pay more in taxes under Trump's plan.

Reducing taxes on the grand scale that Trump has proposed would mean far less revenue for the federal government. The government would have to either reduce spending, or borrow more to make up the difference.

Trump has promised to identify areas of the federal budget in which he would eliminate spending, Burman noted, but the New York businessman has also pledged to maintain the bulk of public expenditures by ruling out reductions in entitlements and the military.

"There's reason to be skeptical," Burman said.

If the government borrowed all of the money to pay for Trump's tax plan, the deficits and the cost of interest would increase the national debt by $7.2 trillion. By contrast, the figure the center estimated for former Republican nominee Mitt Romney's tax plan four years ago was about $5 trillion.

Trump's advisers have argued that reducing taxes would benefit the broader economy by encouraging Americans to work, save and invest. Any improvement in the economy overall could also create more revenue for the federal government.

Burman, however, pointed out that trillions of dollars in federal deficits would increase interest rates for businesses and consumers who are looking to borrow money, since they would have to compete with the Treasury Department for credit. An increase in interest rates would hold back the economy over time.

"We expect that the Trump plan would provide a short-term boost to the economy," Burman said. "In the long run, the economy would be worse off."

He and his colleagues said they will publish more detailed estimates of the effects of both candidates' plans on the economy in the coming days. Clinton's plan

Most of the benefits of Clinton's plan would go to working and middle-class families. For families with children under the age of 5, Clinton would double the maximum yearly value of the child tax credit from $1,000 to $2,000 for each child.

Clinton has also proposed an expansion of the credit for other families with children up to 17 years old that would primarily benefit poor families.

On average, a typical middle-class family would pay about $200 less in taxes in 2025 under Clinton's proposal, according to the analysis. For the poorest one in five families, the savings would be worth about $100 on average.

These averages alone might be misleading, however, since the benefits for households without children would be limited, and their incomes could even be reduced as a result of the increase in corporate taxes, which would weigh on wages and investment in the broader economy, according to the Tax Policy Center. The center did not provide detailed estimates for families based on the age or number of their children.

By contrast, Clinton has proposed substantial increases in taxes on the wealthy.

By 2025, 93 percent of the new revenue that Clinton would raise would come from the richest 1 percent of Americans, according to the analysis. Households in this group would pay close to $164,000 more each year on average. The additional taxes would reduce their incomes by an average of 7.3 percent.

Almost two-thirds of that revenue would come from the richest 0.1 percent, who would pay an average of $1.1 million more each year, reducing their incomes by almost 11 percent.

In addition to the expanded credits for children, Clinton has also proposed major new public expenditures – such as helping students in college avoid debt and spending hundreds of millions on roads, ports and other infrastructure. On the whole, Burman said, it is unlikely that Clinton's plans will have much effect either way on the federal government's bottom line.

Dueling Tax Plans

By Kevin G. Hall

McClatchy, October 11, 2016

Donald Trump's proposed tax plan would blow up the national debt over the next decade, while Hillary Clinton would bring it down but fails to return debt to historically much lower levels.

Those are the conclusions by the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center, in a detailed analysis Tuesday of tax plans from both the major candidates.

Trump would collapse brackets down to three rates, 12, 25 and 33 percent and would lower the corporate tax rate down to 15 percent, and he'd extend that rate to small businesses and partnerships that pass through their business income to owners and managers who declare it on their personal taxes.

These tax cuts for working Americans and business would result in $6.2 trillion in lost revenue over the first decade of implementation and $8.9 trillion over the following 10 years. About 75 percent of the lost revenue would come from the steep cuts in the taxation of businesses and of the wealthiest Americans.

The revenue losses would trigger higher interest rates, making it more costly for the federal government to borrow to meet past obligations and any shortfall that arises from the drop in revenue. When adding those interest costs, the federal debt would grow by $7.2 trillion in 2026 and $20.9 trillion by 2036. Trump has said he won't reduce military spending, and won't touch entitlement programs like Medicare and Social Security_ three of the biggest drivers of all federal spending.

The plan would cut taxes at every income level, but high-income taxpayers would receive the biggest cuts, both in dollar terms and as a percentage of income.

Tax Policy Center analysis of Donald Trump's tax proposals.

Importantly, the center did not factor in benefits and losses to the broader economy from the sweeping tax cuts and loophole closers, and did not do so for Clinton's plan either.

"The Clinton Official-led Tax Policy Center has wasted everyone's time with a fraudulent analysis," the Trump campaign said in a statement, accusing the center of deliberately misrepresenting Trump's plan, alleging ties to Clinton while in the same statement also touting criticism by the center of Clinton's plan.

The project's head, Syracuse University Professor Len Burman, expressed confidence that the Joint Committee on Taxation, the tax analysis arm of Congress, would agree that Trump's plan lowers economic growth over the course of a decade.

"The JCT would almost surely score the Trump plan as reducing GDP . . . it would push up interest rates," Burman told reporters. "That's the traditional analysis unless you assume . . . we could borrow infinite amounts of money from the rest of the world without having any effect on interest rates."

Traditional economic models show higher interest rates lead businesses to invest less and weaken productivity, which in turn leads to flat or negative wage growth. It would also push up the cost of taking out a mortgage or car loan.

"This is the traditional analysis, and we think it is right," said Burman, who served as deputy assistant secretary for tax analysis at the Treasury Department from 1998 to 2000 before co-founding the center in 2002 with tax analysts from the Reagan, Clinton and first Bush administrations.

Hillary Clinton's tax plan works in the opposite direction. It would reduce the deficit by raising $1.4 trillion in new revenue through 2026, and another $2.7 trillion in the decade after that. It would trigger savings in interest costs, and as a result the center concludes the deficit would fall $1.6 trillion over the next 10 years.

But a whole range of new spending promised by Clinton on the campaign trail would likely make the savings a wash and result in the current status quo, which has debt levels as a percentage of the economy at twice their historical rates. It presumes, said Burman, adding that current debt levels largely continue over the next decade.

"At least she doesn't make things worse," said Burman, noting that Clinton would add new layers of complexity to an already complicated tax code.

Clinton's deficit reduction comes from higher taxes on the wealthiest, and her plan would reduce the after-income tax of the top 1 percent of earners by 7 percent, the center

estimates. Low and middle-income workers would see modest gains in after-tax income of 1 percent or less.

Clinton's Me-Too Tax Credit

Wall Street Journal, October 11, 2016

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

At Wells Fargo, Complaints About Fraudulent Accounts Since 2005

By Stacy Cowley

New York Times, October 11, 2016

In 2005, the year John G. Stumpf became president of Wells Fargo, Julie Tishkoff, then an administrative assistant at the bank, wrote to the company's human resources department about what she had seen: employees opening sham accounts, forging customer signatures and sending out unsolicited credit cards.

She kept complaining for four years, and she was not alone. For years similar or identical complaints from Wells Fargo workers flowed in to the bank's internal ethics hotline, its human resources department, and individual managers and supervisors. In at least two cases in 2011, employees wrote letters directly to Mr. Stumpf — who became the company's chief executive in 2007, and its board chairman in 2010 — to describe the illegal activities they had witnessed.

Since the ethics scandal erupted in public last month, Mr. Stumpf has testified twice in front of Congress that he and other senior managers only realized in 2013 that they had a big problem on their hands — two years after the bank had started firing people over the issue.

Now, regulators, lawmakers, current and former employees, and others are asking: How was it that this drumbeat of complaints did not set off loud alarm bells earlier? And why have the brunt of the firings fallen on low-level workers, not on the managers and executives who shaped the company's aggressive sales culture?

"It appears that there were activities going on that indicate you may have known much earlier" than 2013, Representative Maxine Waters, Democrat of California, said while questioning Mr. Stumpf in a House Financial Services Committee hearing last month.

Ms. Waters pointed to court filings from 2008 from employees who tried to blow whistles, and to a Wells Fargo sales quality manual that was updated in 2007 — just months after Mr. Stumpf became chief executive, and with his executive guidance — to remind employees that they needed to obtain a customer's consent before opening an account.

Ms. Tishkoff was fired in 2009. At least two of her supervisors were aware of her complaints and ignored them, according to a wrongful termination lawsuit she filed against Wells Fargo in 2011. Those supervisors remain with the bank and are now regional presidents, responsible for overseeing thousands of workers at hundreds of branches.

And since Sept. 8, when Wells Fargo said it would pay $185 million in fines for opening as many as two million customer accounts and credit cards without authorization, dozens of former employees have stepped forward to tell stories like Ms. Tishkoff's — describing the company's toxic sales culture and their own thwarted efforts to use the bank's internal channels to draw attention to the scope of the problem.

"Everybody knew there was fraud going on, and the people trying to flag it were the ones who got in trouble," said Ricky M. Hansen Jr., a former branch manager in Scottsdale, Ariz., who was fired after contacting both human resources and the ethics hotline about illegal accounts he had seen being opened.

Wells Fargo says that it investigates all complaints of impropriety from its ethics hotline or other channels. But it added that until 2013, it handled each complaint about account fraud individually. It was not until three years ago that the company realized it had a broader problem, according to Mary Eshet, a Wells Fargo spokeswoman.

At that point, Wells Fargo began an internal investigation. By then, though, the issue had caught the attention of prosecutors and regulators. In May 2015, the Los Angeles city attorney filed a sweeping lawsuit against Wells Fargo over its creation of unauthorized accounts.

Last month, the bank settled that case and two related actions brought by federal regulators. Ms. Eshet cited the steps the company took in response to the scandal, including its move this month to drop the aggressive sales goals that employees said created pressure to act unethically.

"We have made fundamental changes to help ensure team members are not being pressured to sell products, customers are receiving the right solutions for their financial needs, our customer-focused culture is upheld at all times and that customer satisfaction is high," Ms. Eshet said.

But former employees whose cases are detailed in lawsuits against the bank say that many of the managers at the branch level and above who heard their ethics complaints did nothing and are still there. Between 2011 and this year, Wells Fargo terminated the employment of 5,300 workers for creating as many as two million unauthorized bank and credit card accounts; around 10 percent of those worked at the branch manager level or above, according to the bank, but only one — an area president — had a high-level management role.

In 2009, Yesenia Guitron, a banker in the Northern California town of St. Helena, filed reports to her branch manager, to her branch manager's boss and to Wells Fargo's ethics hotline about a colleague who she said was opening and closing accounts without customer permission.

Those and other fraudulent acts continued despite her complaints, and were openly tolerated by the branch's management, Ms. Guitron told Wells Fargo's human resources department. In 2010, Ms. Guitron was called into her boss's office and told she was being fired for insubordination.

Ms. Guitron filed a wrongful termination lawsuit, submitting into the public record thousands of pages of documents and testimony from multiple branch workers about the unethical acts they said they witnessed. The court sided with Wells Fargo and dismissed the case in 2012. Ms. Guitron had an "objectively reasonable" belief that the bank had acted fraudulently, but Wells Fargo still had grounds to fire her because she fell short of her sales goals, the judge ruled.

Pam Rubio, the manager of the branch where Ms. Guitron worked, is now a private banker at Wells Fargo, managing money for wealthy clients. Also still with the bank is Greg Morgan, the regional manager whom Ms. Guitron approached about the problems at her branch. He was promoted last year and is now Wells Fargo's regional president of the San Francisco market. (Neither Ms. Rubio nor Mr. Morgan responded to requests for comment.)

"We agree with the judge's finding that her claims of retaliation had no merit," Wells Fargo said in a written statement.

Wells Fargo said that Ms. Tishkoff was terminated "for falsifying expense reports" and that the bank "does not tolerate retaliation against team members who report their concerns." Ms. Tishkoff's side of the story is that she accidentally submitted several low-dollar expense items twice and that the company used that as a premise to fire her. The case was settled in 2012, according to Ms. Tishkoff's lawyer, who said the terms of the deal prevented her from speaking publicly about it.

As outrage over the bank's actions has grown, frustrated former employees have said the bank should have heeded what they have said were widespread warnings and taken action much earlier — a fact Mr. Stumpf acknowledged at a hearing before the House Financial Services Committee.

"We should have done more sooner," he said.

That answer does not satisfy Mr. Hansen, the former branch manager in Scottsdale, who said he was fired for speaking up.

Mr. Hansen started at Wells Fargo in 2008 and worked his way up to a management job. A number of his region's top performers openly cheated, he said, but in 2011, while stationed away from his branch to cover for a colleague, he came on a particularly egregious case: The branch's bankers were inventing fake businesses and opening accounts in their names, he said.

"I called H.R. and said, 'What do I do?'" Mr. Hansen recalled. "And they said, 'Go to the ethics hotline.'"

"They said that if we knew about fraud going on and did not report it, we could be terminated for that," he said.

Mr. Hansen said he called the ethics line. The investigator asked for specifics, such as the account numbers and the names of the bankers who opened them. Mr. Hansen said he pulled up the accounts to gather that information.

One month later, he was fired for improperly looking up account information.

"They said, 'Are you aware that what you did was an ethics violation?'" Mr. Hansen recalled.

Incensed, Mr. Hansen sent an email in 2011 to Mr. Stumpf and several human resources executives describing what he had witnessed. The company responded by offering to rehire him in a reduced role, making $30,000 less than he had before. He took the job because he needed one, he said, but quit two years later from the stress of working in what he considered to be an unethical place.

Rasheeda Kamar, a former branch manager in New Milford, N.J., also sent Mr. Stumpf a letter in 2011, the day she learned she was going to be fired for falling short of her branch's sales goals. Bankers were reaching those goals artificially, she warned him: "Funds are moved to new accounts to 'show' growth when in actuality there is no net gain to the company's deposit base."

Her letter, like Mr. Hansen's, was sent two years before Mr. Stumpf says he became aware that such activity was prevalent.

Ms. Kamar said she felt vindicated last month, when Wells Fargo admitted that thousands of its workers had acted illegally — until she read a quotation from Mr. Stumpf blaming the bank's employees, not its corporate culture, for the fiasco.

"I thought, 'How dare he?'" she said in an interview. "They knew, and they turned a blind eye."

She forwarded her 2011 email to Mr. Stumpf to Senator Robert Menendez, Democrat of New Jersey, who quoted it to Mr. Stumpf when the Senate Banking Committee grilled him.

"I don't remember that one," Mr. Stumpf replied.