

THE HOMELAND SECURITY *NEWS CLIPS*

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

TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF

DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 17, 2018 5:00 AM EDT

TODAY'S EDITION

Leading DHS News

[Trump's School Safety Commission Aims To Use Students To Help Make Schools Safer \(ABCNEWS\)](#) 4

[Nielsen: Students Should Receive Medical Training In Case Of Attack \(UPI\)](#) 5

[Trump School Safety Commission Convenes Today \(POLITICO\)](#) 6

DHS News

[White House To Honor ICE 'Heroes' After Family Separation Fiasco \(POLITICO\)](#) 8

Border Wall

[Border Mayors Frustrated With Rhetoric From Washington, Say Wall Is Unnecessary \(USAT\)](#) 9

Aviation Security

[CBP Helps California's Mineta San Jose Airport Implement Facial Biometrics \(EXECCV\)](#) 9

Immigration Policy

[HHS Official: Agency Not Able To Ensure Safety Of Unaccompanied Migrant Kids After They Leave Its Care \(WP\)](#) 9

[Trump Official: Feds Not Responsible For Migrant Children Released From U.S. Custody \(USAT\)](#) 10

[Thousands Of Migrant Children Come Here Alone, The U.S. Doesn't Keep Track Of Them. \(NYT\)](#) 12

[U.S., ACLU Agree On Plan To Reunite Separated Immigrant Families \(REU\)](#) 13

[Nursing Illegal Immigrant Mother Sues Over Border Separation \(WT\)](#) 13

[Bring Separated Parents Back To U.S., ACLU Tells San Diego Judge \(TIMESSD\)](#) 14

[Trump Administration Ordered To Give Up Documents On Deportation Decision \(SFC\)](#) 14

[DOJ Hires Another Batch Of Immigration Judges \(TWNHALL\)](#) 15

Immigration Enforcement

[ICE Arrests Cloquet Man On Golf Course \(PINEJRNL\)](#) 15

[Language Barriers Lead ICE To Rip Children From Their Indigenous Parents \(DAYBEST\)](#) 16

[Detained Workers Say They Were Kept For Two Hours In A Bus Without Air Conditioning After ICE Raids In Nebraska \(BZFDNWS\)](#) 18

[ICE Is Turning To Border Patrol To Detain Migrants, Raising Alarms \(VOICESD\)](#) 19

Criminal Investigations

[US Authorities Seize Fake Luxury Goods Shipped From China \(AP\)](#) 21

[Investigators Seize Fake Luxury Goods Worth Half A Billion Dollars \(NYT\)](#) 21

[Feds Seize \\$500 Million Worth Of Fake Designer Goods In Black Market Sting Operation \(WASHEX\)](#) 22

[22 Arrested In Counterfeit Goods Bust Called One Of The Largest In New York City History \(WABCTV\)](#) 23

[Allegan, Michigan, Man Persuaded Teens To Send Explicit Pics \(MH\)](#) 24

[Man Sentenced For Persuading 50-70 Teens To Send Sexually Explicit Photos \(MLIVE\)](#) 24

Emergency Response

[The Year Hurricane Harvey Swamped A Neighborhood— And Split A Friendship \(WSJ\)](#) 25

[AI Startups Promise To Help Disaster Relief And Evacuation \(BSWK\)](#) 25

Cyber News

[Trump Gives The Military More Latitude To Use Offensive Cyber Tools Against Adversaries \(WP\)](#) 26

[Iowa Adds Technology To Detect Russian Election Hacking Attempts \(CRGAZ\)](#) 27

[Trump Reverses Obama-Era Rules On Cyberattacks \(HUFFPOST\)](#) 28

[Trump Takes Steps Toward Reversing Obama-era Cyberattack Rules \(NYPOST\)](#) 28

[Trump, Seeking To Relax Rules On U.S. Cyberattacks, Reverses Obama Directive \(WSJ\)](#) 28

[Trump Scraps Obama Rules On Cyberattacks, Giving Military Freer Hand \(POLITICO\)](#) 28

[Trump Wants To Make It Easier For The U.S. To Launch Cyberattacks \(VICE\)](#) 30

[Trump Move To Loosen U.S. Use Of Cyberweapons Prompts Intrigue \(WSJ\)](#) 31

[Chinese Hackers Scanned Business, Government Websites In Alaska \(HILL\)](#) 31

[Chinese Hackers Targeted U.S. Firms, Government After Trade Mission: Researchers \(REU\)](#) 31

[Hackers At 'China's MIT' Targeted U.S. Companies And Government Departments, Report Says \(NSWK\)](#) 31

[U.S. States Demand Better Access To Secrets About Election Cyber Threats \(REU\)](#) 32

[DHS Conducts Cybersecurity Tabletop Exercise To Prepare For Midterm Elections \(EXECCV\)](#) 32

[DHS Hosts States For Election Security Exercise \(MERTALK\)](#) 32

[Georgia Counties Respond To Hacking, Security Threat \(MYAJC\)](#) 33

[The Mysterious Hacking Of The Candidate Running Against "Putin's Favorite Congressman" \(VANFAIR\)](#) 35

[Cybersecurity: Cause For Optimism, Need For Continued Vigilance \(HILL\)](#) 36

[These Stealthy Cybersecurity Hunters Speak Your Slang \(FASTCOMP\)](#) 37

[Georgia University Breach Risks Sensitive Details Of 417,000 People \(MYAJC\)](#) 38

[US And Chile Agree To Cooperate On Cyber Security \(AP\)](#) 39

[NotPetya Malware Attack: Chaos But Not Cyber Warfare \(ZDNET\)](#) 40

[Name Change Eludes DHS Cyber Wing, Spurring Frustration \(HILL\)](#) 40

[DHS Launches Security Initiative For US Telecommunications Infrastructure \(EXECCV\)](#) 42

[Australian Teen Sparks FBI Action After Hacking Apple: Media \(REU\)](#) 42

[Email Scams Have Cost Utah Businesses More Than \\$20M This Year, FBI Warns \(DESMN\)](#) 42

Terrorism Investigations

[Bomb Threat Made At Boston Globe After Editorial Condemning Trump \(HILL\)](#) 43

[Massachusetts Man's 'No-fly List' Lawsuit Could Jeopardize Terror Probes, Feds Say \(SPREP\)](#) 44

[Terrorist Suspected In The Failed Detroit Christmas Day Bombing May Be Dead \(MLIVE\)](#) 45

[Afghan IS Branch Claims Deadly Attack On Shiites In Kabul \(AP\)](#) 46

[Gunmen Attack Intelligence Service Center In Afghan Capital Kabul \(REU\)](#) 47

[Bombing Of Student Center In Kabul Highlights Threat To Minority Shiite Youth \(WP\)](#) 47

[Afghan Dream Of A Better Life Ends In A Hilltop Mass Grave \(NYT\)](#) 48

[US Officials: Ex-ISIS Fighter Entered US As Refugee \(AP\)](#) 50

[Here's How A Suspected ISIS Fighter Ended Up In The US As A Refugee \(CALLER\)](#) 51

[Several Terror-related Cases Tied To Sacramento Area \(SACBEE\)](#) 52

[U.S. Lawmakers Demand Answers After Scores Of Children Killed In Yemen Airstrike \(USAT\)](#) 53

[London Mayor Sadiq Khan Wants To Ban Cars In Light Of Recent Terror Attacks \(CALLER\)](#) 54

Other DHS News

[Ex-ICE Agent Accused Of Sexually Assaulting Women And Using Job To Silence Them \(CBSNEWS\)](#) 54

[Border Inspector, Former ICE Agent Face Felony Cases In California \(NBCNEWS\)](#) 55

Global Media

[Facing Far-right Protest, Merkel Pledges Action Over Failed Asylum Seekers \(REU\)](#) 55

[Canada Struggling With Illegal Border 'Crisis' Of Its Own Ahead Of Crucial Elections \(FOX\)](#) 55

National News

[Key GOP Senators Say They Have No Issue With Trump Revoking Brennan's Security Clearance \(CNN\)](#) 57

[Press Release | Press Releases | Press | U.S. Senator Richard Burr Of North Carolina \(SENATEGOV\)](#) 58

[Army Brigadier General Says John Brennan Is A 'Clear And Present Danger' Who Wants To 'Overthrow' Trump \(CALLER\)](#) 58

[Senate GOP Mixed On Revoking Brennan's Security Clearance \(WASHEX\)](#) 59

[Brennan: Trump Worked With Russians And Now He's Desperate \(AP\)](#) 59

[John Brennan: President Trump's Claims Of No Collusion Are Hogwash \(NYT\)](#) 60

[Trump Revokes Ex-CIA Director John Brennan's Security Clearance \(WSJ\)](#) 62

[Ex-C.I.A. Director John Brennan Strikes Back After Trump Revokes His Security Clearance \(NYT\)](#) 62

[Brennan Says Trump's Claims Of No Collusion With Russia Are 'Hogwash' \(WP\)](#) 64

[John Brennan: Trump Colluded With Russia \(WASHEX\)](#) 64

[John Brennan Has Gotten A Lot More Outspoken About Trump And Russia Over The Past Year \(WP\)](#) 65

[John Brennan: Donald Trump's Denial Of Russian Collusion Is 'Hogwash' \(USAT\)](#) 66

[John Brennan On Trump: 'Claims Of No Collusion Are, In A Word, Hogwash' \(WT\)](#) 67

[Trump Gears Up To Strip More Clearances From Officials Tied To Russia Investigation \(WP\)](#) 68

[Revoke My Security Clearance, Too, Mr. President \(WP\)](#) 69

[Ben Rhodes Invokes Bin Laden To Shame Trump \(CALLER\)](#) 70

[Former CBS News Reporter Delivers Kill Shot To Liberal Media Narrative That Trump Is Silencing John Brennan \(TWNHALL\) 70](#)

[Scott Adams: Brennan 'Almost Destroyed' U.S. Because He Can't Understand An 'Obvious Joke' \(WT\) 71](#)

[Donald Trump,the Payback President \(NYT\) 71](#)

[John Brennan Isn't The Real Victim \(WP\) 73](#)

[More Than 300 Newspapers Join Globe Effort On Freedom Of The Press Editorials \(BOSGLOBE\) 73](#)

[Donald Trump Declares 'Fake News' An 'Opposition Party' As More Than 300 Papers Protest His Rhetoric \(WT\) 77](#)

[Trump Says Newspapers Are 'In Collusion' On Championing A Free Press \(NYT\) 78](#)

[Trump Rips Media After Hundreds Of Papers Denounce Press Attacks \(NYPOST\) 79](#)

[Trump Lashes Out After Newspapers Respond To His Attacks \(AP\) 79](#)

[Trump Labels Media 'The Opposition Party' As Newspapers Push Back En Masse \(POLITICO\) 79](#)

[Trump Criticizes Boston Globe In Wake Of #freepress Push \(BOSGLOBE\) 80](#)

[Trump Accuses Boston Globe Of 'Collusion With Other Papers' Amid Coordinated Pushback To His Rhetoric \(HILL\) 81](#)

[Trump Responds After Hundreds Of Newspaper Editorials Criticize His Attacks On The Press \(WP\) 82](#)

[A Unified Word Against Attacks On The Press \(MINNST\) 84](#)

[Denver Post Decries Donald Trump's Attacks On Journalists \(DENP\) 84](#)

[A Free Press Needs You \(NYT\) 85](#)

[Thursday Editorial: The War Between Trump And News Media Must End \(FLTU\) 85](#)

[Newspapers Across U.S. Rebuke Trump For Attacks On Press \(REU\) 86](#)

[A Boston Globe Editorial: Journalists Are Not The Enemy \(BOSGLOBE\) 86](#)

[US Newspapers To Trump: We're Not Enemies Of The People \(AP\) 87](#)

[Editorial: Stand In Defense Of The Truth. Don't Let Trump Label Journalists As 'The Enemy' \(SLPD\) 89](#)

[Newspapers Are Essential Part Of Our Democracy \(CHIST\) 90](#)

[Our View: 'Fake News' And All The President's Taunts \(FAYOBS\) 90](#)

[The Los Angeles Times Is Not Participating In Today's Nationwide Editorial Page Protest Against Trump's Attacks On The Press. Here's Why \(LAT\) 91](#)

[Boston Globe Receives Threat After Anti-Trump Editorial \(AXIOS\) 93](#)

[US Senate Unanimously Passes Resolution Affirming The Press 'is Not The Enemy Of The People' \(BOSGLOBE\) 93](#)

[Free Press Gets A Boost With Senate Resolution Declaring It Is Not The Enemy \(CQRC\) 94](#)

[Senate Takes Shot At Trump, Passes Resolution Affirming 'Press Is Not The Enemy Of The People' \(HILL\) 94](#)

[Ann Coulter: Trump Is Like 'Chemotherapy' To The Media. It's 'Unpleasant.' But It 'Kills Cancer Cells' \(WASHEX\) 95](#)

[Kudlow: China Is Sending Team To Washington To Talk Trade \(AP\) 95](#)

[U.S., China To Resume Talks, Raising Hopes Of Breakthrough In Escalating Trade War \(USAT\) 96](#)

[U.S. And China To Rekindle Trade Talks As More Tariffs Loom \(NYT\) 97](#)

[Kudlow Says China Shouldn't Underestimate Trump On Trade \(BLOOM\) 98](#)

[White House Economic Advisor Kudlow Confirms Trade Talks To Resume With China Later This Month \(CNBC\) 99](#)

[China, U.S. To Hold Lower-level Trade Talks In Late August \(REU\) 99](#)

[U.S., China To Resume Trade Talks As Tariffs Bite \(WSJ\) 100](#)

[Low Expectations As U.S., China Send 'Second-level' Officials To 'Token' Trade Talks \(POLITICO\) 100](#)

[China's Economy Is Reeling While U.S. Thrives: Kudlow \(WT\) 101](#)

[Chinese Hackers Targeted U.S. Firms, Government After Trade Mission: Researchers \(REU\) 101](#)

[Google Employees Protest Secret Work On Censored Search Engine For China \(NYT\) 101](#)

[Top U.S. Trade Official Hopes For NAFTA 'Breakthrough' In Days \(REU\) 102](#)

[Trump Says He Is In 'No Rush' To Renegotiate Nafta \(WSJ\) 103](#)

[Mexican Minister Says Flexibility Needed In NAFTA Talks \(REU\) 103](#)

[Sessions Pledges DOJ Will Prosecute 3D-gun Crimes \(WT\) 103](#)

[Senate Confirms 25th And 26th Appellate Judges During Trump Tenure As GOP Reshapes Court At Record Clip \(WP\) 103](#)

[Senate Confirms Two More Circuit Judges After Flake Lifts Blockade \(WT\) 104](#)

[Senate Democrats Threaten To Sue For Info On Supreme Court Nominee \(REU\) 104](#)

[Senate Dems Threaten National Archives With Lawsuit Over Kavanaugh Records \(WT\) 104](#)

[Dems Threaten To Sue Over Release Of Kavanaugh Documents \(POLITICO\) 105](#)

[Democrats Denounce Kavanaugh Process They Approved For Obama And Kagan \(BREITBART\) 105](#)

[Once Dry Discussions, Cabinet Meetings Are Now Part Of The Trump Show \(NYT\) 107](#)

[Pentagon May Delay Trump's Military Parade, Originally Slated For November, To Next Year \(WP\)](#) _____ 108

[Pentagon Says Trump's Military Parade Postponed Until 2019 Amid Reports Costs Jumped 666% \(USAT\)](#) _____ 109

[Trump's Military Parade Delayed Until 2019 \(POLITICO\)](#) _____ 109

[Trump's Military Parade Could Cost More Than \\$90 Million \(REU\)](#) _____ 110

[\\$92M Is New Estimate For Trump Military Parade; Big Increase \(AP\)](#) _____ 110

[Initial Cost For Trump Military Parade Comes In At \\$12 Million, DoD Says \(MILTICES\)](#) 111

[Why Bruce Ohr Pushing His Wife's Oppo Research To The FBI Is Huge \(FEDRALST\)](#) _____ 111

[Mnuchin Says Turkey Faces More Sanctions If Pastor Not Released \(BLOOM\)](#) 112

[Mnuchin: U.S. Could Do More To Punish Turkey If Pastor Not Released 'Quickly' \(POLITICO\)](#) _____ 113

['We Have More That We're Planning To Do' If Turkey Doesn't Release American Pastor, Treasury Secretary Says \(WP\)](#) 113

[U.S. Readying More Turkey Sanctions Unless Detained American Pastor Is Released \(WT\)](#) _____ 114

[U.S. Says Ready With More Sanctions If Turkey Does Not Free Pastor \(REU\)](#) _____ 114

[Turkey Will Emerge Stronger From Lira Crisis Despite Row With U.S. – Minister \(REU\)](#) _____ 114

[Challenged By US And Market Crisis, Turkey Turns To Europe \(AP\)](#) 114

[Erdogan Moves To Shore Up Alliances As U.S. Standoff Deepens \(BLOOM\)](#) _____ 115

[Pompeo Forms Iran Action Group To Run Policy After Nuke Deal \(AP\)](#) _____ 116

[U.S. Secretary Of State Names Brian Hook Special Envoy For Iran \(REU\)](#) _____ 117

[Pompeo Announces New Team For Iran Strategy \(POLITICO\)](#) 117

[A New U.S. Post To Pressure Iran, And A Stark Challenge Ahead \(NYT\)](#) _____ 118

[Iraq, Turkey, European Allies Scheme To Skirt New U.S. Sanctions On Iran \(WASHFRBE\)](#) _____ 119

[German Rail Operator, Deutsche Telekom End Iran Projects \(REU\)](#) _____ 120

[Putin May Meet Leaders Of Turkey, Iran At Summit In Sept – Kremlin \(REU\)](#) _____ 120

[China's Military 'likely Training For Strikes' On US Targets: Pentagon \(NYPOST\)](#) 120

LEADING DHS NEWS

Trump's School Safety Commission Aims To Use Students To Help Make Schools Safer

By Kendall Karson

[ABC News](#), August 16, 2018

Students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas high school returned to school Wednesday for the start of the new year, six months after the devastating shooting shook their community in Parkland. In the wake of the mass shooting, President Donald Trump established a school safety commission, chaired by Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, which convened for the fifth time Thursday.

DeVos made clear to lawmakers in June that exploring the role of guns in making school safer was not part of the "commission's charge," and in keeping with that tone, the discussion with experts shifted to prevention by fortifying schools with additional security measures and training, with Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen adding that students should participate in the response.

"We're also working to mitigate the potential consequences of a successful attack," Nielsen said at the onset of the meeting she hosted. "We recently

established a \$1.8 million grant to enable schools and other groups to train high school students with the skills necessary to stabilize the injured and control severe bleeding."

The School-Age Trauma Training will provide \$1.8 million in free trauma training sessions to the public and high school students in the U.S., in order to train people on how to help victims with a wound.

Mike Stocker/Sun Sentinel/TNS via Getty Images, FILE

Students are evacuated by police out of Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., after a shooting on Feb. 14, 2018.

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar and Attorney General Jeff Sessions also sat on the commission. The meeting heard from three panels of experts to focus on three approaches to securing schools: school building security, active shooter training and school-based threat assessments.

"We really want to make this actionable," Nielsen said of the commission's forthcoming report.

But one of the experts brought before the commission, Donna Michaelis at the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety, sidestepped the DHS's approach, instead proclaiming: "We should not expect schools to be mental health experts, law enforcement

officers, doctors or lawyers... We need to support our schools not expect them to be those experts.”

To inform their report that is set to be released later this year, the commission heard from Jay Brotman of Svigals & Partners and the American Institute of Architects, Max Schachter, the founder and CEO of Safe Schools for Alex and the parent of Alex Schachter who was killed in the Parkland shooting, Jarrod Burguan, Chief of Police at San Bernardino Police Department, Chris Fraley at the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), Michaelis, and Susan Payne, Founder and Executive Director of Safe2Tell Colorado and Director of Safe Communities.

“We know there is no one-size fits all plan,” DeVos said before the panelists spoke with the secretaries. “Every school and every community is different.”

“We continue to identify what’s already working in local communities across the nation,” she continued. “That’s why the commission will be making recommendations, not mandates.”

Adding to that sentiment was Azar, who asserted, “We have a big job to do.”

“To make this happen in an effective way, we need to listen to the people who have been involved from the frontlines,” Sessions said. “We need to build it bottom up.”

The Washington Post via Getty Images, FILE

Officer Joe Plazio, of the Fairfax County Police Department, stays armed with his service pistol as he patrols the hallways where he is stationed at West Springfield High School, Jan. 18, 2012, in Springfield, Va.

Among the recommendations mentioned Thursday were: retrofitting schools to mitigate the risks, such as a rain garden that was created at the newly developed Sandy Hook elementary school after the shooting in Newtown; protecting schools through the process of “hardening,” which can include installing ballistic-hardened hybrid doors in classrooms, increasing communication with law enforcement arriving on scene, and allowing dispatch centers greater capabilities to intervene in the shooting by using smoke suppressants launched by the dispatch center; increasing cooperation between law enforcement agencies and schools, with the use of trained school resource officers; and training students in conflict resolution, restorative justice, crime awareness, and active shooter training.

Schachter then urged the commission members to implement a national school safety policy.

“We had fire codes to protect children from dying in a fire, and it’s worked,” he told the secretaries. “We have a national drug policy how could we not have a national school safety policy?”

“I ask that you formally recommend the creation of a school safety czar,” he said.

One of the concerns raised by Sessions was that some of the recommendations might not be scalable due to the high costs of these measures.

“It would take \$1 million just to put these doors in Marjory Stoneman Douglas high school,” Schachter conceded.

But Brotman offered other low-cost solutions.

“If you start with the design of the school itself,” he said, “you control the access and create the biggest bang for your buck.”

Michaelis also addressed the “hardening” approach, and implied that schools are not made safe by “some impenetrable fortress” but instead by “properly trained, caring, connected and engaged people.”

While the commission continues to deliberate recommendations that will fill the completed report, the members of the Trump administration made one point clear:

“This is of the highest priority for this administration,” Nielsen said.

“This is a high priority, as Secretary Nielsen mentioned, for the president,” Azar reiterated.

“The president is firmly committed to us improving our current situation,” Sessions affirmed.

The commission’s final field visit will be held next week in Las Vegas.

ABC News’ Karolina Rivas contributed to this report.

Nielsen: Students Should Receive Medical Training In Case Of Attack

[UPI](#), August 16, 2018

Aug. 16 (UPI) — Students should be trained to treat injured victims in case of a school attack, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said Thursday during a Trump administration school-safety meeting.

The Federal Commission on School Safety, which convened for the fifth time since the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., in February, was chaired by Education Secretary Betsy DeVos.

Members of the administration discussed methods to increase school safety and improve responses to future attacks, including a “focus on best practices for school building security, active shooter training for schools, and practitioner experience with school-based threat assessment,” according to the Department of Homeland Security.

"We're also working to mitigate the potential consequences of a successful attack," Nielsen said at the meeting. "We recently established a \$1.8 million grant to enable schools and other groups to train high school students with the skills necessary to stabilize the injured and control severe bleeding."

John Verrico, a spokesman for the DHS' Science and Technology Directorate, told ABC News the School-Age Trauma Training will teach high school students basic first aid for use in "any sort of disaster."

During the meeting, Max Schachter, the father of one of the Parkland victims, urged the commission to appoint a school safety czar.

"This commission is doing good work bringing together all these subject matter experts and best practices," Schachter said, according to the New York Post. "But after Columbine, after Virginia Tech, after Sandy Hook, they also had a commission. Those commissions made recommendations. My question to you is: Who is going to be responsible for following through after this commission ends?"

Trump School Safety Commission Convenes Today

A daily overview of education policy news

By Michael Stratford

[Politico](#), August 16, 2018

TRUMP SCHOOL SAFETY COMMISSION CONVENES TODAY: The Trump administration's school safety commission is holding its fifth and latest official meeting today at the White House complex. The commission, which is led by Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, will turn its attention to school security.

— On the agenda: The meeting "will focus on best practices for school building security, active shooter training for schools, and practitioner experience with school-based threat assessment," according to the Department of Homeland Security, which is hosting the session.

— DeVos and fellow commission members Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, Attorney General Jeff Sessions and HHS Secretary Alex Azar are all scheduled to attend.

— The commission will hear from: Jay Brotman of Svigals & Partners, a member of the American Institute of Architects; Max Schachter, CEO and founder of Safe Schools for Alex; Jarrod Burguan, chief of the San Bernardino Police Department; Chris Fraley of the National Association of School Resource Officers; Donna P. Michaelis, who manages school and campus safety for Virginia's Department of Criminal Justice

Services; and Susan Payne, founder and executive director of Safe2Tell Colorado.

— The meeting at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building starts at 2 p.m. ET. Watch live here.

GOOD THURSDAY MORNING AND WELCOME TO MORNING EDUCATION. Drop me a line with your tips and feedback: mstratford@politico.com or [@mstratford](https://twitter.com/mstratford). Share event listings: educalendar@politicopro.com. And follow us on Twitter: [@Morning_Edu](https://twitter.com/Morning_Edu) and [@POLITICOPRO](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPRO).

SENATE BEGINS DEBATE ON 'MINIBUS' THAT INCLUDES EDUCATION FUNDING: The Senate on Wednesday evening formally kicked off debate on its largest spending package of the year — HR 6157 — which funds the departments of Defense, Labor, HHS and Education. But the tough stuff won't come until next week, as POLITICO's Sarah Ferris reports, when GOP and Democratic leaders will announce the lineup for amendments. Dozens, if not hundreds, are likely to be filed on everything from family migration to abortion, though only a select few will get floor time.

— Appropriations Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Ala.), chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, predicted that the Senate would easily clear the package on the floor by Labor Day, possibly as early as next Friday. "Would we finish it in a week? I don't know. It depends on what happens. ... You've got to remember, those are big bills, there's a lot in both," Shelby said. "If we don't finish 'em, we'll be here the next week."

— In a Statement of Administration Policy on Wednesday, the White House didn't indicate whether President Donald Trump would sign or veto the spending package. The statement says only that the administration "looks forward to working with Congress as the FY 2019 appropriations process moves forward." But administration officials took issue with a range of education-related sections.

— The administration said it's "concerned" the bill would fund 28 "unnecessary" education programs, totaling \$6 billion, that Trump's budget request had marked for elimination. The White House said that those programs — which range from K-12 after-school activities to efforts to help low-income students attend college — "are duplicative, narrowly-focused or unable to demonstrate effectiveness."

— The White House also panned the \$350 million set aside in the bill for a limited expansion of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. The statement blasted that funding as "wasteful" and noted the Trump administration has proposed eliminating the program completely.

— White House officials also criticized the bill for failing to fund Trump's \$1 billion school choice proposal

championed by DeVos. However, they did praise the inclusion of a \$45 million booster for charter schools.

— The Trump administration said it opposed a provision that would continue to block DeVos from carrying out key parts of her plan to overhaul how the federal government collects student loans. The provision would “require significant change” to the proposal, known as the Next Generation Processing and Servicing Environment, the White House said. Read more.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES FAFSA MOBILE APP: The Trump administration on Wednesday rolled out a new app that allows students to apply for federal financial aid from their mobile devices. The “beta” version of the “myStudentAid” app — which is now available for download in the Apple App Store and Google Play Store — allows students and families to fill out the 2018-19 FAFSA.

— A more complete version with additional features will go live on Oct. 1 when the 2019-20 FAFSA becomes available. And the administration eventually plans to make it possible for federal student loan borrowers to manage their monthly payments through the app.

— The app is part of a larger effort to overhaul and modernize student aid, which DeVos announced last year.

SEVERE SPECIAL ED TEACHER SHORTAGES FORCE CHANGE AT PREP PROGRAMS: As school districts grapple with a shortage of special education teachers, those that train them say the pipeline may be running dry. Special education teacher preparation programs for years have struggled to recruit candidates, and as the problem worsens, colleges and universities are forced to come up with creative ways to enroll and graduate more teachers. More from Pro’s Mel Leonor.

— “What’s problematic is that universities continue to be the largest provider of teachers. To see the pipeline shrink now that people are in need of teachers has put us in a desperate situation,” said Mary Brownell, director of The CEEDAR Center, which provides support and technical assistance to teacher prep programs across the country.

— The special ed program at the University of Virginia — ranked fourth in the nation by U.S. News and World Report — graduated just 23 students in the class of 2018. At Arizona State University — one of the country’s largest universities at about 72,000 students — the number of graduates the program produces has dropped, from 123 potential teachers in 2012 to just 40 this year. At Florida International University in Miami-Dade County — home to the country’s fourth-largest school district — the special education program

produced 18 graduates this past academic year, compared with 30 five years ago.

— “Definitely our enrollment has declined,” said Melanie Morales, program leader for FIU’s undergraduate special education program. “We’re not generating the number of special ed teachers to meet the need.”

— It’s made teacher prep programs come up with creative ways to make their programs more attractive. The University of Kansas, ranked as the top special education program in the country by U.S. News, began to offer an online special education master’s program five years ago to boost enrollment.

— The university will also soon begin offering an undergraduate degree in both general education and special education. “They get two licenses for the price of one,” said Suzanne Robinson, who teaches special education at the University of Kansas and coordinates the school’s high-incidence special education program. Arizona State has also tried this approach with some success.

— The University of Virginia, Therrien said, has begun to operate a flexible program in Northern Virginia — two hours from its main campus in Charlottesville — that offers a class schedule tailored to working students. The school also offers discounted tuition to practicing general education teachers who want to specialize in special education.

— If shortages persist, they could take a toll on the integrity of the field and the critical research special education programs produce. Declining program enrollment makes it difficult to convince cash-strapped institutions to hire more faculty or replace retirees. “We have seen our numbers dwindle over time. You can’t make the case to hire faculty,” Brownell said. “To diminish the profession like that, the people who are generating knowledge and teaching special education teachers — is a really big problem.”

CALIFORNIA’S NEW CHARTER SCHOOL TASK FORCE: California education chief Tom Torlakson is launching a review of the state’s charter school laws — hoping to modernize them to fit the state’s “transformed” education system. This week, Torlakson announced the creation of the Action Team on Charter Schools to take a closer look at the laws and offer recommendations for needed changes.

— “In the past few years, we have updated virtually our entire K–12 education system. Now it’s time to look at the key laws governing charter schools, which have not been significantly changed in 26 years, to see how they can be modernized to better meet the needs of all public school students, including those who attend charter schools,” Torlakson said.

— The task force includes charter school leaders, a teachers union representative and researchers from the University of Southern California and the University of California, Los Angeles. The group also includes a representative from the Los Angeles chamber of commerce and nonprofit education groups.

SYLLABUS

— Florida judge blasts Sun Sentinel for publishing confidential but legally obtained information about the Parkland school shooter: Sun Sentinel.

— Twelve-year-old transgender girl in Oklahoma is violently threatened after Facebook post by classmate's parent, leading school officials to close the school for two days: The New York Times.

— Can a billionaire's private school become a model for public education in Florida?: The Tampa Bay Times.

— New York City Department of Education plans mandatory implicit bias training: The Wall Street Journal.

Follow the Pro Education team: @caitlinzemma (cemma@politico.com), @khefling (khefling@politico.com), @mstratford (mstratford@politico.com), @BenjaminEW (bwermond@politico.com), @MelLeonor_ (mleonor@politico.com) and @JaneNorman (jnorman@politico.com).

DHS NEWS

White House To Honor ICE 'Heroes' After Family Separation Fiasco

By Ted Hesson

[Politico](#), August 16, 2018

The Trump White House is planning an event next week to honor federal immigration agents — even as more than 500 migrant children remain separated from their parents after being separated at the border.

The “Salute to the Heroes of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs [and] Border Protection” is scheduled for Aug. 20 in the East Room, an administration official confirmed, in the latest signal that the Trump administration anticipates the midterm fallout from its zero-tolerance border policy very differently from its critics.

The ceremony is ready-made to provoke ire from opponents of the zero tolerance policy, some of whom have called for ICE's abolition.

“Only this White House would give medals for taking thousands of immigrant children from their parents,” said Tom Jawetz, vice president for immigration policy at the left-leaning Center for American Progress,

“and continuing to detain hundreds of orphaned kids in defiance of a court order.”

But many immigration advocates believe the family separation drama of recent months is more likely to hurt rather than help congressional Republicans in November.

Frank Sharry, executive director of the pro-immigration America's Voice, said initially he worried Trump and the Republicans would broadcast their hard-line immigration views in the run-up to the midterms. Now, he said, he feels “nearly gleeful” in welcoming it.

“At this point, I'm like, ‘Keep doing it,’” Sharry said. “Americans are concerned with health care costs, education for their kids and retirement for their parents, and he's having a pep rally with ICE agents.”

Trump reiterated Thursday his belief that immigration will be a winning political issue. During a televised Cabinet meeting, he said Democrats' refusal to back his hawkish policies will “hurt them very badly at the polls.”

Plans for the ICE salute are being made even as the administration struggles to fulfill a federal judge's late-June order to reunite migrant families split apart at the border. From April to June, thousands of families were separated forcibly under Trump's zero tolerance border strategy, which subjected all suspected crossers — including parents and asylum seekers — to federal prosecution.

A Quinnipiac University poll in late June found that two-thirds of voters opposed the policy. But a second Quinnipiac survey weeks later found that 76 percent of Republican voters backed Trump's handling of the situation — even as a strong majority agreed that the families should be reunited.

Tyler Moran, managing director of the D.C.-based Immigration Hub, said the White House plans to honor ICE and CBP agents are “a ploy to use culture wars to divide people.”

Trump touted the work of ICE officers at the Cabinet meeting Thursday, saying they “have been absolutely abused” and have done an “incredible job” combating MS-13 and other gangs.

“They are tremendous people,” the president said. “They're brave, they're strong, they're tough and they're good. ... Do you think you're going to send just regular people in to take care of MS-13 and these gangs? Not going to happen.”

Jessica Vaughan, director of policy studies for the restrictionist Center for Immigration Studies, cheered the planned White House event for ICE and CPB officials. “They don't get enough recognition, and I don't think there's enough public awareness of the dangers they face,” she said.

Trump also appeared to be trying to pressure Congress to take action, Vaughan added. "The president is doing as much as he can," she said, "but Congress needs to get into the act also."

BORDER WALL

Border Mayors Frustrated With Rhetoric From Washington, Say Wall Is Unnecessary

By Elida S. Perez

[USA Today](#), August 16, 2018

Mayors of cities along the U.S.-Mexico border say negative rhetoric from Washington that labels the area a war zone remains a challenge and agree a wall isn't needed in the region.

"Unfortunately, they don't know the beauty of our communities in the border," said Las Cruces Mayor Ken Miyagishima.

More: President Trump's Border wall may cost more, take longer: Congress watchdog

The mayors of El Paso, Las Cruces, Sunland Park, N.M., and the mayor pro tem of Juárez met for a roundtable discussion during the 2018 U.S.-Mexico Border Summit on Wednesday.

The discussion comes at a time when the U.S.-Mexico border is under a political microscope over immigration and border security. President Donald Trump campaigned on building a wall and has continued to push for one since taking office.

However, the mayors said the region doesn't need a wall.

"We have a fence here. The fence is fine. It does what it's supposed to do," El Paso Mayor Dee Margo said. "I hear the term wall, I think of the Berlin Wall. I think it's pretty detrimental to the relationships that have lasted more than 400 years."

Roberto Rentería Manqueros, mayor pro tem of Juárez, said regardless of the wall, the communities work together.

"I hope someday people find out that at least in this part (of the border) it's not necessary," Manqueros said. "We don't need a wall."

Manqueros said what is needed is more cooperation from state and federal governments to resolve issues, such as drug trafficking.

"The drug issue is a very difficult problem, especially on the border," Manqueros said. "The borders are a very important part of the country for drug dealers. They have to pass through here in order to do their job."

Manqueros said Mexican President-elect Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador has mentioned initiatives that

could help reduce the problem. Part of the plan is to lower taxes and the cost of goods at the border to make the region more competitive on the Mexican side, he said.

Manqueros also said if people have more money, then they will have better access to education and better job opportunities instead of joining gangs.

The mayors said that while it is frustrating to hear the rhetoric about the border, it is up to them to educate people.

"It falls on us to make sure that we do show people what we really are," said Sunland Park Mayor Javier Perea.

Perea said he welcomes officials to the area and thinks it's also necessary to visit other cities to communicate the message that the region is united.

AVIATION SECURITY

CBP Helps California's Mineta San Jose Airport Implement Facial Biometrics

By Nichols Martin

[ExecutiveGov](#), August 16, 2018

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is providing a facial biometric matching service for Mineta San Jose International Airport or SJC as the station works to fully implement the technology this fall.

The airport is the first in the West Coast to apply facial biometrics to process international travelers, CBP said Aug. 6.

Facial recognition technology works to streamline, accelerate and boost the security of traveler processing activities.

In 2017, the airport accommodated 438,800 international arrivals, exhibiting significant growth from 2015's record of 199,900 international arrivals.

SJC aims to use biometrics technology to address challenges that result from the increase of international travels to the U.S.

"CBP is excited to partner with SJC, which serves as another example of what we can achieve by advancing the entry/exit mandate through public-private collaboration," said CBP Commissioner Kevin McAleenan.

IMMIGRATION POLICY

HHS Official: Agency Not Able To Ensure Safety Of Unaccompanied Migrant Kids After They Leave Its Care

By Colby Itkowitz

[Washington Post](#), August 16, 2018

A Health and Human Services official insisted that the agency is not responsible for ensuring the safety of unaccompanied migrant children once they leave its care – and pleaded with senators on Thursday not to force it to take on the responsibility.

“Please don’t make us a law enforcement agency,” said Jonathan White, testifying on behalf of HHS at a hearing held by the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs subcommittee on investigations. “I think it’s very important that HHS remain the agency tasked with the best interests of the child rather than to assign it enforcement duties.”

White, a career government official and commander in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, bore the brunt of the questioning from visibly frustrated senators who at times raised their voices at him, only to later apologize for their harsh tone.

Although White was joined on the panel by witnesses from the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security, the senators’ attention was primarily on him. Children who cross the U.S.-Mexico border without an adult are placed in government-run shelters overseen by HHS. But after they are turned over to the care of an adult sponsor, there is no formal government system in place to ensure their welfare or safety.

Sens. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Sen. Tom Carper (Del.), the subcommittee’s chairman and ranking member, released a report Wednesday detailing ways in which they believe HHS, and the federal government more broadly, has failed to protect these children. At the hearing, the senators said they are considering legislation that would require HHS to take on a greater role in ensuring the well-being of minors after they leave the shelters.

Yet by the end of the hearing, the senators and White were no closer to an agreement on how – or even if – these children should be monitored when they’re no longer physically in the government’s custody.

“We have neither the authorities nor the appropriations to exercise that degree of oversight after minors exit (government) care,” White told the senators.

“As you know Commander White, this is where we have a difference of opinion,” said Portman. “We believe Congress has given you that authority. And by the way if you don’t, who does?”

This debate began during the Obama administration when an influx of migrant children traveling without their parents overwhelmed resources and drew sharp attention to the government’s handling of the kids. During that time, it was learned that HHS had turned eight children over to human traffickers in Ohio,

so senators began asking why no one in the government was accountable for knowing the children’s whereabouts.

The problem has only gotten worse, Portman and Carper said in their report, since the Trump administration began its now-ended policy of family separations at the border – sending even more children to overcrowded HHS shelters.

In 2015, HHS agreed to attempt to reach a child or their sponsor 30 days after they leave the shelters. But if they cannot be reached, there is no further action required of the agency.

This April, HHS revealed that of the more than 7,000 calls made to sponsors over three months in 2017, officials couldn’t make contact with nearly 1,500 children. At the hearing, Portman asked White for similar data from 2018. White assured him he’d get those numbers in the next two weeks.

Still, at the hearing, White stressed that HHS is not equipped to be the primary agency responsible for tracking down the kids.

White said HHS had no “custodial jurisdiction” once the children left the shelters. He also explained that the children who couldn’t be reached in those follow-up calls are not “lost” in the traditional sense, but rather many of the adult sponsors are undocumented and fear any additional contact with the U.S. government.

“Many individuals come out of the shadows to take their child from us, and some of them return to the shadows,” White said. “These are individuals who are living undocumented in the United States in most cases, and they believe they have cause to fear us.”

Senators from both parties didn’t accept that.

“Let’s be really clear here. If a sponsor isn’t answering a phone call, you don’t know where that child is,” Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.) said. “So you can’t tell us there’s nobody lost.”

“Of course there are lost children—and that’s the whole point here,” Portman said. “No one’s responsible. Why don’t they have to take the call? What does the sponsor agreement mean if they don’t have to take a call at least?”

When adult sponsors, who are mostly parents, remove kids from the shelters they sign an agreement with HHS that they’ll take them to their immigration hearing, but more than half don’t show. “Who enforces that sponsor agreement?” Portman continued. “And your answer to me is going to be nobody.”

Trump Official: Feds Not Responsible For Migrant Children Released From U.S. Custody

By Alan Gomez

[USA Today](#), August 16, 2018

A senior official with the Department of Health and Human Services told a Senate panel on Thursday that the responsibility to monitor migrant children released from federal custody falls on state child welfare agencies – not the federal government.

Jonathan White, who handles the care of minor children for HHS, said federal law requires his department to properly care for those unaccompanied minors while they're in HHS custody. When releasing the children, the department must also carefully vet parents, relatives and other sponsors to verify their relationship and ensure they don't pose a threat to the child.

But White said the department's legal responsibility ends there. If any harm comes to the child after being released to a sponsor, he said there is no federal law that requires his agency to follow up.

"The custodial relationship does end when those children exit (the Office of Refugee Resettlement)," said White, referring to the HHS office that oversees migrant children in its custody. "We are not a law enforcement agency."

That answer angered a bipartisan group of senators who issued a report on Wednesday highlighting what they described as glaring flaws in the treatment and oversight of children released from HHS custody.

Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del., said the federal government is "failing in our responsibility" to protect minors. Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, D-N.D., said she was "frustrated" and "sickened" by the administration's "see no evil" approach to the treatment of children released from custody.

And Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, became increasingly upset as representatives of four different government agencies explained how they were not responsible for the care of those children.

"That's the whole point here," Portman said. "No one's responsible."

More: Senate investigators say feds fail to keep tabs on immigrant children released from custody

Under federal law, the thousands of children who cross the southwest border without a sponsor, known as unaccompanied minors, are first detained by immigration enforcement agents. The Trump administration added an additional 2,500 children to that group this year when it implemented a "zero tolerance" immigration enforcement policy that separated families who crossed the border together, then treating the children as unaccompanied minors.

Federal law limits how long children can remain in detention, so those children are quickly handed over to HHS. That department contracts with local shelters to

house, feed, provide medical treatment, and educate those children.

HHS then performs extensive checks of possible sponsors for the children, running background checks, and conducting home visits in cases where the child may be the victim of human smuggling or requires special medical needs.

Thursday's hearing highlighted a heated disagreement over what should happen next.

Trump administration officials said federal law allow them to provide some post-release services, such as mental health counseling, guidance on upcoming immigration court hearings, and follow-up phone calls to make sure that children are being well taken care of. But White made clear that there's no legal requirement, on the part of HHS or the new sponsor, to complete those phone calls and verify the safety of the child.

That answer infuriated several senators. Portman said the law that governs treatment of unaccompanied minors — the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 — clearly gives HHS broad responsibilities to care for all unaccompanied children, before and after their time in government custody.

Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., compared the situation to state oversight of foster care programs. She said social workers in her state routinely check on the well-being of children placed in foster care or with other sponsors through in-person visits, and by checking with school systems and other local agencies.

"There is a huge network in every single state," she said. "Because you know what states do? They take their responsibility for having children in their care seriously."

McCaskill said the problems raised during Thursday's hearing will likely lead to a "something remarkable" – a bipartisan bill to fix the system.

The Senate Department of Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Permanent Subcommittee on Investigation has been looking into the treatment of unaccompanied children in government custody since 2015, when federal authorities exposed a labor trafficking scheme at an egg farm in Marion, Ohio. Nearly a dozen teenagers and young adults were essentially working as slave laborers. The workers — from Guatemala and as young as 14 — were forced to work long hours and housed in trailers with no heat, hot water, or working toilets.

After news broke about the trafficking in his state, Portman launched the first probe with McCaskill, who was then the subcommittee's top Democrat.

The first investigation concluded HHS did not conduct proper background checks, perform regular home visits or take other basic steps to ensure that

vulnerable children were placed into the care of appropriate sponsors.

According to the subcommittee's second report, released Wednesday, HHS attempted to follow up with 7,635 children, 30 days after they were placed with their sponsors, and found they were "unable to determine with certainty the whereabouts of 1,475" of them; 28 had flat-out "run away."

HHS, DHS and the Department of Justice issued a joint statement Wednesday night, blasting the report's authors. The report "demonstrates fundamental misunderstandings of law and policy," the joint statement read. The government agencies said they alerted investigators to errors in the report but authors "chose to ignore many operational realities and basic legal authorities (or lack thereof) including the lack of HHS authority to care for (unaccompanied minors) after release to a suitable vetted sponsor."

Contributing: Eliza Collins in Washington

Thousands Of Migrant Children Come Here Alone. The U.S. Doesn't Keep Track Of Them.

By Caitlin Dickerson

[New York Times](#), August 16, 2018

Trump administration officials acknowledged Thursday that they have no system for tracking the tens of thousands of migrant children who are released from federal custody each year after traveling to the United States alone.

Facing heated questions from a Senate subcommittee, officials from the Health and Human Services Department, Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the federal immigration courts each said they were not responsible for following up after the children are handed over to sponsors, most of whom are undocumented relatives or family friends.

"We have neither the authorities nor the appropriations to exercise that degree of oversight," said Cmdr. Jonathan White of the United States Public Health Service, part of Health and Human Services.

Commander White acknowledged that the government stops keeping tabs on a child after a phone call that is made 30 days after he or she is released, even if no one answers.

The Senate hearing came as the Trump administration was already under fire for mishandling the records of migrant families that were separated at the southwest border, which injected chaos and delays into a court-ordered effort to reunify them. It marked the end

of a three-year investigation that began while President Barack Obama was still in office.

The process for handling children who travel to the United States alone — known as "unaccompanied minors" — has not changed significantly under President Trump.

"We have a serious problem on our hands," said Senator Rob Portman, Republican of Ohio. "Unaccompanied children are still crossing the border. HHS is still placing them with sponsors and losing track of them."

The investigation found that some of the children have ended up in dangerous situations. At least a dozen have been turned over to human traffickers, including six who were lured by smugglers to Mr. Portman's state, where they were put to work illegally on an egg farm for no pay. One was 14 years old.

"These children are at risk for trafficking and abuse," Mr. Portman said. "When these children do not appear for their hearings, they lose their chance to argue for immigration relief. And many remain in this country illegally, which undermines our nation's immigration laws."

James McHenry, the director of the federal immigration courts, testified that unaccompanied minors were about twice as likely as other migrants to fail to appear in court. More than half miss their hearings and are ordered deported "in absentia," though most of those remain in the country anyway without legal status.

The officials who were questioned argued that migrant children become the responsibility of local child welfare agencies when they are released to sponsors. But the senators pushed back, pointing out that the federal government does not alert those authorities when migrant children are placed in their jurisdictions.

"You want to talk about catch and release?" said Senator Claire McCaskill, Democrat of Missouri, referring to a term used by Mr. Trump and other critics of the Obama administration's policy of releasing migrant families while they await asylum decisions. "You're catching these children and then you're releasing them, and everyone goes like this: 'Not my problem.'"

Children traveling alone surged across the southern border under Mr. Obama in 2014, when border agents apprehended 68,541 trying to enter the United States. About 41,000 have been apprehended in the current fiscal year, a 16 percent increase from the same period in 2017.

Since the congressional investigation began in 2015, the Office of Refugee Resettlement, part of the Health and Human Services Department, has strengthened the background checks that it conducts on sponsors before releasing children to them. The agency

also began the practice of placing a phone call to sponsors one month after a child's release.

Commander White, the department official, acknowledged that follow-up ends there, and most of the phone calls go unanswered. He said that sponsors are not required to stay in contact with the agency, and many "do not want anything more to do with the systems that they have been through."

Senator James Lankford, Republican of Oklahoma, asked whether fewer children might travel to the United States on their own if the government required sponsors to be in the country legally. Commander White declined to speculate on whether such a rule could deter migration over all, which is a well-known goal of the Trump administration. In the short term, he said, it would create a "backup into border stations and produce a humanitarian crisis."

The Health and Human Services Department faced a tidal wave of criticism early in the summer for its handling of migrant children after an official acknowledged that the agency had lost track of nearly 1,500 of them in a three-month period. The admission gave rise to the hashtag #WhereAreTheChildren, which added to, and was in some cases conflated with, consternation over the Trump administration's policy of separating parents and children who crossed the southwest border together.

Before it was revoked by Mr. Trump, the separation policy placed more than 2,000 children with the Office of Refugee Resettlement, which is currently overseeing more than 11,000 in total.

The dramatic start-and-stop, plus a court order to reunify the separated families, has led to intense public scrutiny of the federal government's handling of border crossers in general and children in particular. During the hearing, senators also raised concerns about conditions in the facilities where the children are housed before they are placed with sponsors.

The work of those facilities, and even their locations, has historically been kept secret because of policies that were created to protect the privacy of the children. In recent months, some of the shelters have faced allegations of insufficient resources, as well as physical and sexual abuse.

U.S., ACLU Agree On Plan To Reunite Separated Immigrant Families

By Jonathan Stempel

[Reuters](#), August 16, 2018

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

Nursing Illegal Immigrant Mother Sues Over Border Separation

By Stephen Dinan

[Washington Times](#), August 16, 2018

An illegal immigrant mother who says she was separated from her still-nursing 11-month-old daughter filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration Thursday arguing she was put through unfathomable trauma which hurt her chances to make a good asylum case.

The Trump administration has said it didn't separate nursing children from parents, pushing back against reports earlier this year involving an unnamed migrant woman from Honduras who had supposedly had her child taken.

Now there is a name to attach to such an allegation.

Leydi Duenas-Claros says her infant daughter, identified in court papers only by initials L.M.D., "was still breastfeeding" when the two were "forcibly separated" by border agents.

The episode was so traumatic that it left her unable to make a proper case for asylum when she had the chance, she says. Now she wants a judge to prevent her from being deported, and to order a do-over of her asylum case.

And she says she's still separated from her daughter, and wants an immediate reunion.

"Ms. Duenas-Claros was not able to articulate the full range of factual circumstances underlying her credible fear claim of returning to El Salvador on account of the trauma precipitated by her continued separation from L.M.D.," she says in her lawsuit.

The woman said she's the mother of five children, all U.S. citizens, including L.M.D., the youngest, who was born in the U.S. in July 2017.

But Ms. Duenas-Claros, 30, is not a citizen. She left the U.S. and was back in El Salvador earlier this year, but says she fled in May after deciding that her brother-in-law, who she says is a known MS-13 gang member, "would kill them."

She says the man raped her when she was 12, and abused her father and one of her children.

Ms. Duenas-Claros also said her sister, who was married to the MS-13 gang member, fled him and came to the U.S. where she was granted asylum based on his abuse. Ms. Duenas-Claros said she can't understand how her own claims of fear of the same man were rejected by both an asylum officer and an immigration judge.

Her case challenges a number of assertions by the government, which said it doesn't separate nursing children and parents, and also said it has reunited all

parents separated during the zero tolerance border chaos who are eligible to be reunified.

Customs and Border Protection wouldn't comment on its decisions.

The administration is fighting back against a number of lawsuits stemming from the family separations, which were a consequence of the zero tolerance border policy in place this spring.

A judge in California ordered reunification of thousands of parents and children, while cases in other federal courts — including Washington, D.C., where Ms. Duenas-Claros sued — are arguing over the handling of individual plaintiffs.

Bring Separated Parents Back To U.S., ACLU Tells San Diego Judge

[Times of San Diego](#), August 16, 2018

Some families separated at the border as part of the Trump administration's crackdown on illegal immigration can only be made whole by returning a parent who was removed from the United States back to this country, the American Civil Liberties Union said in a court filing Thursday.

ACLU national attorney Lee Gelernt said the federal government's reunification plan does not address or resolve the right of removed parents to be reunited with their children in the United States.

Gelernt — whose organization represents the plaintiffs in a class-action lawsuit — said the government's reunification plan assumes that all removed class members who are reunited will be reunified in their country of origin.

The plaintiffs expect that many parents who have been separated from their children for many months will seek rapid reunification in their country of origin, Gelernt said.

But in some cases, Gelernt said, removed parents may not have availed themselves of their right to seek asylum because they were misled or coerced into believing that asserting their asylum claim would delay or preclude reunification.

In its court filing, the government urged U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw to approve its reunification plan so the process can move forward immediately.

Government attorneys noted that nothing in a preliminary injunction issued by Sabraw requires it to return any removed class members to the United States for the purpose of reunification.

Earlier this month, Sabraw said finding parents and reuniting them with their children was "100 percent the responsibility of the (Trump) administration."

In June, the ACLU won a nationwide injunction in its class-action lawsuit requiring reunification of children under age 5 by July 10 and all children by July 26.

Even though the government missed both deadlines, Sabraw said he was pleased with the progress the government was making to reunify separated families.

Sabraw is expected to discuss the latest issues in the case during a telephonic conference on Friday.

— City News Service

Trump Administration Ordered To Give Up Documents On Deportation Decision

By Bob Egelko

[San Francisco Chronicle](#), August 16, 2018

The Trump administration must turn over documents explaining its decisions to deport more than 200,000 people who were admitted to the United States after catastrophes in their home countries, a federal judge in San Francisco ruled Thursday.

Advocates for former residents of El Salvador, Nicaragua, Haiti and Sudan are challenging the administration's decision to revoke their temporary protected status. That status, under a 1990 federal law, allows people fleeing disasters in their homeland to live and work in the U.S. under permits that are renewed every 18 months.

President Trump's Department of Homeland Security said it withdrew the protections because the hardships caused by the disasters — earthquakes in El Salvador and Haiti, a hurricane in Nicaragua and a civil war in Sudan — have ended. But the lawsuit contends the real reason was racism.

When Trump reportedly referred to Haiti and African nations as "s—hole countries," it was during a White House meeting on temporary protected status in January. A week later, the administration announced the termination of protected status for Haitians. Deportations to the four countries are scheduled from November 2018 to September 2019.

In addition, advocates argued, the Trump administration failed to state a reason for abruptly changing previous administrations' policies. Those had allowed people to retain protected status based on new hardships in their former homelands, like outbreaks of disease and violence. Federal law requires the government to provide a "reasoned explanation" for changing policies or practices that affect the rights of private citizens.

U.S. District Judge Edward Chen refused to dismiss the suit in June, saying the advocates had plausibly alleged that Trump's statements showed racial

bias that could have influenced his administration's decision. On Thursday, Chen ordered the administration to give the plaintiffs internal documents about conditions in the four countries, the decisions to revoke protections and strategies for explaining them to the public.

Trump administration lawyers argued that documents about internal government deliberations are confidential and need not be disclosed. Chen, who reviewed 20 of the documents in his chambers, said some involved internal deliberations, but still must be turned over because they concern serious issues and "the federal interest in the enforcement of federal law."

If the administration says other specific documents are too sensitive to be disclosed, Chen said, it could try to make its case to a federal magistrate Friday.

Chen will hold a hearing, sometime before protected status for Sudan expires in November, to decide whether to block the deportations.

"We should now be able to see these documents that the government has tried to keep secret," said a lawyer for the plaintiffs, Jessica Karp Bansal of the National Day Laborer Organizing Network. "We've introduced a lot of evidence that the terminations were motivated by discrimination. We think these documents will further support our claims."

Bob Egelko is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. Email: begeko@sfchronicle.com Twitter: [@BobEgelko](https://twitter.com/BobEgelko)

DOJ Hires Another Batch Of Immigration Judges

By Katie Pavlich

[Townhall](#), August 16, 2018

The Department of Justice has hired an additional 23 immigration judges, bring the total number of new judges to 82 during the Trump administration.

The Executive Office for Immigration Review, which manages and processes immigration judge hires, expects an additional 50 judges to be sworn in by the end of the year. Currently, there are 351 total judges.

"Hiring more immigration judges and reducing the time it takes to hire a judge are two key elements reducing the pending caseload of immigration court cases," Attorney General Jeff Sessions released in a statement. "EOIR Director James McHenry should be commended for making tremendous progress on both fronts since he became Acting Director in May 2017. Under his leadership, we are making great strides toward having an immigration court system that serves the national interest."

Earlier this year Attorney General Jeff Sessions gave immigration judges a mandate to get through 700-

cases per year. The current immigration case backlog sits at 700,000 and has tripled since 2009.

"At this time, when our immigration system and our immigration judges are under great stress, I am calling on you to use your best efforts and proper policies to enhance our effectiveness. To end the lawlessness and move to the virtuous cycle, we have to be very productive. Volume is critical. It just is. We ask you to evaluate your processes and disposition rates," Sessions said in April during a speech to the Executive Office for Immigration Review Legal Training Program. "We ask each one of you to complete at least 700 cases a year. It's about the average. "We are all accountable. Setting this expectation is a rational management policy to ensure consistency, accountability, and efficiency in our immigration court system."

IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

ICE Arrests Cloquet Man On Golf Course

By Jamie Lund

[Pine \(MN\) Journal](#), August 16, 2018

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested a Cloquet man at a Carlton County golf course Thursday, Aug. 9.

Pedro Aranda, 42, was arrested by ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) for immigration violations.

Aranda, who was born in Guadalajara, Mexico.

The Douglas County Jail housed Aranda for ICE until earlier this week, when he was listed as released for that facility. He is now detained at another location.

According to ICE spokesman Shawn Neudauer, a federal immigration judge issued a voluntary departure order to Aranda in 2010, which directed that he depart the U.S. by May 25, 2010.

When Aranda did not leave the U.S. by that deadline, the order automatically became a final order of removal — a deportation order.

"Aranda remains in ICE custody pending his removal from the United States," Neudauer said.

He explained that a voluntary departure allows an undocumented immigrant up to 120 days to leave the country on their own. If the person does not leave on their own accord, a deportation order automatically goes into effect.

During an interview in 2015 with the Pine Journal about the Cloquet restaurant Mexico Lindo changing its name to Pedro's Grill and Cantina, Aranda said he and his now-ex wife, Erika, purchased the restaurant from Felipe Mata. Erika told the Pine Journal this week that Pedro does not own the restaurant.

Language Barriers Lead ICE To Rip Children From Their Indigenous Parents

By Scott Bixby

[Daily Beast](#), August 16, 2018

When he was arrested at the U.S.-Mexico border in early June, 24-year-old Mario Perez-Domingo was hoping to save himself and his young daughter from rampant persecution against indigenous communities in his native Guatemala.

But Mario was nearly permanently separated from his 2-year-old child, the kind of terror he couldn't imagine even in his home country, simply because no one could understand his plight.

When he was apprehended by U.S. Customs and Border Protection near McAllen, Texas, Mario was almost immediately separated from his daughter by the arresting agent, despite the birth certificate stating their kinship and his desperate pleas that she was his child.

Those pleas went unheard—in part because Mario speaks Mam, a language indigenous to Guatemala, and has minimal understanding of Spanish or English. He couldn't understand where the border patrol agents were taking his daughter or ask whether he would see her again.

It took more than two months, as well as a DNA test and verification of the birth certificate by the Guatemalan consulate, for attorneys at the Texas Civil Rights Project to reunite Mario with his daughter.

"It proves the government's carelessness when it comes to these families and demands more clarity about why some families are being reunited while others remain separated," said Efrén Olivares, director of the Texas Civil Rights Project's racial and economic justice program.

That lack of preparation has resulted in dozens more stories like Mario's, where people fleeing from violence perpetrated on indigenous populations in Central America have found themselves victimized anew by a system unable to handle indigenous language speakers.

Their children are believed to be among the more than 550 who remain separated from their parents—hundreds of whom have already been deported from the United States, nearly two months after a federal judge ordered the Trump administration to reunite thousands of families that had been separated by its "zero tolerance" immigration policy.

The administration has argued, in a remarkable act of chutzpah, that non-profit organizations should take the lead in tracking down those parents, at least 139 of whom are currently still missing somewhere beyond America's borders. But a task that humanitarian workers

call "extremely difficult" under the best of circumstances has been complicated even further by a language barrier that has isolated immigrants like Mario even within their home countries.

A disproportionate number of these separated parents are in the same position as Mario: they come from indigenous communities, members of persecuted minority groups whose primary language isn't Spanish, but one of dozens of indigenous languages native to Central America. These groups face unique disadvantages both in their countries of birth and upon entering the the United States—but their greatest vulnerability, advocates say, may be the linguistic barrier that hinders reunification with their children.

"There just aren't that many interpreters available," Michelle Brané, director of the Women's Refugee Commission's migrant rights and justice program, told *The Daily Beast*. "The fact that the parents have already been deported, and that a lot of [family reunification efforts] are going to have to happen by phone, mixed in with the language difficulties, makes this a life-or-death issue."

Americans can be forgiven for assuming that almost all unauthorized immigrants in the United States are originally Spanish speakers of Mexican extraction. President Donald Trump certainly appears to be under that impression: Trump has tweeted about illegal immigration from Mexico fourteen times more than the rest of Latin America combined.

But undocumented immigration from Mexico has declined in recent years, both in the number of migrants and as a percentage of the overall undocumented population of the United States, while the greatest increase in unauthorized entries has its origins in Central America's "Northern Triangle": El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement declined to share the most recent statistics regarding the primary language of deported parents, although an ICE report found that of the total number of migrants removed from the United States by ICE in 2016 and 2017, one in three came from El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras, and a 2015 review of difficulties faced by indigenous language-speaking immigrants found that 42 percent of Guatemalan families entering Arizona in 2015 spoke an indigenous dialect as their primary language.

Of immigrants fleeing a marked increase in gang violence, internal displacement, and government oppression in the region, an outsized percentage come from indigenous communities whose long history of persecution make them particularly vulnerable to deteriorating government stability in their home countries—and the rise in violence that has accompanied it.

“It’s already difficult for an average person in these countries to get any sort of response from the police to violence, as it is,” said Daniella Burgi-Palomino, the senior associate for Mexico, border and migration issues at the Latin American Working Group, a non-profit that advocates for human rights and conscientious U.S. policy in Latin America.

Those challenges, Burgi-Palomino told *The Daily Beast*, “are compounded and doubled and tripled for members of indigenous communities because of language issues—and because they have already been historically excluded from government and government responses.”

The language barriers are a contributing factor not only in difficulties indigenous Central Americans face in the United States, but also in their attempts to seek asylum or refuge in the United States in the first place.

“They’re cut off, even in their own countries, from government protection,” Brané said, “which can increase their need for asylum.”

The global number of asylum seekers from the Northern Triangle increased five-fold between 2012 and 2015, according to the International Organisation for Migration, and the number of U.S. residents born in one of the three countries more than doubled between 2000 and 2015, from 1.5 million to 3.4 million. Of those, the Pew Research Center estimated that roughly 55 percent were undocumented.

Migrants of all ethnic and linguistic groups are fleeing the region due to a precipitous rise in gang violence, economic woes, and the current unavailability of government support, Burgi-Palomino said. But indigenous communities are particularly susceptible to those problems—in part because of a history of state-sponsored violence against them.

In Guatemala, the U.S.-backed government waged a 36-year civil war against ethnic Maya peasants who were accused, often inaccurately, of aligning with communists insurgents. A United Nations commission later determined that the state-perpetrated violence against indigenous Guatemalans reached the level of genocide, with roughly 200,000 killed or “disappeared” over the course of the war.

Although an agreement signed at the end of the civil war declared that “all the languages spoken in Guatemala deserve equal respect” and vowed pro-indigenous government policies, most of the promised reforms have failed to materialize.

“Indigenous communities have historically been excluded and targeted against by the state, and continue to be so,” Burgi-Palomino said. “They’re still largely living in the most impoverished parts of the country... Having

representation from the indigenous communities in government is still largely a challenge across the board.”

In Guatemala, that isolation has led to strained access to state benefits, including healthcare, nutrition, and schooling, as well as made indigenous communities uniquely susceptible to violent crime—particularly domestic violence.

“One of the main drivers for migration, specifically for indigenous communities out of Guatemala, is domestic violence and violence against women,” Burgi-Palomino said. Alongside Honduras, Guatemala has some of the highest rates of sexual and gender-based violence in the world, which, as *The Daily Beast* has reported, impacts women in isolated and underserved indigenous communities in particular.

“You’re talking about a population that is extremely vulnerable, and that vulnerability is compounded if you’re talking about an indigenous woman or indigenous child,” Burgi-Palomino said.

In both Guatemala and Honduras, indigenous communities are further threatened by internal displacement, often at the hands of multinational corporations building hotels and resorts who aren’t above using hired mercenaries to push Maya communities off their lands—sometimes violently.

In 2016, activist Berta Cáceres Flores, founder the National Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras, was found murdered in her home after publicly opposing a hydroelectric dam that would threaten a river sacred to the indigenous Lenca people. Two weeks later, a colleague was murdered as well.

“The overarching transversal challenges and human-rights violations that indigenous communities face, both in Honduras and Guatemala, are often directly related to their right to their lands,” Burgi-Palomino said. “It is widely documented that Guatemala and Honduras are two of the most dangerous countries in the world for environmental defenders.”

These dangers, compounded by weak governments with little interest in protecting minority groups, have led to a massive influx of undocumented indigenous people from the Northern Triangle. Immigration from the region rose by 25 percent between 2007 to 2015, a Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. census data showed, while immigration from Mexico decreased by 6 percent during the same period.

Indigenous immigrants are typically poorer, less educated and are less likely to speak English, making their lives in the United States nearly as isolated as in their home countries. Data from the 2010 census showed that 77 percent of U.S. residents who speak Mayan languages at home said that they speak English

“less than very well.” For those who speak Spanish at home, 43 percent said the same.

These disadvantages have been acutely felt by immigrants who speak indigenous languages and have been detained by U.S. immigration authorities. Although a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement “Language Access Plan” released in 2015 declared that efforts were underway to “improve the language services provided in ICE residential facilities,” advocates told The Daily Beast that they have serious concerns about how the language barrier has impacted family separation.

“We know that it’s a pretty major problem,” Brané said. “From having worked with these families in the past, a lot of them speak a little bit of Spanish—they will answer you, they will nod.” But, she added, many are not nearly fluent enough to give informed legal consent to give up their right to be reunited with their child.

The problem isn’t new to the recent influx of indigenous language speakers: one review of adults arrested on the Arizona border in 2014 found that half of those detained described not receiving an explanation of the legal papers issued to them in a language that they actually understood.

“I find it hard to believe that this was adequately explained in every case,” Leah Chavla, an international human rights lawyer and policy advisor with the Women’s Refugee Commission, told The Daily Beast. “There were definitely not enough [translators] for something like this, and I find it hard to believe that this was adequately explained in every case.”

The lack in qualified translators who speak languages indigenous to the Northern Triangle will only become a larger problem in the future, if current trends are any indication. According to statistics compiled by the Department of Justice, Mam, a Mayan language native to Guatemala, is now the ninth-most frequently spoken language in U.S. immigration court cases, followed by K’iche’, another Guatemalan indigenous language, making both more frequently heard in immigration courts than French or Korean. In 2012, neither dialect was even in the top 25 most spoken language in such proceedings.

Without enough translators to handle the caseload of indigenous speakers, immigration courts and asylum proceedings have often forged ahead in Spanish, or taken to “relay interpreting,” a high-stakes version of the playground game “Telephone,” where a migrant’s testimony is translated from Mam or K’iche’ or Q’anjob’al into Spanish, then translated from Spanish into English and back again.

In the midst of the family separation crisis, some speakers of indigenous languages have come forward to volunteer their own interpretation services, Brané said,

“but how many of those people are qualified to do technical interpretation?” Additionally, many speakers may be undocumented themselves, making an immigration proceeding the last place they want to be seen.

Advocates see the government’s inability to provide translators in the proceedings as a violation of constitutional protections of procedural due process rights—and a recipe for permanent family separation if deported indigenous parents can’t be located after leaving the country.

“People fled a very specific danger,” Burgi-Palomino said. “The danger was probably in existence for a long period of time. Now, they’ve been forced to return to that danger and those areas of risk, and many of them probably don’t want to be found, because they’re in hiding for their own safety.”

Beyond the logistical concerns of locating missing indigenous parents—whose access to telephones in remote areas can already be limited—there are very few organizations locally who are capable of tracking them down on behalf of the U.S. government or non-profits seeking to reunite them with their child.

“They are not going to trust an organization, much less their own government, to have access to them or find them,” Burgi-Palomino said. “The whole task of finding these parents and kids is going to be like finding a needle in a haystack.”

Detained Workers Say They Were Kept For Two Hours In A Bus Without Air Conditioning After ICE Raids In Nebraska

By Hamed Aleaziz

[BuzzFeed News](#), August 16, 2018

The American Civil Liberties Union on Thursday accused Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents of mistreating suspected undocumented workers who were detained in a major raid in Nebraska last week.

According to the allegations, the agents transported some of the detained workers, including two pregnant women, on a two-hour drive with no air conditioning. When passengers asked for cool air, the agents turned on the heater, according to the allegations released by the ACLU of Nebraska.

The pregnant women did not have access to water during the trip, the ACLU said.

“With high humidity and temperatures outside of the bus approaching close to 100 degrees, it was imperative that the authorities provide adequate water,” said Rose Godinez, policy and legal counsel at the organization.

The allegations come just over a week after ICE picked up 118 suspected undocumented workers on immigration violations, part of a larger shift by the Trump administration to crack down on workplace violations.

ICE referred a request for comment to the US Attorney's Office in Omaha. That office did not respond immediately to a request for comment.

The treatment of detained pregnant women is an especially sensitive topic. BuzzFeed News reported in July that pregnant women in immigration detention said they had been denied proper medical care and had been abused.

In a detailed statement provided to BuzzFeed News, the ACLU of Nebraska said it discovered the reported abuses after speaking to many of the people who were detained and later released.

"Upon release, many reported ICE agents' lack of preparedness, negligence, and, in some cases, abuse of those detained in the raid. We received several reports concerning potential civil rights violations of the detained immigrants," said Godinez.

ICE officials did not provide a comment when given the list of complaints alleged by the ACLU.

Among the complaints, the organization says that workers were not allowed to provide documentation proving they had authorization to work or were already in deportation proceedings, were unaware of their constitutional right to an attorney, were handcuffed with chains around their waists, and were given only a small cup of soup and crackers — not adequate food, they say — for the 12 hours that most were detained as they were processed.

The allegations regarding high temperatures during the drive were confined to one bus carrying workers, the ACLU said.

The League of United Latin American Citizens filed a complaint Thursday with the Department of Homeland Security's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, detailing complaints it had heard about transportation for the suspected undocumented workers, including high heat.

"We formally request an investigation into these allegations commence immediately to assure that in the future no human being detained ... has to suffer inhumane treatment that can place them in dangerous conditions that can cause harm and even death while in the US government's custody," said Julie Contreras, chair of the organization's immigration affairs committee.

ICE agents came across the workers as they served search warrants at a hydroponic tomato plant, farms, and restaurants, and arrest warrants for 17 individuals in multiple states who allegedly were connected to a "criminal conspiracy to exploit illegal alien

laborers for profit, fraud, wire fraud and money laundering."

The ACLU also claims that a mother of two young children was not given a phone call to check in on the status of her young children even though she asked several times to do so.

"The mother worried her childcare provider could not care for her daughter long-term and did not know where her two children were going to be taken, how long she was going to be detained, and if she would ever see her children again," said Godinez. "She was promised she'd be allowed to make a call at the end of the day but was never allowed to do so."

The raid, according to Godinez, "is a frightening look into the Trump administration's war on immigrants and its violations of the basic human and constitutional rights that our country was founded upon."

ICE Is Turning To Border Patrol To Detain Migrants, Raising Alarms

By Maya Srikrishnan

[Voice Of San Diego](#), August 16, 2018

A Border Patrol agent patrols the primary fence separating the United States and Mexico. / Photo by Adriana Heldiz

Faced with an onslaught of immigrants in custody under President Donald Trump's zero tolerance policy, Immigration and Customs Enforcement has had to turn to Border Patrol to help detain people as they await criminal and immigration proceedings.

Criminal defense attorneys have begun raising alarms in court that Border Patrol is not up to the task, and that the conditions detainees are being held in might violate the U.S. Constitution.

Immigrants who have been released from criminal custody on bond and are awaiting trial are typically held in ICE custody at the Otay Mesa Detention Center, its San Diego County detention facility.

But the large number of people coming into ICE custody each day has required the agency to turn to Border Patrol as it waits for local beds to open up. ICE officials estimate that more than 100 people a week are being released into their custody either on bond, awaiting trial or after they've served their sentence, awaiting immigration proceedings — and even up to 40 or 50 on some days.

ICE officials said their staging area, where the agency temporarily holds detainees, isn't authorized to hold people for more than 12 hours, so they've turned to Border Patrol for help while they wait for open beds in Otay Mesa.

Border Patrol works to detect and prevent the unauthorized entry of people and illicit goods into the United States within 100 miles of the border. Border Patrol returns some people it catches entering without permission and sometimes keeps people in its custody for a night or so before transferring them to other agencies. People generally don't spend a long time in Border Patrol custody.

ICE, on the other hand, is charged with enforcing immigration laws in the interior of the country. Its broad array of functions includes arresting unauthorized immigrants and putting them into removal proceedings, managing immigrant detention and deporting people.

ICE has been expanding its immigrant detention capacity for years. The facility in Otay, for example, was specifically built for immigrant detention, with immigration courtrooms included. Attorneys are raising concerns over immigrants increasingly being held in Border Patrol custody under zero tolerance. Those facilities, they say, are not meant to detain people for long periods of time.

ICE officials said that for those who have already served their time for the criminal conviction but who still have to go through the immigration system – either to process an asylum claim, or for removal proceedings – the agency looks for detention beds outside of the county to prioritize bed space for those waiting for their criminal proceedings in the Southern District of California.

Last week, two defendants charged in federal court with misdemeanors for illegally entering the country, Dawachhiring Sherpa and Tenjing Sherpa, had a status hearing to set their trials. Their attorneys, who said they hadn't been able to contact them, were alarmed to see their clients still in the same clothes they had been arrested in.

The two individuals had paid bond and were supposed to be released into ICE custody. The clothes made their attorneys suspect they were actually in Border Patrol custody.

"Your honor, they are appearing in the same clothes that they were wearing at the date of their initial hearing on Aug. 1," said one of their attorneys, Leila Morgan of the Federal Defenders of San Diego Inc., which handles most of the pro-bono federal criminal defense cases in San Diego. "Because they've been in ICE custody since that time, I'm concerned – or they're supposed to be in ICE custody and I think they're actually in Border Patrol custody. I'm concerned they haven't had access to personal hygiene and we haven't had access to them."

"Why have you not had access?" asked Magistrate Judge Clinton Averitte.

"We didn't know where they were, because they're not showing up on the ICE locator," Morgan said.

Kimberley Trimble, another attorney, said that she had in her notes that the defendant she was representing that day was being held in Barracks 3, a Border Patrol facility in Chula Vista – the prosecutor had sent the information to another attorney working on Dawachhiring Sherpa's case.

"Part of our concern is that from communications with clients who have been held at Border Patrol stations before their appearances, they are not provided with hygiene or proper areas to sleep, and I am concerned at this point that this could be violating the 8th Amendment and be inappropriate conditions of confinement that are tantamount to punishment," Trimble said.

A Border Patrol spokeswoman said the agency does not comment on pending litigation.

"It is important to remember that U.S. Border Patrol stations are short term hold room and processing facilities, not prisons, jails, or long-term detention facilities designed for extended detention," according to a document laying out national standards for transportation and detention for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, under which Border Patrol is included. "Fully processed detainees in our custody are awaiting intake windows and custody transfers to other federal agencies and facilities."

The document details the standards for medical care availability, clothing changes and the availability of showers and hygiene products, like soap, shampoo and toothbrushes in Border Patrol and Customs and Border Protection facilities that temporarily hold people.

"Every person in the care of the U.S. Border Patrol is provided with food, medical care, and the ability to clean themselves after. We have proper drinking water, restrooms, and hygiene items, blankets, a change of clothing and sleeping mats in some cases."

Yet defense attorneys have raised issues of conditions in Border Patrol stations in court many times. Declarations from migrants held in them describe more than a dozen people being held in a single cell, rooms that are cold with the lights on 24 hours a day, and inadequate access to food, hygiene – like showers, toothbrushes or clean clothes – and medical care.

In Arizona, there is currently pending litigation over detainment conditions in Border Patrol facilities, which echo the descriptions of the facilities coming out in San Diego's federal courts: cold temperatures; lack of bedding, hygiene and medical care; people being held virtually incommunicado for days, unable to call attorneys or family members to notify them of their location.

Averitte agreed to let the attorneys get more information from their clients in court, while there was a Nepali interpreter on the line for the hearing.

Tenjing Sherpa told the court through the interpreter that he had been given access to a shower but had not been given a change of clothes or access to an attorney.

"No, nobody told us we could even make a call," Sherpa said.

Trimble seized on that comment.

"I raise that issue with the court as I believe that violates the 6th Amendment and the ability to properly communicate with counsel during proceedings," Trimble said.

"Whether it reached to the level of the 6th Amendment or not, you do need to have reasonable access to your client," Averitte said. "You do need to know where they are so you can find them and make arrangements to visit them. You need to know whether or not there's going to be interpreter facilities available where they are being held. I don't know if this is an issue with respect to these two individuals or if it's a recurring issue or not. From what I'm seeing, there may be a problem."

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

US Authorities Seize Fake Luxury Goods Shipped From China

[Associated Press](#), August 16, 2018

NEW YORK (AP) – Federal homeland security agents seized a large haul of counterfeit luxury handbags, wallets and belts smuggled through ports in the New York-city area and Los Angeles, officials said Thursday.

U.S. Homeland Security Investigations announced charges in New York City against 33 people in a scheme involving fake goods it estimated had a potential value of nearly a half billion dollars if passed off as genuine. It said the seized items included fake Louis Vuitton and Tory Burch handbags, Michael Kors wallets, Hermes belts and Chanel perfume.

"The defendants allegedly smuggled millions of dollars of counterfeit luxury goods into our country, depriving companies of their valuable and hard-earned intellectual property," Assistant U.S. Attorney General Brian Benczkowski said in a statement.

The majority of items from China were smuggled in 20 shipping containers through the Port of New York and New Jersey, authorities said. Another pair of the 40-foot containers came in at the Port of Los Angeles.

Authorities said some of the defendants forged the information of legitimate importers on paperwork as part of the scheme. Court papers said they arranged to truck the goods to self-storage facilities in Brooklyn, Queens and Long Island where they were unloaded and stored before being distributed to wholesale and retail sellers in New York, California and elsewhere in the United States.

Authorities also said they seized personal property from the defendants in the New York area valued at about \$12 million.

Copyright 2018 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Investigators Seize Fake Luxury Goods Worth Half A Billion Dollars

By Liz Robbins

[New York Times](#), August 16, 2018

The federal government said it had seized enough counterfeit Gucci bags, Hermes belts and Tory Burch purses to fill 22 shipping containers, in a six-year investigation into the importation and sale of fake luxury goods that ended on Thursday with charges filed against 33 people. The individuals were charged with conspiracy, trafficking in counterfeit goods and trademark counterfeiting.

The goods were part of a scheme originating in China that stretched to warehouses in Queens and even to retailers in Illinois and California, officials from Homeland Security Investigations, a branch of the United States Customs and Immigration Enforcement agency, announced at a news conference in New York on Thursday.

"This is the largest investigation that our agency has had regarding the amount of counterfeit items," Angel M. Melendez, New York's Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in New York, said in an interview.

The goods seized were knockoffs of popular brands, including Gucci, Tory Burch, Hermes, Coach, Burberry, Michael Kors and Louis Vuitton. There was knockoff Chanel perfume, too, which concerned investigators since previous schemes had involved using animal urine instead of the perfume company's formula.

Authorities estimated that the loss in retail value to the United States was nearly a half-billion dollars. In 2012, federal authorities in Newark, N.J. charged 29 people for attempting to smuggle \$325 million worth of fake goods into the country.

Mr. Melendez said at the news conference that 32 of the men and women had been arrested. All of them

are of Chinese heritage. One was living in the country illegally.

Mr. Melendez said the federal government had attacked the supply chain rather than going after individuals who sell counterfeit goods on the streets.

The investigation began in 2012, when Customs and Border Protection agents at the Port of Newark noticed anomalies in a shipping manifest; upon opening a 40-foot cargo container, the agents inspected the goods and realized they were counterfeit, said Leon Hayward, the assistant director of trade and cargo security for the border agency.

Mr. Melendez said that the fraud scheme had two parts. In one, counterfeit goods were made in China and then shipped to the United States through as many as eight legitimate shipping companies.

The importers represented themselves as employees of legitimate importing companies with email addresses and phone numbers. The goods were trucked to warehouses in Queens, Brooklyn and Long Island, and then wholesale distributors sold the goods to other distributors.

In the other part of the scheme, he said, defendants traveled to China to purchase generic items, which could be exported legally. A separate factory then produced knockoff logos, which were smuggled into the United States and affixed to the goods.

Three retail businesses in Queens and two in Manhattan were part of the scheme, Mr. Melendez said, adding that they had closed. But an employee at one of the businesses identified by authorities, Proya Fashion, in the Manhattan garment district, said it was still operating, and insisted that no one was arrested. The employee hung up before giving her name.

None of the other businesses could be reached for comment.

Twenty of the containers came in through the Port of New York and New Jersey, and two through the Port of Los Angeles, Mr. Melendez said.

As part of the indictment, authorities for the agency, known as ICE, said they also seized personal property belonging to the defendants in the New York metropolitan area worth a total of \$12 million.

ICE is better known for its operations in domestic immigration enforcement, which have led some Democratic candidates around the country to call for the agency to be abolished. Some officials within Homeland Security Investigations, which conducts investigations of crimes like counterfeit goods, money laundering, drug trafficking, human smuggling, child exploitation and cybercrimes, have sought to distance themselves from immigration enforcement.

In June, 19 investigators sent a letter to Kirstjen Nielsen, the secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, requesting a stand-alone agency.

Ronald D. Vitiello, the deputy director of ICE, who had come to New York for the announcement of the investigation, said that the agency's two arms should remain together. "I think the work that both big halves of the organization do are mutually dependent," he said. "Part of my vision going forward is to make sure each of us understands that."

Follow Liz Robbins on Twitter: @nytlizrobbins

Feds Seize \$500 Million Worth Of Fake Designer Goods In Black Market Sting Operation

By Anna Giaritelli

[Washington Examiner](#), August 16, 2018

Thirty-three people have been charged for their alleged roles in a global smuggling operation in which \$500 million worth of counterfeit designer items were shipped from China to the United States and sold on the black market, according to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Fake Louis Vuitton and Tory Burch purses, Michael Kors wallets, Hermes belts, and Chanel perfume were shipped overseas by Chinese manufacturers disguised as legitimate imports through ports on the east and west coasts.

ICE, an agency largely known for deporting people illegally in the country, said its Homeland Security Investigation team was responsible for the big bust.

"The defendants allegedly smuggled millions of dollars of counterfeit luxury goods into our country, depriving companies of their valuable and hard-earned intellectual property," Assistant Attorney General Brian A. Benczkowski of the Justice Department's Criminal Division said in a statement.

Twenty-two people were charged federally, and 11 others were charged by the district attorney's office in Queens, N.Y. "Most were citizens and lawful residents," ICE spokesman Khaalid Walls confirmed to the Washington Examiner.

Among the charges filed against the accused are conspiracy to trafficking and trafficking in counterfeit goods, conspiracy to smuggle and smuggling, money laundering conspiracy, immigration fraud and unlawful procurement of naturalization, and unlawful procurement of naturalization.

Federal investigators also seized nine properties in New York city's Queens, Staten Island, and Brooklyn, that it said belonged to the accused.

ICE said the operation was a government-wide effort that involved the New York Police Department Border Security Enforcement Task Force, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, New York State Police, Justice Department Task Force on Intellectual Property, and the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office.

22 Arrested In Counterfeit Goods Bust Called One Of The Largest In New York City History

[WABC-TV New York](#), August 16, 2018

NEW YORK CITY (WABC) –

Nearly two dozen people have been arrested in what authorities are calling one of the largest counterfeit goods takedown in New York City's history.

Agents from Homeland Security Investigations and the NYPD shut down the alleged luxury counterfeit goods operation Thursday morning, with 22 suspects accused of illegally bringing millions of dollars worth of Chinese-manufactured goods into the United States by smuggling them through ports of entry on the East and West coasts.

One defendant is additionally charged with unlawful procurement of naturalization.

The suspects are identified as:

--Qi Feng Liang, 34, of Brooklyn, aka Alex, aka Mike Sotire

--Wo Qi Liu, 43, of Brooklyn, aka Louis, aka, Qi, aka Woqi, aka Big Elephant

--Zhi Ming Zhang, 43, of Staten Island, aka Jordan, aka Four B

--Josstina Lin, 42, of Brooklyn, aka Tina

--Xue Wei Qu, 51, of Queens

--Xi Quan Huang, 58, of Queens

--Yun Lei Huang, 32, of Queens

--Yun Wu Huang, 34, of Queens

--Wei Mei Gao, 35, of Queens

--Shen Miao Xia, 44, of Queens

--Si Lung Chung, 42, of Manhattan, aka Allan

--Le Wei Zheng, 42, of Manhattan

--Xiao Ying Huang, 53, of Nassau County, aka Linda

--Qiong Chan Mu, 26, of Nassau County, aka Rosanna

--Ren Zong Zhu, 31, of Nassau County

--Yong Lin Dong, 43, of Queens

--Cai Ying Lin, 43, of Queens

--Cheng Xu Yu, 29, of Queens, aka Vic

--Jian Hua Zhu, 52, of Queens

--Jin Hua Zhang, 55, of Queens

--Jie Mei Chen, 33, of Queens, aka Jenny

--Yu Ming Wong, 36, of Queens

The charges include conspiracy to traffic and trafficking in counterfeit goods, conspiracy to smuggle and smuggling counterfeit goods, money laundering conspiracy, immigration fraud and unlawful procurement of naturalization.

In addition, the government restrained nine real properties in Queens, Staten Island and Brooklyn belonging to the defendants.

"The defendants allegedly smuggled millions of dollars of counterfeit luxury goods into our country, depriving companies of their valuable and hard-earned intellectual property," Assistant Attorney General Brian Benczkowski said. "The illegal smuggling of counterfeit goods poses a real threat to honest businesses, and I commend our federal prosecutors and partners at HSI and the NYPD for their outstanding work on this important investigation. The Department of Justice is committed to holding accountable those who seek to exploit our borders by smuggling counterfeit goods for sale on the black market."

According to the court filings, the suspects played various roles in the trafficking of counterfeit goods manufactured in China, brought by ocean-going ships to the U.S. in 40-foot shipping containers smuggled through ports of entry disguised as legitimate imports and distributed throughout the country.

The counterfeit goods included items such as fake Louis Vuitton and Tory Burch handbags, Michael Kors wallets, Hermes belts and Chanel perfume.

The defendants' alleged roles included (all information and accusations are according to the criminal complaint):

Importers

Qi Feng Liang, Wo Qi Liu, Zhi Ming Zhang and Yu Ming Wong served as shipping container importers. They arranged to smuggle counterfeit goods into the United States through the Port of New York/New Jersey and elsewhere. They fraudulently used the names, addresses and other identifying information of legitimate import companies and falsified the descriptions of the containers' contents on U.S. customs paperwork associated with the containers of counterfeit goods. They used "burner" phone numbers and "burner" email accounts obtained by using false or incomplete information in order to conceal their true identities. The counterfeit goods were transported by trucks to self-storage facilities in Brooklyn, Queens and Long Island, where the goods were unloaded and stored. Qi Feng Liang, Wo Qi Liu, Zhi Ming Zhang and Yu Ming Wong smuggled or attempted to smuggle 23 40-foot shipping containers into the country loaded with counterfeit items. The estimated Manufacturers' Suggested Retail Price of

these items, had they been genuine, would have been more than \$450 million.

Wholesale Distributors

Josstina Lin, Xue Wei Qu, Xi Quan Huang, Yun Lei Huang, Yun Wu Huang, Si Lung Chung, Le Wei Zheng, Xiao Ying Huang, Qiong Chan Mu, Ren Zhong Zhu, Cheng Xu Yu, Jin Hua Zhang, Jian Hua Zhu, Yong Lin Dong and Cai Ying Lin managed the receipt, storage and distribution of counterfeit goods smuggled into the United States by the importers. They resold the counterfeit items to other wholesale and retail sellers in New York, California and elsewhere in the United States.

Domestic Shippers

Wei Mei Gao, Sheng Miao Xia and Jie Mei Chen used private shipping businesses they controlled to distribute the counterfeit goods smuggled into the United States by the importers and handled by the wholesale distributors. The domestic shippers also facilitated payments by the wholesale and retail counterfeit goods sellers to the wholesale distributors. Jie Mei Chen is also charged with unlawful procurement of naturalization.

As alleged in the indictments, some defendants additionally conspired to launder the proceeds from the sale of counterfeit goods, and others illegally concealed their involvement in the trafficking of counterfeit goods when applying for immigration benefits.

Allegan, Michigan, Man Persuaded Teens To Send Explicit Pics

By Kaitlyn Schwerts

[Miami Herald](#), August 16, 2018

A 27-year-old man pretending to be a 15-year-old by the name of "Roman Kalhart" persuaded "as many as 50 to 70" young teens to send him sexually explicit photos over the internet four years ago, and now he's been sentenced to more time in prison, the U.S. Attorney's Office of the Western District of Michigan said in a news release.

James T. Pyle, of Allegan, was sentenced in federal court Wednesday to more than 20 years in prison after he pleaded guilty to a charge of sexual exploitation of a minor.

Pyle was initially facing two counts of enticement of a minor, two counts of sexual exploitation of a minor and two counts of receipt of child pornography, according to the indictment. He accepted a plea deal in May.

Court records said Pyle admitted to persuading a 15-year-old boy in Wisconsin to send him explicit photos. At least 20 victims were outlined in the pre-sentence investigation report, the U.S. Attorney's Office noted.

SIGN UP

The U.S. Attorney's Office said he obtained those photos by posing as a teen on Facebook and befriending "numerous" young teens online.

At the time, in 2014, the U.S. Attorney's Office said Pyle was on probation for a previous felony charge, accosting a child for immoral purposes. By 2015, the court revoked his probation, and he was ordered to spend 33 to 48 months in prison for probation violations, according to MLive.com.

In a pre-sentencing interview, Pyle acknowledged he has a problem and said he felt like "the scum of the earth."

A sentencing memorandum filed in federal court on Pyle's behalf indicates he's receiving group counseling and one-on-one counseling while in prison.

The judge sentenced Pyle to more than 20 years in prison on Wednesday, and also ordered Pyle to serve 10 years of supervised release and pay a \$2,500 fine.

The U.S. Attorney's Office said the case was prosecuted as part of Project Safe Childhood, and was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations with help from the Michigan Department of Corrections and the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety.

"The U.S. Attorney's Office takes very seriously cases involving child predators," U.S. Attorney Andrew Birge said in a statement. "Those people who would use the internet to hide their true identity to befriend and exploit children deserve the fullest punishment the law provides."

Man Sentenced For Persuading 50-70 Teens To Send Sexually Explicit Photos

[MLive \(MI\)](#), August 16, 2018

GRAND RAPIDS, MI – An Allegan man accused of befriending 50-70 young teens and persuading them to send him sexually explicit photographs has been ordered to serve more than 20 years in prison.

James Theodore Pyle, 27, was convicted of sexual exploitation of a minor in U.S. District Court and sentenced to 245 months in prison. He's also ordered to spend 10 years on supervised release, and to pay a fine of \$2,500.

In 2014, prosecutors said Pyle posed as "Roman Kalhart" on Facebook and claimed he was 15 years old. He's accused of befriending as many as 50-70 young teens and persuading them to send him explicit photos.

The victims include a 15-year-old boy in Wisconsin, and a 12-year-old boy in Minnesota. At least 20 victims were outlined in the pre-sentence investigation report.

Man convinced teens to send nude photos on internet

At the time of the offense, Pyle was on probation for a 2012 conviction of accosting a child for immoral purposes in 2009. His probation was revoked and, on Jan. 25, 2015, he was sentenced to 33 to 48 months in prison for that conviction.

Chief U.S. District Judge Robert Jonker ordered that Pyle serve his federal sentence consecutively to his state sentence, which will conclude on Nov. 20, 2018.

"The U.S. Attorney's Office takes very seriously cases involving child predators," said U.S. Attorney Andrew Birge in a statement. "Those people who would use the internet to hide their true identity to befriend and exploit children deserve the fullest punishment the law provides."

Pyle is incarcerated at the Carson City Correctional Facility in Montcalm County. He's listed on Michigan's sex offender registry as a tier 2 offender who registered on Nov. 19, 2012.

Tier 2 offenders most remain on the registry for 25 years, not including prison/jail time.

Pyle's most recent case was prosecuted as part of Project Safe Childhood – a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. It was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations, with assistance from the Michigan Department of Corrections and the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Year Hurricane Harvey Swamped A Neighborhood—And Split A Friendship

By Dan Frosch

[Wall Street Journal](#), August 16, 2018

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

AI Startups Promise To Help Disaster Relief And Evacuation

By Christopher Flavelle

[Bloomberg BusinessWeek](#), August 16, 2018

As record wildfires raced through California's wine country last October, devouring thousands of homes, Sonoma County Sheriff's deputies drove up and down streets with sirens blaring, warning residents over bullhorns to evacuate. Twenty-four people didn't make it, and more than half of them were at least 70 years old. That suggests they either couldn't hear the warnings or couldn't leave under their own power, according to Sarah Tuneberg. "Those people did not need to die," she says.

Tuneberg's company, Geospiza Inc., sells artificial intelligence software that scours data to help cities find

and protect their most vulnerable residents during a disaster. She says the platform can check multiple databases to guess which residents, in this case, have hearing impairments or use personal-care attendants. It then alerts emergency managers about who's likely to need assistance. "It's just too hard in the fog of war, given our current technology, to pull those pieces together in a timely fashion," Tuneberg says. "That's what we're trying to do."

As climate change makes weather more extreme, a new crop of startups—including Geospiza, named for the adaptable finches made famous by Charles Darwin—is trying to harness AI to save lives by predicting damage from hurricanes, wildfires, and earthquakes better and faster than humans do. Although the services remain largely unproven, cities around the U.S., many still reeling from last year's record disasters, have begun signing up for them. Geospiza has a contract with Redmond, Wash., and has pilot agreements with Multnomah County, Ore., which includes Portland, and Jefferson County, Fla.

"You can save an order-of-magnitude more lives with good planning"

Another startup, One Concern Inc., assesses building data, elevation, soil types, weather data, and other factors to predict earthquake damage block by block and identify which buildings are most in need of reinforcement. After a quake, the company says, it can recommend where to evacuate, send first responders, and set up shelters. "You can save an order-of-magnitude more lives with good planning," says co-founder Nicole Hu. The company says it plans to introduce similar services for wildfires and floods later this year.

The One Concern software is already being used in San Francisco to plan drills, says Michael Dayton, deputy director for the city's Department of Emergency Management. Dayton says the software can predict, for example, whether and where an earthquake is likely to cause fires, based on where that earthquake strikes and how strong it is. It can also predict the safest routes for bringing aid and other supplies into the city.

In Utah, the nonprofit Field Innovation Team is experimenting with AI software that can anticipate what people in shelters will need based on the ages and health of those most likely to lose their homes. That information can guide how the shelters are designed, what help they offer, and even what kinds of donations officials solicit from the public, says founder Desiree Matel-Anderson, former chief innovation adviser at the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

AI isn't a panacea, especially if the relevant databases aren't kept current. "That has to be an

ongoing effort,” says Mark Ghilarducci, director of the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services. “The last thing you want to do is make decisions on old or bad information.” Given the power of such systems, privacy is another concern. Just as important, the software can often be a black box that’s difficult to hold accountable, says Sarah Miller, chair of the Emerging Technology Caucus for the International Association of Emergency Managers. “If the AI somehow accidentally decides that those who have higher incomes are more worthy of saving, then it might redirect resources accordingly, and we might not know that,” she says.

Hu says One Concern will never sell or share any personal information, while Tuneberg says Geospiza ensures that such data are available only to people with “an appropriate and valid need to know.” She says that in the unlikely event that AI inadvertently privileges some groups over others, as it can in the risk assessment software sometimes used in criminal sentencing, developers would be able to spot those outcomes through regular testing. “Minorities and people with disabilities are ignored by the system through human approaches every single day,” she says. “This idea that AI is going to do worse by them, I would say, is ridiculous.”

BOTTOM LINE – Emergency managers in several cities and counties are using AI services to help plan their disaster response, but they remain largely unproven.

CYBER NEWS

Trump Gives The Military More Latitude To Use Offensive Cyber Tools Against Adversaries

By Ellen Nakashima

[Washington Post](#), August 16, 2018

The Trump administration has moved to give the military more latitude to conduct offensive cyber operations against American adversaries, continuing an effort begun last year to grant commanders more leeway to make battlefield decisions.

President Trump on Wednesday signed an order delegating authority to the defense secretary to use cyber tools and techniques to disrupt or degrade an adversary’s network or choke off attacks underway, loosening rules established under the Obama administration.

The move comes as the administration is focused on deterring Russian efforts to disrupt the November election and, more broadly, to undermine U.S. democracy. Although Trump has sent mixed signals on

the issue, his administration, from Vice President Pence on down, has warned Russia that it will not tolerate foreign interference in American politics.

The new directive, first reported by the Wall Street Journal, comes as Gen. Paul Nakasone, who heads both the National Security Agency and U.S. Cyber Command, has recommended to Pentagon leaders that the two organizations remain under one head for at least two years. The call to end this “dual-hat” arrangement dates to the Obama administration, but the effort was delayed, and when Nakasone took over he gave the matter a fresh look.

Nakasone, who submitted his recommendation Aug. 5, believes the nine-year-old CyberCom still needs intelligence support from the NSA, according to people familiar with his thinking, and that separate leadership would hinder that effort. This would keep in place the structure that has existed since CyberCom’s launch. At the same time, Nakasone has set up a “small group” comprised of people from both organizations to work together to detect and thwart Russian interference in the midterm elections.

Taken together, these moves show a strengthened focus on military cyber capabilities — and reflect a mounting concern on the part of senior security officials about the severity of the threat from foreign adversaries, especially Russia.

Director of National Intelligence Daniel Coats recently warned that the “lights are blinking red” and “the digital infrastructure that serves this country is literally under attack.”

The NSA declined to comment on Nakasone’s recommendation, but confirmed that he had provided it to Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for their review. Dunford is expected to make his recommendation to Mattis as early as next week.

Trump’s cyber order replaces one issued by President Barack Obama in 2012, called Presidential Policy Directive 20, which laid out a framework for undertaking offensive and defensive cyber actions. Many military cyber operators saw it as needlessly constraining.

The new order also applies to other agencies, although the Pentagon is the primary focus, said a senior administration official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a nonpublic document. Some officials have advocated such a move for years. When Trump’s national security adviser, John Bolton, arrived at the White House, he spearheaded a new push for the policy, the official said.

Former acting deputy assistant secretary of cyberdefense policy Kate Charlet said “it makes sense”

for the defense secretary to have authority for certain operations. "Say you wanted to stop Russia from going after our critical infrastructure — if we have an opportunity to prevent something like that, then we should be able to act on that quickly," Charlet said.

Under the Obama-era order, such an operation would be vetted by agencies including the State Department and intelligence agencies, in a National Security Council-led process. Final approval lay with the president. "There was always pushback," recalled Aaron Hughes, another former senior Pentagon official. "We were hamstrung for so many things we felt were benign."

Former State Department cyber coordinator Christopher Painter said he supports using cyber capabilities, "but at the same time, you need to make sure you're looking at other national equities." It's important, he said, to ensure that a cyber operation does not compromise intelligence collection, law enforcement investigations and diplomatic relations.

Nakasone's recommendation to maintain one head over both the NSA and CyberCom is rooted in a determination that CyberCom does not yet have the level of intelligence support it needs to operate effectively on its own. To conduct offensive or defensive operations, it relies primarily on intelligence collected and analyzed by the NSA, which is much larger. Both are located at Fort Meade, Md.

Nakasone has said that even if the two organizations have different leaders, they will always need to work together closely. But the two have different missions. CyberCom's is to disrupt and destroy adversaries' networks when directed. The NSA's is to gather foreign intelligence as required by policymakers, as well as to support military commanders.

"CyberCom needs tactical intelligence on military targets," said Hughes, which he said is generally not what NSA is collecting. So CyberCom, although it will always rely to some extent on the NSA, needs to develop its own collection capability to be effective, he said.

While senior officials understand the need for the NSA to share technical intelligence with CyberCom, it has not always worked smoothly at the operational level, said people familiar with the matter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive issue. To alleviate that, Nakasone has set up a cryptologic support group within CyberCom to serve as a hub for intelligence sharing.

Several cyber experts and former senior government officials say the two organizations should have their own heads.

"The military and intelligence missions are related but they're fundamentally different," said Michael Daniel,

White House cyber coordinator in the Obama administration. "So for CyberCom to be truly and fully functional in the way the nation needs, it needs to be its own separate organization."

Iowa Adds Technology To Detect Russian Election Hacking Attempts

By James Q. Lynch

[Cedar Rapids \(IA\) Gazette](#), August 16, 2018

CEDAR RAPIDS — Iowa is among the majority of states to adopt technology giving the federal government access to voter data and voter registration computer systems as part of the expanding effort to guard against Russian hacking attempts that targeted 21 states in 2016.

"We know in Iowa, thousands a day try to get into the government systems," Secretary of State Paul Pate told Bloomberg News, adding that earlier this year he added the so-called Albert sensors to his computer network, a system that is separate from the state computer network.

At least 36 of 50 states have installed the sensors at the "elections infrastructure level," according to the Department of Homeland Security. The sensors are named for Albert Einstein and modeled after a system used to protect federal government computer networks.

Homeland Security reported 74 individual sensors across 38 counties and other local government offices have been installed. Only 14 such sensors were installed before the 2016 U.S. presidential election. There are about 9,000 local jurisdictions where voting takes place.

Pate, whose spokesperson said the office is "working with DHS in a variety of ways, including an Albert sensor," would like counties to follow his lead to be "equally protected."

However, that protection would come at a cost. The sensors are free to states and some large counties, according to Homeland Security's Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center. Smaller jurisdictions have to pay fees of \$600 to \$1,500 a month.

And there are limitations, according to Linn County Auditor Joel Miller, who has looked at the Albert sensors.

The sensors look for strange internet protocols, commonly referred to as IP, in the state I-Voters system. But if someone already has gained remote access through any of the 500 I-Voter clients, "then the IP address being used by the I-Voters client is a legitimate, accepted IP address to Albert," Miller said, "and the MAC address on the client has already been accepted by I-Voters." The MAC address refers to a unique identifier associated with a device.

“So Albert is helpful, but not the end-all tool,” Miller said. He believes counties and the Secretary of State Office need a tool that tracks the movement of voter registration records.

He’s not alone in that concern. Neal Kelley, chief of elections for Orange County, Calif., recently added Albert sensors “because I believe voting systems have tremendous vulnerabilities that we need to plug; but also the voter registration systems are a concern,” he said.

“That’s one of the things I lose sleep about: It’s what can we do to protect voter registration systems?” Kelley said.

The 14 states that do not have sensors installed ahead of the 2018 midterm elections have opted for another solution, are planning to do so shortly or have refused the offer because of concerns about federal government overreach. Those 14 states were not identified by officials.

But enough have installed them that cybersecurity experts can begin to track intrusions and share that information with all states. The technology directly feeds data about cyber incidents through a nonprofit cyber intelligence data exchange and then to DHS.

“When you start to get dozens, hundreds of sensors, like we have now, you get real value,” said John Gilligan, chief executive of the Center for Internet Security. “As we move forward, there are new sensors that are being installed literally almost every day. Our collective objective is that all voter infrastructure in states has a sensor.”

Top U.S. intelligence officials have predicted that hackers working for foreign governments will target the 2018 and 2020 elections.

Trump Reverses Obama-Era Rules On Cyberattacks

By Ryan Grenoble

[Huffington Post](#), August 16, 2018

The Trump administration on Wednesday rolled back a series of Obama-era rules meant to regulate and coordinate how the United States engages in cyberattacks, portraying the rules as unnecessarily restrictive.

The confidential Obama rules, referred to as “Presidential Policy Directive 20,” set in place processes for approval before any one government agency could launch a cyberattack.

“If you don’t have good coordination mechanisms, you could end up having an operation wreck a carefully crafted multiyear espionage operation to gain access to a foreign computer system,” Michael Daniel, Obama’s

White House cybersecurity coordinator, explained to the Wall Street Journal.

A copy of the Obama directive, leaked by NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden and obtained by The Guardian in 2013, also explicitly prevented the government from engaging in domestic cyber operations except in cases of emergency.

It’s unclear what new rules, if any, the Trump administration has implemented instead, but a former senior U.S. official expressed concern to the Journal the new rules might now permit domestic activities.

Trump officials contend Directive 20 was more of an impediment than a useful framework for interagency communication, a stance that could signal an increase in the U.S. engaging in such attacks moving forward.

Trump’s national security adviser John Bolton was reportedly a driving force behind the decision.

Trump Takes Steps Toward Reversing Obama-era Cyberattack Rules

By Reuters

[New York Post](#), August 16, 2018

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

Trump, Seeking To Relax Rules On U.S. Cyberattacks, Reverses Obama Directive

It isn’t clear what rules the president is adopting to replace the existing ones

By Dustin Volz

[Wall Street Journal](#), August 15, 2018

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

Trump Scraps Obama Rules On Cyberattacks, Giving Military Freer Hand

By Eric Geller

[Politico](#), August 16, 2018

President Donald Trump has eliminated rules governing the process for launching cyberattacks, giving the military freer rein to deploy its advanced hacking tools without pushback from the State Department and the intelligence community, an administration official told POLITICO.

Trump’s decision, the latest example of his desire to push decision-making authority down the chain of command, could empower military officials to launch more frequent and more aggressive cyberattacks against adversaries like Russia and Iran.

The guidelines approved by President Barack Obama, known as Presidential Policy Directive 20,

required high-level discussions between many agencies before the military could conduct significant cyber operations. In rescinding PPD-20, Trump put cyberattacks on the same level as kinetic operations, which do not require high-level approval or interagency discussions.

Now, U.S. Cyber Command can conduct attacks based on the administration's strategic decisions without needing to get White House signoff on individual digital strikes.

"There's a large degree of unhappiness in DoD and in Cyber Command with the interagency process and the structure set up by PPD-20 to approve offensive cyber operations," said a former U.S. official, who, like others interviewed for this story, requested anonymity to discuss classified matters.

During the Obama administration, this person said, the State Department "was successful in blocking or slowing Cyber Command in doing things it wanted to do, even against targets you wouldn't think anyone would have any objection to, like ISIS."

Under Obama, according to a former FBI official, "there was not clear guidance from the administration" about using cyber capabilities "against major threats."

The former U.S. official played down the significance of the move, which was first reported by The Wall Street Journal. "It's not so much to let Cyber Command off the leash as to let [the head of] Cyber Command act like any other combatant commander."

It remains unclear what new policy has replaced PPD-20, and the White House declined to comment.

A former DoD cyber official said that agencies like State and Commerce, with their understandings of diplomatic and economic consequences, still needed to be involved in major decisions.

"There still need to be checks and balances, given that the internet is a broader ecosystem of which the military is only one actor," this person said.

Another former DoD official agreed, saying the U.S. needed to be "very careful not to get too far over our skis until our cybersecurity posture as a nation is stronger, because it isn't the military or government that will bear any response. It will be our soft civilian underbelly."

The intelligence community has also balked at some military operations, especially ones that risk exposing the eavesdropping software that U.S. spies spend years developing and planting in enemy networks.

The bureaucratic wrangling that resulted from PPD-20 had serious, practical consequences, said the former U.S. official. Last year, Cyber Command and its British counterpart developed a plan to conduct cyber

operations, but debates between U.S. agencies delayed the mission.

"The British eventually got bored and went ahead and left without us because our interagency process was so turgid," said the former official, who declined to specify the target or provide more details. "They started their activities three months before the U.S. was able to come to an agreement — on something that had been a U.S. proposal."

The Trump White House appears determined not to repeat that scenario. Trump's decision to give the military a freer hand "is consistent with the administration's decentralized approach to other military and security actions," said an official who worked on cyber policy in the George W. Bush administration, "and PPD-20 was seen as a typical Obama-era exercise in group stasis."

Still, the decision is a significant blow to the State Department, which will now have less sway over whether the military conducts specific digital attacks that could complicate diplomatic negotiations or other international priorities.

State officials "don't think there was any need for change," said the former U.S. official. "DoD wants to have less need to consult on every operation. State says, no, they have to, this is so important."

The White House has been mulling the change for months. While national security adviser John Bolton is typically seen as a hawkish influence inside the administration, discussions about scrapping PPD-20 began before he took over from Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster.

Homeland security adviser Tom Bossert, whom Bolton pushed out when he arrived, "started a thoughtful, principles-level review" of PPD-20 and the trade-offs of keeping or rescinding it, according to a second former U.S. official.

Eliminating PPD-20 does not erase the constellation of legal challenges to cyber operations that have consumed meetings between Pentagon planners and State Department lawyers.

"That policy piece of paper became a scapegoat for bigger issues," said the former FBI official. "Whether people liked it or not, the PPD-20 process highlighted some very real legal issues regarding the extent of Cyber [Command's] authority to take certain actions in cyberspace."

The latest defense policy bill attempted to address some of those issues, declaring that cyberattacks are "traditional military activities" and do not require the president to sign a "covert action" finding before they can proceed. The former FBI official said there was "an effort underway to remove real and perceived legal and policy hurdles to facilitate Cyber [Command's] actions."

R. David Edelman, who served as a director for international cyber policy on the National Security Council during the Obama administration, said that whatever replaced PPD-20, it needed to incorporate non-military considerations.

“In military affairs, blaming the lawyers, or the process, is often easier than having good ideas,” he told POLITICO. “While it’s fair to say that U.S. cyber policy was cautious and lawyerly to a fault in the early days, unless we get better at predicting the consequences of cyberattacks, the alternative is recklessly lashing out and crossing our fingers.”

Edelman, now the director of MIT’s Project on Technology, Economy and National Security, noted that after the elimination of both PPD-20 and the White House cyber coordinator role, the need for a broad vision was greater than ever.

“What we need now is to know that a new plan is in place,” he said, “and to understand how it will keep impulsiveness from becoming the norm in our cyber policy, too.”

Trump Wants To Make It Easier For The U.S. To Launch Cyberattacks

By David Gilbert

[Vice](#), August 16, 2018

Donald Trump wants to make it much easier for the U.S. to launch offensive cyberattacks against its adversaries — but experts warn it could lead to even bigger problems.

According to a report by the Wall Street Journal, the U.S. president signed an order Wednesday rolling back an Obama-era policy that put significant restrictions on how and when the U.S. could deploy its so-called cyberweapons — particularly against foreign adversaries.

The move, championed by National Security Adviser John Bolton since his arrival in April, is designed to allow the U.S. to react more aggressively to foreign election interference as well as augment its traditional military responses.

This is an “offensive step forward,” one administration official told the newspaper.

Many lawmakers and intelligence officials frustrated at a lack of a comprehensive cyberwar strategy have been calling for a relaxation of the rules of engagement for cyberattacks.

Donald Trump wants to make it much easier for the U.S. to launch offensive cyberattacks against its adversaries — but experts warn it could lead to even bigger problems.

According to a report by the Wall Street Journal, the U.S. president signed an order Wednesday rolling back an Obama-era policy that put significant restrictions on how and when the U.S. could deploy its so-called cyberweapons — particularly against foreign adversaries.

The move, championed by National Security Adviser John Bolton since his arrival in April, is designed to allow the U.S. to react more aggressively to foreign election interference as well as augment its traditional military responses.

This is an “offensive step forward,” one administration official told the newspaper.

Many lawmakers and intelligence officials frustrated at a lack of a comprehensive cyberwar strategy have been calling for a relaxation of the rules of engagement for cyberattacks.

“The U.S. removing cyberwarfare restrictions is long overdue,” Thomas Reschke, a former counterintelligence special agent with the U.S. Army, told VICE News. “Other countries openly attacking assets across the board has gone unchecked for far too long. Worse, the previous policy of agreeing not to use cyber capabilities only emboldened both China and Russia.”

Russia and China have been at the forefront of those attacking the U.S. in recent years, with the former focused on disrupting elections while the latter has been targeting cyber espionage and the theft of valuable intellectual property.

Trump used these attacks as a rallying cry during his 2016 election campaign.

“It will make certain that our military is the best in the world in both cyber offense and defense,” Trump said in a campaign speech. “As a deterrent against attacks on our critical resources, the United States must possess the unquestioned capacity to launch crippling cyber counterattacks. America’s dominance in this arena must be unquestioned.”

While some intelligence officials may welcome Trump’s move, others within the security industry are wary of the change, warning that without knowing what new rules have replaced the old ones, we don’t know exactly what powers Trump is handing to his intelligence agencies and the Pentagon.

“We need more from the administration,” Sam Curry, chief security officer at Cybereason, told VICE News. “We need to know what the Trump administration guidelines are, why the rules are being changed now and what scenarios are envisioned.”

Mikko Hypponen, chief research officer with F-Secure, said while it was unclear what spurred the rule changes, one thing is clear, U.S. Cyber Command has more tools at its disposal.

"We are once again living in the middle of an arms race. This time, it's a cyber arms race," Hypponen told VICE News.

While China and Russia have been at the forefront of attacks, other nations including North Korea have been muddying the waters, making it harder to know who is conducting the attacks.

And this could prove problematic if the U.S. adopts a much more aggressive cyber offensive strategy.

"I am in favor of cyber offensive capabilities," Joseph Carson, chief security scientist at Thycotic, told VICE News. "However, in cyberspace, the biggest problem we have is absolute attribution to knowing who exactly carried out the cyberattack and is it possible that it was a misdirection to put political pressure on two or more countries."

Obama signed Presidential Policy Directive 20 in 2012, putting in place a system whereby a wide range of individuals and agencies have to be consulted before any cyber campaign was launched. It was designed in part to prevent one agency from interfering with classified cyber espionage campaigns being conducted by another agency.

The secret policy was made public in 2013 when whistleblower Edward Snowden leaked classified documents.

Curry hopes a similar leak won't be necessary this time around.

"Hopefully it won't take another Snowden-like leakage or a massive conflict where new offensive cyber powers are exercised to give us more insight into the new rules of engagement and foreign policy stance," Curry said.

Trump Move To Loosen U.S. Use Of Cyberweapons Prompts Intrigue

'The devil is in the details,' says Trump's former homeland security adviser

By Dustin Volz

[Wall Street Journal](#), August 16, 2018

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

Chinese Hackers Scanned Business, Government Websites In Alaska

By Jacqueline Thomsen

[The Hill](#), August 16, 2018

Security researchers have found that Chinese hackers examined government and businesses websites in Alaska for potential vulnerabilities in the weeks surrounding a state trade delegation's trip to China.

Researchers for the security firm Recorded Future said they found that hackers working out of China's Tsinghua University targeted energy and communications firms.

The action took place in the weeks before and after state officials went on a trade mission to China in May, led by Alaska Gov. Bill Walker (I).

The researchers said that websites for Alaskan service providers and government offices were scanned by the Chinese actors seeking possible vulnerabilities ahead of the trade trip. They added that flaws could allow them access to otherwise inaccessible and confidential systems.

A second scan of Alaskan government sites was conducted in June, shortly after the state's governor said he would raise concerns with federal officials about trade disputes between the U.S. and China.

"The spike in scanning activity at the conclusion of trade discussions on related topics indicates that the activity was likely an attempt to gain insight into the Alaskan perspective on the trip and strategic advantage in the post-visit negotiations," the Recorded Future report states.

A Recorded Future researcher said it's unclear if the targeted systems were compromised.

The security firm said it provided the FBI with a copy of the report. The Hill has reached out to the FBI for comment.

A Tsinghua University official denied the allegations to Reuters, which first reported the research.

"This is baseless. I've never heard of this, so I have no way to give a response," he said, declining to provide his name.

The report comes as the U.S. and China engage in an escalating trade war. China is Alaska's largest trading partner.

Updated at 9:52 a.m.

Chinese Hackers Targeted U.S. Firms, Government After Trade Mission: Researchers

By Christopher Bing, Jack Stubbs

[Reuters](#), August 16, 2018

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

Hackers At 'China's MIT' Targeted U.S. Companies And Government Departments, Report Says

By Jason Lemon

[Newsweek](#), August 16, 2018

Hackers working from an elite Chinese university have targeted U.S. businesses and government departments, according to security researchers at the cybersecurity firm Recorded Future.

Speaking to Reuters, the researchers alleged that the hackers worked from China's Tsinghua University in Beijing to probe U.S. energy and communications companies, as well as the Alaskan state government. Specific targets included Alaska Communications Systems Group Inc (ALSK.O), Ensco Plc's (ESV.N) Atwood Oceanics, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, the Alaska governor's office and regional internet service provider TelAlaska.

"The spike in scanning activity at the conclusion of trade discussions on related topics indicates that the activity was likely an attempt to gain insight into the Alaskan perspective on the trip and strategic advantage in the post-visit negotiations," Recorded Future's report, which was released Thursday, said. The cybersecurity firm told Reuters that it previously shared the document with the FBI.

According to the report, the alleged hack occurred before and after a trade mission by Alaska's state government, led by Governor Bill Walker, to China in May. The Asian nation has been Alaska's biggest foreign export market for the past seven years with more than \$1.3 billion in exports.

An official at Tsinghua University, who declined to give his name, told Reuters that the accusations were "baseless," saying he had "never heard" of any such activity. The top Chinese university is often classified as "China's MIT," and has close ties to Tsinghua Holdings, a state-backed company that develops a variety of technologies, including robotics and artificial intelligence.

Other cybersecurity firms have previously warned of the threat of Chinese hackers interfering in the U.S. Back in June, Symantec's Security Response Attack Investigation Team claimed that a cyberespionage group operating from computers inside China had launched a "wide-ranging" operation targeting U.S. satellite communications and the defense sectors.

Hacking has become a growing security concern across the world, with numerous governments and international corporations reporting large-scale breaches in recent years. Much attention has recently been given to alleged Russian efforts to target the U.S. government and elections.

Last month, officials from the Department of Homeland Security also disclosed their suspicions that Russian hackers were behind electricity blackouts in the U.S. last year, after they gained access to some utility control rooms.

Iranian hackers have raised alarms bells as well, particularly after the Trump administration indicted an Iranian hacker network in May. Officials called the attack, which targeted dozens of U.S. universities, companies and government agencies, "one of the largest state-sponsored hacking campaigns" ever prosecuted.

U.S. States Demand Better Access To Secrets About Election Cyber Threats

By Christopher Bing

[Reuters](#), August 16, 2018

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

DHS Conducts Cybersecurity Tabletop Exercise To Prepare For Midterm Elections

By Monica Jackson

[ExecutiveGov](#), August 16, 2018

The Department of Homeland Security has conducted a tabletop exercise to help public and private sector entities prepare and respond to cybersecurity issues that may arise during the 2018 midterm elections.

The Tabletop the Vote 2018: DHS' National Election Cyber Exercise featured pointers on how to address potential risks to the elections such as manipulating information on political candidates and election procedures and performing spear phishing campaigns toward election officials, DHS said Wednesday.

Participants of the three-day activity were able to identify possible plans to disrupt voter confidence, voting operations and the integrity of elections.

DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen stated that the exercise helped test the abilities of the government and the industry to respond to cyber incidents that could affect an election.

Nielsen added that the effort also boosted the communication and incident response capabilities of the election community.

Government agencies such as the departments of Defense and Justice , Office of the Director of National Intelligence, National Institute of Standards and Technology,

National Security Agency,FBI and U.S. Cyber Command sponsored the cyber response effort.

DHS Hosts States For Election Security Exercise

[MeriTalk](#), August 16, 2018

The Department of Homeland Security on Aug. 13-15 hosted "Tabletop the Vote 2018: DHS' National

Election Cyber Exercise,” which invited vendors and Federal, state, and local election officials to participate in election security preparation.

“Today’s exercise brought together our partners from all levels of government and the private sector in order to test our ability to respond to cyber incidents that could potentially affect an election, and build strong communication and incident response plans across the election community,” said DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen.

The three-day event offered a scenario based on real-world events and risks such as spear-phishing, social media manipulation, denial of service attacks, disruption of voter registration, malware infections of voting machines, and the exploitation of elections offices networks.

The exercise involved officials from 44 states and the District of Columbia. Federal agencies also participated, including the National Security Agency, the Department of Defense, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and U.S. Cyber Command.

“The response we have received from this week’s participants has been overwhelmingly positive and we’ve identified areas we need to collectively focus on ahead of the midterm elections. In this environment, if we prepare individually, then we fail collectively, and I am grateful for everyone’s participation and partnership this week,” said Nielsen.

In addition to the exercise, participants also discussed processes to better share threat information, request assistance from other levels of government, communicate about incidents to the public, and best practices to manage risk.

Georgia Counties Respond To Hacking, Security Threat

By Tia Mitchell Meris Lutz Leon Stafford
[Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#), August 16, 2018

As Georgians prepare to cast their ballots in a nationally watched gubernatorial race, the security and reliability of the state’s election system remains a point of concern for many voters and security experts.

Polls show that a large percentage of Americans believe there’s a concerted effort underway by foreign entities to undermine American Democracy and promote discord, using everything from fake Facebook accounts to Russian Twitter bots. But perhaps nothing strikes fear in the hearts of voters in Georgia and across the country more than the notion that their ballots could be changed by hackers.

In the metro area, elections officials in Fulton, DeKalb, Cobb, Gwinnett, Henry, Clayton and Fayette counties told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution they are working with the Secretary of State’s office to ensure every ballot cast in November is counted and reported accurately. They say their systems and processes are battle tested and secure.

Still, there’s a growing clamor for more precautions.

The state’s weaknesses have been well documented. Georgia uses electronic voting machines and is one of only five states that don’t have paper backups that can be used to audit results.

More than 20 experts from Georgia Tech, MIT, Princeton and other top-tier institutions signed a letter to Secretary of State Brian Kemp last year expressing “grave concerns” about Georgia’s election system and urging the state to adopt paper ballots. That process is underway, but no changes are likely before November.

Also feeding into voters’ apprehension is mounting evidence that Russia attempted to hack into election systems across the U.S. in 2016. Special counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation found one suspected operative had visited Cobb and Fulton counties’ election websites, though no confidential information was obtained, the Secretary of State’s office said.

Russian hackers tried without success to gain access to the private election systems of 21 states, but Georgia was not one of them, Kemp’s office said. Still, some experts say, it’s a matter of time.

Harri Hursti, a data security expert who signed the letter to Kemp, said Georgia’s software is more than 10 years old and “definitely hackable.”

Without a paper trail, it would be very difficult to prove if an election had been tampered with because malware can easily be written to erase itself after completing a task, he and other experts have said.

“If something goes wrong there is no way to audit,” Hursti said.

And Richard DeMillo, the executive director of the Center for 21st Century Universities at Georgia Tech, said he recently attended a conference in which participants figured out how to break into election machines “in very interesting ways.”

“Ways that if I were in the Secretary of State’s office would make me very nervous,” he continued.

Kemp’s duties include overseeing the November election, even though he is on the ballot himself as the Republican gubernatorial nominee. His representatives say there is neither evidence that Georgia’s voting system has been tampered with nor cause for widespread concern.

“Alongside federal, local and private sector partners, we continue to fight every day to ensure secure and accurate elections in Georgia that are free from interference,” Secretary of State spokeswoman Candice Broce said. “To this day, due to the vigilance, dedication and hard work of those partners, our elections system and voting equipment remain secure.”

The voting machines have been tested, as well as the related systems used to tabulate votes, Kemp’s office said. Homeland Security has also held briefings for counties, and the Secretary of State offers training.

Kemp’s office, the General Assembly and a newly formed statewide commission are in the process of mapping out a plan to implement paper balloting before the 2020 presidential election. But the current system of 27,000 touchscreen machines remains in place for the short-term.

“The state is helping counties test the machines regularly to make sure that they operate as designed and that they are accurately counting voter selections,” Broce said.

Of course, as many point out, there have been plenty of problems with elections over the years that have nothing to do with Russians.

A cybersecurity researcher in 2016 exposed security vulnerabilities at Kennesaw State University’s Center for Election Systems, which provided logistical support to the state. The problems were serious enough to prompt the state to end its contract.

Also issues have cropped up frequently on the local level, most noticeably in Fulton County. In 2007, records for more than 100,000 voters were found in a dumpster. The following year, it took the county days to finish counting absentee ballots. And in 2012, another presidential election year, the county failed to properly register some voters, forcing 10,000 people to use provisional ballots.

Current Fulton elections director Richard Barron was hired in 2013. He’s said in the past that he was working to update voter rolls, reduce the number of provisional ballots cast and ensure voters are directed to the right polling location.

Regarding the more recent concerns, Barron said a lot of hacks that happen in labs would be much harder in the real world. For example, seals are placed on voting machines, and poll workers check to ensure the seals are unbroken. They also make sure that the serial numbers on the machines match those recorded earlier.

Fulton is among the counties that have asked Homeland Security to review its systems and procedures.

“We made the decision to avail ourselves of their services,” Barron said. “I’m not concerned about the voting system. I think it’s safe and secure.”

Officials from Gwinnett said the county “has never received any notification of an attempting hacking of its elections systems.”

County spokesman Joe Sorenson said Gwinnett uses “physical and electronic measures” to secure machines but did not provide specifics. He said safeguards are adjusted “from time-to-time,” adding that it’s important to note that neither the county’s voting machines nor the machines used to count votes are connected to the internet.

“Gwinnett County takes the security of elections seriously and implements best practices to ensure the integrity of the votes,” Sorenson said in an emailed statement.

Two weeks ago, Henry County officials installed an alarm system at its elections office in McDonough. Elections and Registration director Tina Lunsford said the move was made out of an abundance of caution — not because there’s any information that the county is a target of hacking or voting machine tampering.

“As you start to see more and more come out about the Russians, it’s just another way for us to increase security,” she said.

Across America, voters are worried. A February 2018 NBC News poll concluded that eight out of 10 Americans are concerned the country’s voting systems are susceptible to hackers, and two-thirds said they fear foreign governments will try to interfere in elections this year.

And many Georgia voters have voiced concerns about election security during county commission meetings and to their local elections boards. Backed by groups like the Coalition for Good Governance, Indivisible Georgia Coalition, Common Cause Georgia and the NAACP, they have tried to make a case for paper ballots sooner rather than later.

Clayton resident Timothy Vondell Jefferson said he is most concerned that the loss of political norms in Washington will have an impact on the integrity of voting in Georgia. He thinks Kemp has declined to resign as secretary of state because Donald Trump — a Kemp supporter — has encouraged leaders to break with tradition and do whatever it takes to win.

“The leader of the country is sending a message that anything goes,” he said.

DeKalb Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson said she has heard enough to also have worries.

“I’m sure that many people throughout the state would feel much more comfortable with a printed ballot backup to make sure that their vote is counted,” she

said. “Because of the allegations of hacking and the intimidation and all other scenarios surrounding our election process, people are concerned. ... I just don’t feel 100 percent sure that my vote is my vote.”

Sara Henderson, executive director of Common Cause Georgia, is encouraging residents to vote early if they are worried about tampering.

“Lots of people love going to the polls on Election Day. I am one of them,” she said. “But if your concern is not having that human verifiable piece of paper, then go early-vote or go online and request an absentee ballot.” Early voting is still electronic in most jurisdictions. However, voters who want to use paper can request a mail-in ballot.

Common Cause also has a list of other recommendations it believes will help elections go smoothly, such as hiring enough workers to fully staff polling locations, not assigning voters to new precincts within 60 days of the election, increasing access to early voting and being more transparent about how and why voter roll purges are conducted.

At Johnson’s request, DeKalb commissioners recently delayed a proposal that would have caused some voters in Stonecrest to be sent to a new polling location in November. The change will now happen after the election.

Staff writers Tyler Estep and Arielle Kass contributed to this report.

The Mysterious Hacking Of The Candidate Running Against “Putin’s Favorite Congressman”

By Maya Kosoff

[Vanity Fair](#), August 15, 2018

The first hack of Dr. Hans Keirstead’s congressional campaign came in the form of a phishing e-mail. In August 2017, the California Democratic candidate reportedly received a fake Microsoft Office e-mail prompting him to enter his password. He did so, but quickly realized the e-mail had been malicious, and advised his staffers to take the appropriate precautions. But the attacks didn’t stop there. In December, hackers or bots began to enter different username and password combinations in an effort to access the campaign’s Web site—the siege lasted for two and a half months. What’s more, according to records obtained by Rolling Stone, the campaign also sustained some 130,000 “brute-force attempts” to access the server that hosted its Web site, and in January, according to its digital consultant, several attempts were made to access its Twitter account.

According to campaign e-mails, only the spear-phishing attack was successful, and Keirstead’s campaign says the hacks did not ultimately influence election results. (Keirstead came in third in California’s “top-two” primary on June 5, falling 125 votes short of the second-place finisher, Democrat Harley Rouda.) In a vacuum, the attacks would be cause for concern. But they’re particularly alarming as the number of reported incidents of election meddling climbs ahead of 2018 midterms. “It is clear from speaking with campaign professionals around the country that the sustained attacks the Keirstead for Congress campaign faced were not unique,” Keirstead campaign manager Kyle Quinn-Quesada told Rolling Stone, “but have become the new normal for political campaigns in 2018.”

Similar phishing attacks have been reported by the campaign for Democratic Senator Claire McCaskill—according to the Daily Beast, Russian operatives tried and failed to access the McCaskill campaign’s data using a variant of the password-stealing technique employed by “Fancy Bear” hackers who targeted Hillary Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta in 2016. (In that instance, hackers sent fake e-mails to targets alerting them that their Microsoft Exchange password had expired, and asking them to enter a new one.) Last month, Microsoft revealed that it had detected and blocked hacking attempts against three different congressional candidates so far in 2018; the hackers, Microsoft V.P. of security and trust Tom Burt, announced at the Aspen Security Forum, had used “a fake Microsoft domain . . . as the landing page for phishing attacks.” Separate attempts at meddling have occurred on social-media sites. A few weeks ago, Facebook announced that it had discovered new, malicious accounts on Facebook and Instagram designed to influence elections by targeting divisive social issues, similar to the effort put forth by the Russia-linked Internet Research Agency in advance of the 2016 election. The operators behind the 17 profiles and 8 Pages, which were set up between March 2017 and May 2018, appeared to be more sophisticated, disguising their identities more effectively than the I.R.A.

Despite their resemblance to the hacks on McCaskill and Podesta, it’s still unclear who perpetrated the attacks on Keirstead; experts suggest it could be any number of parties, including a hacker with an agenda, an organized-crime unit, or a nation-state. But one of Keirstead’s potential opponents in the 48th district’s general election was Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, a pro-Russia, pro-Trump politician known as “Putin’s favorite congressman.” Rohrabacher’s record of Russian sympathies is so extensive that in 2012, the F.B.I. and senior members of the House Intelligence Committee

took him aside to warn him that Russia could attempt to recruit him as an asset. (“How stupid is that?” Rohrabacher asked rhetorically in a recent interview with *The New York Times.*) He’s also voted against Russian sanctions, attempted to scrub Russian anti-corruption activist Sergei Magnitsky’s name from the Global Magnitsky Act, and has something of a history of associating with key figures in Robert Mueller’s Russia investigation, including Alexander Torshin, Michael Flynn, and Julian Assange. (Rohrabacher’s campaign did not respond to Rolling Stone’s request for comment.)

Unlike in the case of the infamous 2016 D.N.C. hack, the Democratic Party appears to have reacted quickly to reports from Keirstead’s campaign, with senior D.C.C.C. officials alerting the F.B.I. If the bureau has uncovered the culprit, it hasn’t informed the campaign. But Quinn-Quesada said he’s heard from other campaign operatives who’ve had similar experiences. “The targets aren’t just high-profile statewide candidates or elected officials,” he said. “Individual congressional campaigns are being targeted on a regular basis.” The White House, too, has warned of an ongoing effort to influence U.S. elections: “The warning lights are blinking red again,” said Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats last month. “Today, the digital infrastructure that serves this country is literally under attack.” Yet the Trump administration has done painfully little to prevent these attacks. And with less than three months to go before Americans turn out to the polls en masse, they show no sign of abating.

Cybersecurity: Cause For Optimism, Need For Continued Vigilance

By Gregory T. Kiley, Opinion Contributor —
[The Hill](#), August 16, 2018

Last month, the Department of Homeland Security hosted its first-ever National Cybersecurity Summit, bringing together some of the senior-most cybersecurity officials across government including cabinet officials and the Vice President, industry CEOs, and representatives from some of the largest companies in the world. This was the first-of-its-kind event providing a forum to coordinate risk management across government and private sector. The Administration is to be applauded for their efforts, as there is a clear need for a coordinated, cross-sector, government-industry effort to protect our Nation’s critical infrastructure from the growing cybersecurity threat. Within the Federal government, DHS is tasked with leading government’s efforts to champion that coordinated, integrated approach.

At the Summit, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen announced the creation of the National Risk Management Center, which will focus on evaluating threats and defending US critical infrastructure against hacking. The center will focus on the energy, finance, and telecommunications sectors. “We are reorganizing ourselves for a new fight,” said Nielsen, who described the new center as a “focal point” for cybersecurity within the federal government.

These efforts are encouraging and should be welcomed, especially after a July 23, 2018, report citing Homeland Security officials stating that Russian hackers have conducted hundreds of attacks against the United States electrical grid. Cyber-attack and disruption has moved beyond threats to actual effects. Not only do we have to worry about our infrastructure being attacked, but we must deal with foreign actions like the Russians impacting our energy markets and infrastructure projects, spreading misinformation to prevent things from even being built, as a House Committee on Science, Space and Technology Report released last March so clearly demonstrates.

The House Committee report covered its investigation into Russian efforts to influence U.S. energy markets. The report detailed how Russia manipulated various groups such as the Sea Change Foundation, the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy and the Sierra Club in an attempt to carry out its geopolitical agenda, particularly with respect to energy policy. The report contained examples of Russian-developed content targeting U.S. energy markets and energy policy. Quoting directly from the report, “Russian agents attempted to incite Americans to take action against pipeline efforts by promoting links and references to online petitions. Numerous tweets, for example, encouraged viewers to follow links to petitions aimed at stopping the Dakota Access, Sabal Trail, and Enbridge Line 5 pipeline (Page 8 of the above-cited report).”

Better understanding of these actions and costs, benefits and risks to government and industry are needed. The Federal Government can articulate the threat of cyber-attacks, actively protect its own systems (.gov) and advise and offer to provide limited support to state, local, territorial and tribal entities, as well as to private sector owners of critical infrastructure (the .com world). We need to build upon partnerships with the government to improve information sharing to keep up with threats.

While the cost of a massive infrastructure attack is quite high, the probability of a catastrophic attack at any given moment is low. Headlines and articles about potential attacks on our grid are great click-bait – but they ignore the fact that Russia and China (our most

sophisticated adversaries and likely the only ones with the capability to harm our grid) are aware that if they shut down our electrical grid anywhere in America, our government could do the same to them in Moscow or Beijing. Just because Russia has strategies to attack us, doesn't mean they will. It's the same deterrent strategy that kept the world from blowing itself up during the height of the Cold War.

One aspect of an attack on our critical infrastructure that the government does need to be more in tune with is the interconnectedness and cross dependencies of our public infrastructure which ensure that the entire system is only as strong as its weakest link. Today, an attack on our financial system or natural gas pipelines may also have implications for our ability to provide Americans with electricity.

Finally, the federal government must work more closely with private industry to ensure that if they share information critical to the mitigation and prevention of attacks, proprietary information is protected and the bureaucrats and politicians do not lay blame on those businesses. Because even if that corporation could have done more to protect consumers, if the company feels that working with government exposes them to litigation or other punitive measures, they might refuse. Ultimately, this would prevent collaboration precisely when such information is needed by law enforcement and security agencies to establish attribution and build forensic and criminal cases against perpetrators.

Authorities are often left to play Cassandra prophesying doom, but only reaching deaf ears. Changing the risk-reward equation is a difficult task for government. It may require controversial protections against corporate liability, real tax incentives for investment in hardened critical systems, and tougher penalties or sanctions against those who fail to operate resilient critical infrastructure systems. Government needs to be a full participant in changing the risk-reward calculation. Hopefully the new federal funding, structures, and authorities are a step in the right direction.

Gregory T. Kiley is a former senior professional staff member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and U.S. Air Force Officer.

These Stealthy Cybersecurity Hunters Speak Your Slang

By Steven Melendez

[Fast Company](#), August 16, 2018

On a recent morning, Andrei Barysevich, director of advanced collection at cybersecurity firm Recorded

Future, used a VPN and Tor connection to connect to an underground hacking forum.

Andrei Barysevich [Photo: courtesy of Recorded Future]The site, with posts in English and Russian, had a design similar to early-2000s Web forums, but instead of fan fiction or thoughts on politics, users post offers to sell illegal goods like credit card numbers and security codes, forged shipping labels, and hosting for botnet operators. Some users on the forum even advertise that they'll call banks or other companies on behalf of scammers, who may not speak their victims' languages convincingly enough to impersonate them on the phone.

Barysevich and others at Recorded Future regularly visit such forums on the so-called Dark Web to gather information that can help their clients understand the digital threats against them.

Offers on such sites can also help discern which companies have been the target of hacks and breaches, and can help Recorded Future learn if online criminals are targeting specific industries—even if they haven't been attacked yet. The approach works, Recorded Future says, because many hackers rely on Dark Web forums to sell the secrets they've stolen.

"They want to either steal stuff or make money—that's what it comes down to," says cofounder and CEO Christopher Ahlberg. "These guys have to go to the marketplace."

Recorded Future, which was founded in 2009 and soon received funding from Google and the CIA-linked venture firm In-Q-Tel, made big news recently when it spotted a hacker selling training materials and other sensitive information about military drones through an underground forum. The documents weren't classified, but in the wrong hands, they could have helped U.S. adversaries learn about the operations and potential weaknesses of the planes. After Recorded Future reported the offering to the Department of Homeland Security, officials apparently fixed a security flaw that made it possible for the hackers to obtain the documents.

It's not the first time Recorded Future has made national news for its watchdog efforts: In 2016, for instance, the company spotted a hacker selling access to U.S. Election Assistance Commission user accounts. And at any given moment, the firm is stumbling on lower-profile threats that don't necessarily grab headlines. "There's been many examples where we've found various sort of hacking toolsets for attacking banks," Ahlberg says. "They're not going to get the same sort of PR."

Posts on a Dark Web forum offer a range of services. [Photo: courtesy of Recorded Future]How They Do It

In general, Recorded Future uses automated systems to slurp in and sift through online posts, whether they're news stories and blog posts or more transient content on text paste sites and forums commonly used by hackers. Other systems within the company use metadata about digital attacks themselves to spot trends in hacker behavior.

"We've built a model which will predict which will be the malicious IP addresses this week," says Staffan Truve, cofounder and CTO. "You can actually preconfigure your IP firewalls."

Staffan Truvé [Photo: courtesy of Recorded Future] But Recorded Future also relies on a core group of human analysts who can understand the multiple languages and shifting slang of the hacker forums. In some cases, they can even convince forum sellers to engage with them in one-on-one chats about illicit data they have on offer or wrangle invitations to invite-only discussion venues. Some forums even escrow services to help their largely anonymous users transact business. And many hackers make connections on the forums then chat through other media, often using the decentralized and encrypted chat tool Jabber.

"You have to have some experience—you have to have some starting point," says Barysevich. "If you just show up and say 'I'm a new guy,' and no one knows you, and no one ever dealt with you, it's very, very unlikely you're going to get any intel or any useful information shared with you."

The company occasionally does effectively "burn" an online identity, if hackers come to realize that talking to that particular forum user is likely what got their activities reported to authorities. The researchers also have to convince criminals that they're trustworthy, all while staying within the confines of the law themselves and, of course, using digital safeguards like VPNs and virtual machines to keep their own systems safe.

[Photo: courtesy of Recorded Future] "We are not allowed to commit crime," Barysevich says. "We are good guys, but we have to pretend that we are bad guys."

Barysevich and others on his team speak Russian, which he says is a serious advantage, as is knowing the idiosyncratic terms used by hackers on the forums. As other forums blossom in other languages, from French and German to Turkish and Brazilian Portuguese, the company is looking to further expand the number of employees fluent in some of those languages. King And Country

Tracking nation-state-backed hackers also has its own challenges, separate from tracking the hackers for hire and data sellers more commonly found on the Dark Web forums.

Priscilla Moriuchi [Photo: courtesy of Recorded Future] "The two types of actors that work for nations and cybercriminals just have completely different motivations, they have different communications strategy," says Priscilla Moriuchi, Recorded Future's director of strategic threat development, who joined the company after a stint at the National Security Agency.

Still, some of the techniques the company uses are the same: looking for attack metadata and published information that reveals the tactics and strategies of attackers, even indirectly. Earlier this year, the company reported that China's National Vulnerability Database, which lists vulnerabilities in software, generally reports new bugs faster than its U.S. equivalent—except in some cases, in which, Recorded Future speculates, Chinese authorities are holding back bugs for their own spies to use. Bugs sometimes appear with one date in the database, despite not actually being published until a later point, according to the company.

And even government-funded hackers can still frequent hacker forums to purchase data, malware, and other tools, not too different from their private counterparts.

"The bad guys are, to a large extent, using the Web to communicate," says Truve. "They are very helpful."

Georgia University Breach Risks Sensitive Details Of 417,000 People

By Matt Kempner

[Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#), August 16, 2018

A breach of email accounts at Augusta University Health may have exposed sensitive health and personal information of about 417,000 people, including patients around Georgia, the university reported Thursday.

Those at risk are primarily patients of Augusta University Health, including Augusta University Medical Center (which is the teaching hospital for the Medical College of Georgia), Children's Hospital of Georgia and more than 80 outpatient clinics around the state, according to the university.

It is unclear how many of those potential victims are from metro Atlanta

Faculty members and "a small number" of students at Augusta University were also among those who may be affected, according to the university.

Exposed information may have included patient names, addresses, diagnoses, medications, lab results, dates of birth, treatment information, medical record numbers, medical information, surgical information, dates of service and insurance information.

Social Security numbers and driver's license numbers may also have been included "for a small percentage of individuals," the university stated in a press release. It added that "no misuse of information has been reported at this time."

"We take the protection of private information seriously, and we apologize to every person affected by this incident," Augusta University President Brooks Keel said in the release. "We are quickly working to implement several planned information security enhancements and will continue to look for ways to safeguard patient and personal privacy."

On September 11 of last year the university discovered an "intrusion" that occurred that day and the day before, according to university spokeswoman Christen Engel.

"We worked to stop the intrusion the very same day: disabling the impacted email accounts, requiring password changes for the compromised accounts and maintaining heightened monitoring of the accounts to ensure that no other suspicious activity was taking place," she wrote in an email.

Engel said, though, that the university didn't confirm that data had been breached or learn about its apparent scope until external investigators notified officials July 31, 2018.

The breach involved a phishing attack by an unauthorized user involving the email accounts of 24 university faculty and administrative personnel, Engel said. Investigators sifted through 364,000 emails and attachments, some of which may have been years old.

The university also reported Thursday that it is investigating another, apparently smaller, phishing attack that occurred July 11, 2018.

As for the first attack, "Augusta University is in the process of notifying identifiable individuals whose information may have been compromised and regulatory agencies.

"Individuals whose Social Security number may have been contained in the compromised information will be offered free credit monitoring services for one year," the university stated. "Augusta University encouraged notified individuals to remain vigilant in reviewing account statements for fraudulent or irregular activity on a regular basis, including a review of any explanation of benefits statements."

Engel said letters to people affected will be sent in about a week.

The university is directing individuals with questions to call 1-877-327-1090 toll free, available weekdays between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m., or visit augusta.edu/notice.

Augusta University medical emails have been put at risk in other past phishing attacks, including one in 2016 and another in April of 2017.

Data may have been exposed on about 4,700 people in the 2016 incident and another 5,600 patients in the April, 2017 event, Engel said.

The university said it disabled the email accounts and required password changes, among other steps. In the April incident the emails contained sensitive information on patients, including in some cases financial information, prescription information, diagnosis and treatment information. External investigators "could not definitively conclude" if that information was accessed or viewed, according to a university statement last year.

At the time, the university and medical center said they were "committed to maintaining the privacy of patient information and to continually evaluating and modifying practices to enhance appropriate security and privacy measures, including ongoing cybersecurity awareness of their workforce."

Emory Roane of the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse said four possibly successful phishing attacks at one university in the course of two or three years "is concerning."

But he said he doesn't know whether the university has dropped the ball in its cyber efforts.

"Health and education are both huge targets for phishing attacks and target rich environments for data breaches," he said.

Cybersecurity attacks have hammered many businesses and government organizations around the nation. One of the biggest attacks involved Atlanta-based data giant Equifax, where a breach last year may have compromised personal information on more than 147 million Americans.

Such incidents helped highlight the potential importance of the state's recently opened \$100-million Georgia Cyber Center in Augusta. The facility was designed to be used primarily in the training of cybersecurity experts for government and private industry.

One of the main partners involved in providing training at the new center? Augusta University.

US And Chile Agree To Cooperate On Cyber Security

By Robert Burns

[Associated Press](#), August 16, 2018

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) – U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and his Chilean counterpart have signed an agreement pledging closer cooperation in combating cyber threats.

Mattis and Defense Minister Alberto Espina held a signing ceremony Thursday after meeting to discuss a range of security issues, including military exercises and cooperation in science and technology. Cyber defense is a topic of growing interest throughout the Western Hemisphere. Banco de Chile, one of the country's biggest commercial banks, has said a hacking operation robbed it of \$10 million in June.

Santiago was the fourth stop for Mattis on a tour of South America that began in Brasilia on Sunday. He also visited Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires and is scheduled to hold talks in Bogota, Colombia, on Friday.

Copyright 2018 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

NotPetya Malware Attack: Chaos But Not Cyber Warfare

By Danny Palmer

[ZDNet](#), August 16, 2018

The impact of last year's NotPetya cyber attack was felt around the world, bringing several large organisations grinding to a halt and costing billions of dollars in damage and lost revenue – but the attack said to be the work of the Russian military still doesn't cross the threshold for being classed as cyber warfare, according to one new analysis.

A new paper published by global cyber insurance and risk management firm Marsh suggests that NotPetya doesn't meet the requirements to be classed as cyber warfare because the main impacts were only economic, focused on civilian infrastructure and that the goal of the attack wasn't "coercion or conquest".

Despite economic damage and the UK and US governments attributing the attack to the Russian military, "these two factors alone are not enough to escalate this non-physical cyber attack to the category of war or "hostile and warlike" activity," said Matthew McCabe, assistant general counsel for cyber policy at Marsh.

While the economic costs have cost individual companies hundreds of millions and have cumulatively reached billions of dollars, the paper argues that for an attack to be classed as an act of war, it must go beyond economic damage – even if that that damage is large.

The report points comments made by then-US President Barack Obama in 2014 in which he described the Sony Pictures attack – attributed to North Korea as "cyber vandalism." Like NotPetya, no physical damage was done, and the attack had costly consequences for Sony but McCabe argues this isn't enough to class it as an act of war.

"For a cyber attack to fall within the scope of the war exclusion, there should be a comparable outcome, tantamount to a military use of force," he said.

See also: [Cyberwar: A guide to the frightening future of online conflict](#)

A second reason Marsh doesn't see NotPetya as an act of warfare is because the attack didn't serve any military purpose: the most prominent victims were in civilian areas like logistics and pharmaceuticals.

These are are what McCabe describes as "places far removed from the locale or the subject of any warfare" and mean that NotPetya can't be described as an act of war.

Thirdly, the NotPetya campaign wasn't backed up by a military use of physical force against targets.

"The resulting chaos caused by NotPetya bore greater resemblance to a propaganda effort rather than a military action intended for "coercion or conquest," which the war exclusion was intended to address," said McCabe.

What this ultimately means, the report claims, is that under the current definitions of warfare, NotPetya wouldn't come under the category of damage caused by warfare and cyber insurance companies therefore wouldn't be forced to pay out for losses relating to war damages.

However, the report points out that the definition of warlike activity is one hundred years old which suggests it may need to be updated for the realities of the 21st century.

Name Change Eludes DHS Cyber Wing, Spurring Frustration

By Morgan Chalfant

[The Hill](#), August 16, 2018

Trump administration officials are growing increasingly frustrated over stalled legislation concerning a key office responsible for combating cyber threats.

The Senate has failed to pass legislation that would rename a little-recognized office at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which has become a leading player in the U.S. government's efforts to protect elections from Russian interference.

The bill in question, the product of a years-long effort by House Homeland Security Chairman Michael McCaul (R-Texas), easily passed the lower chamber in December.

But Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wisc.), who chairs the Senate Homeland Security Committee, has so far been unable to shepherd it across the finish line in the upper chamber. The lack of progress has left Homeland

Security officials and others on Capitol Hill baffled and frustrated.

"I think it's fair to say that there is some amount of frustration in the DHS team on the ability of the Senate to move important legislation to give DHS needed changes to its organizational structure in the cybersecurity space," a source close to the administration told The Hill.

A Homeland Security spokesman declined to comment for this article.

The bill is straightforward, and not viewed as particularly contentious. The idea is to give the Homeland Security office responsible for securing federal networks and protecting U.S. critical infrastructure from cyber and physical sabotage – now called the National Protection and Programs Directorate, or NPPD – a more targeted name, and to restructure it into a full-fledged agency.

Under the bill, the office would be rebranded the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency – which proponents say would better communicate its mission to key industries and help them recruit and retain high-quality personnel.

Johnson's committee approved the provision in March as part of a broader package that would reauthorize the Department of Homeland Security.

But, more than five months later, the provision has not reached the Senate floor for a vote, triggering worries it might not be passed before the legislative clock runs out.

Meanwhile, the lack of developments has attracted attention at the highest levels of the White House. Speaking at a cybersecurity summit in New York last month, Vice President Pence demanded the Senate pass the bill.

"The time has come for the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency to commence," Pence said on July 31. "This agency will bring together the resources of our national government to focus on cybersecurity. And it's an idea whose time has come."

Johnson has advocated for the tenets of the bill, describing it as a "key reorganization" vital to Homeland Security's cyber mission in March.

But sources familiar with the legislative negotiations said Johnson has been unwilling to separate the standalone legislation from the broader Homeland Security reauthorization bill, making it more difficult to pass. When asked to dispute that characterization, a spokesman for Johnson said he "has led the effort in the Senate to reorganize DHS's cyber division as part of a larger effort to reauthorize DHS" and "is working with his colleagues to advance his bipartisan legislation through the full Senate."

The reauthorization bill could become more controversial given hot-button issues like immigration. It has also provoked objections from other committees.

Senators nearly hitched the reauthorization bill to must-pass omnibus spending legislation in late March, but were unsuccessful in doing so in the eleventh hour.

After the failed effort, Johnson publicly fumed that "turf wars" with the Senate Intelligence Committee had prevented the name change from making it into the omnibus. However, sources say lawmakers on the Senate Intelligence Committee have raised issues with the broader reauthorization bill – but not the specific provision that would rename the cyber office. It is unclear if any other committees have expressed grievances with the cyber provision. Johnson also tried, unsuccessfully, to attach the reauthorization package to annual defense policy legislation approved by the Senate in August.

When reached for comment on the appetite for the bill in the Senate, Leader Mitch McConnell's (R-Ky.) office directed The Hill to Johnson's committee.

Johnson acknowledged Wednesday that it might not be possible to get the legislation passed as part of the larger reauthorization bill. He also said he met with Chris Krebs, who heads NPPD, earlier Wednesday on election security and is "sympathetic" to the Homeland Security unit's efforts.

"That was certainly what we were hoping is to get the whole reauthorization we included in that package. I just met with Chris Krebs today," Johnson told The Hill when asked about his engagement with Homeland Security on the bill.

"We had a secure briefing on election security. It is something I am sympathetic with. We are going to figure out how we can get it all accomplished. I'd love to do it as the entire DHS authorization. I'm not sure that's going to be possible," he said.

It's not just administration officials who are growing increasingly impatient – people who work closely with the committees of jurisdiction are also hearing frustrations about the lack of action.

"I think part of the frustration is obviously that it hasn't been moved, and that there isn't real clarity of why it isn't moving," said Suzanne Spaulding, an Obama-era Homeland Security official who led NPPD. "That is frustrating."

When contacted, a spokesman for McCaul pointed to a statement he made last week calling on the Senate to act "quickly" on the legislation, in addition to other bills passed by his committee.

"With each passing day, the cyber threats facing our homeland continue to grow," McCaul said.

NPPD has seen its responsibilities rapidly expand since it was stood up at Homeland Security a decade

ago. The office regularly engages with operators of critical infrastructure – most of which is owned by the private sector – to protect the U.S. electric grid, banks, water systems and other critical assets from digital and physical attacks.

The cyber wing has been in the news more recently for taking the lead on helping state and local election officials protect their digital voting systems from cyberattacks, following Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election.

Advocates see the renaming and restructuring of NPPD as an easy win for Republicans, especially as the administration continues to get hammered for what critics describe as a failure to take meaningful action on election cybersecurity.

“I think moving this legislation is a really important step forward in our cybersecurity capability and competence, and ability to work with the private sector and state and local jurisdictions,” Spaulding said.

“In that way, I think it would indeed not just symbolically send a message about the importance of cybersecurity and that they have not taken their eye off that ball, but would also be important substantively.”

Proponents say the name change, while not vital to the functioning of the cyber office, would be a critical step at a time when concerns are growing over the potential for cyberattacks to have catastrophic effects on U.S. critical services.

“DHS is right that there is an element of rebranding with NPPD,” said Matthew Eggers, vice president of cybersecurity policy at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which late last month led a group of trade associations urging the Senate to pass the bill.

“They want to convey what the organization does and with whom and what entities,” Eggers said. “There is an effort here to deepen public private efforts to protect cyberspace.”

Stakeholders remain optimistic that the bill will eventually be passed despite the hang-ups, given the support for it within the administration, the Republican-led Congress, and among industry.

“In getting any kind of bill drafted and moved through the legislative process, there are going to be differing opinions, but I think at the end of the day they get reconciled,” said Eggers. “I think friction, if you will, is a good thing, and I think that leads to better legislation.”

Still, the Senate has limited legislative days until the end of the 2018 fiscal year, and there is also the risk that Republicans could lose the majority in either chamber in the November midterm elections – potentially complicating the legislation’s path forward in a new Congress.

Some want to see the legislation passed before the midterms, when there will be substantial attention on the cyber office’s work in helping to secure state election infrastructure.

“Sooner rather than later, I think, is our mantra,” said Eggers.

DHS Launches Security Initiative For US Telecommunications Infrastructure

By Monica Jackson

[ExecutiveGov](#), August 16, 2018

Chris Krebs, undersecretary of the National Protection and Programs Directorate at the Department of Homeland Security, has announced that the department is working on strengthening the telecommunications infrastructure of the U.S., FCW reported Wednesday.

At a National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee meeting, Krebs said the DHS is seeking security systems to protect domestic infrastructure from foreign actors.

The DHS will integrate its effort with the committee’s “moonshot” project, which was launched in May to address national cybersecurity issues, to help determine the capabilities and policies that can be used to safeguard U.S. telecommunications systems.

During the NSTAC meeting, Krebs also brought up the department’s objectives for the National Risk Management Center, which DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said would drive public-private teaming at the strategic level to respond to cyber defense matters.

The NPPD official added that the center would also address some of the recommendations of NSTAC’s moonshot effort.

Australian Teen Sparks FBI Action After Hacking Apple: Media

[Reuters](#), August 16, 2018

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

Email Scams Have Cost Utah Businesses More Than \$20M This Year, FBI Warns

By Alec Williams

[Deseret \(UT\) News](#), August 16, 2018

SALT LAKE CITY — With two alleged scammers set to stand trial in Salt Lake City in the coming months, the FBI is warning Utah business owners about falling into email fraud schemes.

“In 2017, 150 different Utah businesses reported cumulative losses of \$5 million” from such schemes, said

Jeffrey Collins, the FBI special agent in charge of the cyber task force in Salt Lake City.

"This year, we've already had well over \$20 million — so it's rising."

The FBI is trying to prevent business email compromise schemes in Utah — crimes where scammers will target both businesses and individuals performing wire transfer payments.

A scammer gets access to a legitimate business account, either by hacking or other means, then poses as a supervisor or CEO and requests an urgent company wire transfer to an account.

Scammers can also create a dummy account after doing some spying by hacking into an account. They will then impersonate a real email account with a slight misspelling or will use a dot-net email instead of dot-com.

"Please i will need you to take care of a financial obligation quickly. What is the required information needed for you to process a domestic wire transfer? Regards, (Redacted)," one such email obtained by the FBI reads from a Utah business about to be scammed.

In this instance, the scammer, posing as a higher-up, gave the employee the details of a bank account and requested an unknown amount. An email later, the employee, thinking he or she was corresponding with the boss, replied that the transfer was handled.

"I see numerous complaints come in per week where businesses have lost \$100,000; \$200,000," Collins said. "We had one recently — \$20 million."

"Sometimes this money is lost in just a few emails," Collins said. "That's all it takes for someone to be defrauded."

The FBI reports that these email scams have been known to heavily target the real estate sector in recent years. However, victims can come from anywhere.

"Although we call it business email compromise, victims can also be non-businesses," said assistant U.S. attorney Carl LeSueur. "There are couples who have lost down payments on their first home this way."

LeSueur said "nobody is outside the scope of this threat." Scammers have been known to target title insurance companies, real estate brokers, law firms and small businesses in order to get the money they want.

"Our goal really is to educate the public to try and prevent these crimes," Collins said. "It's become a significant enough problem that we want to get the message out to the public."

Since scammers may slightly misspell or use a dot-net email address, Collins warned business owners to exercise caution with their correspondence.

"Looking at that, being careful when you are dealing with any sort of business transaction," Collins

said. "Making sure that that's the legitimate email address — that's probably first and foremost."

Collins' other suggestion: Pick up the phone.

"Just before you're going to send the money," he said, "call and confirm those banking details to make sure it's really who you're intending to send it to."

Saheed Yusuf, 32, and Vanisha Wright Matthis, 46, both of Atlanta, are alleged to have scammed a Utah business out of \$58,000 in 2016. Following a five-count indictment related to alleged email fraud schemes, the two are set to stand trial in Utah starting in October and September, respectively.

The FBI is not releasing the identity of the Utah business cited in the official indictment, filed on June 6.

Since October 2013, the FBI reports that over \$12.5 billion has been lost to scams like these worldwide. In the U.S. during that period, over 41,000 people have been reported to be victims of these email scams, totaling a \$2.9 billion loss.

TERRORISM INVESTIGATIONS

Bomb Threat Made At Boston Globe After Editorial Condemning Trump

By Justin Wise

[The Hill](#), August 16, 2018

A bomb threat was reported at The Boston Globe on Thursday, the same day the newspaper spearheaded a campaign to publish coordinated editorials at multiple papers condemning President Trump's attacks against the press.

Officials from the Boston police told Boston 7 News that they do not believe the threat was "super serious" but that they have increased patrols around the building.

The station noted that the FBI is conducting an investigation.

A building manager at the Globe's headquarters said the paper received "several threats via phone call" on Thursday, according to an email obtained by Axios.

"Based on this threat the local and federal authorities have recommended some additional security measures for the property," the email read, according to the report. "For the remainder of the day you will see uniformed Boston Police officers in the lobby and around the property."

A spokesperson for The Globe confirmed the development to Axios, adding "that alarming turn of the president's rhetoric — the specific labeling of the press as an 'enemy of the American people' and the opposition party — does cause us concern about media outlets and the stories we have heard around the country."

“Journalistic outlets have had threats throughout time but it’s the president’s rhetoric that gives us the most concern,” the spokesperson said.

The threat comes as hundreds of newspapers around the country published editorials denouncing the president’s frequent attacks against the media.

“To label the press ‘the enemy of the people’ is as un-American as it is dangerous to the civic compact we have shared for more than two centuries,” the Globe wrote in its editorial.

Trump responded to the coordinated editorials by accusing the Globe of “collusion with other papers.”

In a later tweet, the president said “there is nothing I would want more for our Country than true freedom of the press,” before asserting that the media regularly pushes political agendas.

There is nothing that I would want more for our Country than true FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. The fact is that the Press is FREE to write and say anything it wants, but much of what it says is FAKE NEWS, pushing a political agenda or just plain trying to hurt people. HONESTY WINS!— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) August 16, 2018

Massachusetts Man’s ‘No-fly List’ Lawsuit Could Jeopardize Terror Probes, Feds Say

[Springfield \(MA\) Republican](#), August 16, 2018

SPRINGFIELD – Over virtually an adult lifetime behind bars, Michael Alan Crooker has repeatedly sued the government for more information access, better medical care, consumer rights protections and myriad other gripes. He’s won or settled dozens of self-drafted lawsuits, even if it’s go-away money.

After his release from federal prison last year, Crooker, 65, sued the FBI and Transportation Security Administration – this time over his alleged placement on the “no-fly list,” a post-9/11 watch list generally reserved for suspected terrorists.

Crooker was charged in connection with weapons of mass destruction-related offenses. He later pleaded guilty to lesser charges including threatening a federal prosecutor and possession of a toxin, ricin, without registration.

“I didn’t have real ricin, weaponized ricin, like the government makes for assassinations. ... I had smashed up beans,” he said this week.

His latest stint in prison lasted 13 years. Crooker was released in March 2017.

From behind his computer at his modest home in Southwick, Crooker is lately locking horns with Washington attorneys on behalf of high-level officials within the U.S. Department of Justice. While he is not the

first to challenge placement on the no-fly list, his pro se lawsuit has brought the government to the edge of a brand new precipice, according to court filings.

U.S. District Judge William G. Young recently denied the government’s motions to dismiss Crooker’s lawsuit altogether or put it on hold until he wades through further “administrative remedies” Crooker argues are not even available. Barring any concessions from the government, Young has ordered both sides be “trial ready” by Oct. 1.

Crooker is the first to challenge his placement on the list – which the government, on principle, has refused to even confirm – without having ever booked a flight or attempted to cross a border. Crooker insists he is not a terrorist and should be allowed to fly. The rub is, he hasn’t even tried, which was one of the government’s central arguments in its unsuccessful motions.

If Crooker’s lawsuit is successful, it would mean virtually anyone can be granted access to no-fly list information. Government attorneys argued that making the list public in this way would enable terror groups to cherry-pick operatives and “open the floodgates” for frivolous inquiries.

Crooker’s lawsuit also has shone a light on little-known government criteria and procedures for collecting terror data.

According to filings in the court case, the FBI maintains a Terrorist Screening Center to collect intelligence on potential extremists, which is then loaded into a classified Terror Screening Database and funneled to various government agencies, including TSA. That agency is responsible for ensuring safe air travel under the Department of Homeland Security.

Crooker’s lawsuit has forced the government to elicit an affidavit from the FBI’s top terror screening czar, who argued the disclosures Crooker is seeking could even disrupt ongoing counterterrorism investigations.

Timothy P. Groh, deputy director for the Terrorist Screening Center, is responsible for building and managing the Terrorist Screening Database, plus “managing encounters, and sharing intelligence with domestic and foreign partners.”

Groh said there are broad categories of people who find themselves on the no-fly list, including having threatened to commit international or domestic acts of terror and being “operationally capable of doing so,” his affidavit reads. Crooker denies fitting any of these categories, arguing his threat against a government official was “decades ago.”

Groh says opening up inquiries about the no-fly list could be a valuable development for active and would-be terror plots.

"It would also be of considerable value to terrorist groups to confirm which individuals are not the subject of ongoing investigations and who are more likely to escape scrutiny. In other words, efforts to reverse engineer information based on what is confirmed would be significantly simplified for those seeking to do harm," Groh said.

Also attached to the government's recent filings is an affidavit by Deborah O. Moore, branch manager of the Transportation Security Redress Branch in Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Ombudsman and Traveler Engagement at the Transportation Security Administration of the Department of Homeland Security. In short, Moore tracks traveler's disputes for TSA, including those who have been denied while attempting to board flights.

In her affidavit, Moore says travelers who are denied the right to fly can appeal to the Homeland Security's Redress (TRIP) section, and if they have all the required documentation in order, may get a letter saying "You are on the No Fly List" and the underlying reasoning. Moore echoes several of Groh's arguments.

"TRIP limited the applicability of revised redress procedures to United States persons who purchase an airline ticket resulting in a denial of boarding, in part, to avoid exploratory inquiries by individuals who, armed with the knowledge of who is and who is not on the No Fly List, may seek to harm the United States using the aviation system," her statement reads.

Moore adds that, as it stands, 98 percent of those who seek redress through the TRIP program are not in the Terrorist Screening Database. Some are "misidentified" when they attempt to travel, she said.

Crooker's litigation in U.S. District Court in Springfield was preceded by a lawsuit he filed in the Connecticut court system after he was fired from his job shuttling travelers from a private, off-site service to curbsides at Bradley International Airport. The gig was a lucrative one and the first legitimate employment Crooker held since his release from prison.

According to correspondence he first filed in connection with the complaint in Connecticut, the state oversight agency for airports informed his employer, LAZ Fly Airport Parking, that Crooker was on the watch list and ordered him banned from any part of the airport – even "non-sterile" areas not monitored by TSA. After months of litigation, Crooker settled the employment lawsuit for an undisclosed amount of money earlier this year.

Crooker in 2017 challenged his alleged placement on the list to TSA, which rejected his complaint outright, arguing he had never been barred from a flight or crossing a border and it fell "outside the scope" of the

redress offered by the agency. Those are the two narrow circumstances in which the government will entertain a challenge to the no-fly list, government attorneys argue in their briefings.

The no-fly list is protected by law as "Sensitive Security Information" or "SSI," the government's briefings note. People land on the list after being included in the "watch list nomination process," according to court filings.

In his ruling to deny the government's motions, Young concedes that a challenge to the no-fly list based on loss of employment is an unusual legal position – but one the judge deemed has value.

"He has lost a job, and a job that means a lot to him," Young wrote.

Crooker's lawsuit in the Massachusetts federal court does not seek monetary damages. Instead, he asks for an order forcing the government remove his name from the list and to provide the basis of his placement on the list. It also asks for an opportunity to contest his inclusion on the list before a "live, neutral decision-maker."

Crooker said he offered as a settlement to be "demoted" to the Selectee list, another government catalog that doesn't bar air travel, per se, but adds another level of scrutiny to its members. Crooker says he has no immediate plans to fly, and that his recent history of air travel has been limited, for obvious reasons.

"Con Air, too many times to count," he said, referring to the U.S. Marshals Service's Justice Prisoner and Alien Transportation System, used to transport inmates and immigrant detainees to prisons, courthouses and detention centers across the country.

Attorneys for the government recently petitioned Young for an extension of time to respond to Young's denial of its motions to dismiss and stay the action. The new deadline is Aug. 31.

Terrorist Suspected In The Failed Detroit Christmas Day Bombing May Be Dead

[MLive \(MI\)](#), August 16, 2018

The suspected al-Qaeda bomb maker and terrorist believed to have built the explosive intended to detonate inside a passenger plane destined for Detroit on Christmas Day 2009 may be dead, according to a recent United Nations Security Council report.

"Some Member States report that explosives expert Ibrahim al-Asiri may have been killed during the second half of 2017," the July report says. "Given al-Asiri's past role in plots against aviation, this would represent a serious blow to operational capability."

The report contains no details pertaining to how al-Asiri was killed or who might be responsible.

The 25-page report summarizes counter-terrorism activity across the globe.

Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, then 23, was one of 289 passengers on Northwest Airlines flight 253, a Dec. 25, 2009 flight from Amsterdam to Detroit. As the plane made its final approach to Detroit Metro Airport in Romulus, officials say Abdulmutallab attempted to ignite explosives concealed in his underwear.

The bomb malfunctioned, and while Abdulmutallab suffered burns, no one was seriously injured.

Abdulmutallab, a native of Nigeria, pleaded guilty to eight charges filed against him and was sentenced to four consecutive life sentences, plus 50 years in prison.

It was determined that al-Asiri played a role in construction of the bomb.

According to a CNN report, some counter-terrorism experts are skeptical al-Asiri is really dead, because al-Qaeda hasn't issued any statements confirming al-Asiri's demise or praising him for martyrdom.

"It would be extremely out of the ordinary for them not to do this for a senior leader like al-Asiri, especially because his group in Yemen are putting out all sorts of statements all the time," Aimen Dean, a former spy for British intelligence inside al-Qaeda, told CNN. "Every time a senior leader within al-Qaeda or its affiliate in Yemen has been killed, they have been quick to put out a statement. It's seen as a religious necessity from a Shariah point of view."

Afghan IS Branch Claims Deadly Attack On Shiites In Kabul

By Amir Shah

[Associated Press](#), August 16, 2018

As Afghanistan's Shiites mourned their dead and held funeral services Thursday, the Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the horrific suicide bombing in Kabul that targeted a Shiite neighborhood the previous day, killing 34 students.

Grieving families gathered to bury their dead but even amid the somber atmosphere there was no respite from violence, underscoring the near-daily, persistent threats in the war-battered country.

Two gunmen besieged a compound belonging to the Afghan intelligence service in a northwestern Kabul neighborhood early Thursday, opening fire as Afghan security forces moved in to cut them off. The standoff lasted for nearly six hours before police killed the gunmen and secured the area. The Islamic State group, in a posting on its Amaq News Agency, claimed more

than 200 people were killed or wounded in Wednesday's suicide bombing.

The bomber, who had walked into a classroom in a one-room building at a Shiite educational center in the neighborhood of Dasht-e-Barchi, where he set off his explosives, was identified as "the martyrdom-seeking brother Abdul Raouf al-Khorasani." Afghanistan's IS affiliate is known as The Islamic State in Khorasan Province, after an ancient name of the area that encompassed parts of present-day Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia.

The bombing also wounded 57 students, according to Health Ministry spokesman Wahid Majroh. Earlier on Thursday, the ministry revised an earlier death toll from the attack down to 34, not 48.

Most of the victims were young men and women, high school graduates preparing for university entrance exams in the Shiite area's educational center.

Kabul hospitals were completely overwhelmed in the immediate aftermath of the attack as officials collected data on the casualties, leading to the confusion and the initial wrong toll.

The Dasht-e-Barchi area is populated by members of Afghanistan's minority ethnic Hazaras — a Shiite community that has in the past been targeted by similar large-scale attacks.

IS, which considers Shiites to be heretics, frequently targets them, attacking their mosques, schools and cultural centers. In the past two years, there have been at least 13 attacks on the Shiite community in Kabul alone.

Fifteen of the victims' bodies were taken Thursday to a Hazara community compound in Kabul where a mass funeral service was being held. The remaining victims were taken to their villages to be buried there, said Gulam Hassan, the cousin of one of the victims.

The attack, which came at the end of more than a week of assaults that have left scores of Afghan troops and civilians dead, shows how militants are still able to stage large-scale attacks — even in the capital of Kabul — and undermine efforts by Afghan forces to provide security and stability on their own.

While the country is battered by insurgent attacks, the two main groups, the Taliban and IS, are deadly opposed to each other and have waged bitter battles in different parts of the country. The Taliban is a nationalist Islamist group unlike the IS, whose ideology calls for a caliphate that binds Muslims worldwide.

In Ghazni city, provincial police chief Farid Mashal said Thursday that roads were being cleared of mines planted by Taliban who held on to entire neighborhoods of the city that they besieged in a surprise overnight assault last Friday. The standoff continued for five days

with more than 100 members of the Afghan National Security forces killed and 20 civilians. Scores of Taliban were also killed, according to Afghan officials.

Mashal said 10 bodies of Taliban fighters discovered beneath a destroyed market were handed over Thursday to the International Red Cross.

The Taliban have long controlled or held sway in most of Ghazni province, of which Ghazni city is the capital. Government control is largely limited to the city, district centers and a handful of small districts are dominated by ethnic Hazaras.

Amnesty International on Thursday denounced the Kabul attack on the Shiites, calling it a war crime.

"The deliberate targeting of civilians and the targeting of places of education is a war crime," said Samira Hamidi, Amnesty's South Asia campaigner. "Mounting civilian casualties show beyond any doubt that Afghanistan and, in particular, its capital, Kabul, are not safe."

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has also condemned the "terrorist" attack on the Shiites that "martyred and wounded the innocent" — students attending class — and ordered an investigation to determine how the bomber had managed to sneak into the compound, which has its own guards.

Survivors on Thursday struggled to come to terms with the bombing.

In a Kabul hospital, Anifa Ahmadi sat by the bedside of her 17-year-old daughter Sima, who was wounded in the attack. Sima was in the front row of the classroom in the single-room building where the explosion occurred.

"I had told her and told her, 'Don't go to school. We are under attack everywhere. No place is safe for us.' But she said 'No, no, no,'" the mother said.

Sima appeared undeterred despite injuries to her legs and arms and said she would go back to school. "I won't let anyone stop me, I will resist all terrorist attacks to have the future I want," she said.

Nahida Rahimi, a doctor at Kabul's Isteqlal Hospital, where some of the wounded are being treated, said a mother told her she had lost a son in Wednesday's bombing after already losing another a year earlier in another suicide bombing, also in Kabul, that targeted Shiites.

"We were both crying," the doctor said.

Elsewhere in Afghanistan, four policemen were killed and four were seriously wounded late Wednesday when they tried to defuse a car bomb they found in southern Kandahar province, according to Zia Durrani, provincial police spokesman.

Kandahar was the religious heartland of the Taliban during their five-year rule that ended with the

2001 invasion by U.S. and NATO forces following the 9/11 attacks in the United States.

Copyright 2018 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Gunmen Attack Intelligence Service Center In Afghan Capital Kabul

By Akram Walizada

[Reuters](#), August 16, 2018

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

Bombing Of Student Center In Kabul Highlights Threat To Minority Shiite Youth

By Pamela Constable

[Washington Post](#), August 16, 2018

KABUL — On a stony hilltop at the edge of a city in shock, 10 coffins were lowered into a freshly dug trench Thursday morning and covered with dirt and stones by a waiting bulldozer. Ten thin slabs were marked in white paint with first names — Farzana, Ataullah, Ali — and planted in a shallow row as several hundred mourners watched in silence.

The dead were all students in their teens and 20s, victims of a suicide bombing Wednesday in the capital that was claimed Thursday by the Islamic State militia. Officials said the blast, inside a college preparatory center in the capital's minority Shiite and ethnic Hazara community, killed 34 people and wounded 57 others. The death toll has been revised several times amid confusion at hospitals.

While friends and relatives were holding ceremonies for the blast victims, a group of armed men attacked a training compound operated by the national intelligence agency in another area of Kabul. Gunfire and explosions continued for several hours during the attack, which police said was staged from a nearby construction site. Authorities said three attackers were killed. No casualties on the government side were reported.

[It was a horror scene': Scores of Afghan students killed in Kabul suicide bombing]

The two attacks came amid an accelerating spate of violence, notably a deadly, four-day siege by Taliban fighters on the eastern city of Ghazni. The bloodshed has increased public fear and frustration with the Afghan government and has dimmed Afghan and American hopes to build on a cease-fire with the Taliban in June and an exploratory meeting between Taliban and U.S. diplomats last month.

Among mourners at several funerals Thursday — including friends and relatives of the slain students, as well as strangers who felt the need to be there — the sense of grievance was specific, acute and expressed in increasingly angry terms. Some muttered about ethnic genocide, government conspiracies and the need to defend themselves.

Afghan Shiite mourners offer funeral prayers on Aug. 16, 2018, for nine victims of a suicide attack in Kabul. (NOORULLAH SHIRZADA/AFP/Getty Images)

Others expressed a deeper, enduring worry that has been spreading across the city's Shiite and Hazara populace in the past several years, as Sunni Islamist militants have bombed and shot at a succession of mosques, shrines, religious processions, public rallies and education centers in their urban enclaves.

[Attack on Hazaras raises fears of Sunni-Shiite violence in Afghanistan]

It is the growing sense, voiced in numerous interviews this week, that an entire generation of young Hazaras is under threat. Many Hazaras feel that the best and brightest members of their long-suppressed, predominantly Shiite ethnic group — now beginning to compete with more dominant groups in professions, education and politics, — are not only being targeted by outside religious adversaries but also are underprotected by the Afghan government.

"There is no security for us," said Soraya Samar, 19, a student who addressed the mourners from a bullhorn as she stood on top of a truck. "Every time an incident takes place, we ask for more security, but nothing changes. The government has done nothing to protect us since Deh Mazang."

Samar was referring to a peaceful protest staged by Hazara students and young people just over two years ago at a traffic circle in Kabul. As a crowd of several hundred gathered, a suicide bomb exploded in their midst, killing more than 80 people and wounding many more. Some of the young Deh Mazang victims were buried in the same hills as those who died Wednesday.

In a statement Thursday, the human rights group Amnesty International denounced Wednesday's bombing as a "war crime" that was apparently "motivated by sectarian hatred."

[Kabul's worried Shiite minority reconsiders voting after deadly attack]

To many, the attack on the Mowud learning center Wednesday was another assault on the educational and professional aspirations of Shiite Hazaras. Many people noted Thursday that the center had built an exceptional track record, with large numbers of its students scoring

high marks on national college entrance exams. Now, some parents say they fear sending their children there.

"As a father, the thing I care most about in the world is my kids' education. We are living in a democracy now, and the things of learning should replace guns and violence and blood," said Amir Jafferi, 42, a small-business owner in Kabul with three teenage children. "If education comes under attack, then there is no solution to our problems, and the violence and bloodshed will return."

Jafferi, who like many Afghan Shiites spent years as a war refugee in Iran, said he had been planning to send his oldest daughter to Mowud for college prep classes. But now he is rethinking that decision.

For the first time since returning home, he said, "I have a feeling of darkness for the future, and for the future of my children."

Sharif Hassan and Sayed Salahuddin contributed to this report.

Afghan Dream Of A Better Life Ends In A Hilltop Mass Grave

By Mujib Mashal And Fatima Faizi
[New York Times](#), August 16, 2018

The teenage students were lowered into a mass grave one after another, shoulder to shoulder — just as they had sat at their lecture hall the day before.

A suicide bomber, perhaps no older than they, had walked in as their algebra class ended and physics was about to begin, detonating his explosive vest and turning the university prep center into a scene of carnage.

On the whiteboard, basic algebraic equations were covered in blood. A nearby blackboard, where "Valentine day" was written in faded chalk, was riddled with holes from the ball bearings that were packed into the bomber's vest.

The lecture hall had been so packed, and the explosion so powerful that more than a third of the 230 students were among the casualties. Health officials said more than 30 were killed and dozens were wounded. The mangled bodies were hard to identify.

At the hilltop burial site on Thursday, Roshan Ghaznavi, a human rights campaigner, wept over the coffin of a girl named Negina from a poor family; she had been their best hope for a better life.

"Today, it is Negina's casket, tomorrow it will be my casket, the day after it will be your casket," Ms. Ghaznavi said. "Humanity is dead here. It's been dead for a long time."

The attack was claimed by the Islamic State, its latest in a brutal string of bloody bombings against civilian targets, everything from mosques to schools, and

even a midwife training center. The Islamic State's hold on Afghan territory was never large, and has been slipping, but its cruel brand of bloodshed has compounded Afghans' suffering during years of war against the Taliban.

The Kabul school's casualties were just a small fraction of the relentless bloodletting by a resurgent Taliban in the past week, when attacks took the lives of several hundred Afghans, security personnel and civilians.

Most of the students at the education center, called Mawoud Academy, had moved from villages in central Afghanistan to spend a year in Kabul preparing for the country's competitive university entrance exam. Their families had saved so the children, staying in \$15-a-month hostels in Kabul, could pursue a universal dream: a good education as their ticket out of poverty and isolation.

For the families, the choice to send their children to the capital has become increasingly fraught. Seventeen years after the American invasion, foreign money still powers opportunities for advancement in the city. But the recent wave of violence has made the cost of those opportunities a heavy one.

Many of the dead from the school were transported back to their villages. But about a dozen, like Negina, were brought to the hilltop in the west of Kabul, close to another mass grave for the victims of an Islamic State bombing two years ago. An excavator did the initial digging, before local men — some in suits, their jackets neatly folded in the dirt — dug with shovels and pickaxes.

Some of the caskets were carried by fellow students or relatives who had made it to the burial. Others were shouldered by volunteers who had heard the news and arrived to help.

"Nobody knows where he was from," said Haji Abas, who was sitting next to a coffin marked Azizullah.

"He has no one here, no family," someone said.

"We are his family," Mr. Abas said. "Let's move him closer to the others."

Among the first to be buried were twins, Attaullah and Farzana, 19.

They were the first children of their parents, born and raised in Ghazni Province before their family moved to Kabul nine years ago. Their mother was a seamstress; she would often sew them matching clothes when they were babies, their cousin Abdul Qader Rahimi said.

"Attaullah was the first to be born, and he grew faster than Farzana," Mr. Rahimi said. "She would tease him that he drank her share of milk, that's why."

"One could not live without the other — that is why they left the world together," Mr. Rahimi said. "They were one soul, in two bodies."

Then there was Negina. No one at the cemetery really knew much about her.

Her only friend helped other women inch the coffin closer to the grave until its turn arrived. Then she fainted. Other women unbuckled her shoes and splashed her face with water.

Later, a university lecturer who had rented Negina a room filled in some of the blanks about her life. Two weeks ago, he said, a woman from Jaghori district, in restive Ghazni, had arrived in Kabul with a toddler and a high school graduate, Negina. The woman said her husband was ill, and her son was working as a laborer in Iran. She wished for Negina to enter university, and then get a well-paying job to lift the family.

Ali Farhang, the lecturer, said Negina and a roommate split the monthly rent for one room: \$30.

He said Negina and her roommate had waved goodbye to him on their way to class around 2:20 p.m. The explosion hit at 3:45.

"I peaked into their empty room from the window last evening," Mr. Farhang said. "Their lunch bowl was still there — just a salad of tomatoes and onions."

The academy, down a narrow lane, remained closed on Thursday, except to the relatives who came to pick up the dozens of handbags and backpacks left behind. The roof was blown off. The chairs, covered in blood, were piled in corners.

Police officers guarding the premises sat in the dirt behind the walls, having their lunch of bread and potato curry.

"Gather your strength so you don't cry," one of the officers said, as reporters went inside. "We cried a lot."

Masuma, wearing a checkered shawl, came searching for the handbag her daughter, Atika, had left behind. Atika had been in the next-door classroom and had survived. Her bag held four books and four pens, Masuma said.

"There are a lot of bags like that — dozens," the guard answered, as he led her to rows of tables piled with bags. The contents had been pulled out so relatives could more easily identify their children's belongings.

As they searched, the guard asked how her daughter was doing.

"She is not normal," Ms. Masuma said. "When she sees the photos, she cries a lot."

They found the bag in the lecture hall where she had been seated.

"Yes, this is hers," Ms. Masuma said. "It has four books and four pens."

For some, the end of their search was sadder still.

Hamid Omer had spent much of the evening of the bombing going hospital to hospital to find his sister Rahilla, 17. The night before, they had talked about a potential wife for him. In the morning she ironed his work pants before heading to class.

He finally found her at the government morgue.

"There were two bodies: a boy and a girl." Mr. Omer said. "I was numb, but I had to check the girl. When I checked, her head was shattered, not recognizable."

Then he noticed a watch he thought was his sister's. He called home, somehow hoping that someone else had the same watch and hers would be there. It was not.

US Officials: Ex-ISIS Fighter Entered US As Refugee

By Don Thompson And Julie Watson

[Associated Press](#), August 16, 2018

An Iraqi man accused of killing for the Islamic State entered the U.S. as a refugee after claiming to be a victim of terrorism, in a case drawing attention amid the Trump administration's criticism of the resettlement program's vetting process.

Omar Abdulsattar Ameen, 45, was arrested in California on Wednesday and will be extradited to Iraq under a treaty with that nation, U.S. officials said. He made his first appearance in federal court in Sacramento after his arrest at an apartment building in the state capitol.

Ameen left Iraq and fled in 2012 to Turkey, where he applied to be accepted as a refugee to the U.S., according to court documents.

He was granted that status in June 2014. That same month, prosecutors say he returned to Iraq, where he killed a police officer in the town of Rawah after it fell to the Islamic State. Five months later, Ameen traveled to the United States to be resettled as a refugee.

Ameen was arrested by the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force based on a warrant issued in May by an Iraqi federal court in Baghdad. Ameen could face execution for the "organized killing by an armed group," according to Iraqi documents filed in U.S. federal court.

Benjamin Galloway, one of Ameen's public defenders, said he had just 10 minutes to meet with his client prior to his initial court appearance, and attorneys hadn't decided whether to contest that Ameen is the man wanted by Iraqi authorities.

Ameen did not disclose his membership in two terrorist groups when he later applied for a green card in the United States, officials said.

The Trump administration has sharply criticized the Obama-era resettlement program for not doing enough to keep out terrorists.

State Department and Department of Homeland Security officials did not immediately respond to questions about Ameen.

Seamus Hughes, of George Washington University's Program on Extremism, said most ISIS cases in the United States have involved U.S.-born citizens and that the case should be considered rare but illustrates holes in the system.

"There was clearly a number of tripwires that didn't go off in this vetting process," he said. "No doubt security officials will want to take a long hard look at how to improve the vetting program in the future."

According to resettlement agencies in the United States, the U.S. vetting process is one of the world's toughest that has allowed in 3 million refugees since 1975 with not one arrested for carrying out a lethal terror attack on U.S. soil.

Most people spend at least three years being interviewed, undergoing biometric checks and medical exams, and filling out paperwork before being approved for refugee status. Cases are screened by the Department of Defense, FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, and other agencies.

After they are resettled, refugees continue to undergo security checks in the United States for five years or more.

The Trump administration added requirements, including longer background checks and additional screenings for females and males between 14 and 50 from certain countries, including Iraq. It also drastically reduced the annual ceiling of refugee arrivals to the U.S. from 110,000 to 45,000.

Officials at the State Department say new vetting protocols are "enabling departments and agencies to more thoroughly review applicants to identify threats to public safety and national security."

Ameen was identified by a witness to the slaying who viewed a series of photographs of ISIS members, according to the Iraqi documents.

The FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force has been investigating Ameen over the filing of fraudulent travel or immigration documents since 2016, according to a court filing. It says the FBI independently corroborated Ameen's involvement with the terrorist organizations and participation in the slaying.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Edmund Brennan accepted prosecutors' argument that Ameen is dangerous and a flight risk and ordered him detained until his next court appearance set for Monday.

The Iraqi arrest warrant and extradition request say Ameen entered his hometown of Rawah in the Anbar province of Iraq in a four-vehicle ISIS caravan and drove to the home of Ihsan Abdulhafiz Jasim, who had served with the Rawah Police Department.

He and at least five other named suspects opened fire and the man shot back, but the documents allege that Ameen fatally shot the man in the chest as he lay on the ground.

The Islamic State later claimed responsibility for the slaying on social media.

The FBI has interviewed at least eight witnesses who identify the Ameen family — including Ameen himself, his father, brothers, and paternal cousins — as affiliated with al-Qaida and ISIS, prosecutors said.

Court documents say Ameen's family also aided al-Qaida in Rawah. The documents say Ameen helped plant improvised bombs, transported militants, solicited funds, robbed supply trucks and kidnapped drivers on behalf of al-Qaida.

The FBI quotes one witness as saying Ameen's vehicle in 2005 was a Kia Sportage flying a black al-Qaida flag with a cut-out roof and a machine gun mounted on the rear.

Copyright 2018 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Here's How A Suspected ISIS Fighter Ended Up In The US As A Refugee

By Chuck Ross

[Daily Caller](#), August 16, 2018

Suspected Islamic State fighter Omar Ameen was arrested in California on Wednesday on charges of murdering an Iraqi police officer.

Ameen, 45, obtained refugee status, allowing him to come to the U.S.

Ameen met little resistance on his path to the U.S. All he had to do was lie about his links to ISIS, according to the Department of Justice.

The process for Iraqi national Omar Adbulsattar Ameen to enter the U.S. was simple: All the suspected Islamic State fighter had to do was lie on his United Nations applications for refugee status and during interviews with U.S. Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS) officials, according to the Department of Justice.

Ameen, who was arrested in California on Wednesday on an outstanding murder warrant in Iraq, claimed he was not a member of ISIS or al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). He also denied taking part in any terrorist or criminal activity in Iraq.

In order to meet the physical safety requirement to qualify as a refugee, Ameen, 45, claimed his father had been murdered while helping the American military and that his brother had been kidnapped by a terrorist group affiliated with radical cleric Muqtada al Sadr.

But all of that was a lie, according to the Justice Department.

Ameen was allegedly a member of ISIS. In 2004, before the rise of that brutal terror group, Ameen and his family helped start AQI, according to the DOJ. In addition to allegedly killing an Iraqi police officer, Ameen is suspected of planting IEDs and committing terrorist acts near his hometown of Rawah.

But Ameen appears not to have faced any rigorous questioning from the U.S. government about terror links and his criminal activities. Instead, he simply answered "no" to questions about his alleged ISIS and al-Qaeda links while inventing a false narrative about his father and brother.

"Have you ever interacted with, had involvement with, or known any members of ... Al Qaeda in Iraq ... the Islamic State of Iraq or any other armed group or militia?" was one of the questions USCIS posed to Ameen.

"No," he answered, according to Justice Department documents.

Ameen denied he had ever committed crimes in Iraq.

"In actuality," according to the Justice Department, witnesses told the FBI that Ameen committed "numerous crimes ranging from robbery to placing [improvised explosive devices]."

"Ameen's negative answers cut off a line of questioning relevant to his admissibility to the United States," the Justice Department filing states.

"Based on the written and verbal answers given by Ameen, his refugee application was approved by USCIS on June 5, 2014."

Ameen, who claimed to work as a truck driver, first applied for refugee status in Turkey in 2012. On June 21, 2014, less than three weeks after obtaining refugee designation, Ameen allegedly murdered Iraqi police officer Ihsan Abdulhafiz Jasim in Rawah, an ISIS stronghold.

Ameen then entered the U.S. on Nov. 4, 2014, settling first in Salt Lake City and then in Sacramento, where he was arrested on Wednesday. He will be extradited to Iraq to face charges of premeditated murder. (RELATED: ISIS Fighter Who Obtained Refugee Status Arrested On Murder Charges In California)

Ameen applied for a green card in 2016, which would have allowed him permanent resident status in the U.S. The FBI began investigating Ameen for visa fraud

that same year. It is unclear from government filings when the FBI learned of Ameen's alleged terrorist activities.

The ease with which Ameen obtained refugee status and entered the U.S. is "a sad illustration of the inherent problem in our vetting system," Jessica Vaughan, an analyst at the Center for Immigration Studies, which supports policies limiting immigration, told The Daily Caller News Foundation.

The U.S. government's refugee vetting process has been a topic of intense debate during President Donald Trump's tenure. Days after taking office, Trump ordered a ban on travel from several predominantly Muslim countries.

Iraq was initially on that list but removed at the request of Secretary of Defense James Mattis. The Supreme Court upheld a revised travel ban in June.

Trump critics accused the administration of discriminating based on religion. Trump supporters argued the ban was necessary to prevent terrorist acts on U.S. soil.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) established a National Vetting Center in February to screen all individuals applying for refugee status, visas and other immigration benefits.

"Last year, at the President's direction, the U.S. Government implemented significant enhancements to the security of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program," DHS spokesman Tyler Q. Houlton said in a statement when asked whether the Trump administration's vetting requirements would have prevented Ameen from entering the U.S.

"Tighter screening and tougher vetting in the refugee program have already started to make Americans safer at home," he continued. "This is just one example of how raising the bar on our security standards has directly increased our ability to protect and secure our nation from terror groups abroad."

Vaughan said the refugee vetting process under the Trump administration has improved, "but it's not foolproof."

"That's why we should assist by sending aid to them instead of visas," she continued. "It shows how we cannot always rely on our own vetting, which is based on other countries' records, which may be inaccurate, inauthentic or simply unavailable."

Eight witnesses told the FBI about his family's connections to AQI and ISIS. One FBI witness also provided a death certificate for Ameen's father, which showed that, rather than being murdered, he died on Dec. 25, 2010, from a blood clot.

But Ameen claimed on a refugee application submitted to USCIS that his father was "shot dead" while

helping the American military transport portable houses. Ameen repeated the claim verbally under oath during an interview to obtain a green card.

"Not only did Ameen misrepresent the cause of his father's death, but he also falsified the nature of his father's involvement with AQI," the government wrote. "By concealing the true nature of his father's membership in AQI, Ameen misdirected USCIS away from its inquiry into any possible disqualifying ties to terrorism."

Ameen also claimed on his refugee application that his brother's home in Baghdad was raided by a group of "masked, black-clad men" affiliated with the terrorist group Jaish Al Mahdi in March 2012.

"According to Ameen, he feared persecution based on the kidnapping of his brother if he were to remain in Iraq," the government wrote.

But Ameen's brother was not apprehended by a terror group, according to the DOJ. Instead, he was arrested by authorities on terrorism charges. An Iraqi court issued an arrest warrant for Ameen and three of his brothers on Dec. 26, 2010.

"These two claims of past persecution formed the basis of Ameen's acceptance as a refugee. By falsely claiming to be a victim of past persecution, Ameen created a narrative that resulted in approval of his refugee application," the Justice Department said.

The government filing says that Ameen's denials of having ties to ISIS and al-Qaeda "cut off a line of inquiry into his familial ties to terrorism."

For Vaughan, the Ameen case is evidence of how easy it is for terrorists to skirt the vetting process.

"Bad actors can and do lie to get here," she said.

Several Terror-related Cases Tied To Sacramento Area

By Sam Stanton And Hannah Holzer
[Sacramento \(CA\) Bee](#), August 16, 2018

The arrest in Sacramento County on Wednesday of a suspected ISIS and al-Qaida leader is the latest of several terror-related cases in recent years in the capital region, ranging from suspects accused of training for Jihad to others accused of wanting to fight overseas for terrorist groups.

Omar Ameen, 45, was arrested at a Arden Arcade apartment complex on Wednesday as part of a request by the Iraqi government that he be extradited to his home country to face a murder charge there for allegedly killing a former police officer as part of an ISIS operation.

Ameen, an auto mechanic who came to the United States in 2014, is in custody at the Sacramento County Main Jail and is due back in federal court Monday.

Ameen declined to be interviewed in the jail Thursday morning by The Sacramento Bee, and his wife declined to talk outside of court Wednesday. SIGN UP

The Ameen case is one of several filed in the region since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks involving terror or ISIS-related charges, including: The Lodi Terror Case

The first and most controversial was the post-9/11 announcement by federal authorities in June 2005 that they had broken up an al-Qaida terror cell based in Lodi.

Prosecutors charged Hamid Hayat, then a 22-year-old cherry picker, of traveling to Pakistan to train as a terrorist and said he received explosives and weapons training that included using photos of President George W. Bush as targets. His father, Umer, also was charged with lying to the FBI.

Umer Hayat's jury could not reach a verdict and he eventually pleaded guilty to a lesser charge and was sentenced to time served.

His son, now 35, was convicted in 2006 of lying to FBI agents and providing support to terrorists. He was sentenced to 24 years and is serving his time at a federal prison outside Phoenix, where his projected release date is May 2, 2026, according to the federal Bureau of Prisons.

But Hayat's conviction remains controversial and is currently the subject of an appeal pending in federal court in Sacramento, where his attorneys have argued that the terrorist training camp he supposedly attended was closed when he visited Pakistan, and that his conviction stemmed in part from the fact that he used a novice attorney who had never handled a federal criminal case before. The Wannabe ISIS Fighter

Nicholas Teasant, a troubled college dropout and National Guard washout, was indicted in March 2014 of attempting to provide support to a foreign terrorist organization.

Teasant, a San Joaquin County resident who was 19 at the time, had earlier converted to Islam to impress a young woman, then became the focus of the FBI when he began discussing plans for attacks in the United States and his desire to travel to Syria to fight for ISIS.

At the time, ISIS was still largely unknown in the United States, and his lawyers contended he suffered from mental illness. They claimed that he never could have carried out his boasts of planning attacks and training ISIS fighters. But when he traveled to Blaine, Wash., in an effort to get to Canada and, eventually, Syria, federal agents moved in and arrested him.

Teasant later told The Sacramento Bee in a pair of jailhouse interviews that he was not a danger to the United States, and he was philosophical about his future.

"Even if they gave me the maximum 15 years I'd come out of prison at 35," he said in 2014. "That still

leaves me the rest of my life to go to college and get a Ph.D., do what I want and be with my family."

Teasant pleaded guilty in December 2015 to a federal terrorism charge and was sentenced to nine years in prison. Now 24, he is serving his sentence at a federal prison in Florida and has a projected release date of Oct. 3, 2024.

The American River College Student

Aws Mohammed Younis al-Jayab, who was studying computer science in Sacramento at American River College, was arrested in January 2016 and charged with making false statements to immigration authorities about his travels overseas to Syria to allegedly fight against the Assad regime.

Al-Jayab, an Iraqi-born Palestinian who came to the United States in 2012, was subsequently indicted by a federal grand jury in Chicago on charges of providing material support to terror groups overseas.

Those cases are pending, and his lawyers in Chicago moved in January for the case there to be dismissed, arguing that Al-Jayab could not be prosecuted in the United States because he had immunity as a combatant who fought overseas. Al-Jayab "was a protected, lawful combatant as recognized by long-standing common law principles," his lawyers argued.

Last week, a federal judge in Chicago denied that motion and ordered him to stand trial beginning Sept. 24. The Marine Corps Washout

Everitt Aaron Jameson, a 26-year-old Modesto man who completed basic training and sharpshooting as a Marine but subsequently was discharged for failing to disclose his history of asthma, was charged in December 2017 with plotting a Christmas Day attack on San Francisco's Pier 39.

Jameson, a tow truck driver, pleaded guilty in June to one count of attempting to provide material support to ISIS and was sentenced Monday to a 15-year term in prison.

Support coverage of breaking news and watchdog journalism. [Click here](#) to start a digital-only subscription to The Sacramento Bee.

U.S. Lawmakers Demand Answers After Scores Of Children Killed In Yemen Airstrike

By Jane Onyanga-Omara

[USA Today](#), August 16, 2018

Democratic U.S. lawmakers are demanding answers from the Trump administration after scores of children were killed in an airstrike on a school bus in Yemen last week.

Yemeni health officials said at least 51 people were killed – 40 of them children – when the Saudi-led coalition against Iran-backed Shiite rebels known as Houthis bombed the bus in the province of Saada, northern Yemen, last Thursday.

The United States, the United Kingdom and France provide logistical and intelligence support to the Saudi-led campaign, which includes the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The Saudi-led coalition first said the strike was “legitimate” and later said it would investigate “collateral damage,” the BBC reported.

Houthi officials called the strike a “crime by America and its allies against the children of Yemen,” according to the BBC.

Thousands of people attended the mass funerals of the children in rebel-held Saada earlier this week. Most of the children, who were returning from a summer camp, were 10 to 13, the United Nations said. More than 70 people were injured, according to the Red Cross.

Democratic House and Senate members wrote three letters to U.S. defense officials demanding answers about U.S. involvement in the civil war, which has been raging for more than three years.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., wrote to U.S. Central Command chief Gen. Joseph Votel for details about how the U.S. supports the Saudi-led bombing campaign, the Intercept reported.

House Democrats wrote to Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Intelligence Director Daniel Coats requesting a briefing about the U.S. involvement in the conflict, the Washington Post reported.

And Rep. Ted Lieu, D-Calif., wrote Defense Department Inspector General calling for an investigation into whether U.S. personnel supporting the Saudi-led coalition were violating U.S. or international law.

On Monday, President Donald Trump signed a \$716 billion defense bill into law that included a measure requiring his administration to determine whether the U.S. or its partners violated U.S. law or policy while assisting the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. Trump has raised objections to 52 provisions of the new law, including that measure.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan Wants To Ban Cars In Light Of Recent Terror Attacks

By Virginia Kruta

[Daily Caller](#), August 16, 2018

London Mayor Sadiq Khan responded to Wednesday’s reported terror attack by suggesting that

vehicles be banned in certain parts of the city, particularly near the government buildings where Parliament meets.

Khan told BBC Radio that the important thing was to ensure that the people continued to have access to their government, but that measures to keep members of Parliament safe would benefit everyone.

“I think there would be lots of challenges if we would do the whole square. It is a thoroughfare for cars, vehicles and commercial deliveries going through London. So it’s possible to have a designed solution ... in keeping our buildings and people as safe as we can do. And also not losing what is so wonderful about our city that is a vibrant democracy, people can walk around safely.”

Since July of 2016, when a man in a rented truck drove into a crowd in Nice, France, vehicle-based attacks have been on the rise — particularly in Europe where many cities have stricter regulations on guns and knives.

Just a few months ago, Khan issued a public call to young Londoners, challenging them not to “risk” their futures by carrying knives.

In the wake of Wednesday’s attack, however, London authorities appear to be on the same page as Khan. Transport Secretary Chris Grayling admitted that “there may well be a case” for banning vehicular traffic in certain parts of London.

“We’ve got to do that carefully,” he told Sky News after the attack. “We shouldn’t just take an on-the-hoof response to what was a very disturbing incident.”

OTHER DHS NEWS

Ex-ICE Agent Accused Of Sexually Assaulting Women And Using Job To Silence Them

By Crimesider Staff

[CBS News](#), August 16, 2018

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – A former special agent with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has been arrested on suspicion of sexually assaulting two women and using his position to make sure they didn’t report the crimes. John Olivas of Riverside was arrested Wednesday and pleaded not guilty to federal civil rights charges of deprivation of rights under color of law, according to authorities.

Prosecutors said Olivas tried to rape a woman and twice raped another woman in 2012 while he was a special agent for ICE homeland security investigations.

The Los Angeles Times reported Olivas joined ICE in 2007 and resigned in 2015 after spending six years as

a special agent. The paper reported Olivas had been in ongoing relationships with both of the women, and that neither was under investigation.

In both cases, prosecutors said Olivas told the women that police wouldn't respond to any crime reports they made because Olivas was a federal law enforcement officer.

Olivas could face a potential life sentence if convicted. He's free on \$50,000 bond.

Border Inspector, Former ICE Agent Face Felony Cases In California

[NBC News](#), August 16, 2018

A former Homeland Security Investigations special agent raped a woman twice, sexually assaulted another and told the victims police would never believe them if they reported him because of his law enforcement position, federal prosecutors alleged.

Riverside, California resident John Jacobs Olivas, 43, was arrested Wednesday and pleaded not guilty in a U.S. District Court hearing the same afternoon. The alleged crimes took place in 2012, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Los Angeles.

A federal grand jury indictment alleges Olivas, who resigned in 2015, raped a victim twice, in September 2012 and November 2012, and attempted to rape another in January 2012. The document alleges he told the January victim that "police would not be responsive" if she tried to report him.

He faces three counts of deprivation of rights under color of law and could face multiple life sentences if he's successfully prosecuted, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office. Free on \$50,000 bond, the suspect was scheduled to stand trial Oct. 9.

Meanwhile, a fellow Department of Homeland Security employee, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officer Harvey Booker, faces allegations that he strangled a traveler at San Diego's main port of entry July 8.

A federal grand jury indicted Booker, a 70-year-old supervisory inspector, on suspicion of willfully depriving the victim, who was not identified, of his constitutional right to be free from unreasonable force and unlawful assault by law enforcement.

The officer, who started his job with CBP in 1994, was placed on unpaid suspension and was due in court Sept. 7, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office in San Diego. He was arrested at his home Wednesday, booked and was subsequently released, according to federal inmate records. Bond had been set at \$10,000.

Booker pleaded not guilty, U.S. Attorney's Office spokeswoman Kelly Thornton said.

"U.S. Customs and Border Protection stresses professionalism, honor and integrity in every aspect of our mission and does not tolerate actions by any employee that would tarnish the reputation of our agency," CBP Director of Field Operations for San Diego, Pete Flores, said in a statement.

Last year the U.S. Government Accountability Office reported that CBP was 1,100 officers short of its target staffing level and that the agency was having trouble retaining employees.

GLOBAL MEDIA

Facing Far-right Protest, Merkel Pledges Action Over Failed Asylum Seekers

[Reuters](#), August 16, 2018

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

Canada Struggling With Illegal Border 'Crisis' Of Its Own Ahead Of Crucial Elections

By Benson Cook

[Fox News](#), August 16, 2018

Montreal, Québec – As migrants continue to spill over the porous southern border, many politicians are calling the situation a "crisis" and are urging the government to do more. Some have even proposed putting up a fence along one of the longest borders in the world.

The border in question, however, is not America's border with Mexico, but Canada's with the United States. Some estimate that as many as 400 a day are crossing the 5,525 mile border between Canada and the U.S. through non-official ports of entry and with provincial elections looming, the issue is causing political ramifications.

As the Trump Administration has cancelled Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for several nationalities with large immigrant communities in the U.S. – notably Haitians and Salvadorans – many of those people have felt they have little option but to flee to Canada for safety.

Under a refugee agreement known as the Safe Third Country Agreement that both the U.S. and Canada are party to, a person with protected status in a country that is deemed "safe" for refugees (in this case, the United States) cannot leave the country and apply for asylum in another "safe" country at an official port of entry. A loophole in the agreement, however, allows

these refugees to apply for asylum in another country if they're already inside that country.

This has led to thousands of asylum-seekers crossing into Canada from gaps in the border with the U.S. over the past two years, almost all of them into the province of Québec from upstate New York.

This situation has created political tension across Canada, with conservatives laying blame for the "crisis" squarely at the feet of Justin Trudeau's government. Shortly after President Trump took office, the Canadian prime minister issued a now-infamous Tweet saying that all refugees would be welcome in his country, with the hashtag #WelcomeToCanada.

Many, such as the opposition Conservative Party's shadow Minister for Immigration, Michelle Rempel, have said that this created an unrealistic expectation that anyone could come to Canada. During emergency meetings in Parliament this summer on the issue, Rempel said she doesn't think that's sustainable, and added that she thought the "situation is going to get worse."

Those feelings have been echoed by leaders in the province of Ontario, who have called on the Trudeau government to do come up with a plan on how to deal with asylum-seekers, who continue to cross into the country in significant numbers. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police intercepted 7,326 people at the border between April and July.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police intercepted 7,326 people at the border between April and July, according to official figures; This undated surveillance photo provided by U.S. Customs and Border Protection shows people illegally crossing the United States border from Canada near Derby Line, Vt

Nowhere has this tension over migration been felt more keenly than Québec, the only Canadian province that has partial control over who immigrates there, and the province of arrival for an estimated 96% of irregular border crossers (the Canadian government actively discourages the use of the term "illegal" to describe asylum-seekers that have entered the country by straying across the border). Many in the predominantly French-speaking province consider immigration to be a process that dilutes Québec's unique linguistic and cultural identity in North America.

The province is facing an election on October 1st in which immigration is already proving to be a hot-button issue. The governing Liberal Party led by Premier Philippe Couillard has worked closely with the federal government to accommodate asylum seekers, allowing most of those who want to remain in the province to stay while helping those who do not get settled in Toronto and other locales that can accommodate them.

However, even the Liberal government in the province declared earlier this summer that they, along with the province of Ontario, have "run out of room".

CANADIAN IMMIGRATION WEBSITE CRASHES DURING ELECTION

The party is trailing in opinion polls to a nationalist opposition party known as the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ), which has promised to slash even legal immigration by as much as 20%, and to force all new immigrants to learn French. Currently, most immigrants are given the option of learning either English or French. In an interview with the Montréal Gazette earlier this year, the party's immigration spokeswoman Nathalie Roy accused the Liberal government of trying to "hide the problem [of immigration] under the carpet."

In response, Premier Couillard accused the CAQ of considering immigrants to be "problems that need solving."

The CAQ, led by former businessman François Legault, has also proposed taking strong action to protect the "secular" nature of the state, by banning overt religious symbols such as hijabs and yarmulkes.

The staunchest champion of Canada's surging population of asylum-seekers is still Justin Trudeau (pictured). But polls have shown that most Canadians would prefer a stronger line, like that espoused by the opposition Conservative Party ahead of key provincial elections

Legault's party has been far from the only one proposing tough solutions to immigration problems in Québec. In a move that may sound familiar to Americans, another opposition party, the Parti Québécois (PQ) proposed earlier this year to construct a fence along stretches of the province's border with New York that have seen large numbers of asylum seekers enter the country. The PQ's leader, Jean-François Lisée, has since walked back those comments somewhat but the idea sparked a conversation about what can be done to discourage refugees from making the journey.

Currently, as provincial politicians have begun to distance themselves from open-arms immigration policies, the staunchest champion of Canada's surging population of asylum-seekers is still Trudeau. But polls have shown that most Canadians would prefer a stronger line, like that espoused by the opposition Conservative Party, be taken instead. With a federal election in the country scheduled for next October, Québec's election could be a bellwether for Trudeau.

NATIONAL NEWS

Key GOP Senators Say They Have No Issue With Trump Revoking Brennan's Security Clearance

By Manu Raju, Lauren Fox, Daniella Diaz And Clare Foran

[CNN](#), August 16, 2018

Washington (CNN)Several high-profile Republican senators told CNN over the past day that they have no issue with President Donald Trump's decision to revoke former CIA Director John Brennan's security clearance.

Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn, the chamber's second-ranking Republican, said Thursday he doesn't understand why former employees have access to classified information at all.

He said he hardly believes Brennan was assisting the Trump White House – a reason given for why some former intelligence community employees can maintain their security clearance – and that Trump's concern has been individuals monetizing their access to classified information for personal gain.

"Unless there is some justification not to," Cornyn said, suggesting it might be worth having all former employees lose their clearances when they are done being in office.

In op-ed, Brennan says Trump revoked his security clearance to 'scare into silence' critics

And he wasn't the only one. Of the public statements made by Republican senators, more sounded supportive of the President than against.

GOP Sen. Cory Gardner of Colorado called Brennan's comments on the administration "disgraceful" to the country.

"I think what John Brennan has said about this country over the past several months has been disgraceful," Gardner, who chairs the National Republican Senatorial Committee, told CNN on Thursday.

Asked whether he was troubled by Trump's decision, South Carolina Republican Sen. Tim Scott responded, "why should I find it to be troubling?"

"I don't think it's retribution," Scott told CNN. "However, I think it's clear that Brennan has found a way to monetize a part of his national security clearance and I'm not sure how that served our national security."

And Sen. Johnny Isakson, a Georgia Republican, said it was Trump's "prerogative" to pull security clearances.

The White House on Wednesday originally cited national security concerns for cutting off the clearance, a reasoning that appeared to be undercut by comments

Trump later made to the Wall Street Journal where he connected Brennan to the special counsel's Russia investigation.

"I call it the rigged witch hunt, (it) is a sham. And these people led it!" Trump told the Journal in an interview. "So I think it's something that had to be done."

Brennan wrote in a blistering New York Times op-ed that Trump "has become more desperate to protect himself and those close to him."

"Which is why he made the politically motivated decision to revoke my security clearance in an attempt to scare into silence others who might dare to challenge him," Brennan wrote in the op-ed published Thursday morning.

Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Richard Burr, a North Carolina Republican responded to Brennan's op-ed in a statement to reporters Thursday.

"Director Brennan's recent statements purport to know as fact that the Trump campaign colluded with a foreign power. If Director Brennan's statement is based on intelligence he received while still leading the CIA, why didn't he include it in the Intelligence Community Assessment released in 2017?" he said in the statement. "If, however, Director Brennan's statement is purely political and based on conjecture, the president has full authority to revoke his security clearance as head of the Executive Branch."

Not all Republicans agreed with Trump's decisions. Sen. Bob Corker, the chairman of the influential Senate Foreign Relations Committee and a Tennessee Republican who's not running for re-election, repeated to CNN on Thursday his comparison that the President's move to strip Brennan's clearance is like a "banana republic."

Corker said Trump's behavior is symptomatic of how the President is "continual tearing down institutions causing Americans to lose faith in institutions instead of building them up – that's what made our country function the way that it is. ... if you're going to serve in the public arena, you're going to have people rail against you. That's just part of it."

Moderate GOP Sen. Susan Collins of Maine said Wednesday that while Brennan has been "far too political in his statements," she did not see a need to revoke his clearance.

"I think it's unwise because generally recently retired national security officials have a lot to contribute," Collins said.

Brennan is the first former national security official to have his security clearance revoked after the White House announced last month that Trump was considering taking that action against several of his most vocal critics in the national security world.

In a statement read in the White House briefing room by press secretary Sarah Sanders on Wednesday, the President explained his decision by saying, "Mr. Brennan's lying and recent conduct, characterized by increasingly frenzied commentary, is wholly inconsistent with access to the nation's most closely held secrets."

The former CIA director criticized the news Wednesday on Twitter, calling it "part of a broader effort by Mr. Trump to suppress freedom of speech & punish critics," and saying it "should gravely worry all Americans."

The comments from Cornyn, Gardner and Isakson came the day after other GOP senators – including John Kennedy of Louisiana – sided with the President. Kennedy called Brennan "butthead" who doesn't need the clearance.

Kentucky Republican Sen. Rand Paul had strongly had advocated for the removal of Brennan's clearance in advance of Trump's decision.

"I applaud President Trump for his revoking of John Brennan's security clearance," Paul said in a statement after the White House announcement. "I urged the President to do this. I filibustered Brennan's nomination to head the CIA in 2013, and his behavior in government and out of it demonstrate why he should not be allowed near classified information. He participated in a shredding of constitutional rights, lied to Congress, and has been monetizing and making partisan political use of his clearance since his departure."

South Carolina GOP Sen. Lindsey Graham said Thursday that Brennan brought it upon himself.

"I think Mr. Brennan brought this upon himself by being so outrageous in his comments, making conclusions that I don't think are supported by the evidence," he said. "When you look at CIA policy of how a former director should carry themselves, I think Mr. Brennan stepped well over the line."

Sen. John Thune, a South Dakotan and member of Senate GOP leadership, said he doesn't know everything the administration knows, "but I think there is a reason national security professionals keep those clearances and I think it's probably to provide continuity."

Thune said however they likely had reasons for doing it.

"I do think that the fact that he is out there every day acting in a partisan way probably doesn't help his cause," Thune said.

And Sen. Roy Blunt said he wants to take a "look at this whole security clearance issue."

"When members of Congress leave no matter how long they've been on the intel committee, they have to go through a process to have a reason to have a continued security clearance," he said. "I'm a little

surprised that as many people have these clearances as do have and frankly it's created a situation where I want to look at that whole process closer than I have in the past."

Press Release | Press Releases | Press | U.S. Senator Richard Burr Of North Carolina

[United States Senate](#), August 16, 2018

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Senator Richard Burr (R-NC), Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, issued the following statement on comments made in The New York Times by former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) John Brennan:

"Director Brennan's recent statements purport to know as fact that the Trump campaign colluded with a foreign power. If Director Brennan's statement is based on intelligence he received while still leading the CIA, why didn't he include it in the Intelligence Community Assessment released in 2017? If his statement is based on intelligence he has seen since leaving office, it constitutes an intelligence breach. If he has some other personal knowledge of or evidence of collusion, it should be disclosed to the Special Counsel, not The New York Times.

"If, however, Director Brennan's statement is purely political and based on conjecture, the president has full authority to revoke his security clearance as head of the Executive Branch." Next Article

Army Brigadier General Says John Brennan Is A 'Clear And Present Danger' Who Wants To 'Overthrow' Trump

By Nick Givas

[Daily Caller](#), August 16, 2018

Army Brig. Gen. Anthony Tata said former CIA director John Brennan is a "clear and present danger" to the United States and wants to "overthrow" President Donald Trump on Fox News Thursday.

Tata, who is now retired, said Brennan's tweets disparaging Trump and calling for his removal are enough to revoke his security clearance. (RELATED: John Brennan Offers Theory That Putin Is Blackmailing Trump)

"He spied on American citizens and lied in front of Congress about that spying," Tata said on "Fox & Friends." "Question 29 on the security clearance form says, you know, 'have you ever supported overthrowing the U.S. Government?' All of you got to look at Brennan's tweets and he supports the removal of this

president, and right there — that's enough evidence to get rid of his clearance."

Host Brian Kilmeade then played a clip of GOP Sen. John Kennedy of Louisiana calling Brennan an embarrassment to the intelligence community and accusing him of being politically biased in his professional dealings.

"I've made my feelings known about Mr. Brennan. I think most Americans look at our national intelligence experts as being above politics," Kennedy said. "Mr. Brennan has demonstrated that that's not the case. He's been totally political. I think I called him a butthead and I meant it. I think he's given the national intelligence community a bad name."

"John Brennan is a clear and present danger and a threat to this nation," Tata concluded. "He supports the overthrow of this particular president. And he needed to have his access to information revoked."

Senate GOP Mixed On Revoking Brennan's Security Clearance

By Susan Ferrechio

[Washington Examiner](#), August 15, 2018

Some Republicans endorsed President Trump's decision Wednesday to revoke former CIA Director John Brennan's security clearance. Others said it was a bad idea.

"It just feels like a banana republic kind of step," Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., a frequent Trump critic, told reporters. "I don't like it at all. It feels really vindictive."

Other Senate Republicans praised the move and said Brennan is a likely source of leaks and other potential wrongdoing.

"I support it," Sen. James Risch, R-Idaho, who is a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee said.

Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., said Brennan, "has cheapened the status of our national security intelligence in this country."

Kennedy added, "I don't see why he needs a security clearance," adding, "I think he's just a political hack and I think he has demonstrated that."

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, was among several GOP lawmakers who said the White House may have reasons to revoke Brennan's status that they are not aware of.

"I don't see the grounds for revoking his security clearance but there may be information that I'm not aware of," Collins said.

Collins said revoking the credentials is "unwise," because those who have recently retired from the intelligence agencies "have a lot to contribute."

Brennan has been a very vocal critic of President Trump on television, where he serves as a cable news contributor, and on social media.

He has been accused of leaking information to the media aimed at hurting the Trump administration.

Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., a longtime critic of Brennan, personally lobbied Trump to revoke Brennan's clearance.

Brennan: Trump Worked With Russians And Now He's Desperate

By Jill Colvin And Anne Flaherty

[Associated Press](#), August 16, 2018

Former CIA Director John Brennan said Thursday that President Donald Trump yanked his security clearance because his campaign colluded with the Russians to sway the 2016 election and is now desperate to end the special counsel's investigation.

In an opinion piece in *The New York Times*, Brennan cites press reports and Trump's own goading of Russia during the campaign to find Democrat Hillary Clinton's missing emails.

Trump himself drew a direct connection between the revocation of Brennan's clearance and the Russia probe, telling *The Wall Street Journal* the investigation is a "sham," and "these people led it!"

"So I think it's something that had to be done," Trump said.

It was a swift departure from the official explanation given by the White House on Wednesday, which cited "the risks" posed by what Trump labeled Brennan's "erratic conduct and behavior." The president said he was fulfilling his "constitutional responsibility to protect the nation's classified information."

Brennan wrote that Trump's claims of no collusion with Russia are "hogwash" and that the only question remaining is whether the collusion amounts to a "constituted criminally liable conspiracy."

President Donald Trump is revoking the security clearance of former CIA director John Brennan, who served in the Obama administration. (Aug. 15)

"Trump clearly has become more desperate to protect himself and those close to him, which is why he made the politically motivated decision to revoke my security clearance in an attempt to scare into silence others who might dare to challenge him," he wrote.

Brennan's loss of a security clearance was an unprecedented act of retribution against a vocal critic and politicizes the federal government's security clearance process. Former CIA directors and other top national security officials are typically allowed to keep their clearances, at least for some period, so they can be

in a position to advise their successors and to hold certain jobs.

Trump said Wednesday he is reviewing the security clearances of several other former top intelligence and law enforcement officials, including former FBI Director James Comey and current senior Justice Department official Bruce Ohr.

All are critics of the president or are people whom Trump appears to believe are against him.

Democrats called it an “enemies list,” a reference to the Nixon White House, which kept a list of President Richard Nixon’s political opponents to be targeted with punitive measures.

There was no reference to the Russia probe in a White House statement Wednesday that was read at a press briefing and then sent out to reporters. In the statement, Trump denounced Brennan’s criticism and accused Brennan of having “leveraged his status as a former high-ranking official with access to highly sensitive information to make a series of unfounded and outrageous allegations, wild outbursts on the internet and television about this administration.”

“Mr. Brennan’s lying and recent conduct characterized by increasingly frenzied commentary is wholly inconsistent with access to the nations’ most closely held secrets,” Trump said.

In the Journal interview, Trump said he was prepared to yank Brennan’s clearance last week, but that it was too “hectic.” The president, who was on an extended working vacation at his New Jersey golf club last week, has been under fire over accusations of racism by former adviser Omarosa Manigault Newman and his bitter reaction to them. Trump’s statement, distributed to reporters, was dated July 26, 2018, suggesting it could have been held and then released when needed to change a damaging subject.

Brennan has been deeply critical of Trump’s conduct, calling his performance at a press conference last month with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Finland “nothing short of treasonous.”

Brennan said Wednesday that he had not heard from the CIA or the Office of the Director of National Intelligence that his security clearance was being revoked, but learned it when the White House announced it.

Trump’s statement said the Brennan issue raises larger questions about the practice of allowing former officials to maintain their security clearances, and said that those of other officials were under review.

They include Comey; James Clapper, the former director of national intelligence; former CIA Director Michael Hayden; former national security adviser Susan

Rice; and Andrew McCabe, who served as Trump’s deputy FBI director until he was fired in March.

Also on the list: fired FBI agent Peter Strzok, who was removed from the Russia investigation over anti-Trump text messages; former FBI lawyer Lisa Page, with whom Strzok exchanged messages; and senior Justice Department official Bruce Ohr, whom Trump recently accused on Twitter of “helping disgraced Christopher Steele ‘find dirt on Trump.’”

Ohr was friends with Steele, the former British intelligence officer commissioned by an American political research firm to explore Trump’s alleged ties with the Russian government. He is the only current government employee on the list.

“I don’t trust many of those people on that list,” Trump told the Journal. “I think that they’re very duplicitous. I think they’re not good people.”

At least two of the former officials, Comey and McCabe, do not currently have security clearances, and none of the eight receive intelligence briefings. Trump’s concern apparently is that their former status gives special weight to their statements, both to Americans and foreign foes.

Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Trump’s press secretary, insisted the White House wasn’t targeting only Trump critics. But Trump did not order a review of the clearance held by former national security adviser Mike Flynn, who was fired from the White House for lying to Vice President Mike Pence about his conversations with Russian officials and later pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI.

Democrats, and even some Republicans, lined up to denounce the president’s move, with House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., slamming it as a “stunning abuse of power.” And California Rep. Adam Schiff, the ranking Democrat on the House intelligence committee, tweeted, “An enemies list is ugly, undemocratic and un-American.”

Several Republicans also weighed in, with Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., saying, “Unless there’s something tangible that I’m unaware of, it just, as I’ve said before, feels like a banana republic kind of thing.”

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said she saw no grounds for revoking Brennan’s security clearance, “unless there is disclosure of classified information, of which I’m unaware.”

Copyright 2018 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

John Brennan: President Trump’s Claims Of No Collusion Are Hogwash

By John O. Brennan

[New York Times](#), August 16, 2018

That's why the president revoked my security clearance: to try to silence anyone who would dare challenge him.

Mr. Brennan was director of the Central Intelligence Agency from 2013 to 2017.

When Alexander Bortnikov, the head of Russia's internal security service, told me during an early August 2016 phone call that Russia wasn't interfering in our presidential election, I knew he was lying. Over the previous several years I had grown weary of Mr. Bortnikov's denials of Russia's perfidy — about its mistreatment of American diplomats and citizens in Moscow, its repeated failure to adhere to cease-fire agreements in Syria and its paramilitary intervention in eastern Ukraine, to name just a few issues.

When I warned Mr. Bortnikov that Russian interference in our election was intolerable and would roil United States-Russia relations for many years, he denied Russian involvement in any election, in America or elsewhere, with a feigned sincerity that I had heard many times before. President Vladimir Putin of Russia reiterated those denials numerous times over the past two years, often to Donald Trump's seeming approval.

Russian denials are, in a word, hogwash.

Before, during and after its now infamous meddling in our last presidential election, Russia practiced the art of shaping political events abroad through its well-honed active measures program, which employs an array of technical capabilities, information operations and old-fashioned human intelligence spycraft. Electoral politics in Western democracies presents an especially inviting target, as a variety of politicians, political parties, media outlets, think tanks and influencers are readily manipulated, wittingly and unwittingly, or even bought outright by Russian intelligence operatives. The very freedoms and liberties that liberal Western democracies cherish and that autocracies fear have been exploited by Russian intelligence services not only to collect sensitive information but also to distribute propaganda and disinformation, increasingly via the growing number of social media platforms.

Having worked closely with the F.B.I. over many years on counterintelligence investigations, I was well aware of Russia's ability to work surreptitiously within the United States, cultivating relationships with individuals who wield actual or potential power. Like Mr. Bortnikov, these Russian operatives and agents are well trained in the art of deception. They troll political, business and cultural waters in search of gullible or unprincipled individuals who become pliant in the hands of their

Russian puppet masters. Too often, those puppets are found.

In my many conversations with James Comey, the F.B.I. director, in the summer of 2016, we talked about the potential for American citizens, involved in partisan politics or not, to be pawns in Russian hands. We knew that Russian intelligence services would do all they could to achieve their objectives, which the United States intelligence community publicly assessed a few short months later were to undermine public faith in the American democratic process, harm the electability of the Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton, and show preference for Mr. Trump. We also publicly assessed that Mr. Putin's intelligence services were following his orders. Director Comey and I, along with the director of the National Security Agency, Adm. Michael Rogers, pledged that our agencies would share, as appropriate, whatever information was collected, especially considering the proven ability of Russian intelligence services to suborn United States citizens.

The already challenging work of the American intelligence and law enforcement communities was made more difficult in late July 2016, however, when Mr. Trump, then a presidential candidate, publicly called upon Russia to find the missing emails of Mrs. Clinton. By issuing such a statement, Mr. Trump was not only encouraging a foreign nation to collect intelligence against a United States citizen, but also openly authorizing his followers to work with our primary global adversary against his political opponent.

Such a public clarion call certainly makes one wonder what Mr. Trump privately encouraged his advisers to do — and what they actually did — to win the election. While I had deep insight into Russian activities during the 2016 election, I now am aware — thanks to the reporting of an open and free press — of many more of the highly suspicious dalliances of some American citizens with people affiliated with the Russian intelligence services.

Mr. Trump's claims of no collusion are, in a word, hogwash.

The only questions that remain are whether the collusion that took place constituted criminally liable conspiracy, whether obstruction of justice occurred to cover up any collusion or conspiracy, and how many members of "Trump Incorporated" attempted to defraud the government by laundering and concealing the movement of money into their pockets. A jury is about to deliberate bank and tax fraud charges against one of those people, Paul Manafort, Mr. Trump's former campaign chairman. And the campaign's former deputy chairman, Rick Gates, has pleaded guilty to financial fraud and lying to investigators.

Mr. Trump clearly has become more desperate to protect himself and those close to him, which is why he made the politically motivated decision to revoke my security clearance in an attempt to scare into silence others who might dare to challenge him. Now more than ever, it is critically important that the special counsel, Robert Mueller, and his team of investigators be allowed to complete their work without interference — from Mr. Trump or anyone else — so that all Americans can get the answers they so rightly deserve.

Trump Revokes Ex-CIA Director John Brennan's Security Clearance

The president ties the move to the investigation of Russia's interference in the 2016 election

By Peter Nicholas And Michael C. Bender
[Wall Street Journal](#), August 15, 2018

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

Ex-C.I.A. Director John Brennan Strikes Back After Trump Revokes His Security Clearance

By Julie Hirschfeld Davis And Michael D. Shear
[New York Times](#), August 16, 2018

John O. Brennan, the C.I.A. director under President Barack Obama, struck back at President Trump on Thursday for revoking his security clearance, calling the president's claims of "no collusion" with Russia to influence the 2016 election "hogwash" and arguing that the commander in chief was trying to silence anyone who would dare challenge him.

"Mr. Trump clearly has become more desperate to protect himself and those close to him, which is why he made the politically motivated decision to revoke my security clearance in an attempt to scare into silence others who might dare to challenge him," Mr. Brennan wrote in an opinion article in *The New York Times*. He said the move made it more important than ever for Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel, to complete his investigation of Russia's election misdeeds without interference from Mr. Trump.

Mr. Trump's decision to revoke the security clearance drew rebukes Thursday from national security officials and members of both political parties, who called it an extraordinary act of retaliation that reflected authoritarian tactics.

"The fact that the president did this himself leaves him open to the criticism that it looks politically motivated," Fran Townsend, who served as homeland security adviser in George Bush's White House, said on

CBS. "The notion that you're going pull somebody's clearance because you don't like what they did in government service or you don't like what they say is deeply disturbing and very offensive."

In a statement on Wednesday, Mr. Trump cited what he called Mr. Brennan's "erratic" behavior and "increasingly frenzied commentary," as grounds for stripping the former intelligence chief of his access to classified information, saying that Mr. Brennan had abused his security clearance "to make a series of unfounded and outrageous allegations."

Mr. Trump's decision, announced on Wednesday by Sarah Huckabee Sanders, the press secretary, came only a few weeks after Ms. Sanders warned that Mr. Trump was considering revoking the clearances of Mr. Brennan and others who he believed had politicized and inappropriately profited from their access to delicate information. It was the latest assault by a president who has routinely questioned the loyalties of national security officials and dismissed some of their findings — particularly the conclusion that Moscow intervened in the 2016 election — as attacks against him.

In an interview later in the day with *The Wall Street Journal*, Mr. Trump drew a direct connection between the investigation and the targeting of Mr. Brennan and others whose security clearances he had said were under review.

"I call it the rigged witch hunt," Mr. Trump said. "And these people led it!"

"So I think it's something that had to be done," he added.

Step by step, from the moment 10 days into his administration that he fired the acting attorney general, Sally Q. Yates, Mr. Trump has overseen the removal of top national security officials who have defied him or worked at senior levels of the Russia investigation. They include James B. Comey, the former F.B.I. director; Andrew G. McCabe, the former F.B.I. deputy director; and Peter Strzok, the former F.B.I. counterintelligence agent who helped oversee the Hillary Clinton email inquiry and the Russia investigation and disparaged Mr. Trump in a series of inflammatory texts.

Mr. Trump's action against Mr. Brennan appeared to be the first time that a president has ever issued or revoked a clearance outside of the established process, according to Bradley P. Moss, a lawyer who has written on the issue.

In the interview with *The Wall Street Journal*, Mr. Trump argued that his list of potential targets for having security clearances revoked was not confined to his political opponents, saying that he "would put a Republican on, too, if I thought they were incompetent or crazy."

The revocation of Mr. Brennan's security clearance also appeared to be a way to change the subject from damaging accusations in a tell-all book by Omarosa Manigault Newman, a former reality TV show star who worked in the White House and now claims that Mr. Trump used a slur to disparage African-Americans and is in a state of mental decline.

Some Republican lawmakers said they supported Mr. Trump's decision to move against Mr. Brennan, who has been unusually virulent in his criticism of the president, including accusing him of treason. But it drew criticism across the political spectrum, including from within Mr. Trump's own party. Senator Bob Corker, Republican of Tennessee and the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, said the president's move was "a banana republic kind of thing" that was inappropriate and vindictive.

A statement from Aitan Goelman, Mr. Strzok's lawyer, said that Mr. Trump's move "has taken us down one more step on the path toward authoritarianism."

The White House statement on Mr. Brennan was dated July 26, three days after Ms. Sanders first announced that Mr. Trump was considering revoking his critics' clearances. The date suggested that the decision had been made weeks ago, although the White House would not explain the delay in revealing it.

Mr. Trump's decision to follow through in punishing Mr. Brennan came only a day after his campaign brought an arbitration case against Ms. Manigault Newman to enforce a nondisclosure agreement that she signed in 2016.

Mr. Brennan has become increasingly vocal in his criticism of the president and often tweets or appears on television as a contributor on NBC to question Mr. Trump's fitness for office. Last month, Mr. Brennan said the president should be impeached for "treasonous" behavior after Mr. Trump stood next to President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia at a news conference in Finland and cast doubt on the conclusion of the intelligence agencies that Moscow interfered in the 2016 presidential election.

On Tuesday, the story of Mr. Trump's reality star aide turned accuser intersected with that of his frequent public antagonist when Mr. Brennan chastised the president in a tweet for calling Ms. Manigault Newman "that dog."

Mr. Brennan wrote: "It's astounding how often you fail to live up to minimum standards of decency, civility, & probity. Seems like you will never understand what it means to be president, nor what it takes to be a good, decent, & honest person. So disheartening, so dangerous for our Nation."

Ms. Sanders said the president was also considering yanking the security clearances of other former officials and one current Justice Department official, all of whom have angered the president. The group includes Michael V. Hayden, the former head of the National Security Agency who was made C.I.A. director under George W. Bush; Susan Rice, a national security adviser under Mr. Obama; James R. Clapper Jr., the former director of national intelligence under Mr. Obama; and Ms. Yates.

Others who no longer have a clearance might lose the ability to have it reinstated, the president warned. Mr. Comey and Mr. McCabe, neither of whom currently have a security clearance, are part of the list.

The only current official on Mr. Trump's list is Bruce Ohr, a lawyer in the Justice Department's criminal division. The president has criticized Mr. Ohr on Twitter because of Mr. Ohr's friendship with Christopher Steele, a former British intelligence officer who compiled a salacious dossier containing damaging information about the president.

Mr. Ohr's wife, Nellie — Mr. Trump singled her out as "beautiful" in a tweet over the weekend — worked until September 2016 as a contractor for Fusion GPS, the research firm that commissioned the dossier.

Clearances are typically revoked for cause, because of a security concern like alcoholism, financial problems, health concerns or the mishandling of classified material.

"This is supposed to be an impartial and objective assessment of security concerns," said Mr. Moss, the lawyer. "This is the president taking a step that he most likely had the legal authority to take, but that no other president has ever thought it proper or justified to do on his own."

The standard procedure for revoking a security clearance is initiated by the sponsoring agency — which in this case would have been the C.I.A. — and includes memos outlining why a clearance is being withdrawn and, in some cases, an opportunity for the current or former official to offer a defense or rebuttal. The appeals process can be avoided if the head of an agency orders the revocation.

The C.I.A. did not begin a proceeding against Mr. Brennan or take action to remove his clearance, according to officials familiar with the process. The spy agency referred all questions to the White House.

Former high-ranking officials in defense, intelligence, diplomacy and law enforcement usually maintain their clearances when they leave the government, in part to advise those still serving. Keeping such access also increases a former official's earning potential, helping them land jobs in lobbying, consulting

or security contracting or as paid analysts on cable television.

Nearly 4.1 million people have security clearances, according to the most recent report by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, including 1.3 million with top secret clearances.

Mr. Hayden, in an interview with CNN, said the president had “absolute authority” to oversee security clearances, but that by revoking Mr. Brennan’s for political reasons, Mr. Trump had degraded “the dignity of the office” of the president and suggested he wanted to pressure his critics into silence.

In an email, Mr. Hayden said that losing his clearance would have “a marginal impact on the work I do,” noting, for example, that he would have to resign from the proxy board of an American subsidiary of an Irish company to ensure that its work respects the classification rules of the United States.

Senator Rand Paul, Republican of Kentucky, who first raised the prospect of stripping Mr. Brennan of his clearance in a meeting last month with Mr. Trump at the White House, applauded the president’s action on Wednesday.

“He participated in a shredding of constitutional rights, lied to Congress and has been monetizing and making partisan political use of his clearance since his departure,” Mr. Paul said in a statement.

But Democrats said Mr. Trump’s move against Mr. Brennan was dangerous, likening it to President Richard M. Nixon’s drawing up of a list of political opponents against whom he would use the government to extract revenge.

“An enemies list is ugly, undemocratic and un-American,” Representative Adam B. Schiff of California, the senior Democrat on the Intelligence Committee, said on Twitter. “I also believe this action to silence a critic is unlawful.”

Brennan Says Trump’s Claims Of No Collusion With Russia Are ‘Hogwash’

By John Wagner

[Washington Post](#), August 16, 2018

Former CIA director John Brennan struck back at President Trump on Thursday, writing in a blistering op-ed that Trump’s claims of no collusion with Russia in the 2016 presidential election are “hogwash.”

The piece, posted on the New York Times website, came a day after Trump announced he was stripping the security clearance of Brennan, who led the CIA during most of President Barack Obama’s second term and has emerged as one of Trump’s fiercest critics.

In his op-ed, Brennan characterized Trump’s action as “politically motivated” and said it was “an attempt to scare into silence others who might dare to challenge him.”

Brennan wrote that it is “critically important” that special counsel Robert S. Mueller III be permitted to complete his investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election and whether Trump’s campaign coordinated with Russia.

While Trump has repeatedly insisted there was “no collusion,” Brennan wrote that the “only questions that remain are whether the collusion that took place constituted criminally liable conspiracy, whether obstruction of justice occurred to cover up any collusion or conspiracy, and how many members of ‘Trump Incorporated’ attempted to defraud the government by laundering and concealing the movement of money into their pockets.”

The former CIA director took aim at Trump for his public call as a candidate in July 2016 for Russia to help find missing emails of his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton, who was being scrutinized for having used a private email server while secretary of state.

“By issuing such a statement, Mr. Trump was not only encouraging a foreign nation to collect intelligence against a United States citizen, but also openly authorizing his followers to work with our primary global adversary against his political opponent,” Brennan wrote.

“Such a public clarion call certainly makes one wonder what Mr. Trump privately encouraged his advisers to do — and what they actually did — to win the election,” Brennan said. “While I had deep insight into Russian activities during the 2016 election, I now am aware — thanks to the reporting of an open and free press — of many more of the highly suspicious dalliances of some American citizens with people affiliated with the Russian intelligence services. Mr. Trump’s claims of no collusion are, in a word, hogwash.”

Trump said Wednesday that he is also reviewing the security clearances of nine other former officials, including former FBI director James B. Comey, all of whom have criticized the president or been targeted by congressional Republicans seeking to discredit the Russia probe.

Trump appeared to make a direct link in an interview with the Wall Street Journal on Wednesday. “I call it the rigged witch hunt,” Trump said of the Russia probe. “And these people led it. So I think it’s something that had to be done.”

John Brennan: Trump Colluded With Russia

By Caitlin Yilek

[Washington Examiner](#), August 16, 2018

Former CIA Director John Brennan, who had his security clearance revoked by President Trump on Wednesday, said there is no doubt Trump colluded with Russia during the 2016 presidential election.

“Mr. Trump’s claims of no collusion are, in a word, hogwash,” Brennan wrote in an opinion piece published Thursday for the New York Times.

“The only questions that remain are whether the collusion that took place constituted criminally liable conspiracy, whether obstruction of justice occurred to cover up any collusion or conspiracy, and how many members of ‘Trump Incorporated’ attempted to defraud the government by laundering and concealing the movement of money into their pockets,” the piece continued.

As an example of the alleged collusion, Brennan pointed to Trump publicly calling on Russia in July 2016 to find Hillary Clinton’s missing emails. Around the same day Trump urged Russia to find the emails that had been deleted from Clinton’s personal accounts, Russian intelligence officers tried to hack email accounts associated with Clinton’s presidential campaign, an indictment from special counsel Robert Mueller’s office stated.

Trump has denied colluding with Russia to win the 2016 presidential election. He frequently refers to the Mueller investigation as a “witch hunt.”

Brennan said Trump’s statement encouraged Russia to gather intelligence against an American citizen and authorized his allies to work with a U.S. adversary against his political rival.

The opinion piece was published a day after White House press secretary Sarah Sanders announced that Trump was revoking the former CIA director’s security clearance over his “erratic behavior.” Brennan has been a vocal critic of Trump, often denouncing the president in television appearances.

Trump’s move shows he’s “become more desperate to protect himself and those close to him,” and thus is trying to “scare into silence others who might dare to challenge him,” Brennan wrote.

John Brennan Has Gotten A Lot More Outspoken About Trump And Russia Over The Past Year

By Amber Philips

[Washington Post](#), August 16, 2018

The debate at the heart of President Trump’s decision to revoke the security clearance of CIA director John O. Brennan is political free speech. Essentially:

How much is too much for a former top member of the U.S. intelligence community?

Trump has left little doubt that he decided to revoke the security clearance of Brennan for being involved in the early days of the Russia investigation. Trump’s aides and allies have also accused Brennan of being inappropriately political, transforming from his once-nonpartisan role as CIA director under President Barack Obama into one of the most outspoken members of the intelligence community about Trump and Russia.

It’s not just Trump allies who are caught off guard by Brennan’s willingly molding himself into a lightning rod. “As a recently retired CIA chief, John Brennan has been far too political in his comments,” Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine), a moderate Republican, told reporters Wednesday, adding she doesn’t think Trump should have revoked his security clearance.

Brennan has indeed grown a lot more willing to accuse Trump of wrongdoing as Trump’s presidency has gone on. Around this time last year, Brennan said he didn’t know whether Trump’s campaign colluded with Russia. He didn’t even want to say that word, “collusion.”

Now, Brennan straight up accuses the president’s campaign of colluding with Russia. He called Trump’s denials of collusion “hogwash” in a provocative op-ed in the New York Times published less than 24 hours after Trump revoked his security clearance. That’s something many of Trump’s other critics aren’t willing to say.

So, is Brennan becoming too political for democracy’s good? Or have the facts compelled him to speak out in increasingly alarming language, politics be damned? That’s a question of intent that both sides will no doubt have strong feelings about. But since Brennan’s intent does get at the heart of whether Trump just appropriately punished him, it’s worth looking back at what Brennan said last summer about Trump and Russia and how he has changed his tune now.

Brennan, a year ago, on the Trump campaign’s naivete about Russia: The former CIA director testified to Congress in May 2017 that he thought it was possible the Trump campaign was tricked into collusion with Russia but that the campaign naive about it. But he carefully worded his thoughts to never directly accuse the Trump campaign of anything.

“My radar goes up early when I see certain things that I know what the Russians are trying to do, and I don’t know whether or not the targets of their efforts are as mindful of Russian intentions as they need to be,” he said. (Brennan had been out of the CIA for several months at this point.)

Brennan now: He is way less willing to give the Trump campaign the benefit of the doubt that it had innocent motives. After Trump’s Helsinki summit with

President Vladimir Putin in July, Brennan said the president's deference to Putin was an impeachable offense.

Donald Trump's press conference performance in Helsinki rises to & exceeds the threshold of "high crimes & misdemeanors." It was nothing short of treasonous. Not only were Trump's comments imbecilic, he is wholly in the pocket of Putin. Republican Patriots: Where are you???— John O. Brennan (@JohnBrennan) July 16, 2018

Brennan last year on Russia's motives for getting involved: It was definitely to hurt Hillary Clinton, he told Congress last May: "I believe they tried to damage and bloody her before the election."

Brennan now: He still feels that way. That Brennan would keep repeating this is notable because it's something that Trump has refused to acknowledge, despite the fact his own intelligence community has come to this conclusion.

Brennan last year on Trump asking Russia during the campaign to hack into Hillary Clinton's emails: It didn't come up in his hours-long testimony to Congress about Russian interference, suggesting that members of Congress and Brennan just weren't focused on this moment in the broader context of Russian election interference.

Brennan now: This moment is now a linchpin in Brennan's argument that Trump likely colluded with Russia. In making the comments above, Brennan said Trump was "openly authorizing his followers to work with our primary global adversary against his political opponent."

"Such a public clarion call certainly makes one wonder what Mr. Trump privately encouraged his advisers to do — and what they actually did — to win the election," he wrote in the New York Times.

It's worth noting that a recent federal indictment against Russian hackers points out that "on or about" the same day Trump said that, Russians did try to get Clinton's emails. Though the indictment alleges no behind-the-scenes coordination between the two sides.

Brennan last year on the existence of Trump-Russia ties: He testified to Congress that he was concerned enough about Trump-Russia ties to alert the FBI of what he was finding, but he let the investigation play out:

"I encountered and am aware of information and intelligence that revealed contacts and interactions between Russian officials and U.S. persons involved in the Trump campaign that I was concerned about because of known Russian efforts to suborn such individuals and it raised questions in my mind, again,

whether or not the Russians were able to gain the cooperation of those individuals."

Brennan now: He is convinced there were inappropriate Trump-Russia ties.

"While I had deep insight into Russian activities during the 2016 election, I now am aware — thanks to the reporting of an open and free press — of many more of the highly suspicious dalliances of some American citizens with people affiliated with the Russian intelligence services," he wrote in the Times.

Brennan then on Trump-Russia collusion: He was making no judgments other than to say it could have happened inadvertently. When asked directly by Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.) if evidence of collusion existed, Brennan said: "I don't know whether or not such collusion — and that's your term — such collusion existed. I don't know."

Brennan now on collusion: He definitely thinks it happened. He cites members of the Trump campaign's ties to Russia (Paul Manafort, an FBI warrant to spy on Carter Page), the trial of Manafort on bank and tax fraud charges and that Trump publicly asked Russia to release Clinton's emails.

In the Times, he ends with this conclusion: "The only questions that remain are whether the collusion that took place constituted criminally liable conspiracy, whether obstruction of justice occurred to cover up any collusion or conspiracy, and how many members of 'Trump Incorporated' attempted to defraud the government by laundering and concealing the movement of money into their pockets."

So a year and a half into Trump's presidency, Brennan is much less willing to give the president the benefit of the doubt than he was a few months in. The question about Brennan vs. Trump then becomes twofold: whether that's acceptable behavior for the former head of the CIA and whether that warrants revoking his security clearance.

John Brennan: Donald Trump's Denial Of Russian Collusion Is 'Hogwash'

By David Jackson

[USA Today](#), August 16, 2018

Wasting no time, ex-CIA Director John Brennan said Thursday that President Donald Trump revoked his security clearance this week to try and silence him for speaking out against Trump's friendliness with Russians who influenced the 2016 election.

"Mr. Trump's claims of no collusion are, in a word, hogwash," Brennan wrote in a New York Times op-ed published the day after the White House announced revocation of his security clearance.

Brennan cited Trump's call on Russia in July of 2016 to release emails from the private account of Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton; Trump later said he was joking, but Brennan wrote that the comment "makes one wonder what Mr. Trump privately encouraged his advisers to do – and what they actually did – to win the election" over Clinton.

Said Brennan: "The only questions that remain are whether the collusion that took place constituted criminally liable conspiracy, whether obstruction of justice occurred to cover up any collusion or conspiracy, and how many members of "Trump Incorporated" attempted to defraud the government by laundering and concealing the movement of money into their pockets."

Trump, who has denied collusion or obstruction of justice with respect to the Russia investigation, said he revoked Brennan's security clearance because of "erratic" statements about the Russia case.

Brennan has "leveraged" his CIA experience and access to information "to make a series of unfounded and outrageous allegations – wild outbursts on the internet and television – about this Administration," Trump said in a written statement.

Trump also said he is reviewing the security clearances of other Barack Obama administration officials he has accused of trumping up Russia allegations in a bid to undermine his presidency. The president has also accused these officials of going easy on Clinton in an investigation of her emails.

The president's list includes former FBI Director James Comey, former national intelligence director James Clapper, former CIA director Michael Hayden, former national security adviser Susan Rice, as well as other ex-FBI officials involved in the Russia investigation.

The president has denounced the investigation headed by special counsel Robert Mueller as a "hoax" perpetrated by Democrats.

After his announcement, Trump took to Twitter to quote commentators who supported his action against Brennan. "I'd strip the whole bunch of them," said Fox News commentator Sean Hannity. "They've all betrayed the American people with a political agenda. They tried to steal and influence an election in the United States."

The officials listed by Trump said they are pursuing the truth about the president and Russia, and will not be silenced.

"The larger implication here is the jeopardy to our first amendment rights," Clapper said Thursday on CNN. "There's a very chilling message here to people in the intelligence community."

In his New York Times op-ed, Brennan said Trump is also trying to intimidate prosecutors, but predicted he would not be successful.

"Mr. Trump clearly has become more desperate to protect himself and those close to him, which is why he made the politically motivated decision to revoke my security clearance in an attempt to scare into silence others who might dare to challenge him," Brennan said.

John Brennan On Trump: 'Claims Of No Collusion Are, In A Word, Hogwash'

By Gabriella Muñoz

[Washington Times](#), August 16, 2018

Former CIA Director John O. Brennan said Thursday there is no question that President Trump colluded with Russia and accused a "desperate" Mr. Trump of stripping his security clearance in order to intimidate other opponents.

"Mr. Trump's claims of no collusion are, in a word, hogwash," Mr. Brennan wrote in an op-ed published in The New York Times.

"Mr. Trump clearly has become more desperate to protect himself and those close to him, which is why he made the politically motivated decision to revoke my security clearance in an attempt to scare into silence others who might dare to challenge him," he wrote.

The former head spy described the coordination between the U.S. intelligence agencies to track Russian involvement with American citizens "who become pliant in the hands of their Russian puppet masters."

According to Mr. Brennan, that work was made more difficult by Mr. Trump's infamous 2016 Russia comment. Coming from a presidential candidate, the statement encouraged Russian hackers and his base to favor a long-time geopolitical foe, he wrote.

"Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing," Mr. Trump said in a campaign speech.

In an interview for CNN's "New Day Former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper disagreed that Mr. Trump claims of innocence are "hogwash." He did stress that the security concerns were serious, so the Mueller investigation needs to be allowed to complete its work.

"Well I don't know if I'd use that word," he said.

"I think there needs to be an official determination made about this and that, I think, can only be done by the Mueller investigation," Mr. Clapper said.

Mr. Trump argued Mr. Brennan used his clearance to pursue personal and partisan interests.

"Mr. Brennan has recently leveraged his status as a former high-ranking official with access to highly sensitive information to make a series of unfounded and outrageous allegations — wild outbursts on the Internet

and television — about this administration,” Mr. Trump said in a statement.

Following the Helsinki summit, Mr. Brennan said the president’s performance amounted to treason and put the intelligence community at risk.

He also said the intelligence community could start withholding information from the president in order to protect national secrets.

Mr. Trump announced that Mr. Brennan is may be the first in a longer list of Obama-era government officials stripped of their clearances. The others include former FBI Director James B. Comey, former FBI agent Peter Strzok, and former Attorney General Sally Yates.

Trump Gears Up To Strip More Clearances From Officials Tied To Russia Investigation

By John Wagner And Karoun Demirjian
[Washington Post](#), August 16, 2018

President Trump has told advisers that he is eager to strip more security clearances as part of an escalating attack against people who have criticized him or played a role in the investigation of alleged Russian interference in the 2016 presidential campaign, two White House officials said.

Over the past 19 months, Trump has fired or threatened to take action against nearly a dozen current and former officials associated with the inquiry, which he has labeled a “rigged witch hunt,” including former FBI director James B. Comey, former deputy attorney general Sally Yates and former FBI deputy director Andrew McCabe. All three were dismissed.

Trump intensified his attacks this week by stripping former CIA director John Brennan of his security clearance and announcing that others are under review. Brennan and former director of national intelligence James R. Clapper Jr., who is on Trump’s review list, were among the Obama administration officials who briefed Trump before his inauguration on evidence of Russia’s interference in the campaign.

The president has repeatedly urged Attorney General Jeff Sessions and other officials to end the investigation led by special counsel Robert S. Mueller III, who is examining potential collusion between Moscow and the Trump campaign and whether the president has sought to obstruct justice.

To critics, Trump’s moves echo President Richard Nixon’s decision to force the abrupt firing of Watergate special counsel Archibald Cox.

“If you did all this in one day, it would have a ‘Saturday night massacre’ odor to it,” said Benjamin Wittes, a Brookings Institution fellow who oversees the Lawfare Blog on national security issues, referring to the

1973 move by Nixon that prompted resignations by the Justice Department’s top two officials. “But you spread it out and get people used to the first one, then you do the second one — over a long period of time, it becomes the new normal.”

In this file photo taken on May 23, 2017, former CIA director John Brennan testifies during a House Intelligence Committee hearing about Russian actions during the 2016 election. (Saul Loeb/AFP/Getty Images)

Many of Brennan’s former colleagues have rallied to his defense.

“I would consider it an honor if you would revoke my security clearance as well, so I can add my name to the list of men and women who have spoken up against your presidency,” retired Navy Adm. William H. McRaven, who oversaw the 2011 Special Forces raid that killed Osama bin Laden, wrote in an op-ed for The Washington Post. “If you think for a moment that your McCarthy-era tactics will suppress the voices of criticism, you are sadly mistaken.”

Inside the West Wing, Trump is eager to move against others on the security clearance review list and could act soon, according to the White House officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

Trump believes he has emerged looking strong and decisive in his escalating feud with Brennan, the aides said, adding that he shows a visceral disdain for the former CIA director when he sees him on TV.

But other aides would prefer a more fulsome process or that he drop the matter altogether, and they are scrambling to review the list of people Trump says he’d like to strip of clearances. These officials said Trump did not focus on his power to remove clearances until this summer.

Still, as the Russia investigation tightens around the president — Mueller is pressing Trump’s legal team over a potential interview with him — the president remains impulsive and unpredictable, aides said.

“The process is essentially meaningless,” one White House aide said. “If Trump wants to do it, he’ll just do it.”

Trump has frequently overruled, contradicted or ignored his aides, and that internal discord was on display again in the move against Brennan.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders announced the action Wednesday by reading an eight-paragraph statement in Trump’s name, citing Brennan’s “erratic conduct” and “wild outbursts” on television and erroneous statements he had made.

Later that afternoon, Trump summoned a Wall Street Journal reporter into the Oval Office for an

impromptu interview in which he linked Brennan's clearance revocation to the "sham" Russia investigation.

"These people led it," he said, referring to Brennan and others. "So I think it's something that had to be done."

In an op-ed published Thursday by the New York Times, Brennan called Trump's claims that there was no collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia "hogwash."

Brennan characterized Trump's action as "politically motivated" and said it was "an attempt to scare into silence others who might dare to challenge him."

Rudolph W. Giuliani, Trump's lead attorney for the special counsel investigation, dismissed suggestions that the president had developed an "enemies list," saying that decisions on security clearances will be made on a "case-by-case basis."

"The basis for having it is the president is going to call on you for advice — if that doesn't exist, there's no reason for you to have a clearance," Giuliani said in an interview. "We aren't prohibiting their First Amendment rights. We are just saying, you don't get to see top-secret government documents."

White House aides confirmed that Trump made his decision weeks ago about Brennan, who serves as an NBC News contributor. Senior advisers, including Sanders, recommended to the president that they announce the action Wednesday amid an onslaught of news coverage from former Trump aide Omarosa Manigault Newman's new book, which accuses Trump of having made racist remarks, the aides said.

Brennan attacked Trump for calling Manigault Newman a "dog" hours before the clearance was taken away. Trump has obsessed over the book and media coverage of it for several days, aides said.

Trump grew increasingly agitated about Brennan and others earlier in the summer, believing they were exploiting their credentials as former national security officials to make money, aides said. The president mentioned the Russia investigation when discussing the matter in private and drafted a list of officials who have angered him for Sanders to read at the lectern in the White House briefing room, the aides said.

Although advisers cautioned the president that some people on the list — including Comey and McCabe — had already lost their security clearances when they were fired, Trump insisted that they be included anyway, the senior officials said.

Brennan was too "political," Trump told his aides. The president did not get much resistance from his inner circle because Brennan is widely disliked in the West Wing, according to a senior official and a former

administration official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

Mark Zaid, a national security lawyer in Washington, called Trump's move unprecedented and said Brennan could pursue a due process claim. But he said it is unlikely that Brennan could win his clearance back.

"He may have a whistleblower claim because Trump tied it to Russia," Zaid said.

"What we're concerned about is how much further is it going to go?" he added, referring to other potential Trump targets.

Also on Trump's list are former FBI employees Peter Strzok and Lisa Page, who criticized the president in private texts while carrying on an affair during their work on agency investigations of the presidential campaigns of Trump and Hillary Clinton. Page resigned in May and Strzok was fired last week.

The only current official known to be in Trump's review is Bruce Ohr, a Justice Department employee who was demoted recently after Republicans named him in a memo earlier this year that targeted his ties to the former British intelligence officer who wrote a controversial dossier about the Trump campaign's alleged contacts with Russian officials.

Trump named Ohr and his wife in two critical tweets this week.

The president's moves have elicited mixed responses among Republicans on Capitol Hill, most of whom have supported his right to remove Brennan's clearance.

Sen. Richard Burr (N.C.), chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, criticized Brennan for his remarks about potential collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia. If the claim is "purely political and based on conjecture, the president has full authority to revoke his security clearance as head of the Executive Branch," Burr said in a statement Thursday.

Revoke My Security Clearance, Too, Mr. President

By William H. McRaven

[Washington Post](#), August 16, 2018

William H. McRaven, a retired Navy admiral, was commander of the U.S. Joint Special Operations Command from 2011 to 2014. He oversaw the 2011 Navy SEAL raid in Pakistan that killed al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

Dear Mr. President:

Former CIA director John Brennan, whose security clearance you revoked on Wednesday, is one of the finest public servants I have ever known. Few Americans

have done more to protect this country than John. He is a man of unparalleled integrity, whose honesty and character have never been in question, except by those who don't know him.

Therefore, I would consider it an honor if you would revoke my security clearance as well, so I can add my name to the list of men and women who have spoken up against your presidency.

Like most Americans, I had hoped that when you became president, you would rise to the occasion and become the leader this great nation needs.

A good leader tries to embody the best qualities of his or her organization. A good leader sets the example for others to follow. A good leader always puts the welfare of others before himself or herself.

Your leadership, however, has shown little of these qualities. Through your actions, you have embarrassed us in the eyes of our children, humiliated us on the world stage and, worst of all, divided us as a nation.

If you think for a moment that your McCarthy-era tactics will suppress the voices of criticism, you are sadly mistaken. The criticism will continue until you become the leader we prayed you would be.

Ben Rhodes Invokes Bin Laden To Shame Trump

By Virginia Kruta

[Daily Caller](#), August 16, 2018

Former Obama foreign policy advisor Ben Rhodes took a shot at President Donald Trump on Wednesday after learning that the White House had revoked former CIA Director John Brennan's security clearance.

Citing Brennan's involvement in the raid that killed 9/11 terrorist Osama Bin Laden, Rhodes seemed to suggest that proved Brennan was above reproach.

Robert O'Neill — the SEAL Team 6 member who went public as the man who fired the shots that killed Bin Laden — fired back at Rhodes, making an apparent reference to the other operators who carried out the mission alongside him.

O'Neill, who called out President Obama in 2015 for his "lack of strategy" in dealing with ISIS, has also not been shy about criticizing President Trump, particularly regarding his plan to hold a military parade.

Former CBS News Reporter Delivers Kill Shot To Liberal Media Narrative That Trump Is Silencing John Brennan

By Matt Vespa

[Townhall](#), August 16, 2018

Former CIA Director John Brennan no longer has a security clearance. It's been revoked. He's out of the

club. Oh, and you bet the liberal news media was all over this, once again going into meltdown mode over something that was perfectly within the president's authority. But like with anything that Trump does, we're always on the verge of a total constitutional crisis...in CNN-land. Guy also wrote that Brennan's pervasive partisan antics warranted his clearance being revoked. Oh, but it's all politically motivated, you see (via Politico):

President Donald Trump's decision to revoke former CIA director John Brennan's security clearance is a "politically motivated" attempt to silence those who disagree with the president, Brennan said in a New York Times op-ed on Thursday.

"Mr. Trump clearly has become more desperate to protect himself and those close to him," Brennan said. "which is why he made the politically motivated decision to revoke my security clearance in an attempt to scare into silence others who might dare to challenge him."

Brennan's op-ed published Thursday, one day after the White House announced the president had revoked the former CIA director's security clearance and placed the clearances of several current and former officials under review. Brennan, who has often been critical of Trump, helmed the intelligence agency from 2013 to 2017.

Wait, you're saying there's a campaign to silence you, yet you can still say whatever you want, right? You just did. And the anti-Trump media are going to give you even more media its and exposure over this security clearance nonsense. Former CBS News investigative reporter Sharyl Attkisson also torpedoed this absurd narrative.

Brennan tweeted, "This action is part of a broader effort by Mr. Trump to suppress freedom of speech & punish critics. It should gravely worry all Americans, including intelligence professionals, about the cost of speaking out. My principles are worth far more than clearances. I will not relent." He. Tweeted. This. He's obviously not being silenced, folks. It's just some former top intelligence officials complaining he no longer has access to sensitive information, which he could possibly leak to the press.

Our friends at Twitchy captured the fun:

So, no, we're not becoming a banana republic. This isn't Russia, even though Democrats now seem to think they're the hordes of Mordor now. The president can do this. He did it. And you can all the 25-person deep panels all you want, liberal media. The decision is final—and it's not yours. Also, Hillary will never be president and Obama is not coming back.

Scott Adams: Brennan ‘Almost Destroyed’ U.S. Because He Can’t Understand An ‘Obvious Joke’

By Douglas Ernst

[Washington Times](#), August 16, 2018

Cartoonist Scott Adams of “Dilbert” fame told his huge political fan base on Thursday that Obama-era CIA Director John Brennan may send the U.S. into chaos due to his inability to get a joke.

The author of “Win Bigly: Persuasion in a World Where Facts Don’t Matter” said President Trump appears to be dealing with a dangerous political witch hunt because Mr. Brennan thought a public roasting of Hillary Clinton and her secret email server as secretary of state was influenced by Russian propaganda.

The former CIA boss, writing in an op-ed for The New York Times published Thursday, admonished then-presidential candidate Mr. Trump’s call during a 2016 campaign event for Russia to find the thousands of emails deleted from Mrs. Clinton’s private server.

“The already challenging work of the American intelligence and law enforcement communities was made more difficult in late July 2016 ... when Mr. Trump, then a presidential candidate, publicly called upon Russia to find the missing emails of Mrs. Clinton,” Mr. Brennan wrote. “By issuing such a statement, Mr. Trump was not only encouraging a foreign nation to collect intelligence against a United States citizen, but also openly authorizing his followers to work with our primary global adversary against his political opponent.”

Mr. Adams — one of the first political commentators to predict the billionaire’s electoral success — said the decision to strip the former CIA boss of his security clearance is a completely rational decision.

Mr. Adams told his Twitter audience of nearly 270,000 people that only a dangerous person would use Mr. Trump’s joke as the pretext for jumping down an investigative rabbit hole.

“So Brennan may have started one of the most important political witch hunts in history based on not recognizing a joke — and I’m not even making that up,” he said. “I feel fairly confident in saying that what I just said is literally true: that the head of the CIA has almost destroyed the United States because he didn’t understand that an obvious joke was a joke.”

Scott Adams talks about CIA directors who can’t recognize jokes, RBS scumbags, and coffee. <https://t.co/wR8JuMymw3> — Scott Adams (@ScottAdamsSays) August 16, 2018

The cartoonist said that another option was that Mr. Brennan was waiting for any excuse to tie Mr. Trump to a nefarious Russian plot.

“Now he might be lying about that,” he said. “It could be that he’s just using that as an excuse and say, ‘Oh, it was really about that thing [Mr. Trump] said that didn’t look like a joke to me.’ So maybe it’s just something he wanted to do when he just needed what I call a ‘fake’ because, you know, he was already inclined to do it but he wanted to wait. So we don’t know.

“Now, if you’ve got a guy who’s willing to put the entire stability at risk because he can’t tell the difference between a joke and a serious statement, then that guy has got to lose his security clearance at least,” Mr. Adams continued. “I wouldn’t want him anywhere near a decision. Would you? After seeing how Brennan responded to a public joke would you want him to make any important decisions about anything? I mean, that’s some scary stuff.”

Mr. Brennan claimed in his op-ed that the president is full of “hogwash” regarding ties to Russia.

“The only questions that remain are whether the collusion that took place constituted criminally liable conspiracy, whether obstruction of justice occurred to cover up any collusion or conspiracy, and how many members of ‘Trump Incorporated’ attempted to defraud the government by laundering and concealing the movement of money into their pockets,” Mr. Brennan said.

Donald Trump, the Payback President

By The Editorial Board

[New York Times](#), August 16, 2018

What fun is it being president if you can’t use the tools of government to punish your critics?

The editorial board represents the opinions of the board, its editor and the publisher. It is separate from the newsroom and the Op-Ed section.

President Trump’s decision to strip the security clearance of John Brennan, a former director of the C.I.A., qualifies as one of the least surprising moves from the White House this year. Mr. Brennan has been an outspoken critic of Mr. Trump, and the president’s skin is as thin as his regard for democratic norms. And despite the laughable rationalizations now being peddled by administration apologists, Mr. Brennan’s spanking is just the latest display of what has become standard operating procedure for this president: using the official levers of government to punish critics and to encourage other detractors to sit down and shut up.

Mr. Trump’s act of spite against Mr. Brennan is less ambitious and, frankly, less imaginative, than some of the other avenues of retribution he has explored.

Aggrieved over what he considers insufficiently obsequious coverage by The Washington Post, Mr. Trump has repeatedly threatened to punish the paper's owner, Jeff Bezos, by raising the postal rates paid by the online retail giant Amazon, of which Mr. Bezos is the founder and chief executive. Similarly, in the midst of his snit over the protests by National Football League players who have taken a knee during the national anthem, Mr. Trump instructed aides to brainstorm ideas for going after the league in last year's tax-reform package.

Then there was the president's failed attempt to block the merger between AT&T and Time Warner, which pretty much everyone recognized as part of his long-simmering animus toward the news media in general and CNN in particular. (The network is owned by Time Warner.) When the Department of Justice filed suit last November on antitrust grounds, the administration insisted that Mr. Trump had no part in the decision — a claim that would have been more credible if Mr. Trump had not vowed to block the merger more than a year earlier, when he was still a candidate. It also didn't help Mr. Trump's case that his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani said that the president had "denied the merger."

On a more intimate scale, the Trump White House has delighted in selectively barring journalists from official events. Just last month, Kaitlan Collins, a White House reporter for CNN, was called into the West Wing, scolded for having asked the president "inappropriate" questions earlier that day and then informed that she would not be attending Mr. Trump's Rose Garden appearance with the head of the European Commission — an event open to the news media. Then again, at least Ms. Collins wasn't shoved around and physically ejected from the premises, as happened in May to Ellen Knickmeyer, a reporter for The Associated Press who was trying to cover a speech by Scott Pruitt, at that time the head of the Environmental Protection Agency. Faced with blowback, the administration insisted that the room had reached capacity.

After such episodes, Mr. Trump and his lackeys often feel moved to offer some type of official cover story for his petty thuggery. For instance, the president's statement on Mr. Brennan, conveyed to reporters on Wednesday by the White House press secretary, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, claimed that the former director's clearance had been revoked because his "erratic conduct and behavior" and "increasingly frenzied commentary" posed a risk to national security. This excuse not only fails the laugh test, it differs from the rationale Ms. Sanders floated a couple of weeks ago, when she first announced that Mr. Trump was considering this action. At that time, she said that Mr.

Brennan and other critics had "politicized, and in some cases monetized, their public service and security clearances."

At other times, Mr. Trump is vastly more forthright, as when explaining in an interview later Wednesday that he took away Mr. Brennan's security clearance in part because of the latter's early role in the Russia inquiry. Raging about how "these people" had led the "rigged witch hunt," Mr. Trump reasoned, "So I think it's something that had to be done." The revelation was a remarkable echo of the president's admission to NBC's Lester Holt last year that he had fired the F.B.I. director, James Comey, in part over "this Russia thing" rather than the ludicrous official line that he had done so because of Mr. Comey's handling of the Hillary Clinton email investigation.

At this point, one might ask why the White House even bothers to invent cover stories that the president himself will inevitably contradict. Mr. Trump obviously cherishes — and actively cultivates — his reputation as someone who will work to crush those who dare defy him.

Following the Group of 7 summit in June, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada held a news conference in which he said that his country would respond in kind to any steel and aluminum tariffs imposed by the United States and he promised that Canadians "will not be pushed around." Outraged, Mr. Trump vowed to make Mr. Trudeau and his entire country pay for such impudence. "That's going to cost a lot of money for the people of Canada," said Mr. Trump. "He learned. You can't do that. You can't do that."

Politically palatable excuses aside, the president wants everyone to know that this is how he operates. It fuels his image as a tough guy. Where is the fun in punishing your enemies if you can't rub their noses in it? More strategically, scaring one's critics into submission won't work if those critics don't understand what's happening.

In the president's statement on Mr. Brennan, he reminded the public that nine other individuals are currently having their access to classified information reviewed. Some of the names on the list have been fierce critics of the president. Others have ties to the continuing Russia investigation that Mr. Trump has been working so tirelessly to discredit. Whatever the particulars, all have drawn the displeasure of the president and must be taught a lesson. Mr. Trump ominously warned, "Security clearances for those who still have them may be revoked, and those who have already lost their security clearance may not be able to have it reinstated."

There's a word for an approach to leadership that features treating the tax code, postal rates, antitrust laws and the First Amendment as weapons to settle one's personal grudges. And that word is not "democratic."

John Brennan Isn't The Real Victim

By The Editorial Board

[Washington Post](#), August 16, 2018

WHEN PRESIDENT TRUMP last month threatened to punish one of his critics, former CIA director John Brennan, by taking away his security clearance, House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) dismissed the threat with a wry smile. Mere "trolling," he said, as if to suggest: Boys will be boys.

In fact, even as bluster, Mr. Trump's words would not have been acceptable. But now the president has acted on them, stripping a career intelligence officer of his access to classified material, with no legitimate cause. Mr. Trump, in fact, made no secret of his illegitimate motive: In an interview published in the Wall Street Journal on Wednesday, he blamed Mr. Brennan for the special counsel's investigation into possible Russian collusion with the Trump campaign. Revoking Mr. Brennan's clearance is an act of petty vengeance.

The real victim here is not Mr. Brennan, who will get along fine without his security clearance, but the national security of the United States and its democratic norms. National security is harmed because administration officials and members of Congress benefit when they can draw upon the wisdom and experience of long-serving public servants such as Mr. Brennan. Mr. Trump has threatened eight other former officials, and even one current official, with similar treatment. Over time, that would make their advice less useful to officials who might otherwise benefit from it.

Democratic norms erode as the president, inventing insulting pretexts for his actions, uses his authority over access to classified information to bully and punish critics and would-be critics. Those who may be more vulnerable than Mr. Brennan, who rely on their security clearances for their employability in the private or public sector, may indeed be intimidated into silence.

Others will be stirred to resist. On the opposite page today, we publish an open letter to the president from William H. McRaven, a retired admiral and former commander of U.S. Special Operations forces. "I would consider it an honor if you would revoke my security clearance as well, so I can add my name to the list of men and women who have spoken up against your presidency," he writes. "If you think for a moment that your McCarthy-era tactics will suppress the voices of criticism, you are sadly mistaken."

In Mr. Trump's America, every transition of power would result in the vilification, demotion and humiliation of those who served before, even civil servants who were honorably performing their duty. His conception of government denies the possibility of any motivation beyond partisan — or, in Mr. Trump's case, personal — loyalty, at the expense of the principle that patriotic Americans can put the national interest above such considerations. It is pettiness distilled and more revealing of the president's malformed sense of duty than that of his targets. This is the national debasement that Mr. Ryan and the rest of his party have enabled.

More Than 300 Newspapers Join Globe Effort On Freedom Of The Press Editorials

By Jaclyn Reiss

[Boston Globe](#), August 14, 2018

More than 300 news publications across the United States have committed to a Boston Globe-coordinated effort to run editorials Thursday promoting the freedom of the press, in light of President Trump's frequent attacks on the media.

Some of the most respected and widely circulated newspapers in the country have committed to taking a stand in their editorial pages, including The New York Times, The Dallas Morning News, The Denver Post, The Philadelphia Inquirer, and the Chicago Sun-Times. The list ranges from large metropolitan dailies to small weekly papers with circulations as low as 4,000.

The Globe initiative comes amid the president's repeated verbal attacks on journalists, calling mainstream press organizations "fake news" and "the enemy of the American people." Tensions came to a boil in early August when CNN reporter Jim Acosta walked out of a press briefing after White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders refused to refute Trump's "enemy of the people" comments.

"We are not the enemy of the people," Marjorie Pritchard, deputy managing editor of the Globe's opinion page, told the AP last week.

The Globe's request to denounce the "dirty war against the free press" has been promoted by industry groups such as the American Society of News Editors, as well as regional groups like the New England Newspaper and Press Association. The request also suggested editorial boards take a stand against Trump's words regardless of their politics, or whether they generally editorialized in support of or in opposition to the president's policies. Related Links Editorial: Journalists are not the enemy

A central pillar of President Trump's politics is a sustained assault on the free press. Journalists are not

classified as fellow Americans, but rather “the enemy of the people.”

“Our words will differ. But at least we can agree that such attacks are alarming,” the Globe appeal said.

As of last Friday, 70 newspapers had committed to the initiative. By Tuesday, that number had grown to about 200, and the number jumped again to more than 300 on Wednesday.

Pritchard previously said the decision to reach out to newspapers was reached after Trump appeared to step up his rhetoric in recent weeks. He called the media “fake, fake disgusting news” at an Aug. 2 rally in Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

“Whatever happened to the free press? Whatever happened to honest reporting?” he asked at the rally, pointing to journalists covering the event. “They don’t report it. They only make up stories.”

Pritchard said she hoped the editorials would make an impression on Americans.

“I hope it would educate readers to realize that an attack on the First Amendment is unacceptable,” she said. “We are a free and independent press; it is one of the most sacred principles enshrined in the Constitution.”

This isn’t the first time the Globe’s opinion board has taken a stand against Trump and his policies. In April 2016, while Trump was still campaigning for president, the Globe’s opinion page ran a scathing editorial in its Sunday edition, accompanied by a satirical front page envisioning an America under a Trump presidency. Trump called the Globe “stupid” and “worthless” that Sunday during a rally in New York.

The following is a list, updated Wednesday afternoon, of news organizations that have committed to running editorials on Aug. 16:

Akron Beacon Journal
Albuquerque Journal
Alpena News
American News
Ames Tribune
Anderson Observer
Anniston Star
Arizona Daily Star
Arizona Daily Sun
Athens News
Athol Daily News
Atlantic City Weekly
Austin American Statesman
Baltimore Sun
Bangor Daily News
Beaverton Valley Times
Berkshire Eagle, Bennington Banner, Brattleboro Reformer, Manchester Journal

Big Bend Sentinel and Presidio International
Bismarck Tribune
Bluff Country Newspaper Group (six separate newspapers)
Boise Weekly
Boston Business Journal
Bozeman Chronicle
Bristol Herald Courier
Brockton Enterprise
Brunswick News
Bucks County Courier Times
Burlington County Times
Cannon Beach Gazette
Cape Cod Chronicle
Cape Cod Times
Cape Cod Times
CapeCodWave.com
Center for Public Integrity
Chagrin Valley Times
Chicago Sun Times
Chico News and Review
Chronicle Express
Chronicle-Telegram
Cincinnati City Beat
Citizen Chronicle
Citrus County Chronicle
Coachella Valley Independent
Columbian Progress
Columbus Dispatch
Commercial News
Commercial Review
Commonwealth Journal
Concord Monitor
Connersville News-Examiner
Courier Sentinel
Crawford County Independent
Daily Free Press
Daily Globe
Daily Hampshire Gazette
Daily Herald
Daily Ledger
Daily News
Daily Times
Dallas News
Dalles Chronicle
Darien Times
Daytona Beach News-Journal
Deadline Detroit
Deerfield Valley News
Denton Record-Chronicle
Denver Post
Des Moines Register
Detroit Free Press

DeWitt Observer
 Dixon's Independent Voice
 Dodgeville Chronicle
 Duluth News Tribune
 Dyersville Commercial, Manchester Press, and
 Cascade Pioneer
 Eau Claire Leader-Telegram
 Echo Press
 Edgefield Advertiser
 El Diario
 Erie Times News
 Essex Media Group
 Estacada News
 Eugene Weekly
 Examiner Media: The Examiner, White Plains
 Examiner, Northern Westchester Examiner, Putnam
 Examiner
 Falls City Journal
 Farmington Daily Times
 Fayette Advocate
 Fenimore Times
 Finger Lakes Times
 Folio weekly
 Forest Grove News-Times
 Forum Home
 Francesville Tribune
 Freeman South Dakota Editorial
 Fresno Bee
 Fulton County News
 Garden City News
 Garretson Gazette
 Gaston Gazette
 Gettysbrug Times
 Glasgow Daily Times
 Grant County Herald
 Greenboro Reporter
 Greenwood Commonwealth
 Gresham Outlook
 Griggs County Courier and Steel County Press
 Grosse Pointe News
 Hardwick Gazette
 Hartford Courant
 Highlands News Sun
 Hillsboro Free Press
 Hillsboro Tribune
 Holland Sentinel
 Honolulu Civil Beat
 Hood River News
 Houghton Lake Resorter
 Houston Chronicle
 Idyllwild Town Crier
 Insider NJ

Islip Bulletin and Long Island Advance and Suffolk
 County News
 Jackson Citizen Patriot
 Jamestown Sun
 Jennings Daily News
 Jersey Journal
 Johnson Newspaper Corp. (five dailies and 12
 weeklies)
 Journal Opinion
 Journal Star of Peoria
 Journal-Times
 Kalamazoo Gazette
 Kansas City Star
 Keene Sentinel
 Kennebec Journal
 Kenosha News
 Kokomo Tribune
 La Opinión
 Lake Geneva Regional News
 Lake Oswego Review
 Lakeville Journal and Millerton News
 Lawrence Journal World
 Leader-News
 LNP Lancaster online
 Long Beach Post
 Longview News Journal
 Los Alamos Daily Post
 Machias Valley News Observe
 Mackinack Island Town Crier
 Madras Pioneer
 Martha's Vineyard Times
 McCluskey Gazette
 Metro West Daily News and Milford Daily News
 Miami Herald
 Milton Times
 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
 Minneapolis Star Tribune
 Montevideo American-News
 Morgan County News
 Morning Sentinel
 Morrisons Cove Herald
 Mountrail County Promoter
 Nantucket Inquirer and Mirror
 Nashville Scene
 New York Daily News
 New York Times
 Newport This Week
 News and Tribune
 News Times
 Nieman Foundation
 North Carolina Health News
 North Coast Journal

North Shore News Group (six community newspapers)

Northwest Michigan Voice

Northwest Michigan Voice

Observer Reporter

Oklahoman

Omaha World-Herald

Orange County Register

Park Rapids Enterprise

Patriot Ledger

Philadelphia Inquirer

Plympton-Halifax Express

Portland Press Herald

Progress Index

Providence Journal

Provincetown Banner

QNS. Queens Courier, Ridgewood Times

Ransom County Gazette and The Sargent County Teller

Rapid City Journal

Rappahannock News (Washington, Va.)

InsideNoVa.com (Northern Virginia's leading news web site)

Rawlins County Square Deal

Real Change News

Record Journal

Register Mail

Review

Richmond Register

Ripon Press

Rochester City News

Rochester City News

Rockford Register Star

Roswell Daily Record

S. Florida Sun Sentinel

Sag Harbor Express

Salina Journal

San Antonio Express

San Diego Tribune

San Jose Mercury News and the East Bay Times

Sandy Post

Sante Fe New Mexican

Seaford and Laurel Stars (Morningstar Publications)

Seward Independent (four publications)

Siuslaw News

SizingUpTheSouth.com, (Society of Professional Journalists – Region 3)

SLO Tribune

South Bend Tribune

Springfield Republican

St. Ignace News

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Star Democrat

Star News

Star News

State Journal Register

Steele Ozone and Kidder County Press

Storm Lake Times

Sun

Sun Journal

Swift County Monitor

"Swift County Monitor-News, Benson, MN

Grant County Herald, Elbow Lake, MN

Tampa Bay Times

Telegram and Gazette

The (Houma, La.) Courier and the (Thibodaux, La.) Daily Comet

The Altamont Enterprise Albany County Post

The Ann Arbor News

The Bay City Times

The Bedford Record-Review

The Black Voice News

The Brunswick Beacon

The Butler County Times-Gazette

The Canton Repository

The Chronicle

The Commons

The Courier

The Courier-Times (New Castle)

The Culpeper Times (Culpeper, Va.)

The Daily Advance

The Daily Item

The Daily Reflector

The Day

The Fayetteville Observer

The Flint Journal

The Gazette

The Grand Rapids Press

The Guadalupe County Communicator

The Herald

The Herald Democrat

The Herald Journal

The Herald-Times

The Hub City Post

The Hull Times

The Intelligencer

The Jefferson Chronicle

The Journal News/lohud.com

The Morehead News

The Muskegon Chronicle

The News Enterprise

The News Herald

The North Coast Journal

The North Scott Press

The Oakridger

The Plymouth Review
 The Portland Tribune
 The Press Democrat
 The Queens Courier and Ridgewood Times
 The River Reporter
 The Saginaw News
 The Sentinel of Gloucester County
 The Shelbyville News
 The Slidell Independent
 the Standard
 The Star News
 The Sylva Herald
 The Taos News
 The Three Rivers Commercial-News
 The Times
 The Times Tribune
 The Town and Country Weekly
 The Wave
 Times Herald Record
 Times of North Little Rock
 Times Standard
 Times Tribune
 Tomahawk Leader
 Topeka Capital-Journal
 Trentonian
 Triad City Beat
 Tucson Sentinel
 Tulsa Voice
 Tulsa World
 Union County Leader
 Valencia News Bulletin
 Van Buren County Democrat
 Wanderer
 Wapakoneta Daily News
 Warwick Beacon
 Wellesley Report
 West Linn Tidings
 Whitman-Hanson Express
 Whitman-Hanson Express/ Plympton-Halifax
 Express
 Wilsonville Spokesman
 Wisconsin Gazette
 Woodburn Independent
 Yankton County Observer
 Yellow Springs News
 YourArlington.com

Donald Trump Declares 'Fake News' An 'Opposition Party' As More Than 300 Papers Protest His Rhetoric

By Dan Boylan And Gabriella Muñoz
[Washington Times](#), August 16, 2018

President Trump slammed The Boston Globe Thursday for coordinating a nationwide protest with more than 300 other outlets, saying it's "in collusion with other papers on free press. Prove it!"

At a Cabinet meeting Thursday, Mr. Trump heard briefings from several advisers and then told journalists in the room, "If you'd like, you can stay. If you'd like, you can leave ... freedom of the press."

Earlier in the morning, Mr. Trump declared "fake news media" to be the opposition party and bad for America on Thursday, as hundreds of newspapers protested the president's constant media criticism.

The president defended himself and accused the media of "pushing a political agenda" and "trying to hurt people."

More than 350 newspapers across the country published editorials to push back on Mr. Trump's claims about "fake news" and "the enemy of the people." The publications range from major national papers like The New York Times and The Denver Post to small local papers, in addition to international publications like The Guardian newspaper in the U.K.

The nationwide protest started last week with a call from The Boston Globe to publish editorials supporting the need for a free press.

"Journalists are not classified as fellow Americans, but rather 'The enemy of the people.' This relentless assault on the free press has dangerous consequences," The Globe wrote.

To the delight of his supporters and disdain of his enemies, Mr. Trump has long employed a strategy of attacking the press to generate headlines.

Media analysts marveled at his success during the 2016 presidential campaign, noting that his combative, non-mainstream approach generated an estimated \$3 billion to \$5 billion worth of free media and or advertising.

On Thursday, the media blasted back.

The New Yorker magazine's effort in the anti-Trump campaign stated: "Nearly every day, Trump makes his hostility clear. He refers to reporters as "scum," "slime," and "sick people." They are cast as unpatriotic — "I really think they don't like our country," he says."

It also denounced the president's use of the term "fake news," arguing that the same tactic to dismiss critical reporting is favored by other living "autocrats" including Russian President Vladimir Putin and Syrian dictator Bashar Assad.

However, some papers were concerned about how the massive coordinated effort would appear.

"A coordinated response from independent — dare we say 'mainstream' — news organizations feeds a narrative that we're somehow aligned against this

Republican president,” The Baltimore Sun wrote, while asserting that insults undermining the press are dangerous.

The L.A. Times included critiques of the president in their editorial, but declined to join the protest, “because we value our independence.

“The idea of joining together to protest him seems almost to encourage that kind of conspiracy thinking by the president and his loyalists. Why give them ammunition to scream about ‘collusion?’” editor Nicholas Goldberg wrote.

Some more conservative outlets dismissed The Globe’s campaign, including Townhall.com, which called it a “pathetic bid to pretend it [The Globe] is still relevant.”

The Wall Street Journal also declined to participate.

Mr. Trump’s hometown tabloid newspaper, The New York Post, which tends to support him, had some fun with the overall idea.

“Who are we to disagree?” Post editorialists wrote, adding: “It may be frustrating to argue that just because we print inconvenient truths doesn’t mean that we’re fake news, but being a journalist isn’t a popularity contest. All we can do is to keep reporting.”

The Globe’s coordinated pushback comes after Mr. Trump recently refused to back down from framing the press as an “enemy of the people,” despite his eldest daughter and senior adviser Ivanka Trump distancing herself from her father’s rhetoric.

Mr. Trump’s doubling down came nearly a month after a deadly shooting at the Capitol Gazette in Maryland. On June 28, a man with a shotgun blasted his way into the newsroom and shot five employees, four of them journalists. While the shooting suspect was shown to have had a long history of animosity toward the paper, many argue the president’s rhetoric contribute to the threats journalists face.

According to the U.S. Press Freedom Tracker, 31 journalists have been attacked and 3 arrested in 2018.

The Washington Times reported that journalists covering the “Unite the Right 2” rally and antifa protests over the weekend in D.C. were harassed and threatened by counterprotesters.

“Today in the United States we have a president who has created a mantra that members of the media who do not blatantly support the policies of the current U.S. administration are the ‘enemy of the people,’ “ the Boston Globe wrote, “This is one of the many lies that have been thrown out by this president much like an old-time charlatan threw out ‘magic’ dust or water on a hopeful crowd.”

Trump Says Newspapers Are ‘In Collusion’ On Championing A Free Press

By Eileen Sullivan

[New York Times](#), August 16, 2018

President Trump on Thursday assailed the media for editorials in newspapers across the country that championed the freedom of the press, a unified response in the face of the president’s relentless attacks.

In a series of morning Twitter posts, Mr. Trump said The Boston Globe was “in collusion” with other newspapers for leading the editorial effort, choosing a word that has become synonymous with the special counsel’s investigation into Russian election interference — an investigation that he has repeatedly called a “witch hunt” and a “hoax.”

Trump also added “PROVE IT!” in one of the messages, though it was not clear what he meant.

The Boston Globe, which was sold to the the Failing New York Times for 1.3 BILLION DOLLARS (plus 800 million dollars in losses & investment), or 2.1 BILLION DOLLARS, was then sold by the Times for 1 DOLLAR. Now the Globe is in COLLUSION with other papers on free press. PROVE IT!

In a subsequent tweet, he wrote that he was in favor of “true FREEDOM OF THE PRESS,” but repeated accusations that most of the news it produced was fake or pushing a particular political agenda. Earlier in the morning, Mr. Trump also called the “fake news media” the “opposition party.”

The president has called the press the enemy of the people and rallied his supporters to speak out against the news media, a directive critics have said could lead to violence against journalists. Earlier this month, a senior editor at The Globe proposed that newspapers publish editorials about “the dangers of the administration’s assault on the press.”

[Read The New York Times editorial here.]

Speaking to reporters ahead of a cabinet meeting, Mr. Trump briefly alluded to the editorials.

“If you’d like, you can stay. If you’d like, you can leave,” Mr. Trump told reporters. “Freedom of the press.”

The Senate on Thursday passed a resolution in support of press freedoms, which included an affirmation “that the press is not the enemy of the people.”

Mr. Trump took a swipe at The Globe by noting that The New York Times Company had sold the paper at a steep loss, though he incorrectly said that the price had been \$1. The Times Company sold The Globe and other properties for \$70 million in 2013, after having paid \$1.1 billion two decades before.

The president’s tweets came a day after the White House announced that Mr. Trump had taken the

unprecedented step of revoking the security clearance of one of his biggest critics, John O. Brennan, the former director of the C.I.A. Mr. Brennan said the president's action was an attempt to silence him and a warning to others who speak out against him and his administration's policies.

"Mr. Trump's claims of no collusion are, in a word, hogwash," Mr. Brennan, who led the C.I.A. when Russia started its interference campaign, wrote in an opinion article published in *The Times*.

Mr. Trump has been fighting accusations that his presidential campaign colluded with Russia to influence the 2016 election. He has repeatedly said there was no collusion and has called news reports about his campaign's contacts with Russia "fake news," even as federal prosecutors detailed such communications in legal documents.

The White House said the president was considering revoking the security clearances of other former national security officials and one current official. Former national security officials maintain their security clearances in part to be of assistance to new administrations for consultation or elaboration on historical context.

Trump Rips Media After Hundreds Of Papers Denounce Press Attacks

By Mark Moore

[New York Post](#), August 16, 2018

President Trump called the news media the "opposition party" on Thursday, the same day hundreds of newspapers across the country published editorials defending the freedom of the press in the United States.

"THE FAKE NEWS MEDIA IS THE OPPOSITION PARTY. It is very bad for our Great Country....BUT WE ARE WINNING!," the president posted on his Twitter account.

More than 300 newspapers – in major metropolitan areas and small towns and in red states and blue – wrote editorials denouncing Trump's attacking the news media as "the enemy of the people."

About an hour later, Trump returned to Twitter to say he supports a free press but not "FAKE NEWS."

"There is nothing that I would want more for our Country than true FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. The fact is that the Press is FREE to write and say anything it wants, but much of what it says is FAKE NEWS, pushing a political agenda or just plain trying to hurt people. HONESTY WINS!," he wrote.

The project initiated by the Boston Globe encouraged newspapers across the country to stand up for press freedom after Trump called journalists "horrible,

horrendous people" at recent rallies, leading his supporters to shout obscenities at them and flash obscene gestures.

"This relentless assault on the free press has dangerous consequences," the Boston Globe wrote. "We asked editorial boards from around the country – liberal and conservative, large and small – to join us today to address this fundamental threat in their own words."

In another tweet, Trump trashed the Boston Globe for its "COLLUSION" with other news outlets and denounced familiar foe the New York Times for taking a bath when it sold the Globe.

"The Boston Globe, which was sold to the the Failing New York Times for 1.3 BILLION DOLLARS (plus 800 million dollars in losses & investment), or 2.1 BILLION DOLLARS, was then sold by the Times for 1 DOLLAR. Now the Globe is in COLLUSION with other papers on free press. PROVE IT!," he said.

But media reports at the time show the Times sold the Boston Globe in 2013 for \$70 million, a significant drop in the \$1.1 billion it paid to purchase the newspaper 20 years earlier.

Trump Lashes Out After Newspapers Respond To His Attacks

By Associated Press

[Associated Press](#), August 16, 2018

President Donald Trump is lashing out at the press as newspapers nationwide launch a coordinated rebuttal to his attacks against what he calls "fake news."

Trump tweets: "There is nothing that I would want more for our Country than true FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. The fact is that the Press is FREE to write and say anything it wants, but much of what it says is FAKE NEWS, pushing a political agenda or just plain trying to hurt people. HONESTY WINS!"

Trump is sensitive about his media coverage and says the press is "fake" and the "enemy of the people."

Trump also is criticizing *The Boston Globe*, which spearheaded the newspaper editorial campaign. He tweets that the Globe "is in COLLUSION with other papers on free press. PROVE IT!"

Copyright 2018 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Trump Labels Media 'The Opposition Party' As Newspapers Push Back En Masse

By Rebecca Morin

[Politico](#), August 16, 2018

President Donald Trump lashed out at the media Thursday morning, identifying the "fake news" as "the

opposition party” on the same day that hundreds of newspapers nationwide printed editorials critical of the president’s rhetoric towards the media.

“THE FAKE NEWS MEDIA IS THE OPPOSITION PARTY. It is very bad for our Great Country....BUT WE ARE WINNING!” Trump wrote on Twitter Thursday.

More than 350 news outlets published editorials Thursday denouncing the president’s threats against the press. The call for the widespread rebuke of the president was spurred by The Boston Globe.

“Journalists are not classified as fellow Americans, but rather ‘The enemy of the people,’” the Boston Globe’s editorial board wrote. “This relentless assault on the free press has dangerous consequences.”

The list of outlets publishing editorials refuting the president’s claim that the press is “the enemy of the people” ranges from big-city newspapers like the New York Times and the Chicago Tribune to smaller ones like the Van Buren County Democrat and the Swift County Monitor-News.

The president dug into the Globe’s campaign further, saying the newspaper is “in collusion” with other publications for denouncing his insults.

“The Boston Globe, which was sold to the the Failing New York Times for 1.3 BILLION DOLLARS (plus 800 million dollars in losses & investment), or 2.1 BILLION DOLLARS, was then sold by the Times for 1 DOLLAR. Now the Globe is in COLLUSION with other papers on free press. PROVE IT!” Trump tweeted.

The Times in 2013 sold the Globe for \$70 million. It was initially bought for \$1.1 billion in 1993 by the Times.

Trump continued to bash the press Thursday morning, claiming once again that the media does not report the truth and is instead “trying to hurt people.”

“There is nothing that I would want more for our Country than true FREEDOM OF THE PRESS,” the president wrote online. “The fact is that the Press is FREE to write and say anything it wants, but much of what it says is FAKE NEWS, pushing a political agenda or just plain trying to hurt people. HONESTY WINS!”

Trump has consistently railed against the media dating back to his presidential campaign, labeling outlets and reporters as “fake news” when they publish reporting critical of him or his administration.

Animosity towards the press from the administration has spiked in recent weeks, marked most notably by the White House denying access to an open press event to a CNN reporter. At Trump’s rallies, news organizations have begun to hire private security to protect their reporters from attendees, who often hurl insults at and heckle the press.

Trump Criticizes Boston Globe In Wake Of #freepress Push

By Christina Prignano

[Boston Globe](#), August 16, 2018

President Trump criticized The Boston Globe in a tweet Thursday amid a push from hundreds of newspapers around the country condemning the president’s attacks on the news media. The effort was organized by the Globe’s editorial board, which is separate from the paper’s news department.

Trump ridiculed the terms of The New York Times’s sale of the Globe to John Henry, erroneously saying the Globe was sold for \$1. Henry purchased the Globe, its affiliated websites and businesses, and the Worcester Telegram and Gazette for \$70 million in the 2013 sale.

Trump also miscalculated the sale price of the Globe to the Times. The Times purchased the Globe in 1993 from the Taylor family for \$1.1 billion, not \$1.3 billion. The Taylors had run the Globe since a year after its 1872 debut as the The Boston Daily Globe.

Trump also accused the Globe of collusion for organizing the effort, in which more than 350 newspapers answered an open call to write editorials in support of the free press.

Trump claimed in another tweet that he wants nothing more than “true freedom of the press.” Related Links Editorial: Journalists are not the enemy

A central pillar of President Trump’s politics is a sustained assault on the free press. Journalists are not classified as fellow Americans, but rather “the enemy of the people.”

Shortly afterward, the Globe’s opinion section responded in a tweet.

Earlier Thursday, Trump called the media the “opposition party” in all capital letters in a tweet.

“THE FAKE NEWS MEDIA IS THE OPPOSITION PARTY. It is very bad for our Great Country....BUT WE ARE WINNING!” Trump tweeted.

The editorial writing effort drew support from Senator Elizabeth Warren on Thursday morning, who called the press “one of the cornerstones of our democracy.”

Attorney General Maura Healey also weighed in with words of support.

Trump’s attacks on the press have become more heated in recent weeks. At a rally in Pennsylvania earlier this month, he called the media “fake, fake, disgusting news.”

The Globe’s opinion department began its push last week, calling for each organization to write its own editorial in support of a free press.

“Our words will differ. But at least we can agree that such attacks are alarming,” the Globe appeal, which was promoted by newspaper industry groups, said.

As of last Friday, 70 publications had committed to the initiative. By Tuesday, that number had grown to about 200, and the number jumped again to more than 300 Wednesday.

Trump Accuses Boston Globe Of ‘Collusion With Other Papers’ Amid Coordinated Pushback To His Rhetoric

By Brett Samuels

[The Hill](#), August 16, 2018

President Trump on Thursday accused the Boston Globe of “collusion with other papers” after the news outlet coordinated a nationwide effort to publish editorials pushing back against the president’s attacks on the press.

It’s Trump’s first public comments on the Globe’s efforts, and comes amid his fierce feud with much of the media.

“The Boston Globe, which was sold to the the Failing New York Times for 1.3 BILLION DOLLARS (plus 800 million dollars in losses & investment), or 2.1 BILLION DOLLARS, was then sold by the Times for 1 DOLLAR. Now the Globe is in COLLUSION with other papers on free press. PROVE IT!” Trump tweeted.

The Boston Globe, which was sold to the the Failing New York Times for 1.3 BILLION DOLLARS (plus 800 million dollars in losses & investment), or 2.1 BILLION DOLLARS, was then sold by the Times for 1 DOLLAR. Now the Globe is in COLLUSION with other papers on free press. PROVE IT!— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) August 16, 2018

It’s unclear what Trump was calling for the newspapers to prove, but his suggestion that news organizations were colluding with each other seemed to echo a tweet from Ari Fleischer, who said on Wednesday morning that multiple newspapers printing the same editorial message amounted to collusion.

The former press secretary for President George W. Bush suggested it was hypocritical for the media to coordinate such a campaign, considering the blowback Sinclair Broadcasting Group received for forcing stations to run specific segments and commentary.

The MSM, which loves to criticize Sinclair media when Sinclair has its TV stations carry the same editorial message, collude to act like Sinclair – so long as the message is anti-Trump. Once again, the media doubles down on its own double standard. <https://t.co/3uFu0LD523>— Ari Fleischer (@AriFleischer) August 15, 2018

The president also misrepresented the sale prices for the Globe. The newspaper was sold to The New York Times Company for \$1.1 billion in 1993, and John Henry purchased it in 2013 for \$70 million.

In a subsequent tweet, the president said “there is nothing I would want more for our Country than true freedom of the press,” before claiming that the media often pushes a political agenda or is “trying to hurt people.”

There is nothing that I would want more for our Country than true FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. The fact is that the Press is FREE to write and say anything it wants, but much of what it says is FAKE NEWS, pushing a political agenda or just plain trying to hurt people. HONESTY WINS!— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) August 16, 2018

Marjorie Pritchard, the deputy managing editor of the Globe who oversees the paper’s editorial page, first called on newspapers earlier this month to publish editorials pushing back against the president’s rhetoric toward the media, which she dubbed a “dirty war.”

More than 300 news organizations pledged to join the effort, The Associated Press reported, with papers like the Globe, The New York Times, New York Post, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, San Jose Mercury News and Idaho Statesman publishing editorials on Thursday to condemn the president.

“To label the press ‘the enemy of the people’ is as un-American as it is dangerous to the civic compact we have shared for more than two centuries,” the Globe wrote in its editorial.

“Insisting that truths you don’t like are ‘fake news’ is dangerous to the lifeblood of democracy. And calling journalists the ‘enemy of the people’ is dangerous, period,” The New York Times editorial board wrote.

The president has ratcheted up his attacks on the press in recent weeks, declaring on Twitter that the media is “unpatriotic,” and “can also cause war.”

The attacks on the media have been well-received by Trump’s base, and he may seen taking on the newspapers as good politics. At rallies held by the president, crowds have been known to break into “CNN sucks” chants.

Some saw the mass editorial-writing effort by newspapers as a move that could backfire by allowing the president and his supporters to argue that the anti-Trump messages were reflective of a bias against the president in the news media.

Earlier Thursday, Trump dismissed the press as “the opposition party,” but said he’s winning the media’s fight against him.

THE FAKE NEWS MEDIA IS THE OPPOSITION PARTY. It is very bad for our Great Country...BUT WE

ARE WINNING!— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) August 16, 2018

Trump's use of the term "opposition party" echoes a label for the media frequently deployed by his former chief strategist, Stephen Bannon.

Trump has had a fraught relationship with the media since he first declared his candidacy in 2015. He often derides negative coverage as "fake news" and more recently has taken to labeling reporters as the "enemy of the people."

Trump has continued to use the latter attack even after a gunman killed five people at a Maryland newspaper office in June.

The White House has on multiple occasions maintained the administration is committed to a "free press."

Trump Responds After Hundreds Of Newspaper Editorials Criticize His Attacks On The Press

By Lindsey Bever

[Washington Post](#), August 16, 2018

Hundreds of newspaper editorial boards across the country answered a nationwide call Thursday to express disdain for President Trump's attacks on the news media, while some explained their decision not to do so. The same morning, the president tweeted that the "fake news media" are the "opposition party."

The editorials came after the Boston Globe's editorial board called on others to use their collective voice to respond to Trump's war of words with news organizations in the United States.

Trump has labeled the news media "the enemy of the American people" and called much of the coverage "fake news."

The Globe's op-ed board wrote in an editorial published online Wednesday that, "Today in the United States we have a president who has created a mantra that members of the media who do not blatantly support the policies of the current US administration are the 'enemy of the people."

"This is one of the many lies that have been thrown out by this president, much like an old-time charlatan threw out 'magic' dust or water on a hopeful crowd."

The Globe's editorial board made the appeal last week, urging newspaper editorial boards to produce opinion pieces about Trump's attacks on the media. These boards, staffed by opinion writers, operate independently from news reporters and editors.

As The Washington Post's policy explains, the separation is intended to serve the reader, "who is

entitled to the facts in the news columns and to opinions on the editorial and 'op-ed' pages."

The Globe reported Thursday that more than 300 of them obliged.

Trump responded to the editorials Thursday morning, tweeting that the Globe is "in collusion with other papers on free press" and that many of the media are "pushing a political agenda."

The Boston Globe, which was sold to the the Failing New York Times for 1.3 BILLION DOLLARS (plus 800 million dollars in losses & investment), or 2.1 BILLION DOLLARS, was then sold by the Times for 1 DOLLAR. Now the Globe is in COLLUSION with other papers on free press. PROVE IT!— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) August 16, 2018

There is nothing that I would want more for our Country than true FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. The fact is that the Press is FREE to write and say anything it wants, but much of what it says is FAKE NEWS, pushing a political agenda or just plain trying to hurt people. HONESTY WINS!— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) August 16, 2018

A month after taking the oath of office, Trump labeled the news media "the enemy of the American people." In the year that followed, a CNN analysis concluded, he used the word "fake" — as in "fake news," "fake stories," "fake media" or "fake polls" — more than 400 times. He once fumed, the New York Times reported, because a TV on Air Force One was tuned to CNN.

Then last week, at a political rally in Pennsylvania, Trump told his audience that the media are "fake, fake disgusting news."

"Whatever happened to honest reporting?" Trump asked the crowd. Then he pointed to a group of journalists covering the event. "They don't report it. They only make up stories."

In response, the Minneapolis Star Tribune's editorial board wrote:

Let's start with a fundamental truth: It is and always has been in the interests of the powerful to dismiss and discredit those who could prove a check on their power. President Donald Trump is not the first politician to openly attack the media for fulfilling its watchdog role. He is, perhaps, the most blatant and relentless about it.

To this president, the journalist's time-honored role in a democracy is meaningless. Reporters present a fact-finding counter to the fanciful narrative Trump spins daily.

And the Houston Chronicle:

What makes Trump's undermining of the press worse is that it's not taking place in bureaucracy's backrooms. Trump's insults directed at reporters and

news organizations, and his threats to limit press access and freedoms, are front and center at news conferences, at rallies, on Twitter. And they're incessant.

Not only do they pose a danger to journalists' safety — history tells us mere bias can progress to harsh words, to bullying and even to violence if society comes to accept the escalating forms of ridicule as normal — but there's a more insidious threat. Trump's broad brush undermines the collective credibility of thousands of American journalists across the country, and the world, who make up the Fourth Estate — so called for its watchdog role over the other three branches of government.

And also the Denver Post:

We believe that an informed electorate is critical to Democracy; that the public has a right to know what elected officials, public figures and government bureaucracies are doing behind closed doors; that journalism is integral to the checks and balances of power; and that the public can trust the facts it reads in this newspaper and those facts coming from the mainstream media.

Trump is a difficult politician to cover. His tweets and factually inaccurate statements frequently put him at loggerheads with the media. In a vacuum void of his outlandish statements, some of Trump's policies would earn more straightforward media coverage. It has become a destructive cycle where the media covers Trump's words and instead of self-reflection following scathing media reports, Trump cries fake news.

It's a dangerous cry coming from the White House.

The Miami Herald's editorial board called on Trump to end the war:

We all — as citizens — have a stake in this fight, and the battle lines seem pretty clear. If one first comes successfully for the press as an "enemy of the American People," what stops someone for coming next for your friends? Your family? Or you?

Not even President Richard Nixon, whose original "enemies list" of the 20 private citizens he hoped to use his public office to "screw" included three journalists, tried to incite violence against reporters. While stewing privately about Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein as "enemies . . . trying to stick the knife right in our groin," not even Nixon tagged the lot of us, Soviet-style, as "enemies of the people." Nor did even he dare to take on the idea that our free press is worth protecting.

However, some newspapers decided not to run editorials on the issue, including The Washington Post. This newspaper's editorial board has previously responded to Trump's attacks on news organizations, but Editorial Page Editor Fred Hiatt said Saturday that

the board would not participate in the organized response.

Neither did the Los Angeles Times.

Or the San Francisco Chronicle.

The Chronicle's editorial page editor, John Diaz, wrote that "It's not that we take issue with the argument that Trump's assault on the truth generally, and his efforts to diminish the free press specifically, pose a serious threat to American democracy." But, he said, the newspaper values independence — a sentiment that was shared by the Los Angeles Times.

"The Globe's argument is that having a united front on the issue — with voices from Boise to Boston taking a stand for the First Amendment, each in a newspaper's own words — makes a powerful statement," Diaz wrote. "However, I would counter that answering a call to join the crowd, no matter how worthy the cause, is not the same as an institution deciding on its own to raise a matter."

The Globe's call represents one side of a debate about how the media should view and respond to the president's splenetic attacks on the press — or whether they should do anything at all.

Washington Post Executive Editor Martin Baron, who has responded directly to Trump's attacks, said the paper's reporting on the president is not a result of hostility. Baron told the Code Media conference in California: "The way I view it is, we're not at war with the administration; we're at work. We're doing our jobs."

Baron told interviewers that The Post would have approached a Hillary Clinton administration with the same aggressive reporting.

On Thursday the Senate unanimously passed a resolution that "affirms the press is not the enemy of the people" and "condemns the attacks on the institution of the free press."

But at least one newspaper said that the president is not its primary concern.

The editorial board for the Capital Gazette in Annapolis wrote that the newspaper is more concerned with how its community sees it.

"It's not that we disagree with concerns about the president's language in speeches and on social media," the op-ed board said. "We noted with regret the hurtful nature of his remarks last month calling most journalists dishonest even as we attended funerals for five friends and colleagues killed in the June 28 attack on our newsroom.

"We're just not coordinating with other news organizations because the president's opinion, frankly, is just not that important to us. We are far more concerned about what this community thinks of us."

A Unified Word Against Attacks On The Press

By Editorial Board Star Tribune

[Minneapolis Star Tribune](#), August 15, 2018

Editor's note: In an effort initiated by the Boston Globe opinion staff, scores of American editorial boards today are joining their voices in responding to President Donald Trump's relentless denigration of the American news media. Below, the Star Tribune Editorial Board's contribution:

Let's start with a fundamental truth: It is and always has been in the interests of the powerful to dismiss and discredit those who could prove a check on their power. President Donald Trump is not the first politician to openly attack the media for fulfilling its watchdog role. He is, perhaps, the most blatant and relentless about it.

To this president, the journalist's time-honored role in a democracy is meaningless. Reporters present a fact-finding counter to the fanciful narrative Trump spins daily.

It is evident by now that Trump's perpetual grievance with the press is not a function of temper or thin skin. What Trump calls "fake news" is mostly information and views with which he is uncomfortable — the revelation of lies, the contradiction of misinformation. He is not alone in this. Authoritarian leaders in other countries regularly threaten, punish and imprison reporters who challenge the ruling regime's line. Journalists from such countries who visit America have marveled at the freedom and safety afforded American reporters as they do their jobs.

That freedom is vital to democracy, which depends on an informed electorate. The founders of this nation understood that. They built strong First Amendment protections for a press that in their day was savagely partisan, with few pretensions to neutrality. Journalists' role, then as now, was to be a check on power, one that was not controlled by government — and constitutionally could not be. Journalists go where citizens often cannot, and are able to ask all the loud, messy, uncomfortable questions politicians would rather not answer, to shine a light in dark corners.

As Trump has ramped up his attacks on the press, even calling reporters "the enemy of the people," he increasingly is leading his supporters to identify with powerful elites, who have an interest in shrouding their motives and actions, rather than with those empowered by the First Amendment to ferret out information on the public's behalf.

That is a threat to the democracy we have known and, as populations in other countries know too well, a fateful step on the road to authoritarianism. That is why,

on this one day, newspapers across the country are taking the extraordinary step of presenting a unified front, to demand that journalists be allowed to do their jobs, without threat, without intimidation. To declare that such freedom must extend from the local reporter covering a small-town school board meeting to the White House press corps.

Minnesota journalists have faced this kind of strategic grudge match before, when former Gov. Jesse Ventura, a one-time wrestler, did his best to make a foil out of the state's Capitol press corps, even labeling them, Trump-style, as "media jackals" and raging at stories that pushed on his vulnerabilities. The reporters are still here, still doing the job, still asking impertinent questions. And Ventura? He's part of the media. The Russian media, that is, a commentator on RT, a Kremlin-funded network formerly known as Russia Today.

The Star Tribune Editorial Board is confident that the nation's journalists will withstand Trump's assaults, and that the American public will continue to see the wisdom of this country's founders in ensuring a strong, independent press that can lift the corner on whatever the powerful are trying to hide.

Denver Post Decries Donald Trump's Attacks On Journalists

By The Denver Post Editorial Board

[Denver Post](#), August 16, 2018

Journalists in The Denver Post newsroom spend their days in pursuit of the truth.

There's no political filter or agenda belying their printed words, just a desire to inform the public.

It's true that sometimes a news story leaves much to be desired. Larry Bailey recently told us he has been a longtime subscriber to The Post but feels there is a slant against Trump. "If you haven't told the whole truth then you haven't told the truth," he said.

Bailey reached out to The Post when he learned this board was participating in a nationwide campaign among more than 200 editorial boards to publish editorials Thursday decrying Trump's attack on the press.

He's right — errors of omission do occur. Sometimes there's simply not space to print all the news or time to get all the reporting done. And yes, sometimes stories or facts are bypassed due to the natural bias that everyone carries with them. Journalists are fallible, but the reporters and editors who work to bring you your news are not conspiring to misinform.

Consider our newsroom's immigration coverage: the same reporters who write about moms taking asylum in churches so they aren't uprooted from the lives they

have built are also covering the criminals here illegally who commit murder or run elaborate drug rings. Both are stories that need to be told and are stories that have been told in these pages.

"It's a mistake," Bailey said of this editorial. "You're really making Trump's point."

We certainly hope not, but we could see how editorial boards working together to present a message opposing Trump's assault on the media could be construed as confirming the president's fake news conspiracy theory.

This coordinated response, however, is limited to pushing back against Trump's efforts to undermine the work of journalists across the nation. We are simply standing up for what we believe in as journalists.

We believe that an informed electorate is critical to Democracy; that the public has a right to know what elected officials, public figures and government bureaucracies are doing behind closed doors; that journalism is integral to the checks and balances of power; and that the public can trust the facts it reads in this newspaper and those facts coming from the mainstream media.

Trump is a difficult politician to cover. His tweets and factually inaccurate statements frequently put him at loggerheads with the media. In a vacuum void of his outlandish statements, some of Trump's policies would earn more straightforward media coverage. It has become a destructive cycle where the media covers Trump's words and instead of self-reflection following scathing media reports, Trump cries fake news.

It's a dangerous cry coming from the White House.

And so we are taking this opportunity to assure our readers that The Denver Post newsroom and opinion pages are dedicated to bringing you all the facts. We are also encouraging our readers to point it out when we are missing the mark of telling "the whole truth." We are listening and capable of self reflection.

A Free Press Needs You

By The Editorial Board

[New York Times](#), August 15, 2018

In 1787, the year the Constitution was adopted, Thomas Jefferson famously wrote to a friend, "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

That's how he felt before he became president, anyway. Twenty years later, after enduring the oversight of the press from inside the White House, he was less sure of its value. "Nothing can now be believed which is

seen in a newspaper," he wrote. "Truth itself becomes suspicious by being put into that polluted vehicle."

Jefferson's discomfort was, and remains, understandable. Reporting the news in an open society is an enterprise laced with conflict. His discomfort also illustrates the need for the right he helped enshrine. As the founders believed from their own experience, a well-informed public is best equipped to root out corruption and, over the long haul, promote liberty and justice.

"Public discussion is a political duty," the Supreme Court said in 1964. That discussion must be "uninhibited, robust, and wide-open," and "may well include vehement, caustic and sometimes unpleasantly sharp attacks on government and public officials."

In 2018, some of the most damaging attacks are coming from government officials. Criticizing the news media — for underplaying or overplaying stories, for getting something wrong — is entirely right. News reporters and editors are human, and make mistakes. Correcting them is core to our job. But insisting that truths you don't like are "fake news" is dangerous to the lifeblood of democracy. And calling journalists the "enemy of the people" is dangerous, period.

These attacks on the press are particularly threatening to journalists in nations with a less secure rule of law and to smaller publications in the United States, already buffeted by the industry's economic crisis. And yet the journalists at those papers continue to do the hard work of asking questions and telling the stories that you otherwise wouldn't hear. Consider The San Luis Obispo Tribune, which wrote about the death of a jail inmate who was restrained for 46 hours. The account forced the county to change how it treats mentally ill prisoners.

Answering a call last week from The Boston Globe, The Times is joining hundreds of newspapers, from large metro-area dailies to small local weeklies, to remind readers of the value of America's free press. These editorials, some of which we've excerpted, together affirm a fundamental American institution.

Thursday Editorial: The War Between Trump And News Media Must End

By Times-Union Editorial Board

[Florida Times-Union](#), August 15, 2018

This war between the mainstream media and President Donald Trump has to stop.

It is causing Americans to disbelieve much of what they read and hear from both the White House and the press.

The level of anger and emotion in the public sphere today is forcing out legitimate information.

A democratic republic, as the Founding Fathers wrote, depends on an informed electorate. But the well of information is being poisoned.

There is plenty of blame to go around. But it must start with the most powerful person in America — the president of the United States.

By calling the media “the enemy of the people,” dismissing any coverage he dislikes as “fake news” and berating reporters at public rallies, Trump is exploiting skepticism about information itself.

But the skepticism itself?

Trump didn't start that.

Trump, media feed off each other

Conservative talk show host Charlie Sykes, author of “How the Right Lost its Mind,” wrote that the conservative media's long campaign against the mainstream media successfully convinced “our audiences to ignore and discount any information from the mainstream media. This has destroyed the right's immunity to false information.”

Trump trafficked in conspiracy theories before running for president, and he continued the practice in the Republican primaries. What's worse, his number of erroneous statements has reached into the thousands.

Now mix Trump's shenanigans with a mainstream media trapped in a self-destructive loop, and you understand the concern of longtime media columnist Howard Kurtz, author of “Media Madness: Donald Trump, the Press and the War over the Truth.”

In his book, Kurtz noted that Trump has staked his presidency on “nothing less than destroying the credibility of the news media; and the media are determined to do the same to him. ... This is not just a feud or a fight or a battle. It is scorched-earth warfare in which only one side can achieve victory.”

Kurtz wrote that many segments of the mainstream media have become addicted to having an antagonistic relationship with Trump: national newspapers like The New York Times and The Washington Post, for example, have seen their digital subscriptions surge from sparring with Trump — and TV networks are drawing larger audiences.

But the rest of the media are being badly hurt in the process.

“Everything you read, hear and see about Trump's victory,” Kurtz wrote, “is filtered through a mainstream media prism that reflects a lying president — and virtually never considers the press' own baggage and biases. ... Media outlets overdosed on negative stories about Trump, who in turn attacked them with harsh language, which in turn drove them deeper into anti-Trump territory, which they defended by cloaking themselves in the First Amendment.”

Unfortunately, that's about right.

Even those who have little reason to defend Trump have found the media's coverage excessive at times.

Former President Jimmy Carter, a Democrat and born-again Christian who is the polar opposite of Trump — a Republican who openly uses foul language and once led a lifestyle that can be charitably described as “colorful” — told New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd that “the media have been harder on Trump than any other president.”

America is the loser

Kurtz wrote that our biggest fear should be this: while Trump's presidency will eventually end, “the media's reputation, badly scarred during these polarizing years, might never recover.”

It's just not in our country's best interests for that to happen.

The president needs to tone down his toxic rhetoric.

It simply isn't worthy of the high office that he holds.

And the mainstream media — largely centered in a Northeast bubble and seemingly oblivious to the lingering perception that they resent that Trump's rise to power happened under their noses and without their help — need to do some soul searching.

The time has clearly come for America's big newspapers and broadcast networks to bring back the ombudsman position, and to actively encourage independent critiques of their coverage.

Who's the real loser in this war between the media and Trump? The answer is all too clear:

It's America.

Newspapers Across U.S. Rebuke Trump For Attacks On Press

By Alex Dobuzinskis And Brendan O'Brien

[Reuters](#), August 16, 2018

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

A Boston Globe Editorial: Journalists Are Not The Enemy

By The Editorial Board

[Boston Globe](#), August 15, 2018

A central pillar of President Trump's politics is a sustained assault on the free press. Journalists are not classified as fellow Americans, but rather “the enemy of the people.” This relentless assault on the free press has dangerous consequences. We asked editorial boards from around the country – liberal and conservative, large

and small – to join us today to address this fundamental threat in their own words.

Replacing a free media with a state-run media has always been a first order of business for any corrupt regime taking over a country. Today in the United States we have a president who has created a mantra that members of the media who do not blatantly support the policies of the current US administration are the “enemy of the people.” This is one of the many lies that have been thrown out by this president, much like an old-time charlatan threw out “magic” dust or water on a hopeful crowd.

For more than two centuries, this foundational American principle has protected journalists at home and served as a model for free nations abroad. Today it is under serious threat. And it sends an alarming signal to despots from Ankara to Moscow, Beijing to Baghdad, that journalists can be treated as a domestic enemy.

The press is necessary to a free society because it does not implicitly trust leaders — from the local planning board to the White House. And it's not a coincidence that this president — whose financial affairs are murky and whose suspicious pattern of behavior triggered his own Justice Department to appoint an independent counsel to investigate him — has tried so hard to intimidate journalists who provide independent scrutiny.

There was once broad, bipartisan, intergenerational agreement in the United States that the press played this important role. Yet that view is no longer shared by many Americans. “The news media is the enemy of the American people,” is a sentiment endorsed by 48 percent of Republicans surveyed this month by Ipsos polling firm. That poll is not an outlier. One published this week found 51 percent of Republicans considered the press “the enemy of the people rather than an important part of democracy.”

Trump's attack feedback loop helps explain why his faithful are following him into undemocratic territory. More than a quarter of Americans now say that “the president should have the authority to close news outlets engaged in bad behavior,” including 43 percent of Republicans. Thirteen percent of those surveyed thought that “President Trump should close down mainstream news outlets, like CNN, The Washington Post and The New York Times.”

Trump can't outlaw the press from doing its job here, of course. But the model of inciting his supporters in this regard is how 21st-century authoritarians like Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan operate; you don't need formal censorship to strangle a supply of information.

Trump's apologists feebly insist that he is referring only to biased coverage, rather than the entire fourth estate. But the president's own words and long track record show again and again just how deeply cynical and dishonest this argument is.

The nation's Founding Fathers took for granted that the press would be biased and yet they still explicitly enshrined the freedom of journalists and publishers in the Constitution. “Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost,” wrote Thomas Jefferson.

American politicians of all parties since the Founders have grouched about the media, trying to work the refs by arguing that the news is biased against their tribe. But there was always respect for the press as an institution. It was not that long ago that Ronald Reagan proclaimed, “Our tradition of a free press as a vital part of our democracy is as important as ever.”

“The press was to serve the governed, not the governors,” Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black wrote in 1971. Would that it were still the case. Today, the only media that Trump's movement accepts as legitimate are those that unquestioningly advocate for its leader personally.

Indeed, it is not just that the president is stoking domestic division for political and personal gain, he's asking his audiences to follow him into Fantasia. “Just stick with us, don't believe the crap you see from these people, the fake news,” he told an audience in Kansas last month. “Just remember, what you're seeing and what you're reading is not what's happening.” George Orwell put it more gracefully in his novel “1984.” “The party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command.”

It is an essential endpoint to Trump's deluge of dishonesty that he now contests objective reality and urges his supporters to do the same. In the first 558 days of his presidency, Trump made 4,229 false or misleading claims, according to a list compiled by The Washington Post. Yet among Trump supporters, only 17 percent think that the administration regularly makes false claims. “Alternative facts” have become de facto.

Lies are antithetical to an informed citizenry, responsible for self-governance. The greatness of America is dependent on the role of a free press to speak the truth to the powerful. To label the press “the enemy of the people” is as un-American as it is dangerous to the civic compact we have shared for more than two centuries.

US Newspapers To Trump: We're Not Enemies Of The People

By David Bauder

[Associated Press](#), August 16, 2018

Newspapers from Maine to Hawaii pushed back against President Donald Trump's attacks on "fake news" with a coordinated series of editorials in defense of a free press on Thursday — and, not surprisingly, Trump didn't take it silently.

The campaign was set in motion by an editor at the Boston Globe, which argued in its own editorial that Trump's label of the media as the enemy of the people "is as un-American as it is dangerous to the civic compact we have shared for more than two centuries."

Trump denounced the effort on Twitter, saying the Globe was in collusion with other newspapers.

"There is nothing that I would want more for our country than true FREEDOM OF THE PRESS," the president typed. "The fact is that the press is FREE to write and say anything it wants, but much of what it says is FAKE NEWS, pushing a political agenda or just plain trying to hurt people."

Meanwhile, the U.S. Senate on Thursday passed a resolution with no objections stating that "the press is not the enemy of the people."

Cognizant of heated feelings on the issue, the Globe hired extra security on Thursday, said Jane Bowman, newspaper spokeswoman. "Journalistic outlets have had threats throughout time but it's the president's rhetoric that gives us the most concern," Bowman said.

It was not clear how many newspapers participated. Marjorie Pritchard, the editor who launched the campaign, said earlier in the week that some 350 news organizations indicated they would, but she did not immediately return messages on Thursday. Even with the coordinated effort, there was some significant blowback from newspapers that wrote to say they would not participate.

The Radio Television Digital News Association called on broadcasters and web sites to express support. Since Monday, there have been 2,240 mentions of either "First Amendment" or "free press" by broadcasters across the country, said Dan Shelley, the group's executive director. One TV station, WPSD in Paducah, Kentucky, showed a copy of the First Amendment guaranteeing freedom of the press on its screen before every commercial during newscasts, he said.

"It has been a big source of conversation all across the country," Shelley said. "Just because people are talking about it, it's a victory in my book."

Editorial boards at the Portland (Maine) Press-Herald and the Honolulu Star-Advertiser and many places in between weighed in to support the effort.

"The true enemies of the people — and democracy — are those who try to suffocate truth by vilifying and demonizing the messenger," wrote the Des Moines Register in Iowa.

In St. Louis, the Post-Dispatch called journalists "the truest of patriots." The Chicago Sun-Times said it believed most Americans know that Trump is talking nonsense. The Fayetteville (North Carolina) Observer said it hoped Trump would stop, "but we're not holding our breath."

The Morning News of Savannah, Georgia, said it was a confidant of the people.

"Like any true friend, we don't always tell you what you want to hear," the Morning News said. "Our news team presents the happenings and issues in this community through the lens of objectivity. And like any true friend, we refuse to mislead you. Our reporters and editors strive for fairness."

The New York Times encouraged readers to subscribe to a local newspaper. "We're all in this together," the Times said.

That last sentiment made some journalists skittish. Some newspapers, including the Wall Street Journal, the San Francisco Chronicle, the Times-Picayune in New Orleans, the Rome (N.Y.) Daily Sentinel and the Richmond (Virginia) Times-Dispatch, contained editorials or columns explaining why they weren't joining the Globe's effort. Some worried that it played into the hands of Trump and his supporters who think the media is out to get him. The idea of a coordinated campaign simply left others cold, with one newspaper referencing a longtime rivalry.

"We prize our independence, both from government and from other media outlets," the New York Daily News wrote. "Coordination, especially with Boston, isn't in our nature."

There was also some scolding of the press — from the press — for letting distaste for Trump show up where it shouldn't in news stories.

"Just as his lack of restraint has often been the president's self-inflicted wound, the bias of some of the press has hurt journalism, at the very moment when it is most needed to save itself," said the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. "It is time for a truce."

It remains unclear how much sway the effort will have. Newspaper editorial boards overwhelmingly opposed Trump's election in 2016. Polls show Republicans have grown more negative toward the news media in recent years: Pew Research Center said 85 percent of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents said in June 2017 that the news media has a negative effect on the country, up from 68 percent in 2010.

At the Capital Gazette in Annapolis, Maryland, where five staff members were killed by a gunman in June, editors said Thursday they were not participating in the effort because they care more about what the community thinks than the president. But Trump can do some good by giving a Presidential Medal of Freedom to one of the slain employees, Wendi Winters, who had tried to stop the gunman by charging at him before being killed, they said.

“The president could use the occasion of presenting the medal to Wendi’s family as a moment of change in his approach toward those whose job it is to question his presidency,” the newspaper’s editorial board wrote. “He could honor her work by expressing his belief in the importance of journalism to our country — even when he feels unfairly treated.”

Copyright 2018 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Editorial: Stand In Defense Of The Truth. Don’t Let Trump Label Journalists As ‘The Enemy’

By The Editorial Board

[St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#), August 16, 2018

An estimated 200 newspapers across the country are devoting editorial space on Thursday to a joint appeal for President Donald Trump to cease and desist with his attacks on the news media. By labeling journalists as “the enemy of the people,” Trump turns reporters into potential targets and degrades the importance of the work we all do.

We in the news media stand together in an appeal for sanity. When Trump labels us as the enemy, he issues an open invitation for extremists to engage in direct confrontation and potential violence. Trump eggs on his supporters at rallies, pointing back to the press pool. Within seconds, reporters find themselves hounded, berated and threatened.

Trump is hardly the only president to face news media scrutiny. A cursory search of “Bill Clinton” and “Monica Lewinsky” in Post-Dispatch archives came up with more than 2,900 references. When we plugged in the former president’s name and “Whitewater” — the real estate scandal that engulfed Clinton’s administration from 1994 through 1998 — nearly 3,800 references popped up. It’s worth noting that the federal probe of Clinton began only after The New York Times published an exposé of the scandal in 1992.

Trump would have Americans believe that he’s a victim of a witch hunt fueled by a vindictive and out-of-control news media. More often than not, it’s journalists’

reporting of Trump’s actual words and deeds that sends his administration scrambling for excuses, scapegoats and diversions — such as his attacks on the messengers.

There was no “fake news” in Trump’s utterances in a 2005 recording about his belief that male stars get to sexually abuse women. There was no fake news when he attacked the parents of a fallen U.S. soldier during the 2016 Republican National Convention. Trump alone is responsible for his harsh rhetoric about immigrants, those with disabilities, minorities and women. Trump alone is responsible for his remarks defending white supremacists. But if journalists inconvenience him by quoting his exact words, they get labeled as enemies of the people.

The president’s daughter, Ivanka Trump, has been gracious enough to state publicly that, even though she has her own complaints about coverage she’s received, “I do not feel that the media is the enemy of the people.”

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders refuses to do likewise, citing the skewering she received by a comedian performing at this year’s White House Correspondents’ Association dinner. Comedian Michelle Wolf’s remarks were low-blow, unfair attacks on Sanders’ appearance. They were not funny. We have major issues with the star-studded spectacle that the event has become. Sanders has every right to criticize the dinner. But that doesn’t equate even remotely with “enemy of the people.”

Most of the reports Trump labels as fake are verifiable fact, yet he tends to embrace Infowars-style nonsense as the “truth,” often retweeting it. Americans, even in the Trump era, look to their president for moral guidance. When Trump misleads them with untruthful characterizations — a running Washington Post count numbers 4,229 lies — while portraying the truth as “fake,” he succeeds only in confusing the public and sowing the seeds of chaos.

Journalists serve on the front lines in the war to protect democracy and transparent governance. The truth is embarrassing. The truth hurts, as Bill Clinton can attest. Journalists who deliver the truth to the American public are not enemies, they are the truest of patriots.

Trump is inflicting massive, and perhaps irreparable, damage to democracy with these attacks. This will end only if Republicans stop trying to defend Trump’s harsh rhetoric and join Democrats and independents in calling for him to stop.

When journalists stop doing their job, ignorance, dictatorship, corruption and abuse will certainly flourish across the land. If you love this country and our constitutional freedoms, it is your duty as an American

patriot to stand in defense of news media and stand against Trump's dirty war on the truth.

Newspapers Are Essential Part Of Our Democracy

By Letters To The Editor

[Chicago Sun-Times](#), August 16, 2018

In response to your editorial on press freedom: To all of you whose names we know from the bylines, and the many others who make this newspaper happen but whose names we never see, let me just say "thank you."

I may not always agree with what the paper prints, but I stand with you today and every day. I am a regular visitor to our congressional representatives, where I see firsthand the impact the paper has on their decisions (whether they like what you write or not). You are not our enemy — you are an essential part of our democracy; the democracy this nation has been founded on.

Whether you're writing front-page stories, cleaning the newsroom each night, or delivering the paper each morning, I am grateful. Please continue to be the advocate for the people, and of the people.

Sarah Power, Logan Square

Thank you

I just read your editorial on the press and felt compelled to send a note of thank you for the work being done by your staff. The Sun-Times has been a part of my life every morning for as far back as I can remember. Again, thank you.

Janice Mocarski, Irving Park

Trump is doing a great job

Most Americans know that Trump is doing the best job ever for this country, economy, jobs, taxes (I'm getting twice as much back next year), building our military and gaining respect in the world, not like that last president. Newspapers like the Sun-Times are tools of the Democrats and leftists.

Trump is not your nice politician, but a smart businessman. You told us terrible things would happen if Trump was elected president. Instead, wonderful things are happening. Do you understand the difference between objective news and fake news? I don't think so.

Dan Gierut, Palos Hills

On target

Your Aug. 13 editorial "Chopping of Jackson Park trees related to Obama Center bad form" was both timely and on target.

Not only is the relocation of the existing track/field facility required solely because the proposed Obama Presidential Center will replace the existing facility, and not only is the Obama Foundation actually paying for the replacement work, but the May 17 Plan Commission

approval of the Park District proposal to build the replacement facility required the project to wait until after the federal reviews are complete. Those reviews are not scheduled to be complete until next year.

Brenda Nelms and Margaret Schmid,
co-presidents, Jackson Park Watch

Better than tweeting

Donald Trump has had numerous tweets this week about Omarosa. The president of the United States could put his time to better use in other ways — like playing more golf.

Gerald Weisberg, Lake View

Change the behavior

Many groups these days vocally demand in the media a change in police behavior. And, yes, certain boundaries regarding conduct need to be adhered to. But, the big white elephant in the room is this: What about the behavior of all those citizens running around with guns like it's the Wild West and shooting up the neighborhoods like a video game? Is there not a behavior change required there as well?

Tom Maru, Franklin Park

Our View: 'Fake News' And All The President's Taunts

By The Editorial Board

[Fayetteville \(NC\) Observer](#), August 15, 2018

If, like many readers, you worked your way back to these opinion pages from Page 1, you saw a lot of news — national, international, state and local. And not a word of it was made up or invented to serve one political cause or another. Newspapers deal in fact. We have to — if we lose our credibility, we go out of business. Publishing fantasy labeled as truth is a fast way to get there. Our readers are no fools and they'll drop us like a bad habit if they aren't getting straight, accurate reporting.

So we're here today, as are hundreds of other newspapers across the country, to take issue with President Donald Trump's regular characterization of the media as "fake news" and his assertions that journalists are "un-American" or "enemies of the people." Last we checked, we are the people. A look around any newsroom will reveal people who look just like your neighbors — people who raise families, shop in the local stores, go to church on Sunday, try to lose a couple pounds, get a parking ticket, and vote regularly — some for Democrats and some for Republicans. Yes, that's right. Some of us actually believe in conservative ideals. Saying all journalists are liberals is about as accurate as saying all people of Scottish heritage eat (and like) haggis.

What we do during our work day is tell the stories of our community, finding the information you need and publishing it, in print and online. Our staffers are pretty good fact checkers, but sometimes they miss a whopper. We're only human, after all. When that happens, we correct the error as fast as we can. Getting it right is important. It's a matter of pride and business success for us.

So we take considerable issue with those who would paint us as Trump-hating ideologues who deliberately publish falsehoods. We publish news about the president and his administration. We run stories about the president's agenda and actions, and how he's running the executive branch of our federal government. We also publish, on these opinion pages, commentary about the president's performance. He is not a typical president and some of that commentary finds problems with his performance. Other writers support many of his platforms. We seldom comment on the distant intrigues of the federal government, save for those parts that most directly touch our readers. And in those areas — especially defense and veterans affairs — we've been supportive of many of this president's policies and decisions. In that, we've hardly been an enemy of the president, let alone an enemy of the people.

But understanding this presidency requires some understanding of the Trump mystique. The art of his deal involves great quantities of bluster and overblown rhetoric, seasoned with whatever interpretation of "fact" will bolster his case. Donald Trump built a career on manipulating imagery and dancing on either side of the fine line between truth and fiction. He did not, after seven decades of life, alter that strategy when he took up residence at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

Taking everything this president says as literally true can be a dangerous mistake, even for his most ardent supporters. And we see worrisome signs that many people in the Trump "base" would gladly restrict the freedom of the press to report and opine on the president's actions. Going there could be a fatal mistake for our nation, because it signal the tearing up of the First Amendment, among other constitutional issues. That could be the first foray into the destruction of our democracy and the transition of government to something more worthy of a banana republic.

We hope the president will abandon his increasingly damning slurs of the entirety of the press and its legitimacy as an American institution. We hope for it, but we're not holding our breath. Rather, we hope all the president's supporters will recognize what he's doing — manipulating reality to get what he wants. He is a man given to exaggeration, the most frequently used tool on his workbench. President Trump's fans should

keep that in mind and not rush to trample the Constitution — a bad idea that truly would be un-American.

The Los Angeles Times Is Not Participating In Today's Nationwide Editorial Page Protest Against Trump's Attacks On The Press. Here's Why

By Nicholas Goldberg

[Los Angeles Times](#), August 16, 2018

More than 300 newspapers around the country will participate today in a group protest of President Trump's frequent attacks on the news media. Each of the papers will publish editorials — their own separate editorials, in their own words — defending freedom of the press.

The Los Angeles Times, however, has decided not to participate. There will be no free press editorial on our page today.

This is not because we don't believe that President Trump has been engaged in a cynical, demagogic and unfair assault on our industry. He has, and we have written about it on numerous occasions. As early as April 2017, we wrote this as part of a full-page editorial on "Trump's War on Journalism":

On Tuesday evening, Rep. Keith Ellison won the Democratic Party nomination for Minnesota attorney general by more than 30 points. It should have been a wholly victorious moment for Ellison, a leader of the Democratic National Committee and a high-profile voice for its progressive flank.

It wasn't. On Saturday night, Ellison's former girlfriend's son published a post on Facebook that accused Ellison of being violent toward his mother, Karen Monahan, during the course of their relationship. He claimed to have discovered abusive texts and tweets, as well as a two-minute video of Ellison dragging her by her feet while yelling expletives at her. Monahan later wrote that her son's allegations were "true." Ellison has denied the allegations, including at his victory party.

As a feminist and a survivor of sexual violence, I'm as inclined as one can be to believe women. And yet, my knee-jerk instinct was denial; the account didn't match my own perception. I've followed Ellison's career for years and interviewed him just last summer. In my experience, he presents himself as a kind and gentle person.

It's hard to think of anything that could chill speech more powerfully than the message President Trump sent Wednesday.

White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders delivered that message at the afternoon briefing, announcing that Trump had revoked the security

clearance of former CIA Director John Brennan. His main offense? Being a harsh critic of the Trump administration.

Let's be clear about a couple things right up front. The president absolutely has the authority to yank security clearances. They're supposed to lapse (technically, move from "active" to "current") as soon as the holder leaves a job that requires such clearance, but Sanders said presidents have traditionally left them in place for former top intelligence and law enforcement officials so they could advise their successors "and as a professional courtesy."

Southern California sweated out record-setting triple-digit temperatures in July in places ranging from downtown Los Angeles to Santa Ana. That's Inland Empire heat in the L.A. Basin.

And 2018 is on track to be one of the hottest years since record-keeping began in 1880, fitting in with the past four years – 2016 was the warmest year, 2015 the second-warmest, followed by 2017 and 2014. And 2016 was an El Niño year, as this year might prove to be (70% chance by winter) — El Niños put upward pressure on temperatures.

And now scientists are using a new probability formula say the next five years will likely be "anomalously warm."

Vanessa Delgado must be having some seriously mixed emotions about joining the California Senate this week: Joy at winning a special election last week to replace former state Sen. Tony Mendoza (D-Artesia), who quit earlier this year rather than face an expulsion vote by his peers, and despair that her first month in the Senate will effectively be her last.

This odd proposition is due to the peculiarities of California's election law, which requires a special election for vacant seats even if there's a concurrent election for the next regular term. It's silly, costly and, as we now see, unfair to the candidates in both races. (The editorial board has written more than once that the special election rules ought to be revised.)

Delgado ran in both races. She was one of the two top vote-getters in the special election primary (then won the runoff in that race), but did not make the November runoff for the next four-year term.

Tuesday morning, President Trump tweeted (kill me) that his former communications aide Omarosa Manigault Newman (seriously, let's get off this planet) is a "dog."

It was just the latest in a string of insults he's lobbed at high-profile black Americans. Less than two weeks ago, he called basketball star LeBron James and CNN anchor Don Lemon dumb. (This is a Trump go-to:

he's repeatedly said Rep. Maxine Waters has a "low I.Q.")

Trump is riled up that Newman has been on the talk-show circuit promoting her new book, a splashy tell-all about her time in the White House. On "CBS This Morning," she unveiled a tape from the campaign that appears to reveal aides discussing how to handle Trump's alleged use of the N-word if it ever came to light.

As he challenges incumbent Democrat Dianne Feinstein for a seat in the U.S. Senate, state Sen. Kevin de Leon (D-Los Angeles) has made resisting the Trump administration a centerpiece of his campaign. A good illustration is his take-no-prisoners approach to President Trump's Supreme Court nominee, Brett Kavanaugh. Feinstein isn't doing enough to try to block the appointment, De Leon says, arguing that Democrats should go so far as to shut down the Senate.

OK, so what's the endgame there? As members of the minority party, the only tools at Senate Democrats' disposal where nominees are concerned are dilatory ones. They can use the filibuster to kill most types of legislation, but not nominations — thanks in large part to their own shortsighted decision in 2013 to forbid filibusters on almost all nominees. (The only exception was Supreme Court justices, but Republicans predictably removed that barrier after Trump took office.)

The Senate Judiciary Committee has scheduled Kavanaugh's hearing for Sept. 4, and assuming he clears that hurdle, the only thing that can stop him from being confirmed is Republicans. Sure, Democrats could threaten to filibuster the spending bills necessary to keep the federal government operating on all cylinders after Oct. 1, but the GOP may have Kavanaugh confirmed by then. And even if it doesn't, partially shutting down the government over Kavanaugh A) won't stop the Senate from voting on his nomination, and B) isn't likely to win much support from a public that does not like government shutdowns.

The easy thing to say about the fallout from Omarosa Manigault Newman's revelation that she recorded conversations with President Trump and White House Chief of Staff John F. Kelly is that there's no honor among reality TV stars.

The former "Apprentice" star, who was fired from her White House position by Kelly, is promoting a tell-all book about the administration and her loss of faith in Trump. She has accused the president of being a racist and claims that he has displayed signs of a "mental decline."

Trump in turn has called his former co-star "wacky," a "lowlife" and "vicious, but not smart." (Attacking the intelligence of his African American critics is becoming a Trump staple.) He also accused her of

missing meetings and said that he asked her to join the White House staff because she “begged me for a job, tears in her eyes.” Trump further tweeted:

How many FBI agents can you name?

The agency has produced a handful of famous (or infamous) directors — most notably, J. Edgar Hoover. For the most part, though, it’s a faceless organization of seemingly interchangeable parts. And that’s by design.

Peter Strzok, whom the FBI fired on Friday, illustrates why.

Porn star Stormy Daniels’ lawyer, Michael Avenatti, is currently in Iowa, where he’s glad-handing the locals at a state fair as he mulls a 2020 run for president.

I’m going to ask politely: Oh my god, please don’t.

Avenatti has skyrocketed to national recognition as the lawyer defending Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, in her quest to be released from a 2016 nondisclosure agreement regarding what she says was a one-night stand with President Trump in 2006. The Newport Beach attorney has built a career winning major settlements from celebrities and corporations — what he calls “fighting on behalf of Davids vs. Goliaths.” He’s also racked up his fair share of troubles, including a bankruptcy at his law firm and multiple lawsuits filed by employees of a coffee chain he owned.

Boston Globe Receives Threat After Anti-Trump Editorial

By Dan Primack

[Axios](#), August 16, 2018

The Boston Globe today received a threatening telephone call that is being taken seriously by local and federal authorities, according to an email sent by a facilities manager to other tenants at the newspaper’s headquarters.

Big picture: The Boston Globe today published an editorial pushing back against President Trump’s claims that some in the media are an “enemy of the people,” and also helped coordinate similar editorials in 300 other papers.

Trump replied via Twitter:

Here is part of the building manager’s email, which was sent just before noon today:

“Earlier today a tenant in the building, the Boston Globe, received several threats via phone call. Based on this threat the local and federal authorities have recommended some additional security measures for the property. For the remainder of the day you will see uniformed Boston Police officers in the lobby and around the property. There are very few specifics, but the threat was specific to later this afternoon.”

A Boston Police Department spokesman confirmed that it increased patrols around the Globe building, but said to call the FBI about any possible threat. The FBI declined comment, citing Department of Justice policy.

A spokeswoman for the Globe provided the following statement:

“We are taking the advice of local and federal authorities who have recommended some additional security measures. The alarming turn of the president’s rhetoric — the specific labeling of the press as an ‘enemy of the American people’ and the opposition party — does cause us concern about media outlets and the stories we have heard around the country. Journalistic outlets have had threats throughout time but it’s the president’s rhetoric that gives us the most concern.”

US Senate Unanimously Passes Resolution Affirming The Press ‘is Not The Enemy Of The People’

By Jaclyn Reiss

[Boston Globe](#), August 16, 2018

The US Senate on Thursday passed a resolution by unanimous consent affirming that the media “is not the enemy of the people.”

The move comes amid an initiative led by the Boston Globe editorial board in which more than 350 news organizations published editorials promoting the freedom of the press. The editorials were published in response to President Trump’s repeated verbal attacks on journalists, in which he has called mainstream press organizations “fake news” and “the enemy of the American people.”

The editorial push caused #FreePress to trend on Twitter, and elicited an angry response from Trump.

The resolution was introduced by Democratic US Senator Brian Schatz of Hawaii, Democratic US Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, and Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer of New York. The measure, though largely symbolic, was passed by the Republican-controlled Senate in a rebuke to the president. The resolution passed by a unanimous voice vote around noon, according to a representative in Schatz’s Washington office. No senators objected to the measure.

In such a vote, the names or numbers of senators voting on each side are not recorded, according to the Senate website. Related Links Editorial effort in support of the free press sparks praise and pushback

The nationwide push provoked a response from all corners, from the White House to professional sports figures.

Schatz said in the statement that the resolution was “an opportunity for us to uphold our oath and make clear that we support liberty and free speech.”

“Every member of Congress has sworn to uphold the Constitution, including the right to the free press,” he said.

Schumer said in a statement that Congress “has a duty protect the press’s first amendment right.”

“We rely on reporters and newscasters to keep our leaders honest, accountable, and always working in the best interest of the American people,” he said. “I truly believe that America always solves its problems and combating dangerous and irresponsible attacks on journalism is no exception.”

Blumenthal said the measure reaffirms “the essential role played by a free press in our democracy.”

“The press’s dogged pursuit of the truth — uncovering and reporting facts, exposing wrongdoing, and holding public officials accountable — has never been more important,” he said. “When we look back at these extraordinary times, I strongly believe that our free press will be recognized as heroes — and I’m proud to stand with them today.”

Free Press Gets A Boost With Senate Resolution Declaring It Is Not The Enemy

By Niels Lesniewski

[CQ Roll Call \(DC\)](#), August 16, 2018

The Senate on Thursday went on record declaring “that the press is not the enemy of the people” — a rebuke to President Donald Trump, who declares the opposite on a regular basis.

Senators adopted by unanimous consent a resolution from Democratic Sen. Brian Schatz of Hawaii and Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer of New York to declare the Senate’s support for a free press and the First Amendment protections afforded to journalists.

The resolution text was released the same day 350 newspapers ran editorials designed to push back on Trump’s criticisms of the media.

That action provoked a response from Trump, who responded in a series of Thursday morning tweets.

“There is nothing that I would want more for our Country than true FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. The fact is that the Press is FREE to write and say anything it wants, but much of what it says is FAKE NEWS, pushing a political agenda or just plain trying to hurt people,” Trump wrote. “HONESTY WINS!”

The Schatz-Schumer resolution “reaffirms the vital and indispensable role the free press serves to inform the electorate, uncover the truth, act as a check on the inherent power of the government, further national

discourse and debate, and otherwise advance our most basic and cherished democratic norms and freedoms.”

“This bill is an opportunity for us to uphold our oath and make clear that we support liberty and free speech,” Schatz said in a statement. “It also sends the message that the legislative branch is capable of functioning as a separate and co-equal branch of government.”

The preamble to the measure highlights a number of past debates, including litigation, about press freedoms. It also quotes from the Virginia Declaration of Rights, stating, “The freedom of the Press is one of the greatest bulwarks of liberty, and can never be restrained but by despotic Governments.”

“We rely on reporters and newscasters to keep our leaders honest, accountable, and always working in the best interest of the American people. I truly believe that America always solves its problems and combating dangerous and irresponsible attacks on journalism is no exception,” Schumer said in a statement.

Senate Takes Shot At Trump, Passes Resolution Affirming ‘Press Is Not The Enemy Of The People’

By Jordain Carney

[The Hill](#), August 16, 2018

The Senate took a rhetorical shot on Thursday at President Trump’s attacks on the media, passing a resolution affirming that the press is “not the enemy of the people.”

The nonbinding resolution, which cleared the chamber by unanimous consent, also touts the “indispensable role of the free press” and says an attack on the media meant to “systematically undermine the credibility of the press as a whole [is] an attack on our democratic institutions.”

Spearheaded by Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) and Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), the resolution doesn’t directly mention Trump, who has called the press the “enemy of the people.”

The Senate’s action came hours after Trump launched his latest attack on the press, saying much of what is written is “fake news.”

“There is nothing that I would want more for our Country than true FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. The fact is that the Press is FREE to write and say anything it wants, but much of what it says is FAKE NEWS, pushing a political agenda or just plain trying to hurt people. HONESTY WINS!” he said in a tweet.

Trump has maintained a fraught relationship with the press since his candidacy, frequently deriding news outlets as “fake news” and seeking to discredit

unfavorable coverage about himself and his administration.

The president has suggested revoking press credentials from reporters, encouraged rally crowds to lash out at the media and even gone as far as labeling journalists the “enemy of the people,” suggesting that they “cause war.”

On Thursday, hundreds of papers joined The Boston Globe in the paper’s initiative calling for editorial boards to take a stand against Trump’s rhetoric toward the media, which Marjorie Pritchard, the deputy managing editor of the Globe who oversees the paper’s editorial page, dubbed a “dirty war.”

Trump lambasted the coordinated effort in a tweet on Thursday, accusing the Globe of “collusion with other papers.”

“The Boston Globe, which was sold to the the Failing New York Times for 1.3 BILLION DOLLARS (plus 800 million dollars in losses & investment), or 2.1 BILLION DOLLARS, was then sold by the Times for 1 DOLLAR. Now the Globe is in COLLUSION with other papers on free press. PROVE IT!” Trump tweeted.

In a subsequent tweet, Trump said, “there is nothing I would want more for our Country than true freedom of the press,” before claiming that the media often pushes a political agenda or is “trying to hurt people.”

Ann Coulter: Trump Is Like ‘Chemotherapy’ To The Media, It’s ‘Unpleasant,’ But It ‘Kills Cancer Cells’

By Eddie Scarry

[Washington Examiner](#), August 16, 2018

Conservative author Ann Coulter said if nothing else comes out of President Trump’s time in office, at least the news media will have lost all influence in the U.S.

In her upcoming book, “Resistance Is Futile: How the Trump-Hating Left Lost Its Collective Mind,” Coulter sides with the White House in describing the investigations into the 2016 Trump campaign’s alleged “collusion” with Russia as “fake news” and says its front-page status is a symptom of the collective mind set of a corrupted, “totally discredited” media out to get the president.

“When journalists get together, they lose control and become a clique of mean girls dishing on the new girl at school,” she says in a copy of the book obtained in advance by the Washington Examiner. “They have to call Trump the ‘short-fingered vulgarian’ or construct absurd conspiracy theories about Russia.”

She adds that Trump is “like chemotherapy for the country: it’s unpleasant to go through, you vomit, your hair falls out—but it kills cancer cells, and you live. Trump’s presidency may be an unpleasant thing to go through, but everyone on the New York Times’ editorial board will die.”

Coulter, like Trump, is an aggressive critic of the national media, frequently attacking news outlets for spreading what she says is false information about Republicans, conservatives, and more lately the president.

In her book, Coulter says that in order for American democracy to thrive, the press in its current state must fully collapse.

“An essential component of saving the country is absolutely destroying the press,” she writes. “Not a brick upon a brick should remain. Then it can be rebuilt on more ethical lines.”

She adds later, “Things have been trending this way for a while, but under Trump, the media’s transformation into an enemy of democracy is complete.”

“Resistance Is Futile” publishes Aug. 21.

Kudlow: China Is Sending Team To Washington To Talk Trade

By Paul Wiseman And Darlene Superville

[Associated Press](#), August 16, 2018

The United States and China are resuming trade talks, raising hopes for a way out of an intensifying dispute between the world’s two largest economies.

White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow told reporters Thursday that the U.S. team will be led by David Malpass, U.S. Treasury under secretary for international affairs. Earlier, China said it would send a delegation led by a deputy commerce minister.

This meeting would be the first between senior U.S. and Chinese officials since June 3 talks in Beijing ended with no settlement. The United States has already imposed taxes on \$34 billion in Chinese goods, drawing Chinese retaliation. President Donald Trump is readying tariffs on \$216 billion more, and Beijing has vowed to counterpunch with its own trade sanctions.

“We haven’t really had a sit-down with them in quite some time at any level. So who knows? But it’s got to be a good thing,” said Kudlow, director of the National Economic Council.

Investors expressed relief at the prospect of a cease-fire in a trade standoff that has been escalating for months. The Dow Jones industrial average was up more than 365 points in late morning trading.

“It’s better to be talking than not talking, particularly in a dispute which shows no signs of let up and where

mutual trust is so low," said Wendy Cutler, a former U.S. trade negotiator who is a vice president at the Asia Society Policy Institute.

But she cautioned: "We should not expect any breakthroughs at this meeting and keep expectations low. At best, the two sides could agree on future engagement at a more senior level and start exploring possible off ramps from this escalating dispute. "

The United States and China are battling over China's aggressive campaign to challenge American technological dominance. The U.S. charges that China uses predatory tactics ranging from outright cybertheft to forcing foreign companies to hand over technology as the price of admission to the Chinese market.

Efforts to resolve the dispute have bogged down. In May, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin had declared the trade war "on hold" after China agreed to reduce the U.S. trade deficit by buying more American energy and farm products. But Trump reversed course and announced that the U.S. would go ahead with tariffs on Chinese goods, and Beijing withdrew its offer to step up purchases of American products.

The talks scheduled for later this month sound "like a lower-level version of what we had in May. They struck a deal and one week later the president rejected it," said Philip Levy, a senior fellow at the Chicago Council on Global affairs and a White House trade adviser in the administration of President George W. Bush. "What we've seen in China negotiations is that the president has repeatedly failed to trust his own people."

The U.S. trade deficit with China in goods and services — the gap between what the U.S. sells the Chinese and what it buys from them — came to a record \$336 billion last year. Trump blames unfair Chinese trade practices for the vast trade gap.

"We're talking about two fundamentally different approaches to commerce," said trade lawyer Robert Holleyman, a partner at Crowell & Moring law firm and an Obama administration U.S. trade official involved in negotiations with China. "China has a state-planned and state-driven, heavily subsidized and substantially closed economy. The U.S. is in favor of a more open market economy... Can those differences be bridged? Or are they so fundamental that the tariffs and retaliatory tariffs become the norm."

Copyright 2018 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

U.S., China To Resume Talks, Raising Hopes Of Breakthrough In Escalating Trade War

By Michael Collins

[USA Today](#), August 16, 2018

Analysts said Thursday that China's decision to send a trade delegation to the United States this month could be the first signs of a breakthrough in what has been an escalating trade war between the two countries.

"It's definitely a good sign that the two sides are talking," said Erin Ennis, senior vice president of the U.S. China Business Council, a Washington-based nonprofit group.

China's Ministry of Commerce announced Thursday that Vice Minister of Commerce Wang Shouwen will lead a delegation to the U.S. in late August to hold talks on the economy and trade issues.

Wang will meet with a U.S. delegation headed by David Malpass, the undersecretary of Treasury for international affairs, the commerce ministry said in a statement on its website.

"China welcomes communications and dialogue on the basis of reciprocity, equality and integrity," the statement said, but Beijing emphasized that it continues to oppose "unilateralism and trade protectionism and does not accept any unilateral trade restrictions."

The statement did not say when or where the meetings would take place. But the discussions would mark the first formal dialogue between the two countries since trade talks broke down two months ago and both countries began a series of tit-for-tat actions by slapping tariffs on each others' imports.

While the agenda has not been disclosed, analysts noted that the announcement did not indicate that the U.S. Trade Representative's office would be involved in the discussions. They interpreted that as a sign that the talks could be a prelude to further negotiations down the road.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross have both shown interest in trying "to get some things moving in the relationship that shows the two sides can work together," Ennis said.

"You need to create the circumstances so that both sides have trust that they are going to follow through on their commitments, but then also use that as a basis of being able to have the more difficult discussions that are going to take a little longer to work out," she said.

Both countries are experiencing mounting domestic economic pressures from key sectors as a result of their trade war actions, "so they need to get to the negotiating table in an effort to ease those pressures," said Kevin Madden, a Republican consultant who has worked with private companies to promote free trade.

The decision to resume talks is an indication that, "while the politics of trade war rhetoric can be alluring, trade wars are still not good and not easy to win," Madden said.

The announcement out of China comes just one week before the U.S. is set to impose a second round of tariffs on Chinese goods.

In July, the U.S. placed tariffs on \$34 billion of Chinese products, including farm equipment, motor vehicles, medical equipment and products made of aluminum and steel, in response to complaints that Beijing steals or pressures companies to hand over technology.

China retaliated by slapping an extra 25 percent duty on 545 products from the United States including soybeans, electric cars, orange juice, whiskey, salmon and cigars, in retaliation for Trump's initial round of tariffs.

Last week, the U.S. Trade Representative's office announced that it also is moving forward with a 25 percent tariff on \$16 billion in Chinese goods. The tariffs are set to take effect on Aug. 23 and will impact 279 product lines, including electronics, plastics and railway freight cars.

It was not clear whether the latest round of talks would begin before those tariffs take effect.

In response to those levies, China slapped additional tariffs of 25 percent on \$16 billion worth of U.S. goods, including fuel, steel products, autos and medical equipment.

President Donald Trump also has threatened to levy a 25 percent tariff on \$200 billion of Chinese products, prompting a warning from Beijing that it would retaliate with duties on \$60 billion of U.S. goods including coffee, honey and industrial chemicals.

U.S. And China To Rekindle Trade Talks As More Tariffs Loom

By Alan Rappeport And Ana Swanson
[New York Times](#), August 16, 2018

The United States and China will return to the negotiating table late this month in an attempt to ease months of tensions that have been building since trade talks broke down this year and both countries began imposing escalating rounds of tariffs on each other.

China said on Thursday that it would send a delegation led by Wang Shouwen, its vice minister of commerce, to Washington to meet with a group of officials led by David Malpass, the Treasury Department's under secretary for international affairs. Although Trump administration officials have repeatedly said the ball is now in China's court to revive the faltering

discussions, the Chinese government said the trip was being made at the invitation of the United States.

The talks come as the trade relationship between the two countries faces further deterioration. The Trump administration is preparing far more expansive tariff measures, including levies on another \$16 billion worth of Chinese products that are expected to go into effect next Thursday. The administration is also scheduled to hold six days of hearings over the next two weeks to allow up to 370 witnesses to weigh in on plans for tariffs on a further \$200 billion worth of Chinese products, a spokeswoman for the United States trade representative said.

If all of those tariffs go into effect, the United States would be taxing roughly half of the goods it imports from China each year, raising prices for a broad swath of manufacturers, retailers and other industries.

The meeting between midlevel officials is a departure from the formal rounds of talks between top economic teams from the United States and China that took place during the early days of the Trump administration and the trade meetings led by Steven Mnuchin, the Treasury secretary, and Liu He, China's vice premier in charge of economic policy, this spring.

Larry Kudlow, the director of the White House's National Economic Council, sought to lower expectations on Thursday and insisted that President Trump had no intention of backing down on his demands.

"Any time you're talking, that's better than not talking," Mr. Kudlow said in an interview with CNBC.

Mr. Kudlow said that the demands of the United States have not changed, and that China must lower its tariff and non-tariff barriers and cease the theft of American intellectual property.

"The Chinese government in its totality must not underestimate President Trump's toughness and willingness to continue this battle," Mr. Kudlow added.

Beyond tariffs, currency concerns have re-emerged as an issue in the Trump administration, and they are expected to come up during this round of talks.

The value of China's currency, the renminbi, has fallen roughly 10 percent against the dollar since the beginning of April, a change that makes Chinese products cheaper for foreigners to purchase and helps offset the impact of the Trump administration's tariffs.

Economists say the currency has weakened because of market forces and the strengthening of the dollar, as well as the influence of the Chinese government, which sets a baseline for the currency and then allows its value to fluctuate within a narrow band.

That drop in value will put pressure on the Treasury Department in advance of an October report in which Mr. Mnuchin is charged with deciding whether to

label countries currency manipulators. So far, the Trump administration has declined to give China the label, saying that while China manipulated its currency in the past, that problem had dissipated for now.

But in the last month, China's currency has once again become a target for Mr. Trump.

"China, the European Union and others have been manipulating their currencies and interest rates lower, while the U.S. is raising rates while the dollars gets stronger and stronger with each passing day — taking away our big competitive edge," Mr. Trump tweeted on July 20. "As usual, not a level playing field ..."

In its coming talks, the Treasury Department will seek to pressure the Chinese to lift the value of their currency, a person briefed on the plans said. But additional American tariff measures going into effect in coming months could further push down the value of the renminbi against the dollar, complicating those efforts.

The Trump administration is engaged in trade clashes on multiple fronts, as American negotiators seek to wrap up talks over the North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico and hold additional talks with European and Japanese counterparts in coming months.

In the meantime, talks with China have moved slowly. The White House has seemed unimpressed by China's offers to purchase tens of billions of dollars' worth of additional American products, which Trump administration trade officials say fall short of the substantial changes they want China to make to its partly state-run economy.

Trade experts were skeptical on Thursday that the coming talks would prove fruitful. Chinese officials have expressed frustration that the United States has not empowered a point person in the trade talks who can speak on behalf of Mr. Trump. In May, after Mr. Mnuchin announced that the trade war was "on hold," the president scrapped the agreement that the countries were working toward and called for more tariffs.

Mr. Malpass is even less empowered than Mr. Mnuchin to strike a deal, and while the Treasury Department has been the agency most aggressively pushing for a trade truce, the Office of the United States Trade Representative, led by Robert E. Lighthizer, is formally charged with overseeing the lists of Chinese goods facing tariffs.

At the Group of 20 summit meeting of finance ministers in Argentina last month, Mr. Mnuchin said that he had engaged only in "chitchat" with his Chinese counterparts and that the ball was in China's court to initiate a breakthrough.

"This looks like it will be a waste of time for the two govts," Scott Kennedy, the director of the Project on

Chinese Business and Political Economy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said on Twitter. "Who thinks US Treasury Dept is empowered to make THE deal to end the trade war?"

Kudlow Says China Shouldn't Underestimate Trump On Trade

[Bloomberg News](#), August 16, 2018

Donald Trump's top economic adviser welcomed China saying it will send Vice Commerce Minister Wang Shouwen to the U.S. for low-level talks in late August, while also adding that the president's determination on trade shouldn't be underestimated.

"It's a good thing that they're sending a delegation here – we haven't had that in quite some time," National Economic Council Director Larry Kudlow told CNBC Thursday. "The Chinese government in its totality must not underestimate President Trump's toughness and willingness to continue this battle to eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers and quotas to stop the theft of intellectual property and to stop the forced transfer of technology."

He said the Chinese economy and currency "are slipping, as you all know, but let's just see what happens." Talks can produce better outcomes than expected, and talking is better than not talking, he added.

The Chinese delegation led by Wang will meet with an American group led by David Malpass, under secretary for international affairs at the Treasury Department, at the invitation of the U.S., China's Ministry of Commerce said in a statement on its website on Thursday.

"This will be 'talks about trade talks,'" said Gai Xinzhe, an analyst at the Bank of China's Institute of International Finance in Beijing. "Lower-level officials will meet and haggle and see if there is a possibility for higher-level talks."

Before an earlier deal collapsed in May, China agreed to "significantly" increase purchases of U.S. goods and services, and that may provide a guide for the next round of discussions.

Necessary Concessions

To restart trade negotiations with the U.S., China must offer a package of measures, according to Jacob Parker, the vice president for China operations for the U.S.-China Business Council in Beijing. China needs to make an offer that slashes the bilateral trade surplus, lowers import tariffs, provides better protection for intellectual property and stops forced technology transfers, Parker said earlier this month.

Caution is warranted, according to Gai. “Even if the senior officials reach a deal, things could still change, as President Trump can easily flip-flop. We have been there.”

China’s equity market has suffered declines and the yuan has been on a losing streak for more than a month. Chinese authorities, bracing for economic fallout, have introduced measures to support growth ranging from shifting toward a more accommodative monetary policy to boosting fiscal spending.

The two nations had appeared to have reached a deal in May after Chinese Vice Premier Liu He – President Xi Jinping’s top economic adviser – led a group of officials to Washington. But Trump backed away from the agreement soon afterward, and ever since the two sides have been locked in a trade standoff as they slapped tariffs on billions of dollars of each other’s goods.

The commerce ministry reiterated in the statement that China is against trade protectionism and won’t accept any unilateral trade restrictions. “China welcomes communications and dialogue on the basis of reciprocity, equality and integrity,” it said.

The Trump administration imposed duties on \$34 billion of Chinese goods last month, a move that also prompted immediate retaliation from Beijing. Another \$16 billion in levies will be effective Aug. 23. Earlier this month, China announced a list of \$60 billion worth of U.S. imports it plans to apply tariffs on, after Trump ordered officials to consider imposing a 25 percent tax on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods, up from an initial 10 percent rate.

Wang, who is the key official leading China’s trade talks worldwide, led an advance team to Washington in May. In a July interview, he told Bloomberg that he didn’t understand why the U.S. quickly reversed its course.

“Good faith negotiation is required,” Wang said then. “For any talk to be successful, no party should point a gun at the other party.”

White House Economic Advisor Kudlow Confirms Trade Talks To Resume With China Later This Month

[CNBC](#), August 16, 2018

White House economic advisor Larry Kudlow confirmed Thursday that the U.S. and China will resume trade talks later this month, but warned that President Donald Trump has a strong resolve to make sure the administration gets a good deal. div > div.group > p:first-child">

Kudlow is the director of the National Economic Council and is one of Trump’s top advisors. His office

likely will be involved when a Chinese delegation visits the U.S. later in August for trade talks, though he said in an interview with CNBC that David Malpass, the under secretary of the Treasury for international affairs, will act as lead.

“The Chinese government, in its totality, must not underestimate President Trump’s toughness and willingness to continue this battle to eliminate tariffs and nontariff barriers and quotas, to stop the theft of intellectual property and to stop the forced transfer of technology,” Kudlow said in a “Squawk Box” interview. “Those are the asks that we’ve been making now for quite some time.”

His statements come amid market optimism that the two sides will be able to avert a trade war that some fear could spill over globally and stanch the economic momentum the U.S. has seen during the Trump administration.

The president has vowed to renegotiate global trade deals that have worked against the U.S., and he has targeted China specifically for tariffs on \$50 billion worth of goods so far.

Kudlow was measured in his optimism about the upcoming negotiations even amid his hopes for the economy.

“Let’s just see what happens,” he said. “Sometimes talks can produce better outcomes than expected.”

As Kudlow spoke, Wall Street was preparing for a rally following several volatile days of trading. Stocks surged at Thursday’s opening after headlines broke that the two sides again were trying to resolve their differences.

Among Trump’s main grievances are lopsided tariffs that make China far less hospitable for U.S. goods than Chinese goods are in America. The administration has specifically targeted the elimination of intellectual property theft as its goals in the talks.

“If they open up their markets, whether you’re talking about industry or financial services or technology, U.S.A. will talk through the increase export sales to China by phenomenal rates,” Kudlow said. “We’re the most competitive economy in the world because of the unexpected boom as the result of new policies.”

Kudlow also said U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer is “getting close” to a trade deal with Mexico. And he said the strong dollar is a “sign of confidence” in the United States.

China, U.S. To Hold Lower-level Trade Talks In Late August

By Michael Martina, David Lawder

[Reuters](#), August 16, 2018

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

U.S., China To Resume Trade Talks As Tariffs Bite

The new round of discussions, the first since May, would be lower-level, exploratory talks

By Chao Deng In Beijing And Bob Davis

[Wall Street Journal](#), August 16, 2018

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

Low Expectations As U.S., China Send 'Second-level' Officials To 'Token' Trade Talks

By Adam Behsudi

[Politico](#), August 16, 2018

China and the U.S. will restart trade talks in Washington, D.C., later this month, but the move is unlikely to de-escalate President Donald Trump's trade war with Beijing.

China is sending a lower-level functionary without any real power to meet with a second-tier official at the U.S. Treasury, a sign of Chinese irritation that Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin was unable to deliver when they thought they had a deal a few months ago, said a source close to the talks.

And meanwhile, the Trump administration is showing no signs of conciliation. Trump economic adviser Larry Kudlow on Thursday spoke dismissively about the talks, describing them as "second-level" in one television interview and issuing a tough warning to the Chinese government in another.

"The Chinese government in its totality must not underestimate President Trump's toughness and willingness to continue this battle," Kudlow, the director of Trump's National Economic Council, warned on CNBC.

Even though Trump has described his tariffs as leverage that will cause short-term pain as his team presses China to change its trade practices, the mood on both sides suggests a solution is a long way off. GOP lawmakers, farmers and others in Trump's political base have been complaining about the harm the tit-for-tat with China is causing to U.S. producers and consumers, but U.S. officials who could reach a deal are more focused on talks with other countries, like Mexico.

"I particularly am optimistic about Europe and Mexico," Kudlow told Fox News on Thursday morning.

White House deputy press secretary Lindsay Walters said the administration has identified "specific problems that China needs to address."

"This includes China taking concrete action to stop distorting markets and forcing our companies to transfer technology," she said in a statement, adding that the U.S. hopes China "will make the appropriate choice."

This month's meeting between Treasury Undersecretary David Malpass and Chinese Vice Minister of Commerce Wang Shouwen will occur at the same time the Trump administration is moving ahead with imposing tariffs on an additional \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports.

"The key thing is Treasury has no authority here and Malpass has less than no authority, or interest or expertise," said Derek Scissors, a China expert at the American Enterprise Institute. "We are sending someone to this as sort of a token. We've been down this road before. Treasury cannot make a trade deal."

"At best, this meeting will be a temperature taking exercise," said Scott Kennedy, a China expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

China has stoked the trade fight with retaliatory tariffs of its own, in response to U.S. penalties on \$50 billion worth of Chinese goods. Beijing has also done little to stop its currency from sliding, which the U.S. has viewed as an effort to blunt the impact of tariffs.

The two countries have been lobbing tariffs and counter-tariffs at each other ever since a deal brokered by Mnuchin fell apart in May. Beijing would have agreed to increase purchases of U.S. farm and energy goods in a bid to sway Trump against tariffs, in that agreement, which Mnuchin hammered out with Chinese Vice Premier Liu He.

"Vice Premier Wang Yang and Vice Premier Liu He both thought they reached deals that were then vetoed by the president," Kennedy said. "It's politically risky for a very senior Chinese official to come to the United States."

The source close to the talks said the channel between Mnuchin and Liu had been "downgraded" and there is overall frustration over Treasury's role in the talks.

"It's not really clear what Secretary Mnuchin brings to the table in terms of his oversight and responsibility," the source said.

It's likely U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer will have to get involved to reach a solution. But right now, Lighthizer is focusing on working out a NAFTA deal with Mexico. And unlike Mnuchin, he's a China hawk.

Kudlow told reporters on Thursday that deputy-level officials from USTR and the Commerce Department would be involved in the upcoming meeting.

Lighthizer, a former trade attorney and longtime critic of China's economic policies, has backed Trump's aggressive approach. Not only is his office legally tasked by Congress to negotiate trade deals, but he also led work on a report which has provided the basis for U.S. tariffs. The report identifies Chinese industrial policies the administration says are aimed at forcefully acquiring or stealing U.S. technology to advantage Chinese firms.

Beijing's offers to buy more U.S. goods were aimed at reducing China's \$375 billion trade surplus with the U.S., a primary focus for Trump. But China has offered few reform proposals to address policies limiting market access for foreign companies and forcing U.S. firms into joint ventures in which they must hand over technology as a condition of doing business.

Meanwhile, administration officials are preparing to hear from roughly 370 witnesses weighing in on the latest list of proposed tariffs during a week of public hearings starting Monday. The government has collected nearly 1,200 public comments, many opposing the proposed tariffs.

"If the administration has decided they want to impose tariffs on the \$200 billion for political reasons, Lighthizer's not going talk until then," Scissors said.

China's Economy Is Reeling While U.S. Thrives: Kudlow

By Dave Boyer

[Washington Times](#), August 16, 2018

White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow said Thursday that China's economy is worsening while the U.S. is thriving amid a tariff war between Washington and Beijing.

"Their economy is just heading south," Mr. Kudlow told President Trump at a Cabinet meeting. "Right now, their economy looks terrible."

He said the "single biggest story this year is an economic boom that is durable and lasting that most people thought was impossible, and they were wrong."

Mr. Trump has initiated a tariff war with China in an effort to rebalance the U.S. trade deficit. China has retaliated with tariffs on a wide variety of U.S. products, including soybeans.

Chinese Hackers Targeted U.S. Firms, Government After Trade Mission: Researchers

By Christopher Bing And Jack Stubbs

[Reuters](#), August 16, 2018

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

Google Employees Protest Secret Work On Censored Search Engine For China

By Kate Conger And Daisuke Wakabayashi

[New York Times](#), August 16, 2018

Hundreds of Google employees, upset at the company's decision to secretly build a censored version of its search engine for China, have signed a letter demanding more transparency to understand the ethical consequences of their work.

In the letter, which was obtained by The New York Times, employees wrote that the project and Google's apparent willingness to abide by China's censorship requirements "raise urgent moral and ethical issues." They added, "Currently we do not have the information required to make ethically-informed decisions about our work, our projects, and our employment."

The letter is circulating on Google's internal communication systems and is signed by about 1,000 employees, according to two people familiar with the document, who were not authorized to speak publicly.

The protest presents another obstacle for Google's potential return to China eight years after the company publicly withdrew from the country in protest of censorship and government hacking. China has the world's largest internet audience but has frustrated American tech giants with content restrictions or outright blockages of services including Facebook and Instagram.

It is also the latest example of how Google's outspoken work force has agitated for changes to strategy. In April, the internet company's employees spoke out against its involvement in a Pentagon program that uses artificial intelligence to improve weaponry. By June, Google had said it would not renew a contract with the Pentagon for A.I. work.

Google's interest in bringing search back to China came to the forefront earlier this month, when reports surfaced that the company was working on a search app that restricts content banned by Beijing. The project, known internally as Dragonfly, was developed largely in secret, prompting outrage among employees who worried they had been unwittingly working on technology that would help China withhold information from its citizens.

"We urgently need more transparency, a seat at the table, and a commitment to clear and open processes: Google employees need to know what we're building," the letter said.

The letter also called on Google to allow employees to participate in ethical reviews of the company's products, to appoint external representatives to ensure transparency and to publish an ethical assessment of controversial projects. The document referred to the situation as a "code yellow," a process used in engineering to address critical problems that impact several teams.

Google declined to comment on the letter. It has said in the past that it will not comment on Dragonfly or "speculation about future plans."

Employees are expected to press management about Dragonfly at a weekly staff meeting on Thursday. As of late Wednesday, one of the top questions on an internal software system called Dory, which lets employees vote for the questions that executives should answer at the meeting, asked whether Google has lost its ethical compass, said employees familiar with the letter. Other questions on Dory asked directly about the Dragonfly project and specific information that may be censored by the Chinese government, such as air pollution data.

This week's staff meeting will be the first opportunity for Google's work force to ask executives about Dragonfly since the meeting was not held last week. The absence of a gathering — the result of a regularly scheduled break in the summer, according to company spokesman Rob Shilkin — led to fears among employees that leadership was becoming less transparent following several controversies over Google's government work.

Historically, Google has been more responsive to employee concerns and more transparent about future projects and inner workings than other major technology companies, inviting questions from workers at its staff meetings and encouraging internal debate.

The internal dissent over Dragonfly comes on the heels of the employee protests over Google's involvement in the Pentagon project to use artificial intelligence. After Google said it would not renew its contract with the Pentagon, it unveiled a series of ethical principles governing its use of A.I.

In those principles, Google publicly committed to only use A.I. in "socially beneficial" ways that would not cause harm and promised to develop its capabilities in accordance with human rights law. Some employees have raised concerns that helping China suppress the free flow of information would violate these new principles.

In 2010, Google said it had discovered that Chinese hackers had attacked the company's corporate infrastructure in an attempt to access to the Gmail accounts of human rights activists. The attack, combined

with government censorship, propelled Google to pull its search engine from the country.

The exit from China was a seminal moment for the company — a symbol of its uncompromising idealism captured by Google's unofficial motto of "Don't Be Evil." At the time, Chinese internet users marked the loss of Google's search engine by laying flowers at the company's Beijing offices in what became known as an "illegal flower tribute." A possible re-entry to China, according to current and former employees, is a sign of a more mature and pragmatic company.

Google has maintained a significant presence in China even though its flagship services are not accessible in the country. Last year, Google announced plans for a research center in China focused on artificial intelligence. And it has introduced translation and file management apps for the Chinese market. Google now has more than 700 employees in China.

Google's work on Dragonfly is not a guarantee that its search engine will be welcomed back to China. The government would have to approve its return and it has kept American technology firms like Facebook at arm's length, opting instead to work closely with homegrown internet behemoths.

Some employees are in favor of re-entering China, arguing that exiting the country in protest of censorship has done little to pressure Beijing to change its position while it has made Google nonessential among the world's largest base of internet users.

When Google pulled out of China in 2010, Sergey Brin, the company's co-founder, said it objected to the country's "totalitarian" policies when it came to censorship, political speech and internet communications. If anything, China has only tightened its controls in the last eight years — leaving the company in a bind for how to justify its return.

"You can never satisfy a censor, particularly the ones in China," said Charles Mok, member of the Hong Kong Legislative Council who advocates for information technology and who is affiliated with the territory's democratic camp.

Google is probably facing intense pressure to introduce more of its products in China, Mr. Mok said, but added that the company would lend legitimacy to government censorship if it debuted a censored search product in China.

"Then the Chinese government can say, 'Google is O.K. with it too,'" he said.

Top U.S. Trade Official Hopes For NAFTA 'Breakthrough' In Days

By Steve Holland

[Reuters](#), August 16, 2018

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 Is In 'No Rush' To Renegotiate Nafta

'If we don't have a breakthrough, don't do the deal'

By Michael C. Bender

[Wall Street Journal](#), August 16, 2018

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

Mexican Minister Says Flexibility Needed In NAFTA Talks

By Jason Lange

[Reuters](#), August 16, 2018

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

Sessions Pledges DOJ Will Prosecute 3D-gun Crimes

'We will not stand for the evasion, especially the flouting, of current law'

By Gabriella Muñoz

[Washington Times](#), August 16, 2018

The nation's top law enforcement officer committed Thursday to prosecuting individuals that create undetectable 3D printed firearms on Thursday.

"Under federal law, it is illegal to manufacture or possess plastic firearms that are undetectable. Violation of this law is punishable by up to five years in prison," Attorney General Jeff Sessions said in a statement. "We will not stand for the evasion, especially the flouting, of current law and will take action to ensure that individuals who violate the law by making plastic firearms and rendering them undetectable, will be prosecuted to the fullest extent."

Mr. Sessions did not elaborate on any plan of strategy to track or monitor the creation of such weapons.

The Justice Department filed a brief on Wednesday stating that the lawsuit filed by Washington State Attorney General Bob Ferguson should be dismissed. The DOJ argued that it only has jurisdiction over exports posing a security threat from foreign actors, so they cannot regulate domestic concerns.

Supporters of Defense Distributed, the original site that published plans for 3D printed guns, argue that the debate over the software lies in free speech, not gun

legislation. They argue information its self is protected, and separate from actually creating the guns.

In defiance of a judge's order against Defense Distributed, the plans were published by a website called Code Is Free Speech and spread through social media.

Senate Confirms 25th And 26th Appellate Judges During Trump Tenure As GOP Reshapes Court At Record Clip

By Seung Min Kim

[Washington Post](#), August 16, 2018

The Senate on Thursday confirmed the 25th and 26th appellate court judges during President Trump's tenure, as Republicans continued reshaping the federal judiciary at a record clip.

The Senate approved A. Marvin Quattlebaum Jr. by a vote of 62 to 28, and backed Julius Ness Richardson on a vote of 81 to 8. Both will join the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit.

The GOP-controlled Senate has been approving appellate court judges at a rapid pace, already setting a record for the most confirmed during a president's first two years in office.

GOP leaders are installing jurists favored by conservatives who are likely to influence decisions on immigration, voting rights, abortion and the environment for decades.

The votes came amid the escalating dispute between Democrats and Republicans over documents from Supreme Court nominee Brett M. Kavanaugh's time at the George W. Bush White House.

Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) said Democrats would sue the National Archives if their Freedom-of-Information request for all records from Kavanaugh's time as an associate in the White House Counsel's Office and as White House staff secretary were denied.

Schumer said Republicans had "chosen obfuscation over transparency."

Republicans have requested Kavanaugh's White House counsel records but have ruled his staff secretary papers out of bounds. In addition to the documents, Kavanaugh has spent a dozen years on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, amassing a record of more than 300 legal opinions that Republicans say are the best indicator of the kind of Supreme Court justice he will be.

While much of the focus has been on Kavanaugh, McConnell has secured Senate confirmation of more than two dozen nominees to the 13 U.S. courts of appeals.

McConnell called Quattlebaum and Richardson “two well-qualified judicial nominees.”

As a U.S. attorney, Richardson successfully prosecuted Dylann Roof, who was convicted in the killing of nine black parishioners during a massacre inside a Charleston, S.C., church in 2015.

Richardson also clerked for the late Chief Justice William Rehnquist.

contributed to this report.

Senate Confirms Two More Circuit Judges After Flake Lifts Blockade

By Alex Swoyer

[Washington Times](#), August 16, 2018

The Senate confirmed two more appeals court judges Thursday, continuing to make progress on President Trump’s goal of revamping the federal judiciary after a maverick Republican dropped his blockade.

Sen. Jeff Flake of Arizona had halted progress on judges earlier this summer, staging a protest over Mr. Trump’s trade policies.

But after getting the chance to vote on a non-binding statement of pushback against Mr. Trump, Mr. Flake relented last month and the GOP was able to clear more judges through the committee pipeline, readying them for floor votes.

The latest two to earn full Senate approval were A. Marvin Quattlebaum Jr. and Julius N. Richardson, both of whom will sit on the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Judge Quattlebaum was confirmed on a 62-28 vote, while Mr. Richardson was cleared by an 81-8 margin.

Judge Quattlebaum was confirmed last year as a district court judge and Mr. Richardson worked as assistant U.S attorney for the District of South Carolina since 2009.

Mr. Trump has now placed 26 judges on the circuit courts.

Mr. Flake, a frequent Trump critic, had held up the process, alerting colleagues in June that he wouldn’t allow any appeals judges to clear the Judiciary Committee, until he got a floor vote on his objections to Mr. Trump’s tariffs, which the president has pursued against a number of trade competitors.

The GOP only has a one-seat majority on the committee. Mr. Flake was threatening to join Democrats in voting against nominees, which could have bottled them up in committee.

That would have been particularly disruptive for Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who had canceled most of senators’ August vacation to keep them in town to make progress on spending bills and presidential nominees.

Mr. Flake said last month that the non-binding tariff vote satisfied his request so he lifted his blockade. Three judges, including Thursday’s nominees, have been confirmed since.

Senate Democrats Threaten To Sue For Info On Supreme Court Nominee

By Lisa Lambert And Susan Cornwell

[Reuters](#), August 16, 2018

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

Senate Dems Threaten National Archives With Lawsuit Over Kavanaugh Records

‘With this suit, we can finally shine some light on Kavanaugh’s record’

By Alex Swoyer

[Washington Times](#), August 16, 2018

Senate Democrats said Thursday they’re preparing to sue the National Archives to force it to release papers from Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh’s background.

Democrats sent a Freedom of Information Act request earlier this month to the Archives demanding millions of pages of documents from Judge Kavanaugh’s time working as staff secretary for President George W. Bush’s White House, and said if they don’t get an answer they’ll file the lawsuit to compel production.

Republicans have requested documents related to Judge Kavanaugh’s time working in the White House counsel’s office from 2001 to 2003, but have not asked for millions more pages from his time as staff secretary from 2003 to 2006.

Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer, New York Democrat, said they need to see all of the records, which officials have estimated could total 4 million pages.

“We would much rather follow the bipartisan process that’s been around for years. Mitch McConnell is tearing down all of the bipartisan parts of approving judicial nominees,” Mr. Schumer said.

“With this suit, we can finally shine some light on Kavanaugh’s record,” he added.

Democrats are hoping to find landmines in Judge Kavanaugh’s past that they can use to persuade wavering Democrats to oppose him and also cause moderate Republicans to defect, defeating the president’s nomination.

GOP lawmakers say the judge’s roughly 300 legal opinions should be the main focus for lawmakers to review as they vet the president’s pick.

Dems Threaten To Sue Over Release Of Kavanaugh Documents

Schumer also said he plans to meet Brett Kavanaugh next week.

By Burgess Everett

[Politico](#), August 16, 2018

Senate Democrats are willing to take their fight over Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh's paper trail all the way to court.

On Thursday, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) said his caucus is preparing to sue the National Archives if it is unable to meet the party's Freedom of Information Act request for hundreds of thousands of pages of Kavanaugh documents that have not yet been disclosed publicly. If the Archives has not met Democrats' request in 20 days, Schumer and his members say they will go to court.

"We'd much rather follow the bipartisan process ... now Republican obstruction requires an extraordinary response," Schumer told reporters. "We stand ready to sue the National Archives for Judge Kavanaugh's full records if necessary."

The minority leader also said he would meet with Kavanaugh next week, breaking a long standoff between Schumer and the White House over the documents. He and dozens of other Democrats had hoped to receive a more full document review before meeting with the nominee, now an apparent impossibility before Kavanaugh's Sept. 4 hearing.

Schumer said he would ask Kavanaugh about the documents "and what he intends to do about it. He can't duck."

The potential lawsuit would come right as Kavanaugh's confirmation hearings begin in early September. Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), said that at a minimum, they would hope the courts would compel a partial release of documents as the hearings begin.

"I am prepared to go to court," Blumenthal said. "Once we get in court, we can seek preliminary relief ... that turns over at least some of the documents."

Since Kavanaugh worked for President George W. Bush, Bill Burck, a lawyer who works for Bush, is working to release about 900,000 pages of Kavanaugh's papers at the GOP's request. But Schumer and Judiciary Committee ranking member Dianne Feinstein are pushing for far more from the Archives, which it says it is unable to release.

In a notice posted on Wednesday, the Archives said there "several million pages" of documents on Kavanaugh at the library and at the Archives. The Archives said it is not able to comply with the Senate

Democrats' request, hence the stalemate that could go all the way to court.

The lawsuit shows the lengths that Senate Democrats are going to in order to derail the nomination. The vast majority of the caucus already opposes Kavanaugh, but the GOP needs a bare majority to confirm him.

"Watching this confirmation unfold is like watching the tortured last moments of a blowout basketball game. Democrats are down thirty with 10 seconds left, but they keep fouling to stop the shot clock in an attempt to avoid their inevitable defeat," said Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), a member of the Judiciary Committee, on Thursday.

Yet with a restive liberal base, Schumer is still hoping that there's something in Kavanaugh's voluminous records that might sway moderate GOP Sens. Susan Collins of Maine or Lisa Murkowski of Alaska to oppose the conservative judge. Several moderate Democrats are also undecided, but their votes won't determine Kavanaugh's confirmation without some GOP defections.

"If those documents come out, it could persuade some others to vote against it, including some on the Republican side," Schumer said. "His legitimacy is being undermined already because they refuse to release documents."

Democrats Denounce Kavanaugh Process They Approved For Obama And Kagan

By Ken Klukowski

[Breitbart](#), August 16, 2018

Democrats are protesting Sen. Chuck Grassley's beginning Judge Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation hearing for the Supreme Court and the process for getting Kavanaugh documents, but recent history shows they have nothing to complain about, because they approved the very same process for the most recent nominee from a Democratic president.

As chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Grassley (R-IA) decided to go the extra mile to accommodate Democratic senators. He will begin Kavanaugh's hearing 57 days after President Trump nominated him, as compared to 48, 49, and 48 days for Justices Sotomayor, Kagan, and Gorsuch respectively—the three most recent nominees from both parties.

Grassley also agreed to provide 900,000 pages of documents involving Kavanaugh's government service, more than any nominee in history, and more than four times the number provided for recent nominees of either party—including Kagan (who had only 172,000 pages).

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) considers that all-time high of 900,000 documents on President Trump's

nominee to be insufficient, and so is requesting numerous additional documents from the National Archives. But as The Hill's Jordain Carney reported, Archivist David Ferriero informed Feinstein that both the Justice Department and the Archives' general counsel, Gary Stern, have advised him that the Presidential Records Act authorizes only committee chairmen to request documents, not individual senators.

Feinstein is crying foul at the archivist's decision, despite the fact that Ferriero was appointed by President Obama.

The Archives are not able to complete Grassley's document request until late October due to its enormous size, but senators are determined to have Kavanaugh confirmed in time for the Court to start its annual term on October 1, so that the Court will not be short-staffed with an even number of justices that could result in cases unnecessarily wasted on 4-4 tie votes.

(These efforts are not to be confused with the separate effort by Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), who is leading committee Democrats in filing a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for additional documents.)

But Republicans have actually stepped up to the plate to help. Hundreds of thousands of the documents from the National Archives are also available through other sources, like President George W. Bush's presidential library and the Office of George W. Bush.

The Presidential Records Act (PRA) is the federal law that allows presidents to refuse to release many documents from an administration until 12 years after that president leaves office, after which many documents can still be kept private. The PRA also empowers a former president to designate someone to act for that president in deciding which documents he is willing to make public during that 12-year window.

The man Bush designated under the PRA before the 43rd president left office in 2009, former White House Deputy Counsel William Burck, is leading a team of 50 lawyers who are reviewing all the document requests regarding Kavanaugh. Between Burck and the Archives, over 200,000 pages of documents have already been given to the committee – which is already more than the total number for any Supreme Court nominee in over 200 years.

Democrats object to the process, arguing that Burck's role as Kavanaugh's former boss and a presidential appointee taints his document releases. Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) calls Burck a "massively conflicted Republican lawyer ... cherry-picking what documents the Senate Judiciary Committee can see."

However, there are clear parallels between the process being used for Kavanaugh and the one used for the most recent nominee from a Democratic president: Obama's nominee Elena Kagan.

Justice Kagan served in the White House for four years under President Bill Clinton, first as associate White House counsel (like Kavanaugh) and later as deputy director of the White House Domestic Policy Council.

Bruce Lindsey was deputy White House counsel under Clinton, just like Burck was for Bush. Lindsey led the review of Kagan's documents for release to the Senate for her confirmation. And Lindsey had the right to assert objections to any documents that Clinton may not want released.

Some of Kagan's documents concerned whether a president is subject to being sued or subject to legal process – which would include depositions and being forced to testify – while still in office. In Kagan's case, those documents discussed Paula Jones' lawsuit against Clinton for sexual misconduct. Kagan's memos expressed her views on which arguments the administration should make before the Supreme Court on that matter. One of those memos was from Kagan to Lindsey, the former boss who was later determining which Kagan documents to release.

Does all that sound familiar?

It is equally important to note the differences between Burck and Lindsey. First, Burck has actually filled this role before. He served as Bush's PRA representative when Neil Gorsuch was nominated to the Supreme Court, because Gorsuch, too, was a political appointee in the Bush administration.

An even more important difference is that Lindsey was one of Clinton's closest advisers, as the New York Times reported. If Burck is disqualified, then Lindsey's much closer relationship with Clinton would all the more disqualify him from playing that role in Kagan's hearings. But Democrats did not complain about Lindsey then, so how can they complain about Burck now?

In fact, Time magazine dubbed Lindsey "Mr. Fix-It" for Clinton, an "old pal" from before the White House. Some insiders referred to Lindsey as Clinton's "Enforcer" or "Consigliere," Sicilian terms referring to top mafia operators who take care of sensitive matters for a mafia crime boss. No one alleges that Burck has that kind of long-term, intimate, cozy relationship with Bush.

Lindsey also did not publicly comment on documents regarding Kagan, and refused Republican requests to expedite the release of documents. To the contrary, many Clinton documents were not released despite Republican insistence that they be produced. Those documents did not become public until 2014,

almost two years after the 12-year restriction authorized by the PRA expired—and four years after Kagan was confirmed to a lifetime appointment on the Supreme Court.

Republicans are also quick to point out that most of these Kavanaugh documents are of limited relevance to determining what sort of justice he will be. Kagan was never a judge, so had authored no court opinions. The best window into Kavanaugh's judicial philosophy are the 4,800 pages of his 307 published judicial opinions as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, along with the 6,400 pages of judicial opinions written by other judges, but that Kavanaugh joined, for a total of 11,200 pages of court decisions.

Senate Democrats have not explained how the process was acceptable for Democrats then, but unacceptable for Democrats now. The only differences are the political party of the team following that process, and the fact that they already have a mountain of pages of Kavanaugh's court opinions on which to evaluate him.

Once Dry Discussions, Cabinet Meetings Are Now Part Of The Trump Show

By Julie Hirschfeld Davis

[New York Times](#), August 16, 2018

President Trump's cabinet meeting on Thursday began with him calling the vaunted Queen of Soul a former employee. It ended with him musing that things were looking up for American farmers who have been stung by the effects of his trade war.

In between, the president called on his top economic adviser to publicly share his "very beautiful" assessment of the economy, and said Mexico and China were waging a form of war against the United States by exporting drugs to kill Americans.

In other words, it was a normal cabinet meeting in the age of Trump. What was once considered a dry policy discussion among restrained public servants has turned into a kind of West Wing performance art, featuring a president prone to exaggeration and his advisers taking turns praising him and his policies.

By now, the ritual has become familiar, like a monthly installment of a faithfully watched reality show with a story line that has become almost comically consistent.

"Despite the horrible laws, we're doing very well," the president said during Thursday's episode.

He then invited Kirstjen Nielsen, the secretary of homeland security, to detail all the successes the Trump administration was having in stopping migrants at the southwestern border. (She made no mention of the hundreds of migrant children still separated from their

parents as a result of Mr. Trump's "zero tolerance" policy, announced earlier this year, toward unauthorized immigrants.)

Mr. Trump spent much of the session gently quizzing his cabinet secretaries with lead-ins prodding them to offer positive comments. Past sessions have occasionally featured a sharp comment directed at an unfortunate participant on the receiving end of a televised rhetorical swipe.

On Thursday, cabinet members were largely spared the indignity. But when Mr. Trump turned to Jeff Sessions, the attorney general he likes to publicly insult, the president put the nation's top law enforcement official on the spot with a call to bring a "major federal lawsuit" against drug companies over opioids.

"In China, you have some pretty big companies sending that garbage and killing our people," Mr. Trump said. "It's almost a form of warfare, and I'd like to do whatever you can do legally to stop it from China and from Mexico."

Occasionally, Mr. Trump will overtake the agenda to publicly vent a particularly bitter grievance. His advisers shift uncomfortably in their chairs, avoiding eye contact or bracing to clean up a public-relations mess — as was the case last month when Mr. Trump used a cabinet meeting as the backdrop to attempt a halfhearted walkback of his widely criticized news conference in Helsinki, Finland, with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia.

Not so at Thursday's gathering. Mr. Trump steered clear of the more controversial news of the day — including his decision to revoke the security clearance of a prominent critic and the unflattering tell-all book by a former aide — and instead began by noting the death of Aretha Franklin, the Queen of Soul.

"I want to begin today by expressing my condolences to the family of a person I knew well," Mr. Trump said as he opened the meeting. "She worked for me on numerous occasions. She was terrific: Aretha Franklin."

It was not clear what the president was referring to, but Ms. Franklin did perform a handful of times at Mr. Trump's properties during her lifetime, which was far more notable for her scores of chart-topping singles, her 18 competitive Grammy Awards, her induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and her performances at the inauguration of Barack Obama and for other presidents.

In the middle of a health care update from R. Alexander Acosta, the labor secretary, Mr. Trump engaged in some wishful thinking about the repeal of the health care law enacted under Mr. Obama. "We actually got rid of Obamacare," the president said, "except for one vote."

The Affordable Care Act remains law, although parts of it have been rescinded or weakened; a Republican effort last summer to repeal it was thwarted most famously by Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona. Two other Republicans also voted against its repeal, as did 48 Democrats.

Mr. Trump also offered his own, inaccurate explanation — one rejected by state officials and firefighting experts — for the scourge of wildfires ravaging California. He said they were the result of water being diverted into the Pacific Ocean to save fish.

“We’re spending a fortune in California because of poor maintenance and because, frankly, they’re sending a lot of water out to the Pacific to protect the smelt,” Mr. Trump said.

He called on Ryan Zinke, the interior secretary, to repeat an argument he had made earlier in the day on television — that climate change was not to blame for the deadly blazes. “Ryan was saying it’s not a global warming thing, it’s a management situation,” Mr. Trump said.

Mr. Zinke obliged, blaming Canadian lumber imports — one of Mr. Trump’s favorite trade villains — for what he called displacing American-grown lumber on the market, leaving fallen trees to rot and become combustible. “So ridiculous,” Mr. Trump said with a nod.

On a day when he had tweeted that the “FAKE NEWS MEDIA IS THE OPPOSITION PARTY” and as hundreds of newspapers, including The New York Times, ran editorials condemning his attacks as undermining press freedoms, Mr. Trump held out his live, 57-minute cabinet meeting as a counterpoint.

“If you’d like, you can stay,” Mr. Trump told the small group of reporters representing the White House press corps at the meeting. “Or if you’d like, you can also leave. Don’t forget: freedom of the press!”

The president did make some news of his own. At one point, he appeared to confirm a disputed account of a deal for Turkey to release an American pastor, Andrew Brunson, in exchange for Washington’s help in freeing a Turkish woman detained in Israel on charges of funding Hamas.

The Turkish woman was freed, but Mr. Brunson remains under house arrest in Turkey. The deal was reported widely, but disputed privately by some American officials, and White House and State Department officials have refused to publicly discuss it.

The president, however, was more than happy to hold forth.

“We got somebody out for him,” Mr. Trump said, apparently referring to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey. “He needed help getting somebody out of

someplace; they came out. They want to hold our wonderful pastor. Not fair. Not right.”

Steven Mnuchin, the Treasury secretary, said he was ready to impose additional sanctions on members of Mr. Erdogan’s government if Mr. Brunson was not freed quickly.

Other news Mr. Trump wanted to share was of dubious authenticity.

He asked Sonny Perdue, the agriculture secretary, how American farmers are faring. “The farmers like Trump,” the president said.

“They’re selling the corn, and they’re selling the soybean, and they’re selling everything at levels that are soon going to be pretty good levels,” Mr. Trump said. “I’m hearing it’s starting to really pick up.”

Prices for agricultural exports fell last month by the largest percentage in seven years, driven in large part by a major drop for soybeans.

Mr. Perdue pushed back a bit, but only gently.

“Obviously there are some price constraints right now,” he began. But, Mr. Perdue told the president, the farmers were keeping the faith.

“They believe what you’re doing in China, as you’ve tried to indicate to them, will lead to a better and brighter future,” Mr. Perdue said.

Pentagon May Delay Trump’s Military Parade, Originally Slated For November, To Next Year

By Missy Ryan

[Washington Post](#), August 16, 2018

The Trump administration may delay a military parade slated for this fall, the Pentagon said Thursday, amid questions about the event’s increasing cost.

Col. Rob Manning, a Pentagon spokesman, said in a statement that the parade, which President Trump ordered earlier this year as a tribute to American military might, could take place next year.

“The Department of Defense and White House have been planning a parade to honor America’s military veterans and commemorate the centennial of World War I,” Manning said. “We originally targeted November 10, 2018 for this event but have now agreed to explore opportunities in 2019.”

Manning provided no reason for the apparent postponement, which came amid a spate of news reports that the event, which is expected to include aircraft, vehicles, period uniforms and symbols of U.S. power, could cost up to \$92 million, far more than originally estimated.

Officials have been planning the event since earlier this year, when the president, apparently inspired by a

similar display he observed last year in France, discussed the parade in a meeting with senior officials at the Pentagon.

The cost and the symbolism of the parade — reminiscent, critics say, of shows of force by authoritarian governments — have generated criticism from Democrats and, privately, consternation among military officials at a time when the Pentagon is trying to demonstrate its might against competitors including Russia and China.

Such large parades have been rare in recent U.S. history, though the George H.W. Bush administration staged a military parade in Washington in 1991 after the conclusion of the Persian Gulf War.

Earlier this year, a senior official said the parade would probably cost between \$10 million and \$30 million. Some share of the higher cost of close to \$100 million is expected to be paid by other government agencies that would take part in organizing or securing the event.

Planning for the parade comes at a time when Trump has boasted of saving money by suspending joint military exercises with South Korea, part of his outreach to North Korea. The affected exercise would have cost about \$14 million, far less than the parade's current expected cost.

The American Legion, a veterans organization, said earlier Thursday that while it appreciated that Trump wanted to show support for U.S. troops, other priorities should win out.

"However, until such time as we can celebrate victory in the war on terrorism and bring our military home, we think the parade money would be better spent fully funding the Department of Veterans Affairs and giving our troops and their families the best care possible," the group's national commander, Denise Rohan, said in a statement.

Pentagon Says Trump's Military Parade Postponed Until 2019 Amid Reports Costs Jumped 666%

By William Cummings

[USA Today](#), August 16, 2018

Amid reports of a soaring estimated cost for President Donald Trump's planned military parade in Washington, the Defense Department announced Thursday that it would delay the parade until 2019.

The estimated cost for the parade, originally slated for Nov. 10, had jumped \$80 million, The Associated Press reported Thursday citing an unnamed Pentagon official.

"The Department of Defense and White House have been planning a parade to honor America's military veterans and commemorate the centennial of World

War I," Department of Defense Spokesman Col. Rob Manning said in a statement. "We originally targeted November 10, 2018 for this event but have now agreed to explore opportunities in 2019."

A Defense Department spokesman told USA TODAY earlier Thursday plans for the parade have not yet been approved and that costs could still change.

Last month, the Military Times reported that initial estimates of the parade's cost were \$12 million. The official — who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss plans that haven't been released yet — told AP the new projection is \$92 million. That represents an increase of 666 percent.

About \$50 million would cover Pentagon costs for equipment, personnel and other expenses for the parade, the official said. The rest would be handled by other agencies, including security costs.

Pentagon spokesman Jamie Davis cautioned that "planning for the Military Veterans Day Parade continues and final details are still being developed. Any cost estimates are pre-decisional."

In February, White House budget director Mick Mulvaney put the cost at \$10 million to \$30 million.

The American Legion said in a statement Thursday that the organization appreciates Trump's desire to "show in a dramatic fashion our nation's support for our troops." But the veterans group believes that with troops still deployed overseas in the fight against terrorism, "the parade money would be better spent fully funding the Department of Veterans Affairs and giving our troops and their families the best care possible."

Trump has expressed a desire for such a parade for years and was greatly impressed by the Bastille Day march he witnessed on a presidential trip to Paris in 2017.

Trump's Military Parade Delayed Until 2019

By Jacqueline Klimas

[Politico](#), August 16, 2018

The controversial military parade ordered by President Donald Trump originally scheduled for Veterans Day will be delayed until 2019, the Pentagon announced Thursday night.

The Defense Department, which initially planned the parade for November to coincide with Veterans Day weekend and the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, did not give a reason for the abrupt change of plan, simply issuing a statement that said it has "agreed to explore opportunities in 2019."

The announcement came only hours after a report by CNBC that the estimated cost of the parade is now as much as \$92 million — much more than previous estimates of \$12 million to \$30 million.

Trump originally asked for the military to organize such an event after seeing similar demonstrations on Bastille Day in France, but lawmakers on both sides of the aisle criticized the pomp and circumstance as reminiscent of authoritarian regimes.

The parade is expected to include marching troops from different branches as well as a “heavy air component” of modern and historic war planes, the Pentagon said in March. But it will not include some of the heaviest military hardware like tanks to avoid damaging roads between the White House and the Capitol like the last one did in 1991 after the Persian Gulf War.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Trump’s Military Parade Could Cost More Than \$90 Million

By Idrees Ali

[Reuters](#), August 16, 2018

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

\$92M Is New Estimate For Trump Military Parade; Big Increase

By Lolita C. Baldor

[Associated Press](#), August 16, 2018

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Veterans Day military parade ordered up by President Donald Trump would cost about \$92 million, U.S. officials said Thursday, citing preliminary estimates more than three times the price first suggested by the White House.

According to the officials, roughly \$50 million would cover Pentagon costs for aircraft, equipment, personnel and other support for the November parade in Washington. The remainder would be borne by other agencies and largely involve security costs. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss early planning estimates that have not yet been finalized or released publicly.

Officials said the plans have not yet been approved by Defense Secretary Jim Mattis.

The parade’s cost has become a politically charged issue, particularly after the Pentagon canceled a major military exercise planned for August with South Korea, in the wake of Trump’s summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Trump said the drills were

provocative and that dumping them would save the U.S. “a tremendous amount of money.” The Pentagon later said the Korea drills would have cost \$14 million.

Lt. Col. Jamie Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, would only say Thursday that Defense Department planning for the parade “continues and final details are still being developed. Any cost estimates are pre-decisional. We will announce more information when it is available.”

While details are still being worked out, the parade is expected to include troops from all five armed services — the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard — as well as units in period uniforms representing earlier times in the nation’s history. It also is expected to involve a number of military aircraft flyovers.

A Pentagon planning memo released in March said the parade would feature a “heavy air component,” likely including older, vintage aircraft. It also said there would be “wheeled vehicles only, no tanks — consideration must be given to minimize damage to local infrastructure.” Big, heavy tanks could tear up streets in the District of Columbia.

The memo from Mattis’ office provided initial planning guidance to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. His staff is planning the parade along a route from the White House to the Capitol, and would integrate it with the city’s annual veterans’ parade. U.S. Northern Command, which oversees U.S. troops in North America, is responsible for the actual execution of the parade.

Earlier this year, the White House budget director told Congress that the cost to taxpayers could be between \$10 million and \$30 million. Those estimates were likely based on the cost of previous military parades, such as the one in the nation’s capital in 1991 celebrating the end of the first Gulf War, and factored in some additional increase for inflation.

Trump decided he wanted a military parade in Washington after he attended France’s Bastille Day celebration in the center of Paris last year. As the invited guest of French President Emmanuel Macron, Trump watched enthusiastically from a reviewing stand as the French military showcased its tanks and fighter jets, including many U.S.-made planes, along the famed Champs-Elysees.

Several months later Trump praised the French parade, saying, “We’re going to have to try and top it.”

Copyright 2018 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Initial Cost For Trump Military Parade Comes In At \$12 Million, DoD Says

By Tara Copp

[Military Times](#), July 18, 2018

The initial price tag could easily change, and no final plan has been approved yet, a defense official said on the condition of anonymity. The price would depend on the final numbers of troops and type of equipment involved, and how those troops will need to be transported to Washington, such as whether they would need to be moved by train.

Why Bruce Ohr Pushing His Wife's Oppo Research To The FBI Is Huge

By Adam Mill

[Federalist](#), August 16, 2018

A review of publicly available information causes a reasonable person to wonder whether Bruce Ohr broke the law by promoting his wife's anti-Trump research to the FBI when he was working at the Justice Department.

The law prohibits public officials from involvement in matters in which their spouse has a financial interest. The question is, Did Ohr "personally and substantially" participate in a particular matter in which his spouse had a "financial interest" while he was employed by the Justice Department as the assistant attorney general? Let's take a closer look.

Recall that the Hillary Clinton campaign (through its law firm Perkins Coie) hired opposition research firm Fusion GPS to generate dirt on Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential campaign. Fusion GPS in turn hired former British spy Christopher Steele, who compiled the Trump dossier containing as yet unproven allegations of Russian dirt on Trump.

We learned in December that Ohr met with Fusion GPS in November 2016 — a critical time frame — while he was the associate deputy attorney general. Former FBI agent Peter Strzok has confirmed Ohr fed the FBI documents pertinent to the investigation into Trump's Russia ties, and The Hill reported the FBI used Ohr to continue collecting information from Steele, even after it terminated him as a source for leaking word of the investigation to the media.

John Solomon filled in the contours of Ohr's role in the investigation, writing in The Hill of recently disclosed emails:

They also confirm that Ohr later became a critical conduit of continuing information from Steele after the FBI ended the Brit's role as an informant. ...

The FBI specifically instructed Steele that he could no longer 'operate to obtain any intelligence whatsoever on behalf of the FBI,' those memos show.

Yet, Steele asked Ohr in the Jan. 31 text exchange if he could continue to help feed information to the FBI: 'Just want to check you are OK, still in the situ and able to help locally as discussed, along with your Bureau colleagues.'

'I'm still here and able to help as discussed,' Ohr texted back. 'I'll let you know if that changes.'

Republican Rep. Trey Gowdy recently expressed alarm that Ohr would insert himself into the ongoing Russia investigation. Understandably so. The FBI acts as the Justice Department's investigator, and normally must convince the DOJ that the quality and quantity of gathered evidence will support a case before a federal court. When a senior DOJ prosecutor gives the FBI information, it comes with the DOJ's implied endorsement of the evidence. This kind of implied endorsement may have played a role in the FBI's decision to pay Steele to continue research on the Trump dossier.

Ohr sponsored Steele's research in spite of the fact that, as Steele later admitted, critical allegations in the dossier remain unverified. In particular, Steele now refuses to stand by his allegations of Russian hacking. Steele reportedly said his dossier allegations were never supposed to be made public, which is incongruous with his dissemination of the allegations to Ohr and his decision to leak word of the investigation to the press.

Fusion GPS co-founder Glenn Simpson disclosed in a sworn declaration that Fusion GPS paid Ohr's wife, Nellie Ohr, a Russia expert, to help research and analyze potential opposition research on Trump.

Curiously, it appears Ohr's relationship with both Simpson and Steele predated his wife's work for Fusion GPS, which raises the question whether Simpson may have hired her to gain favor with him. We don't know how long Nellie Ohr worked for Fusion GPS, but Simpson's December 2017 declaration indicates bank records from August 2015 through that time reflected she contracted with the firm to help research Trump. Ohr's promotion of his wife's research to the FBI potentially helped stoke continued demand for her services.

As pointed out by The Daily Caller, Ohr failed to disclose that his wife was being paid by Fusion GPS in his mandatory public financial disclosure form. The purpose of the form is to "identify potential or actual conflicts of interest." Thus, The Daily Caller posits that when Ohr became involved in brokering his wife's Trump-Russia research to the FBI, he deprived DOJ of the opportunity to identify this potential conflict of interest by failing to disclose the source of her "consulting" income. The DOJ had a legal right to know that Ohr's

wife was personally profiting from the research he promoted to the FBI.

One question that remains unanswered is whether Ohr also had a role in approving or overseeing the Trump-Russia investigation from within the DOJ. As noted by The Daily Mail, he “worked closely” with both Sally Yates, former assistant attorney general, and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein.

Also of note is that both Yates and Rosenstein signed off on one or more of the spy warrants for Trump associate Carter Page. If either Yates or Rosenstein consulted Ohr on the propriety of those applications, Ohr would have been in a position to endorse the validity of research for which his spouse was paid.

Violation of the law prohibiting public officials from involving themselves in matters in which their spouse has a financial interest (18 U.S.C. §208) is a crime punishable for up to five years in prison, if the conduct is deemed willful. The DOJ has the power to enforce this law civilly and criminally, and as Ohr’s employer, has a responsibility to do so if he violated it. So the DOJ’s perceived inaction in response to Ohr’s actions may set a government-wide precedent.

Steele openly sought to use the dossier to interfere with the election. Ohr promoted his work in spite of the fact that Steele made no secret to Ohr that he was desperate to stop Trump from becoming president. And he acted on it. Solomon reports, based on notes he reviewed of Ohr’s meeting with Steele: “Glen asked Chris to speak to the Mother Jones reporter. It was Glen’s Hail Mary attempt,” Ohr wrote.”

In December 2016, Ohr received a memory stick with early versions of the dossier allegations. But why would he continue to receive Fusion GPS dirt even after the election? Perhaps because the campaign to stop Trump didn’t end after the election.

That December, Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta supported calls to brief members of the Electoral College on the investigations into Trump’s Russia ties and into Russian meddling in the election. He openly advocated nullifying the election result by using the requested briefing to persuade members of the Electoral College to break with their voters.

The description of the requested briefing clearly matched the same “intelligence” that the Clinton campaign procured and Nellie Ohr helped Fusion GPS produce. Ohr may have conferred undeserved legitimacy on the “intelligence” when he promoted it to the FBI. This raises the question of whether his actions also constitute an attempt to “use his official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election,” in violation of another law.

Russian interference in an American election is obviously a serious concern. But public officials here in the United States are in an even greater position to use their power to tilt and influence future American elections. Ohr’s wife was indirectly hired by the Clinton campaign to help defeat Trump. Ohr seems to have used his position in the DOJ to help his wife further this contractual objective.

If we allow the government to pick its own leaders by interfering in elections, our democracy will quickly become a sham. That’s why Congress passed the law in the first place. Has the DOJ done enough to reassure Americans that officials within the DOJ will not interfere with future elections?

The DOJ might not have known the extent of Ohr’s involvement in 2016. But it certainly knows now. And government officials are undoubtedly watching how Ohr’s case plays out. Unfortunately, his continued presence in the DOJ sends them a powerful message about the relatively low risk of following his example.

Mnuchin Says Turkey Faces More Sanctions If Pastor Not Released

By Justin Sink

[Bloomberg News](#), August 16, 2018

Mnuchin’s remarks were prompted by President Donald Trump, who said Turkey has “not proven to be a good friend” to the U.S. Trump complained that his administration had secured the release of a Turkish citizen from an unnamed country on behalf of Erdogan, who didn’t reciprocate by releasing pastor Andrew Brunson.

“We got somebody out for him,” Trump said. “He needed help getting somebody out of some place, he came out. They want to hold our wonderful pastor. Not fair. Not right.”

Trump was referring to his urging that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu release a Turkish citizen, Ebru Ozkan, who’d been arrested in Israel on accusations of abetting Hamas, a person with knowledge of the matter said. Netanyahu did it, and Ozkan was sent back to Turkey on July 16.

Trump thought he had a deal for Brunson’s release, an administration official said. Instead, Turkey moved the pastor to house arrest.

The president’s frustration was signaled in a meeting between White House National Security Adviser John Bolton and Turkish Ambassador to the U.S. Serdar Kilic earlier this week.

Bolton flatly told the ambassador, who had requested the meeting to discuss the dispute, to release Brunson, according to the official.

Trump continued his barrage against the Ankara government on Thursday evening with a tweet: "Turkey has taken advantage of the United States for many years. They are now holding our wonderful Christian Pastor, who I must now ask to represent our Country as a great patriot hostage. We will pay nothing for the release of an innocent man, but we are cutting back on Turkey!"

The plight of Brunson has dominated the Trump administration's policy toward its NATO ally, even as the dispute shakes currency markets. Brunson, who Turkish officials say had links to a failed 2016 coup, is being held under house arrest. A lower court already turned down his lawyer's request to free him and the U.S. has said it won't negotiate until he's released.

Erdogan has said the standoff would push Turkey to forge other alliances. His government said it would not comply with U.S. sanctions against Iran, a key oil supplier to Turkey.

He has also moved to shore up alliances in Europe and the Middle East, easing pressure on the battered lira, as the standoff with the U.S. has deepened. Efforts to rally support and bolster domestic markets included a call Thursday between Turkish Finance Minister Berat Albayrak and international investors.

Erdogan also spoke with French President Emmanuel Macron, a day after talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. While Berlin isn't offering any aid, the conversation reflects the stakes on both sides and Germany's sway as the biggest economy in Europe.

Germany wants Turkey to avoid a financial meltdown and can't allow the country to descend into chaos, according to a person familiar with Merkel's thinking who asked not to be identified. After a war of words over democratic values sent relations to a low point a year ago, Germany is also making an overture by hosting Erdogan for a state visit on Sept. 28.

Relations between Berlin and Ankara deteriorated as Erdogan consolidated power after the failed coup in 2016. Tensions escalated after Turkey detained a group of human-rights activists and jailed a German journalist. Another dispute led Germany to withdraw troops from a NATO air base in Turkey. But Erdogan's overtures to Europe suggest he's prepared to mend ties in an attempt to weather the U.S. pressure.

A \$15 billion pledge of support from Qatar will help Turkey buy time as it tries to contain double-digit inflation and a mass of foreign currency debt, investors say. But it won't replace the need for new policy. Qatar's pledge rewards Erdogan for standing by the gas-rich Gulf country against a Saudi-led boycott backed by Trump.

Turkey's effort to bolster its political alliances came in tandem with steps taken by authorities to support the

banking system and curb short selling of the lira. The lira had lost as much as a quarter of its value within a matter of weeks after the U.S. sanctioned members of Erdogan's government. Albayrak on Thursday ruled out restrictions on movement of capital as a policy option, helping lift the currency before Mnuchin's remarks.

Mnuchin: U.S. Could Do More To Punish Turkey If Pastor Not Released 'Quickly'

By Caitlin Oprysko

[Politico](#), August 16, 2018

The United States is prepared to take more action against the Turkish government if it does not move to release a detained American pastor, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Thursday.

At a Cabinet meeting at the White House, Mnuchin noted recent sanctions imposed on members of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's administration over its refusal to release Rev. Andrew Brunson and added that "we have more that we're planning to do if they don't release him quickly," according to a pool report.

Mnuchin didn't elaborate.

Turkish authorities arrested the 50-year-old minister and missionary in 2016 on charges of espionage and aiding a terrorist organization, but the Trump administration has maintained Brunson's innocence and demanded his release.

President Donald Trump during the meeting said Brunson is a "very innocent man."

Earlier this month, the Treasury Department sanctioned Turkey's minister of justice and minister of interior over their alleged roles in the detention, and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo recently met with his Turkish counterpart to press for Brunson's release. On Wednesday, a Turkish appeals court denied Brunson's petition for appeal.

Brunson's detainment comes amid a financial crisis in Turkey and as officials in Ankara are engaged in a standoff over trade issues with Washington.

'We Have More That We're Planning To Do' If Turkey Doesn't Release American Pastor, Treasury Secretary Says

By Karen DeYoung And Kareem Fahim

[Washington Post](#), August 16, 2018

The United States will take further action against Turkey if it continues to detain American pastor Andrew Brunson, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Thursday in a sign that tensions between the NATO allies will continue to escalate over the issue.

"We have more that we're planning to do if they don't release him quickly," Mnuchin said when asked by

President Trump at a Cabinet meeting for an update on U.S. sanctions on Turkish officials.

He did not provide further details.

Brunson is under house arrest after spending nearly two years in a Turkish prison under what the Trump administration has said are bogus allegations of aiding terrorists.

The issue has led to a dramatic souring of U.S.-Turkey relations. The Treasury Department earlier this month levied sanctions on two senior Turkish officials in retaliation for Brunson's continued detention. That move was followed by an announcement by Trump last week that the United States was doubling tariffs on imported Turkish metals.

Turkey has responded by declaring that it will raise tariffs on a number of U.S. imports, including cars, tobacco and spirits.

In remarks at Thursday's Cabinet meeting, Trump voiced his disappointment with Turkey in personal terms, saying the country has "not proven to be a good friend."

"They have a great Christian pastor there. He's an innocent man," Trump said.

He also appeared to acknowledge that he was disappointed that Turkey did not release Brunson after the United States helped negotiate the release of a Turkish national being held in Israel.

"We got somebody out for him," Trump said, referring to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

"They want to hold our wonderful pastor," Trump added. "Not fair. Not right."

U.S. Readying More Turkey Sanctions Unless Detained American Pastor Is Released

By Dave Boyer

[Washington Times](#), August 16, 2018

Treasury Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin said Thursday that the United States is preparing more sanctions against Turkey if American pastor Andrew Brunson is not released from custody.

"We have more that we're planning to do if they don't release him quickly," he said.

Mr. Mnuchin gave the update at a Cabinet meeting, where President Trump said Turkey is not turning out to be a great friend of the U.S.

Mr. Trump said of the pastor, "He's a very innocent man."

The administration sanctioned two top Turkish officials last week over the imprisonment of Mr. Brunson, who was released from jail last month but is still being detained on house arrest. Turkey has accused him of

fomenting an attempted coup, but the U.S. says the charges are phony.

Turkey is also seeking the extradition from the U.S. of a Muslim cleric whom it accuses of inciting the coup attempt.

U.S. Says Ready With More Sanctions If Turkey Does Not Free Pastor

[Reuters](#), August 16, 2018

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

Turkey Will Emerge Stronger From Lira Crisis Despite Row With U.S. – Minister

By Daren Butler

[Reuters](#), August 16, 2018

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

Challenged By US And Market Crisis, Turkey Turns To Europe

By Christopher Torchia

[Associated Press](#), August 16, 2018

Beset by a shaky currency and tension with the United States, Turkey is reaching out to Europe to shore up relations with major trading partners despite years of testy rhetoric and a stalled bid for EU membership.

The engagement by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has harshly criticized Germany and other European nations in the past, is part of a diplomatic campaign to capitalize on international unease over U.S. President Donald Trump and American tariff disputes around the world. Also this week, Qatar pledged \$15 billion in investments in Turkey and Russia's foreign minister talked about using national currencies instead of the dollar in trade with Turkey.

Even so, many commentators believe the path to Turkey's long-term recovery lies in bold economic steps, such as an interest rate increase to curb inflation after years of debt-fueled growth, as well as a resolution to a bitter rift with the United States over an American pastor on trial in a Turkish court. They wonder to what extent Erdogan, who has intensified his control over Turkey as leader for nearly 16 years, can modify his positions after saying the currency crisis and standoff with Washington is an "economic war."

The dialogue with NATO allies in Europe as well as Russia, seen by many in Washington as a threat to U.S. interests, reflect Turkey's unusual status as a strategic country in a volatile region where world powers have

long been deeply involved. Turkey, which has secular traditions and a mostly Muslim population, has generally taken a pragmatic course since the Cold War, staying anchored in Western institutions but also engaging Iran and other regional heavyweights.

In a fresh emphasis on Europe, Erdogan spoke by phone about stability and cooperation with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Wednesday, and with French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday. In addition, Turkey freed two Greek soldiers who had been held in a Turkish prison for months. And a Turkish court freed Taner Kilic, an Amnesty International representative who was jailed for 14 months, though the terror-related charges against him were not dropped.

"There is a growing reaction in Europe against the Trump administration's restrictive and punitive economic policies," Ibrahim Kalin, a spokesman for the Turkish president, said in remarks that did not address the difficulties in relations between Europe and Turkey. He said Turkey, France and Germany "are on the same page" in opposing the U.S. move to impose tariffs.

Just last year, during a low point, Erdogan referred to what he called the "Nazi practices" of contemporary Germany.

Washington imposed sanctions on two Turkish government ministers and doubled tariffs on Turkish steel and aluminum imports over the detention of American pastor Andrew Brunson on espionage and terror-related charges. Turkey retaliated with tariffs on some U.S. imports and said it would boycott U.S. electronic goods.

The EU has likewise been subjected to new tariffs on steel and aluminum by the Trump administration, with the bloc responding in kind, though the sides agree last month to try to roll back the punitive duties.

The EU, Turkey's biggest trading partner, provides billions of euros to the Turkish government to help several million Syrian refugees on its soil and prevent them from reaching Europe. But the relationship is also fraught. Turkey has accused European countries of harboring suspected terrorists, while Europe has longstanding concerns about democracy and the rule of law in Turkey.

Turkey's detention of half a dozen German citizens for what Berlin considers political reasons after a 2016 coup attempt has been a major irritant. Another German citizen was arrested Wednesday for suspected links to Kurdish rebels, German news agency dpa reported.

It would be in Turkey's own interest to come to an agreement with the United States and others on the release of foreign prisoners, said Germany's foreign minister, Heiko Maas. Merkel has also said that, while Turkey's economic stability is vital, it is important that the

country's central bank be able to operate independently. Some investors are concerned that Erdogan is increasing influence over the central bank to keep it from raising interest rates, a worry that contributed to the recent plunges in the value of the Turkish lira.

Holger Schmieding, an economist for Berenberg bank, said there are limits to what the EU can do to help Turkey.

"A few extra billion euros for Turkey to cope with the Syrian refugee crisis and some small amounts from other EU funds are feasible," he wrote in an analysis. "But such sums would not make a decisive difference."

Schmieding said a bailout by the International Monetary Fund, seen as unlikely at the moment, could become a "realistic option" if Erdogan improves political ties with the EU and the United States and makes a "U-turn" on economic policies.

The \$15 billion pledge from Qatar comes as the small nation on the Arabian Peninsula faces its own geopolitical crisis. For over a year, Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have boycotted Doha in a political dispute. Despite facing initial strains in its own crisis, energy-rich Qatar does have the money to spend to help Ankara.

Despite Turkey overtures to Europe this week, experts are braced for more twists and turns.

Angelos Stangos a commentator in Greece's Kathimerini newspaper, says Greek officials should be cautious because Trump and Erdogan are powerful and unpredictable. More instability in Turkey could hurt Greece's tourism industry and lead to increased refugee flows.

"One cannot predict where and how the tension in their relationship will end," he wrote.

Copyright 2018 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Erdogan Moves To Shore Up Alliances As U.S. Standoff Deepens

By Alaa Shahine

[Bloomberg News](#), August 16, 2018

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan moved to shore up alliances in Europe and the Middle East, easing pressure on the battered lira, as the standoff between Turkey and the U.S. deepened.

Efforts to rally support and bolster domestic markets include a call Thursday between Turkish Finance Minister Berat Albayrak and international investors. Erdogan also spoke with French President Emmanuel Macron, a day after talks with German

Chancellor Angela Merkel and a \$15 billion pledge of support from Qatar.

The lira climbed for a third day along with emerging-market currencies even after the White House said new tariffs on Turkish goods would remain regardless of whether Andrew Brunson, an American pastor detained in Turkey, was freed. Helping support the currency, the central bank didn't offer any funding through its one-week repo rate at 17.75 percent for a fourth day, forcing lenders toward its more expensive overnight rate of 19.95 percent.

"The bigger issue for markets is this constant politicization of economic and financial issues," said Mohieddine Kronfol, the Dubai-based chief investment officer for global sukuk, Middle East and North Africa fixed income at Franklin Templeton Investments.

Erdogan's overtures to Europe suggest he's prepared to mend ties strained by past diplomatic clashes – he accused Merkel's government of engaging in "Nazi practices" last year – in an attempt to weather the U.S. pressure. The pledge by Qatar, on the other hand, rewards the president for standing by the gas-rich Gulf country against a Saudi-led boycott backed by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Qatar said the financial package would come in the form of "projects, investments and deposits." It didn't give details. The lira, one of the world's worst-performing currencies this year, advanced 1.8 percent to 5.8381 per dollar at 3:30 p.m. in Istanbul, paring its loss for the year to about 35 percent.

The plight of Brunson has dominated the Trump administration's strategy toward its NATO ally, even as the dispute roiled currency markets. Brunson, who Turkish officials say had links to a failed 2016 coup, is being held under house arrest. An appeals court is due to rule on his fate this week. A lower court already turned down his lawyer's request to free him and the U.S. has said it won't negotiate until he's released.

Erdogan said the standoff would push Turkey to forge other alliances. Shortly afterwards, his government said it would not comply with U.S. sanctions against Iran, a key oil supplier to Turkey.

Investors and analysts say the support from the likes of Qatar will help Turkey buy time but doesn't replace the need for policy actions to contain double-digit inflation and a mass of foreign-currency debt. That's why the upcoming presentation by Albayrak, Erdogan's son-in-law, is so critical.

"I would ideally need to hear a more substantiated fiscal plan," Esther Law, an emerging-market debt manager at Amundi SA, said on Bloomberg TV. "Give me some numbers. Will there be any fiscal rule? How are they going to achieve, let's say, a budget deficit not

much worse than where we are without compromising growth too much. This is exactly what I'm after."

Turkey's effort to bolster its political alliances came in tandem with steps taken by authorities to support the banking system and curb short selling of the lira.

Ehsan Khoman, head of MENA research and strategy at MUFG Bank, said he expects that the currency's relief to be short-lived, prompting the central bank to hike borrowing costs "imminently in order to rebuild credibility."

— With assistance by Constantine Courcoulas

Pompeo Forms Iran Action Group To Run Policy After Nuke Deal

By Matthew Lee

[Associated Press](#), August 16, 2018

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Thursday formed a group to coordinate and run U.S. policy toward Iran as the Trump administration moves ahead with efforts to force changes in the Islamic Republic's behavior after withdrawing from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

Accusing Iran of unleashing "a torrent of violence and destabilizing behavior against the United States, our allies, our partners and, indeed, the Iranian people themselves," Pompeo announced the creation of the Iran Action Group, which he said would drive administration policy in Washington and overseas.

He said the administration remains willing to talk to Iran but that in order to do so "we must see major changes in the regime's behavior both inside and outside its borders."

Pompeo named Brian Hook, who is currently the State Department's director of policy planning, to run the group with the title of special representative for Iran. Hook led the administration's ultimately unsuccessful attempt to negotiate changes to the nuclear deal with European allies before President Donald Trump decided in May to pull out of the accord.

Since withdrawing, the administration has re-imposed sanctions that were eased under the deal and has steadily ramped up pressure on Iran to try to get it to stop what it describes as "malign activities" in the region. In addition to its nuclear and missile programs, the administration has repeatedly criticized Iran for supporting Syrian President Bashar Assad, Lebanon's Hezbollah movement, Shiite rebels in Yemen and anti-Israel groups.

It has also in recent weeks stepped up criticism of Iran's human rights record and is working with other nations to curb their imports of Iranian oil.

The administration is warning Iran's oil customers that they will face U.S. sanctions in November unless they significantly reduce their imports with an eye on eliminating them entirely. It has also told businesses and governments in Europe that they may also be subject to penalties if they violate, ignore or attempt to subvert the re-imposed U.S. sanctions.

Hook, accusing Iran of being "a force for instability and violence," said he would also keep the door open to talks but made clear that U.S. efforts to isolate Tehran both economically and diplomatically would not end until its leadership changed policies.

"The burden is on the Iranian regime to change its behavior," he said.

Critics of the administration's approach suggested that Hook's new position was a sign the U.S. was adopting a policy of regime change in Iran, something that Pompeo and other officials have denied. They maintain they only want to see the government change course.

Some critics noted that the creation of the Iran Action Group was announced during the 65th anniversary of the five-day period in 1953 in which former Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh was overthrown in a U.S.- and British-backed coup.

Hook said the timing was "pure coincidence" and rejected comparisons between the Iran group and an earlier State Department initiative known as the "Future of Iraq Project" that was undertaken when U.S. policy was to promote the downfall of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

Hook is expected to be replaced as policy planning chief by Kiron Skinner, a foreign policy academic and adviser to several Republican presidential candidates who served on Trump's national security transition team and very briefly at the State Department after Trump took office, according to officials who were not authorized to publicly discuss personnel matters and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Copyright 2018 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

U.S. Secretary Of State Names Brian Hook Special Envoy For Iran

By Lesley Wroughton

[Reuters](#), August 16, 2018

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

Pompeo Announces New Team For Iran Strategy

By Caitlin Oprysko

[Politico](#), August 16, 2018

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Thursday unveiled a new team to coordinate the Trump administration's post-nuclear deal approach to Iran and bolster support for the strategy abroad.

The Iran Action Group will be helmed by Brian Hook, the secretary of state's senior policy adviser, who will receive the title of special representative for Iran. Pompeo told reporters that the coalition is charged with "directing, reviewing and coordinating all aspects of the State Department's Iran-related activity" and will report directly to him.

The main objective of the new U.S. strategy is to change the behavior of the Iranian regime by applying economic pressure and diplomatic isolation to squeeze Tehran. Hook said Thursday that out of 12 goals laid out by Pompeo earlier this year, the group will key in on ensuring that Iran does not pursue nuclear research with potential military uses, choking off Iran's ability to finance terrorist groups, and securing the release of and putting an end to the practice of "arbitrarily detained" American citizens.

Another emphasis of the coalition will be building "the broadest level of international support" for the new U.S. strategy, and Hook said he had productive discussions Wednesday with French, German and British officials about Iran. Those allies, who opposed the White House decision in May to pull out of the Iran nuclear deal, have said they intend to continue doing business with Iran despite the threat of secondary sanctions from the U.S. Hook would not rule out that possibility once oil sanctions go into effect in November.

He applauded President Donald Trump's refusal to re-certify the deal in May, arguing that the move freed the State Department to diplomatically "pursue the entire range of Iran's threats," which he pointed out are also concerns held by U.S. allies.

And asked whether the formation of the group, whose formation comes nearly 65 years to the day after the 1953 coup in Iran, intends to oversee regime change, Hook responded that the timing was "pure coincidence."

The group was not formed with the goal of establishing a dialogue between Tehran and Washington, Hook said, adding that "normal relations can only begin after we see that the Iranian regime is serious about changing its behavior."

But "those two things occur on a parallel track," he said.

A New U.S. Post To Pressure Iran, And A Stark Challenge Ahead

By David E. Sanger

[New York Times](#), August 16, 2018

The Trump administration is creating a special envoy post to coordinate the United States' economic pressure campaign against Iran, the latest in a series of moves to cut off Tehran's revenue and force it into a new nuclear agreement.

The job will be filled by Brian Hook, currently the State Department's director of policy planning, who was heading the negotiations before Mr. Trump decided to abandon the 2015 nuclear agreement with Tehran.

Mr. Hook faces an enormous challenge: Mr. Trump's moves have been denounced by American allies in Britain, France and Germany who say they are still abiding by the terms of the deal — and are urging Iran to do the same.

In an interview before his post was to be announced on Thursday, Mr. Hook conceded that the administration's withdrawal from the accord has strained relations with Europe. But he argued that it also opened new avenues of diplomacy.

"The Iran nuclear deal — however much they think it is keeping the peace — has prevented nations from taking action against the full range of Iran's threats to peace and security," Mr. Hook said.

"Now we can go after the Iranian regime revenues to deny them what they need to support Assad, the Houthis, and Iran's militias and proxies," he said, referring to President Bashar al-Assad of Syria and rebels in Yemen.

So far, Mr. Trump's strategy — a threat to European and Asian firms that if they do business with Iran they will be barred from business in the United States — has had only mixed results. China, for one, said this week that it would not stop buying oil from Iran, as permitted under the 2015 deal.

Still, a series of companies that were edging back into Iran have canceled their planned operations, from Boeing to European banks to energy firms that were looking to revive the country's outmoded oil drilling operations.

Iran, meanwhile, has not budged. On Monday, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, predicted on Twitter that the American strategy will fail. "THERE WILL BE NO WAR, NOR WILL WE NEGOTIATE WITH THE U.S.," he wrote.

The twin questions lurking over the American strategy are whether it does more damage to old alliances than it is worth, and whether increased

sanctions could force the kind of broad changes that Washington demands.

Mr. Trump has said he is open to a new nuclear accord that fixed what he saw as the shortcomings in the 2015 agreement.

Officials from Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China — all countries that negotiated the accord — have urged that any flaws be fixed in new agreements to preserve the existing one.

Mr. Trump rejected that approach in a move that his previous foreign policy team — including Rex W. Tillerson, the former secretary of state, and H. R. McMaster, the former national security adviser — regarded as a grave mistake.

In an email to The New York Times to promote Mr. Hook's new post, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo defended the administration's approach.

"Iran is a threat to the U.S. and our allies as it fuels terrorism, instability and weapons proliferation in the Middle East, Europe and beyond while the regime commits horrendous crimes against its own people," Mr. Pompeo said.

"We have the right strategy and an Iran-focused 'A-Team' already here at State," he said. "We urgently need to accelerate our diplomacy and coordination with partners around the globe."

The agreement that Mr. Trump jettisoned put severe limits on Iran's ability to make nuclear fuel until 2030, but lifted them thereafter. Its scope also was limited merely to Iran's nuclear activity.

France has since proposed a separate accord to limit Iran's missile testing, which has proceeded despite a United Nations resolution urging it not to conduct those tests. Iran has ignored that mandate.

Mr. Hook's appointment reflects something of a reversal at the State Department. Mr. Tillerson had eliminated many "special envoy" posts after concluding that there were far too many, causing organizational chaos.

Mr. Hook said the Iran problem required an official with powers to reach into many corners of the United States government.

"Iran is about as crosscutting as it gets in foreign policy challenges," Mr. Hook said, noting its reach into policy concerns about nuclear proliferation, missiles, maritime security, human rights and terrorism.

Mr. Hook and Mr. Pompeo believe that the Arab states and Israel have been enthusiastic about the American exit from the nuclear agreement. But the Europeans have argued that it unnecessarily sets up a confrontation where none is necessary: Reports by the International Atomic Energy Agency confirm that Iran has

stayed within the restrictions, and there was no need to blow up an agreement that was working, they say.

The European Union has threatened to punish firms that bend to the American threats and withdraw from Iran. But American officials are betting that Europe will not penalize companies that calculate their business interests with the world's largest economy vastly outweigh any interests in pursuing business in Iran.

Iraq, Turkey, European Allies Scheme To Skirt New U.S. Sanctions On Iran

By Adam Kredo

[Washington Free Beacon](#), August 16, 2018

Iran's regional allies and some European nations continue to form new plans to skirt a rash of upcoming sanctions on Tehran to keep the hardline regime afloat as protesters continue to push for regime change in the Islamic Republic, according to U.S. officials and experts.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi is the latest regional official to oppose the new sanctions and throw his government's support behind Iran as it works with regional allies and others to avoid a series of new sanctions by the Trump administration aimed at further squeezing Tehran's economy and choking off funding for its terrorist forces.

Senior Turkish officials, operating on orders from President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, also have vowed to help Iran skirt new U.S. sanctions. The move represents another turn in the diplomatic standoff between Turkey and the United States over its imprisonment of an American pastor that led the Trump administration to issue new sanctions on Ankara. Senior U.S. officials say that even more sanctions are coming down the pike.

As the Trump administration prepares to hit Tehran with a large package of new sanctions on Nov. 5, Iran's regional allies and some European governments continue high-level powwows to figure out a way around these sanctions, prompting outrage in Congress and in the Trump administration, sources said.

"We are ... working to build a global coalition to counter Iran's malign activity," a senior administration official said of the new sanctions. "What I can tell you very specifically is that we have made it very clear that we're going to aggressively enforce this executive order and the other authorities that we have pursuant to statute. We will work with countries around the world to do so. But make no mistake about it, we are very intent on using these authorities. We will use them aggressively."

"This is not the Obama administration," said another U.S. official involved in the Iran sanctions push. "The United States expects its allies to side with us

against the Iranian regime, which has rejected talks with President Trump and continues to export terrorism and oppress its own people. The U.S. expects Iraq to act like a normal country and, if they choose not to, we will not forget which of our allies sided with the regime against us. You can be very sure President Trump personally knows who is on which side as well."

Efforts by Iran's allies and European business partners to skirt sanctions are being thoroughly addressed by the Trump administration, which announced on Thursday the creation of the Iran Action Group. The new body of senior State Department officials "will be responsible for directing, reviewing, and coordinating all aspects" of the administration's efforts to isolate Iran, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced.

The new action group will work to "ensure the Department of State remains closely synchronized" with the rest of the administration and U.S. allies to curb Iran's regional terror actions, as well as new sanctions on the country. The group will be lead by Brian Hook, a senior State Department official who has been working with European allies to pressure them to support new sanctions.

Hook has already taken high-level meetings with European allies in pursuit of this policy.

Abadi's latest promise to work with Iran against U.S. sanctions is another sign of the growing ties between the two countries, which have become allies under the prime minister's tenure. Iranian-backed forces have long been operating in Iraq and have obtained U.S. arms in some cases by pretending to be official Iraqi forces. Iran continues to solidify its presence in Iraq, which it considers a key strategic location.

Earlier this month, Abadi condemned U.S. sanctions on Iran as a "strategic error" and has since promised to breach them.

"I did not say we will abide by the sanctions," Abadi was quoted as saying, explaining he will only refrain from U.S. dollar transactions with the Islamic Republic.

Iraqi groups tied to the Iranian government also have lashed out against the sanctions, according to new analysis by the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

"Abu Ala' al-Wala'i, the secretary general of Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada, an Iraqi Shiite militia with close ties to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, rejected the U.S. sanctions against the Islamic Republic, saying, 'We are working to break the blockade,'" FDD noted in a recent report on efforts by Iranian allies to skirt new U.S. sanctions.

"The militia also vowed to 'use all available means to prevent the starvation of our Muslim brothers in Iran,'" According to FDD's research.

Multiple other Iraqi groups and individuals tied to Iran have made similar comments in recent weeks, amplifying pressure on Abadi to go along with these efforts, according to FDD's analysis.

"Iran-aligned political parties also joined in the criticism," FDD noted. "The Islamic Dawa Party urged all nations not to abide by the 'unjust' sanctions, while former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, a member of Dawa, met with Iran's ambassador to Iraq and vented his frustration with the renewed sanctions on Iran."

Behnam Ben Taleblu, an Iran research fellow at FDD who helped author the report, told the Washington Free Beacon the Trump administration must apply its own pressure on Abadi and the Iraqi government to move away from Tehran.

"Not only must the U.S. work to pressure and incentivize the current and future government of Iraq to abide by sanctions, but the U.S. must take note of and counter Shiite militia networks which the Islamic Republic could use to engage in cross-border smuggling as the regime attempts to offset sanctions pressure," Taleblu said.

German Rail Operator, Deutsche Telekom End Iran Projects

[Reuters](#), August 16, 2018

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

Putin May Meet Leaders Of Turkey, Iran At Summit In Sept – Kremlin

[Reuters](#), August 16, 2018

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

China's Military 'likely Training For Strikes' On US Targets: Pentagon

By Chris Perez

[New York Post](#), August 16, 2018

China has been quietly training its pilots for long-range bomber missions — and the Pentagon now fears that the country is "likely" practicing for World War III.

"Over the last three years, the [People's Liberation Army] has rapidly expanded its overwater bomber operating areas, gaining experience in critical maritime regions and likely training for strikes against US and allied targets," the Pentagon said in a report released Thursday.

In addition, "China is developing a stealthy, long-range strategic bomber with a nuclear delivery capability that could be operational within the next 10 years."

If they succeed, "the deployment and integration of nuclear capable bombers would, for the first time, provide China with a nuclear 'triad' of delivery systems dispersed across land, sea, and air," the Pentagon said.

The Chinese government has already constructed its first overseas base — in the East African nation of Djibouti — and are now seeking to "establish additional military bases in countries with which it has a longstanding friendly relationship and similar strategic interests, such as Pakistan, and in which there is a precedent for hosting foreign militaries," according to officials.

The Pentagon's report also pointed out how China was rapidly boosting their space program.

"The PLA continues to strengthen its military space capabilities despite its public stance against the militarization of space," it said. "[China wants] to expand space surveillance capabilities that can monitor objects across the globe and in space and enable counterspace actions."

Officials noted how the Chinese had already started developing galactic weapons systems, including "kinetic-kill missiles, ground-based lasers and orbiting space robots."

The Trump administration, meanwhile, hopes to get its "Space Force" off the ground by 2020.

The Pentagon released its assessment on Thursday as tensions continue to rise between the US and China over trade. The Chinese have been conducting military exercises with their long-range bombers for months — landing them on islands and reefs in the South China Sea.

Back in May, the Pentagon was said to have rescinded its invitation to Beijing to take part in the international Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) military exercise — and China didn't take it lightly.

"This is a rash decision," said Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in response.

"China is only building civilian and necessary defense facilities on our own islands," he added. "It is the right of every sovereign state to preserve and defend itself. This is a normal deployment and has nothing to do with militarization, just like the US has a military presence on Hawaii and Guam. However, China's deployment is on a much smaller scale ... We don't wish to see any exaggeration or hype over this matter."

The Chinese government did not immediately respond to requests for comment about the Pentagon's report.