



DHS MORNING BRIEFING

Prepared for the Office of Public Affairs (OPA)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

By TechMIS

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Editorial Note: The DHS Daily Briefing is a collection of news articles related to Department’s mission. The inclusion of particular stories is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse the political viewpoints or affiliations included in news coverage.

TO: Homeland Security Secretary & Staff

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Top News

US launches mass expulsion of Haitian migrants from Texas

The Washington Post [9/19/2021 8:22 PM, Arelis R. Hernández, 11773K] reports the Biden administration Sunday began deporting people from the makeshift camp where nearly 14,000 migrants have gathered beneath a South Texas bridge amid food shortages and deteriorating sanitary conditions. Three flights carrying 327 Haitian nationals landed in Haiti on Sunday, according to two U.S. officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to release the information. In a midday news conference, Border Patrol Chief Raul Ortiz said the federal government had moved 3,300 individuals from the camp Sunday to migrant processing facilities. The government enlisted the help of the local school system to transport people on school buses to facilities in Texas in San Antonio, Laredo and Eagle Pass, he said. "We are working around-the-clock to expeditiously move migrants out of the heat, elements and from underneath this bridge to our processing facilities in order to quickly process and remove individuals from the United States consistent with our laws and our policies," said Ortiz, adding it will be done in a "humane and timely manner." The Biden administration is conducting the deportations under Title 42, the Trump-era public health order that President Biden has kept in place to push migrants south of the border during the covid-19 pandemic. The goal is to reduce the number of people waiting to be processed by U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel and improve conditions on the ground. It's also designed to break the momentum and determination of migrants who have been encouraged by their U.S. relatives to make the journey before the opportunity passes or their individual circumstances worsen. Reuters [9/19/2021 2:57 PM, Daina Beth Solomon, Alexandra Ulmer, 5304K] reports the United States was working with the home countries or countries through which the migrants had transited to get them to accept those who had been awaiting immigration processing under the bridge that links Del Rio with Ciudad Acuña in Mexico. Earlier on Sunday Reuters journalists saw a white bus escorted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents enter the Del Rio airport, then a group boarding a Coast Guard plane. A police source said the people were migrants and a source familiar with airport operations said the aircraft was heading to El Paso, Texas. Alejandro Mayorkas, secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), said during another news conference that expulsion flights to Haiti that started on Sunday will continue daily. He said he could not detail the number of flights or number of Haitians for security reasons. DHS had announced on Saturday that it was accelerating expulsions to Haiti, sending more CBP agents to the area, and taking other steps to address the situation in Del Rio, where conditions under the bridge have grown increasingly squalid. The AP [9/19/2021 8:00 PM, Juan A. Lozano, Eric Gay, Elliot Spagat and Evens Sanon, 49K] reports Mexico said Sunday it would also begin deporting Haitians to their homeland. A government official said the flights would be from towns near the U.S. border and the border with Guatemala, where the largest group remains. Haitians have been migrating to the U.S. in large numbers from South America for several years, many having left their Caribbean nation after a devastating 2010 earthquake. After jobs dried up from the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, many made the dangerous trek by foot, bus and car to the U.S. border, including through the infamous Darien Gap, a Panamanian jungle. Some of the migrants at the Del Rio camp said the recent devastating earthquake in Haiti and the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse make them afraid to return to a country that seems more unstable than when they left. "In Haiti, there is no security," said Fabricio Jean, a 38-year-old Haitian who arrived in Texas with his wife and two daughters.

“The country is in a political crisis.”

Reported similarly:

Reuters [9/19/2021 2:15 AM, Robenson Sanson and Gessika Thomas, 5304K]

Axios [9/19/2021 2:19 PM, Ivana Saric, 526K]

ABC News [9/19/2021 1:51 PM, Quinn Owen, 37K]

Mayorkas warns Haitian migrants not to attempt journey to US, mass expulsion begins

FOX News [9/20/2021 4:25 AM, Edmund DeMarche, 9251K] reports Alejandro Mayorkas, the head of the Department of Homeland Security, warned Haitian migrants against attempting a voyage to the US as more 12,000 migrants were camped around a bridge in Del Rio, Texas. “We are very concerned that Haitians that are taking the irregular migration path are receiving misinformation—that the border is open or that Temporary Protected Status is available to them despite the fact they are arriving long after the date that presents the deadline for TPS eligibility,” Mayorkas told journalists during a conference call, the Miami Herald reported. “This is not the way to come to the United States.” Bruno Lozano, the mayor of Del Rio, Texas, estimated that there were more than 12,000 migrants and asylum-seekers at a border location. The U.S. aims to expel many of the migrants camped around a bridge in Del Rio, a report said. Starting Wednesday, there will be seven expulsion flights daily to Port-au-Prince and to Cap-Haitien, the Associated Press reported, citing a U.S. official who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly. Flights will continue to depart from San Antonio but authorities may add El Paso, the official said. DHS did not immediately respond to an after-hours email from Fox News. Mondesir Sirilien, a returned migrant, told Reuters that he spent about \$15,000 to leave Haiti for the U.S.

Haiti Protests Mass Deportation of Migrants as US Faces Overwhelming Arrivals in Del Rio

The New York Times [9/19/2021 2:19 PM, Harold Isaac and Natalie Kitroeff, 24635K] reports the Haitian government protested plans by the Biden administration to expel migrants from the United States en masse, arguing that Haiti is mired in a deep political and humanitarian crisis and does not have the means to receive thousands of homeless deportees. The head of Haiti’s national migration office, Jean Negot Bonheur Delva, said the authorities expect that 14,000 Haitians would be expelled from the United States over the coming three weeks. Officials said they were preparing to receive three flights of migrants just on Sunday to the country’s capital, Port-au-Prince. “The Haitian state is not really capable to receive these deportees,” said Mr. Bonheur Delva in an interview. Haiti’s president, Jovenel Moïse, was assassinated in July. A month later the country’s impoverished southern peninsula was devastated by a 7.2 magnitude earthquake, forcing the Caribbean nation’s unstable government to confront the fallout of a deadly natural disaster. Traditionally, most Haitian migrants have fled violence and economic deprivation in the capital Port-au-Prince, where about half the country’s population lives. But a more recent wave of immigrants have fled from the quake-stricken areas. Many of the Haitians being deported from the U.S. are likely going to return to southern villages and towns destroyed by the earthquake, in which running water and power have yet to be restored. Mr. Bonheur Delva said “ongoing security issues in the country” made it extremely difficult to resettle thousands of people. He said the country could not adequately provide security or food to the returnees and said the Covid-19 pandemic further complicated the country’s ability to accept so many people at once. “I am asking for a humanitarian moratorium,” he

said. "The situation is very difficult." The Wall Street Journal [9/19/2021 1:21 PM, Alicia A. Caldwell] reports approximately 14,000 migrants, many originally from Haiti, are now in Del Rio, according to officials in the area, overwhelming the resources of local, state and federal authorities. They have formed a makeshift camp under a bridge while they wait to be processed, with a fence on one side and the Rio Grande on the other. All entered the U.S. illegally and are expected to try to claim asylum in the U.S. On Sunday, the first flights removing some from this new wave of migrants took off from Texas to Haiti, said Lewis G. Owens, the top elected official in Val Verde County, which includes Del Rio. Mr. Owens said he was told by Border Patrol leadership Sunday morning that they planned to begin processing 3,000 migrants a day and moving them away from the bridge. They will give priority to deporting single adults, he said, and are still figuring out how to handle families.

Top News (Sunday Talk Shows)

Director of the National Institutes of Health Dr. Francis Collins on Vaccine Boosters, Mandates (FOX News Sunday With Chris Wallace)

FOX News Sunday With Chris Wallace [9/19/2021 9:05 AM, Staff, 1.8M]

Director of the National Institutes of Health Dr. Francis Collins joins FOX to discuss the coronavirus and related vaccines. An FDA advisory panel supported the idea of booster shots for people 65 and older and those most at risk but rejected the idea of booster shots for the general population. "I think the big news is that they actually did approve the initiation of boosters. Remember, they're taking a snapshot of right now. We're going to see what happens in the coming weeks. It would surprise me if it does not become clear over the next few weeks that that administration of boosters may need to be enlarged based upon the data we've already seen both in the US and Israel. It's clear the waning in the effectiveness of those vaccines is the reality, and we need to respond to it," said Collins. "The process is to look at the data, have the experts consider it, and then make their best judgements at that point, recognizing that the judgement may change. If people want an absolutely authoritative statement about here's the right answer, well that's not what our country is all about. Move to China, you'll get it there," said Collins. "The goals here are to try to protect Americans from dying from this disease. 670,000 have already. It does look from the review of the data by people like myself that we are going to need to provide boosters for people at risk in order to keep this surge from beginning to affect even though who are fully vaccinated. We're trying to do the right thing, trying to look at the data as it evolves, recognizing things are changing day by day," said Collins. About 57% of the world has not received a single first dose of COVID vaccine. When asked of the morality of Americans getting boosters when this is the case, Collins said, "I think this is a false choice that's being put forward. We have, of all the countries in the world, done the most to try to get doses to people in low and middle income countries across the world. We've already sent out 140 million doses, committed to another 500 million that are coming, contributed \$4 billion to COVAX so we are very invested in that. Watch and see what happens this week when the President meets with other countries. There may be more information there as well. The most that we may be talking about as far as boosters between now and the end of this year might be 100 million doses. It's a pretty small, modest number compared to what we are already sending out to the rest of the world or have committed to do so." On mandatory vaccines for private businesses, Collins said, "I do know that the law that Congress passed requires OSHA to take action when there is grave danger in the workplace of harm to employees. COVID-19 represents a grave danger so a reasonable person might say that they are not just supposed to act, they have to act in that space, and

that is the justification for this rule." On whether people coming from across the border should be mandated to get vaccines, Collins said, "I know that vaccines are being offered to people in that situation. I guess you're asking why is it not mandated. That would have to be a question for someone else." Collins said from a public health point of view, he wants everybody to be vaccinated, and if a mandate would help, there should be one for illegal immigrants. Children 5 to 11 are set to be examined for vaccines in weeks. Collins appealed to the people who are not vaccinated to urge them to get vaccinated.

Dr. Anthony Fauci on FDA Decision on COVID Vaccine Booster Shots (ABC's This Week With George Stephanopoulos)

ABC's This Week With George Stephanopoulos [9/19/2021 9:05 AM, Staff, 3M]

The President's Chief Medical Advisor Dr. Anthony Fauci joined ABC to discuss the situation with the coronavirus. An FDA panel recently rejected booster shots for the general public. "As you well know, the approval was for people 65 years of age or older, and a considerable number of people who are 18 to 64 who have underlying conditions that put them at a higher risk for severe disease and people from 18 to 64 who are in institutional or occupational situations that would put them at an increased risk to exposure and infection. So that's a pretty good chunk of the people. The decision was made based on the data they examined, but that was always the plan, Martha, to make a proposal to be ready and prepared to do the entire amount right from the beginning with everybody, but if not, to be prepared to do what the advisory committee and the FDA finally authorized, which is fine. So I'm not disappointed. I think the process worked," said Fauci. Fauci said that they hope there will be an effect of stopping the spread when that population gets a booster, but the goal was to prevent people from getting severe disease. "Ultimately, Martha, we hope that enough people will be vaccinated either with the primary regimen or following a third shot booster with Pfizer that we will get that effect of preventing spread," said Fauci. Fauci noted that there will be a continual review of new data and possible changes to the current recommendations. Fauci said boosters based on Moderna and Johnson and Johnson will be examined in the next few weeks. On vaccines for children, Fauci said, "It will certainly be this Fall. When you talk about the rollout for vaccines, again, there will be a bit of a difference in timeframe, maybe by a couple to a few weeks between Pfizer and Moderna and others. So what we're going to almost certainly see is that sometime in the next few weeks as we get into October, we'll be able to see the vaccines for children get enough data to be presented for safety and immunogenicity, but when you get to Moderna, it will probably be a few weeks beyond that, maybe into the end of October, the beginning of November."

Dr. Anthony Fauci: People Shouldn't Get COVID Boosters Without FDA Approval (CNN's State of the Union With Jake Tapper)

CNN's State of the Union With Jake Tapper [9/19/2021 9:02 AM, Staff]

Dr. Anthony Fauci has been a proponent of COVID-19 booster shots for those who have been vaccinated, but the advisory committee to the FDA disagrees. Dr. Fauci says he doesn't view this as a mistake, with the recommendation based on an "evaluation of all of the totality of the data from the United States, from Israel, and any bit of data that we could get by the advisory committee to the FDA." Fauci adds that he supports the recommendation to wait on booster shots for the general public, saying that with the move to vaccinate people 18-64 with underlying conditions or higher risk of exposure, a large portion of the population will still get booster shots. This past Wednesday, Fauci said it would be a mistake not to advise booster shots. "... Just because I look at the data and say

I would do it this way, that's the reason why we have qualified groups of people who together as a committee examine all the data and make a decision," Fauci explains. The committee's decision also does not rule out the future of booster shots for the general public, Fauci adds, and he believes they will be widely recommended as more data is collected. One month ago, President Biden announced that the White House plans for every adult who has been vaccinated to get a booster eight months after their last doses. He said the booster program would be during the week of September 20th once the CDC and FDA approve the boosters. As people get booster shots without waiting for FDA approval, Fauci says it is not recommended they do so, as there is "always a theoretical risk" of people being harmed by getting the booster without sufficient data to show getting it is safe. Dr. Fauci says it should not be long before there is enough information for these booster shots for Pfizer recipients and when people who got other doses will be able to receive boosters.

Dr. Anthony Fauci on Future of COVID-19 Booster Shots (NBC's Meet the Press)

NBC's Meet the Press [9/19/2021 9:03 AM, Staff, 3.1M]

Dr. Anthony Fauci, of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases says President Biden's announcement of the plan to offer booster shots to Americans by September 20th was not getting ahead of the FDA or CDC. "The president and the medical group at the White House said we are planning to be able to roll out boosters essentially for everyone 16 years of age and older. That was a plan that was always... contingent upon the FDA's normal regulatory process, together with their advisors, to make a decision as to exactly what that rollout would look like." The data, Fauci says, led the FDA advisory committee to recommend only people 18-64 years of age with underlying conditions or higher risk of infection through occupational situations get the booster shots. As of now, Fauci says he believes that in the next few months or into the next year, more people will be approved for boosters. Dr. Fauci says the highest priority is still getting vaccines to unvaccinated people. Most of the data allows for approval of Pfizer booster shots, but Dr. Fauci says the data for those who have gotten the Moderna and the Johnson & Johnson vaccines should be "literally a couple to a few weeks away." Right now, there are no conclusive studies that show how long immunity lasts for people who have gotten the coronavirus. What is known is that if someone recovers from COVID-19 and then gets vaccinated, "the level of your immunity is extraordinarily high, surpassing any of the other two-dose vaccines that you get." Fauci says there are still 70 million Americans who are eligible for the vaccine but have not gotten it yet.

Dr. Francis Collins: Wider Approval for Booster Shots Likely to be Announced Soon (CBS' Face the Nation)

CBS' Face the Nation [9/19/2021 10:34 AM, Staff, 5.3M]

Dr. Francis Collins, the director of the National Institutes of Health, predicted earlier this month that booster shots are likely to be recommended for almost everybody, but that did not happen on Friday. Dr. Collins says he finds it "significant" that the FDA advisory committee unanimously voted to offer boosters to people with high risk of exposure and severe illness, such as healthcare workers and people over 65. With data continuously being evaluated, especially the findings from Israel, Dr. Collins says the recommendation to offer boosters for more people will come soon. Dr. Peter Marks, who is on the FDA advisory committee, included teachers in the high-risk category. Collins says teachers "could be seen in that space," especially teachers in classrooms with children 12 and under who cannot be vaccinated. Collins expects the CDC to discuss on Wednesday and Thursday parents of children under 12 and whether that puts them in the high-risk category as well.

Within the next two or three weeks, Dr. Collins says it should be known whether people who have been vaccinated with one vaccine can get boosters of a different formula. He adds that Moderna and Johnson & Johnson have submitted booster data, "so it's likely that the FDA will be able to have a comment on that pretty soon." Collins says the White House's announcement about the booster shots last month saying there should be shots available by this week was a preparedness strategy that Collins compares to hurricane preparedness. Next month is the target for approving vaccines for the 5-11 age group, but Dr. Collins says he does not want to put a specific date on when children five and under might be approved for a vaccine, though the trials for that age group are also ongoing.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Global Vaccination Efforts, US-China Relations (CNN's Fareed Zakaria GPS)

CNN's Fareed Zakaria GPS [9/19/2021 10:18 AM, Staff, 1M]

On Tuesday, world leaders will converge on the United Nations headquarters in New York for speeches, meetings, conferences and more, all part of the UN General Assembly. Despite the fact that the host country, the United States, asked other nations to keep delegations home to avoid turning the gathering into a COVID super-spreader event, leaders of more than 100 nations are still expected. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres joined CNN to discuss the upcoming summit. On collaboration in the international community, Guterres said, "There are some positive signs. We had the IMF together with World Bank, the World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization proposing a program of \$50 billion to allow for an increased vaccination in developing countries. I know President Biden is convening a summit to try to increase substantially the amount of vaccines available to the developing countries, but let's be clear, all of this is too little too late." Guterres noted there are two divides in vaccination efforts. One is a North-South divide in which the North took care of its vaccination of the population and largely forgot about the South, increasing mistrust between the global south and north. The other is the geo-strategic global divide which is now centered in the relationship between China and the US. "Since the beginning, and talking with both sides, I have been saying that there are areas in which a confrontation is inevitable. Human rights is one of these areas. The other some geostatistical questions related, for instance, the South China Sea or Taiwan. There are areas in which there are different positions, and it will not be easy to overcome these differences. There is an area where I believe there should be effective cooperation: climate. Then there are areas in which I believe a negotiation is necessary, a serious negotiation because there are different interests, but at the same time, there are common interests. This is related to trade and technology," said Guterres. Guterres said the future of two large countries with solely conflicting and confrontational relationships would become very dangerous for the world and the world economy. When asked about telling the Chinese government that they should allow a WHO investigation on COVID, Guterres said, "Their response is that the investigation was already done properly. So this is a matter of different opinion."

Senator Bernie Sanders Continues to Push for \$3.5 Trillion Reconciliation Bill (CBS' Face the Nation)

CBS' Face the Nation [9/19/2021 10:40 AM, Staff, 5.3M]

Reports say the U.S. military killed seven children and three civilian adults in a drone strike while targeting individuals believed to have been planning a terrorist attack on the Kabul airport. Senator Bernie Sanders says he hopes the Biden administration understands what happened with the strike and make sure something like it never happens again. The Biden

administration has also announced that it will step up deportations, particularly for the thousands of Haitian migrants that have gathered in southern Texas. Sanders says he hopes the \$3.5 trillion spending plan will include immigration measures. He says there are around 11 million people who are undocumented and “doing the essential work” for the economy and that the White House should work towards immigration reform and paths to citizenship. However, moderates are balking at this and other social policies in the reconciliation bill. Because there is no Republican support for the bill, Sanders says, the bill is being brought under the reconciliation process. Sanders says the reconciliation bill will challenge large corporations and pharmaceutical companies as well as address issues such as healthcare, affordable housing, climate, and immigration. Sanders says major compromises on the bill have already been made with cutting the original \$6 trillion over ten years down to the current \$3.5 trillion.

Rep. Jim Clyburn on Passing Reconciliation, Infrastructure Bills, Raising Debt Limit (CNN’s State of the Union With Jake Tapper and Dana Bush)

CNN’s State of the Union With Jake Tapper and Dana Bush [9/19/2021 10:40 AM, Staff, 1M]

Congressman Jim Clyburn joined CNN to discuss two spending bills making their way through Congress. Dozens of progressives have said they are going to vote no on the bipartisan infrastructure deal on September 27 if a sweeping \$3.5 trillion reconciliation bill isn’t also passed by then. “We are negotiating and of course we have a pretty bit tent in our party. We have progressives that are very, very important not just to the party but to the country, and we have more moderates, and that’s how it should be. We reflect what this country is all about, and we have a pretty evenly divided country these days and all of us are working through that,” said Clyburn. Clyburn noted that even though these bills are expensive, the cost of not doing anything about it outweighs the risk. Clyburn said they are working hard to reach the goal of voting on the infrastructure bill by September 27. “I think that we ought to really focus on the American people and think about what it takes to get us in a good place and then let the numbers take care of themselves,” said Clyburn. Clyburn expressed optimism that the House will be able to pass the infrastructure bill. On raising the debt limit, Clyburn said, “The full faith and credit of the United States of America should not be compromised on the altar of politics, and I will hope that our Republican friends will get beyond politics and do what’s necessary to keep this country moving forward and keep our financial integrity in place.”

Senator John Yarmuth on Debt Ceiling and Controversial \$3.5 Trillion Bill (Fox News Sunday With Chris Wallace)

Fox News Sunday With Chris Wallace [9/19/2021 9:19 AM, Staff, 1.2M]

Congress has a lengthy to-do list by the end of the month, and failure to act could lead to a government shutdown and defaulting on the U.S.’s debt obligations for the first time in history. Meanwhile, the fate of President Biden’s \$3.5 trillion economic agenda is on doubt. John Yarmuth, the chair of the House Budget Committee, says there are “several options for raising the debt ceiling, which is absolutely mandatory.” Yarmuth calls this a “ridiculous position to be in” as the U.S. is the only country to have a debt ceiling of this kind, which has been raised “100 times over the 104 years it’s been in existence.” Senator Mitch McConnell, however, says he and his fellow Republicans oppose raising the debt ceiling, which would cause the U.S. government to default. Meanwhile, Democratic leaders say the House will “consider” the bipartisan infrastructure bill on September 27th, but some left-wing members have said if the bipartisan bill is put up and the \$3.5 trillion spending bill is not passed, they

will vote against the former bill. Yarmuth says the matters in the \$3.5 trillion bill are not “frivolous” and need to be passed in order to fund affordable child care, early childhood education, senior care, and more social infrastructure. Yarmuth says that if the bill passes, it will be less than the \$3.5 trillion being asked for now.

Sen. Bill Cassidy on Raising the Debt Ceiling, Passing Infrastructure Bill (NBC’s Meet the Press)

NBC’s Meet the Press [9/19/2021 9:21 AM, Staff, 2.6M]

Sen. Bill Cassidy joined NBC and talked about the debt ceiling discussion in Congress. “We actually raised on a bipartisan basis the debt ceiling in the last Congress because on a bipartisan basis we agreed on what to spend the money on. This time, Democrats what to increase the debt ceiling for their reconciliation bill, which they’re passing on a party line basis, which is going to fuel inflation, if you speak to Democratic economists like Larry Summers. So, wait a second, we’re supposed to aid and abet party-line spending, which even Democratic economists say will fuel further inflation? No that’s not right. Now, if you want to come back and meet where we can actually find common ground and actually address needs as opposed to a Democratic wishlist, then we’ll help, but not when you’re just trying to tank the economy by fueling inflation to get your kind of who knows, your wishlist,” said Cassidy. Cassidy said the raising of the debt ceiling would be raised adequately to include the \$1.9 trillion package passed on a party-line vote. “Going forward, that’s what they’re hoping to do. They’re hoping to increase the debt ceiling to meet the \$3.5 trillion package which the committee for responsible budget says is actually \$5.5 trillion,” said Cassidy. Power is still out from hurricane damage in parts of Cassidy’s state. On whether the infrastructure bill will make power outages less likely after storms in Louisiana, Cassidy said, “First, hopefully disaster relief will actually address those particular needs, but this bill has billions to promote resiliency for the grid whether it’s a hurricane in Louisiana, an ice storm in Texas or the Northeast or forest fires on the West Coast, so absolutely. Again, billions to address resiliency. We should pass this.”

Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo Discusses Afghanistan Withdrawal Efforts (FOX’s Sunday Morning Futures With Maria Bartiromo)

FOX’s Sunday Morning Futures With Maria Bartiromo [9/19/2021 10:30 AM, Staff]

Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo joined FOX to discuss the Biden administration’s handling of withdrawing US troops from Afghanistan. A drone strike killed civilians during the withdrawal from Afghanistan. “It’s obviously a tragedy that civilians were killed. To those families and those around them, their friends, my apologies. We pray for them. This is just another example. It looks like they were in a rush, they were in a hurry, you could see the political pressure, and if there was one thing that drove this failed evacuation, it was the arbitrary political deadline that President Biden set, the arbitrary cap on the number of troops that could be there so we could secure the American departure and the departure of our equipment and those things. These were all political decisions driven down to the military, and I’m confident the military was under enormous pressure,” said Pompeo. “This is just another piece of an evacuation that was driven by politics and not putting America first and America’s national security.” Secretary Blinken was interrogated in hearings over the last week on the withdrawal. “It’s very difficult to imagine how this administration is going to turn it around because they seem so deeply desirous of just making this go away as if there weren’t still Americans who were being held hostage by the Taliban inside of Afghanistan, as if we still didn’t have promises out to some of the folks who helped us for these past 20 years. They just want it to go away so I’m not sure how the Biden

administration gets back from this space. I hope they'll begin to recognize that their credibility around the world was damaged deeply by how they executed this withdrawal, the failure to work alongside allies to deliver, make sure we got our allies and friends out of the country, and that we have abandoned a partner in a way that didn't deliver for security in the region as well. They need to show, they need to find places they can show real resolve, determination, make clear that we're not going back to what we were doing for the last eight years of the Obama administration which is weaknesses on the world stage," said Pompeo. Pompeo said moral support should be provided to fighters in Afghanistan. "We should make doubly sure that we never recognize the Taliban as the rightful leaders of Afghanistan," said Pompeo. "There's no way we should recognize them. Think about this: I heard Secretary Blinken say there was no plan. No, there was a detailed plan. They just chose to tear it up and put a political constraint where we had a conditions-based security model for how we were approaching the risk from terrorism in Afghanistan," said Pompeo. "They just permitted the Taliban to throw all of that away, to throw normal diplomacy away, the hard work that we were engaged in, and allow terrorists to take over this country. We shouldn't recognize them, and most importantly, Maria, and what I most worry about, is I think there may be American taxpayer dollars that may be headed for the Taliban as well. We will bribe them, we will pay them, we will coerce them through using US taxpayer dollars to convince the Taliban either to allow Americans out or for something else where we have no leverage today because of the decisions that this administration made," said Pompeo. China is supposedly negotiating a deal to occupy Bagram Air Base. There was a tweet from Secretary Antony Blinken which said, "We stand with the people of Hong Kong and continue to support their human rights and fundamental freedoms." A short time after this was posted, the State Department took it down, and said it was a mistake and the tweet was meant for somebody else. A new tweet was put up and that key sentence was taken out. Instead, it was put into the spokesman's tweet, Ned Price. "The statement that Secretary Blinken originally put out is absolutely true. The United States must stand with the people of Hong Kong. Everyday, always. We must demand that their rightful place, that the Chinese Communist Party had itself agreed to for 50 years, be restored. It doesn't appear that's where the Chinese Communist Party is headed, but the United States must continue to stand strongly with them, just as we do with the people of Taiwan. I don't know what happened. I don't know why this tweet was taken down. The original tweet that Secretary Blinken had posted was perfectly in line with what I believe the United States policy should be," Pompeo said. Back on the Afghan withdrawal, a senior State Department official said a unit created by the prior administration to conduct the withdrawal was disbanded. Pompeo said, "We did create a unit. It was really well done. It was an important team that we had put together under amazing leadership." Pompeo said they knew they needed State Department resources to get people out of harm's way at a moment's notice. "As for why the State Department was in charge, it makes sense to put the State Department in charge of getting diplomats and resources out, but more importantly than who is in charge, in the end, the Commander in Chief is in charge. It was President Biden's responsibility to provide the resources and the political freedom and the space for our military and our State Department to make sure we got every American out. Every American diplomat, every American citizen, and every American military personnel, and they simply failed to do that and frankly are failing to do that even as we sit here today," said Pompeo. Pompeo praised the administration on the new submarine deal with Australia, noting he believes it will be good for the Quad and deterring Chinese aggression.

Sen. Ted Cruz on Afghan Withdrawal, Chinese Aggression (FOX's Sunday Morning Futures With Maria Bartiromo)

FOX's Sunday Morning Futures With Maria Bartiromo [9/19/2021 10:40 AM, Staff]
Sen. Ted Cruz joined FOX to discuss the US's withdrawal from Afghanistan and Gen. Milley's alleged phone calls with China. He interrogated Secretary of State Antony Blinken this past week and got him to admit that the State Department did give the Taliban what is akin to a kill list of Americans and allies as they walked out. "When it comes to Afghanistan, Joe Biden and his administration have presided over the worst foreign policy catastrophe in a generation. They put politics in front of everything else, they abandoned Americans behind enemy lines, and it was a disaster," said Cruz, saying Biden surrendered, including surrendering Bagram Air Base. "Our nation is going to pay the price for the President's weakness and incompetence for years to come," said Cruz. General Mark Milley will testify in front of Cruz's committee next week. Chinese military ships have been in the waters off of Alaska and Taiwan. Gen. Milley allegedly spoke to his Chinese counterparts in the final days of the Trump administration. "Milley's conduct in Afghanistan, the disaster of Afghanistan, abandoning Bagram, abandoning Americans behind, there are a lot of reasons that General Milley and Secretary Austin and ultimately President Biden and Kamala Harris need to be held to account, but the report this past week that General Milley called the lead General in China and said that he would prevent President Trump from carrying out any military orders, I very much hope that report is not true. Bob Woodward includes it in a book. I don't know if Woodward's quote is accurate or not. I think General Milley deserves the benefit of the doubt. He deserves the chance to address it and answer is that quote true. Is that what you said? If it isn't, Woodward should be ashamed. If it is, then Milley would've committed a gross dereliction of duty. He would've violated the chain of command. Under our Constitution, there is one commander in chief, and it is not for the military generals to reach out to our enemies and defy the commander in chief. I hope the quote didn't happen. I hope General Milley clearly and unequivocally denies it, but he deserves at least the chance to address whether that charge is true or not," said Cruz. On the threat of China, Cruz said, "I have said for a long time that I think China is the single greatest geopolitical threat facing the United States for the next century. We talked a minute ago about the consequences of Afghanistan, of the disaster, of the failure of Biden's weakness. Every enemy across the globe saw that weakness, and they took the measure of the man. Xi in China is watching how America behaves, and they're taking the measure of the man in the Oval Office, and unfortunately I believe the chances of a Chinese amphibious assault on Taiwan have increased tenfold in the last month because as Xi has looked at Biden, I fear that Xi has made the determination that Biden is too weak and too unable to do anything, that this is now a ripe opportunity for China to move militarily on Taiwan. If that happens, it would be utterly disastrous, but weakness invites aggression. The way you protect Taiwan, and I think we should absolutely protect Taiwan, is you protect it through strength."

Former Joint Chiefs Chairman Mike Mullen Discusses Afghan Drone Strike, Milley Discussions with China (ABC's This Week With George Stephanopoulos)

ABC's This Week With George Stephanopoulos [9/19/2021 9:22 AM, Staff, 3M]

A stunning admission from the Pentagon that a drone strike in Kabul amid the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan killed 10 civilians with no connection to ISIS-K. It comes from the Pentagon already reeling from the revelation that Joint Chiefs Chairman Mark Milley privately conferred with his Chinese counterpart to avert conflict in the final months of the Trump administration. Former Joint Chiefs Chairman Mike Mullen joined ABC to discuss the situation. "I thought what General McKenzie did was right, admit the mistake and apologize, and look, and he also spoke later of possible reparations, and in fact, in the end, Secretary Austin has also committed to a review that hopefully will look at accountability for this," said Mullen. When asked if there should be accountability, he said, "Absolutely I think there

should. This was obviously an incredibly complex, fast-moving situation. We'd lost those 13 military members a couple days before that. There was clear intelligence that additional strikes were on their way. So it was in that environment in which this strike actually took place, as sad as it was." Mullen said, "Clearly they were convinced at the time that it was a good strike, and it takes some time to do that, and this is the same command that has been evacuating Afghanistan and all of that entails. I'm not overly concerned about how long it took" to apologize. Mullen said on over the horizon strikes, there will need to be validation of the intelligence, but the US has done this for years and has had many successful drone strikes. "The over the horizon capability is really there. Doing it in an extremely quick, confused, chaotic environment made this one that much more difficult and problematic," said Mullen. On Milley's communication with China in the final days of the Trump administration, Mullen said, "Having communication with counterparts around the world is routine, and even having them now with China. There was a time when we had no communications with China or if we had a problem with China, they'd cut off all mill-to-mill connections. So I'm encouraged the fact that the line of communication is there. This was routine. I think it was also overseen certainly listened to by many other in the inter-agency process so Milley wasn't out there by himself." Mullen noted he hopes the part about warning China of a strike is not true. "What's a little bit alarming to me, though, is that the Chinese would read the situation as they did as really chaotic and as if we were going to possibly strike. It's very clear, and I don't know this because I haven't talked to Chairman Milley, it's very clear he had good intel that this was the case, but the misread by China is also worrisome and it speaks to the need to have these open communications so that we don't miscalculate," said Mullen. Mullen noted he believes Milley would try to do the best thing for our country in any situation. On the submarine deal that the US made with Australia that caused France to withdraw its ambassadors, Mullen said, "Yeah, it's a big deal. To see the Australians, the US, and UK come together for that technology, and it's going to give that part of the world and Australia significant sustaining capability in undersea warfare that they don't have, and I think, I hope, strengthens the security environment in that part of the world, but it is a big, big change, and I am very much in favor of what's happening."

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Afghanistan (CNN's Fareed Zakaria GPS)
CNN's Fareed Zakaria GPS [9/19/2021 10:28 AM, Staff, 1M]

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres joined CNN to discuss Afghanistan. Guterres recently said it was a fantasy to imagine that the United Nations would be able to handle the Afghan problem. No governments have currently recognized the Taliban and very few are willing to provide aid to prevent humanitarian disaster in the country. "We have sent to Kabul the emergency relief coordinator and head of our humanitarian affairs sector who was the first personnel at the ministerial level that went to Kabul and spoke with Baradar, with Haqqani, with all those that matter. What I said about the fantasy is that you cannot ask the UN to solve all the problems that many countries with hundreds of thousands of soldiers, with trillion of different currencies and with all the means at their disposal for decades were not able to solve. And to say now the UN goes there and solves everything, they have an inclusive government, they will have full respect of human rights, they will stop all terrorism for all activities. I mean let's be honest, we have not the capacity to do that that all the others failed for decades. What we can do and we are doing is to engage with the Taliban, first of all for humanitarian aid to be distributed and to make them understand that we have solidarity from the international community and to be able to one day have recognition from the international community, they need to deliver on the aspects that are very important for us: the human rights for girls and for women. Women the right to work, girls the right to be

at school at all levels. That it will be very important for them to cooperate at the international community to avoid Afghanistan to be a safe haven for terrorists. These are things we can, naturally, engaging with them, advocate for, but we have no illusion. The situation is unpredictable, and if someone today says that they know exactly how Afghanistan will be in three months' time, I think it is probably a prophet without much credibility," said Guterres. On the international effort to combat the pandemic, Guterres said, "I think there is a conscience that if we don't address quickly the problems of those areas of the world in which the virus is still spreading like wildfire, we risk to have the COVID as a permanent problem, like the flu. This with the impacts that we are seeing in the global economy, this is something we need to avoid at all costs. I think there is a growing conscience that this is the case, and I hope that in the next few weeks, there will be effective progress in relation to the vaccination programs."

Former French Ambassador to US Gerard Araud Discusses Rift Following Announcement of US, UK, Australia Submarine Deal (CNN's Fareed Zakaria GPS)

CNN's Fareed Zakaria GPS [9/19/2021 10:07 AM, Staff, 1M]

Unacceptable behavior among allies and partners. That is what the French government called the announcement of a new security pact between the US, Australia, and the UK this week. Seen as an effort to counter China, the new deal will help Australia build a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines, among other things. But the French already had a deal to build submarines with their Australian allies. They say this move was a stab in the back. On Friday, France took the exceptional step of recalling its ambassadors to Washington and Canberra. Former French Ambassador to Washington Gerard Araud joined CNN to discuss the situation. "It was a total astonishment. On the 30th of August, the minister of defense and foreign affairs of Australia were reaffirming the commitment to the contract. 30th of August. And suddenly overnight it's denounced. On the top of that, it's denounced after obviously our closest allies plotting in our back to kick us out of the jail. So you have the loss and on top of that, you have the deviousness of our closest allies against our major interests," said Araud. When asked if France could've been part of a new agreement, Araud said, "I think it's the right question. Actually, we, the French ambassador who met the Secretary of State, met with the national security advisor, raised the question saying not only we, as I have said, we lose the contract, but you kick us out of this strategic partnership because Australia was also our strategic partner. Our Navies have been training together, and we consider that Australia was the pillar of our Indo-Pacific strategy." Araud said he does not think that the storm will have major consequences since most Europeans see it as a French problem. "Basically, we have the impression that President Biden doesn't care," Araud said, noting Afghanistan and that there was no proposal of cooperation coming from the American side when Biden traveled to Europe. "Since then, it's very difficult to say that there's a European policy of this administration." On whether or not the US and France will be able to come back together, Araud said, "I think our community has to work together, but there is no love. There is only proof of love. So I think that the administration has to show that, as I have said, that they consider that the Europeans are a real partner in a common endeavor, and we are still waiting for that." Araud also noted that France is headed into a presidential election cycle and this decision will make things more difficult for President Macron.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

[MA] Activists call on jail to stop housing immigration detainees

The [AP](#) [9/19/2021 3:21 PM, Staff, 2701K] reports immigrant rights activists in Massachusetts are planning to rally near historic Plymouth Rock and outside a local jail to call on the facility to stop housing federal immigration detainees. Organizers on Thursday evening will hold a vigil at the waterfront Pilgrim Memorial State Park followed by a march and rally at the Plymouth County Correctional Facility. The jail is the lone remaining facility housing immigration detainees in the state, with some 77 in custody as of late last month, according to federal data. Plymouth County Sheriff Joseph McDonald recently notified U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement that his office was terminating a program that deputizes some of its staff to act as federal immigration agents. But he said the jail would continue to house immigration detainees, as it has since the 1990s, despite calls from activists.

Citizenship and Immigration Services

Democrats Dealt a Blow on Immigration Plans

The [New York Times](#) [9/19/2021 8:44 PM, Luke Broadwater, 24635K] reports the Senate parliamentarian dealt a major setback on Sunday to Democrats' plan to use their \$3.5 trillion social policy bill to create a path to citizenship for an estimated 8 million undocumented immigrants. Elizabeth MacDonough, the Senate parliamentarian, who serves as the chamber's arbiter of its own rules, wrote that the "policy changes of this proposal far outweigh the budgetary impact scored to it and it is not appropriate for inclusion in reconciliation," according to a copy of her decision obtained by New York Times. Democrats had been seeking to grant legal status to undocumented people brought to the United States as children, known as Dreamers; immigrants who were granted Temporary Protected Status for humanitarian reasons; close to one million farmworkers; and millions more whom are deemed "essential workers." Immigration advocates had pushed the plan as their best chance this Congress to improve the lives of millions of immigrants, after attempts to reach a bipartisan deal with Republicans fell apart. [Roll Call](#) [9/19/2021 9:20 PM, Suzanne Monyak and Caroline Simon, 119K] reports the consequences of putting millions of people on a path to citizenship would go far beyond the narrow scope of the nation's budget, Elizabeth MacDonough said. Lawful permanent resident "status would give these persons freedom to work, freedom to travel, freedom to live openly in our society in any state in the nation, and to reunite with their families and it would make them eligible, in time, to apply for citizenship – things for which there is no federal fiscal equivalent," she said. "Changing the law to clear the way to LPR status is tremendous and enduring policy change that dwarfs its budgetary impact." The [Los Angeles Times](#) [9/19/2021 6:31 PM, Jennifer Haberkorn, 3710K] reports that Democrats are next expected to pitch a backup plan that would provide a similar pathway to citizenship, but probably not cover as many people, according to sources familiar with the talks. But the ruling released Sunday is an ominous sign for its chances, as it recounted several reasons why a massive expansion of citizenship cannot be included in the bill. Because of the special fast-track procedure Democrats are using to pass their \$3.5-trillion bill, all parts must conform to Senate rules, chiefly that each provision be directly related to the federal budget. The process, called reconciliation, allows Democrats to pass their bill with only 50 votes plus the tie-breaking vote of the vice president. The Senate parliamentarian, Elizabeth MacDonough, advised Senate aides that the proposed pathway to citizenship would not comply, according to a document obtained by the Los Angeles Times on Sunday. [Politico](#) [9/19/2021 8:07 PM, Marianne Levine, 1707K] reports Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said Sunday evening that Democrats are "deeply disappointed in the decision" but plan to meet with the

Senate parliamentarian in the coming days and pursue other options. "Our economy depends more than ever on immigrants," Schumer said. "Despite putting their lives on the line during the pandemic and paying their fair share of taxes, they remain locked out of the federal assistance that served as a lifeline for so many families. We will continue fighting to pursue the best path forward to grant them the ability to obtain lawful status."

Reported similarly:

[Washington Post](#) [9/19/2021 11:40 PM, Maria Sacchetti, 11773K]

[The Hill](#) [9/19/2021 8:25 PM, Jordain Carney, 1776K]

[Reuters](#) [9/19/2021 11:11 PM, David Shepardson, 5304K]

Customs and Border Protection

Deported veterans allowed back into the U.S. to get vaccinated

The [San Diego Union Tribune](#) [9/19/2021 12:40 PM, Alexandra Mendozawriter, 302K] reports a group of deported veterans was allowed back briefly into the country Wednesday to receive the COVID-19 shot as part of a special clinic held by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. One of them was U.S. Marine veteran Milton Tepeyac, 45, who made the trip from Sonora, México. Two days before the clinic, while searching for a house to rent in Hermosillo, he came across a Facebook post informing about the clinic to be held at the San Ysidro border crossing. "The simple fact that they are doing this, is already an incredible achievement", said Tepeyac. The VA in collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security reached out to veterans living on or near the border to inform them of both the vaccine and other benefits for which they are eligible, explained Dr. Jennifer MacDonald, senior advisor for health to the Secretary of VA. In total, 21 people, including some of the veteran's family members, received the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine at this clinic set up at a designated area near the PedEast border crossing.

Deportees land in Port-au-Prince: 'Nobody told us we were going back to Haiti'

The [Washington Post](#) [9/19/2021 7:03 PM, Widlore Merancourt and Anthony Faiola, 11773K] reports he crossed the Mexican border into Texas only two weeks ago, joyous at the prospect of building anew in the United States. Now part of the first wave of deportees rapidly ejected by the Biden administration amid a fresh surge at the border, Johnson Bordes, 23, stepped off a Boeing 737 on Sunday and into the Haitian capital, terrified by a city torn apart by violence in a homeland he could barely remember. Like many deportees arriving on charter flights at the airport in Port-au-Prince, 15 minutes from neighborhoods controlled by brutal armed gangs, Bordes's family left Haiti in the great migration after the 2010 earthquake that killed more than 200,000 people. He was 12 when they left, first for the Dominican Republic, then on to Chile, where he was living with his mother and brother when the coronavirus pandemic hit. Encouraged by relatives in the United States, the family set out on a 4,500-mile trek to the U.S. border — never imagining the road would lead back to the devastated country they left more than a decade ago. He mingled with other confused deportees, many of whom hadn't seen Haiti in years, and now spoke Spanish or Portuguese better than Haitian Creole. Several families told The Washington Post that they were never told they were being deported back to Haiti.

[TX] Part of Texas border closed where thousands of Haitians crossed

The Hill [9/19/2021 3:30 PM, Monique Beals, 1776K] reports the United States closed off a stretch of the Mexican border where thousands of Haitian migrants have been crossing between Ciudad Acuña, Mexico, and Del Rio, Texas, according to The Associated Press. Thousands of migrants are currently living in squalid conditions under a bridge in Del Rio, where temperatures are often near 100 degrees. For three weeks, they had been crossing the river into Mexico for food and other supplies before returning to the camp in Texas. But Texas Department of Public Safety vehicles lined up to block the bridge and river this weekend, and officials taped off a dam that had been used for crossing the river, according to the AP. The Washington Times [9/19/2021 6:24 PM, Stephen Dinan, 381K] reports Texas state troopers used cars to erect a wall of metal this weekend, sealing off the U.S.-Mexico border in Del Rio, and the Homeland Security Department said it was rushing agents and officers to the site to process the thousands of migrants who had made it across, as officials moved on what has become an illegal immigrant beachhead inside the country. Homeland Security also vowed more deportation flights and use of expedited removal, a speedy deportation process, to try to oust as many of the migrants, most of them Haitians, from the camp they erected on the banks of the Rio Grande. With the stream of new migrants cut off, authorities whittled down the numbers from a peak of about 16,000 people late last week to fewer than 13,000 Sunday afternoon.

[TX] Border Patrol in Texas discovers 49 undocumented migrants hidden in tractor-trailer

FOX News [9/19/2021 11:25 AM, Stephen Sorace, 9251K] reports border agents in Texas thwarted a human smuggling attempt and discovered 49 undocumented migrants crammed inside a tractor-trailer, officials said Friday. Border Patrol agents in Sierra Blanca encountered the tractor-trailer on Thursday during a traffic check at an immigration checkpoint on I-10, U.S. Customs and Border Protections (CBP) said in a statement. Agents checked the trailer and found 49 migrants from Brazil, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru hiding inside, the agency said. The driver, whom authorities said was a visa holder, was turned over to Homeland Security Investigations for prosecution.

[TX] "Trapped": Migrants collecting food try to evade law enforcement at the U.S.-Mexico border

Reuters [9/19/2021 9:19 PM, Daina Beth Solomon, Alberto Fajardo, 5304K] reports a U.S. law enforcement officer on horseback wielded what appeared to be a lariat, whipping it close to the face of a man wading in the Rio Grande carrying a plastic bag of food. It was just one desperate moment in a few hours of such scenes along the Rio Grande on Sunday. Hundreds of Haitian migrants who have been camping under a bridge in the Texas town of Del Rio were trying to bring food and other supplies from Ciudad Acuña in the Mexican state of Coahuila, while U.S. officials have stepped up security at the border and started flying migrants out of the area, some to Haiti. Migrants said their squalid encampment under a bridge on the U.S. side of the river was short of supplies. U.S. officials over the last few days had let migrants cross back and forth at a shallow point of the river. On Sunday, however, they told migrants they would not be able to return to the U.S. side if they ventured into Mexico. "We're trapped," said Joncito Jean, 37, who had spent three days sleeping on a sheet on the ground with his wife and children, ages 3 and 4. He said he regretted the decision to come.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

[CA] More evacuations ordered in California as wildfires threaten giant sequoia trees

ABC News [9/19/2021 1:14 PM, Julia Jacobo, 37K] reports wildfires swirling around California's giant sequoia trees are prompting more evacuations as they spread toward communities surrounding the forests. Residents in Ponderosa and Quaking Aspen in Tulare County have been ordered to evacuate immediately now that the Windy Fire had fanned to more than 18,000 acres surrounding the Sequoia National Forest and was 0% contained on Sunday morning. Other communities in Tulare County, such as Johnsondale and Camp Whitsett, had been ordered to evacuate several days earlier due to the Windy Fire, while the KNP Complex Fire, which is also threatening the historic sequoia forests, prompted evacuations in the Three Rivers community. The KNP Complex Fire had grown to nearly 22,000 acres by Sunday morning and was also 0% contained. The AP [9/19/2021 8:01 PM, Staff, 495K] reports the National Weather Service issued a red flag warning through Sunday, saying gusts and lower humidity could create conditions for rapid wildfire spread. The fires forced the evacuation of the park last week, along with parts of Three Rivers, a foothill town of about 2,500 people. Firefighters using bulldozers expanded a line between the fire and the community, fire spokesperson Rebecca Paterson said Sunday.

Secret Service

[NY] NYC braces for return of in-person attendance at U.N. General Assembly

New York Daily News [9/19/2021 2:13 PM, Shant Shahrigian, Neutral, Secondary] reports tensions inside and gridlock outside are in the forecast for the UN General Assembly's return to deliberations this week. The global COVID crisis, dire warnings about climate change and fallout from the U.S. withdrawal in Afghanistan are expected to predominate at the annual meeting, where more than 100 world leaders will descend upon the United Nations headquarters in Midtown. President Biden plans to make an appeal for greater international partnership on the pandemic, climate change and human rights abuses. He is set to meet with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday and address the assembly on Tuesday. Last year's General Assembly was all-virtual, and Biden is limiting his time at this year's forum over COVID concerns. On Wednesday the commander-in-chief is hosting a virtual summit focusing on the pandemic. He is expected to ask global leaders to boost commitments to sharing vaccines and address oxygen shortages around the world, among other issues. This year's General Assembly is Biden's first as president. After his predecessor Donald Trump aggressively advocated an "America First" stance on the global stage, world leaders welcomed Biden's election as a return to international norms. But chaos during last month's withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan raised questions about Biden's leadership among longstanding allies. Leaders of friendly countries decried the move, which came as the Taliban took over Afghanistan, as a disaster. U.S. officials sounded a message of unity ahead of the General Assembly.

[PA] Pennsylvania Man Pleads Guilty to Providing Material Support to ISIS

Homeland Security Today [9/18/2021 3:00 PM, Staff, Positive, Secondary] reports a Pennsylvania man pleaded guilty on September 16 to one count of attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). Mustafa Mousab Alowemer, 23, of Pittsburgh pleaded guilty to one count of attempting to provide material support to ISIS in relation to his plan to attack a church in Pittsburgh. According to court

documents, Alowemer plotted to bomb a church located on the north side of Pittsburgh using an explosive device. His stated motivation to conduct such an attack was to support the cause of ISIS and to inspire other ISIS supporters in the United States to join together and commit similar acts in the name of ISIS. Alowemer also targeted the church to “take revenge for our [ISIS] brothers in Nigeria.” Alowemer was aware that numerous people in the proximity of the church could be killed by the explosion. In furtherance of the plot to bomb the church, in May 2019, Alowemer distributed multiple instructional documents related to the construction and use of explosives and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to an individual Alowemer believed to be a fellow ISIS supporter, but who was in fact an FBI employee. Alowemer distributed these documents with the intent that the information be used in the assembly of a destructive device and in furtherance of conducting an attack in support of ISIS. In or around June 2019, Alowemer purchased several items, including nails and acetone (nail polish remover) with the belief that they were necessary to assemble a destructive device and with the intention they be used to construct the explosives that would be detonated in the vicinity of the church. The FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force members who were directly involved in this investigation include: FBI, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), IRS – Criminal Investigation, U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Pennsylvania State Police, Allegheny County Police Department, Pittsburgh Bureau of Police, Allegheny County Port Authority Police, Allegheny County Probation, University of Pittsburgh Police Department and UPMC Police Security.

[CA] Man Accused Of Manufacturing Guns From Wildomar Home

The [Patch](#) [9/18/2021 5:49 PM, Staff, Positive, Secondary] reports a felon accused of possessing equipment commonly used to make counterfeit money and manufacturing firearms out of a Wildomar home was arrested and remained behind bars in lieu of \$55,000 bail Saturday. Patrick Kirk, 30, was taken into custody after deputies served a search warrant Friday afternoon at a home in the 21400 block of Apricot Lane, according to the Riverside County Sheriff’s Department. Sheriff’s officials said among the items deputies seized from the residence were body armor and an illegal rifle. Kirk was booked into the Cois Byrd Detention Center on suspicion of various gun crimes, including manufacturing an assault weapon.

Coast Guard

[FL] A group of more than 10 rafters arrive in Miami Beach and fled when they touched the mainland

[Univision](#) [9/19/2021 6:08 PM, Staff, 366K] reports a boat with about 12 rafters washed ashore from Miami Beach this Saturday night. A witness recorded with his cell phone the moment when the boat approached the shore, at the level of 24th street with Collins. helicopter was flying over the boat when the migrants made landfall and took off running. There is no information on the arrest of any of them. The Coast Guard clarified that “they work to prevent, deter and intercept illegal migration,” however Cuban immigrants and rafters who require protection against persecution or torture are not repatriated when requesting the credible fear interview. “Migrants intercepted at sea are detained by the Coast Guard and are provided with food, water, and shelter, while their disposition is decided in coordination with other federal agencies,” the Coast Guard explained in a statement. “This is a longstanding US government policy. All intercepted immigrants have

an opportunity to request and receive protection against persecution or torture, “says the Coast Guard.

National Security News

U.N. General Assembly Expected to Address Climate Change, Covid-19

The [Wall Street Journal](#) [9/19/2021 5:30 AM, William Mauldin] reports world leaders gathering this week for an annual United Nations meeting will confront persisting global problems such as Covid-19 and climate change, while grappling with new tensions and conflicts dividing U.N. members. Diplomats and leaders attending the U.N. General Assembly in New York will also contend with the return to power of the Taliban and the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, as well as the challenge posed by Iran under a new, hard-line president, Ebrahim Raisi. President Biden is scheduled to address the General Assembly for the first time as president on Tuesday, planning to appear in person after last year’s virtual gathering. Under pressure from New York City, the U.N. is requiring that participants be vaccinated, but will rely on the honor system, a U.N. spokeswoman said. Diplomats arriving in the U.S. must submit a negative test for Covid-19, said Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N. U.S. officials have asked countries to avoid bringing large delegations. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who had the coronavirus but has said he isn’t vaccinated, is scheduled to speak Tuesday, before other leaders. China’s Xi Jinping and Russia’s Vladimir Putin aren’t expected to attend the gathering or address it directly, leaving the job to subordinates. Mr. Raisi is scheduled to speak later than Mr. Biden on Tuesday. In his address, Mr. Biden is expected to address the pandemic and climate change while pressing other governments—including the new Taliban regime and China—on rights issues. Mr. Biden will host a virtual summit Friday of the leaders of Australia, India, Japan and the U.S.—an informal alliance known as the Quad—as he prepares for his own global summit of democracies later this year. As the U.N. gathering approached, some diplomats worried that a focus on governance and rights could complicate ties with authoritarian countries that share some U.S. interests. Iran’s foreign ministry spokesman said on Sunday that Tehran remained open to a meeting in New York and that its foreign minister would in any case hold bilateral talks with his counterparts from the nuclear-deal talks. Iran has so far this year refused direct talks with the U.S. The [AP](#) [9/19/2021 2:07 PM, Edith M. Lederer] reports U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has pointed to many other signs of a more chaotic, insecure and dangerous world: rising poverty and hunger; technology’s advances “without guard rails” like lethal autonomous weapons; the risks of climate breakdown and nuclear war; and growing inequality, discrimination and injustice bringing people into the streets to protest “while conspiracy theories and lies fuel deep divisions within societies.” The U.N. chief keeps repeating that the world is at “a pivotal moment” and must shift gears to “a greener and safer world.” To do that, leaders need to give multilateralism “teeth,” starting with joint action to reverse the global failure to tackle COVID-19 in 2020 and to ensure that 70% of the world’s population is vaccinated in the first half of 2022. But as is often true with the United Nations, it remains to be seen whether the high-level meetings, which start Monday and end Sept. 27, make actual progress.

[Cuba] Biden administration has made little progress in closing Guantanamo Bay prison

[CNN](#) [9/19/2021 8:01 AM, Ellie Kaufman, 4876K] reports President Joe Biden has said he wants to close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility, where 39 detainees still reside, by the end of his term, but his administration is yet to make much progress towards meeting

that goal. The Biden administration first announced it intended to close the facility during a White House press briefing in February 2021. When asked by a reporter if the prison would be closed by the time Biden leaves office, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said, "that's certainly our goal and our intention." But months into Biden's term, 39 detainees remain housed at the prison in Cuba. 10 detainees have been cleared by the Guantanamo Periodic Review Board system and are eligible for release, but they have not been transferred to a different country and out of the prison yet. Aside from the 10 already eligible for release, 17 detainees are eligible for periodic review board hearings, two detainees have been convicted and ten are in the office of military commission process, meaning they are still in the pretrial process in the military court system created for law of war offenses, and they have yet to be proven guilty or innocent.

[France] France's Macron to talk to Biden amid crisis over submarines

The [AP](#) [9/19/2021 12:08 PM, Elaine Ganley] reports French President Emmanuel Macron will speak in the coming days with President Joe Biden in their first contact since a major diplomatic crisis erupted between France and the United States over a submarine deal with Australia, an official said Sunday. The phone call is at the request of Biden, government spokesman Gabriel Attal said, adding that there was "shock" and "anger" at first in France over news of the deal. But now it's time to try to move forward, he said. What the French now call a "grave crisis" erupted over the sudden, surprise end to a 2016 contract worth at least \$66 billion between France and Australia to build 12 conventional diesel-electric submarines. Instead, Australia signed on with the United States and Britain for eight nuclear-powered submarines. France insists it was not informed of the deal in advance. France recalled its ambassadors from the United States and Australia in a sign of the seriousness of the crisis. "What's at play in this affair, this crisis ... are strategic issues before being commercial issues," Attal said in an interview on BFMTV. "The question is ... the forces present, the balance, in the Indo-Pacific where part of our future is at play, and our relations with China." Macron will be seeking explanations from Biden about what led to a "major rupture in confidence," the spokesman added. "There was a moment of shock, of anger ... Now, we must advance."

[France] France cancels defence meeting with UK over submarine row, sources say

[Reuters](#) [9/19/2021 6:42 PM, John Irish and Tim Hether, 5304K] reports France has cancelled a meeting between Armed Forces Minister Florence Parly and her British counterpart planned for this week after Australia scrapped a submarine order with Paris in favour of a deal with Washington and London, two sources familiar with the matter said. Parly personally took the decision to drop the bilateral meeting with British Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, the sources said. The French defence ministry could not be immediately reached. The British defence ministry declined comment. The sources confirmed an earlier report in the Guardian newspaper that the meeting had been cancelled. The scrapping of the multi-billion-dollar submarine contract, struck in 2016, has triggered a diplomatic crisis, with Paris recalling its ambassadors from Washington and Canberra. France claims not to have been consulted by its allies, while Australia says it had made clear to Paris for months its concerns over the contract.

[Australia] Australian prime minister: No regrets over submarine deal with US, UK

[The Hill](#) [9/19/2021 1:26 PM, Monique Beals, 1776K] reports Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said on Sunday that he stands by his decision to move forward with a new trilateral security deal with the U.K. and U.S. and forgo another deal made with France in

2016. "I don't regret the decision to put Australia's national interest first," Morrison said, according to Reuters. The new deal will allow Australia to build at least eight nuclear-powered submarines with technology from the U.S. and the U.K., a move Morrison said will better serve Canberra against new threats in the Indo-Pacific, Reuters noted. French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian on Saturday, however, criticized the "duplicity, disdain and lies" surrounding Australia's decision to partner with the U.K. and U.S., according to The Associated Press.

[North Korea] N.Korea warns U.S. risks 'dangerous nuclear arms race' over Australia subs

Reuters [9/20/2021 3:18 AM, Hyonhee Shin, 5304K] reports North Korea warned on Monday that the United States risked a dangerous nuclear arms race by providing submarine technology to Australia, criticising its "double standards" and vowing counter-measures. Last week, the United States clinched a new trilateral security partnership involving Britain to provide technological aid to Australia to build at least eight nuclear-powered submarines. North Korea joined China in decrying the U.S. decision as an "irresponsible one" that destroys regional peace and stability and global non-proliferation efforts. "These are extremely undesirable and dangerous acts which will upset the strategic balance in the Asia-Pacific region and trigger off a chain of nuclear arms race," the North's foreign ministry said in a comment carried by the official KCNA news agency. The North criticised Washington's "double-dealing attitude," singling out White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki's remarks that it does not seek conflict with China but the decision was to shore up regional security. Her comment "amounts to a stand that any country can spread nuclear technology if it is in its interests, and this shows that the U.S. is the chief culprit toppling the international nuclear non-proliferation system," the ministry said.

Reported similarly:

Washington Post [9/20/2021 2:31 AM, Rachel Pannett, 11773K]

Bloomberg [9/19/2021 8:39 PM, Youkyung Lee, 6400K]

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DHS MORNING BRIEFING

Prepared for the Office of Public Affairs (OPA)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

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Editorial Note: The DHS Daily Briefing is a collection of news articles related to Department’s mission. The inclusion of particular stories is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse the political viewpoints or affiliations included in news coverage.

TO: Homeland Security Secretary & Staff

DATE: Tuesday, September 21, 2021 6:00 AM ET

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Top News

Biden to raise refugee admissions cap to 125,000 in the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1

The [New York Times](#) [9/20/2021 6:11 PM, Michael D. Shear, 24635K] reports that President Biden intends to increase to 125,000 the number of refugees who can enter the United States in the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, the State Department announced on Monday, making good on his campaign pledge to do so. Mr. Biden's decision is unlikely to affect two groups of people most recently in the news: tens of thousands of people from Kabul fleeing the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan and more than 15,000 Haitians in a sprawling, makeshift camp under a bridge at the southern border. The people in those groups are not officially classified as refugees. The move indicates the president's intention to open the country's doors after four years in which the Trump administration sought to prevent refugees from settling here. In May, Mr. Biden raised the refugee admissions cap for the current fiscal year from 15,000 - an historically low level set by former President Donald J. Trump - to 62,500. At the time, Mr. Biden also vowed to make good on his promise to increase the cap to 125,000 for the first full fiscal year of his presidency. Ned Price, the State Department spokesman, said in a statement on Monday that Mr. Biden has sent to Congress a report detailing his intention to do just that in an effort to "address needs generated by humanitarian crises around the globe." "A robust refugee admissions program is critical to U.S. foreign policy interests and national security objectives, and is a reflection of core American values," Mr. Price said in the statement. The [Washington Post](#) [9/20/2021 5:16 PM, Felicia Sonmez and Seung Min Kim, 11773K] reports the administration also cited the expanded resettlement of Central Americans and Myanmar dissidents. According to a report released Monday by the State Department in conjunction with the Departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services, the cap for fiscal 2022 is expected to include 40,000 refugees from Africa, 35,000 from the Near East/South Asia, 15,000 from East Asia, 15,000 from Latin America/the Caribbean, and 10,000 from Europe/Central Asia. An additional 10,000 belong to an unallocated reserve, according to the report. [CBS News](#) [9/20/2021 3:59 PM, Camilo Montoya-Galvez, 2612K] reports that during fiscal year 2022, the U.S. will give "particular focus" to resettling Central Americans fleeing violence, LGBTQ refugees, Afghans who worked for U.S.-based organizations, at-risk Uyghurs, Hong Kong dissidents and refugees from Burma, including members of the persecuted Rohingya Muslim minority, according to the notification. The administration said it would also unveil a private sponsorship program during the coming fiscal year that will allow non-governmental groups and individuals in the U.S. to finance the resettlement of refugees. The initiative is likely to mirror a program in Canada that has broad support there. Approximately 53,000 Afghans who were determined to be in danger of being harmed in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan are undergoing vaccination and processing at eight military sites across the U.S. mainland, a Department of Homeland Security spokesperson told CBS News on Monday. [The Hill](#) [9/20/2021 6:29 PM, Morgan Calfant, 1776K] reports the Biden

administration will need additional slots in part to accommodate Afghans who are being brought to the United States after the fall of the Afghan government to the Taliban during the U.S. military withdrawal from the country. Some 53,000 Afghans have been brought to the U.S., though a portion of them are applicants for special immigrant visas. Earlier this month, the White House asked Congress for \$6.4 billion in additional funding to help resettle Afghan refugees.

Reported similarly:

[Reuters](#) [9/20/2021 4:34 PM, Mica Rosenberg and Lisa Lambert, 5304K]

[CNN](#) [9/20/2021 1:01 PM, Priscilla Alvarez, 4876K]

[FOX News](#) [9/20/2021 6:12 PM, Michael Lee, 9251K]

[Telemundo Washington DC](#) [9/20/2021 1:52 PM, Staff, 4K]

[Washington Times](#) [9/20/2021 12:21 PM, Stephen Dinan, 381K]

White House, House Homeland Security chair denounce ‘horrific’ mistreatment of Haitian migrants by Border Patrol officers

The [AP](#) [9/20/2021 4:59 PM, Juan A. Lozano, Eric Gay, Elliot Spagat and Evens Sanon] reports more than 6,000 Haitians and other migrants have been removed from an encampment at a Texas border town, U.S. officials said Monday as they defended a strong response that included immediately expelling migrants to their impoverished Caribbean country and using horse patrols to stop them from entering the town. Calling it a “challenging and heartbreaking situation,” Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas issued a stark warning: “If you come to the United States illegally, you will be returned. Your journey will not succeed, and you will be endangering your life and your family’s life.” Mayorkas and Border Patrol Chief Raul Ortiz said they would look into agents on horseback using what appeared to be whips and their horses to push back migrants at the river between Ciudad Acuña, Mexico, and Del Rio, Texas, where thousands of migrants remain camped around a bridge. Both officials said they saw nothing apparently wrong based on the widely seen photos and video. Mayorkas said agents use long reins, not whips, to control their horses. Ortiz, the former chief of the Del Rio sector, said it can be confusing to distinguish between migrants and smugglers as people moved back and forth near the river. The chief said he would investigate to make sure there was no “unacceptable” actions by the agents. Mayorkas said 600 Homeland Security employees, including from the Coast Guard, have been brought to Del Rio, a city of about 35,000 people roughly 145 miles (230 kilometers) west of San Antonio. He said he has asked the Defense Department for help in what may be one of the swiftest, large-scale expulsions of migrants and refugees from the United States in decades. He also said the U.S. would increase the pace and capacity of flights to Haiti and other countries in the hemisphere. The number of migrants at the bridge peaked at 14,872 on Saturday, said Brandon Judd, president of the National Border Patrol Council, a labor union that represents agents. Mexico also said it would expel Haitian migrants, and began busing them from Ciudad Acuña Sunday evening, according to Luis Angel Urraza, president of the local chamber of commerce. He said he saw the first two buses leave from in front of his restaurant with about 90 people aboard. But Mayorkas defended his recent decision to grant Haitians temporary legal status due to political and civil strife in their homeland if they were in the United States on July 29, but not to those being sent back now. “We made an assessment based on the country conditions ... that Haiti could in fact receive individuals safely,” he said. The [Washington Post](#) [9/20/2021 4:55 PM, Felicia Sonmez, 11773K] reports the White House and the chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee on Monday voiced concern over photos and reports appearing to show U.S. Border Patrol officers on

horseback mistreating Haitian migrants near the Rio Grande, calling the images “horrific.” One photo by photojournalist Paul Ratje shows a Border Patrol officer on horseback, grabbing the shirt of a Haitian migrant holding bags of food and trying to enter an encampment near the river. Other footage shows mounted Border Patrol officers chasing migrants away. One of the officers can be seen swinging at one of the migrants with what appears to be a strap connected to the horse’s bridle. Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (D-Miss.), chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, denounced the officers’ behavior in a statement Monday. “Video and photos coming out of Del Rio showing U.S. Border Patrol’s mistreatment of Haitian migrants along the border are horrific and disturbing,” Thompson said. “This mistreatment runs counter to our American values and cannot be tolerated.” He called on Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas to “take immediate action to hold those responsible accountable and ensure that all migrants are treated in accordance with the law and basic decency, as this Administration has promised to do since day one.” During a press availability in Del Rio, Tex., Monday, Mayorkas was asked whether the images showed inhumane treatment by the Border Patrol officers. Mayorkas responded that reporters “are assuming facts that have not yet been determined.” White House press secretary Jen Psaki fielded several questions about the images during Monday’s news briefing. Psaki described the footage she has seen as “horrific” but said she is seeking more context and information on the events that took place. [USA Today](#) [9/20/2021 3:51 PM, Chelsey Cox and Mabinty Quarshie, 6282K] reports Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas told reporters Monday that CBP is coordinating with Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the U.S. Coast Guard to move migrants to other processing locations for removal. The agency has moved approximately 3,500 migrants “over the last few days and 3,000 today,” he said. “We are in the midst of a pandemic and a critical migration challenge,” Mayorkas said. “We continue to exercise the Centers for Disease Control (and Prevention’s) title 42 authority.” It is “not an immigration authority, but a public health authority,” Mayorkas said. [CBS News](#) [9/20/2021 7:15 PM, Staff, 2612K] reports The migrants have been dealing with triple-digit temperatures and a lack of food and water, reports CBS San Antonio affiliate KENS-TV. “It’s hot. It’s dry. We’re also prone to weather phenomena here,” Del Rio Mayor Bruno Lozano said. “We are providing food, water, portable toilets, towels. Emergency medical technicians are available first aid if someone needs medical care beyond what our employees can provide,” U.S. Border Patrol Chief Raul L. Ortiz said, according to KENS. “We are working around the clock to expeditiously move migrants out of the heat, elements and from underneath this bridge to our processing facilities in order to quickly process and remove individuals from the United States consistent with our laws and our policies,” Ortiz TOLD A news conference at the Del Rio bridge.

Reported similarly:

[Politico](#) [9/20/2021 2:43 PM, Nick Niedzwiadek, 1707K]

[Bloomberg](#) [9/20/2021 10:50 PM, Jennifer Epstein and John Harney, 6400K]

[Reuters](#) [9/20/2021 5:43 PM, Daina Beth Solomon, 5304K]

[CNN](#) [9/20/2021 10:38 PM, Jason Hoffman, Priscilla Alvarez, et al., 4876K]

[Univision](#) [9/20/2021 6:38 PM, Staff, 366K]

Hundreds of Haitians return to Mexico after expulsions from Texas begin

[The Hill](#) [9/20/2021 3:14 PM, Joseph Choi, 1776K] reports hundreds of Haitian migrants have gone back to Mexico from the camp under a bridge in Del Rio, Texas, where many were staying in squalor as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) began deportations this week. A steady stream of mostly Haitian migrants made its way back across the Rio

Grande on Monday. Many feared being sent back to their home country, which has been shocked by a presidential assassination and a massive earthquake in recent months. At one point, nearly 12,000 migrants were at the Del Rio camp. U.S. Border Patrol is aiming to deport the majority of these migrants, reportedly prioritizing single adults and families who don't declare asylum. Many Haitian migrants who were in the Del Rio encampment have not been back to Haiti since 2010, having left the country after the 7.0 magnitude earthquake. DHS began deporting Haitian migrants back to Port-au-Prince this week, with more than 300 migrants being sent back on Sunday alone. Beginning on Tuesday, Immigration and Customs Enforcement is expected to fly seven or eight planes to Haiti per day. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas traveled to Del Rio on Monday to address the situation and receive an operational briefing. Haitian officials have sent divided signals on the return of so many migrants, with acting Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry saying the country is prepared to welcome them back and Election Minister Mathias Pierre arguing the country is not prepared for such a large influx of people. [NPR](#) [9/20/2021 3:31 PM, Joel Rose, Scott Neuman] Audio: [HERE](#) reports as the Biden administration moves quickly to expel migrants camped under a bridge in Del Rio, Texas, its plan depends on a controversial Trump-era policy put in place in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic to speed up removals. "Title 42 is not an immigration authority, but a public health authority," Mayorkas said. "To protect the American public. To protect the communities along the border. And to protect the migrants themselves." On Sunday, U.S. Border Patrol Chief Raul Ortiz said the government had moved 3,300 individuals from the bridge camp to migrant processing facilities in San Antonio, Laredo and Eagle Pass, Texas. Ortiz said the local school system had lent buses to the effort, which he said was being carried out in a "humane and timely manner." Officials said just over 300 have been removed on flights to Haiti. "We are working around-the-clock to expeditiously move migrants out of the heat, elements and from underneath this bridge to our processing facilities in order to quickly process and remove individuals from the United States consistent with our laws and our policies," Ortiz said. [FOX News](#) [9/20/2021 2:59 PM, Ronn Blitzer, 9251K] reports that while the administration is trying to protect illegal immigrants who are already in Del Rio, living in poor conditions during a pandemic, Mayorkas emphatically tried to discourage other migrants from coming to the U.S. "We are very concerned that Haitians who are taking this irregular migration path are receiving false information that the border is open or that Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is available," Mayorkas said. While some Haitians enjoy TPS protection, Mayorkas clarified later that this is only for those currently in the U.S. who arrived before July 29. "I want to make sure that it is known that this is not the way to come to the United States. That is false information," Mayorkas reiterated. "Irregular migration poses a serious security risk to the migrants themselves. Trying to enter the United States illegally is not worth the tragedy, the money or the effort." [USA Today](#) [9/20/2021 4:02 PM, Staff, 6282K] Video: [HERE](#) reports White House Press Secretary says the situation along the southern border is challenging, but defended the administration's immigration policy.

Reported similarly:

[Washington Times](#) [9/20/2021 10:28 AM, Stephen Dinan, 381K]

Biden admin prioritizes single adult Haitians, some families for deportation

[Yahoo! News](#) [9/20/2021 8:49 AM, Julia Ainsley, 13869K] reports that the Biden administration will prioritize all single adult Haitians and some Haitian families for deportation, after more than 15,000 mostly Haitian migrants converged on a Texas border bridge, say two senior Department of Homeland Security officials. Unaccompanied children and some families will be allowed to stay in the United States and given dates for asylum

hearings, the senior Homeland Security officials said. Thousands of others will be deported to Haiti, including families who do not claim asylum and all single adults. Many have not seen Haiti since they fled to Latin American countries after the 2010 earthquake or other natural or political crises. Immigration and Customs Enforcement will begin flying six to eight deportation flights per day starting Tuesday, the officials said. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas visited Del Rio on Monday for a briefing and met with state and local officials. Over the weekend, Customs and Border Protection closed the Del Rio International Bridge, diverting traffic to nearby Eagle Pass, Texas, and with the number of agents in the area surging to 400. Texas state troopers began blocking migrants from crossing over the Rio Grande to prevent them congregating under the bridge. Border Patrol Chief Raul Ortiz said Sunday that the agency had moved 3,300 migrants of the crowd of 15,000 out from under the bridge. The senior Homeland Security officials said multiple women went into labor among the throngs packed under the bridge, but all babies were delivered safe and healthy. A Homeland Security spokeswoman said of the three flights that left Sunday, "All passengers were medically screened prior to boarding the flights. Additionally, migrants and staff were provided with and required to wear personal protective equipment prior to, and during, the flight, and to be cleared for travel were required to have a temperature of less than 100.4 degrees and to not exhibit Covid-related symptoms." The spokeswoman did not comment on who would be prioritized for deportation.

Reported similarly:

[The Hill](#) [9/20/2021 11:54 AM, Joseph Choi, 1776K]

Haitian journey to Texas border starts in South America

The [AP](#) [9/21/2021 12:14 AM, Julie Watson, Juan A. Lozano and Elliot Spagat, 11773K] reports Robins Exile downed a traditional meal of plantains and chicken at a restaurant run by Haitian immigrants, just a short walk from the walled border with the United States. He arrived the night before and went there seeking advice: Should he try to get to the U.S., or was it better to settle in Mexico? Messages on WhatsApp and Facebook and YouTube videos from Haitian migrants warned him to avoid crossing in Del Rio, Texas, where thousands of Haitians have converged recently. It was no longer the easy place to cross that it was just a few weeks ago. Discussion Monday at the Tijuana restaurant offered a snapshot of Haitians' diaspora in the Western Hemisphere that picked up steam in 2016 and has shown little sign of easing, demonstrated most recently by the more than 14,000 mostly Haitian migrants assembled around a bridge in Del Rio, a town of only 35,000 people. Of the roughly 1.8 million Haitians living outside their homeland, the United States is home to the largest Haitian immigrant population in the world, numbering 705,000 people from the Western Hemisphere's poorest country. Significant numbers also live in Latin American countries like Chile, which is home to an estimated 69,000 Haitians, according to the Migration Policy Institute.

Haitian migrants in Texas worry as deportations begin: "I'll die in Haiti"

[CBS News](#) [9/20/2021 10:04 AM, Staff, 2612K] reports that mass deportations for more than 12,000 migrants in south Texas are underway, with more than 300 Haitians arrived back in their home country Sunday. More deportation flights are planned this week, as the U.S. government tries to process the more than 12,000 migrants camped out near Del Rio, Texas. Correspondent Manuel Bojorquez reports that most of the migrants, who have been living in a makeshift camp near the border in Del Rio, are Haitians, many of whom who migrated to South and Central America after the devastating earthquake in 2010. They

came to the U.S. border recently after hearing rumors that they would be allowed to cross, hoping for a better life up North, but most will likely end up back in Haiti. More than 300 Haitians arrived back in their home country Sunday, and more deportation flights are planned this week, as the U.S. government tries to process the more than 12,000 migrants camped out near Del Rio, Texas. One migrant says he was in detention for four days in the U.S.: "Four days without brushing our teeth; four days without a shower." With this section of the U.S.-Mexico border closed, many of the migrants tried to cross the Rio Grande over the weekend, but were confronted by Border Patrol agents on horseback. In an interview with CNN, Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas said the U.S. government is working to move thousands of the migrants every day to processing centers. "We have sent a very clear message early on, in light of the fact that we are in the midst of a pandemic, that the border is not open, and people should not take the perilous journey here," he said. In that interview, Mayorkas was asked if there's a contradiction because the U.S. is welcoming refugees from Afghanistan, but deporting Haitians in need. He replied that the Afghan nationals are being screened and vetted before being flown to the U.S., and that is different than simply showing up at the border. [Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Daines demands answers over reports child traffickers among Afghan evacuees

The [Washington Times](#) [9/20/2021 9:30 AM, Haris Alic, 381K] reports Sen. Steve Daines is demanding answers about the Biden administration's Afghan evacuation program over concerns it has been subverted by child traffickers. Mr. Daines, Montana Republican, sent a letter to the Department of Homeland Security on Monday requesting pertinent information on its vetting process for Afghan evacuees. The GOP lawmaker argued that congressional oversight was needed to ensure taxpayer dollars were not spent on resettling "dangerous individuals or child traffickers" within the U.S. "While admitting those who served alongside U.S. forces and those who would face religious persecution is laudable, there is a great deal of public confusion as to the full scope of those who are entering the U.S. following the fall of Afghanistan's government to the Taliban," wrote Mr. Daines in the letter, a copy of which was obtained exclusively by The Washington Times. Given that more than 120,000 individuals have already been evacuated from Afghanistan, Mr. Daines said it was concerning that many lacked "comprehensive records" from which to conduct a proper national security threat screening. In his letter, Mr. Daines requested Homeland Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas detail to Congress what the federal government was doing about the situation. GOP lawmakers are especially interested in whether the Biden administration has a system in place to weed out individuals engaged in "child trafficking or sexual misconduct."

[TX] Texas Gov. Abbott asks Biden for federal emergency declaration amid border crisis

[FOX News](#) [9/20/2021 2:14 PM, Ronn Blitzer, 9251K] reports Texas Gov. Greg Abbott asked President Biden to issue an emergency declaration for his state due to the increasingly difficult border crisis. In a letter to the president, Abbott specifically pointed to Val Verde County, where Haitian migrants have set up an encampment in Del Rio under the International Bridge. The governor said that as of Saturday there were nearly 16,000 migrants in Del Rio. "Families, including infants and children, need food, water and medical supplies that the local government cannot supply," Abbott wrote. "Thousands of families are immobilized in 100-degree heat as their numbers continue to swell as they wait to be processed by the approximately 64 federal agents in the area. Individuals are camping in squalid conditions and bathing in muddy river water, causing great health concerns."

Additionally, the governor said, the coronavirus pandemic makes the situation even more perilous, as he "has been provided no clear information about whether these individuals have received a COVID-19 vaccination or have been tested for the virus, or if they be exposing Texans and Americans to COVID." Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas is on the ground in Texas Monday to address the situation in Del Rio, and the Department of Homeland Security is taking various steps, including ramping up efforts to return migrants to Haiti and other countries. [Telemundo 48 El Paso](#) [9/20/2021 6:20 AM, Staff, 5K] reports Governor Abbott issued a state disaster declaration for multiple counties in South Texas on May 31, 2021, due to the continued flow of undocumented migrants at the border. Additionally, Abbott implemented Operation Lone Star in March to combat human and drug smuggling in Texas, developed a plan to build a wall on the state-Mexico border, and signed HB9 on September 17 to designate \$ 1.8 thousand. millions for border security efforts.

[Afghanistan] C.D.C. mandates measles vaccinations and quarantines for Afghan refugees.

The [New York Times](#) [9/20/2021 6:52 PM, Eileen Sullivan, 24635K] reports the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is requiring Afghan refugees to get vaccinated against measles and quarantine for 21 days, after some were found to have the highly contagious virus when they arrived in the country this month. As of Monday, the C.D.C. said it knew of 16 confirmed cases of measles among Afghan evacuees and Americans who fled Afghanistan in recent weeks — up from six that the White House confirmed late last week — and four cases of mumps. Evacuees on American military bases in the United States and overseas will have to wait three weeks after getting the MMR vaccine that protects against measles, mumps and rubella before they can leave, the C.D.C. said, to give the vaccine time to take effect. The agency said Monday that some Afghan evacuees had "left bases before measles cases were identified," prompting a mass vaccination campaign. The new information came in a special advisory that the agency issued to doctors around the country, warning them to be on alert for cases of measles and other infectious diseases among evacuees from Afghanistan. The advisory said the C.D.C. was "also aware of some cases" of tuberculosis, chickenpox, malaria, leishmaniasis, hepatitis A and Covid-19 among evacuees. It warned that the evacuees were at increased risk of gastrointestinal infections as well, including shigellosis, giardiasis and cryptosporidiosis.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

[TX] Conroe sex offender sentenced to 50 years in case involving dozens of victims

The [Houston Chronicle](#) [9/20/2021 2:30 PM, Jose R. Gonzalez, 183K] reports a registered sex offender from Conroe who was paroled in 2018 will be in prison until 2070. The 34-year-old man will not be released until the year 2070 after a plea deal last week where he stood accused of victimizing dozens of children, some as young as 8 years old — making sexual contact with four of them — in a case where he was found in possession of thousands of images of child pornography. On Friday, Jody James Malone Jr. pleaded guilty to the first-degree felony offense of continuous sexual abuse of a child, in presiding Judge Lisa Michalk's 221st District Court. Michalk sentenced Malone to 50 years in prison with one year jail credit, according to the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office. "Because of the strength of the investigation, we were able to secure this outcome without requiring his victims to appear publicly in court," said lead prosecutor Special Victims Division Chief Shana Redwine in a statement. "This was a great relief to those children and their families.

We are grateful for the good work of law enforcement in this case.” According to the District Attorney’s Office, the agency aided in the case against Malone and his apprehension, along with Homeland Security Investigations, the Conroe Police Department and other agencies within the Houston-Metro Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force.

Citizenship and Immigration Services

After Setback, Democrats Vow to Push Ahead on Immigration Overhaul

The New York Times [9/20/2021 6:29 PM, Luke Broadwater and Eileen Sullivan, 24635K] reports Congressional Democrats vowed on Monday to continue their efforts to grant legal status to millions of undocumented immigrants, a centerpiece of President Biden’s immigration plan, after a top Senate official rejected their bid to include it in their \$3.5 trillion social policy bill. Sunday’s decision by the Senate parliamentarian threatened to scuttle what Mr. Biden and Democrats had considered their best chance in decades to enact an initiative that has been stymied amid partisan polarization and procedural obstacles. Roll Call [9/20/2021 5:47 PM, Suzanne Monyak, 119K] reports New Jersey Sen. Bob Menendez, a key player in immigration discussions, told reporters Monday that Democrats “will be going back to the parliamentarian with other options in the coming days.” “She gave her view on only one approach on including a pathway to citizenship in reconciliation,” Menendez said, just hours after Parliamentarian Elizabeth MacDonough shot down efforts to include a path to legal status for certain immigrants in the bill. “I certainly intend to keep working until we get to a yes, and we’re not going to take no for an answer,” Menendez said. Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer also noted in a statement Sunday night that his caucus had “prepared alternate proposals” and would hold additional meetings with MacDonough. The alternative options are part of a back-and-forth likely to ensue with the parliamentarian, as Democrats work to include a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants for the first time in decades before potentially losing their congressional majorities in the 2022 midterm elections. In her decision, MacDonough said she found the proposed provisions, which would have covered millions of undocumented immigrants, including those brought to the U.S. as children, did not comply with Senate procedural rules governing the reconciliation process. Under the so-called Byrd rule, measures included in a reconciliation bill — which can pass with a simple majority — must directly have a budgetary impact. “Changing the law to clear the way to [lawful permanent resident] status is tremendous and enduring policy change that dwarfs its budgetary impact,” she wrote. FOX News [9/20/2021 5:53 AM, Adam Shaw, 9251K] reports that as part of this bill, Democrats had sought to include a number of immigration provisions, including a pathway to legal permanent residence and citizenship for a number of categories of illegal immigrants. Those eligible included recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, those who are protected by Temporary Protected Status, farmworkers, and those deemed “essential workers.” It was seen as Democrats’ best chance of passing pathways to citizenship for illegal immigrants, after efforts to pass a sweeping immigration reform bill earlier in the year stalled in the face of Republican opposition. Given the 50/50 split in the Senate, Democrats would have needed to get 10 Republican votes to overcome a filibuster, and Republicans have largely snubbed efforts to grant legal status to illegal immigrants — citing the effect they believe it would have on the already surging crisis at the southern border. But in a preliminary ruling, MacDonough ruled that such language was inappropriate for a budget reconciliation bill.

Reported similarly:

AP [9/20/2021 6:05 PM, Alan Fram, 495K]

Reuters [9/20/2021 4:01 PM, Susan Cornwell, 5304K]

Telemundo [9/20/2021 1:31 PM, Staff, 346K]

Proposed Rule Protecting ‘Dreamers’ Nears Public Release

Bloomberg [9/20/2021 9:07 AM, Lydia O’Neal, 18K] reports that the White House has completed its review of a proposed rule to preserve and beef up deportation protections for individuals brought to the U.S. as children, often called “dreamers.” The White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs sent the proposal to the Department of Homeland Security on Sept. 17, signaling that it could be released any day now. The rulemaking could potentially put the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, program on better footing, if the rule is finalized. A Brownsville, Texas, federal judge on July 16 halted Homeland Security Department approvals of new applications, characterizing the program’s 2012 implementation as unlawful, but leaving current participants unscathed pending a further court order. President Joe Biden said his administration plans to appeal the decision. The administration included the proposed rule in its regulatory agenda June 11.

Customs and Border Protection

US extends land border restrictions with Canada, Mexico through Oct. 21

USA Today [9/20/2021 7:25 PM, Bailey Schulz, 6282K] reports that it’s been more than a month since Canada reopened its land borders to travelers from the United States, but the U.S. has no plans to return the favor any time soon. Border restrictions on nonessential travel have been extended again, this time through Oct. 21, White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator Jeff Zients said Monday. The restrictions were first implemented in March 2020 and have since been extended on a monthly basis. While the White House announced a new international air travel system that will open travel for all vaccinated foreign nationals in early November, it has not revealed when land border restrictions will ease. The land border restrictions, implemented by the DHS and its Canadian and Mexican counterparts, prohibits non-U.S. residents in Mexico and Canada from crossing for nonessential travel. Travelers from the U.S. can fly into Mexico and Canada and vice versa, although the Canadian government will soon require all air travelers, cruise ship passengers and passengers on interprovincial trains to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Health Canada, a department of the Canadian government, said Monday that the country’s current entry requirements would remain in place until at least Nov. 21. The Department of Homeland Security says it continues to enforce U.S. immigration laws at all U.S. borders, including between ports of entry.

Health and treatment violations discovered in Otay Mesa Detention Center

Telemundo 20 [9/20/2021 9:59 AM, Staff, 20K] reports that several violations of health regulations to prevent COVID-19 came to light by Core Civic, the agency that manages the Detention Center in Otay Mesa, as announced by the Office of Inspection General of the Department of Homeland Security. Reveals a statement from the Office of the Inspector General. "It's not surprising at all," those were the words of a migrant whose name we will not share to protect her identity, and who spent time at the Otay Mesa Detention Center last year. She was there from January 2020 to August of that same year. "They did not give us what was necessary to take precautions: antibacterial gel, masks, disinfectants, no, none of that," said the migrant. The Office of Inspection General of the Department of Homeland

Security recently revealed that after an unannounced visit they discovered several violations of the standards set by the government that compromised the health, safety and rights of the detainees. "Being there one is afraid of being infected, of getting sick, many things happen there," said the ex-prisoner. Among the breaches, mention was made of the failure to force the use of precautions such as face masks and social distancing, the failure to provide required services to segregated detainees, as well as access to recreational areas, to legal calls, to laundry, to change of sheets, correspondence, legal materials, cafeteria and law library. In addition, they found that inmates' requests were not adequately responded to and visiting hours were not specified, among other complaints. An ICE associate executive director is now in charge of making sure these oversights are not repeated.

Dozens of Republican governors call for meeting with Biden on border surge

The Hill [9/20/2021 9:53 AM, Joseph Choi, 1776K] reports that a group of 26 Republican governors led by Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey and Texas Gov. Greg Abbott on Monday issued an open letter to President Biden requesting a meeting to discuss the surge in illegal border crossings. "The months-long surge in illegal crossings has instigated an international humanitarian crisis, spurred a spike in international criminal activity, and opened the floodgates to human traffickers and drug smugglers endangering public health and safety in our states," the governors wrote. According to the governors' letter, border apprehensions have risen by nearly 500 percent when compared to last year, accounting for around 1.3 million people. The state leaders appeared to take a shot at the "lack of federal action" on the issue and called on Biden to "take action to protect America, restore security, and end the crisis now." The letter from the GOP governors comes on the same day the U.S. government began deporting hundreds of Haitian migrants who had been camped under a bridge in Del Rio, Texas. More than 320 migrants landed in Haiti's capital city of Port-au-Prince on three flights from the U.S. on Sunday. Border Patrol officials have said that they are aiming to deport the majority of the estimated 12,000 migrants who have been living under a bridge in Texas. "We must end the current crisis and return to border operations that respect the laws of our land and the lives of all people, including those in our states looking to the federal government to enforce and protect our nation's borders," the governors added in their letter. They have requested a meeting with Biden within the next 15 days. The letter was also signed by Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey, Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan and South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem.

Reported similarly:

FOX News [9/20/2021 11:08 AM, Jessica Chasmar, 9251K]

[TX] DHS asks Pentagon to help move migrants from Del Rio, Texas

The Hill [9/20/2021 6:25 PM, Ellen Mitchell, 1776K] reports the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has asked the Pentagon to help move migrants awaiting asylum processing in Del Rio, Texas, to other facilities, the Department of Defense's (DOD) top spokesman said Monday. Press secretary John Kirby said the Pentagon has "received a request for transportation support" from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to help "efforts moving non-U.S. citizen migrants from Del Rio, Texas, to other CBP processing facilities." The DOD support, which will be on a reimbursable, temporary basis, will conclude on or before Oct. 20 and can "be provided at minimal risk to current DOD missions," Kirby said. The Pentagon, should it approve the plan, would lend some of its contracted air support —

not military aircraft — to the mission, Kirby added. He said he did not have further details on the DHS request as the Pentagon is “examining it, reviewing it and determining the best way forward.”

[TX] Texas Border Patrol discovers hotel room packed with illegals in suspected human smuggling operation

FOX News [9/20/2021 9:39 PM, Bradford Betz, 9251K] reports Texas Border Patrol agents discovered a hotel room in which 10 illegal immigrants were staying while they waited to be smuggled deeper into the U.S. Rio Grande Valley Sector Border Patrol agents received a tip Friday afternoon about a hotel in Edinburg being used to harbor illegal immigrants. The city is located in the southern tip of Texas, near the Mexico border. Agents went to investigate the hotel and witnessed two individuals enter the suspected room with several jugs of water and groceries. They continued to surveil the hotel room and determined it was being used to harbor illegal immigrants, U.S. Customs and Border Protection said. The Hidalgo County Sheriff’s Office conducted a welfare check and discovered more than 10 people in the room. CBP said the people were citizens from El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico. The migrants reportedly told the officers that they had been waiting to be transported further into the U.S. for nearly 30 days. The next morning, McAllen Border Patrol Station agents in Hidalgo discovered more illegal immigrants – including an unaccompanied child – using a storm drain to illegally enter the U.S. From early that morning until late in the evening, MCS agents and the Hidalgo Police Department set up a perimeter and arrested about 10 people using the storm drain to illegally enter the U.S. All subjects were citizens of Mexico and Honduras. [Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Transportation Security Administration

U.S. to lift covid ban for air travel from Europe and others, but land border restrictions remain

The Washington Post [9/20/2021 12:32 PM, Adam Taylor and Marisa Iati, 11773K] reports the White House announced on Monday that it would be lifting blanket travel restrictions on visitors from Europe, Britain and other countries that had been imposed at the start of the pandemic. Under rules to take effect in early November, fully vaccinated travelers from anywhere in the world would be able to fly to the United States, though they would also be subject to new testing and contact-tracing procedures, Jeff Zients, the White House coronavirus response coordinator, said in a call with reporters. Zients said the new system “follows the science” to keep Americans and international travel safe and would be “relying on individuals, rather than a country-based approach, so it’s a stronger system.” The travel ban — though a low-profile issue in the United States — had been particularly galling to Europeans, with one British newspaper dubbing it “Kafkaesque.” In total, the travel restrictions had impacted 33 nations, including Britain, India and China. “Travel ban lifted!” tweeted Stavros Lambrinidis, the European Union’s Ambassador to Washington, who only hours earlier had said that E.U. member states had been “working diligently” to help get the ban lifted. It is unclear if heightened political tensions in the U.S.-EU relationship ultimately pushed the United States to drop the ban. Secretary of State Antony Blinken had a long discussion about the travel ban on Friday with French ambassador to Washington, Philippe Etienne, just before Etienne was ordered to return to Paris due to France’s anger over a U.S.-UK-Australia submarine deal, said a senior State Department official familiar with the matter. When asked if the decision to lift the ban was aimed at restoring relations with Europe after recent such setbacks, Erica Barks-Ruggles, a State Department official at the

Bureau of International Organizations, said the decision was “driven by the science.” [USA Today](#) [9/20/2021 1:42 PM, Bailey Schulz, 6282K] reports that while the White House announced the new air travel system, it has not revealed when land border restrictions will ease. The land border restrictions, implemented by the DHS and its Canadian and Mexican counterparts, prohibits non-U.S. residents in Mexico and Canada from crossing for nonessential travel. Travelers from the U.S. can fly into Mexico and Canada and vice versa, although the Canadian government will soon require all air travelers, cruise ship passengers and passengers on interprovincial trains to be vaccinated against COVID-19. The mandate does not prevent U.S. citizens from returning home. The restriction applies to land and ferry travel. [Axios](#) [9/20/2021 10:20 AM, Oriana Gonzalez, 526K] reports "This new international travel system follows the science to keep Americans and international air travel safe," Zients said. "By requiring foreign nationals to be fully vaccinated in order to fly into the United States, and implementing additional strict safety protocols, we will protect Americans here at home and enhance the safety of international travel," he added. EU Home Commissioner Ylva Johansson told Axios earlier this month that she had received no explanation on why the ban remained from U.S. officials, and that Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas simply told her it was "very complicated."

Reported similarly:

[Politico](#) [9/20/2021 12:22 PM, Oriana Pawlyk, 1707K]

[AP](#) [9/20/2021 11:55 AM, Zeke Miller, 2701K]

[CNN](#) [9/20/2021 11:11 AM, Kevin Liptak, Arlette Saenz, and Betsy Klein, 4876K]

Flight bookings plummet amid delta variant fears

[The Hill](#) [9/20/2021 9:00 AM, Karl Evers-Hillstrom, 1776K] reports that flight bookings rapidly declined in August and early September amid a surge in COVID-19 cases fueled by the highly transmissible delta variant. Online customers spent \$4 billion on flights within the U.S. in August, down 24 percent from July and 35 percent below pre-pandemic levels, according to an analysis from Adobe Digital Insights. Through the first 10 days of September, flight bookings remained weak, down 39 percent from the same period in 2019. “Historically, July and August have similar consumer spending levels when it comes to domestic flight bookings,” says Vivek Pandya, lead analyst at Adobe Digital Insights. “The fact that August came in over \$1.2 billion under July is striking when you consider the historical benchmark, and it shows how much the delta variant has shaped what consumers feel about air travel.” The analysis found that holiday reservations have also taken a hit, with Thanksgiving flight bookings down 18 percent from the same period in 2019. Airlines have indicated that the delta variant’s continued spread has caused travelers to cancel their flights. The recent decline in air travel has forced carriers to lower their expectations for the rest of the year after strong summer travel sparked optimism of a robust comeback. Figures from the Transportation Security Administration confirms that air travel hasn’t picked back up in recent weeks. The agency screened roughly 1.9 million travelers on Friday, down from around 2.6 million people on the same day in 2019.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Biden launches plan to address ‘silent killer’: extreme heat

The [AP](#) [9/20/2021 10:27 AM, Matthew Daly, 495K] reports that the Biden administration is moving to protect workers and communities from extreme heat after a dangerously hot summer that spurred an onslaught of drought-worsened wildfires and caused hundreds of

deaths from the Pacific Northwest to hurricane-ravaged Louisiana. Under a plan announced Monday, the U.S. Departments of Labor and of Health and Human Services as well as other federal agencies are launching actions intended to reduce heat-related illness and protect public health. "White House climate adviser Gina McCarthy called heat stress a "silent killer" that disproportionately affects the poor, elderly and minority groups. While not as dramatic as wildfires or hurricanes, "heat stress is a significant, real threat that has deadly consequences," McCarthy said in an interview. "Many people don't recognize that heat stress is a real physical problem until it's too late for them," she said." The effort to address heat stress comes as President Joe Biden is working with world leaders to hammer out next steps against rapidly worsening climate change. A June heat wave in the Pacific Northwest, exacerbated by climate change, caused hundreds of deaths and thousands of emergency room visits for heat-related illnesses. In Louisiana, more than a million people, including the entire city of New Orleans, lost power when Hurricane Ida struck on Aug. 29. At least 12 of the 28 Ida-related deaths in Louisiana were caused by heat, according to the Louisiana Health Department. As part of the administration's plan, the Labor Department is launching a program to protect outdoor workers, including agricultural, construction and delivery workers, as well as those working indoors in warehouses, factories and kitchens. The Department of Homeland Security is launching a series of prize competitions focused on strengthening the nation's resilience to climate change. The first competition will focus on new ways to protect people at risk of heat-related illness or death during extreme heat events or in connection with other disasters.

Reported similarly:

[USA Today](#) [9/20/2021 1:13 PM, Maureen Groppe, 6282K]

Hurricane season continues to buzz with activity as Tropical Storms Peter and Rose spin in the Atlantic

[USA Today](#) [9/20/2021 3:13 PM, Doyle Rice, 6282K] reports that the 2021 hurricane season continues to buzz with activity as two tropical storms and two other disturbances were all in action Monday across the Atlantic basin. Tropical Storm Peter, which formed Sunday, could bring heavy rain to portions of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and the northern Leeward Islands, the National Hurricane Center said. The rain could lead to "areas of urban and small stream flooding through Tuesday." In addition to the rain threat, swells generated by Peter are expected to affect the northern Leeward Islands early this week, then reach the Bahamas by midweek. "These swells could cause life-threatening surf and rip current conditions," according to the Hurricane Center. As of 11 a.m. EDT Monday, the center of Peter was about 170 miles east-northeast of the northern Leeward Islands, the center said. Peter moved west-northwest at 15 mph with top winds of 50 mph. Looking at the future of the storm, AccuWeather meteorologist Randy Adkins said, "Peter is not anticipated to intensify past a low-end tropical storm as it encounters a combination of wind shear and drier air, which will prevent the storm from strengthening over the coming days." The hurricane center's forecast track shows Peter potentially approaching Bermuda by the weekend. Tropical Storm Rose, which formed in the eastern Atlantic Ocean on Sunday, poses no threat to any land areas, the hurricane center said. As of 11 a.m. EDT Monday, the center of Rose was about 620 miles west-northwest of the Cabo Verde Islands, moving northwest at 16 mph. It had winds of 40 mph. Rose is expected to continue to spin across the central Atlantic over the next few days and is likely to weaken into a depression by midweek, forecasters said.

[VT] Vermont urged to extend emergency motel housing for homeless

The [AP](#) [9/20/2021 10:22 AM, Lisa Rathke, 495K] reports that as hundreds of homeless Vermonters are expected to lose access to motel rooms paid for by the state during the pandemic, advocates urged officials on Monday to extend the benefit even longer. In July, the state extended the hotel voucher program 84 days for families with children, the disabled, pregnant women and other vulnerable people, and gave \$2,500 checks to those no longer eligible. About 543 of the 881 households in motel rooms will reach their 84-day limit on Wednesday, advocates said at a Montpelier press conference. "My clients are terrified that losing shelter will mean they'll start to experience mental health declines, that gains that they've made in their recovery will be lost. Many of them have conditions that put them at high risk for serious COVID-related complications if they are to be infected," said Mairead O'Reilly, an attorney with Vermont Legal Aid. Advocates say the extension is needed due to a lack of shelter beds and housing and a surge in COVID-19 cases with the spread of the delta variant. A 30-day extension is available to families who are intensely engaged in case management, who can show a housing plan and for people who have the most severe disabilities, said O'Reilly. "We don't think that practically many of the folks who are currently sheltered will be able to take advantage of these," she said. The groups sent a letter to the commissioner of the Vermont Department for Children and Families last week asking for the benefit to be extended as long as possible. Commissioner Sean Brown did not respond to an email seeking comment. The state is investing \$120 million to create more permanent and shared-housing arrangements while also encouraging shelters to expand, officials have said.

[NH] Sununu asks for 2nd disaster declaration after more storms

The [AP](#) [9/20/2021 4:32 PM, Staff] reports Gov. Chris Sununu on Monday requested a federal disaster declaration for New Hampshire as a result of storms and flooding that happened July 29-Aug. 2, a week after he asked for one covering storms from mid-July. Sununu's letter to Paul Ford, the acting regional administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency in Boston, said roads and infrastructure were washed out in 35 communities across the state and forced some evacuations. Sununu's letter said the first round of rainfall was preceded by four weeks of above-average precipitation in southwestern New Hampshire, which had already experienced record rainfall that exceeded 10 inches. The southwest part of the state typically sees around 4 to 5 inches of rain throughout the entire month of July. The state estimated damages at \$3.2 million, but that doesn't represent the full scope of damages and costs communities and state agencies will have to spend to return to pre-disaster condition, the letter said. The costs are expected to be much higher.

[AL] Second Alabama man dies in floodwaters after heavy rain

The [AP](#) [9/20/2021 2:52 PM, Staff] reports a man who was kayaking with his children following heavy rains saved the kids when the current became too strong but couldn't get himself out of the water and drowned, officials said Monday. Johnny Henderson III, 35, of Hazel Green was pronounced dead after emergency workers located his body in flood waters on Sunday, Coroner Tyler Berryhill said. Henderson was the second person from Alabama to die in weekend flooding. "He was kayaking with his children near their home when the water current became very strong pulling them near a drainage pipe. He was able to get his children to safety from the kayak before later succumbing to the current of the dangerous waters," Berryhill said in a statement. Also on Sunday, searchers in Tuscaloosa found the body of a man whose sports-utility vehicle was overwhelmed by water during flash

flooding on Saturday. The body of Kelvin Watford, 40, was found about a quarter-mile downstream from where his vehicle was found, news outlets reported. Flood watches and warnings covered northern sections of Alabama and Mississippi, most of Tennessee and northwest Georgia. The rains are associated with remnants of Hurricane Nicholas, which made landfall on the Gulf Coast last week.

[LA] Louisiana colleges already reeling from the pandemic now struggle to recover from Ida

Politico [9/20/2021 5:35 PM, Jessica Calefati, 1707K] reports that only a third of Nicholls State University students were vaccinated against the coronavirus when they returned to campus last month, so the Louisiana school embarked on a campaign to press inoculations — and it seemed to be working. Hundreds of reluctant students got jabs in the first few days of the semester. Then Hurricane Ida made landfall just 70 miles south. The Category 4 storm not only threatened lives and left a million or so homes and businesses across Louisiana without power. It also battered 21 state colleges and universities, stalling campus vaccination efforts in a state with one of the lowest vaccination rates in the country. After months of strategizing how to ease students back to campus as the highly contagious Delta variant surged, college administrators shifted their priorities overnight as Ida scattered everyone. Now they're busy making sure students have food, water and shelter, and wondering how to counsel many of them through this semester. "Until recently, all we talked about was Covid. Now all we talk about is the hurricane," Nicholls President Jay Clune said in an interview. President Joe Biden approved a major disaster declaration for Louisiana the day Ida struck, authorizing individual and public assistance for hard-hit parishes. He also deployed FEMA teams to distribute grants for temporary housing, emergency home repairs and medical expenses linked to the hurricane. Ida made landfall three weeks ago but it wasn't until Monday that Nicholls was able to resume online classes.

Federal Protective Service

Federal officer arrested at Capitol rally won't be charged

The AP [9/20/2021 2:02 PM, Michael Balsamo, Eric Tucker and Colleen Long] reports a federal law enforcement officer was arrested carrying a gun at Saturday's rally at the U.S. Capitol billed to support the suspects charged in January's insurrection but will not be prosecuted. The 27-year-old New Jersey man is an officer with U.S. Customs and Border Protection. He was arrested by Capitol Police for illegally possessing a gun on the grounds of the Capitol after people in the crowd reported seeing him with a handgun and notified nearby officers. A spokesman for the U.S. attorney's office in Washington said prosecutors were "not moving forward with charges" but did not provide additional information about the decision. Two law enforcement officials said the officer was not at the rally in any official capacity. The officials could not discuss the matter publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity. The Department of Homeland Security's inspector general was also notified of his arrest. U.S. Customs and Border Protection said it was aware of the arrest and was "fully cooperating with the investigation." "CBP stresses honor and integrity in every aspect of our mission and expects officers to adhere to the oath they take to uphold the laws of this country," the agency said in a statement. The Hill [9/20/2021 5:19 PM, Monique Beals, 1776K] reports law enforcement in D.C. had taken extra steps to ensure safety at Saturday's event including a return of the fence that surrounded the Capitol and having the National Guard on standby. While federal law generally permits law enforcement officers to carry their guns in other states, regardless of their gun laws, that's not the case

on federal property where it's illegal to carry a gun, including the U.S. Capitol. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer was one of just four people who were arrested at the event, the AP said.

Reported similarly:

Washington Times [9/20/2021 11:17 AM, Emily Zantow, 381K]

Secret Service

[NY] Man charged with drug possession, forgery after deputies search Schaghticoke home

CBS6 [9/20/2021 12:00 PM, Staff, Positive, Secondary] reports the Rensselaer County Sheriff's Office say they have arrested a Schaghticoke man, on drug and counterfeit money charges. Investigators say deputies searched a home on Richfield Street, then arrested 38 year old Charles McIntyre. He's charged with multiple counts of possession of a forged instrument, forgery, criminal possession of a controlled substance, and criminal possession of a controlled substance with intent to sell. McIntyre was arraigned and remanded to the Rensselaer County Jail due to three prior felony convictions.

[NJ] New Jersey Man Admits Stealing more than \$450,000 in Unemployment Insurance Benefits

The United States Department of Justice [9/20/2021 12:00 PM, Staff, Positive, Secondary] reports a Union, New Jersey, man today admitted that he illegally obtained more than \$450,000 in unemployment insurance benefits, Acting U.S. Attorney Rachael A. Honig announced. Maurice Mills, 29, of Union, New Jersey, pleaded guilty by videoconference before U.S. District Judge Brian Martinotti to an information charging him with wire fraud. On March 27, 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) was signed into law. The CARES Act created a new temporary federal unemployment insurance program called Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), which provides unemployment insurance benefits (UIB) for individuals who were not eligible for other types of unemployment (e.g., the self-employed, independent contractors, gig economy workers). The CARES Act also created a new temporary federal program called Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation that provides additional benefits to those eligible for PUA and regular UIB. The New York State Department of Labor administers and manages the regular unemployment and PUA programs in the State of New York. Between August and September of 2020, Mills submitted fraudulent UIB applications to the State of New York using the names of other individuals. As a result, the State of New York approved and provided, and Mills falsely obtained, more than \$450,000 in UIB. The charge of wire fraud is punishable by a maximum potential penalty of 20 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000, or twice the gross profits to Mills or loss suffered by the victims, whichever is greatest. Sentencing is scheduled for Feb. 3, 2022. Acting U.S. Attorney Honig credited special agents of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Jonathan Mellone in Manhattan; special agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge George M. Crouch Jr., in Newark; postal inspectors of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, under the direction of Acting Inspector in Charge Raimundo Marrero in Newark; and special agents of the U.S. Secret Service, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Mark McKeivitt in Newark, with the investigation leading to today's arrest. She also thanked the New York State Department of Labor, Office of Special Investigations for its assistance in the investigation. The government is represented

by Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew Kogan of the U.S. Attorney's Office Cybercrime Unit in Newark.

[SC] South Carolina municipalities facing nonstop cyberattacks, working from home a potential threat

WBTW News13 [9/20/2021 2:22 PM, Braley Dodson, 24K, Neutral, Secondary] reports South Carolina municipalities can be an easy target for cyberattacks, highlighting the need for safety infrastructure months after high-profile hacks have shone a spotlight on the issue. "It is important for organizations to protect themselves from these attacks because everything now involves computers," said Ryan Truskey, the deputy chief information security officer for the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division. "It is something that every organization needs to protect." Truskey said that there is "a high level" of incidents in the state, with government, health care, and financial institutions the biggest targets for cybercriminals. What makes these attacks even more common, he said, is that municipalities can be seen as easy prey. "Cyberattacks are something that happen all day, every day, all night, and when we are protecting cyberattacks," Truskey said, also noting that security apps on networks block a lot of low-level attacks. The South Carolina Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity task force, or SC CIC, started under former Gov. Nikki Haley and was formed by Gov. Henry McMaster in an attempt to create a working group to investigate the state's infrastructure. The task force is made up of agencies such as the Office of Homeland Security, the FBI, the U.S. Secret Service, the National Guard, the state emergency management, and the election commission, among others. Truskey said it's a high-priority topic for SLED. With how fast technology changes, he said, it's hard to stay up to date. Systems need to be functional, but also secure. More recent attacks have targeted supply chains and shown that agencies can no longer inherently trust software to block cybercriminals. "User education is extremely important, and that is one of the things that we provide in the SC CIC is training in that space," Truskey said.

[KY] Police Warn Princeton Businesses To Check For Counterfeit Bills

WPKY [9/20/2021 3:00 PM, Tammy Hancock, Neutral, Secondary] reports officials with the Princeton Police Department are warning local businesses about counterfeit bills being used in the area to make purchases. On Monday, Princeton Police say they received a report from a local bank stating four local businesses have received fake \$20 bills over the weekend. In addition, they indicate Lyon County has also received counterfeit \$20 bills over the weekend. According to Princeton Police, they posted the alert to their social media page to warn all businesses to check their money. If you suspect someone is trying to pass counterfeit currency, call the Princeton Police Department.

[GA] Georgia police department warns about fake cash floating around city

WSBTv [9/20/2021 9:31 AM, Staff, 139K, Neutral, Secondary] reports there is some funny money floating around a Georgia county and a police department wants people to be aware. The Hazlehurst Police Department posted on its Facebook Monday about the fake bills. The department said that phony 100 dollar bills were shot out of a cannon during a recent homecoming celebration. The bills look real on the surface, but on closer inspection, the words "For Motion Picture Use Only" is printed on the front of the bill. The phrase is also posted on the back of the bill instead of "United State of America." The police department said it wants word to be spread about the fake money. This isn't the first Georgia city to have an issue of phony bills floating around. Last month, the Rabun County sheriff's office warned about fake \$100 bills floating around the county. The alleged fake bills were posted

on the Facebook page with the title: "FAKE CURRENCY ALERT." Two of the bills has the word "copy" on the lower left hand corner of the bill.

[FL] South Florida Man Charged with Defrauding After-School Program for Underprivileged Immigrant Children Appears in Federal Court

The United States Department of Justice [9/20/2021 11:00 AM, Staff, Positive, Secondary] reports that Friday, Miami resident Ramon Caridad Rodriguez, 28, made his first appearance in South Florida federal court to face a grand jury indictment charging him with defrauding his former employer, a religious charity organization that runs after-school programs for underprivileged immigrant children to help them avoid gangs and gang violence. According to the indictment, Rodriguez abused the company's trust by using a company credit card to make thousands of dollars' worth of personal purchases and then attempted to conceal those purchases through lies and altered bank statements. Some of these purchases included items like lawn chairs, bug spray, tiki torches, and personal groceries. He used over \$160,000 of the company's money for his personal gain, says the indictment. The indictment charges Rodriguez with nine counts of wire fraud. If convicted, Rodriguez faces up to 20 years in federal prison on each charge. Juan Antonio Gonzalez, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Brian Swain, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Secret Service (USSS), Miami Field Office, and Art Acevedo, Chief, City of Miami Police Department made the announcement.

[KS] A circulation of counterfeit money reported in southeast Kansas

KODE TV [9/20/2021 7:50 PM, Jake Kaufman, 5K, Neutral, Secondary] reports a circulation of fake money is being reported in southeast Kansas. Reports are coming in to law enforcement about counterfeit one hundred dollar bills. Many of them that say "for motion picture copy money." Cherokee County Sheriff David Groves says it's important for cashiers or anyone in retail to be able to identify a fake bill. "It's always an ongoing issue, and we try and visit with the business community from time to time just to remind them and new staff of the security measures they can take to help safeguard themselves from this fake money or fictitious money," David Groves – Cherokee County Sheriff Groves adds some signs for fake money is the texture, a security strip and a hologram that can be seen under a light. [Editorial note: consult video at source link]

[CO] Fake \$50 bill reported in Kearney area

The North Platte Bulletin [9/20/2021 5:50 PM, Staff, Neutral, Secondary] reports a Kearney business received a counterfeit \$50 bill Monday, and it was difficult to tell it from a real bill. Kearney chamber of Commerce President Derek Rusher said the counterfeiters bleached a \$1 bill before printing on it, so the \$50 felt and looked like the real thing. Rusher sent an email to Kearney businesses telling them to be alert. A bank caught the \$50 as a \$1 bill when it went through their currency counter, Rusher said. When held to the light, the fake \$50 did not have the President watermark like an authentic bill, Rusher said. Counterfeit bills sometimes turn up in North Platte too, often in connection with drug arrests.

[CA] Counterfeit Money, Illegal Weapons: Police Suspect Wildomar Man

The Patch [9/20/2021 12:43 PM, Toni McAllister, 2117K, Positive, Secondary] reports a man suspected of manufacturing firearms and counterfeit money in Wildomar was arrested Friday but has since been released from jail on \$55,000 bail. Patrick Kirk, 30, of Wildomar was taken into custody by Riverside County Sheriff's deputies around 5 p.m. in the 21400 block of Apricot Lane following a search warrant service at the address. Kirk was booked

into Southwest Detention Center on suspicion of possessing a ghost gun, being a felon in possession of a firearm, being a felon in possession of ammunition, manufacturing an assault weapon, possession of an assault weapon, and being in possession of body armor, according to jail records. Kirk was released from custody Sunday in lieu of \$55,000 and is due to appear in court in December, jail records show.

Coast Guard

[FL] Florida doctor discovers empty raft likely from Cuba, shows what people are 'willing to sacrifice for freedom'

FOX News [9/19/2021 10:07 PM, Bradford Betz, 9251K] reports that a Miami-based doctor discovered an empty raft with drinking water still on board a few miles off the coast of Florida on Saturday. Writing in Spanish, Ernesto Cardenas, a gynecologist and obstetrician, said he found a "rustic boat" while out sailing. "It was empty but still had some drinking water and that gives me hope that someone rescued them," Cardenas wrote. "This is the reality and despair that those who do not have freedom live under the dirty leg of socialism and communism #sosocuba #sosvenezuela #communismsucks #uscoastguard." In a video, Cardenas noted that "This is what people are willing to sacrifice for freedom." The U.S. Coast Guard could not be reached for comment, but it routinely urges potential migrants from Cuba "Don't take to the seas."

[MI] Pair of Michigan kayakers die amid rough Lake Superior waters, gale-force winds

FOX News [9/20/2021 11:54 AM, Stephen Sorace, 9251K] reports that the bodies of two kayakers in Michigan were recovered Friday along the coast of Lake Superior after the pair went missing amid gale-force winds and waves as high as 7 feet, officials said Sunday. The victims have been identified as Kimberly Aiello of Troy, Michigan, and David Delegato of Shelby Township, Michigan, the National Park Service said in a statement. Aiello and Delegato were reported missing on Thursday as Lake Superior was experiencing gale-force gusts of up to 35 knots and waves 3 to 5 feet high, with some reaching 7 feet, the NPS said. Following a search by the NPS and other state and federal agencies, the U.S. Coast Guard recovered the bodies Friday afternoon. The weather conditions were believed to be contributing factors in the pair's deaths, according to officials. "Specifically, the United States Coast Guard aviation and water borne assets who worked tirelessly to complete their mission in support of the National Park Service." The NPS website has an extensive safety guide about kayaking at Pictured Rocks.

CISA/Cybersecurity

Biden wants to make it harder to pay ransomware hackers

The Washington Post [9/20/2021 7:33 AM, Joseph Marks, 11773K] reports the Biden administration is making swift progress on its master strategy to combat ransomware. But any reduction in attacks may still be far off. The administration plans to move as early as this week to place sanctions on financial exchanges that facilitate ransomware payments, as Ellen Nakashima reports. The big goal: To disrupt the current ecosystem in which it's exceptionally easy for victims to pay ransoms to hackers that lock up their computers — and exceedingly difficult to track those payments once they're made. The government has been pushing for such improvements for roughly the past decade. But during that time, hacks have only become more damaging. The Biden administration mandated minimum

cyber protections for pipelines in July, and officials have openly speculated about imposing such standards for other critical industries. But even White House officials warn any changes will be a long time coming. “This is a problem that’s built up over a number of years and it’s not something that will be solved in a moment,” an official said when announcing the strategy. The most damaging and prolific criminal ransomware gangs operate on Russian territory and with the Kremlin’s tacit approval, U.S. officials say. Russia has joined the United States and other nations in agreeing to abide by a series of cybersecurity rules of the road over the years but done little to change its actual behavior.

[IA] Iowa-Based Grain Cooperative Hit With Ransomware Attack

Bloomberg [9/20/2021 11:21 AM, William Turton, 6400K] reports that Iowa-based grain cooperative New Cooperative Inc. was struck by ransomware in recent days and has shut down its computer systems as it tries to mitigate the attack. The attack occurred on or around Friday, according to Allan Liska, senior threat analyst at the cybersecurity firm Recorded Future Inc. The ransomware gang, which goes by the name BlackMatter, is demanding a \$5.9 million ransom, Liska said. New Cooperative confirmed that they had been attacked and said they had contacted law enforcement and were working with data security experts to investigate and remediate the situation. “New Cooperative recently identified a cybersecurity incident that is impacting some of our company’s devices and systems,” according to a statement from the cooperative. “Out of an abundance of caution, we have proactively taken our systems offline to contain the threat, and we can confirm it has been successfully contained.” New Cooperative has communicated with its feed customers and is working to create workarounds to get feed to animals while its systems are down, a person familiar with the matter said. The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment. It is unclear to what extent New Cooperative’s systems have been affected. BlackMatter is believed to be linked to the ransomware group DarkSide, which attacked Colonial Pipeline Inc. earlier this year, triggering fuel shortages along on the East Coast. The Hill [9/20/2021 7:20 PM, Maggie Miller, 1776K] reports “Please know that NEW Cooperative is treating this matter with the utmost seriousness, and we are using every available tool and resource to quickly restore our systems,” the company spokesperson told The Hill. “We appreciate the patience of our valued customers as we investigate this matter and work to restore functionality and will share additional information directly with our customers as we learn it.” In what are thought to be screenshots of a negotiation between a spokesperson for New Cooperative and the hackers tweeted out by security researchers, New Cooperative noted that 40 percent of the nation’s grain production runs through its software, and that the ransomware attack would “break the supply chain very shortly” if the hackers did not relent. A spokesperson for the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), the key federal agency tasked with securing critical U.S. infrastructure, declined to comment in favor of comments from New Cooperative.

Reported similarly:

Reuters [9/20/2021 4:27 PM, Karl Plume and Christopher Bing, 5304K]

[AK] Alaskan health department still struggling to recover after ‘nation-state sponsored’ cyberattack

CNN [9/20/2021 7:09 PM, Sean Lyngaas, 4876K] reports some computer networks at the Alaskan health department are still offline after foreign government-backed hackers breached the department in May, a spokesperson told CNN on Monday. News of the

breach first emerged in May, but Alaskan officials now say that "nation-state sponsored" hackers exploited a vulnerability in the health department's website to gain further access to department data. The hackers may have accessed Alaskans' Social Security numbers and health and financial information, officials said. "There is still no timeline for when all services that are currently offline will be back online," Clinton Bennett, a spokesperson for the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, told CNN. He pointed to the department's large and complex IT infrastructure in explaining the long recovery time. Bennett declined to comment when asked which foreign government was behind the intrusions, or what the attacker's motives were. The news underscores the arduous process that organizations face in fully recovering from a complex breach. The Alaskan health department didn't restore its electronic system for processing birth, death and marriage certificates until July 26, according to the department's statement. The FBI and US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency declined to comment on the breach. Mandiant, a cybersecurity firm hired to investigate the breach, declined to comment.

Terrorism Investigations

[NY] N.Y. man arrested over threat to kill Dominican president during to city

The Washington Post [9/20/2021 7:54 PM, Shayna Jacobs and Samantha Schmidt, 11773K] reports a self-proclaimed QAnon supporter was arrested for threatening to kill the president of the Dominican Republic after he tracked down the official in New York City where he is staying for the United Nations General Assembly, federal authorities said Monday. Enrique Figueroa, 47, made repeated threats on social media in recent weeks, depicting a growing violent obsession with President Luis Abinader and landing himself on the radar of law enforcement officials in New York who are in a state of heightened alert because of the events at the U.N. which began last week, the Jewish high holidays and the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. In a recent post that set off alarms for federal agents who were monitoring him, Figueroa uploaded photos of Abinader's motorcade in New York City, putting himself in proximity to the Caribbean dignitary. Assistant U.S. Attorney Alexander Li, without naming the targeted official, said in court that Figueroa "appears to have tracked" Abinader's whereabouts in New York City, further escalating concerns over menacing messages he posted to Instagram and Facebook accounts — aimed at the foreign leader. Figueroa's attorney, Amy Gallicchio, argued his words were "hollow" and that he was not a true threat. "There's nothing to suggest there is any intent to carry out these words," she added. In a video taken by a Dominican news network on Monday, Abinader said he didn't have any details about the threats against him. Reached after Figueroa's court appearance, a spokesman for Abinader said he only recently learned of the development and did not provide further comment. U.S. Magistrate Judge James L. Cott ordered Figueroa held without the option of posting bond, after Li said that the suspect is a public danger and a flight risk. He recently tried to travel to the Dominican Republic to try to find Abinader but was stopped at Newark International Airport because his passport had expired.

[DC] US Capitol rioter who stormed Senate floor reports to prison while trying to undo his felony guilty plea

CNN [9/20/2021 7:56 PM, Marshall Cohen, 4876K] reports that the first January 6 rioter to be sentenced for a felony reported to prison on Monday to serve his eight-month sentence, while mounting a longshot legal bid to undo his guilty plea. Paul Hodgkins of Florida stormed the US Capitol during the pro-Trump insurrection and was one of the few dozen

rioters who breached the Senate floor shortly after it was evacuated. He pleaded guilty to obstructing the congressional certification of Joe Biden's victory and was sentenced to eight months in prison. But as his surrender date drew closer, Hodgkins fired his veteran attorney, hired a new one who only passed the bar last year and launched an effort to unwind his guilty plea and reduce his prison term -- even though the judge's eight-month sentence was far less than the Justice Department's 1.5-year recommendation. The about-face from Hodgkins comes as other rioters grapple with accepting responsibility and amid increasing efforts by Republicans to rewrite the history of January 6. Protesters returned to Capitol grounds on Saturday in support of the few dozen rioters who are in jail before trial. And prominent right-wing figures are still flooding the zone with disinformation about the insurrection. Hodgkins, 38, turned himself in on Monday and is now in prison, his attorney said. The lawyer refused to say where Hodgkins is serving his sentence, citing fears for his safety. The Bureau of Prisons website that lists all federal inmates hasn't been updated yet with Hodgkins' information. "The circling blood-thirsty sharks can feast," Hodgkins' defense attorney Carolyn Stewart told CNN in an email Monday. "The haters can rejoice, while the prayers of all others are welcome."

[CA] California militia member pleads guilty to conspiracy charge

The [AP](#) [9/20/2021 8:40 PM, Staff, 2701K] reports an alleged member of a California right-wing militia group pleaded guilty Monday to charges stemming from the fatal shooting of a federal guard in Oakland more than a year ago. Kenny Miksch, 21, became the fourth member of the so-called Grizzly Scouts to plead guilty to conspiring to obstruct justice, KTVU-TV reported. He faces 20 years in prison when sentenced. The men are accused of conspiring to destroy communications and other records about the May 29, 2020, killing of federal security officer David Patrick Underwood and attempted murder of his partner as they guarded the Ronald V. Dellums Federal Building in Oakland. The officers were shot while a large demonstration over the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis was underway nearby. Prosecutors said Air Force Staff Sgt. Steven Carrillo, 32, fatally shot Underwood and wounded his partner. They said Carrillo used the protest as cover for the crime and for his escape. Carrillo has pleaded not guilty. The Grizzly Scouts identified with the decentralized "boogaloo" movement, which calls for armed conflict against the government, federal prosecutors said. Miksch was responsible for the group's training and firearms instruction, prosecutors said.

Reported similarly:

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [9/20/2021 8:41 PM, Bob Egelko, 495K]

National Security News

Amidst global criticism, Biden faces big week at UN General Assembly

The [New York Times](#) [9/20/2021 3:00 AM, Rick Gladstone, 24635K] reports the United Nations convenes its annual speeches by world leaders on Tuesday against a backdrop of seemingly irreversible planet warming, polarized superpower relations and a tenacious pandemic that has worsened the global rich-poor divide. President Joe Biden will be making his debut speech as president amid strong new doubts about his ability to vault the United States back into a position of global leadership. Unlike 2020, when the session was conducted almost entirely virtually because of the pandemic, more than 100 leaders and other high-ranking representatives intend to deliver their speeches in person. But access to the 16-acre U.N. complex in Manhattan remains strictly limited, with mandatory mask-

wearing and other Covid-prevention measures. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield of the United States told reporters that the measures were meant to ensure that the General Assembly “does not become a superspreader event.” The Los Angeles Times [9/20/2021 1:27 PM, Tracy Wilkinson, 3710K] reports that Biden administration officials insist that partnerships have not suffered permanent damage despite recent setbacks. But several NATO nations said the U.S. failed to give them proper warning of the withdrawal from Afghanistan, a charge the Biden administration denies. Another blow to U.S. credibility came Friday when the Pentagon acknowledged a drone-controlled air strike in Kabul, Afghanistan, killed not an Islamist terrorist as it first claimed but 10 civilians. And in the same week, the Biden administration ignited a huge row with the United States’ oldest ally, France when the president announced the U.S. was sharing sensitive technology to help Australia build nuclear-powered submarines, which scuttled Canberra’s sub deal with France. Claiming it was blindsided, France recalled its ambassadors to Washington and to Australia, and accused Biden of betrayal and of being almost as bad as Trump. So Biden, and Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, may not find as much of a warm and welcoming reception at the U.N. this week as they may have at one time expected. “France is our longest ally, our longest friend and partner, and continues to be an extremely valuable ally across a huge range of issues,” the State Department’s senior official for dealing with international organizations, Erica Barks-Ruggles, said Monday. Axios [9/20/2021 1:53 PM, Zachary Basu, 526K] reports Biden will also use his address to lay out his vision for an era of “intensive diplomacy” with allies and “vigorous competition” with great powers — without a Cold War with China. UN Secretary-General António Guterres made headlines this morning when he urged the U.S. and China to repair their “completely dysfunctional” relationship for the sake of solving global challenges. Biden will stress in his remarks on Tuesday that he “does not believe in the notion of a new Cold War, with the world divided into blocs,” an administration official said. “He believes in vigorous, intensive, principled competition that does not tip over into conflict.” Biden will also hold a major COVID summit on Wednesday on the sidelines of the General Assembly at which he’ll lobby countries to donate vaccines for the developing world.

[France] UK, Australia confident in relations with France, but French ambassador says they ‘absolutely weren’t informed’ of new submarine deal

The AP [9/20/2021 5:18 AM, Staff] reports Prime Minister Boris Johnson has insisted that Britain’s relationship with France is “ineradicable,” despite fury in Paris over a U.S.-U.K.-Australia submarine deal. A meeting between French Defense Minister Florence Parly and her British counterpart, Ben Wallace, has been postponed as the agreement roils relations between France and major allies. The French government appears to have been blindsided by the submarine deal reached last week between the U.S., U.K. and Australia, which canceled its own previously made agreement. French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian called it a “stab in the back,” and France recalled its ambassadors from Washington and Canberra, a highly unusual move among allies. Johnson said U.K.-France relations were “very friendly” despite the diplomatic turmoil. “Our love of France is ineradicable,” Johnson told reporters traveling with him to New York for the U.N. General Assembly. “AUKUS is not in any way meant to be zero-sum, it’s not meant to be exclusionary. It’s not something that anybody needs to worry about and particularly not our French friends.” Reuters [9/20/2021 9:41 AM, Colin Packham and Philip Blenkinsop, 5304K] reports Australia’s trade minister said on Monday he would seek a meeting with France to ease tensions over Canberra’s decision to scrap the \$40 billion submarine deal, and was confident it would not cloud EU-Australia trade talks. Australian minister Dan Tehan told Australian Broadcasting Corporation radio on Monday he would be “very keen” to meet his French counterpart when

he is in Paris in October. And he told Sky News Australia: "It's just very much business as usual when it comes to our negotiations on that free trade agreement." French European Affairs Minister Clement Beaune told France 24 television on Friday that he could not see how Australia could now be trusted in trade negotiations. Lange said the willingness of EU countries to compromise was likely to be "quite limited," particularly for France and notably on agriculture. He also said a future deal might now contain more penalties for non-compliance. [CNN](#) [9/20/2021 5:07 AM, Joseph Ataman and Ben Westcott, 4876K] reports France's ambassador to the United States reiterated in an interview Monday that the breakdown of the French-Australian submarine deal last week came as a surprise to Paris. Speaking on French radio station RTL, Ambassador Philippe Etienne said French Cabinet ministers were not given any indication the agreement would be canceled when they met with their Australian counterparts just days before the new deal was announced. "We absolutely weren't informed of the new course," Etienne said. He said senior members of the Macron administration were still discussing what to do next. "As soon as we learned Wednesday morning (of the new deal), I demanded to be seen, I was seen," by the White House, Etienne said. "(But) it was a little late." Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said that while he understood France's disappointment, "Australia's national interest comes first."

[North Korea] North Korea warns submarine deal with Australia could lead to nuclear arms race

[The Hill](#) [9/20/2021 10:34 AM, Joseph Choi, 1776K] reports that North Korea on Monday joined the international feud over the trilateral agreement between the U.S., U.K. and Australia to share nuclear submarine technology, warning that the move would trigger a nuclear arms race. "These are extremely undesirable and dangerous acts which will upset the strategic balance in the Asia-Pacific region and trigger off a chain of nuclear arms race," a North Korean Foreign Ministry official was quoted as saying on state media, according to [The Washington Post](#). "It is quite natural that neighboring countries including China condemned these actions as irresponsible ones of destroying the peace and stability of the region and the international nuclear nonproliferation system and of catalyzing the arms race," said the official. Almost immediately after the deal was announced last week, China said the three western countries should "shake off their Cold-War mentality and ideological prejudice." North Korea's condemnation comes less than a week after it launched multiple test missiles, heightening tensions on the Korean peninsula. The same day that North Korea launched its test missiles, South Korea also tested missiles from a submerged 3,700-ton submarine. South Korean President Moon Jae-in condemned the North Korea's missile tests as a provocation while Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said the missile tests were a "threat to the peace and security" in the region. The agreement between the three countries will give Australia at least eight nuclear submarines and abandons a prior \$40 billion agreement Canberra signed with France for diesel-electric submarines.

{End of Report} [RETURN TO TOP](#)



DHS MORNING BRIEFING

Prepared for the Office of Public Affairs (OPA)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

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Editorial Note: The DHS Daily Briefing is a collection of news articles related to Department’s mission. The inclusion of particular stories is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse the political viewpoints or affiliations included in news coverage.

TO: Homeland Security Secretary & Staff

DATE: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 6:00 AM ET

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Top News

DHS inspector general declines to investigate Del Rio horse patrol incident

CNN [11/16/2021 5:20 PM, Priscilla Alvarez, 5705K] reports the horse patrol incident in Del Rio, Texas, that drew swift condemnation from senior Biden administration officials will not be investigated by the Department of Homeland Security's inspector general, the department announced Tuesday. US Customs and Border Protection had referred the incident -- where Border Patrol agents on horseback aggressively confronted migrants -- to the watchdog, according to the Department of Homeland Security. Instead, CBP's Office of Professional Responsibility is now investigating the incident, the department said, adding that the office has reviewed videos and photographs and interviewed witnesses, employees and CBP leadership. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said he was "horrified" by the incident and had previously pledged he was committed to completing the investigation in "days, not weeks." But nearly two months later, the probe continues. "Once completed, the results of the investigation will be provided to CBP management to determine whether disciplinary action is appropriate and, if so, the specific discipline to be imposed. At that time, the employees will be afforded due process, including an opportunity to respond, and any corrective actions will comport with applicable laws and regulations," DHS said in a statement Tuesday. "The disciplinary process, which is separate from the fact-finding investigation, is subject to certain timelines established in CBP's labor-management agreement with the employees' union of the United States Border Patrol," the statement added. During a Senate hearing Tuesday, Republican Sen. Mike Lee of Utah pressed Mayorkas on his response to the Del Rio incident at the time, asking why he did not defend the Border Patrol. Mayorkas pushed back, saying that an independent investigation will determine the facts and eventually, the outcome. The agents involved in the incident remain on administrative duty, according to DHS spokeswoman Marsha Espinosa. Horse patrol units continue to be deployed based on operational assessments, but are not deployed in the city of Del Rio, she added. FOX News [11/16/2021 11:14 AM, Jessica Chasmar, 11051K] reports the news came just hours before Mayorkas is set to appear before the Senate Judiciary Committee, where he will likely face questions about what he and the DHS are doing with the record numbers of migrants crossing the southern border. Mayorkas had initially backed the agents alongside Border Patrol Chief Raul Ortiz, noting the use of reins to control the horse. He later claimed he had not seen the images when he made those remarks and, while staying away from the "Whip" claims, continued to call the images disturbing as the agents were placed on desk duty and the use of horses were ended in the Del Rio Sector. USA Today [11/16/2021 4:56 PM, Kevin Johnson and

Rebecca Morin, 7620K] reports DHS remains committed to conducting a thorough, independent, and objective investigation. DHS will share information, as available, consistent with the need to protect the integrity of the investigation and individuals' privacy. "I want to assure you that we are addressing this with tremendous speed and tremendous force," Mayorkas said told lawmakers in September.

Reported similarly:

Univision [11/16/2021 11:26 AM, Jorge Cancino, 389K]

Washington Times [11/16/2021 5:12 AM, Stephen Dinan, 389K]

Mayorkas defends border policies against GOP attacks

Roll Call [11/16/2021 4:13 PM, Suzanne Monyak, 106K] reports Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas found himself on defense Tuesday before the Senate Judiciary Committee as Republicans grilled him on the record-high number of migrants who journeyed to the southwest border last fiscal year. In the first hearing on oversight of the Department of Homeland Security under the Biden administration, Mayorkas defended the department's policies and decisions to roll back some of the prior administration's immigration restrictions, which Republicans blame for the higher migration levels. Data released last month revealed last fiscal year was the busiest on record at the U.S.-Mexico border, with federal agents logging roughly 1.7 million encounters with migrants from October 2020 through September 2021. "I don't think that the approximately 965,000 people who were subject to Title 42 expulsions under the CDC's authority would consider the border open," Mayorkas shot back at Sen. Mike Lee, after the Utah Republican questioned the administration's control over the southwest border. Mayorkas also defended the administration against questions from Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., on the steep increase in migrant encounters in 2020 — when migration slowed during the COVID-19 pandemic — and in 2021. When Cotton asked if Mayorkas was "satisfied" with the increase, Mayorkas replied: "No, I'm not, but worse is to promulgate and operationalize a policy that defies our values as a nation." A number of Republicans also asked Mayorkas about the reported \$450,000 settlement payments under consideration for migrant families separated at the border under the Trump administration. Mayorkas declined to answer their queries, maintaining that those payments and litigation exist under the jurisdiction of the Justice Department, not DHS. He also insisted the payments are not a so-called pull factor drawing migrants to cross the border. However, the data also showed a downward trend in migrant encounters. The number of overall encounters decreased by 14 percent between September and October, and October was the third consecutive month where the number of encounters decreased. Town Hall [11/16/2021 11:50 AM, Katie Pavlich, 489K] reports that testifying in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee Tuesday morning, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas confirmed the Biden Administration is encouraging illegal immigrant families "separated from their children" to sign up for taxpayer funded relief checks. "We recently launched a website where families who were indeed separated can register for relief. We are working very closely with counsel for the families. We are working with the government, the nation's of origin to accelerate the provision of passports for parents who do indeed want to come here," Mayorkas said.

DHS stops releasing some migrants without providing immigration court dates

CBS News [11/16/2021 1:40 PM, Staff, 2907K] reports Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas faced pointed questions from members of Congress about the situation at the U.S.-Mexico border. Among the topics addressed was an initiative to instruct 78,000

migrants who were not fully processed for deportation to appear before an immigration judge. CBS News immigration reporter Camilo Montoya-Galvez joined CBSN's Tanya Rivero to discuss. [Editorial note: consult video at source link] [CNN](#) [11/16/2021 7:37 PM, Priscilla Alvarez, 5705K] reports the Department of Homeland Security has stopped the practice of releasing migrants in the United States only with paperwork that tells them to report to an Immigration and Customs Enforcement office, Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas told senators Tuesday. The Biden administration continues to expel tens of thousands of migrants arrested at the US-Mexico border under a Trump-era public health order. But some are released into the United States depending on capacity at border facilities and individual circumstances, typically with a "notice to appear," which is a document that instructs people to appear before an immigration judge on a certain date and kicks off the deportation process. But earlier this year, to move migrants faster out of overwhelmed facilities, US Border Patrol began releasing people encountered at the US-Mexico border without the "notice to appear." Instead, agents provided migrants, many of them families, only with notices to report, which put the onus on migrants to initiate their own immigration process. The practice drew wide condemnation from Republicans who argued the Biden administration didn't know the whereabouts of migrants released into the US without the impetus of set court dates for them to reappear.

Mayorkas says not all 1.2M illegal immigrants with final removal orders should be deported

[FOX News](#) [11/16/2021 9:03 AM, Ronn Blitzer, 11051K] reports that Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas told the Senate Judiciary Committee Tuesday that the American immigration system is "Broken," while stating that not all of the 1.2 million illegal immigrants with final removal orders should be deported. Committee ranking member Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, pointed to a Sept. 30 memo in which Mayorkas said "The fact that an individual is a removable non-citizens should not alone be the basis of an enforcement action against them." Grassley then asked if this still applied to those who already have final removal order against them. "We cannot remove one point two million individuals," Mayorkas said, speaking to the impracticability of deporting so many people. He then called into question the validity of those orders. "I would not necessarily accept the fact that all of them have received due process," he said. When asked if any of the 1.2 million people should be deported, Mayorkas said those "Who pose a public safety threat, who pose a national security threat, who pose a border security threat," should be deported from the U.S. Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., defended DHS's use of "prosecutorial discretion" in deciding which deportation cases to pursue. Coons claimed that "an approach that effectively makes any undocumented immigrant a priority is actually making no one a priority." [Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Cruz confronts Mayorkas with photo of migrants sleeping on floor at Texas facility: 'Biden cages'

[FOX News](#) [11/16/2021 3:43 PM, Ronn Blitzer, 11051K] Video: [HERE](#) reports Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas got into a heated exchange over children kept in poor conditions in detention facilities at the border. During a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on Tuesday, Mayorkas took issue with Cruz characterizing the facilities as "cages," when the senator asked how many children have been kept there. "Senator, I respectfully disagree with your use of the term cages," Mayorkas said. Mayorkas did not have a firm number of how many children had been there. Cruz then made a point that Democrats have not paid close attention to the situation,

having Mayorkas confirm that neither President Biden nor Vice President Harris has been to the facility. The senator then turned the focus to his own colleagues. Mayorkas insisted that Democrats have been there, but he was unsure whether any of them were part of the committee.

DHS chief Mayorkas: 'I give myself an A for effort'

Newsweek [11/16/2021 2:26 PM, Alex J. Rouhandeh, 2013K] reports that Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday, where he answered questions about the state of America's national security, particularly in regard to the situation at the southern border. During the questioning period, South Carolina's Republican Senator Lindsey Graham asked the secretary a number of questions regarding the Biden administration's handling of the border. Among those questions, Graham asked Mayorkas to grade himself. "I'm a tough grader on myself," Mayorkas said. "And I give myself an 'A' for effort, investment in mission, and support of our workforce." Despite the number of reported encounters at the southern border dropping each month since August, over 164,000 migrants were still encountered in October, a figure far exceeding any monthly total reported between October 2019 to January of 2021. On top of this issue, which has served as a continued source for Republican criticism, the Customs and Border Protection agency also faces mounting criticism for its treatment of migrants. CBP's Office of Professional Responsibility finds itself involved in an investigation over whether its horse patrol units used whips against Haitian migrants after disturbing images surfaced in late September. Republican Senator Mike Lee of Utah came after Mayorkas regarding the investigation against the horse patrol units. The Washington Times [11/16/2021 6:06 AM, Stephen Dinan, 389K] reports that fighting through three hours of combative questions from senators on the Judiciary Committee, Mr. Mayorkas said it "takes time" for the results to show along the border, but defended the slow progress even as new numbers showed illegal border crossings last month broke the record for October, usually a slow month. "We're on the road to success," he said. His defense was not reassuring to Republicans on the committee. "The Department of Homeland Security has clearly failed in its mission to obtain operational control," said Sen. Mike Lee, Utah Republican. Mr. Mayorkas found himself on the defensive over activities across his sprawling department. He sparred with one senator who accused him of holding immigrant children in cages, and repeatedly admitted he didn't have data on hand that senators were seeking. Some of his toughest questions came over the screening of Afghan evacuees. Under questioning by Sen. Josh Hawley, Missouri Republican, Mr. Mayorkas admitted that tens of thousands of Afghans who he has granted parole to enter the U.S. were not put through the same rigorous screening as they would have been had they come as refugees. "They have not all been given interviews," he acknowledged. Instead, he said, the department is relying on fingerprints to try to flag potential bad actors, and those folks were then given interviews before boarding planes.

DHS Launches Cybersecurity Recruitment and Talent Management System

HS Today [11/16/2021 6:07 AM, Staff, 14K] reports that the Department of Homeland Security has launched the Cybersecurity Talent Management System, a new personnel system that will enable DHS to more effectively recruit, develop, and retain the United States' top cybersecurity professionals. CTMS will enable DHS to fill mission-critical cybersecurity positions by screening applicants based on demonstrated competencies, competitively compensating employees, and reducing the time it takes to be hired into the Department. Employees hired through this system will join the new DHS Cybersecurity

Service, the Nation's preeminent federal cybersecurity team working to protect U.S. critical infrastructure and the American people from cybersecurity threats, and increase nationwide resilience. "The DHS Cybersecurity Talent Management System fundamentally re-imagines how the Department hires, develops, and retains top-tier and diverse cybersecurity talent," said Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas. "As our Nation continues to face an evolving threat landscape, we cannot rely only on traditional hiring tools to fill mission-critical vacancies. This new system will enable our Department to better compete for cybersecurity professionals and remain agile enough to meet the demands of our critical cybersecurity mission." Earlier this year, Secretary Mayorkas announced the most successful cyber hiring initiative. In the Department's history and established the Secretary's Honors Program to recruit talented recent graduates.

DHS chief information security officer wary of Pentagon's changes to CMMC

The [Federal News Network](#) [11/16/2021 1:16 PM, Justin Doubleday, 76K] reports that the Department of Homeland Security is testing out its own way of evaluating contractor cybersecurity measures, amid concerns about the efficacy of the Defense Department's Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification program. DHS launched a pathfinder this summer to begin evaluating existing contractors with cyber hygiene clauses in their contracts, according to Ken Bible, chief information security officer at DHS. He said DHS has had those clauses in place since 2015, but has never held companies accountable for meeting the standards. He said DHS has assessed one contractor so far on whether it is meeting the cybersecurity standards. "We're going to continue to expand upon that Pathfinder," Bible said during a conference today hosted by SC Media. "I don't know that we found from that one Pathfinder everything that we needed to really build out our DHS program in that area." DHS has been monitoring the Pentagon's CMMC program as it builds out its own approach to contractor cybersecurity. Bible said initial impressions were that the Pentagon's use of third-party audits would not work for DHS. "We looked at that and said, 'Well, that may be a little bit too heavy handed for the industrial base that supports the Department of Homeland Security, really didn't want to disadvantage small businesses, which have been kind of at the heart of being able to innovate within the Department of Homeland Security,'" Bible said. DHS may be concerned the Pentagon has swung too far in the opposite direction.

[AL] Migrant Teen Trafficking Probe Leaves Lingering Concerns

[Bloomberg BNA](#) [11/16/2021 5:19 PM, Ellen M. Gilmer, Ben Penn, 19K] reports federal investigators have been unable to locate most of a group of migrant children allegedly turned over to labor traffickers, but they've also found no evidence of exploitation. At least three agencies looked into reports of potential trafficking or exploitation of unaccompanied migrant children in Enterprise, Ala., and couldn't substantiate those claims, according to two people familiar with the investigation. But the unknown whereabouts of many of the children who had been approved by the Health and Human Services Department for release to adult sponsors in Enterprise, a small city in southeastern Alabama that's home to a cluster of chicken slaughterhouses, exposes major gaps in the government's inquiries. While some of the children who weren't living at the Enterprise addresses listed on their HHS-approved paperwork could have moved to a safer location with a family member, there are still concerns that a network of traffickers used Enterprise as an initial "staging area," before shuttling them off to different worksites, said one of the sources. The Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, and Labor departments investigated the Enterprise situation but couldn't track down most of the minors who were placed with sponsors there, according

to the people familiar with the investigation. It's not uncommon for federal officials to lose contact with unaccompanied children after their release from government custody. The status of probes into other jurisdictions, including Woodburn, Ore., following a similar pattern was not immediately clear. A Department of Labor spokesperson said the Wage and Hour Division has investigations open with HHS related to labor violations in the Southeastern U.S., but declined to provide additional details. Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) on Tuesday accused the Department of Homeland Security of "washing your hands" of children's well-being after they're transferred to HHS and then to sponsors. Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas pushed back on the characterization and said he has "confidence in the dedication" of HHS personnel charged with caring for migrant children.

[Mexico] Mexican president says he will call out US lawmakers who vote against immigration reform

The Hill [11/16/2021 1:14 PM, Rafael Bernal, 2054K] reports that Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said Tuesday he will personally call out U.S. members of Congress who vote against immigration reform. "If legislators from one party block this initiative, we will call them out at a later time in a respectful manner. We will make it known from here that legislators from one party did not help something that is just and humanitarian," said López Obrador at his daily press conference. The remarks were first reported by Mexican daily Reforma. López Obrador also praised President Biden, whom he credited with a proposal to regularize the status of 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. "No president has made a deeper commitment in benefit of migrants than President Biden," López Obrador said. "He committed to 11 million, to regularize the situation of 11 million migrants," he added. Biden's Build Back Better spending bill, which is still be debated in Congress but should get a House vote later this week, currently includes language that could grant some form of immigration relief to about 7 million foreign nationals in the United States. On the campaign trail, Biden did commit to creating a "road map to citizenship" for 11 million undocumented immigrants, in conjunction with Congress. López Obrador and Biden are due to meet in person, along with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, at the White House on Thursday.

[Mexico] Over 1,500 migrants in Mexico caravan regularized, government says

Reuters [11/16/2021 11:08 PM, Tamara Corro, 5304K] reports more than 1,500 members of a migrant caravan that set off toward the U.S. border from southern Mexico last month have been issued documents to regularize their stay in Mexico, the migration authority said on Tuesday. The National Migration Institute (INM) said it had given 1,574 foreign nationals migration cards and ensured they could work in Mexico since the caravan set off on Oct. 23. Enduring adverse weather and under pressure from officials to give up, the caravan containing many women and children has made slow progress through southern Mexico, and on Tuesday moved into the Gulf state of Veracruz from neighboring Oaxaca. Reuters witnesses estimated up to 1,500 people entered Veracruz. Organizers of the caravan put the figure at 2,000. About 3,000 people were in the caravan when it set out, though some estimates since then have put the number higher. Overnight, the caravan stopped in the municipality of Jesus Carranza on Veracruz's border with Oaxaca.

[Mexico] U.S. offers reward for criminal group to which "El Chapo" Guzman's brother belongs

Telemundo [11/16/2021 7:18 PM, Staff, 38K] reports the U.S. State Department on Friday announced a \$5 million reward for information leading to the arrest or conviction of four

Mexican drug traffickers, including Aureliano Guzmán Loera, brother of Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán Loera. This, after the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona unsealed two indictments against "high-ranking members of the Sinaloa Cartel for international drug trafficking". The other three are brothers Ruperto Salgueiro Nevárez, José Salgueiro Nevárez and Heriberto Salgueiro Nevárez, whom U.S. authorities identify as a cell of the Sinaloa Cartel. The brother of "Chapo" Guzmán, who is imprisoned in the United States, and the Salgueiro Nevárezes are accused of violating U.S. drug laws by allegedly distributing controlled substances internationally, including fentanyl, heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine and marijuana. The indictments date back to Nov. 13, 2019, and Feb. 19, 2020, but were sealed.

Citizenship and Immigration Services

Immigration Court accumulates almost 1.5 million cases and the waiting time continues to increase

Univision [11/16/2021 2:27 PM, Jorge Cancino, 389K] reports that the portfolio of processes in the Immigration Court does not stop and is approaching the barrier of 1.5 million cases. The conclusion was reported this week in a report by researchers at Syracuse University's Center for Transactional Records Information and Access. The study indicates that in October alone, the first month of fiscal year 2022, some 50,000 new deportation cases were added to the Immigration Review Office, bringing the cumulative to 1,486,495 cases. The report adds that immigration judges "completed 21,154 cases in October, less than half of the total number of new cases that go to court, which means that the total number of pending cases continues to grow each month." In January 2017, when then-President Barack Obama handed over command to Donald Trump, the Immigration Court had accumulated some 520,000 cases. Four years later, when Trump handed over the mandate to Joe Biden, the EOIR had just over 1.2 million cases, an increase of 56.67%. Report details. The TRAC report highlights that immigration courts have recorded the receipt of 49,817 new cases so far in fiscal 2022. In the same period of fiscal year 2021, there were 21,154 cases that were completed. The report further indicates that, according to court records, "Only 0.68% of new cases in fiscal year 2022 sought deportation orders based on any alleged criminal activity of the immigrant, in addition to possible illegal entry." The revised data also indicates that the courts located in Los Angeles County have the majority of deportation cases pending in Immigration Court. And so far in fiscal year 2022, immigration judges have issued removal and voluntary departure orders in 24.7% of completed cases.

[CA] She promised them citizenship so they could visit dying relatives, but they ended up scammed out of \$ 5,000

Univision [11/16/2021 6:10 PM, Staff, 389K] reports a woman posing as an immigration consultant turned herself in to authorities after allegedly defrauding thousands of dollars from people seeking to adjust their immigration status through citizenship procedures and the Deferred Action program, DACA. In a statement, the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office identified the suspect as Jasmine E. Sánchez, 36, whom they accused of fraud, theft and violations of the Immigration Consultants Act. Sánchez operated from an office in the La Tropicana shopping center, located at 1692 Story Road, in San José. Noticias Univision 14 attended dispatch number 200 and was able to verify that the offices are closed.

[CA] Judge: Iraqi refugee held on murder claims can be deported

The [AP](#) [11/16/2021 8:47 PM, Don Thompson, 706K] reports an Iraqi refugee initially accused of committing a killing for the Islamic State terror group before coming to the U.S. is eligible to be deported because he lied on his immigration papers, a federal judge decided Tuesday. Assistant Chief Immigration Judge Tara Naselow-Nahas ruled that Omar Abdulsattar Ameen lied when he was filling out his refugee application to gain entry into the United States. Among other things, she found he wasn't being truthful when he said he had never interacted with, knew or had involvement with various terrorist groups, including the Islamic State of Iraq. But she rejected other allegations, including that he provided support, engaged in terrorist activity, participated in harming another person, or misrepresented that he was a member of such a group. Naselow-Nahas found that Ameen interacted with a cousin "who is clearly a member of an armed terrorist group." She also found the government proved that he lied when he said his father had been fatally shot and that his brother had been kidnapped.

[China] U.S. and China Agree to Ease Restrictions on Journalists

The [New York Times](#) [11/16/2021 3:00 PM, Michael D. Shear] reports the United States and China announced an agreement on Tuesday to ease restrictions on foreign journalists operating in the two countries, tempering a diplomatic confrontation that led to the expulsion of some American reporters from China during the last year of the Trump administration. The deal was first reported by China Daily, a newspaper controlled by the Chinese government, and later confirmed by a statement issued from the State Department. Under the agreement, made public just a day after President Biden met with President Xi Jinping of China, three news organizations — The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post and The New York Times — will be allowed to send journalists back to China, though it remained unclear whether the specific correspondents expelled last year will be permitted to return to work there. The [AP](#) [11/16/2021 10:50 PM, Staff] reports in a statement to The Associated Press late Tuesday, the State Department said China had committed to issuing visas for a group of U.S. reporters "provided they are eligible under all applicable laws and regulations." "We will also continue issuing visas to (Chinese) journalists who are otherwise eligible for the visa under U.S. law," the statement said. China also committed to increase the length for which U.S. media visas are valid from the current 90 days to one year. "On a reciprocal basis, we are committing to increase validity of U.S. visas issued to PRC journalists to one year as well," the State Department statement said, referring to the People's Republic of China. Both sides will also offer multiple-entry visas, it said.

Reported similarly:

[Washington Post](#) [11/17/2021 2:17 AM, Lily Kuo, 12515K]

[Bloomberg](#) [11/16/2021 9:53 AM, Staff, 8629K]

[Reuters](#) [11/16/2021 10:06 AM, Staff]

[Axios](#) [11/16/2021 5:03 PM, Zachary Basu, 526K]

Customs and Border Protection

As migrants travel to the U.S., the U.S. tries to stop them south of the border

[NPR](#) [11/16/2021 4:20 PM, Ailsa Chang, Miguel Macias, Justine Kenin, 5854K] Audio:

[HERE](#) reports NPR's Ailsa Chang speaks with journalists Maria Hinojosa and Julieta Martinelli about their reporting in Mexico and Colombia on the policies designed to stop migrants from reaching the U.S border.

Reuters reports: Mexico evaluates tightening entry requirements for Venezuelans at the request of the US

Univision [11/16/2021 1:07 PM, Staff, 389K] reports that in the first month of fiscal year 2022, the Border Patrol detained 13,385 Venezuelans at the southern boundary, a number that had not been seen in the past two previous fiscal years. The figure led the United States to pressure Mexico to tighten the requirements for the admission of Venezuelans, according to a report by Reuters. A Mexican official told the agency that the measures could begin to be implemented soon. Another explained that they are reviewing the options with Venezuela and exploring the possibility of imposing a visa. Until now, citizens of the South American country do not require a visa to enter Mexico. A third source said the United States is urging its neighbor to take measures to slow down the entry of Venezuelans, noting repeated complaints from Border Patrol agents about the spike in arrests of citizens of that country. Mexico, the source explained, seeks to ensure that those who enter do not do so by telling lies. A fourth source assured that the US effort with Mexico is being made through informal diplomatic channels and the Department of Homeland Security, but without exerting strong pressure, as it did during the Donald Trump administration in the face of migratory crises. In the previous two fiscal years, the bulk of Venezuelans who have been detained are adults who arrived alone across the Rio Grande from Mexico. A much smaller number are Venezuelan children who traveled without their parents or guardians to the southern border and were arrested: 7 in 2020, 315 in 2021 and 86 in October 2022.

Mike Braun says Democrats trying to appropriate money to tear down border wall, calls it 'craziness'

FOX News [11/16/2021 12:53 PM, Staff, 11051K] reports that Sen. Mike Braun, R-Ind., said Tuesday on "Fox & Friends" that Democrats want to appropriate money to tear down the border wall installed under the Trump administration. SEN. MIKE BRAUN: This is a man-made crisis by a one-man wrecking ball named Joe Biden because he did it, it was Trump, and we're not going to keep those policies in place. We were down there at the border in March and saw all the atrocities, including the smugglers heckling at us, and that was at about 75,000 illegal crossings, it's now about triple that. This is a disaster and in this spending bill, listen to this. There's not only no money there for the wall or for the security that the Border Patrol wants, but they want to appropriate money to start tearing it down. [Editorial note: consult video at source link]

[TX] Border Patrol rescues 5-year-old girl abandoned on border island

Telemundo 48 El Paso [11/16/2021 5:58 PM, Staff, 10K] reports agents assigned to the Eagle Pass Station rescued a 5-year-old girl after she was dropped off on a small island on November 13. According to authorities, agents encountered a group of migrants who entered the United States illegally near Eagle Pass, Texas. An adult woman in the group informed agents that her youngest daughter was left on an island in the Rio Grande between the United States and Mexico. Agents notified the Eagle Pass Station River Unit, which immediately responded to the area and located a total of 10 undocumented migrants on the island, including the youngest. The family members, both of Venezuelan nationality, immediately gathered at the scene. "Human traffickers are cold and calculated, often separating families for their own convenience or to achieve compliance," said Acting Chief Patrol Agent for Del Rio Sector Robert Danley. "Fortunately, our officers acted quickly and were able to locate the girl and reunite her with her mother without incident," he concluded.

[ND] Audit: North Dakota firm was properly awarded wall contract

The AP [11/16/2021 5:00 PM, James MacPherson] reports the Defense Department's internal watchdog said its investigation into a \$400 million border wall contract found it was properly awarded to a North Dakota firm whose owner used multiple appearances on Fox News to push for the job. The Pentagon's inspector general on Monday released results of the audit, requested last year by House Homeland Committee Chairman Bennie Thompson, a Mississippi Democrat. "We reviewed Fisher Sand and Gravel's proposal, compared it to the solicitation, and agreed with (the Corps') assessment that it was the LPTA (Lowest Price Technically Acceptable) and was properly awarded the contract," the audit said. The inspector general's report said Corps officials testified that "there was no undue influence," and that none of the documents reviewed by investigators "provided evidence that there was undue influence from the White House or members of Congress" that affected the award of the contract to Fisher Sand and Gravel. The report, however, noted investigators weren't able to get answers from some Corps employees because they were instructed by administration lawyers "to not answer our specific questions about communications between the White House and senior (Corps) officials."

Transportation Security Administration

[WI] Air travel in Wisconsin returning to pre-pandemic levels

The AP [11/16/2021 10:43 AM, Staff, 706K] reports that Wisconsin airports are returning to pre-pandemic traffic levels as the busy holiday season gets underway. Dane County Regional Airport has seen traffic increase every month this year since the COVID-19 vaccine became widely available, officials said. According to Milwaukee County's Mitchell International Airport marketing coordinator Christie Green, the number of flights during Thanksgiving week is expected to be up 50% compared to last year, but down about 7% compared to the same week in 2019. Green Bay Austin Straubel International Airport director Marty Piette says the size of the airport means even on a busy day, travelers are unlikely to wait long at TSA checkpoints. "We are in constant communication with our TSA stakeholders just to keep apprised of the situation," he said. "But from a staffing standpoint, we're going to be OK here." Still, airport officials are encouraging travelers to arrive early - at least two hours in Milwaukee and 90 minutes in Madison. The federal Transportation Security Administration isn't expecting any major disruptions for holiday travel. The Thanksgiving holiday coincides with the start of a vaccine requirement for federal airport security officers. TSA workers must be vaccinated by Nov. 22 unless the Biden administration honors a request from the American Federation of Government Employees asking to delay the deadline, Wisconsin Public Radio reported. In a letter to White House officials, the union cites a confusing "double standard" because federal contractors are not required to be vaccinated until early next year.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Infrastructure bill unleashes funding to address risky dams

The AP [11/16/2021 2:57 PM, David A. Lieb] reports states will soon be flooded with federal money to address a pent-up need to repair, improve or remove thousands of aging dams across the U.S., including some that could inundate towns or neighborhoods if they fail. The roughly \$3 billion for dam-related projects pales in comparison to the tens of billions of dollars going to roads, rails and high-speed internet in the \$1 trillion infrastructure plan signed Monday by President Joe Biden. But it's a lot more than dam projects had been

getting. Over the past decade, the Federal Emergency Management Agency provided more than \$400 million for projects involving dams, mostly to repair damage from natural disasters. But until just a few years ago, there was no national program focused solely on improving the thousands of dams overseen by state and local entities. FEMA's Rehabilitation of High Hazard Potential Dams Grant Program has divvied up \$31.6 million among 36 participating states from 2019-2021. That amount, appropriated by Congress, was barely one-fifth of what had been authorized under a 2016 federal law. The infrastructure bill provides more than 18 times that amount, pumping \$585 million into the program for hazardous dams, including \$75 million set aside for their removal. Because of administrative requirements, FEMA said the new money likely won't start flowing to states before the 2023 fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1, 2022. Previous grants often have been enough only to cover engineering or planning expenses. "This funding will allow for significant increases in the number and amount of actual dam rehabilitation and removal projects which the current funding levels have not allowed," said David Maurstad, FEMA's deputy associate administrator for insurance and mitigation. Repairing and modernizing all 14,343 high-hazard dams that aren't owned by the federal government could cost more than \$20 billion, according to an estimate by the dam safety association. The infrastructure legislation also includes \$148 million for FEMA to distribute to state dam safety offices — a significant increase over the \$6 million to \$7 million annually that has been divided among states. The new money could help states hire more staff or consultants to assess the safety of dams and develop emergency action plans. Every state except Alabama has a dam safety program, but many are underfunded and understaffed, creating a backlog of work.

[CO] Kruger Rock wildfire in Colorado poses "immediate and imminent danger," threatening homes and businesses

CBS News [11/16/2021 5:20 PM, Tori B. Powell, 2907K] reports mandatory evacuation orders have been issued for some Colorado residents and businesses as firefighters respond to the Kruger Rock Fire, which ignited Tuesday morning in Estes Park. Officials believe the 100-acre flame was ignited by an issue with power lines, CBS Denver reported. In a series of emergency messages, the Larimer County Sheriff's Office warned residents in the area that the fire poses "immediate and imminent danger." The fast-spreading fire is just 90 minutes away from Denver and is located at the eastern entrance to Rocky Mountain National Park. The flame was reported just before 7 a.m. local time and none of it is contained at this point. The sheriff's office said structures in the area are threatened, but no damage has been reported as of Tuesday morning. Larimer County Sheriff Justin Smith told CBS Denver there is concern the flames will reach U.S. Highway 36, which has since been closed from the eastern part of Estes Park to the western edge of Lyons.

[WY] Wind-stoked wildfire causes death in Wyoming, evacuations

The AP [11/16/2021 6:05 PM, Staff] reports wildfires pushed by strong winds forced the evacuation of homes in Montana, Wyoming and Colorado and led to a death in Wyoming, officials said Tuesday. Downed power lines caused a fire near the northern Wyoming community of Clark on Monday night that burned at least two homes and seven outbuildings, said Jerry Parker, the Park County Fire District administrator. Wind gusts topped 100 mph (161 kph) in the area Monday night. In south-central Montana, a fire reported at about 11:30 p.m. Monday led the Stillwater County Sheriff's Office to order evacuations southwest of the town of Absarokee, including an area between the communities of Ingersoll and Roscoe. Thirty-five evacuation notices were issued and deputies also went door-to-door, but it's not clear how many people left their residences, the

sheriff's office said. The cause of the fire is still under investigation. The fire had burned an estimated 6 square miles (16 square kilometers) in timber and rough terrain by Tuesday afternoon. Rain fell on the area Tuesday morning, but the wind increased the fire activity in the afternoon, said Tammie Mullikin, a spokesperson for the Stillwater County Sheriff's Office. In north-central Colorado, a fire southeast of Estes Park forced evacuations in a forested region of Larimer County while sending plumes of smoke toward the eastern plains. The fire was first reported about 7 a.m. in rugged terrain and triggered evacuations in the Hermit Park and Little Valley areas near Estes Park and, later, southward to the Boulder County line and east of U.S. Highway 36 between Estes Park and Lyons. The blaze grew to 115 acres (47 hectares), the Larimer County Sheriff's Office said. The cause of the fire was unknown.

[WA] Hundreds Rescued After Mudslides and Floods Pummel British Columbia

The [New York Times](#) [11/16/2021 12:14 AM, Christine Hauser, Ian Austen, Eduardo Medina, and Jesus Jiménez, 2730K] reports that hundreds of people were rescued from highways in British Columbia on Monday, officials said, after torrential rain set off mudslides that trapped people in their cars and prompted evacuations. Officials said that about 275 people who had been stuck on Highway 7 near the town of Agassiz, a small community east of Vancouver, since Sunday evening had been rescued. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation reported that the helicopter rescue operation had ended by nightfall. Jordan Turner, British Columbia's communications director for emergency management, said by telephone late Monday night that approximately 150 more people had been saved from other stretches of highway in the area. He said that crews had whisked drivers away by helicopter and cleared debris from the road. "There are no longer any people or vehicles stranded between slides at this point in time," he said. Mike Farnworth, British Columbia's minister of public safety, told reporters on Monday afternoon that about 80 to 100 vehicles had become trapped on Highway 7. Rescues were underway in Agassiz and the nearby district of Hope, he added. "We've heard from people who are concerned about their loved ones being in their vehicles and trapped on these slides," he said. "We hear you, and we know it's difficult. But help is on the way." As of Monday afternoon, there had been no confirmed reports of fatalities from any accidents related to the severe weather, Mr. Farnworth said. The weather system was caused by an atmospheric river, part of a convergence of storms that was so vast that it swept from California into Washington and southern British Columbia. [The Hill](#) [11/16/2021 10:40 AM, Joseph Guzman, 2054K] reports that heavy rains and powerful winds brought on by an atmospheric river caused severe flooding and mudslides in parts of Washington state and Canada Monday, prompting evacuations and rescues in several communities. Several flood warnings were issued by the National Weather Service in western Washington and rivers began to swell Monday following days of rainfall, according to The Associated Press. Washington Gov. Jay Inslee (D) issued a severe weather emergency proclamation for 14 western Washington counties to direct state resources to do "everything reasonably possible" to help those negatively affected by the weather, as some areas logged up to 6 inches of rain over the past several days. Wind gusts reached upwards of 60 miles per hour in some areas, with the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport clocking winds at 58 mph. Flooding and mudslides forced the closure of the I-5 in both directions in Whatcom County, which sits along the Canadian border. Southbound lanes in some areas began reopening early Tuesday, according to local King 5. Residents of Hamilton, a town northeast of Seattle, and Mount Vernon were advised to evacuate the area Sunday. Whatcom County officials said about 500 people were displaced in the north and northeast areas of the county due to flooding and hundreds were moved to shelter locations. Emergency officials in the county were conducting search

and rescue missions Monday night. At one point Monday more than 158,000 people were without power in the region, according to The Associated Press. By Tuesday morning about 50,000 were without electricity.

Reported similarly:

Alabama Public Radio [11/16/2021 11:46 AM, Joe Hernandez, 1K]

[PR] An arrest warrant, a fugitive CEO: Puerto Rico's effort to privatize its electrical grid is off to a rocky start

The Washington Post [11/16/2021 6:00 AM, Arelis R. Hernández and Douglas MacMillan, 12515K] reports a phalanx of armed deputies wearing bulletproof vests descended on the corporate offices of the company hired to fix Puerto Rico's antiquated power grid. They were looking for Luma Energy chief executive Wayne Stensby, who had been labeled a fugitive by local lawmakers for refusing demands to turn over documents related to the company. The deputies didn't find Stensby, and the warrant that had been issued for his arrest was suspended after he handed over a memory drive with thousands of documents that leaders of the territory's House of Representatives are reviewing as part of a probe into Luma's use of public money. But the drama that unfolded last week was the latest chapter in the almost-biblical saga of the island's efforts to fix its failing infrastructure as its more than 3 million residents face increasing extreme-weather events. "It's a story that goes back forever, involves thousands of players, involving many sins and many calls to 'come to Jesus,'" said Tom Sanzillo, director of financial analysis for the nonprofit Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, which has studied the island's power grid. The hiring of Luma last year marked a new beginning for the island: a 16-year, \$1.5 billion experiment with privatization. Luma, a venture created by two energy companies — Alberta, Canada-based ATCO and Houston-based Quanta Services — was contracted to distribute electricity to 1.5 million customers and make badly needed upgrades to the power grid. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has allocated nearly \$10 billion in taxpayer funds for the effort. The Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA), the state-run utility provider, now only manages the generation of electricity. But in the five months it has been in charge, problems have worsened, by many measures, including numerous sustained power outages and rate increases that have infuriated customers and lawmakers.

Secret Service

[NH] Former bank manager used dead customers' identities to defraud employer

Union Leader [11/16/2021 4:48 PM, Shawne Wickham, 29K, Positive, Secondary] reports a former Salem bank manager has been sentenced to a year and a day in federal prison for stealing more than \$560,000 from his bank using the accounts and identities of dead customers. Kazi Pervez, 42, of Methuen, Mass., was convicted of bank fraud, according to a news release from the U.S. Attorney's office, which prosecuted the case. Pervez, who pleaded guilty last March, was also ordered to forfeit \$454,730 for restitution. According to court documents, Pervez was working at a branch of Santander Bank in Salem in 2016 and 2017 when he devised a scheme to defraud the bank. Pervez opened bank accounts or directed other bank employees to do so, using the identities and personal information of deceased customers, authorities said. He then withdrew funds from the accounts that exceeded the balance of those accounts and "used his authority as branch manager to authorize the overdraft from the account," court documents said. Pervez also identified inactive accounts of dead customers and transferred more than \$450,000 to accounts at

other banks, or used the funds to pay his bills, authorities said. John Farley, acting U.S. Attorney, called what Pervez did a “significant breach of trust.” The case was investigated by the U.S. Secret Service.

[MA] Massachusetts Man Sentenced to Over One Year in Prison for Bank Fraud

The United States Department of Justice [11/16/2021 3:00 PM, Staff, Positive, Secondary] reports Kazi Pervez, 42, of Methuen, Massachusetts was sentenced to 12 months and 1 day in federal prison for bank fraud, Acting United States Attorney John J. Farley announced today. According to court documents and statements made in court, Pervez was a branch manager for a bank in Salem, New Hampshire. From at least April of 2016 until September of 2017, Pervez used his position as branch manager to steal or attempt to steal more than \$560,000 from the bank. For example, Pervez opened or instructed bank employees to open accounts in the name of deceased bank customers. Pervez then withdrew funds from the accounts that exceeded the balance of the accounts and used his authority as branch manager to authorize the overdrafts from the account. Pervez also identified inactive bank accounts of deceased bank customers and transferred money out of those accounts to other accounts that he controlled. Pervez previously pleaded guilty on March 29, 2021. In addition to his sentence, Pervez was ordered to forfeit \$454,730.26, which will be used for restitution. “The US Secret Service is committed to investigating complex fraud schemes especially those that involve the exploitation of elderly and deceased victims.” stated Timothy Benitez, Resident Agent in Charge of the U.S. Secret Service’s New Hampshire Office. This matter was investigated by the United States Secret Service. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Matthew T. Hunter and John Kennedy and former Assistant U.S. Attorney Arnold Huftalen. Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Rabuck assisted with the forfeiture aspects of the case.

[RI] Rhode Island man pleads guilty to child pornography charges

The AP [11/16/2021 8:46 AM, Staff, 2730K] reports that a Rhode Island man who was twice arrested on child pornography charges, the second time while he was waiting trial following his first arrest, has pleaded guilty, federal prosecutors said. Jacob S. Munroe, 23, faces up to 20 years in prison when he is sentenced in February, according to a statement Monday from the U.S. attorney’s office in Rhode Island. Munroe, who lives in the Pascoag village of Burrillville, was first arrested in June 2019 when illicit images were found on his cellphone after Homeland Security agents found that child pornography posted to an Internet messaging and networking application was tied to Munroe’s IP address, authorities said. In an unrelated investigation, while awaiting trial on charges related to first arrest, Munroe was arrested by Rhode Island State Police in November 2020 when it was determined that he downloaded images depicting child pornography. He pleaded guilty Monday to distribution of child pornography and possession of child pornography, prosecutors said.

[DE] Biden Delaware trips cost taxpayers about \$3M in Secret Service alone

The New York Post [11/16/2021 7:31 PM, Steven Nelson, 6459K, Neutral, Secondary] reports Americans may be grappling with how to put food on the table amid a sharp rise in the cost of everyday goods — but you’d never know it from the tab President Biden has racked up on their dime. Biden’s choice of regular weekend and a few midweek trips home to Delaware have cost nearly \$3 million in security alone, Secret Service expense records shared with The Post show. Biden’s security detail spent \$1.96 million on 16 trips to his Delaware homes this year, the records indicate. Another nine trips aren’t yet counted and likely push the total to \$3 million. Those 25 trips have been racked up in just 43 weeks in

office. And the true price tag to taxpayers is higher because the Pentagon hasn't released costs for Air Force One and Marine One helicopter trips. "Most Americans know that Biden is being hidden because he isn't fit for office," a former Trump White House official taunted. "What they may not realize is that they're paying insane amounts of money for him to be tucked into bed in Delaware every weekend." The documented expenses mostly cover hotels and rental cars for Secret Service agents, as well as airfare and train tickets for them to reach Delaware.

[NC] Second person accused in murder of 15-year-old in shooting near Southside Park in Charlotte

WBTV News [11/16/2021 6:05 PM, Staff, 56K, Positive, Secondary] reports a second person has been accused in the murder of a 15-year-old who was shot to death in south Charlotte in October. Detectives have now charged 19-year-old Taizojh Deaveon Smith for the murder of 15-year-old Daliamontray Decarlo Strothers Jr. Detectives had already previously charged 18-year-old Dametrius Hilliard in the murder. According to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, officers responded to a shooting in the area of Griffith Street and Fairwood Avenue, which is near Southside Park, at 11:58 p.m. on Oct. 12. When they arrived, they found the victim, who was taken to Atrium Main with life-threatening injuries. As a result of continued investigation, detectives identified Smith as the suspect in this case, and warrants were issued for his arrest. On Nov. 16, Smith was located and arrested in Statesville by CMPD with assistance from the U.S. Secret Service, Statesville Police Department, and N.C. Highway Patrol. [Editorial note: consult video at source link]

[AL] In Alabama, Training for Cyber Crime and Competing in War Games

The Wall Street Journal [11/16/2021 5:30 AM, James Rundle, Neutral, Primary] reports around 300 police and National Guard officers from all corners of the U.S. filtered into a drab, white building off Interstate 65 in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. They were there to learn about ransomware from each other, and the U.S. Secret Service. This October day would not be a rehashing of cybersecurity nostrums. Instead, Aaron Sparling, an investigator of 17 years at the Portland Police Bureau in Oregon, was going for something more visceral. In a contained system, he proceeded to set off one of the most destructive malware variants in recent memory for students at the Secret Service's National Computer Forensics Institute. "Essentially, what I did was I took a virtual machine and detonated the WannaCry virus," he said, referring to the ransomware that ripped through public and private organizations in 2017 and counted over 200,000 victims in 150 countries, including FedEx Corp. and Britain's National Health Service by the time it was done. Hands-on experience with a live virus showed students just how the malware goes to work in real time, as instructors coached them in ways to cut detection and response times from hours to minutes, Mr. Sparling said. "I think they had a lot of fun with that," he said. The weeklong event included sessions on incident response and practical education. The following week the Secret Service hosted a war game, in which teams from law-enforcement agencies competed in responding to a ransomware attack on critical infrastructure—the nightmare scenario for U.S. officials, who have called ransomware a national-security threat.

[OH] South Bloomfield Police Warn on Counterfeit Bills

The Scioto Post [11/16/2021 7:00 AM, Jeremy Newman, Neutral, Secondary] reports that, in October, they posted a story on counterfeit bills being passed in Pickaway and Ross county now they seem to have hit South Bloomfield also. South Bloomfield reported today that they have found some fake money in their town also The money looks real but has

some telltale signs if inspected with words that say, "Copy Money" but other than that a quick glance and it could be taken as real. If you own a local business please share the post with others it is unsure if there are other denominations out there.

[TX] McLennan County law enforcement recovers \$75,000 in stolen property

The Waco Tribune Herald [11/16/2021 7:18 PM, Amaris E. Rodriguez, 46K, Positive, Secondary] reports items stolen from a man's store the day after he died were among almost \$75,000 in stolen property area law enforcement officials recently recovered, including high-priced guitars, firearms, fishing rods, electronics and more, McLennan County Sheriff Parnell McNamara said Tuesday. The sheriff's office, a U.S. Marshals Service task force, and Waco, Bruceville-Eddy, Lacy Lakeview and Bellmead police departments were involved in arrests of three people involved in the thefts, McNamara said. Officials arrested Tony Glenn Fisher and Destiny Renee McCollum on Nov. 8 at a residence in the 1600 block of San Jacinto Street in Bellmead. Isaiah Garvin was arrested Nov. 4. McNamara said all three were involved in burglaries, but McCollum was arrested on one charge, possession of a controlled substance. Her specific involvement is unclear. "It was a combined effort, a combined investigation of all of these agencies that brought together these three creeps that you see on the board," McNamara said. He said Garvin called the family of a man he knew who died Oct. 31 to offer his condolences. The day after the man's death, Garvin robbed his store, McNamara said. On the day of his arrest, Fisher also had "a large quantity of counterfeit cash," McNamara said. None of his charges appear to involve counterfeit cash. He previously has been charged for counterfeiting money, McNamara said.

[SD] Fake \$100 bills circulating in Lead

The Black Hills Pioneer [11/16/2021 1:00 PM, Wendy Pitlick, Neutral, Secondary] reports three counterfeit \$100 bills have circulated around the Lead area over the last two weeks, Lead Police Chief John Wainman said Monday. During the regular city commission meeting, Wainman reported that area banks alerted him to the fake bills. "They look pretty real and they feel real," Wainman said. "They're pretty authentic. They're better than most forgeries." One telltale sign of the counterfeit bills are the tiny words "Movie Money" at the top of the bills. But if a cashier or someone doing business does not know to inspect the bill, it could slip by undetected. Wainman said businesses or individuals who receive \$100 bills should check them with a marker or inspect them closely for anything that could be suspicious. Anyone who detects these bills is encouraged to contact the Lead Police Department, 584-1615.

Coast Guard

Coast Guard prioritizing climate change resiliency, workforce in infrastructure investments

The Federal News Network [11/16/2021 6:20 PM, David Thornton, 76K] reports the U.S. Coast Guard has received nearly \$2 billion in shore infrastructure appropriations since 2018. Vice Adm. Paul Thomas, deputy commandant for Mission Support at the Coast Guard, told the House Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation subcommittee that the service is investing much of those funds into resiliency and its workforce. But the General Accountability Office is worried that it isn't enough. "Our work identified that almost half of the Coast Guard's shore infrastructure is beyond its service life, resulting in costly

recapitalization construction and maintenance project backlogs, and as of 2019, these backlogs totaled more than \$2.6 billion,” Heather MacLeod, acting director for Homeland Security and Justice at GAO, said during the Nov. 16 hearing. “In fact, in 2018, the Coast Guard estimated that it would take almost 400 years to address the \$1.77 billion backlog of major projects reported for that year. Also, it’s likely that the estimated costs to address the backlog are understated. This is particularly concerning not only because of the amount of time needed to address the backlog, but because of other potential impacts. For example, we have identified that deferring maintenance can lead to higher costs in the long run, while also risking posing risks to safety, security, readiness, staffing, resources and mission execution.” Added on top of that is the cost of responding to the effects of climate change as the Coast Guard invests in its facilities. MacLeod said that cost needs to be incorporated into all of the Coast Guard’s projects. Thomas said the process of folding those costs into the backlog is underway – though still in its infancy – as part of a greater climate change vulnerability assessment.

[MI] 11-year-old sole survivor of plane crash saved by father’s last ‘bear hug’

ABC News [11/16/2021 7:41 AM, Mina Kaji and Bill Hutchinson, 23K] reports that the 11-year-old sole survivor of a plane crash was saved by her father’s last hug, her mother believes. “Her last memory is her dad just grabbed her and held her really, really tight,” Christie Perdue told ABC News transportation correspondent Gio Benitez about her daughter, Laney. Perdue explained that Laney suffered injuries only on one side of her body, and the other side was protected by one of her father’s “big, bear hugs.” She also shared that Laney is now recovering at the children’s hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan. “She has five broken bones all over the place, but she is amazing and she’s inspiring.” The commuter plane carrying Laney, her father and three others crashed Saturday at the Welke Airport on Beaver Island in the far northern part of Lake Michigan. The Island Airways aircraft was attempting to land at the Welke Airport after departing from Charlevoix, Michigan, about 32 miles away, according to a statement from the Federal Aviation Administration. A helicopter crew from the Coast Guard Great Lakes was training in the area at the time and responded to an emergency call from the island. They flew Laney, who was critically injured, and a male adult, who initially survived the crash, to McLaren Northern Michigan Hospital in Petoskey, Coast Guard officials said. The male victim was later pronounced dead at the hospital. The helicopter crew performed chest compressions on Laney en route to the children’s hospital, the Coast Guard Great Lakes said in a tweet.

[WA] Coast Guard rescues 10, including baby, from raging Washington floodwaters

The Hill [11/16/2021 3:45 PM, Joseph Guzman, 2054K] reports new video shows the moments Coast Guard crew members rescued 10 people from the severe flooding that slammed the Pacific Northwest Monday. The video tweeted by the Coast Guard Pacific Northwest shows several instances of crews hoisting adults and children stranded on roofs into a helicopter as floodwaters raged around them. The Coast Guard said six adults and four children, including one baby, were rescued in Forks, Wash., during the operation Monday. Crews were unable to get to the stranded residents by boat due to “excessive currents,” and had to access them by air, according to KGW8. No one was injured in the rescue. The rescue was one of many in the region as an atmospheric river unleashed heavy rainfall over western Washington and parts of Canada. Washington Gov. Jay Inslee (D) issued a severe weather emergency proclamation for 14 western Washington counties to direct state resources to do “everything reasonably possible” to help those negatively affected by the weather, as some areas logged up to 6 inches of rain over the past several

days. Whatcom County officials said about 500 people were displaced in the north and northeast areas of the county due to flooding and hundreds were moved to shelter locations. Emergency officials in the county were conducting search and rescue missions Monday night. At one point Monday nearly 160,000 people were without power in the region. By Tuesday afternoon, just under 50,000 were still without electricity, according to poweroutage.us.

Reported similarly:

[USA Today](#) [11/16/2021 8:00 AM, Staff, 7620K] Video: [HERE](#)

[CA] Lifeguards pull 3 Mexican citizens from ocean after report of large-scale crossing attempt

The [San Diego Union Tribune](#) [11/16/2021 9:17 PM, Karen Kucher, Alex Riggins, 353K] reports San Diego lifeguards pulled three people from the ocean Monday night after it was reported that dozens of people were attempting to swim from Mexico into the United States, authorities said. Tijuana officials reported the crossing attempt about 9:30 p.m., telling officials in San Diego there was “some sort of commotion down by the marine boundary line,” Petty Officer 3rd Class Alex Gray, public affairs specialist with the Coast Guard, said late Monday. According to the Border Patrol, the agency “received a report that dozens of people were attempting to illegally swim across the international boundary ... near Border Field State Park.” Agents responded to the area — where dense fog was covering much of the coast — and immediately requested help from the Coast Guard and San Diego Fire-Rescue Department firefighters and lifeguards. Rick Romero, a San Diego lifeguard lieutenant, said the three people pulled from the water were uninjured. Border Patrol agents then took custody of the trio, which consisted of a man, a woman and an unaccompanied juvenile boy who were all Mexican citizens, according to the agency.

CISA/Cybersecurity

FBI left out of the loop in cyberattack reporting bill

[Politico](#) [11/16/2021 11:55 AM, Betsy Woodruff Swan and Eric Geller, 2024K] reports that the FBI could be sidelined in new cybersecurity legislation, a top Bureau official told lawmakers Tuesday. And, in the view of America’s most powerful law enforcement agency, that would be a big problem. In testimony to Congress, Bryan Vorndran, the assistant director of the FBI’s Cyber Division, said that the Biden administration is “troubled” by legislation proposed by the Senate and House Homeland Security committees requiring a wide range of companies to report intrusions to the Department of Homeland Security’s Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency but not simultaneously to the FBI. “Current incident reporting legislation being considered fails to recognize the critical expertise and role that DOJ, including the FBI, play when it comes to cyber incident reporting,” Vorndran said in a statement for the record provided to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform. “Cyber is the team sport, and the Department of Justice and the FBI are a key player,” Vorndran continued. “It is time for legislation to reflect this reality.” The Biden administration’s stance throws a last-minute wrench into a yearslong effort to require key companies to disclose cyberattacks. The House’s annual must-pass defense bill includes language requiring critical infrastructure operators and federal contractors to alert CISA if they are hacked. Similar language is likely to make it into the Senate’s version of the bill. The provision — the result of weeks of negotiations between the leaders of the Senate homeland security and intelligence panels — would represent the most sweeping cyber

regulation ever imposed on the private sector.

Reported similarly:

Washington Times [11/15/2021 7:00 PM, Ryan Lovelace, 389K]

Oversight finds 'small lapses' in security led to Colonial Pipeline, JBS hacks

The Hill [11/16/2021 2:45 PM, Maggie Miller, 2054K] reports a series of "small lapses" in cybersecurity led to several recent successful ransomware attacks, the House Oversight and Reform Committee concluded in a staff memo released Tuesday. "Ransomware attackers took advantage of relatively minor security lapses, such as a single user account controlled by a weak password, to launch enormously costly attacks," the memo reads. "Even large organizations with seemingly robust security systems fell victim to simple initial attacks, highlighting the need to increase security education and take other security measures prior to an attack." Beyond the security lapses, the committee also concluded that the companies impacted by ransomware attacks did not have clear points of contact with the federal government, hampering response efforts, and that they faced a huge amount of pressure to pay the attackers. The memo was published ahead of a hearing on ransomware attacks held by the Oversight and Reform panel on Tuesday, which featured National Cyber Director Chris Inglis and top officials from the FBI and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) giving testimony. "From an FBI perspective, we have not seen a decrease in ransomware attacks in the past couple of months originating from Russia," testified Bryan Vorndran, the assistant director of the FBI's Cyber Division. "We do have incomplete data, in a best case scenario, we only see about 20 percent of the intrusions in the country, no different than our partners at CISA, but the FBI has remained focused on investigating cyber criminals in and around Russia." "We will continue to pressure the Russians, but they must understand they must do their part," Inglis testified Tuesday.

G-7 Conducts Cyber-Security Exercise as Financial Threats Climb

Bloomberg [11/16/2021 10:12 AM, Christopher Condon, 227K] reports that Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and counterparts from other leading economic powers conducted a "cyber exercise" Tuesday to showcase the importance of international cooperation amid escalating threats to the financial system. The exercise included finance ministers and central bank chiefs from the Group of Seven nations. It "covered how G-7 members will seek to cooperate in the hypothetical event of a significant, cross-border incident affecting the financial sector," the Treasury said in a statement Tuesday. Policy makers and regulators in the U.S. and other countries have pointed to cyber threats from criminal and state actors as an increasing threat to financial stability. The G-7 last year laid out a multi-year testing program to improve the ability of government and private-sector actors to respond to cyber attacks. In an April interview with CBS's "60 Minutes" program, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said he worried about potential scenarios in which a large payments system or financial institution might be crippled by a cyber attack. "There's a lot of effort going in to deal with those threats," he said at the time. "That's a big part of the threat picture in today's world." During Tuesday's session, Yellen "reaffirmed Treasury's commitment to counter the threats posed by ransomware and other malicious cyber activity across the financial services sector and economy," the statement said. A Treasury spokesperson didn't immediately respond to a request for more details about the exercise.

Data Breach Rule for Health Apps Leaves Developers in the Dark

[Bloomberg](#) [11/16/2021 5:36 AM, Christopher Brown, 19K] reports makers of health apps are scrambling to understand the extent of their legal liability after a divided Federal Trade Commission announced they're now required to inform users about data and privacy breaches—and if they have used their customers' health data without authorization. The commission approved 3-2 a policy statement that the makers of health apps, including apps on smartphones and fitness devices, must comply with the FTC Health Breach Notification Rule. The rule had previously applied to a much narrower set of health-information software, primarily apps used to collect and store health records from doctors and other health-care providers. Supporters say it's a welcome attempt to extend privacy protections to health data being gathered and stored by a new generation of health and fitness apps that hadn't been imagined when the breach notification rule was issued in 2009. These apps gather such information as menstrual cycles, fitness and sleep patterns, and blood-glucose levels. But app developers say the September statement leaves them in the dark about crucial questions, including which apps and app makers are included under the rule, and how big the fines could be for violations, especially in cases where an app maker has been sharing users' health information without authorization.

Terrorism Investigations

[TX] Grandmother reports 'locked and loaded' school board comment to FBI as domestic terror threat

[FOX News](#) [11/16/2021 8:35 PM, Tyler O'Neil, 11051K] reports a Fort Worth grandmother reached out to the Dallas office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to report what she described as a "terrorist threat" at a school board meeting last week. A local father who supports critical race theory had addressed anti-CRT protesters during a school board meeting and said, "I got over 1,000 soldiers ready to go," before adding, "locked and loaded." "I filed a report with the FBI office in Fort Worth," Ladonna Meyers, a grandmother of two who was at the school board meeting on Nov. 9, told Fox News in an interview Tuesday. "It's their job to check in on terrorism, and this was a terrorist threat." In the Fort Worth Independent School District board meeting on Nov. 9, Malikk Austin turned to address the parents who had spoken up about critical race theory. "For those who got an issue with this critical race theory equity, this is something I fight for, for my children," Austin, who is African American, began. "How dare you come out here and talk about the things that my daddy and my grandparents went through? The lynching, the oppression, Jim Crow — and my kids are still being afflicted by this." "We are not our ancestors," Austin added. "I got over 1,000 soldiers ready to go." After Austin's one minute to speak had run out, officers came and escorted him out of the room. During this time, he shouted, "I'll bring my soldiers with me next time... locked and loaded."

National Security News

[United Kingdom] British police declared Liverpool taxi explosion a 'terrorist incident,' but admit the motive remains unknown

The [Washington Post](#) [11/16/2021 2:48 PM, Karla Adam and Ellen Francis, 12515K] reports that British authorities are scrambling to understand the motives of the suspected bomber in a Liverpool taxi explosion who died in the blast, but that hasn't stopped them from quickly declaring the incident a terrorist attack. On Sunday, a taxi exploded outside of Liverpool Women's Hospital, and the following day, police designated it a terrorist incident even while

acknowledging that "The motivation for this incident is yet to be understood." Police have not pointed to a target for the attack or confirmed details reported in local media about the suspect's background - but said it was declared a terrorist incident "Given all the circumstances." British police have broad discretion in what they label a "Terrorist incident," as long as it's consistent with the definition of terrorism in the Terrorism Act 2000, which includes the use or threat of serious violence "For the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause." Analysts said that in this case, the decision to label it as terrorism may be related to the use of an improvised explosive device in the attack, as well as other reasons not declared publicly. According to guidance on the Crown Prosecution Service website, when explosives are used or threatened to be used, "It is not necessary to prove that the action is designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, as is the case with other terrorist offences." Analysts say, by designating the attack as terrorism, the local police force will have access to national resources, including intelligence services, specialist forensic officers and translation help.

[Iran] Video shows Iran helicopter's "unsafe" maneuver near U.S. warship

CBS News [11/16/2021 8:10 AM, Staff, 2907K] reports that the Pentagon on Monday accused Iran of "Unsafe and unprofessional" conduct by a naval helicopter that it said flew within about 25 yards of a U.S. Navy ship and circled it three times in the Gulf of Oman. Video published by Iranian media appeared to show the helicopter flying low and coming close to the USS Essex, an amphibious assault ship. Video circulating on Iranian Telegram channels today of an #Iran military helicopter getting close to what looks like the USS Essex. Would note this comes after US reported the USS Essex had an "Unsafe & unprofessional interaction" with multiple Iranian drones earlier this month. Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said the Iranian helicopter circled the USS Essex three times and at one point flew as low as 10 feet off the surface of the water. He said the incident on Nov. 11 had no effect on the Essex's operations. "Without getting into specifics, the crew of the Essex took the appropriate force protection measures they felt that they needed to, and they acted in accordance with international law," Kirby said. CBS News national security correspondent David Martin reports that previously, defense officials had said the encounter was not considered "unsafe and unprofessional" because the Iranian helicopter was not armed.

[Afghanistan] Taliban Warn of Mass Refugee Exodus if U.S. Keeps Funds Frozen

Bloomberg [11/17/2021 3:36 AM, Eltaf Najafizada, 8629K] reports the Taliban's top diplomat warned of an Afghan refugee exodus if the U.S. continues to block the release of some \$9 billion of the country's assets. "We are concerned that if the current situation prevails, the Afghan government and people will face problems and will become a cause for mass migration in the region and world," Amir Khan Muttaqi, the Taliban's acting foreign minister, said in an open letter to the U.S. Congress. It will also exacerbate the humanitarian crisis, he said. The statement comes shortly before the United Nations Security Council holds a meeting to address the Afghan crisis. The country's economy is reeling as the Taliban struggles to stabilize Afghanistan's finances, with the World Food Program saying more than half of the population faces acute food insecurity. Muttaqi also said that Afghanistan is now secure under the Taliban leadership, posing no threat to the world and willing to engage in positive cooperation. He urged the U.S. to invest in the manufacturing, agriculture and mining sectors of the country. The U.S. had blocked the

assets on concerns about the militant group's continued links with terrorism, human rights abuses and failure to build an inclusive government.

[Belarus] Group behind cyberattacks on multiple governments linked to Belarus

The Hill [11/16/2021 12:15 PM, Maggie Miller, 2054K] reports that hacking and disinformation groups believed to be behind attacks on governmental agencies in countries including Germany in recent months were linked by cybersecurity researchers on Tuesday to the Belarusian government. Researchers for cybersecurity company Mandiant made the attribution as part of a new report, assessing with "high confidence" that the activity of what has been labeled the "Ghostwriter" information campaign was "aligned with Belarusian government interests." A cyber espionage group, which Mandiant labeled "UNC1151," was also linked to the Belarusian government. Mandiant in April had reported that UNC1151 was helping conduct Ghostwriter influence operations. Targets of UNC1151 have included government and private sector groups in Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Ukraine and Germany, with UNC1151 going after Belarusian journalists, dissidents and media entities with a focus on stealing confidential information. Mandiant noted that while UNC1151 has targeted former Soviet nations, it had not gone after any state entities in either Russia or Belarus. The Ghostwriter campaign was previously linked by officials to the Russian government, including the European Union, which formally called out Russia for the attacks on members of Parliament, government officials and others in EU member states. The Associated Press reported in September that the German government was formally blaming Russia's GRU intelligence service for targeting German lawmakers ahead of the country's elections. Mandiant researchers on Tuesday stressed that while "we cannot rule out Russian contributions ... at this time, we have not uncovered direct evidence of such contributions."

[China] Biden, Xi Open to Nuclear-Arms Talks

The Wall Street Journal [11/16/2021 4:36 PM, Alex Leary, Lingling Wei and Michael R. Gordon] reports President Biden and President Xi Jinping of China have agreed to explore talks on arms control, a top White House official said, a day after the two used a virtual meeting to emphasize the need to avoid conflict on regional security and economic matters. "The two leaders agreed that we would look to begin to carry forward discussions on strategic stability," White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Tuesday. Mr. Sullivan made clear the discussion was tentative. "It is now incumbent on us to think about the most productive way to carry it forward from here," he said in response to a question about China's growing military prowess during an event at the Brookings Institution think tank. Nuclear-arms talks, should they materialize, would be one of the few concrete outcomes from Monday night's meeting, which ran more than three hours and saw Messrs. Biden and Xi holding firm to their positions on a range of issues, including Taiwan. The overall benefit of the meeting, experts said, was keeping lines of communication open. "This high-level meeting at a minimum paves the way for more intensive technical discussions about economic and geopolitical issues in which there remains a possibly unbridgeable gulf between the two sides," said Eswar Prasad, a professor of trade policy at Cornell University. Reuters [11/16/2021 5:43 PM, David Brunnstrom, Michael Martina and Tom Daly, 5304K] reports Sullivan did not elaborate on what form the discussions on strategic stability could take, but went on to say: "That is not the same as what we have in the Russian context with the formal strategic stability dialogue. That is far more mature, has a much deeper history to it. There's less maturity to that in the U.S.-China relationship, but the two leaders did discuss these issues and it is now incumbent on us to think about the most productive way to carry it forward." Washington has repeatedly urged China to join it and Russia in a new

arms control treaty. Beijing says the arsenals of the other two countries dwarf its own. It says it is ready to conduct bilateral dialogues on strategic security "on the basis of equality and mutual respect."

[China] U.S.-China engagement to intensify - U.S. national security adviser

Reuters [11/16/2021 10:57 AM, Staff, 5304K] reports that U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said on Tuesday that U.S. engagement with China will intensify at multiple levels to ensure that competition between the two powers does not veer into conflict. Speaking hours after a virtual summit between U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, Sullivan said the two leaders had agreed that "we would look to begin to carry forward discussion on strategic stability" - a reference to U.S. concerns about China's nuclear and missile buildup. "President Biden did raise with President Xi the need for a strategic stability set of conversations...that that needs to be guided by the leaders and led by senior empowered teams on both sides that cut across security, technology and diplomacy," Sullivan said in a Brookings Institution webinar. "You will see at multiple levels an intensification of the engagement to ensure that there are guardrails around this competition so that it doesn't veer off into conflict." Biden and Xi talked for about three and a half hours in their virtual meeting, but appeared to do little to narrow differences between the superpowers which have raised fears of an eventual conflict between them. The United States had envisioned the meeting, the leaders' most in-depth exchange since Biden took office in January, as a way to put stability in a relationship increasingly troubled over a litany of issues, including what Washington sees as Beijing's aggressive actions toward self-ruled Taiwan. In the meeting Biden pressed his Chinese counterpart on human rights and Xi warned that China would respond to provocations on Taiwan.

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Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas
Department of Homeland Security
by electronic mail

January 26, 2022

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

Thank you very much for taking the time to meet with us in November, along with Acting Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Commissioner Miller, to share some of the steps CBP is taking in the areas of transparency and accountability. We are pleased that CBP now has Senate-confirmed leadership, and copy Commissioner Magnus here as well.

We recognize that the operational demands on your team and CBP have been immense. Nevertheless, we believe that a systemic overhaul is urgently necessary. If CBP is to better comply with legal requirements and law-enforcement best practices, improved processes for civil society engagement, addressing misconduct and strengthening accountability, increased professionalism and openness, and changes in recruitment and hiring are imperative.

As discussed for follow-up, we outline here several of the areas we believe require regular and in-depth engagement with both DHS and CBP leadership, as they are in need of immediate attention.

I. Engagement with Civil Society

A. Body-Worn Cameras

Nine years ago, CBP led federal law enforcement in declaring a commitment to equipping officers and agents with body-worn cameras. Implementation has been troublingly slow but there is now announced widespread deployment. Yet the all-important policy choices that differentiate between a body-worn-camera initiative that could increase accountability, trust, and transparency and one that ends up occluding it must be made in consultation with advocates and affected communities. We append a letter sent last month by the Project on Government Oversight (POGO) to Commissioner Magnus requesting prompt engagement on these vital policy issues. While signatories below have varied positions on body-worn cameras' efficacy, we all agree that the lack of consultation and transparency around the policy so far threatens to make cameras' introduction a step backward for CBP.

B. Law Enforcement Coordination Council (LECC)

As many of our groups described to Secretary Mayorkas in a letter dated October 19, 2021,¹ creation of the Law Enforcement Coordination Council has potential to be positive. Yet, we remain concerned that its membership comprises only internal DHS entities and that its proceedings have so far been entirely opaque. As currently constituted, the Council's recommendations will not garner the needed legitimacy from the communities most at risk from law-enforcement misconduct. Those stakeholders, including CBP's geographic public at the borders and other Black and Brown-led organizations, must not just be accorded occasional listening sessions but have actual seats at the table. Similarly, bodies like the Homeland Security Advisory Council need to be diversified and given real oversight duties and access.

Relatedly, we believe DHS and CBP need to be proactive in soliciting and incorporating border communities' and advocates' views on high-level personnel decisions, including openness to bringing in fresh perspectives from outside the agency in leadership roles. We are also concerned about the gaps and inconsistencies between CBP headquarters and the sectors/field offices: Especially for a component of its size, CBP must not only detail personnel from the field to DC but also in the reverse direction, posting trusted representatives of the Secretary and Commissioner at the borders who can directly provide unvarnished operational appraisals.

II. Misconduct, Corruption, and Impunity

Because CBP is the nation's largest law enforcement agency, double the FBI's size and larger even than the NYPD, its lack of many fundamental safeguards to guard against unnecessary use of force, root out corruption, and deter misconduct is especially glaring. The current transparency problems and recurring impunity that pervade the agency must become unacceptable to every person that serves CBP honorably, rather than considered inevitable. CBP has to be subject to effective oversight and accountability measures to rein in and prevent future abuses and ensure justice and accountability for past ones.

A. Complaints Process

At the end of June, the DHS Office of Public Engagement organized a well-attended webinar for advocates at which multiple oversight and investigation components described their roles and protocols. Building on this meeting has been challenging, however, and there has been little direct response from DHS or its components to, for example, the National Immigration Project's important April 2021 report, *Complaints Ignored, Abuses Excused: Why the Department of Homeland Security's Internal Accountability Mechanisms Must Be Reformed*,² and accompanying letter to you.³ We look forward to redoubling efforts to partner on fundamental reforms to the existing complaints patchwork.

¹ <https://www.brw.org/news/2021/10/19/joint-letter-department-homeland-security-secretary-mayorkas>

² https://nippnlg.org/PDFs/2021_27Apr_ice-report.pdf

³ https://nippnlg.org/PDFs/press_releases/2021_27Apr_ice-report-letter-mayorkas.pdf

B. Meaningful, Objective Discipline

Many of those subject to discipline as a result of the racist, sexist, and violent postings as part of the “I am 10-15” Facebook group ultimately had their discipline reduced.⁴ At our meeting, a “hotwash” of this process was discussed and we strongly support such after-action review by DHS and CBP leadership. We are concerned that past membership in this Facebook group does not seem to be affecting CBP promotions thus far and request clarity on that process.

You also pledged accountability for Border Patrol’s racialized Del Rio abuses “in days, not weeks,”⁵ and the President himself promised a swift response. Four months later we are deeply dismayed by the apparent lack of accountability, a failing that we believe reflects systemic inadequacies in DHS’s investigation and disciplinary processes.

Finally, we appreciate CBP’s commitment, expressed during the meeting, to consider whether an examination of law enforcement best practices indicates a need to empower the Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) with more meaningful authority in the disciplinary process. Time and time again, OPR makes disciplinary recommendations to CBP leadership that are disregarded, because decisions on specific disciplinary actions are left to the discretion of field leadership or Deciding Officials. We would appreciate a prompt update on CBP’s consideration of reforms in this area.

III. **Commitment to Transparency**

A. Access to CBP Facilities

Unlike Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which has a standing access directive⁶ for requesting tours and visitation of detention facilities, CBP facilities remain largely inaccessible and non-governmental organizations have routinely been denied any sort of monitoring or visitation access to both Ports of Entry and Border Patrol stations. In some locations, CBP does have a positive practice of occasionally providing stakeholder tours, especially when a new facility opens, but these are not consistently offered in different locations or equally to local and national stakeholders. These stakeholder tours have not historically included the ability to speak

⁴ House Committee on Oversight and Reform, *Border Patrol Agents in Secret Facebook Group Faced Few Consequences for Misconduct*. (Oct. 25, 2021), <https://oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/COR%20CBP%20Facebook%20Group%20Report%20-%20October%202021.pdf>

⁵ Kevin Johnson, “DHS vows to have findings within ‘days’ in investigation of Border Patrol’s treatment of Haitian migrants.” USA Today (Sept. 22, 2021), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2021/09/22/photos-border-patrol-using-horse-reins-whips-prompts-dhs-probe/5812845001/>

⁶ <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/ero-outreach/pdf/access-directive-stakeholder.pdf>

with individuals in CBP custody—a crucial component to monitoring and a part of ICE’s access directive—and are frequently too general in nature to allow an opportunity for issue-specific inquiries or comprehensive monitoring. This is despite longstanding and well-founded concerns over CBP treatment of individuals in its custody and conditions of confinement for those same individuals.⁷

Establishing regular stakeholder access and routine third-party monitoring and visitation of CBP facilities through the development of a CBP access directive is an essential step in working to restore public confidence in CBP and to ensure that individuals receive proper care and treatment and that their rights are respected in CBP short-term custody. We are grateful to you explicitly committing to transparency and believe that ensuring such access is an essential part of this commitment. Transparency will not exist for CBP if Ports of Entry and Border Patrol stations remain closed off without regular access for non-government organizations to conduct monitoring and oversight. Our organizations stand ready to work with CBP to develop an access directive without creating undue burdens on CBP officers and agents.⁸

B. Border Patrol Critical Incident Teams and Use of Force Policy

Our organizations are concerned about internal dynamics that shield CBP from accountability and enable impunity, in turn endangering public safety and potentially national security. Research into police reports and court documents, along with accounts by former CBP officials, as described in a letter that the Southern Border Communities Coalition sent to Congress on October 28, 2021, identifies that Border Patrol is operating teams known as Critical Incident Teams (CITs), among other names, that are compromising the integrity of use of force investigations, thus exacerbating impunity.⁹

We know that Congress has limited the power to investigate criminal misconduct to the FBI, DHS OIG, and OPR. To date, no DHS official has been able to provide stakeholders with the statutory, regulatory or other authority under which CITs operate. This leads us to conclude that

⁷ See, e.g., PBS NewsHour, “A firsthand report of ‘inhumane conditions’ at a migrant children’s detention facility.” (June 21, 2019),

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/a-firsthand-report-of-inhumane-conditions-at-a-migrant-childrens-detention-facility>; American Immigration Council, Challenging Unconstitutional Conditions in CBP Detention Facilities

Doe v. Wolf, No. 15-00250 (D. Ariz. filed June 8, 2015),

<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/litigation/challenging-unconstitutional-conditions-cbp-detention-facilities>

⁸ Relatedly, CBP must engage on creating a detainee locator like ICE has. See ACLU of San Diego & ACLU Border Rights Center, “Separation of Families via CBP Detention and Processing, and the Agency’s Refusal to Implement a Detainee Locator System.” (Apr. 15, 2020),

<https://www.aclusandiego.org/sites/default/files/2020-04-15-oig-complaint-3-final.pdf>

⁹ Southern Border Communities Coalition, Request for Congressional Investigations and Oversight Hearings on the Unlawful Operation of the U.S. Border Patrol’s Critical Incident Teams (BPCITs) (Oct. 27, 2021),

https://d3n8a8pro7vhnmx.cloudfront.net/alliancesandiego/pages/3292/attachments/original/1635367319/SBCC_letter_to_Congress_Final_10.27.21.pdf

these entities are operating beyond any authority granted by Congress, in possible violation of U.S. laws, and engaging in obstruction of justice. We were deeply troubled by recent reporting that CITs' practice includes "collecting evidence that could be used to protect a Border Patrol agent and 'help deal with potential liability issues,' such as a future civil suit."¹⁰ We urge DHS to engage with stakeholders and clarify why and under what authority CITs are involving themselves in criminal investigations of use of force by agents, and to end any such role.

Furthermore, groups that have undertaken a careful review of certain use of force cases, including the cases of Anastasio Hernández Rojas and José Antonio Elena Rodríguez, have found that CITs may have played a role in concealing agent misconduct and harmed the integrity of investigations. This leaves families without justice and border communities without answers. The questionable role of CITs was also brought to light through recent revelations regarding the troublesome spike, and lack of transparency, in fatal encounters connected to CBP vehicular pursuits.¹¹ It is vital to identify the cases that may have been adversely impacted and investigations compromised by CITs so these cases can be independently re-examined.

Use of force policy in general needs careful reexamination, as your LECC priorities recognize. Serious anomalies in guidance, procedures, and record-keeping abound; for example, CBP excludes from its "use of force" definition many dangerous high-speed car chases, as it only classifies an agency vehicle "that delivers (or is intended to deliver) a kinetic impact to a subject"¹² as a reportable use of force, thereby failing to cover most pursuits. Such gaps are common: pointing a firearm at a person is likewise not a "use of force" in CBP's lexicon,¹³ despite the Department of Justice having included such incidents in required police reporting.¹⁴ CBP also refused to adopt an Integrity Advisory Panel recommendation to minimize shooting at vehicles, another law-enforcement best practice.¹⁵ We request consultation about revisions to the January 2021 *Use of Force Policy* to reflect this administration's values and law-enforcement best practices.

¹⁰ Eileen Sullivan, "A Rise in Deadly Border Patrol Chases Renews Concerns About Accountability." New York Times (Jan. 9, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/09/us/politics/border-patrol-migrant-deaths.html>

¹¹ Id.; see also ACLU of Texas, "The Deadly Trend of Border Patrol Vehicle Pursuits." (Jan. 2022), <https://www.aclutx.org/en/fact-sheet-deadly-trend-border-patrol-vehicle-pursuits>

¹² "CBP Use of Force - Administrative Guidelines and Procedures Handbook." (Jan. 2021), 93, https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2021-Jul/cbp-use-of-force-admin-guide-procedure-handbook_4500-002B.pdf

¹³ "CBP Use of Force Policy." (Jan. 2021), 10, https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2021-Jul/cbp-use-of-force-policy_4500-002A.pdf

¹⁴ See, e.g., DOJ Settlement with the City of Albuquerque (2015), 13, (<https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/usao-nm/legacy/2015/01/20/DOJ-ABO%20Settlement%20Agreement%20EXECUTED.pdf>)

¹⁵ Homeland Security Advisory Council, "Interim Report of the CBP Integrity Advisory Panel." (June 29, 2015), 16-17, <https://www.hsdl.org/?abstract&did=767516> ("Prohibit or restrict discharging firearms at a moving vehicle unless deadly force, other than the vehicle itself, is being used/threatened against the officer/agent or another person present unless it is not possible for the threatened officer to avoid being struck by the vehicle.").

IV. Implicit Bias Training and Profiling

We were pleased to learn that DHS intends to conduct implicit-bias training of recruits as well as of all current officers and agents, and await further details. Implicit-bias training is but one example of education and standard-setting—beyond initial academy training—that serve to maintain and enforce a standard of impartiality and non-discrimination.

We also urge CBP and DHS to resume discussions with advocates about reviewing and revising profiling guidance, particularly DHS’s 2013 memorandum on the Department’s Commitment to Nondiscriminatory Law Enforcement and Screening Activities and CBP’s 2020 Policy on Nondiscrimination in Law Enforcement Activities and All Other Administered Programs.¹⁶ These materials, taken together with the Department of Justice’s 2014 racial profiling guidance,¹⁷ permit bias-based profiling in the national security context, at the border, and in protective, inspection, or screening activities. They further facilitate abusive approaches across a range of Department policies, programs, and subcomponents.¹⁸

New guidance should explicitly prohibit profiling based on actual or perceived race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender (including gender identity and expression), without any exceptions. Profiling is real and recurring: For example, a March 2021 ACLU report examining Border Patrol activities in Michigan found evidence that over 96% of people arrested by the Border Patrol’s Detroit Sector were recorded as being “Black,” “Dark Brown,” “Dark,” “Light Brown,” “Medium Brown,” “Medium,” or “Yellow.”¹⁹ Egregious incidents, such as a

¹⁶ Memorandum from Secretary Napolitano, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, to Component Heads (April 26, 2013), https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/secretary-memo-race-neutrality-2013_0.pdf; CBP Policy on Nondiscrimination in Law Enforcement Activities and all other Administered Programs (last modified Feb. 24, 2020), <https://www.cbp.gov/about/ceo-diversity/policies/nondiscrimination-law-enforcement-activities-and-all-other-administered>

¹⁷ See Fact Sheet: U.S. Department of Justice Racial Profiling Guidance, Official Website of the Department of Homeland Security (Dec. 8, 2014), <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2014/12/08/fact-sheet-us-department-justice-racial-profiling-guidance>; U.S. DOJ, Guidance for Federal Law Enforcement Agencies Regarding the Use of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, National Origin, Religion, Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity (Dec. 2014), https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/use-of-race-policy_0.pdf

¹⁸ The Department adopted the policy after insisting that it was “impractical to ignore ethnicity when it came to border enforcement.” See Matt Apuzzo & Michael S. Schmidt, U.S. to Continue Racial, Ethnic Profiling in Border Policy, N.Y. Times (Dec. 5, 2014), <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/06/us/politics/obama-to-impose-racial-profiling-curbs-with-exceptions.html>

¹⁹ ACLU of Michigan, The Border’s Long Shadow: How Border Patrol Uses Racial Profiling and Local and State Police to Target and Instill Fear in Michigan’s Immigrant Communities 4 (March 2021), https://www.aclumich.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/100_mile_zone_report-updated.pdf

Border Patrol agent interrogating two Montana women for speaking Spanish,²⁰ are unfortunately not isolated and reflect an imperative to address training and guidance in this area.²¹

V. Additional Areas of Concern

In addition to the myriad topics discussed during our November meeting, there are other critical issues that warrant further engagement and discussion.

A. Hiring and Recruitment

We believe CBP should review, preferably through independent expert analysis—and report publicly on—all aspects of its hiring, vetting, and recruitment. The prior administration appears to have conducted multiple wasteful hiring initiatives, which were not a phenomenon new to it.²² A vital component of such a review should be how to improve CBP hiring processes to more effectively recruit for and onboard personnel with skill sets appropriate and tailored to CBP’s current mission, including consideration of how these skills match the composition of current migrant populations and humanitarian needs at the border. Dating back to your time in the Obama administration’s DHS, the misalignment of workforce strengths and border realities has only grown.

One example of a perennial problem that the review should address is Border Patrol’s standing as the federal law enforcement agency with the fewest women per capita, struggling to maintain 5% while no other federal LEA is below 15%.²³ Yet in 2016, “CBP held 4,400 recruitment events. Of those events, 26 percent targeted veterans and 5 percent targeted women. Those ratios are almost exactly the same as the ratios of veterans and women in the Border Patrol overall.”²⁴

²⁰ Allyson Waller, “U.S. Border Agency Settles With 2 Americans Detained for Speaking Spanish.” (Nov. 26, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/26/us/montana-spanish-border-patrol.html>

²¹ See Joe Davidson, “Black officers say CBP forced them to profile. A study in one state backs them up.” Washington Post (July 22, 2021), https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/cbp-racial-profiling-aclu-study-michigan/2021/07/21/e3354918-e723-11eb-934f-7e6c1927f261_story.html

²² See, e.g., Geneva Sands, “CBP terminates controversial \$297 million Accenture contract amid continued staffing struggles.” *CNN* (Apr. 5, 2019), <https://www.cnn.com/2019/04/05/politics/cbp-terminate-hiring-contract-accenture/index.html>; Josh Peter, “Professional Bull Riders get millions from Border Patrol for patriotism and plugs.” *USA Today* (Jan. 21, 2020), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/2020/01/21/immigration-sports-league-has-unique-partnership-border-patrol/2798296001/>

²³ Amanda Ripley, “Federal law enforcement has a woman problem: Police agencies are the most male-dominated part of the federal government—and that undermines their mission.” *Politico* (Nov. 14, 2017), <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/11/14/women-federal-law-enforcement-male-dominated-244649>

²⁴ *Id.*

Characteristics of hostile work environments in some places within CBP, including the Facebook group “I’m 10-15,” have been linked to Border Patrol’s overwhelmingly male personnel.²⁵ Notably, the Office of Field Operations has also experienced severe sexual misconduct; “CBP’s culture can be so toxic that its own agents and officers speak out, which is what happened in 2017 when employees reported CBP officers at the Newark Airport had set up a ‘rape table’ at the New Jersey airport where officers would sexually assault other officers.”²⁶

We request further discussion of what CBP is doing to address these problems of hiring, recruitment, and retention, particularly of under-represented groups.

B. Border Patrol Area of Operations

The events in Portland, OR last year that included BORTAC personnel accentuated civil liberties concerns about what operations are properly considered related to border management.²⁷ We are interested in how you are evaluating lessons from that experience.

In addition, we would like to begin a conversation of how to meaningfully define the “reasonable distance” within which CBP exercises extraordinary authority. The ACLU of Michigan has underscored how loosely Border Patrol treats even generous limits on its authority: “CBP wrongly considers Lake Michigan, which does not share a shoreline with Canada, as an international waterway.” Notably, “[a]lthough Border Patrol’s mandated mission is to police the border, only 1.3% of cases for its Michigan operations involved people attempting to enter the U.S. without authorization from Canada.”²⁸

We aim to understand whether CBP has ever conducted the regulatory inquiries regarding “reasonable distance” required by 8 CFR §287.1(b). This regulation clearly contemplates that the distance will be less than 100 air miles in certain places: “Reasonable distance; fixing by chief patrol agents and special agents in charge. In fixing distances not exceeding 100 air miles ... chief patrol agents and special agents in charge shall take into consideration topography, confluence of arteries of transportation leading from external boundaries, density of population, possible inconvenience to the traveling public, types of conveyances used, and reliable information as to movements of persons effecting illegal entry into the United States.”

²⁵ Chantal Da Silva, “Border Patrol Knew About Harrowing ‘Game Of Smiles’ Sexual Assault Claims, But Did Not Take Action, Former Official Says.” *Newsweek* (Nov. 29, 2019), <https://www.newsweek.com/border-patrol-game-smiles-sexual-assault-1447434>

²⁶ Garrett M. Graff, “The Border Patrol Hits a Breaking Point.” *Politico* (July 15, 2019), <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/07/15/border-patrol-trump-administration-227357/>

²⁷ John Burnett, “Border Patrol Response To Portland Unrest: Straying From Mission Or Continuing One?” NPR (July 23, 2020), <https://www.npr.org/2020/07/23/894712004/border-patrol-response-to-portland-unrest-straying-from-mission-or-continuing-on>

²⁸ ACLU of Michigan, *supra*.

Revisiting this requirement and other regulatory constraints would be an important acknowledgment that legal and prudential limits to CBP's authority are not an afterthought.

Relatedly, we encourage you to review the number, locations, and footprints of CBP interior checkpoints, including placement of rescue beacons. Some checkpoints are directly linked to a sharp increase in migrant deaths.²⁹ Expert advocates and groups are eager to brief you on reducing these fatalities.

=====

We recognize that our agenda for CBP accountability and transparency reforms is bold and expansive, but it is also critical to resetting CBP-community relations based on real change. Our aim above all is to establish a relationship of collaboration based on sharing information and ideas that further our common objectives of improving CBP policies and practices. We thank you for your attention to these pressing matters and ask both you and Commissioner Magnus to schedule regular follow-up meetings with us and, most importantly, representatives of border communities.

Yours sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union
Immigration Hub
Project On Government Oversight (POGO)
Refugees International
Southern Border Communities Coalition
Women's Refugee Commission

cc: CBP Commissioner Chris Magnus
CBP Deputy Commissioner Troy Miller
Assistant Secretary for Partnership and Engagement Eva Millona

Appendix: POGO letter to Commissioner Magnus on body-worn cameras (Dec. 15, 2021)

²⁹ Jasmine Aguilera, "More Migrants Die Crossing the Border in South Texas Than Anywhere Else in the U.S. This Documentary Depicts the Human Toll." (Aug. 20, 2021), <https://time.com/6091742/migrant-deaths-texas-documentary/>



December 15, 2021

Commissioner Chris Magnus
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Commissioner Magnus,

Congratulations on your confirmation as commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection. We look forward to working with you in the months ahead to achieve better accountability and oversight of the agency you now direct.

POGO is a nonpartisan independent watchdog that investigates and exposes waste, corruption, abuse of power, and when the government fails to serve the public or silences those who report wrongdoing. We champion reforms to achieve a more effective, ethical, and accountable federal government that safeguards constitutional principles.

In October, we issued a report, *An Oversight Agenda for Customs and Border Protection: America's Largest, Least Accountable Law Enforcement Agency*, which we shared with Secretary Mayorkas and Acting Commissioner Miller. Following their receipt of our report, we have participated in discussions with them, as well as CBP staff, relating to our concerns and how we can support good-government reforms of CBP with a focus on changing agency culture. These discussions have proven fruitful, and it is our hope to continue collaborating with CBP on a regular basis to support change for the better.

We write to follow up immediately on one urgent matter. We understand, based on CBP's August announcement and subsequent updates, that CBP is in the process of deploying thousands of body-worn cameras to agents and officers in the field. This is a milestone that has the potential to improve transparency and accountability significantly if accompanied by the right policy framework.

We are nonetheless concerned that CBP has made no details available about its body-camera policy, nor has the agency consulted in the last five years with border and policing advocates about the all-important policy choices — with which you are very familiar — that can make the difference between cameras aiding or thwarting accountability. In the absence of effective policies governing their use, body cameras will not meaningfully improve accountability and are likely to do more harm than good.

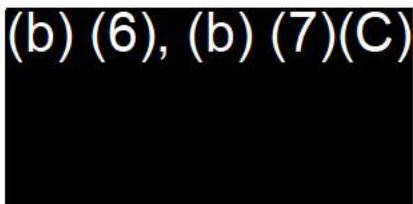
It is vital that CBP develop and adhere to a camera policy that respects privacy and ensures accountability and transparency, as recommended by groups ranging from The Constitution Project's [Committee on Policing Reforms](#) to the [Leadership Conference on Civil and Human](#)

Rights. Some best practices for deploying body-worn cameras are reflected in H.R. 531, the ICE and CBP Body Camera Accountability Act of 2021.¹

At this time, we request that you publicly release any policies or operating procedures adopted to date concerning CBP body cameras. We also request that you pause finalization of any camera policies presently under consideration in order to permit consultation with civil rights organizations, policing experts, and border communities. Their voices should be heard during development of body-worn camera policy, deployment plans, and any metrics for measuring the success of the program. And finally, we request an opportunity to meet with you to share our collective expertise, concerns, and recommendations — from stakeholders in and representing the border communities most affected — for an effective and fair body camera policy.

We understand that body-worn cameras can serve as a primary means to provide accountability for a large agency that at times operates in remote locations across the country. It is vital that such an important program be accompanied by policies that support accountability and transparency. We stand ready to partner with you in making the body-camera deployment represent meaningful change, and we respectfully request the time and forum in which to work together. Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours,

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)


Director, The Constitution Project at the Project On Government Oversight

¹ The Constitution Project Committee on Policing Reforms, *Guidelines for The Use of Body-Worn Cameras by Law Enforcement* (December, 2019), <https://archive.constitutionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Body-CamerasRptOnline.pdf>; The Leadership Conference, *Police Body Worn Cameras: A Policy Scorecard* (November, 2017), <https://www.bwccscorecard.org/>; ICE and CBP Body Camera Accountability Act of 2021, H.R. 531, 117th Cong. (2021) <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/531/text?r=87&s=1>.



DHS MORNING BRIEFING

Prepared for the Office of Public Affairs (OPA)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

By TechMIS

www.TechMIS.com

Mobile User Copy

Editorial Note: The DHS Daily Briefing is a collection of news articles related to Department’s mission. The inclusion of particular stories is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse the political viewpoints or affiliations included in news coverage.

TO: Homeland Security Secretary & Staff

DATE: Sunday, March 20, 2022 8:00 AM ET

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Border Patrol told to consider exempting Ukrainians at southern border from Title 42 restrictions: report

FOX News [3/19/2022 1:48 PM, Adam Shaw, 10541K] reports Border Patrol agents have reportedly been told to consider exempting Ukrainians encountered at the southern border from Title 42 restrictions that are being used to quickly expel migrants -- the latest immigration measure put in place for Ukrainians amid the ongoing Russian invasion. In a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) memo, reported by CBS News, officials say that "the unjustified Russian war of aggression in Ukraine has created a humanitarian crisis." "CBP is authorized, consistent with the Title 42 Order, on a case-by-case basis based on the totality of the circumstances, including considerations of humanitarian interests, to except Ukrainian nationals at land border ports of entry from Title 42," the memo reportedly says. The guidance issued to agents allows exceptions for Ukrainians who are in possession of valid Ukrainian ID and are not deemed national security or public safety threats. There were 272 encounters with Ukrainians at the border in February, according to CBP, compared to 19 in Feb. 2021. There have so far been 1,301 encounters since October.

Attorneys help Ukrainian immigrants stay in US, bring family members from war-torn home

FOX News [3/19/2022 12:59 PM, Joe Schoffstall, 10541K] reports a group of attorneys is helping Ukrainian immigrants remain in the U.S. and bring their family members over from the war-torn nation. The Department of Homeland Security announced earlier this month that Ukrainian migrants living in the U.S. as of March 1 would be eligible for temporary protected status, which allows qualified individuals to receive work authorization and protects them from deportation. Nearly 4,000 Ukrainians were facing deportation proceedings at the time of the announcement, CBS News reported. DHS estimated the move could help 75,100 Ukrainian immigrants in the U.S. The group of attorneys is also assisting Ukrainian immigrants bring their family members to the U.S., Curran said. "Some people are still trying to bring family temporarily on tourist visas," she told Fox News. "There are situations of people trying to get family who can't get into the United States with a tourist visa into other countries or into Mexico." Some Ukrainians have fled to Mexico in order to seek asylum at the U.S. border, Curran said. She added that several of the families she is working with are still trying to get family out of Ukraine. Men 60 and under, however, are not allowed to leave the country.

Ukrainians only: Racial disparities in U.S. border policies grow more obvious

The San Diego Union Tribune [3/19/2022 8:00 AM, Kate Morrissey] reports disparities have plagued the U.S. asylum system since its implementation, and for many, the Biden administration's new practice of letting in Ukrainians at the pedestrian entrance while turning away other nationalities fleeing harm is the latest iteration of that trend. Title 42 has left thousands of asylum seekers stranded in Mexican cities along the border, where cartels and other criminal groups have frequently taken advantage of them. Human Rights First has documented at least 9,886 violent attacks on asylum seekers stuck in Mexico because of Title 42, including kidnapping, torture and rape. With public attention high on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and pressure on the Biden administration to support Ukrainians fleeing the violence, that disparity has only grown. "The CDC's Title 42 public health order remains in place with respect to single adults and family units, and the Department of Homeland Security continues to operate in accordance with that order to the greatest extent possible," a DHS spokesperson said. "Consistent with the CDC order, DHS excepts particularly vulnerable individuals, on a case-by-case basis, from Title 42 for humanitarian reasons." A Union-Tribune analysis of Customs and Border Protection data found that while people from certain countries of origin, including India, Turkey, Romania, Ukraine and Russia, who reach U.S. soil are almost never expelled under Title 42, people from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador are expelled most of the time. Expulsions of certain nationalities have also changed over time, adding to the unpredictable and seemingly arbitrary nature of the policy. DHS recently issued guidance reminding border officials that individualized exceptions to Title 42 "can be applied to Ukrainians," Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas told a small group of reporters on a recent call. He emphasized that there was no categorical exemption for them as a nationality. When asked about the possibility of ending Title 42, Mayorkas told reporters that the decision is up to the CDC.

[TX] Texas wildfire kills 1, as officials worry extreme drought could worsen conditions

The Washington Post [3/19/2022 7:22 PM, Jack Douglas and Jacob Bogage, 12597K] reports all Raquel Robles could do was watch the video on her phone, horrified and helpless, as first smoke, then fire, moved up her driveway and then destroyed the house she and her family had lived in for 13 years. Flames raced through the front yard and caught on to a tree on the edge of her property in this small ranching town in West Central

Texas. Then the wind-swept smoke got even thicker, small debris flew by and orange bursts appeared. Robles knew the house, and everything in it, was turning to ash. The Eastland Complex fire — made up of three smaller wild fires in Central Texas — has incinerated more than 45,000 acres of land since sparking Thursday, destroying hundreds of homes and killing a deputy sheriff who was helping evacuate residents. Deputy Sgt. Barbara Fenley, 51, was evacuating homes in Carbon, the Eastland County Sheriff's Office said, when, due to poor visibility and deteriorating conditions, she steered her vehicle off the road and into flames. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R) declared a disaster in 11 counties affected by the blaze. Smoke on Friday drifted into skies above Houston, some 300 miles away. Only 15 percent of the fire was contained as of Saturday afternoon, officials said. And conditions could worsen. Large swaths of Texas — from the Dallas and Fort Worth suburbs in the east to Lubbock in the north and Odessa and Midland in the west — are suffering extreme drought conditions. Meteorological officials expect winds from the arid southwest to kick up Sunday and Monday, fueling the fire's spread. [Univision](#) [3/19/2022 7:49 PM, Staff, 514K] reports the fires that consumed more than 45,000 acres, mainly in the towns of Carbon and Ranger, may have been started by a barbecue or grill. This was stated Friday morning by Darrell Fox, Ranger fire chief. High winds Thursday night and Friday morning helped the flames spread and quickly consumed acres of dry grass, according to the Texas Forest Service. The latest official report of acres affected is 45,383, which to give an idea of the magnitude is equivalent to 333 times the Dallas Cowboys stadium. Regarding the material damage, the authorities still do not have a precise estimate, but the last reports said that there were 60 homes consumed by the flames. For this reason, on Friday afternoon, Texas Governor Greg Abbott visited the city of Eastland to visit the affected areas. After his tour, he signed the emergency declaration for 11 North Texas counties, including Eastland, one of the most affected by the fires during the extreme drought in the state. As of Saturday afternoon, Texas Forest Services reported having contained 15 percent of the wildfires in Eastland. [AP](#) [3/19/2022 10:44 AM, Staff] reports fire crews in Texas hope to make progress Saturday against a massive complex of wildfires that have killed one person and burned at least 50 homes, officials said. Winds were expected to diminish on Saturday, raising hopes for the attack on the flames, said Angel Lopez, a spokesman for the task force attacking the wildfire complex near Eastland, about 120 miles west of Dallas. However, gusty winds were expected to return Sunday, again raising the wildfire threat to critical levels in western and central Texas, he said. At a news conference in Eastland, Gov. Greg Abbott said late Friday that at least 50 homes had been destroyed by flames with more possibly to be found. He declared a disaster in the 11 counties hardest hit by wildfires. The Texas A&M Forest Services warned that fires could also affect parts of Oklahoma and Kansas, and Nebraska warned of an extreme fire risk. [Reuters](#) [3/19/2022 11:14 PM, Daniel Trotta, 5304K] reports wildfires wiped out 86 homes and a majority of the small town of Carbon, Texas, the Dallas Morning News reported on Saturday, as four fires west of Dallas burned 54,000 acres (22,000 hectares) and killed a sheriff's deputy who was helping people flee. The four fires, designated as the Eastland Complex, have raged since Wednesday or Thursday in Eastland County, about 120 miles (190 km) west of Dallas, and were about 30% contained, the Texas A&M Fire Service said on Saturday. About 85% of Carbon, with a population of 225, was burned, the newspaper reported, publishing photos of homes that were reduced to piles of rubble.

Reported similarly:

[CNN](#) [3/19/2022 6:53 PM, Paradise Afshar and Christina Maxouris, 5600K]

[Ukraine] UN reports nearly 900 civilian deaths in Ukraine, believes true figure 'considerably higher'

The Hill [3/19/2022 6:48 PM, Caroline Vakil, 1877K] reports the United Nations reported that close to 900 civilians have died in Ukraine since the start of Russia's invasion, but added that it believes the true death toll is "considerably higher." The U.N.'s human rights office said in an update on Saturday that it had recorded the deaths of 847 civilians in Ukraine since Feb. 24, including 155 men, 119 women, 21 boys and 7 girls. The U.N. office noted that officials did not know the sex of 509 adults and 36 children. The U.N. office also noted that it had recorded the injuries of 1,399 civilians in the country. The "[Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights] believes that the actual figures are considerably higher, especially in Government-controlled territory and especially in recent days, as the receipt of information from some locations where intense hostilities have been going on has been delayed and many reports are still pending corroboration," the U.N. office said in a statement. "This concerns, for example, Mariupol and Volnovakha (Donetsk region), Iziium (Kharkiv region), Sievierodonetsk and Rubizhne (Luhansk region), and Trostianets (Sumy region), where there are allegations of numerous civilian casualties. These figures are being further corroborated and are not included in the above statistics." The development comes as Ukraine last week reported that at least 1,300 Ukrainian soldiers had died, according to The Guardian. An adviser to Ukraine's defense minister said in an interview being aired Sunday that over 1,400 Russian soldiers have been killed during the conflict. The Russian government has previously reported different casualty figures for its forces than Ukrainians have.

Reported similarly:

NPR [3/19/2022 5:10 PM, Jaclyn Diaz, 5K]

CBS News [3/19/2022 4:05 PM, Tori B. Powell, 2818K]

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

[NM] ICE accuses DHS inspector general of staging photograph in critical report on migrant facility

FOX News [3/19/2022 12:47 PM, Adam Shaw, 10541K] reports Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) accused the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) inspector general of having staged a photograph which the watchdog used to show allegedly poor conditions at a New Mexico migrant facility -- as it railed against the "integrity" of the report. The report found that the Torrance County Detention Facility in Estancia, New Mexico, which is privately run under contract for ICE, was unsafe and unsanitary -- and it took the unusual step of recommending the migrants there be transferred to different facilities. "We have determined that ICE must take immediate steps to address the critical facility staffing shortages and unsanitary living conditions that have led to health and safety risks for detainees at Torrance," it said. It described an understaffed facility with unsanitary conditions including clogged toilets, non-working sinks. ICE should "immediately relocate" everyone held there, the report said. But the enforcement agency railed against the report, with acting chief of staff Jason Houser writing in a formal response that the agency had "serious concerns about the accuracy and integrity of this report" and whether it meets government standards. "In a number of instances, it appears OIG has falsified or mischaracterized evidence, and has ignored facts presented to it in order to achieve preconceived conclusions," he wrote. ICE accused the OIG inspector of "very disconcerting and unprofessional behavior" including making comments 30 minutes in that there is "no

way detainees should be housed here," suggesting a predetermined outcome. The company that runs the facility, CoreCivic, has been similarly critical of the report, including the allegedly staged photo. In an email to Fox News Digital, a spokesperson accused the DHS inspectors of acting "in a deeply unethical manner, including misrepresenting evidence to negatively portray the facility." "This deliberate effort to falsely portray our company and this facility in a negative light is even more disturbing because it was done under the guise of legitimate oversight. We're asking for an immediate review of the conduct of the inspectors," ICE spokesperson Ryan Gustin said. The report comes after DHS ended contracts in May with two detention facilities in Georgia and Massachusetts over conditions. At that time, DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said in a memo to acting ICE Director Tae Johnson that "[w]e will not tolerate the mistreatment of individuals in civil immigration detention or substandard conditions of detention."

Citizenship and Immigration Services

No entry: Ukrainian Americans struggle to get fleeing relatives into United States

The [Washington Post](#) [3/19/2022 9:00 PM, Marc Fisher, Maria Sacchetti and Mark Shavin, 12597K] reports every morning and every night, from her home in Falls Church, Va., Nadiia Khomaziuk messages her sister Lidiia in her hideaway in western Ukraine. Is Lidiia still okay? How about her kids, who are 7 and 11? Every day, Khomaziuk scours the Internet, calls U.S. government offices and connects with lawyers and other Ukrainian Americans, in search of a path to bring her family to safety in the United States. To get to there, Khomaziuk's family and other Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion would need a visa, but the earliest appointment Khomaziuk could get for an interview for her sister at the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw is in September. Lidiia, who asked that her last name not be published because of security concerns, isn't ready to leave Ukraine. She wants to fight "till the last breath," Khomaziuk said, though "the kids' bags are packed, so they can jump in the car the minute they need to. But then I don't know if I can get them here. Waiting six months for an interview just isn't right." More than 3 million Ukrainians have fled their ravaged country, and the great majority of them are in the border states of Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Moldova and Hungary, according to the United Nations. As Russian missiles obliterate more cities, refugees crowded into family basements and church social halls across Eastern Europe confront a painful choice to hold out where they are or try to be resettled as refugees, possibly in faraway countries. Over 5,000 miles away, the reality is setting in for Ukrainian Americans eager to bring their relatives to safety that despite government pledges of solidarity, getting into the United States is a lengthy and cumbersome process that remains largely unchanged from before the war, according to those trying to bring relatives into the country and advocates who are helping them.

Lying on an asylum application would lead to the loss of any other immigration benefit in the US

[Univision](#) [3/19/2022 11:42 AM, Staff, 514K] reports a recent ruling by the Washington DC appeals court could complicate the situation for those who apply for a process of political asylum. In the event that the applicant lies and the court proves it, they would be up against the wall in future legal proceedings in the country. The ruling has an immediate effect, although it was dated March 11, 2022. According to the decision, if a person lies in their political asylum process, they will not be able to legalize themselves in the country.

[NC] Suspended North Carolina attorney sentenced for visa fraud

The [AP](#) [3/19/2022 11:15 AM, Staff] reports a suspended North Carolina attorney has been sentenced to prison for continuing to submit documents for immigration benefits by impersonating another attorney, federal authorities said. Roydera Hackworth, 63, was sentenced Friday to a year and one day in prison and two years of supervised release for fraud in connection with visas, permits and other documents, said U.S. Attorney Michael Easley in a news release. Information from court documents showed that Hackworth was suspended in 2012 by the N.C. State Bar from practicing law. Two years later, she was suspended by the Board of Immigration Appeals from practicing in immigration matters before the Executive Office for Immigration Review, the Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. In 2019, evidence indicated Hackworth continued to practice, prepare, and submit petitions and applications on behalf of client petitioners and applicants for immigration benefits. A review by authorities showed that as many as 24 clients were represented by Hackworth with no knowledge that she was submitting their immigration petitions and applications under the name of another attorney.

Customs and Border Protection

[TX] Border Patrol union fears agents getting railroaded in DHS probe of 'whipping' Haitian migrants

The [Washington Times](#) [3/19/2022 11:04 AM, Stephen Dinan, 350K] reports President Biden was adamant after images of tense confrontations between horse-mounted Border Patrol agents and Haitian migrants emerged in September, vowing that the agents "will pay." One image showed a mounted agent with reins in his hand while a Haitian dodged around the horse, which led some to speculate the migrant was being whipped. A video caught another agent insulting a migrant and calling Haiti "S**t." Vice President Kamala Harris likened the agents' treatment of the Haitians to the oppression of plantation slavery. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas initially defended the agents but then rushed to Capitol Hill to condemn them and promised lawmakers results from his investigation in "days." That was six months ago. Now, with the investigation dragging on, several agents remain sidelined from field duty and fellow agents fear the department is setting them up as fall guys to fulfill Mr. Biden's demand for someone "to pay."

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Southeast braces for 'significant tornado event' this week

[CNN](#) [3/20/2022 4:54 AM, Allison Chinchar, 5600K] reports a "substantial severe weather event -- including potential for significant tornadoes -- remains evident over the Lower Mississippi Valley/central Gulf Coast" this week, the Storm Prediction Center said Sunday. A potent low pressure system sweeping across the Intermountain West Sunday will become the catalyst for a multiday severe weather outbreak this week across the Southern Plains and Gulf Coast region. Beginning Monday, more than 20 million people along the Gulf Coast could be affected by damaging winds, very large hail, and tornadoes. By Tuesday the threat for severe weather increases as it shifts further east. The potential for strong tornadoes, hail, and damaging straight line winds exist from Lafayette, Louisiana, east into Huntsville, Alabama. Wednesday, the focus becomes an area between Mobile, Alabama and Columbia, South Carolina.

[NY] Undocumented immigrants affected by Ida in NY will have until April 29 to apply for financial assistance

Telemundo [3/19/2022 9:01 PM, Staff, 11K] reports undocumented victims of the devastating passage of Storm Ida in New York in early September 2021 will have more time to apply for assistance because the grace period was extended, the New York State Office for New Americans announced Saturday on its Twitter account. The grace period for New Yorkers who are ineligible for FEMA assistance to apply for the Excluded New Yorkers One-Way Relief Fund was extended to April 29. To qualify for assistance under the extended assistance program, New Yorkers must not be eligible for FEMA assistance or live with someone who is eligible for federal assistance.

[FL] 'We were weightless': Florida woman says she was in her home as a suspected tornado lifted it off the ground

USA Today [3/19/2022 1:50 PM, Samantha Neely, The News Herald, 7147K] reports on Friday evening, a suspected tornado tore through the historic St. Andrews community in Panama City, leaving a path of damaged homes and vehicles, scattered debris and shaken residents in its wake. The National Weather Service issued tornado watches for parts of Florida, Alabama and Georgia on Friday morning. There were also reports of a possible tornado in Atmore, Alabama, where a Friday storm injured six people and damaged mobile homes, local media reported.

[TX] Chilling photos show Texas communities devastated by wildfires that burned 50 homes

USA Today [3/19/2022 12:35 PM, Christine Fernando, 7147K] reports an outbreak of wildfires around several small Texas communities has burned at least 50 homes, killed a sheriff's deputy and left a trail of charred vehicles, ash-filled homes and seared grass. Several wildfires merged to form a complex that continued to burn Saturday near Eastland, about 120 miles west of Dallas. Gov. Greg Abbott declared a disaster in the 11 counties hit hardest by the wildfires that were fueled by several months of dry weather and high winds. The Eastland County Sheriff's Office said the fire killed Deputy Sgt. Barbara Fenley, who was going door to door, getting residents to evacuate their homes Thursday. With winds expected to diminish Saturday, fire crews hoped to make progress against the flames, said Angel Lopez, a spokesman for the task force combatting the fire. But with wind gusts expected to return Sunday, the threat of wildfires in western and central Texas may again rise to critical levels, Lopez said. Smaller fires burned in other parts of Texas amid the low humidity and high winds. About 15% of the Eastland Complex fires were contained as of Saturday morning, according to the National Wildfire Coordinating Group. More than 45,000 acres have burned, officials said during a Friday news conference.

Secret Service

Women make up just 24% of the cyber workforce. CISA wants to fix that.

CBS News [3/19/2022 12:48 PM, Nicole Sganga, 2818K] reports as the race to recruit female talent in STEM continues moving ahead with steady progress, stunning statistics still wrack the cybersecurity sector: Women working in cybersecurity currently account for less than one quarter of the overall workforce. Pressed on how close America's cyber defense agency is to "getting there," Easterly responded down to the decimal. "Right now, we're at 36.4% women at CISA's workforce, but I think we can get to 50% before 2030." She paused

before adding, "Actually, I'm hoping we can get there before 2025." Easterly says she hopes colleagues across the federal workforce – including FBI, NSA, U.S. Secret Service – make similar pledges. But the gender gap marks just one of the cybersecurity workforce's persistent challenges. Hispanic, African American, Asian and American Indian/Native Alaskan workers made up just 4%, 9%, 8% and 1% respectively of the cyber security workforce, according to the Aspen Institute. An estimated 3.7 million cybersecurity jobs are available but unfilled, according to the latest (ISC)² Cybersecurity Workforce Study, with 377,000 of those vacancies located in the United States. By that measure, the global cybersecurity workforce will need to grow 65% in 2022 to effectively defend organizations' critical assets.

[MA] Great Barrington man arrested for child pornography after investigation, search
Berkshire Eagle [3/18/2022 5:45 PM, Heather Bellow, 26K, Positive, Secondary] reports police arrested a State Road man Friday on child pornography charges after an investigation by police and federal agents led to allegations he was distributing material depicting children in sexual acts. James J. Keough, 54, is currently held in the Great Barrington Police Department in lieu of \$50,000 bail, police said in a statement Friday. His arraignment is scheduled for Monday in Southern Berkshire District Court. Great Barrington Police Chief Paul Storti told The Eagle that he does not believe the victims are local. Keough is not suspected of making pornography, but of downloading and sharing computer files, Storti said. Town police working with the U.S. Secret Service and state police detectives attached to the Berkshire District Attorney's Office searched Keough's apartment Friday in a multifamily building at 220 State Road. Officers were seen carting out boxes and other materials from Keough's apartment.

[NY] Woman who used counterfeit money to pay off bad check sent to prison
The Daily News Online [3/19/2022 10:15 AM, Scott Desmit, 3K, Positive, Secondary] reports a Bath woman who issued bad checks at a business in Gainesville and then returned with counterfeit money to pay off the debt was sentenced to state prison Thursday in Wyoming County Court. Grace Brown, 46, was sentenced by Judge Michael Mohun to three to six years in state prison. She had pleaded guilty to second-degree forgery. Brown was arrested in October 2020 after an investigation revealed she forged a check and possessed counterfeit money. She originally was charged with first-degree possession of a forged instrument, forgery and issuing a bad check.

[NC] NC federal jury convicts father, son over virus business aid
The AP [3/19/2022 6:03 PM, Staff, 2818K] reports a father and son now await sentencing after a federal jury in North Carolina convicted them of charges involving \$1.7 million in pandemic business relief received by the father's businesses that the U.S government say was obtained fraudulently. After a six-day trial, jurors convicted Tarik Freitekh of bank fraud, money laundering, conspiracy to commit both wire fraud and money laundering, as well as falsifying and concealing material facts, according to a U.S. Justice Department news release. His father, Izzat Freitekh, 55, of Waxhaw, also was found guilty on Wednesday of money laundering, money laundering conspiracy and making false statements. But he was found not guilty of several of more serious charges directly tied to the conspiracy, The Charlotte Observer reported.

[IL] Counterfeit \$100 bills found in Uptown Normal

Week.com [3/19/2022 4:18 AM, Howard Packowitz, 5K, Neutral, Secondary] reports people who found \$100 bills on the ground in Uptown Normal on St. Patrick's Day may have thought the luck of the Irish was with them, but it really wasn't their lucky day. Normal Police are warning the public that it was fake cash was scattered about, looking much like the money in a picture posted on the department's Facebook page. Police are advising anyone pocketing one of those bills to shred it and don't spend it.

Coast Guard

[MD] Ever Forward cargo ship could be stuck in Chesapeake Bay for over a week, officials say

CBS News [3/19/2022 1:20 PM, Staff, 2818K] reports it has been nearly a week since a massive cargo ship with thousands of containers on board got stuck in the Chesapeake Bay. And officials say it could be another 10 days before the ship is able to float again because it is a rare, complex mission. On Friday morning, CBS Baltimore's Ava-Joye Burnett traveled out onto the bay with U.S. Coast Guard engineers and investigators as they tried to bring the vessel afloat. "It's rare for a vessel to run aground in the Chesapeake Bay," Captain David O'Connell, the section Sector Commander of the Maryland-National Capital Region, said ahead of the excursion. He leads Coast Guard operations in the coordination of all maritime safety, security and environmental missions in the region. "I've been here a year and it's the first major incident we've had in the port. You'll see when we go out there that it is an impressive sight to see and because of its size, it's a very complex operation," he said. "Right now it's 24 feet, so basically as it traveled outside the channel, it almost buried itself into the bank," O'Connell said. "That's why it's not an easy operation of just putting some tugs on it and pulling it free." A team of engineers, investigators and even divers are working on a plan to move her. The department of the environment is there too, because with 2,200 tons of fuel onboard, they want to make sure nothing is leaking. As of now, no leaks have been detected, but the crew will have to monitor certain elements every four hours to make sure that doesn't change.

[FL] Coast Guard rescues 189 people near Haiti

Telemundo [3/19/2022 10:09 PM, Staff, 41K] reports the U.S. Coast Guard on Saturday rescued 189 people 20 miles off the coast of Haiti, who were taken in on the freighter off Cape du Mole on the island's northwest coast. The rescued Haitians were on an overloaded vessel and in the midst of bad weather conditions, the Coast Guard said. The U.S. Coast Guard recently said it has "significantly increased its patrols" in the Windward Passage (Windward Passage), a strait in Caribbean waters between Cuba and Haiti, in the face of a wave of Haitian migrants trying to reach U.S. territory. In a statement, Seventh Coast Guard District Rear Admiral Brendan McPherson said that this increased surveillance also extends to all "approaches to the southeastern United States" in order to "intercept and rescue migrants in overloaded and unsafe vessels." The District 7 commander added that his institution works closely with the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense to "prevent these illegal immigrant trips and protect them from unscrupulous smugglers".

Terrorism Investigations

[NY] Trial set for MS-13 associate charged in deaths of 4 men

The [San Diego Union Tribune](#) [3/19/2022 3:14 PM, Staff] reports a federal jury will hear opening statements Monday in the trial of a Long Island woman accused of luring four young men to their slaughter by more than a dozen members of the MS-13 street gang. Prosecutors say Leniz Escobar helped orchestrate the 2017 massacre as a teenage associate of the gang before falsely claiming to be a victim in the ambush. Escobar has pleaded not guilty to racketeering charges in the four deaths that prosecutors described as “a horrific frenzy of violence” involving machetes, knives and tree limbs in a Central Islip park. Defense attorney Jesse Siegel told The Associated Press that “after almost five years, Ms. Escobar is looking forward to having her day in court.” MS-13 had been seeking to settle a score, prosecutors allege, and believed the young victims to be members of the rival 18th Street Gang. The victims’ families have denied that any of the slain men were in a gang.

National Security News

[Ukraine] Russian forces bomb art school in Mariupol housing 400 refugees-city council, Zelenskyy cites war crimes

[Reuters](#) [3/20/2022 3:15 AM, Staff] reports Russian forces have bombed an art school in the besieged Ukrainian port city of Mariupol, where about 400 residents had taken shelter, the city council said on Sunday. There was no immediate word of casualties from the Saturday attack, although the council said the building was destroyed and there were victims under the rubble. Reuters could not independently verify the claim. The [AP](#) [3/20/2022 4:28 AM, Cara Anna] reports Ukrainian authorities said the Russian military bombed an art school where about 400 people had taken refuge in the port city of Mariupol, where President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said an unrelenting siege by Russian troops would go down in history for what he said were war crimes. Local authorities said the school’s building was destroyed and people could remain under the rubble. There was no immediate word on casualties. Russian forces on Wednesday also bombed a theater in Mariupol where civilians were sheltering, authorities have said. “To do this to a peaceful city, what the occupiers did, is a terror that will be remembered for centuries to come,” Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address to the nation. Mariupol, a strategic port on the Azov Sea, has been under bombardment for at least three weeks and become a symbol of the horror of Russia’s war in Ukraine. Local authorities have said the siege has cut off food, water and energy supplies, and killed at least 2,300 people, some of whom had to be buried in mass graves.

Reported similarly:

[Reuters](#) [3/20/2022 5:08 AM, Raju Gopalakrishnan and Dominic Evans, 5304K]

[Turkey] Turkey says Russia and Ukraine nearing agreement on ‘critical’ issues

[Reuters](#) [3/20/2022 6:05 AM, Ali Kucukgocmen, 5304K] reports Turkey’s foreign minister said in an interview published on Sunday that Russia and Ukraine were nearing agreement on “critical” issues and he was hopeful for a ceasefire if the two sides did not backtrack from progress achieved so far. Foreign ministers Sergei Lavrov of Russia and Dmytro Kuleba of Ukraine met in the Turkish resort town of Antalya earlier this month with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu also attending. The discussions did not yield concrete results. But Cavusoglu, who also travelled to Russia and Ukraine last week for talks with Lavrov and Kuleba, told Turkish daily Hurriyet that there had been “rapprochement in the positions of both sides on important subjects, critical subjects”. “We can say we are hopeful for a ceasefire if the sides do not take a step back from the current positions,” he said, without

elaborating on the issues. Turkish presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin, speaking to al Jazeera television, said the two sides were getting closer on four key issues. He cited Russia's demand for Ukraine to renounce ambitions to join NATO, demilitarisation, what Russia has referred to as "de-nazification", and the protection of the Russian language in Ukraine.

[North Korea] N. Korea fires artillery into sea days after missile launch

The [AP](#) [3/20/2022 4:51 AM, Hyung-Jin Kim, 23K] reports North Korea fired suspected artillery pieces into the sea on Sunday, South Korea's military said, days after the North's latest missile launch ended in failure amid the country's recent burst of weapons testing activity. There is speculation that North Korea could soon try to launch its developmental longest-range ballistic missile to bolster its arsenal and dial up pressure on the United States to wrest concessions as negotiations remain stalled. South Korea's military suggested North Korea's midair missile explosion last Wednesday involved parts of the Hwasong-17 missile, its biggest weapon. On Sunday, South Korea's Defense Ministry said it detected firings likely from multiple rocket launch systems off North Korea's west coast. The ministry said the military closely monitors North Korean moves and maintains its readiness. South Korea's presidential office said in a separate statement it held an emergency national security council meeting to discuss what it called the North's "short-range projectile launches."

Reported similarly:

[Reuters](#) [3/20/2022 2:32 AM, Josh Smith and Minwoo Park, 5304K]

[South Korea] S. Korea's National Security Council Meets on North's Projectile

[Bloomberg](#) [3/20/2022 3:06 AM, Sangmi Cha, 9409K] reports South Korea convened a National Security Council meeting to discuss North Korea's launch on Sunday of a short-range projectile, according to the presidential office. North Korea appears to have fired from its multiple rocket launcher this morning, the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Seoul said in a text message to reporters. The military has been maintaining defense readiness while closely monitoring related developments, it said. "The NSC participants will closely analyze the details of the projectile in close cooperation with the U.S. and maintain alert over the recent series of North Korea's missile launches," presidential spokeswoman Park Kyung-mi said in a statement. "We should also work to prevent a security vacuum during the presidential transition period," she said. Concerns have been mounting that North Korea was looking to fire off its first intercontinental ballistic missile in five years after Yonhap News reported this month South Korea and the U.S. have detected signs of an imminent ICBM launch.

{End of Report} [RETURN TO TOP](#)

Chief Ortiz media hits, transcripts, notes, AAR – Week of Feb. 24th 2022

Biggest flags/common themes:

- B1 repeatedly stated he needs more manpower, more agents and more equipment and is working closely with Congress to get additional resources
- Working on the 21-point plan outlined by S1
- More than 260,000 got away this FY year already.
- **Horse patrol:** “I will tell you that almost every agent that was involved in that event is back to work and riding horses, and I had a chance Sergio, over the last nine days, I've ridden horses four times with my agents out there in the field to demonstrate to them my support for horse patrol units and what they do each and every day, and they are doing a phenomenal job. And then with respect to the Del Rio event. I think that investigation is going to get wrapped up here relatively quickly. And we're going to find out you know, really, what the truth were was behind that that incident, and I'm confident that almost all those ages will be exonerated. And what we'll find is it was probably, you know, something that was mischaracterized.”

McAllen Monitor

<https://www.valleycentral.com/news/local-news/us-border-patrol-chief-visits-rgv-talks-agencys-future/>

Local Telemundo 40

<https://www.telemundo40.com/noticias/local/preocupacion-y-frustracion-entre-los-agentes-de-la-patrulla-fronteriza/2179064/>

ABC News Live Prime (ABC online streaming platform on Hulu)

https://www.hulu.com/watch/91948e6b-2bfa-49d9-89b6-f01eb20e2690?play=false&utm_source=shared_link

KURV Radio transcript of interview February 23, 2022 at 7:15am

B1:

Thank you Sergio and Tim for having me. And it's always good to come back to Texas. You know I call this my second home. Certainly DC is not my first what I did is about seven eight days ago decided to make a trip down to the most of the Texas sectors. I started out in Big Bend went to Del Rio went to Laredo and then wound up here in the RGV to really just visit with the troops get a chance to go out and work with them side by side and hear from them some of their concerns that they're dealing with on a daily basis.

KURV:

Take notes from the frontline crew you're listening to. But as we take your message back to DC, I don't think anybody's listening to you.

Unknown 2:49

There are certainly I think is a breakdown in a lot of areas. As you know we were able to bring Secretary Mayorkas down to the border for three days in Yuma, Arizona, that he went down to Laredo and also able was able to see I think firsthand in El Paso some of those challenges that those agents have. I will say this that you know, in my 30 plus years I can say that's probably the biggest commitment from a department official to the border. And he took back a laundry list of things that he wanted to work on, in fact, that next Monday, 21 things he outlined that he wanted us to address. And we've started on that list. This isn't a list just for the Border Patrol, but also for ICE and some of the other departments that are out there. So hopefully, we can make some progress on some of those initiatives. But it's not going to be easy.

KURV:

Our national border patrol chief Raul Ortiz they're probably not going to be easy. Probably not going to be too quick. Either way, Washington first, let's and let's talk a little bit more about this because there has been a lot of pushback from the Republican base. Ever since the administration changed the country's approach to immigration and even some pushback from your rank and file. How would you characterize this administration's approach to immigration overall?

B1:

So when you think about, you know, turning that ship 180 degrees, you know, very much a very different approach to your security and immigration situation. It has been quite a challenge for especially some of our younger agents.

KURV:

When you think about somebody has been in this outfit for 2019 construction and that's despite executive order that stops all while building. Where do we stand? We'll part of the wall with those funds be built because that's through the Rio Grande Valley. We're talking all through Starr and Hidalgo Counties.

Yeah, most definitely. So one of the things one of the initiatives on that list of 21 that the Secretary is focused on is closing some of these gates and gaps that we have out there. So there's 68 of them that were approved. And then I've got another tranche of gates and gaps that I want to close. Is there every single one of those gates and gaps an agent is having to sit right there are National Guardsmen are some of the law enforcement officials. And then secondly, with respect to the Appropriations made you think, a little bit over \$2 billion, well, if we're not going to build

any new infrastructure with that \$2 billion, what else can we potentially do with that? And this is the technology and I've actually proposed an initiative where we have patrol zones out there with technology linear around detection system, and an enforcement so agents can get into these areas much quicker in patrol laterally, which has always been a challenge for us in my 30 plus years in this outfit

KURV:

Especially in parts of the valley. What's the difference between border wall construction happening and levee wall construction happening right now too?

B1:

Yeah, so some of the levee wall system is a life safety issue is so we're going to go back and remediate those areas. We were started the construction in the levee wall system, and we weren't able to finish. You know, that's an area that's controlled by the International Water and Boundary Commission. And so we recognize the impact that those initiatives may have on these communities. And so we're going to make sure and get those back to where they were in maybe it's obviously better. So that's the goal with the remediation of the levee system, and that plays out on a lot of locations. It plays out in California. I toured out there, it plays out in Arizona, Southern Arizona, and so we've just got to do a better job of pushing for these projects much quicker. As you know, anytime you do environmental, you work with the corps and sometimes that becomes a bit of a challenge for us.

KURV: For all our teams is the national border patrol chief. Yeah, he went national he was our chief here for many years or number two for many years here in south Texas. And he now leads the gang and border patrol at a very stressful time for Border Patrol. Have the 21 point plan that Secretary Mayorkas developed and handed over to you chief? In general terms would you describe it greater enforcement or it's a reshuffling of policy for a more lenient or softer approach toward the illegal immigration situation you're handling daily?

B1:

Yeah, I'd say really the policy issues and that 21 Point Plan centered around working with the governor of Mexico and regional partners, we think of Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, there's other players within the immigration spectrum that certainly need to step up their game.

B1:

A lot of these were very, you know, transactional. Do you think about we need more Border Patrol agents? He's asking for that. I need more processing coordinators. I need to get those 1200 trained that were authorized by Congress. When you think about, what about a contracting vehicle so we can get contractors out in these processing centers. So the Border Patrol just gave get back to their patrol responsibilities. And so we're looking to expense money doing that. So a lot of these things are transactional. And then there are a few policy issues. We're not getting enough prosecutions for agents. I've had over 200 agents assaulted already this year and even though we sit around 70% prosecution rate that should be 90 to 100% prosecution rate. So we're working with the Department of Justice to make sure that that happens. And then you think about the migrant protection protocols. You've got to use that initiative in a way that actually creates a deterrent and forces people to apply for asylum, the correct and legal way. And obviously we've got a court mandate to delivering MPP so when you think about, you know, Southern here in south Texas, you think about El Paso and San Diego. If you're going to do it, you might as well do it. And make an impact.

KURV:

Our national border patrol chief Raul Ortiz in the studio here at Newstalk, 710 KURV , you mentioned the protocol. So percentage wise ballpark figure for how many people are being caught after they enter illegally and being returned under these protocols right now, is that the majority is 30% 75.

What is it because at one time because of these COVID protocols, you never know it might be going away because seems like COVID is going away. In the meantime, we still have and they're supposed to go back and once it needs to go back. Okay, so how many people actually being returned to Mexico the first country that should have given him a site?

B1:

Yeah. So there's two things I think in that question. One, you have the title 42 authority from Health and Human Services, which is the CDC authority to expel people because of COVID and the pandemic and so we're averaging anywhere about 47 48% of those populations, right now are getting repatriated back to Mexico who was much higher, about six, eight months ago, but that number has continued to shrink and over 42 Title 42 Over the last two years. If I had to guess about 50 - 50 30% of them were processing via title eight the way we would normally process a migrant if we had apprehended them, and then turn them over to ice or send them back to their home country. But with the title 42 authority if it's a contiguous country, which is Mexico and Canada, we can send them back as long as they're Spanish speakers and we've been able to do that. And we're trying to expand that right now. Because we know we probably only have that for a small window. We know for sure that we're going to have it until March 31. We're so we're going to continue to leverage those CDC authorities while we can.

The second thing on the migrant protection protocols. There is a very small percentage that are putting that are placed into that process right now, when under the previous administration, it was much higher

KURV:

And that's the one that the court the High Court said it needs to go back.

B1:

Yes.

KURV:

So what's the delay? Why are they these things?

B1:

You know, one of the parts of the conversation is they have to be awarded access to an attorney. And so that access to an attorney can happen at anytime within that 24 hour period. So that's one of the delay. That's what that the department and this administration made it so that has to happen, and we certainly afford them access to counsel whenever we can.

KURV:

Is Mexico doing its part securing its southern border as a result from various negotiations with the Biden administration.

B1:

Yeah. So you know, I think with our government, Mexico partners, we've seen that they've also got some capacity issues. I think most of the population that we're encountering come through thought by Tula in that southern that, you know, Prudential so we continue to see an awful lot of traffic down there. They tried to have to force that they have to manage their southern border. And then we certainly asked them to help on their northern border with us because we do mirror patrols with them all the time. I think they're stretched awfully awfully thin right now. They're repatriating people back to Colombia, some of these other countries, Haiti, and whatnot. But when you think about the populations that received compared to when I got here in 2013 144

Different countries already, and we're just finished our first quarter of the fiscal year. You think those 144 countries make up Cubans Venezuelans? Nicaragua is Ecuador, as all these countries where we don't have strong diplomatic ties to so how do you put you know, 70-80 people on a plane to send back to Cuba when your relations with them are already strained? And so that becomes a challenge not just for us but ICE.

KURV:

That's a whole different discussion chief Raul Ortiz National Chief border patrol in the studio here KURV

Let's go back to Del Rio from several months ago, and the much-hyped investigation and some secretary Mayorkas all these border patrol on horseback and the initial wrong accusation report that they have been whipping some of these folks who are running from them and those folks, that was wrong, but yet they promised an investigation and some punitive action. What can you tell me from Washington? Has that been closed already? Are we done with that investigation or something? Some of your folks that works are still in trouble being investigated.

B1:

So there's still an investigation that's open. It's being investigated by our Office of Professional Responsibility which is like our internal affairs office, and conjunction with the Department of Justice. I will tell you that almost every agent that was involved in that event is back to work and riding horses, and I had a chance

KURV:

And are we're able to use horses right?

KURV

Anywhere everywhere they need to ?

B1:

Sergio, over the last nine days. I've ridden horses four times with my agents out there in the field to demonstrate to them my support for horse patrol units and what they do each and every day, and they are doing a phenomenal job. And then with respect to the Del Rio event. I think that investigation is going to get wrapped up here relatively quickly. And we're going to find out you

know, really, what the truth were was behind that that incident, and I'm confident that almost all those ages will be exonerated. And what we'll find is it was probably, you know, something that was mischaracterized.

KURV:

I could keep talking for at least another hour but of all the questions I got for you. The Texas effort at the border is it making a difference isn't helping in any way some setting up improvised volunteer putting GPS to catch fentanyl? You know, all the resources. The State of Texas is providing some backup behind you Is it helping?

B1:

Yeah, most definitely our partnerships with the State of Texas is phenomenal.

KURV:

How so Chief:

B1:

So I went out yesterday down to Anzalduas Park. There are 37 Texas Game Warden boats out there that are out there patrolling not at any one time, but they're out there, you know, supplementing our Border Patrol units. And on any given day, I may have 50% of my workforce tied down processing and only 50% of them out there in patrol. And so having state troopers, Game Wardens, National Guard, our own DoD efforts out there are a force multiplier. I was working last night till about 10-1030 with the Border Patrol guys, and they were bouncing around all over the sector. And what we saw is a concerted effort, great communication, good collaboration. I wish I could take that and take it up Washington DC because we may have some better success. But I will tell you great partnership there and I think we'd be a much poorer state of affairs without their assistance.

KURV:

As a broadcaster going across the valley and any folks in green uniform out there at the river out there in Lacavina and ranch country. Any words of encouragement? I know in a stressful time morale is low. So what would you say to the frontline Border Patrol gang?

B1: That's a great question. A young supervisor asked me that same question last night. And I told her I said, Hey, listen, you know, one of the things about morale, you know, when we're slow, agents get bored and you know, you start to see morale dip. We're really, really busy right now. So certainly, there is a lack of activity. The agents Got to stay focused on the mission. And we saw that video in Laredo several weeks ago. And that's what we were talking about. Stay focused on the mission. Don't get bogged down in the policy. You know, you can have those conversations on your off time. But at the end of the day, we're out there doing a job that's very, very important. Do everything we can to secure the border. And then with respect, let me fight for the resources that you need. I'm asking for more agents. I'm asking for more technology, better vehicles, better tech, you know, I need to have a cell phone and every border patrol agents hand out there so they can communicate with each other with the systems that we have already in place. So those are the types of initiatives that I'm working on at the national level. And then certainly trying to make sure our agents are certainly awarded the compensation that they deserve.

Recurring themes from three, ten-minute engagements with Border Patrol Chief, Raul Ortiz, Penitas, Texas February 23, 2022. Notes taken by Tom Gresback

Sarah Garcia – Telemundo - local

Valerie Gonzalez – McAllen Monitor

Sydney Hernandez, KVEO, NBC, RGV

After the three stops earlier the month – S1 came up with 21 things to work-on. We're working on those items. I said I need:

- More agents – more manpower
- Need to close the gaps and gates
- Need more technology

Another item that made his list are assaults on my agents. About 70% right now are be prosecuted. We both agree that number needs to be closer to 90 to 100%. So we are going to work with DOJ to ensure those who harm are agents are prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

More than 260,000 got aways this FY year already.

More support with processing personnel – Congress has authorized the hiring of 1,200 processing agents so my agents can get back to patrol duties.

I am expecting a pick-up of more migrants crossing as the weather warms up. I'm busy making sure we are prepared. In the last 24-hour cycle I had 5,800 apprehensions along the Southwest border – we have been busy.

It's my job to listen and see so I can take what the agents in the field are seeing back to Washington.

We are getting Ursula CPC back on-line and that will be good.

Title 42 is a CDC authority. I do expect the numbers to increase.

When I was in Laredo – I explained that there is a way to comport themselves in a professional manner – there is a process without being disrespectful. I think a lot of what was said was mischaracterized – the greater the conversation was about resiliency.

I am concerned what we are seeing with cross border fires near Fronzon. We are working with the GOM on this issue.

Donna processing site will remain open.

Subject: AAR on interview in Eagle Pass, TX

Reporter: Mireya Villarreal, ABC News

Interview Subject: Border Patrol Chief Raul Ortiz

Location: Bank of Rio Grande River, Eagle Pass, TX

Time: Feb. 17, 2022, 12:30 p.m. Central Standard Time

Length: 30-minute engagement. On-the-record interview runtime, 19 minutes

Subject: Discussion of border security in recent months and path forward.

Background: Media interview was scheduled as part of ABC's coverage of the Texas border, which began with a visit to the Rio Grande Sector.

Staffing: PAS Dennis Smith

Interview: The interview with Chief Ortiz was recorded for accountability and to ensure accuracy.

Interview Summary: On-the-record interview with B1 included challenges facing Border Patrol such as high migrant encounter numbers, methods of processing migrants, drug trafficking, technology, and agent morale.

Questions:

Q. Where are we with immigration along the border?

A. Currently we are in Del Rio Sector probably one of the busiest in the nation. We have 700,000 apprehensions so far this year and 200,000 got-aways. We are doing everything we can to address the flow. We have men and women working here tirelessly and deploying agents from the northern border.

Q. What can we expect when the new numbers come out?

A. I like to project what we are going to experience for the fiscal year and break it up in quarters. I expect numbers to continue to increase due to the issues we are seeing in Cuba and other countries. There are many push and pull factors. We need to make sure we have enough agents on the front lines.

Q. Do you feel you have enough agents?

A. Ten years ago, we had 21,000 plus agents and today we have a little over 19,500. I think not only do we need more agents, but processing coordinators.

Q. What does Title 42 do for you?

A. Half of our encounters are being expelled through Title 42 and those numbers are shrinking therefore conventional processing is taking more time. We need to ensure we continue to be safe and protect our workforce.

Q. Are you in the conversations about changing or ending Title 42?

A. I am not a policy maker. I do provide counsel when asked.

Q. If you could, would you keep it around longer?

A. Yes. I have lost 19 officers to COVID and CBP has lost 60 plus. COVID-19 continues to be a threat to us.

Q. Do you think that migrants are getting a fair shake at the asylum process under Title 42?

A. Agents follow the proper immigration proceedings and refer to ICE. The bigger threat is from people that are trying to get away from our agents. People who are turning themselves in are typically family units and children. They may be a low threat but still require a lot of effort when processing.

Q. What are your concerns with drug trafficking?

A. The difference in narcotics has changed and we are seeing more hard narcotics such as meth and fentanyl. You have cartels that are leveraging migrant populations and supplementing their incomes and using migrants as diversions. We are making significant investments in technology at our ports of entry and in-between to address these threats.

Q. What is some of the technology that you need?

A. We need access roads, patrol zones, easements, and the ability to see what is coming at us. We need to ensure we have situational awareness by using infrared cameras, sUAS (Small Unmanned Aerial Systems), and underground technology such as sensors. All of those things are tools that will set us up for success.

Q. Are you still using repatriation flights?

A. Repatriation flights have to continue but they are not under my purview. We work closely with our ICE partners to make sure those flights are focused where we need them the most.

Q. Regarding morale, in the video from Laredo, what was that moment about?

A. That discussion was centered around suicides and resiliency. We started talking about policies and some of the things that are frustrating to our workforce. I can't get mired down with policies, that is someone else's responsibility. What I can focus on is the mission and the welfare of the men and women that are out there. I must get them the tools, resources, and agents out there. That is what I am fighting for. I must make sure they are safe and are safe with their families.

Q. Where do you think their frustrations are coming from?

A. *One, there is a lot of information flowing around on social media and media. Also, when you find yourself in a continuing resolution, have suffered losses, and tack on the increase in migrant flow and traffic you cannot respond to, that is where the frustration sits. I understand all of that, and my job is to get them the resources that they need.*

Q. We just saw a video of a rescue of a Haitian family. What is it about the Haitian situation that is pushing them here?

A. *We get reports on what is happening in Haiti and other countries. There are a lot of push factors that lead them here. For some reason the Haitian population prefers to cross in the Del Rio Sector, we saw it in September, and we continue to see it to a lesser degree. These migrant family are placing themselves in danger. We have wonderful agents on patrol, we have search and rescue teams, and marine units and they go above and beyond from what they are asked to do. They do it each day. Fortunately, that family survived but that plays out every day.*

Q. Are troopers and Texas Guard helping?

A. *Our relationship with the State of Texas is outstanding. We work collaboratively with our law enforcement partners and have a great relationship. National Guard has always been a tremendous asset for us. Having additional eyes and ears out here is a tremendous force multiplier for us. This is a whole of government approach and let's not forget our non-governmental organizations for doing a tremendous job supporting us.*

Q. How do you answer critics that say they are still seeing what they saw five years ago?

A. *Traffic is much higher than any other time, but it is a different population. I think they know our Border Patrol Agents are giving 110 percent every day. We are not going to give up, and will stay focused on the mission.*

Q. There are agents that feel like political pawns, how do you respond to that?

A. *We have been in the limelight like other law enforcement. I do think border security is a complex issue and it will not be fixed tomorrow. As Border Patrol Agents, we have to focus on what we do have control over which is this area right here.*

Q. Where do you see the Mexico/U.S. Border in the next five years?

A. *We need to continue to make investments. We saw some significant investments during the last administration, we need to continue some of those investments. Whether it is technology or new systems, a new way of thinking. The policy discussion must be had. I will leave that to the policy makers. The men and women of the Border Patrol will continue to do a phenomenal job to secure the border to the best of their ability. I am awfully proud of the work they do each and every day.*



DHS MORNING BRIEFING

Prepared for the Office of Public Affairs (OPA)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

By TechMIS

www.TechMIS.com

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Editorial Note: The DHS Daily Briefing is a collection of news articles related to Department’s mission. The inclusion of particular stories is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse the political viewpoints or affiliations included in news coverage.

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Top News

U.S. border arrivals increased in February, with 55% quickly expelled

CBS News [3/15/2022 11:15 AM, Camilo Montoya-Galvez, 2818K] reports that migrant arrivals at the southern border jumped by 7% in February from the previous month, but U.S. immigration officials also increased deportations, expelling over half of those who entered government custody using rules first issued under the Trump administration, according to Customs and Border Protection data published Tuesday. U.S. border authorities recorded 164,973 migrant apprehensions last month, compared to 153,941 detentions in January, the CBP figures show. Expulsions of migrants under a pandemic-era restriction put in place in 2020 rose by 17% to 91,513, representing 55% of all border encounters in February. The jump in immigration arrests along the Mexican border was largely fueled by a significant increase in arrivals of migrants from Mexico, Guatemala, Cuba and Colombia, as well as a higher arrest tally for single adults, many of whom try to enter the U.S. illegally multiple times after being expelled. CBP processed single adult migrants 126,151 times last month, an 11% jump from January. Officials also recorded a 16% drop in arrivals of families, processing 26,582 migrant parents and children traveling together. Just over 12,000 unaccompanied children entered U.S. border custody in February, a slight increase from January. Arrests of Mexican migrants rose by 18% to 71,210 in February, while arrivals of Guatemalans increased by 31% to 18,175. Cubans and Colombians reached the U.S. border in record numbers, surpassing tallies for some Central American countries. About 16,500 migrants from Cuba and 9,600 from Colombia entered U.S. custody. CBP officials also processed 13,887 migrants from Honduras, 13,295 from Nicaragua and 7,116 from El Salvador, the agency statistics show. CNN [3/15/2022 11:42 AM, Priscilla Alvarez, 5600K] reports that over the weekend, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention terminated that rule as it relates to unaccompanied minors, who had been exempted from it under the Biden administration, after a lower court ruling forced the administration's hand. The White House has faced mounting pressure from Democratic lawmakers and immigrant advocates to terminate the Trump-era policy, which they say puts people in harm's way.

Just last week, a Ukrainian family fleeing the war in their country had also been barred from seeking asylum at the California-Mexico border but were eventually allowed into the US. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas visited Mexico on Monday to discuss migration with government officials. He is in Costa Rica on Tuesday.

Reported similarly:

FOX News [3/15/2022 10:58 AM, Adam Shaw and Griff Jenkins, 10541K]

Washington Times [3/15/2022 6:40 AM, Stephen Dinan, 350K]

Costa Rica says will work with U.S. to strengthen migration control

Reuters [3/16/2022 12:30 AM, Alvaro Murillo, 5304K] reports Costa Rica said on Tuesday the United States had agreed to work together on strengthening immigration and border policing in the Central American country, during a visit by U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas. Costa Rican President Carlos Alvarado met with Mayorkas weeks after Costa Rica, Panama and Mexico established visa requirements that make it more difficult for Venezuelans and Cubans to transit through their countries towards U.S. territory. The new requirements came after Nicaragua lifted visa requirements for Cuban nationals in November, opening a new avenue for migration north to Mexico and the United States. Mayorkas and Costa Rican Minister of Security Michael Soto signed a letter of understanding pledging police efforts and attention to migrants and refugees. Those efforts would include training, infrastructure and equipment, Soto said in a video shared with media. Mayorkas was in Costa Rica a day after his visit to Mexico where he discussed regional migration and labor policies with Mexican officials.

US seeks regional approach to migration and asylum seekers

The AP [3/15/2022 1:45 PM, Javier Córdoba and Christopher Sherman, 12597K] reports that Faced with the likelihood of eventually reopening its southern border to asylum seekers, the United States government is urging allies in Latin America to shore up immigration controls and expand their own asylum programs. U.S. President Joe Biden is under mounting pressure from leaders of his own party to end sweeping asylum restrictions that have been in place since March 2020 to limit the spread of COVID-19. U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas was meeting with officials in Costa Rica Tuesday, a day after holding talks in Mexico. The support of allies would be critical to control a surge of migration when those restrictions are lifted. Both countries are key, having their own asylum systems and being transit routes to the U.S. for immigrants from South America and from outside the Americas. Last month, Costa Rica started requiring visas for Venezuelans and Cubans, a step toward slowing their migration north. Mexico already required visas of Cubans and added Venezuelans in January. U.S. authorities encountered Venezuelans along the U.S.-Mexico border 3,072 times in February, down sharply from 22,779 times a month earlier, according to figures released Tuesday that demonstrate the impact of Mexico's new requirement for Venezuelans, which took effect Jan. 21. Colombians, who do not require visas for Mexico travel, were encountered 9,600 times, up from 3,911 times in January. Overall, U.S authorities encountered migrants 164,973 times along the border in February, well below an August high of more than 200,000 but up from 154,745 in January and from 101,099 in February 2021, Customs and Border Protection said. Mayorkas' visits could be laying the groundwork for lifting the policy.

Pandemic preparedness bill moves ahead; funding still needed

The AP [3/15/2022 2:57 PM, Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar] reports a Senate committee on Tuesday approved a bipartisan blueprint to overhaul the nation's public health system, applying the lessons of COVID-19 to future outbreaks through a new chain of command, a stronger medical supply chain, and clearer crisis communications. The Health, Education, Labor and Pensions committee approved the PREVENT Pandemics Act by a vote of 20-2. The bill starts by formally placing responsibility for pandemic response — in Burr's words, "mission control" — within a new White House office, on a similar footing as national security. In the Obama White House, the National Security Council had a global health unit, but that was disbanded under the Trump administration. Congressional oversight of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention would be strengthened by requiring Senate confirmation of its director. They include more active surveillance of emerging diseases, building a capability to forecast epidemics and improving data collection and distribution. The Food and Drug Administration would be assigned a higher priority on medicines and countermeasures targeting infectious diseases. The bill calls for close attention to the medical supply chain, everything from raw materials for drug manufacturing, to protective equipment that was in such short supply in the first wave of the pandemic, to tests that continued to be an issue in the omicron wave. A new report estimates that overhauling U.S. public health and preparedness could take \$100 billion in the first year, \$20 billion to \$30 billion in the following two years, and \$10 billion to \$15 billion annually thereafter. Meanwhile, Congress has still to act on Biden's request for \$22.5 billion in immediate funding to maintain momentum on the COVID-19 response.

[Mexico] Mexico deports border gang leader after shooting

The AP [3/15/2022 5:14 PM, Maria Verza, 566K] reports that Mexico deported the alleged leader of a bloodthirsty gang of border hitmen Tuesday, one day after his arrest caused retaliatory shooting and burnings that closed U.S. border crossings and a U.S. consulate. A Mexican official who was not authorized to be quoted by name said Juan Gerardo Treviño had been handed over to U.S. officials in a "Controlled deportation." The term implies Treviño holds dual U.S. citizenship, which is not uncommon along the border. If he had only Mexican citizenship, he would have been subject to a lengthy extradition process. After his arrest Sunday, members of his gang shot up the border city of Nuevo Laredo, and even hit the U.S. consulate with gunfire. The consulate was closed until further notice and two U.S. border bridges leading to Laredo, Texas, were briefly closed because of the incident. U.S. Ambassador Ken Salazar said in a statement Monday that "I have raised our grave concerns about these incidents and the safety and security of our employees directly with the government of Mexico." Treviño was handed over at a border bridge in Tijuana, far to the west of Nuevo Laredo, presumably to avoid attempts to free him. The Mexican army said he was the leader of an extremely violent and heavily armed gang of cartel gunmen known as "The Troops of Hell." Treviño, who reportedly had two illegal guns when he was detained, faces charges of extortion, homicide and terrorism in Mexico. He was wanted for extradition to the U.S. on charges of conspiracy to traffic drugs and launder money. U.S. Customs and Border Protection said that southbound traffic from Laredo into Nuevo Laredo at the Juarez-Lincoln and Gateway to the Americas bridges was suspended, but reopened early Monday.

[Mexico] Journalist killed in Mexico, eighth so far this year

The AP [3/15/2022 10:33 PM, Fabiola Sánchez, 2818K] reports another journalist was shot to death in Mexico on Tuesday, the eighth murdered so far this year in an unprecedented spate of killings that has made Mexico the most dangerous place in the world for the press.

Reporters and photographers have been murdered this year in Mexico at the rate of almost one a week, despite claims from the government that the situation is under control. Prosecutors in the western state of Michoacan said reporter Armando Linares was shot to death at a home in the town of Zitacuaro. His killing came six weeks after the slaying of a colleague, Roberto Toledo, from the same outlet Monitor Michoacan. It was Linares who announced Toledo's death Jan. 31 in a video posted to social media. Zitacuaro is one of the closest towns to the monarch butterfly wintering grounds in the mountains west of Mexico City. The area has been plagued by illegal logging and drug gangs, local governance disputes and deforestation linked to expanding avocado production. Logging has damaged the pine and fir forests where the butterflies spend the winter after migrating from the United States and Canada. Linares served as director at the Monitor Michoacan website, which on Tuesday continued to show an article he had written about a cultural festival celebrating monarch butterflies. There was no immediate information on a possible motive in the killing.

[Ukraine] Biden administration to send \$186M to help Ukrainian refugees

The Hill [3/15/2022 6:17 PM, Morgan Chalfant, 1877K] reports the State Department announced plans Tuesday to provide \$186 million in humanitarian assistance to support Ukrainian refugees displaced due to the ongoing Russian attack on Ukraine. "This will provide further support for humanitarian organizations responding to the crisis and complement the generosity of the neighboring countries that are welcoming and supporting refugees," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement. The United Nations estimated Tuesday that 3 million people have been displaced by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which began about three weeks ago. The Biden administration has sent \$550 million in assistance to Ukraine in the past two weeks, according to White House press secretary Jen Psaki. That assistance is expected to ramp up further after President Biden signed into law a sweeping government funding bill that includes \$13.6 billion in Ukraine-related assistance on Tuesday. Blinken said the funds would support efforts to get food, safe drinking water, shelter, and emergency healthcare to those in need.

[Ukraine] Explainer-Why isn't the U.S. accepting more Ukrainian refugees?

Reuters [3/16/2022 12:05 AM, Ted Hesson, 5304K] reports more than 3 million people have fled Ukraine to neighboring countries since Russia invaded on Feb. 24, according to United Nations data, but the United States has only admitted several hundred Ukrainian refugees so far, leaving some critics questioning U.S. government policy. U.S. President Joe Biden and his top officials have said the United States stands ready to accept refugees if needed, but the administration has repeatedly signaled that Europe should be the primary destination for Ukrainians. "We're going to welcome Ukrainian refugees with open arms if, in fact, they come all the way here," Biden said on March 11 during a meeting of fellow Democrats in Philadelphia. Vice President Kamala Harris, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki have made similar comments. Psaki said on March 10 that the administration believes the "vast majority" of refugees will want to remain in neighboring countries where many have family, friends and former employers. Refugee resettlement can take years, though the Biden administration sped up the process for Afghans following the U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan last August. Lessons from that experience could help expedite the resettlement of other refugees, three U.S. officials told Reuters. A group of more than three dozen Democratic lawmakers urged Biden in a March 11 letter to increase refugee admissions and allow Ukrainians with family members in the United States to enter faster through a temporary mechanism known as "humanitarian parole."

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

CoreCivic Trafficking Suit Dropped by Immigration Detainee

[Bloomberg](#) [3/15/2022 11:29 AM, Daniel Seiden, 19K] reports that a former immigration detainee abandoned her lawsuit accusing ICE contractor CoreCivic Inc. of violating the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 by forcing her to cook and clean under threat of severe living conditions at a Texas detention facility. The parties' joint motion to dismiss was granted by Judge Lee Yeakel of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas on Monday. Counsel for the parties didn't immediately respond to a request for comments. Martha Gonzalez filed a complaint on behalf of a class of 141 detainees claiming mistreatment by CoreCivic in 2018. The district court denied CoreCivic's... [Editorial note: consult source link for extended commentary]

Fake heiress Anna 'Delvey' Sorokin, who swindled NYC elite, in ICE custody amid rumors of deportation

[FOX News](#) [3/15/2022 5:31 PM, Audrey Conklin, 10541K] reports Anna Sorokin, who convinced New York City's elite that she was a German heiress by the name of Anna Delvey in 2017, remains in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody as of Tuesday afternoon, despite rumors of her deportation, according to the agency. "In November 2021, the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) granted Sorokin's emergency stay request; she remains in ICE custody pending removal," an ICE spokesperson told Fox News Digital on Tuesday afternoon. The ICE spokesperson added that the agency does not discuss future removal operations due to operational security. Reports released Tuesday suggested that Sorokin had been deported back to Germany from the Orange County Correctional Facility in Goshen, New York. She was scheduled to leave Monday after a Manhattan judge denied her appeal to stay in the U.S., and prison officials disabled her account on an inmate communications app, an attorney for Sorokin told Insider. [ABC News](#) [3/15/2022 9:27 AM, Luke Barr, 23K] reports she served just under four years in prison and has since been in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody, awaiting deportation, according to a lawsuit she filed against ICE. She claims the poor treatment in ICE facilities gave her COVID-19 and that she was not allowed to receive a COVID booster shot.

Citizenship and Immigration Services

Thousands of Afghan refugees are still living in U.S. hotels while they wait for housing

[NPR](#) [3/15/2022 4:21 PM, Joel Rose, 5347K] Audio: [HERE](#) reports Aziz's family is among countless Afghans who are still living in hotel rooms and other temporary housing across the U.S., some for months, as they wait for permanent housing. All of the Afghan refugees who were evacuated in the Kabul airlift last summer have now left the military bases where they lived for months — more than 76,000 Afghans in all, according to the Department of Homeland Security. But for many, their journey still isn't over. It's not clear exactly how many Afghan refugees are still living in hotels. The federal agencies in charge told us they don't have that information. Based on conversations with state officials and resettlement agencies, the number of Afghans still living in hotels and other temporary housing is significant — likely more than 4000 nationwide as of early March. The biggest obstacle, resettlement agencies say, is a severe shortage of affordable housing.

U.S. Immigration Agency Plans Resumption of In-Person Services

Bloomberg [3/15/2022 12:24 PM, Andrew Kreighbaum, 19K] reports that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services plans to partially reopen some domestic offices June 4 after suspending in-person services during the Covid-19 pandemic, the agency announced Tuesday. USCIS, part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, adjudicates green cards and naturalization applications as well as as temporary nonimmigrant worker visas. The agency has faced mounting backlogs for benefits such as work authorization documents over the past two years, despite pledges by the Biden administration to improve its efficiency. A December report from the agency's internal watchdog found that its work was slowed by its largely paper-based system, even after staff began... [Editorial note: consult source link for extended commentary]

U.S. Work-Permit Backlog Is Costing Immigrants Their Jobs

Bloomberg [3/15/2022 6:00 AM, Dara Lind, 9409K] reports every 15 days, Naina Arora checks a U.S. federal government website to see when she'll be allowed to work again. Arora, the wife of an H-1B visa holder, has been on unpaid leave from her job in the operations department of a major health-insurance provider in Pasadena, Calif. since October, when her work permit expired. She had applied for a renewal in advance, assuming it would take something like the three months it had taken her to get her first one in 2019. Instead, the average processing time listed on the website for cases like hers continues to increase—from 5½ months, to 7½, to 12½. After countless calls to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) case hotline, she finally reached an employee. As she recalls, the response she got was: "I'm so sorry, it's just bad luck, and we cannot do anything about it. Just wait and pray." Unprecedented delays in approving work-permit renewals are routinely leaving immigrants such as Arora in limbo. The government doesn't keep statistics on how many people have had their permits expire while waiting for a renewal, but officials estimate that, at its worst in January and February, hundreds per day were losing permission to work. USCIS found itself on the verge of fiscal collapse in summer 2020; its budget is largely funded by application fees, but applications had plummeted because of the Covid-19 pandemic and Trump-era restrictions on immigration. The agency avoided widespread furloughs, but instituted a hiring freeze that wasn't lifted until well into 2021. At the same time, the shutting down of in-person offices for months in 2020 prolonged already-growing processing times. Then, in summer 2020, the Trump administration created a regulation that turned the two-page work-permit application (which the agency claimed took about 12 minutes to complete) into a seven-page one.

Customs and Border Protection

37% increase in detention of unaccompanied minors at the Mexican border

Univision Austin [3/15/2022 5:40 PM, Staff, 514K] reports the number of unaccompanied immigrant children found at the border with Mexico increased 37% in February compared to those apprehended in January, said Tuesday the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the federal agency under whose command the Border Patrol operates. "In February, 12,011 unaccompanied children were found compared to 8,760 in January, an increase of 37%," details a statement posted on CBP's website. "In February, the average number of unaccompanied children in CBP custody was 520 per day, up from an average of 295 per day in January," it added. The detention figure is known at a time when a high-level delegation from the White House and the Departments of State (DOS), Justice (DOJ), Homeland Security (DHS) and Health (HHS) is meeting in Guatemala with representatives

of Central American governments to develop a strategy to curb undocumented immigration to the United States. The CBP report further explains that the large number of deportations executed during the pandemic "has contributed to a greater number of migrants making multiple attempts to cross the border" to enter the United States. The attempts imply that "total encounters somewhat overstate the number of unique individuals arriving at the border with Mexico," the agency explains. The February data also reveals that "the number of unique individuals encountered along the entire border in February was 116,678, a 2% increase in the number of unique individuals encountered or found in January," it adds. The report further states that in February there were a total of 164,973 encounters along the land border with Mexico, an increase of 7% over the previous month. [Editorial note: consult video at source link]

A Haitian Man's Brutal Experience With U.S. Border Agents Sparked Outrage. Now He's Telling His Story

Yahoo! News [3/15/2022 2:07 PM, Jasmine Aguilera, 13319K] reports that the world first saw Mirard Joseph on one of the worst days of his life. On Sept. 19, 2021, he came to embody the plight of thousands of Haitian migrants after an image taken that day of his attempt to escape a U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) agent on horseback in Del Rio, Texas, spread across the internet and was broadcast on every major news network. While Joseph ran, clinging to plastic bags filled with food, the agent wrenched his shirt. The horse's rein seemed to coil like a whip. The image, captured by New Mexico— and Texas-based photojournalist Paul Ratje, stoked national debate over migration at the U.S.-Mexico border, enduring racism in American institutions, and the unique experience that Black immigrants face. Joseph, along with his wife Madeleine Prospere and their daughter, who just turned 2, had been living with some 15,000 other mostly Haitian migrants in makeshift tents in Del Rio. Many Americans saw Ratje's photo as evidence of the country's broken immigration system. Others, including the NAACP and Vice President Kamala Harris, argued that it evoked an ugly history of slavery. In the days after the incident, President Joe Biden condemned the USBP's use of horses in the arrests, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection launched an internal investigation into the Del Rio horse patrol. "We—our entire nation—saw horrifying images that do not reflect who we are, who we aspire to be, or the integrity and values of our truly heroic personnel in the Department of Homeland Security," Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas said, adding that the images "painfully conjured up the worst elements of our nation's on-going battle against systemic racism."

[FL] Over 100 migrants made landfall in the Florida Keys: Border Patrol

The Hill [3/15/2022 12:22 PM, Sarakshi Rai, 1877K] reports that U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) said Monday that a boat carrying more than 100 migrants, reportedly involved in a maritime smuggling event, made landfall in the Florida Keys. In a statement on Twitter, Chief Patrol Agent Walter N. Slosar, who is in charge of the Miami region, said agents along with federal, state and local partners were responding to "a maritime smuggling event involving over 100 migrants." There is a "coordinated response with our state, federal and local partners, making sure that we get medical and safety checks and then get these individuals processed and transported to our station," Slosar said in a video message on Twitter. The boat was carrying 123 migrants and landed about 20 miles north of Key West, Fla., CBP said in a statement on Tuesday. "At approximately 11:30 am Monday, a good Samaritan notified law enforcement that a suspected migrant vessel was close to running aground with approximately 100 people on board. Soon thereafter the vessel ran aground near a residential shoreline in Summerland Key, Florida. All migrants onboard the vessel

disembarked, and all safely swam to shore," CBP added. According to CBP, responding law enforcement was able to immediately secure the area without incident and rendered first aid to a few migrants needing assistance due to dehydration. CBP said the group told authorities at the scene that they had departed La Tortue Island, Haiti on March 9.

[China] US to detain goods from Chinese sportswear giant Li-Ning over North Korean labor concerns

CNN [3/16/2022 3:09 AM, Michelle Toh, 5600K] reports Li-Ning goods will be detained by US authorities after US Customs and Border Protection said an investigation indicated that the Chinese sportswear giant uses North Korean labor in its supply chain. Starting this week, the company's merchandise will be detained at all US ports, the CBP announced Tuesday. "Such merchandise will not be entitled to entry unless the importer provides clear and convincing evidence that their merchandise was not produced with convict labor, forced labor, or indentured labor," the agency said in a statement. The company is one of China's biggest makers of sports apparel and sneakers, with a market cap of about 133.3 billion Hong Kong dollars (\$17 billion).

Transportation Security Administration

U.S. agency fines more than 900 maskless air, transit passengers

Reuters [3/15/2022 3:42 PM, David Shepardson, 5304K] reports the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has proposed \$644,398 in fines for 922 COVID-19 mask violators since February 2021 on commercial flights, in airports and train stations or on public transit services, the government reported on Monday, a dramatic jump in recent months. According to the government report, all but 44 of the TSA fines were for failing to wear masks as required on airplanes or, less often, in airports. The rest covered unmasked passengers in surface transportation like transit, rail and bus. The agency said it has also issued warnings to more than 2,700 travelers after more than 7,000 reported incidents since the transit mask requirements took effect. In late October, TSA said it had proposed \$85,990 in fines for 190 mask violators and issued warnings to more than 2,200. Last week, TSA said it was extending mask requirements at airports and on airplanes through April 18. Since the start of 2021, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has investigated reports of 6,800 unruly airplane passengers including about 4,800 for not wearing masks. It has opened 450 investigations and proposed more than \$5 million in fines. The TSA fines included \$501,388 for 788 onboard air incidents, averaging \$636. The TSA has issued 18 civil penalties for not wearing masks at airport checkpoints totaling \$57,065 or \$3,170 on average, and 160 others at airports totaling \$57,795, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report said. Another 44 have been issued for surface transportation incidents totaling \$28,150.

Senate Passes Resolution to End Mask Rules on Transportation

Bloomberg [3/15/2022 6:47 PM, Lillianna Byington, 19K] reports the Senate backed legislation to end the federal mask mandate on planes and transit in a largely symbolic vote that highlights GOP opposition to White House pandemic policies. Senators on Tuesday voted 57-40 to pass a resolution (S. J. Res. 37) from Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) to end the mask mandate on public transportation. Republicans hope widespread opposition will nudge the White House to rethink the requirement, which was set to expire on March 18 but last week was extended to April 18. Eight Democrats backed the measure. A bipartisan vote

“would go a long way toward convincing the administration that the public is on our side,” said Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.), ranking member on the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. He spoke at a press conference Tuesday with other Senate Republicans ahead of the vote. The measure would use the Congressional Review Act, which allows Congress to try to halt federal agencies’ rules through expedited procedures. The Senate vote required a simple majority to pass, but will likely be defeated in the House if it came to a vote. The White House has also pledged to veto it if it does pass.

[ND] Officer injured in attack at the Bismarck Airport

The [AP](#) [3/15/2022 4:55 PM, Staff, 566K] reports that a police officer has been injured in an attack at the Bismarck Airport. Police say the officer was called to check on a man who was bothering passengers waiting in the security line Monday. The officer told the man that he would have to leave the airport if he didn’t have an airline ticket. The officer was having a conversation with him in the front lobby area when “The guy just attacked him out of the blue,” said Officer Lynn Wanner. The officer suffered lacerations that required stitches and was taken to the hospital. The officer radioed for assistance and the man was handcuffed with the help of airport and Transportation Security Administration officers. Police say the 37-year-old man had brass knuckles in his possession when he was booked into the Burleigh Morton Detention Center.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Federal government has provided more than \$2B to help cover COVID-19 funerals

The [Hill](#) [3/15/2022 11:29 AM, Cameron Jenkins, 1877K] reports that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on Tuesday announced that more than \$2 billion in funding has been allotted for funeral costs of about 300,000 American families that lost a loved one since the COVID-19 pandemic began. “FEMA’s COVID-19 Funeral Assistance program has helped provide over 300,000 people with critical financial relief during a time of such unexpected, unimaginable and widespread loss,” FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell said, according to The Associated Press. Under the COVID-19 Funeral Assistance program, up to \$9,000 in funeral expenses are covered per person. On average, about \$6,500 has been given to families per death, the agency stated, according to the AP. The agency also reportedly announced on Tuesday that it is set to launch a paid ad campaign in four states that have had high rates of coronavirus-related deaths but low requests for funeral reimbursement. Those states include New York, Pennsylvania, Texas and California. “Our new outreach campaign is designed to reach families, especially across underserved communities, where the cost of a funeral can be a financial burden to a loved one,” Criswell said, according to the AP. “Our goal is to help families apply for assistance, as well as submit all required documents for existing applications.” In order for families to be eligible for assistance, they must provide death certificates that show evidence that COVID-19 was the cause of death of a loved one who died after May 16, 2020. For situations in which the death occurred prior to that date, a signed statement from a medical examiner detailing the cause of death must be provided in addition to the death certificate, the news outlet noted. The Hill has reached out to FEMA for comment.

Reported similarly:

[AP](#) [3/15/2022 9:30 AM, Zeke Miller, 2818K]

[CNN](#) [3/15/2022 6:14 PM, Liz Stark, 5600K]

Secret Service

New Secret Service report details growing incel terrorism threat

CBS News [3/15/2022 11:15 AM, Nicole Sganga, Neutral, Secondary] reports the federal government on Tuesday released a study on the growing terrorism threat from men who call themselves "anti-feminists" or "involuntary celibates" and draw motivation for violence from their inability to develop relationships with women. Since 2014, attacks inspired by the "incel movement" and spanning the U.S. and Canada have left dozens dead. Early intervention and behavioral threat assessments could be the difference between life and death for women targeted by the growing ideology, according to the 26-page report. The report concluded that while "there is no one profile of an individual who plans or executes an act of targeted violence," investigators must consider potential targets when seeking to thwart attacks, as suspects routinely "explore multiple targets during the planning process, before making their final selection." The U.S. Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center took a deep dive into a series of red flags predating a shooting at a yoga studio in Tallahassee, Florida, to determine how early intervention could save lives in the future. The NTAC routinely publishes research based on an assessment of the current threat environment. In the case of 40-year-old gunman Scott Paul Beierle, there were countless warning signs. The man who opened fire inside Hot Yoga Tallahassee — killing two women and injuring four more before committing suicide — had previously been fired from multiple teaching jobs, barred from bars and apartment buildings, and authored a 70,000 word revenge fantasy about a boy turned serial killer, according to the report. According to the U.S. Secret Service's analysis, Beierle was motivated to carry out violence by his inability to develop or maintain relationships with women. Although the origins of "anti-feminist" and "incel" movements vary, the shooter's final crime in 2018 is part of a string of gender-based ideology-driven attacks calling for violence against women.

New report tells horrors facing threatened election officials

The Los Angeles Times [3/15/2022 8:00 AM, Staff, 3779K] reports that, in the combustible days and weeks following the November 2020 election, Adrian Fontes was threatened so many times he lost count. As Maricopa County recorder, Fontes oversaw the balloting in Phoenix and its sprawling suburbs, the swing portion of a swing state and one of the focal points of President Trump's unhinged efforts to overturn Joe Biden's victory. With tensions mounting, as armed demonstrators gathered outside his office and a SWAT team parked itself inside, Fontes packed "Go bags" so his wife and children could quickly flee their home. After one death threat, the family evacuated for several days. The menace facing Fontes and his staff was not unusual. A new survey by the Brennan Center for Justice found 1 in 6 election officials nationwide said they have been threatened, part of a dramatic rise in tensions as voting and elections have become an increasing political flashpoint. "These attacks have forced election officials across the country to take steps like hiring personal security, fleeing their homes and putting their children into counseling," according to the center, a research and policy organization affiliated with New York University. All because election workers were doing their job and a bunch of sore-losing chuckleheads didn't like the result. Maricopa County Recorder Adrian Fontes talks to the media in Phoenix as 2020 ballots are counted behind him. More than 1 in 4 of those surveyed by the Brennan Center said they were concerned about being assaulted. Over half said they worried about the safety of their colleagues. More troubling, 30% said they knew of at least one election worker who had left the position in part because of intimidation or increased threats. It bears repeating that, despite Trump's continued and incessant lies, U.S officials judged the Nov.

3, 2020, election - which saw record-high turnout amid the worst pandemic in a century - "The most secure" in the country's history. "There is no evidence that any voting system deleted or lost votes, changed votes or was in any way compromised," the Department of Homeland Security said in a statement co-signed by some of Trump's own appointees.

Gunman who attacked Florida yoga studio gave off decades of warning signs, Secret Service finds

NBC News [3/15/2022 6:13 AM, Pete Williams, 5101K, Neutral, Primary] reports the Florida man who opened fire inside a Tallahassee yoga studio in 2018, killing two women and injuring five, repeatedly engaged in offensive and criminal behavior for decades, presenting missed opportunities to prevent the rampage, the Secret Service said in a new analysis issued Tuesday. The agency's National Threat Assessment Center studied the background of Scott Beierle, the 40-year-old man who walked into Hot Yoga on Nov. 2, 2018, drew a semi-automatic handgun and began shooting. A few minutes later, he shot and killed himself. But for decades, he gave off warning signs involving inappropriate and criminal behavior toward women and girls, the report found. He was fired from several jobs, banned from some public places, thrown out of the military and even arrested. Friends and family members feared him, and his parents slept with the bedroom doors locked when he lived with them. "Tragedies like this one are successfully prevented every day with behavioral assessment programs," said Steven Driscoll, the threat center's assistant chief. "Nothing about this attacker's behavior should be considered normal. His misogyny was extreme, and it began at a young age." Secret Service researchers found that he touched girls without their consent in high school and openly admired Hitler and the Aryan Nations. After failing in his dream of becoming a screenwriter, he lived with his parents and wrote stories and songs described as "dark, violent and misogynistic."

[MA] New York Man Pleads Guilty to COVID-19 Relief Fraud Scheme

The United States Department of Justice [3/15/2022 4:50 PM, Staff, Positive, Secondary] reports a New York Man pleaded guilty today to charges arising from a scheme to fraudulently obtain business loans and unemployment pandemic relief funds made available under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Ronald Buie, 35, pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud before U.S. District Court Judge Douglas P. Woodlock who scheduled sentencing for June 24, 2022. Buie was charged on Jan. 25, 2022. Buie engaged in a scheme to defraud the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) by submitting fraudulent applications for loans offered in connection with the CARES Act. As part of this scheme, Buie used various false identities to apply for and obtain fraudulent SBA loans in amounts exceeding \$219,000. Buie also submitted fraudulent documentation to apply for and obtain a fraudulent SBA loan for \$60,000 for his company, Platinum Car Service LLC. Specifically, in support of his loan application, Buie provided what he purported to be a monthly bank statement for his business checking account showing an ending balance of more than \$198,000, whereas bank records for that particular month show that the actual balance was less than \$3,000. In addition, Buie's scheme also involved the utilization of various false identities to apply for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits in Massachusetts and Ohio. United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins; Mark Comorosky, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Secret Service, Boston Field Office; Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge of Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations; and Ketty Larco-Ward, Inspector in Charge of the United States Postal Inspection Service made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was provided by the U.S. Secret Service, New York Field Office;

Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance; and the New York City Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney William F. Abely, Chief of Rollins' Criminal Division, is prosecuting the case.

[PA] Suspect in Stabbings at Museum of Modern Art Apprehended in Philadelphia

The Wall Street Journal [3/15/2022 5:41 PM, Allison Prang and Ginger Adams Otis, Positive, Primary] reports a man sought in connection to a stabbing of two employees at New York City's Museum of Modern Art was apprehended early Tuesday morning in Philadelphia, the New York Police Department said. The man, identified by police as 60-year-old Gary Cabana, had allegedly attacked the employees on Saturday afternoon after he was denied entry to the museum in Midtown Manhattan because of a revoked membership. A 24-year-old male victim was stabbed once on the left collarbone, and a 24-year-old female victim was stabbed once in the back of the neck and twice in the lower back. The wounds weren't life-threatening. The NYPD said the investigation is continuing. Chief Essig said the Secret Service got involved in the matter when threats were made against former President Donald Trump. The Secret Service said that, for security reasons, it doesn't discuss "the means and methods used to conduct our protective operations or matters of protective intelligence."

[PA] Lebanon County police seek help identifying suspects who used fake money at Walmart

FOX 43 [3/15/2022 8:45 PM, Grace Ganz, 19K, Neutral, Secondary] reports North Lebanon Township Police Department is calling on community members to help officers identify suspects who used fake money at an area Walmart. Police say the three suspects pictured below passed counterfeit currency at the store on 1355 E Lehman St. on March 12 at 10:50 p.m. According to police, the suspects initially tried to use the counterfeit money in the store's electronics department, but the cashier denied them. Police say they then took their items to an elderly cashier at general checkout, where they bought \$1,534 of merchandise. The suspects purchased the items "using 29 counterfeit \$50's and 7 \$20's totaling \$1,590.00," according to a report from Crimewatch. The report also stated the suspects fled the Walmart in a light-colored minivan or SUV.

[MD] Serial Fraudster Pleads Guilty in U.S. District Court in Maryland to Two New Fraud Schemes and to Violating His Supervised Release for a Previous Federal Fraud Conviction

The United States Department of Justice [3/15/2022 12:00 PM, Staff, Positive, Secondary] reports Jason Evans, age 47, formerly of Anne Arundel County, Maryland, pleaded guilty yesterday to two counts of bank fraud, in connection with two separate fraud schemes, to aggravated identity theft, and to violating his supervised release on a previous federal bank fraud conviction. The guilty pleas were announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Erik L. Barron and Special Agent in Charge Bo Keane of the United States Secret Service - Baltimore Field Office. According to his plea agreement, in 2015, Evans was sentenced to four years in federal prison, and began five years of supervised release on January 17, 2018. Evans admitted that from June 29, 2019 through August 30, 2019, he fraudulently obtained and used a credit card in the name and identity of "JM" using JM's name, date of birth and social security number. The bank approving the credit card application also opened a business account connected to that credit card. Evans then obtained a counterfeit Pennsylvania driver's license bearing the name of JM and a photograph of Evans, with the date of birth altered to be consistent with Evans' age. On

July 30, 2019, Evans presented the credit card and the counterfeit driver's license at a bank in the 7900 block of Ritchie Highway in Glen Burnie, Maryland, and requested a cash advance of \$14,400, which the bank approved. The next day, Evan used the credit card and counterfeit Pennsylvania driver's license at a store in Annapolis, Maryland, to purchase Apple merchandise totaling \$12,114.74, including nine iPhone XS Max cell phones. On August 6, 2019, Evans presented the credit card and counterfeit Pennsylvania driver's license in JM's name at a bank in the 1000 block of Washington Boulevard in Laurel, Maryland, and requested a cash advance of \$14,400. The cash advance was not immediately approved due to a problem with the bank's computer system, but before the system could be rebooted and the transaction identified as fraudulent, Evans left the bank, leaving the fraudulently obtained credit card and counterfeit license in JM's name behind.

[GA] Man used bleach, \$1 bills and a little creativity to make \$235K in fake cash, feds say

The Ledger-Enquirer [3/15/2022 3:44 PM, Julia Marnin, Positive, Secondary] reports a man got a little creative and led a counterfeit money scheme by using bleach, real \$1 bills and a printer that he traveled with to create fake \$100 bills totaling \$235,000, federal officials in Virginia said. This comes after he was convicted twice in 2015 for using counterfeit money, court documents obtained by McClatchy News state. Most recently, he'd bleach the real dollars and print images of \$100 onto them before handing them out to co-conspirators for them to make purchases, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia. New Jersey resident Hollis Forteau, 38, was sentenced to five years in prison on Monday, March 14, federal officials said. "Mr. Forteau is sincerely regretful for any harm that he had caused," his lawyer Daymen Robinson told McClatchy News in a statement. "He will immediately begin to reimburse those who suffered economic lost and do his best to make amends for his conduct." In December 2019 and January 2020, Forteau and at least six others working with him drove from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Virginia, where he directed the others to make purchases at local retailers with the fake cash, according to court documents. Then, prosecutors say, they drove to the same retailers at a different location to return the items they illegally bought and obtain real cash. Forteau would take a cut of the money, prosecutors said. "To ensure a consistent supply" of the fake bills, Forteau traveled with a printer, which was bought with counterfeit money, and a laptop to create them in hotel rooms, according to court documents.

[FL] Variety of drugs, including fentanyl, found after Florida Keys traffic stop, cops say

The Bradenton Herald [3/15/2022 3:34 PM, David Goodhue, Positive, Secondary] reports a man and woman from Jacksonville were arrested on several felony charges after Monroe County deputies say they found multiple drugs, including fentanyl, in their car in a traffic stop in the Florida Keys. The pair, Jeremiah Persyns, 38, and Ashley Caroline Young, 35, are being charged with trafficking in opium, cocaine possession, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of pills without a prescription. As of Tuesday afternoon, they were both in county jail on Stock Island with no bond information immediately available. Deputy Juan Carlos Marino pulled them over around 7:40 p.m. Monday near 12th Street in the Middle Keys city of Marathon. He said he stopped them because the Chevy SUV Persyns was driving had illegal tint on the windows, according to sheriff's office spokesman Adam Linhardt. Persyns first told Marino that he didn't have his driver's license, before providing a fake name, Linhardt said. According to the sheriff's office, deputies searched the car and found 9.9 grams of fentanyl, 6.6 grams of cocaine, 2 grams of methamphetamine,

1.8 grams of marijuana, Oxycodone and Xanax pills, Multiple syringes and pipes, Deputies also found four counterfeit \$100 bills, which Young said were intended for buying more drugs, according to the sheriff's office.

[Canada] South Shore woman charged with trying to poison Trump deemed fit to stand trial

The Montreal Gazette [3/15/2022 6:00 PM, Paul Cherry, Neutral, Secondary] reports Pascale Ferrier, the South Shore resident who is charged with threatening to kill a U.S. president after she allegedly tried to send Donald Trump a letter laced with poison, has been found competent to stand trial. The results of a mental health evaluation conducted by a psychologist were mentioned Tuesday afternoon during a status hearing before Judge Dabney Friedrich at the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C. According to a court document filed in the case earlier this month, the evaluation was ordered to determine whether Ferrier is "suffering from a mental disease or defect rendering her mentally incompetent to stand trial, unable to understand the nature and consequences of the proceedings against her and to properly assist in the preparation of her defence." Ferrier, a resident of St-Hubert, was arrested on Sept. 20, 2020 when she showed up at a border crossing in Buffalo, N.Y. and told U.S. border agents she was the person behind a threatening letter that contained the poison ricin and was addressed to Trump at the White House while he was president. The letter was intercepted on Sept. 18, 2020 when it arrived at the White House mail sorting facility, and the Secret Service turned it over to the FBI.

[Maldives] Fake US Dollars sold in Maldives' black market

The Edition [3/16/2022 3:56 AM, Lamy Abdulla, Neutral, Secondary] reports police cautions public on the purchase of US Dollars from unauthorized parties on Wednesday as reports of sale of fake Dollars have increased. They said there has been an increase of the sale of forged US Dollars through messaging communities such as Viber and other social media platforms. These communities advertise themselves as offering money exchange services, and that police were currently investigating such cases as well. These transactions are conducted by talking to people wishing to purchase Dollars privately once they express interest in the community. The money changes hand when they meet in person, often in places visited by few people. Foreign exchange via unauthorized parties is a widely practiced business in Maldives. However, due to the sale of fake Dollars, the police have urged to conduct such transactions via authorized channels only. They also urged the public ensure they have received valid notes as well.

Coast Guard

[MD] Cargo ship stuck in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay presenting Coast Guard 'logistical challenge'

ABC News [3/15/2022 12:49 PM, Bill Hutchinson, 23K] reports that a loaded 1,095-foot cargo ship remained stuck Tuesday morning in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay, presenting Coast Guard officials with what they described as a "logistical challenge" to free the vessel without polluting the environment. The container vessel, named Ever Forward, ran aground Sunday night after leaving Baltimore, Petty Officer 1st Class Steve Lehmann, a spokesman for the Coast Guard's Mid-Atlantic district, told ABC News Tuesday morning. Lehmann said the ship is stuck in about 23-feet of water but is not blocking traffic in the bay's deep-water channel. "It's a pretty big logistical challenge," Lehmann said about freeing the ship.

Lehmann said a Coast Guard environmental team boarded the ship to make an assessment of its condition and determine how to safely get it towed off what is believed to be a sandbar without polluting the water or causing harm to the crew. "We're making sure all boxes are checked," said Lehmann, adding that a timeline has not yet been established on when an attempt to free the vessel will be made. Lehmann said no one was injured and no pollution has been detected as a result of the mishap. He said the Coast Guard was notified of the incident around 9 p.m. Sunday. Coast Guard officials said the ship was apparently traveling outside the deep-water channel when it got hung up. Lehmann said the ship is believed to be owned by Evergreen Marine Corp., noting the company's name on the side of the vessel. [Editorial note: consult video at source link] The AP [3/15/2022 6:25 PM, Staff] reports that technical experts boarded the Ever Forward on Monday to evaluate the ship's condition, Maryland Port Administration Executive Director William P. Doyle said in a statement Tuesday. He said various experts are working with divers to determine the best course of action to free the ship. Officials haven't yet determined what caused the ship to run aground, Coast Guard Petty Officer 3rd Class Breanna Centeno said in an email Tuesday.

Reported similarly:

Reuters [3/15/2022 12:51 PM, Staff, 5304K]

CBS News [3/15/2022 12:04 PM, Caitlin O'Kane, 2818K]

CISA/Cybersecurity

[Germany] Germany Issues Hacking Warning for Users of Russian Anti-Virus Software Kaspersky

Reuters [3/15/2022 5:31 PM, Staff] reports that Germany's cyber security agency on Tuesday warned users of an anti-virus software developed by Moscow-based Kaspersky Lab that it poses a serious risk of a successful hacking attack. The BSI agency said that the Russia-based cyber-security company could be coerced by Russian government agents to hack IT systems abroad or agents could clandestinely use its technology to launch cyberattacks without its knowledge. Kaspersky said in a statement it was a privately-managed company with no ties to the Russian government. It said that the warning by BSI was politically motivated, adding it was in contact with the BSI to clarify the matter. The BSI warning comes as Russia's invasion of Ukraine escalates with the Russian army's shelling of the capital of Ukraine. The BSI said that German companies as well as government agencies that manage critical infrastructure were particularly at risk of a hacking attack.

[Russia] Bipartisan Senate group urges DHS to provide answers on Russian cyberthreat

The Washington Times [3/15/2022 4:55 AM, Ryan Lovelace, 350K] reports a bipartisan group of 22 senators urged the Department of Homeland Security to provide details about the government's preparedness for cyberattacks from Russia, as its invasion of Ukraine has American lawmakers on edge. Fears of a catastrophic Russian cyberattack accompanying physical attacks on Ukraine that could spiral out of control have not yet materialized. The senators wrote to Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas to get information on the government's plan to defend against cyberattacks, hacks and disinformation that may still come. The 17 Democrats, four Republicans and one independent requested a briefing to explain what the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) is doing to protect against state-sponsored attacks and to share information about what business

sectors are targets, as well as how the government is sharing technical guidance to small businesses and organizations and how the threat of disinformation has changed since Russia's invasion, among other things. CISA recently released new details about its work to prepare for a major cyberattack. The agency said Monday that it hosted a three-day cyber exercise last week called "Cyber Storm VIII," which included about 200 organizations from government, the private sector and other countries to simulate the discovery of a widespread cyberattack and coordinate a response.

Terrorism Investigations

Attacks on Asian American women are igniting a conversation about public safety

CNN [3/15/2022 12:48 PM, Harmeet Kaur, 5600K] reports that What hit Hong Lee so hard about the killing of Christina Yuna Lee was how easily it could have been her. Late one night in February, Christina took a car back to her New York Chinatown apartment, where a man followed her up six flights of stairs and forced herself into her home. She cried out desperately for help, but before anyone could reach her, she was stabbed dozens of times to her death. Christina was an Asian American woman around Hong's age. They shared a mutual friend. And Hong, too, had an experience that left her afraid for her life -- a memory that has been fresh on her mind lately given the string of Asian American women who have been killed in recent weeks. Michelle Go was pushed to her death on the New York City subway tracks. GuiYing Ma died from her injuries after being struck repeatedly in the head with a rock last year in Queens. Julia Li was killed while driving in St. Paul, Minnesota. Mary Ye, a spa worker in Albuquerque, New Mexico, was shot and killed during an attempted robbery. Fang Sihui, a spa owner in the same city, was killed under similar circumstances just three weeks earlier. All the while, the trauma from last year's Atlanta spa shootings still felt raw. "It's just odd to me that all these attacks are happening all at once," Hong said. The brutality and seeming frequency of these high-profile incidents have Hong and other Asian American women on edge. But making sense of the tragedies has proved especially difficult. The victims have been from various class backgrounds -- attacked on streets and subway platforms, at homes and workplaces. The perpetrators have been White, Black and Hispanic -- their actions sometimes without expressing obvious anti-Asian bias. Meanwhile, rates of homicides and other violent crimes increased last year in cities nationwide. As 74% of Asian American and Pacific Islander women report having personally experienced racism or discrimination in the past year, community members are pushing leaders to do more to address public safety. But without a clear, identifiable pattern to the attacks, advocates, elected officials and citizens are divided about the root of the problem -- and what's needed to solve it.

[DC] Document on plan to occupy Capitol Hill buildings, Supreme Court on January 6 discovered by prosecutors

CNN [3/15/2022 2:14 PM, Katelyn Polantz, 5600K] reports that prosecutors have discovered a written plan to "infiltrate" and "occupy" six congressional office buildings and the Supreme Court on January 6, 2021, as part of the federal investigation into Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrio, according to his indictment and a source familiar with the case. The nine-page planning document, titled "1776 Returns," is mentioned briefly in the federal indictment filed last week against Tarrio, who is accused of orchestrating key participants in the US Capitol attack that day. A source revealed more details than were previously known about the plan. In court, prosecutors described an unnamed person sending Tarrio the document in late December 2020. "The revolution is important," the person told him.

According to prosecutors, Tarrío replied: "That's what every waking moment consists of ... I'm not playing games." The written plan doesn't mention violence and contains two prongs -- one called "Storm the Winter Palace" in which organizers would "fill the buildings with patriots" and another called the "Patriot Plan." That one-page list of demands would be distributed in the streets, declaring "we the people" request a new election on January 20, 2021, and falsely claiming "the evidence of election fraud is overwhelming." Though the document doesn't call for seizing the US Capitol, its timing and themes track closely to the 1 p.m. ET assembly of the rioting crowd on Capitol Hill that ultimately overtook the Capitol building. The planning document is included in Tarrío's indictment as part of the alleged actions that support a conspiracy charge against him and others. While the document is notable enough to be included in the charging documents, it is unclear who authored it or how widely it was distributed, or whether Tarrío distributed it to other Proud Boys. His five conspiracy co-defendants have pleaded not guilty, and Tarrío is appearing in federal court on Tuesday in Florida for a detention hearing. The Justice Department wants him to remain in jail as he awaits trial.

[DC] Proud Boys leader charged in Jan. 6 plot jailed until trial

The [AP](#) [3/15/2022 3:08 PM, Adriana Gomez Licon, 566K] reports that a leader in the far-right Proud Boys extremist group will remain jailed until his trial on charges that he remotely led a plot to stop Congress' certification of Joe Biden's 2020 presidential victory. In a Miami courtroom Tuesday, U.S. Magistrate Judge Lauren F. Louis cited the danger that prosecutors say Henry "Enrique" Tarrío poses to the community. The judge said her decision would be explained in detail later in a written order. Though he wasn't at the Capitol with other members of the Proud Boys during the violent insurrection on Jan. 6, 2021, prosecutors say Tarrío created the leadership structure, organized the group of men and directed them to the Capitol. They say Tarrío organized encrypted chats with Proud Boys members in the weeks before the attack, had a 42 second phone call with another member of the group who was moving in and out of the building during the riot and took credit for the chaos at the Capitol. "This is a crime that struck at the heart of our democracy," said prosecutor Jason McCullough. "It is difficult to imagine something that is graver than this crime." Tarrío's attorney Nayib Hassan said his client was not at risk of fleeing from authorities and doesn't have a violent background. Hassan said other defendants charged in the same alleged conspiracy and who were present at the Capitol during the riot have been allowed pretrial release.

[Cuba] Plea discussions launched in stalled 9/11 case at Guantanamo

The [AP](#) [3/15/2022 3:02 PM, Ben Fox] reports prosecutors have initiated discussions on a potential plea agreement to resolve the long-stalled case of five men held at the Guantanamo Bay detention center who have been charged with planning and providing assistance for the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The discussions, which attorneys for one defendant said Tuesday were ongoing, are a significant development in a case that has been mired in pre-trial litigation at the U.S. base in Cuba for nearly a decade. All five, including the self-described mastermind of the 9/11 plot, face potential death sentences if convicted by military commission, though repeated delays and legal challenges have made even setting a trial date elusive. Among the other defendants is Khalid Shaikh Mohammad, a senior al-Qaida figure who has portrayed himself as the architect of the plot. The government has resisted efforts to try the men separately, and an earlier effort to reach a settlement was rebuffed by former President Donald Trump's Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

[Cuba] Washington invitation opens way for U.N. expert's Guantanamo visit

Reuters [3/15/2022 2:33 PM, Emma Farge, 5304K] reports a U.N. expert told the world's top rights body on Tuesday that she had received a preliminary invitation from Washington to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in what could lead to the first-ever visit by one of the body's special rapporteurs. "I am pleased to report to this council session that the U.S. government has extended a preliminary invitation...to engage in a technical visit to the U.S. naval station in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba," Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, the special rapporteur on human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism told the Geneva-based Human Rights Council. Ní Aoláin released a report to the council on Tuesday on secret detentions in which she repeated a call to close the site, which she said still has at least 38 male Muslim detainees.

National Security News

U.S. less effective at countering terrorist threats in Afghanistan and Somalia since troop withdrawal

The Washington Post [3/15/2022 7:56 PM, Karoun Demirjian, 12597K] reports U.S. troops' exit from Afghanistan and Somalia has limited the United States' ability to conduct counterterrorism operations against groups linked to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, the American generals in charge of the Middle East and Africa told senators Tuesday. "In my view, we are marching in place at best," Army Gen. Steven Townsend, who leads U.S. Africa Command, told members of the Senate Armed Services Committee of the security picture in Somalia. "We may be backsliding." For years, the United States has been trying to weaken the terrorist organization al-Shabab, which Townsend has called "the most lethal arm of al-Qaeda." Those efforts were complicated in the last year, following the full exit of U.S. troops from Somalia, a departure ordered by President Donald Trump near the end of his tenure in the White House. Townsend said that counterterrorism efforts have experienced reduced efficacy due in part to the fact U.S. troops have been "commuting to work" from neighboring Djibouti, where the U.S. military maintains a permanent base. The AP [3/15/2022 3:53 PM, Lolita C. Baldor, 2164K] reports former President Donald Trump ordered the complete withdrawal of the roughly 700 U.S. troops in Somalia as one of his final acts in office. Gen. Frank McKenzie, head of U.S. Central Command, said the U.S. has not launched any strikes on Islamic State insurgents in Afghanistan since the U.S. military pulled out of the country last August. He said the militant group has grown since the U.S. left and there are concerns about its ongoing development. He said the group has carried out high-profile attacks in Afghanistan and still aspires to strike the U.S. and allies. McKenzie said the Taliban, which swept across Afghanistan and took control of the government last year, still is trying to counter the Islamic State. But he said it is more difficult for the Taliban to control al-Qaida elements in the country, because the two groups have long been more closely aligned. McKenzie said that without sustained counterterrorism pressure, militants have more time and space to prepare for attacks. Sustained military pressure prevents groups from being able to grow, train and plot, he said.

NATO defense ministers to discuss sending 'substantially more forces' to its eastern borders

The New York Times [3/16/2022 1:50 AM, Victoria Kim] reports NATO defense ministers will discuss stepping up defenses along their eastern front as Russia's attacks inch closer to the alliance's doorstep, the organization's secretary general said on Tuesday. The ministers were set to meet on Wednesday ahead of next week's extraordinary NATO summit, where

President Biden is scheduled to discuss how to respond to Russia's invasion. European allies are putting more pressure on the United States to take more direct action in addition to sanctions and military aid in face of relentless Russian attacks and widespread civilian suffering. Ministers will discuss "concrete measures" to reinforce its eastern flank, on the ground and in the air and on the water, said Jens Stoltenberg, the secretary general of NATO, in advance of the meeting of defense ministers. The Russian invasion and its coordination with Belarus "creates a new security reality" in Europe, he said. "We need to reset NATO's military posture for this new reality," he said. "This could include substantially more forces in the eastern part of the alliance at high alertness and more pre-positioned equipments.

[Belgium] Biden to travel to Brussels for NATO summit amid Russia's war on Ukraine

FOX News [3/15/2022 1:28 PM, Brooke Singman, 10541K] reports that President Biden is expected to travel to Brussels, Belgium, next week for a NATO summit on Russia's war in Ukraine, the White House said Tuesday. Biden will join the "extraordinary" NATO summit that will convene March 24. White House press secretary Jen Psaki said the president will "Discuss the ongoing deterrence and defense efforts in response to Russia's unprovoked and unjustified attack on Ukraine as well as to reaffirm our ironclad commitment to our NATO allies." Biden is also set to join a scheduled European Council Summit to discuss "Shared concerns about Ukraine, including transatlantic efforts to impose economic costs on Russia, provide humanitarian support to those effected by the violence, and to address other challenges related to the conflict." The president's plans to travel to Europe come as Russia's war against Ukraine rages on. Vice President Kamala Harris, who returned to the U.S. over the weekend, traveled to Europe last week to represent the United States in bilateral meetings with European leaders. While in Warsaw, she also met with Canadian President Justin Trudeau. Harris also traveled to Bucharest, Romania, for a bilateral meeting with Romanian President Klaus Iohannis. Harris' visit came after the U.S. sent additional U.S. troops to the countries and neighboring countries to strengthen NATO's deterrence and defense as Russia continues its invasion of Ukraine.

[Ukraine] Congress cuts humanitarian spending despite billions for Ukraine

Roll Call [3/15/2022 9:00 AM, Rachel Oswald, 113K] reports that the bipartisan spending deal that Congress cleared last week provides billions of dollars in aid for Ukraine, but it cuts other humanitarian programs meant to address mounting hunger crises elsewhere in the world, including Afghanistan and West Africa. When the bill's \$4.1 billion in emergency supplemental humanitarian funding for Ukraine is excluded, the baseline fiscal 2022 spending level for humanitarian accounts covered by the State-Foreign Operations title comes in at \$6.8 billion — a \$1 billion cut compared to fiscal 2021 enacted levels. The Biden administration had requested over \$8.5 billion in total fiscal 2022 funding spread over two principal humanitarian aid accounts: the State Department's Migration and Refugee Assistance account and the U.S. Agency for International Development's International Disaster Assistance account. The initial House-passed bill and one offered in the Senate, written by majority Democrats, would have largely fulfilled the White House's humanitarian funding request. In interviews and statements, foreign aid advocates said they were "embarrassed" and "flabbergasted" that Congress reduced funds for dealing with the worst refugee displacements since World War II and other crises caused by mounting natural disasters and manmade conflicts. "It cuts the humanitarian [account] disastrously," said Lisa Peña, director of policy, budget and appropriations for the bipartisan U.S. Global Leadership Coalition. "This bill was insufficient prior to [Russian President Vladimir] Putin even moving

his tanks near the border with Ukraine. We knew there were food price spikes on food and other commodities prior to the war in Ukraine.”

[Ukraine] U.S. providing over \$186M in additional humanitarian aid to Ukraine

Axios [3/15/2022 4:58 PM, Ivana Saric, 526K] reports the U.S. is providing over \$186 million in additional humanitarian assistance to Ukrainians internally displaced or forced to flee abroad by Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Tuesday in a statement. This aid comes on top of the nearly \$293 million the U.S. has provided to Ukraine and the region since the start of the invasion in late February, making the U.S. the "largest single-country donor of humanitarian assistance to Ukraine," Blinken said. Yahoo News/The Hill [3/15/2022 6:17 PM, Morgan Chalfant, 13319K] reports "This will provide further support for humanitarian organizations responding to the crisis and complement the generosity of the neighboring countries that are welcoming and supporting refugees," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement. "We call for an immediate end to Russia's continuing war against Ukraine and for Russia to facilitate unhindered humanitarian access in Ukraine and safe passage for those who seek to leave the cities where they are trapped," he said. "Humanitarian aid deliveries must be allowed to continue without interference, and humanitarian workers must have safe passage to deliver aid and assistance to those in need." The United Nations estimated Tuesday that 3 million people have been displaced by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which began about three weeks ago.

[Ukraine] Two Journalists Working for Fox News Killed While Covering Ukraine-Russia War

The Wall Street Journal [3/15/2022 4:48 PM, Benjamin Mullin] reports two journalists working for Fox News, a cameraman and a consultant, were killed on assignment covering the war in Ukraine, network chief Suzanne Scott told employees Tuesday. Pierre Zakrzewski, a cameraman for Fox News, and Oleksandra "Sasha" Kuvshynova, a consultant, were reporting near Kyiv alongside foreign-affairs correspondent Benjamin Hall when their vehicle was struck by fire on Monday, Ms. Scott said in notes to staff. Based in London, Mr. Zakrzewski was a war photographer who had covered several major conflicts for Fox News, including in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria, the network said. Since the Russia-Ukraine war began, journalists have been shot at, beaten and jailed while covering the conflict and protests, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Another journalist, Ukrainian Yevhenii Sakun, was killed earlier this month when Russian military forces shelled a television tower. Last year, Mr. Zakrzewski was recognized internally at the network with an "Unsung Hero" award for helping to get Afghan freelance associates and their families out of the country. Mr. Zakrzewski was an Irish citizen. Micheál Martin, Ireland's prime minister, said in a statement that he is "deeply disturbed and saddened" by Mr. Zakrzewski's killing. Mr. Hall is hospitalized in Ukraine. He joined the network in 2015 and has reported from the front lines in Syria and Iraq, according to his author page on Fox News's website. Several journalists working for U.S. media have been killed covering the war in recent days. On Sunday, Brent Renaud, a journalist who was on assignment for Time Studios, was shot and killed near the front line of the war. Andrey Nebitov, a police official in the Kyiv region, blamed the killing on Russian troops and said two other correspondents were injured. Before he was injured on Monday, Mr. Hall told Fox News viewers that Mr. Renaud's death was a reminder that the violence in Ukraine affects everyone in harm's way.

[Ukraine] White House insists no-fly zone over Ukraine ‘could prompt a war with Russia’

FOX News [3/15/2022 3:06 PM, Brooke Singman, 10541K] reports President Biden maintains that creating a no-fly zone over Ukraine "could prompt a war with Russia," the White House said Tuesday, as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy insists that NATO order Russian planes not to fly over his country. Zelenskyy is expected to repeat his plea when he addresses Congress virtually Wednesday morning. Members of Congress have stopped short of calling for a no-fly zone, with many echoing Biden's concerns that the move could be escalatory. "It is also true that the president has to look at decisions that are made through the prism of what is in our national security interest and global security interest," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Tuesday. But a growing number of bipartisan lawmakers have been urging the Biden administration to facilitate a deal with Poland to send MiG-29 planes to Ukraine for additional air support as Russia continues its multi-front war on the country. Meanwhile, the president is set to travel to Brussels, Belgium, for a NATO summit on March 24 where he will discuss the "ongoing deterrence and defense efforts in response to Russia's unprovoked and unjustified attack on Ukraine as well as to reaffirm our ironclad commitment to our NATO allies." Biden is also set to join a scheduled European Council Summit to discuss "shared concerns about Ukraine, including transatlantic efforts to impose economic costs on Russia, provide humanitarian support to those effected by the violence, and to address other challenges related to the conflict."

[Belarus] U.S. sanctions Belarus president Lukashenko and others

Axios [3/15/2022 1:37 PM, Ivana Saric, 526K] reports that the Treasury Department on Tuesday announced sanctions against Belarus strongman Aleksandr Lukashenko, his wife and several Russians "connected to gross violations of human rights." Why it matters: Belarus has backed Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, allowing attacks on Ukraine to be launched from its territory. An earlier set of sanctions targeted Belarus' technology exports and sanctioned entities that have supported the Belarusian security services, military and defense sectors. The big picture: While Lukashenko has been sanctioned before, the Treasury Department said it was "re-designating" him, noting that in his nearly 30 years in power he has corruptly used his influence to "grant unique privileges and advantages to his associates" while targeting those who have opposed him. Lukashenko's wife, Halina, has been sanctioned for the first time, "for being a senior-level official, family member of such an official, or a person closely linked to such an official who is responsible for or has engaged in public corruption related to Belarus." Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement that Lukashenko and his immediate family members would be banned from entry to the U.S. Several Russians were also sanctioned for their connections to the detention and death of whistleblower Sergei Magnitsky and for "gross violations of human rights" against human rights advocate Oyub Titiev. What they're saying: "Today's designations demonstrate the United States will continue to impose concrete and significant consequences for those who engage in corruption or are connected to gross violations of human rights," Andrea Gacki, director of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control, said in the statement. "We condemn Russia's attacks on humanitarian corridors in Ukraine and call on Russia to cease its unprovoked and brutal war against Ukraine," Gacki added.

[Iran] Russia raises hopes for a return to the stalled Iran nuclear talks

The Washington Post [3/15/2022 3:49 PM, Liz Sly, 12597K] reports Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Tuesday he has received "written guarantees" from the United

States that Western sanctions on Russia related to Ukraine won't affect Russia's role in the Iran nuclear deal, potentially paving the way for a resumption of stalled talks to revive the agreement. Lavrov was speaking alongside Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, who was visiting Moscow for talks on reviving the 2015 deal, which were suspended Friday after a new Russian demand for guarantees on the sanctions threw the discussions into disarray. Lavrov's comments suggested that Moscow has decided to accept a limited interpretation of its demand that the United States agree in writing to protect Russian dealings with Iran from the new sanctions imposed in response to its invasion of Ukraine. Lavrov said the guarantees Russia has sought were contained in the draft text of an agreement already negotiated by diplomats in Vienna to restore the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, as the nuclear deal is known. "We received written guarantees. They are included in the text of the agreement itself," Lavrov said. "All projects and areas of activity envisaged by the JCPOA have been protected, including the direct involvement of our companies and specialists." Russia's new demand had initially seemed to encompass a much wider range of trade and investment dealings with Iran that could be constrained under the new, Ukraine-related sanctions, giving rise to fears that Moscow intended to hold the Iran deal hostage to the Ukraine war. The Wall Street Journal [3/15/2022 6:10 PM, Laurence Norman] reports the European Union, which coordinates the talks, announced a break in the negotiations on Friday, blaming "external factors" for preventing a deal that is "essentially ready." A senior western diplomat said Tuesday evening that Russia's chief negotiator at the talks, Mikhail Ulyanov, had informed the EU that Russia would accept narrower guarantees ensuring that Russia could carry out the nuclear work it is mandated to do under the 2015 nuclear deal. That includes a uranium swap with Iran, the redesign of the Fordow nuclear facility and the provision of nuclear fuel to Iranian reactors. "Russia says happy with guarantees on nuclear projects and not asking for anything else," said the diplomat, who asked to remain unidentified because of the sensitive nature of the talks. "So we can go ahead with negotiations that are now exclusively US-Iran." State Department spokesman Ned Price said Tuesday evening that "we are not going to sanction Russia for undertaking, for participating in nuclear projects that are part of the" nuclear deal.

[Russia] Russia issues sanctions against Biden and a long list of US officials and political figures

CNN [3/15/2022 2:07 PM, Maegan Vazquez, 5600K] reports that Russia on Tuesday imposed sanctions against a wide range of American officials, including President Joe Biden, marking another escalations in tensions between Russian President Vladimir Putin and the West as Russian military forces continue their invasion of Ukraine. According to a statement issued Tuesday by the Russian Foreign Ministry, the government is adding the following individuals to a "stop list," barring them from entering Russia: Biden, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley, Biden national security adviser Jake Sullivan, CIA Director William Burns, White House press secretary Jen Psaki, deputy national security adviser Daleep Singh, USAID Director Samantha Power, Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Adewale Adeyemo and US Export-Import Bank President Reta Jo Lewis. The "stop list" also includes other non-governmental individuals, including the President's son, Hunter Biden, and former US presidential candidate and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. The move is largely symbolic as it seems unlikely that members of Biden's administration would be traveling to Russia any time soon as the US and its allies move to punish Putin and members of Russia's elites for invading Ukraine. Biden and his administration have ruled out potential

meetings with Putin and have questioned whether he is seriously interested in a diplomatic solution to the war.

[Russia] NATO chief warns of risk of accidental Russian strike in allied nation, calls for increased air defense

FOX News [3/15/2022 2:01 PM, Caitlin McFall, 10541K] reports that NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg warned against the increasing possibility of an accidental military strike by Russian forces in a neighboring NATO nation. "We are ready to protect and defend every inch of NATO allied territory," he told reporters on Tuesday. "When we see more military activities, when we see actually fighting going on close to NATO borders, there's always a risk for incidents and accidents." "Therefore, we have to make every effort to prevent such incidents and accidents and if they happen, to make sure that they don't spiral out of control and create really dangerous situations," he added. The secretary-general's comments came just days after Croatian authorities said an armed Soviet-era drone crashed outside the capital of Zagreb after flying over Romania and Hungary. "I can say that we are stepping up our vigilance," Stoltenberg told reporters, adding that preliminary findings show that the drone was not in fact loaded with explosives as claimed by the Croatian Ministry of Defense. "We are both increasing the capabilities we have to monitor, to track, but also to ensure that we are able to react if needed," he continued. "If anything, it demonstrates the need to further strengthen integration, further strengthen information sharing among allies, and also to invest more and upgrade everything from radars to our persons of air and missile defense systems." Russia has launched more than 900 missiles at Ukrainian targets since the invasion began nearly three weeks ago. Western targets near the Polish border have been increasingly hit and concerns have mounted that a misguided missile could strike a NATO nation as fighting continues.

[Russia] Without sending troops, the U.S. wages 'hybrid warfare' against Russia

NPR [3/15/2022 5:39 PM, Greg Myre] Audio: [HERE](#) reports the U.S. and Russian militaries have both talked for years about "hybrid warfare" as the future of war. Yet it remains a fuzzy term with no fixed meaning. The general idea is waging unconventional war on multiple fronts, and well beyond the traditional battlefield. What's clear is the U.S. and its allies are doing this now — perhaps on a scale never seen before — as they attempt to counter Russia in the war in Ukraine.

[China] White House warns of 'consequences' if China provides aid to Russia: 'The world is watching closely'

FOX News [3/15/2022 3:35 PM, Brooke Singman, 10541K] reports the White House said there will be "consequences" if China provides aid to Russia amid its multi-front war on Ukraine, warning that "the world is watching closely." U.S. intelligence officials said Russia asked China for military and economic aid following its invasion of Ukraine. In an attempt to protect intelligence sources, U.S. officials have been reluctant to detail what type of aid is being sought. "There are a range of sanctions we obviously have in place and we watch, of course, if there's a violation of those and we also watch if there is support provided for the military invasion of another country," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Tuesday. Psaki said that, at this point, "any potential impacts or consequences" will be discussed "through private diplomatic channels." Psaki's comments come after White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan met with the director of Chinese Foreign Affairs Commission Yang Jiechi Monday in Rome, Italy, for an "intense seven-hour session." "We do have deep concerns about China's alignment with Russia at this time, and the national security adviser

was direct about those concerns and the potential implications and consequences of certain actions," the official said, without commenting directly to the reports that Russia had requested aid from China after invading Ukraine. The official, though, maintained that the Biden administration is "communicating directly and privately to China about our concerns about the kinds of support that other countries might be providing to Russia." Sullivan, ahead of the meeting, warned that there "will absolutely be consequences for large-scale sanctions evasion efforts or support to Russia to backfill them."

[North Korea] North Korea Weapons Test Appears to Have Failed

The Wall Street Journal [3/16/2022 1:44 AM, Timothy W. Martin] reports North Korea test-fired an unknown projectile on Wednesday, though the launch was unsuccessful, South Korea's military said, a stumble that Pyongyang has largely avoided in recent years. The attempted launch occurred at 9:30 a.m. local time from the Sunan area, on the outskirts of Pyongyang, according to the South Korean military. The projectile appeared to have exploded during an early boost phase just after taking flight, at an altitude of roughly 12 miles or less, a South Korean military official said. Japan's Defense Ministry said it was aware of the launch but unable to confirm the flight of any ballistic missile. The AP [3/15/2022 9:22 PM, Hyng-Jin Kim, Kim Tong-Hyung, 2164K] reports it wasn't immediately clear what North Korea launched on Wednesday morning or at what stage it had an apparent failure. But the launch, the 10th of its kind this year, shows North Korea is determined to press ahead on its push to modernize its weapons arsenal and pressure its rivals into making concessions amid dormant denuclearization talks. Experts say past failures still have moved North Korea closer to its goal of acquiring a viable nuclear arsenal that could threaten the American homeland. Of eight "Musudan" intermediate-range missiles tests in 2016, only one of those launches was seen by outside analysts as successful, which led to debates of whether North Korea's path toward ICBMs had been cut off.

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