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- New York Times
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### IN THE NEWS

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#### **The U.S. Is Bracing for Complex, Fast-Moving Threats to Elections This Year, Director Wray Warns**

The [Associated Press](#) (02/29, Tucker) reported that in anticipation of this year's elections, the United States expects to confront complex and swiftly evolving threats, significantly influenced by technological advancements such as artificial intelligence, Director Wray revealed. Speaking at a national security conference, Director Wray emphasized, "The U.S. has confronted foreign malign influence threats in the past. But this election cycle, the U.S. will face more adversaries, moving at a faster pace, and enabled by new technology." According to the article, Director Wray's remarks underscored the growing concern within the U.S. government regarding hard-to-detect operations aimed at shaping public opinion. Director Wray also indicated the FBI's commitment to sharing information about threats, stating, "As intelligence professionals, we've got to highlight threats in specific, evidence-based ways so that we're usefully arming our partners and, in particular, the public against the kinds of foreign influence operations they're likely to confront." [VOA News](#) (02/29, Seldin) reported that Director Wray suggested that the list of countries and other foreign groups seeking to influence U.S. voters is set to expand. "AI is most useful for what I would call kind of mediocre bad guys and making them kind of like intermediate," he said. "The really sophisticated adversaries are using AI more just to increase the speed and scale of their efforts," he said. "But we are coming towards a day very soon where what I would call the experts, the most sophisticated adversaries, are going to find ways to use AI to be even more elite." [CNN](#) (02/29, Lyngaas) added that Director Wray also spoke about non-election-related threats, saying that the FBI was "intensely focused" on a range of cyber and national security threats from the Chinese government. The article noted that as for Iran, Director Wray said that Tehran "has been more brazen over the last few years than I've seen in my career." Additional reporting on the story was provided by [The Record](#) (02/29, Matishak), [Clearance Jobs](#) (02/29, Hamilton), and [C-SPAN](#) (02/29, Video). The FBI posted a [transcript](#) of Director Wray's opening remarks.

#### **Trump's Jan. 6 Trial Falls Into Doubt as Supreme Court Takes up Immunity Claims**

[The Hill](#) (02/29, Schonfeld) reported that the Supreme Court's decision to consider former President Trump's claims of criminal immunity has thrown the timing of his federal Jan. 6 trial into uncertainty, potentially delaying it until summer or later, which may clash with the final stages of the upcoming general election. According to the article, Special Counsel Jack Smith, who has charged Trump with four felonies related to attempts to subvert the 2020 election results, had sought a swift trial. The article explained that Trump, pleading not guilty, leveraged his immunity claims to postpone the trial initially set for March 4. The Supreme Court's intervention, described as finding a middle ground, has thus extended the delay, with arguments scheduled for the week of April 22. The article noted that critics and legal experts expressed concerns that the delay plays into Trump's hands, potentially affecting the trial's occurrence before the election. Additional reporting on the story was provided by the [Washington Post](#) (02/29, Wang, Hsu), [Fox News](#) (02/29, Herlihy), [Forbes](#) (02/29, Durkee), [NBC News](#) (02/29, Hurley), [Rolling Stone](#) (02/29, Suebsaeng, Bort), [Axios](#) (02/29, Baker), [USA Today](#) (02/29, Jansen, Groppe), [Vanity Fair](#) (02/29, Lutz), [CNN](#) (02/29, Biskupic), [Financial Times](#) (02/29, Palma, Politi), [Reuters](#) (02/29, Kruzel), and [Courthouse News Service](#) (02/29, Reichmann).

Additional analysis, including opinions and editorials, were provided by [two](#) articles from the [Wall Street Journal](#) (02/29, Editorial), [The Guardian](#) (02/29, Levine), the [New York Times](#) (02/29, Liptak), [two](#) articles from the [Washington Post](#) (02/29, Marcus), [Bloomberg](#) (02/29, Feldman), [Politico](#) (02/29, Huq), and [MSNBC](#) (02/29, Weissman).

### **FBI Raids Two Homes Owned by Top Aide to New York City Mayor Eric Adams**

The [Associated Press](#) (02/29, Offenhartz, Neumeister) reported that federal agents conducted raids on two homes owned by Winnie Greco, a top adviser and the director of Asian affairs for New York City Mayor Eric Adams, in the Bronx. According to the article, an FBI spokesperson confirmed the operation, which is part of an investigation overseen by the U.S. attorney's office in Brooklyn, distinct from another inquiry involving Adams himself. The reasons behind the raids were not disclosed, adding another layer to the scrutiny surrounding Adams and his associates. The article explained that Greco, who has been a key figure in connecting Adams with the city's Asian-American communities and faced previous probes regarding her fundraising activities, was placed on administrative leave following the raids. The article noted that this event marks at least the third instance of federal agents targeting aides close to Mayor Adams, with the investigations hinting at broader inquiries into the administration's conduct and fundraising practices. Additional reporting on the story was provided by [The Hill](#) (02/29, Timotija), [Fox News](#) (02/29, Betz), [NY Daily News](#) (02/29, Gartland), [New York Times](#) (02/29, Rashbaum, Fitzsimmons), [Gothamist](#) (02/29, Kim, Lane), [The Daily Beast](#) (02/29, Fiallo), [Forbes](#) (02/29, Farrell), [Washington Examiner](#) (02/29, Knox), [Patch](#) (02/29, Troutman), [Washington Times](#) (02/29, Picket), [CBS News](#) (02/29, Staff Writer), [Daily Caller](#) (02/29, Silverio), [Independent](#) (02/29, Baio), [Politico](#) (02/29, Coltin), [Daily Mail](#) (02/29, Poleo), [NY Post](#) (02/29, Celona, Hicks, Gibbon), and [ABC News](#) (02/29, Katersky).

### **Trump Seeks to Move Florida Trial to 2025, While Prosecutors Push for July**

The [Washington Post](#) (02/29, Stein, Barrett) reported that federal prosecutors have proposed delaying Donald Trump's classified documents trial in Florida to July 8, pending the Supreme Court's decision on his presidential immunity claim, while Trump's legal team is pushing for a postponement until after the 2024 presidential election. According to the article, U.S. District Judge Aileen M. Cannon is expected to delay the trial's start from its initial late May date due to complex evidentiary issues and Trump's ongoing immunity appeal. The article explained that the Supreme Court's forthcoming April hearing on Trump's immunity could further delay his D.C. federal trial for allegedly attempting to block President Biden's 2020 election victory. The article noted that Trump faces multiple criminal trials, including state charges in New York and Georgia, and has pleaded not guilty in all cases. The article also explained that the Florida case involves dozens of counts of mishandling classified information post-presidency, with recent court proceedings largely held behind closed doors to navigate the legal complexities of trials involving restricted government information. Additional reporting on the story was provided by [Associated Press](#) (02/29, Tucker), [Politico](#) (02/29, Cheney), [NBC News](#) (02/29, Gregorian), [CNN](#) (02/29, Rabinowitz, Blackburn), [Independent](#) (02/29, Woodward), [HuffPost](#) (02/29, Visser), [USA Today](#) (02/29, Jansen), [Washington Examiner](#) (02/29, Deese), [NYMag](#) (02/29, Honig), [The Hill](#) (02/29, Nazzaro), [Forbes](#) (02/29, Pequeno), and [Fox News](#) (02/29, Singman, Spunt).

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## COUNTERTERRORISM

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### **Southern California Man Pleads Guilty to Firebombing Planned Parenthood Clinic**

[Courthouse News](#) (02/29, Pettersson) reported that Tibet Ergul, a 22-year-old from Southern California, pleaded guilty to firebombing a Planned Parenthood clinic in Costa Mesa in March 2022, marking him as the third defendant to admit involvement in this act of terrorism. According to the article, Ergul, alongside Chance Brannon, an active-duty U.S. Marine at the time, and another co-conspirator from Florida, plotted not only the clinic attack but also aimed to disrupt the power grid in Orange County and considered an attack on Dodger Stadium during LGBTQ pride night in 2023. U.S. Attorney Martin Estrada highlighted the "chilling" extent of their violent plans, driven by a hateful ideology aiming to initiate a race war and target various groups and facilities. The [press release](#) noted that the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service investigated this matter. Additional reporting on the story was provided by [Patch](#) (02/29, Staff Writer), [Los Angeles Times](#) (02/29, Mejia), [OC Register](#) (02/29, Emery), and [KCAL \(CBS-9\)](#) (02/29, Sharp).

### **FBI, DHS Lack Information-Sharing Strategies for Domestic Extremist Threats Online, GAO Says**

[FedScoop](#) (02/29, Bracken) reported that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported that the FBI and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) lack a cohesive strategy and clear goals for sharing information on domestic extremist threats with social media and gaming companies. According to the article, this gap raises concerns about the effectiveness of their efforts to combat violent extremism online. The article explained that while both agencies have engaged in various initiatives and partnerships, such as the FBI's involvement in the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism and DHS's briefings through its Office of Intelligence and Analysis, the GAO emphasized the need for a structured approach and specific objectives to enhance these efforts. The article noted that in response, the GAO recommended that both Director Wray and the DHS undersecretary for Intelligence and Analysis develop a strategy and goals for their information-sharing activities. DHS indicated it plans to complete this strategy by June.

### **Judges in Trump-Related Cases Face Unprecedented Wave of Threats**

[Reuters](#) (02/29, Tanfani, Parker, Eisler) reported that judges and prosecutors involved in cases related to former President Donald Trump have faced an unprecedented wave of threats, with U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth revealing a significant increase in death threats after overseeing cases against Trump's supporters. According to the article, the threats, often fueled by Trump's public attacks on the judiciary, have led to concerns about judicial independence and safety. The U.S. Marshals Service, tasked with protecting federal court personnel, documented a significant rise in threatening and harassing communications since Trump's 2015 campaign, with the FBI involved in assessing and responding to serious threats. The article noted that despite the alarming increase in threats, particularly following Trump's criticisms and the charged political climate, arrests for threatening judges remain rare, underscoring the challenges in protecting judicial officials amid heightened political tensions.

### **Video Shows Person of Interest in Explosion Outside Alabama Attorney General's Office**

The [Associated Press](#) (02/29, Staff Writer) reported that authorities released a video showcasing a person of interest connected to the detonation of an explosive device outside the Alabama Attorney General's office early Saturday morning in downtown Montgomery. The footage, distributed by the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency, captures an individual, clad in a facemask, stocking cap, dark jacket, and gloves, walking along a sidewalk. The article noted that while there were no injuries or damage to the building reported, the agency is seeking information from the public, urging anyone with insights to contact the FBI.

### **CIA Violently Cut Off 9/11 Suspect When He Tried to Talk About Attacks**

The [New York Times](#) (02/29, Rosenberg) reported that in the early days of Khalid Shaikh Mohammed's custody for orchestrating the 9/11 attacks, the CIA, rather than exploring his confessions about the attacks, focused on extracting information about future Al Qaeda plans, employing violent interrogation methods like "walling" when he mentioned the attacks. According to the article, Psychologist Dr. James E. Mitchell, involved in the interrogations, testified about the intense methods used, including waterboarding Mohammed 183 times in March 2003, under the mistaken belief of an imminent nuclear attack. The article explained that despite the brutal tactics, which aimed to "condition" detainees into revealing secrets, the FBI later sought to use Mohammed's 2007 confession, obtained without violence, as trial evidence, raising questions about the influence of prior torture on his statements.

### **Opinion: The Department of Homeland Security Is Making the Homeland Less Secure**

An opinion piece by [The Hill](#) (02/29, Brock) criticized the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for failing to secure the U.S. border, accusing it of prioritizing the political goals of the Biden administration over national security. It highlighted the surge in illegal immigration, including individuals with criminal records and a significant increase in single, military-aged males from countries associated with terrorism or terror regions, noting that more than 300 individuals on the Terrorism Watch List have attempted to enter the U.S. since 2021. The author, reflecting on a letter to Congress signed by himself and nine other former high-ranking FBI officials, emphasized the national security risks posed by these trends, including potential threats from China through both cyber intrusions and the fentanyl crisis, suggesting an FBI counterintelligence initiative to interview young Chinese men at the border to assess any operational intent.

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## COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

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### **National Guardsman Jack Teixeira to Plead Guilty to Leaking Classified U.S. Military Intel**

The [New York Post](#) (02/29, Reilly) reported that Massachusetts Air National Guardsman Jack Teixeira will plead guilty to charges related to leaking classified military documents online, marking a significant breach of US national security. Accused of misusing his security clearance to distribute top-secret Pentagon documents on Discord, these leaks included sensitive intelligence on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which Attorney General Merrick Garland stated could "reasonably be expected to cause exceptionally grave damage to national security if shared." The article explained that the case, spotlighting the gravity of the information disclosed, saw Teixeira's actions as part of the most serious security leak since the WikiLeaks publication of 700,000 documents in 2010. The article noted that 15 members of the 102nd Intelligence Wing were also disciplined for insufficient supervision and failing to report Teixeira's espionage-like activities. Additional reporting on the story was provided by [Forbes](#) (02/29, Bohannon), [ABC News](#) (02/29, Katersky), [NPR](#) (02/29, Lucas), [Associated Press](#) (02/29, Richer), [Axios](#) (02/29, Falconer), the [Washington Post](#) (02/29, Harris), [CNN](#) (02/29, Rabinowitz), the [New York Times](#) (02/29, Thrush, Sullivan), [NBC News](#) (02/29, Reilly, Dilanian), [The Guardian](#) (02/29, Yang), [CBS News](#) (02/29, Legare, Triay), [Reuters](#) (02/29, Raymond, Singh), [USA Today](#) (02/29, Jansen), the [Wall Street Journal](#) (02/29, Kamp), and [The Hill](#) (02/29, Dress).

### **Former U.S. Ambassador Accused of Spying for Cuba for Decades Plans to Plead Guilty**

[ABC News](#) (02/29, Mallin) reported that former U.S. Ambassador Manuel Rocha, charged with spying for Cuba over a span of more than four decades, announced his intention to plead guilty to two of the 15 charges against him, marking a significant case of espionage within the U.S. government. Attorney General Merrick Garland characterized Rocha's actions as one of the most extensive infiltrations by a foreign agent in U.S. history. According to the article, Rocha, accused of beginning his clandestine activities in favor of Cuba's intelligence services as early as 1981, utilized his high-level diplomatic roles to access classified information and influence U.S. foreign policy covertly. The charges against him included conspiracy, acting as an illegal agent of a foreign government, unlawful use of a passport, and wire fraud, highlighting his attempts to enrich himself while advancing Cuba's intelligence interests through deceitful means to secure and retain his State Department position and its benefits. The [Associated Press](#) (02/29, Goodman, Mustian) added that Peter Lapp, who oversaw FBI counterintelligence against Cuba between 1998 and 2005, said the fast resolution of the case benefits not only the elderly Rocha but also the government, which stands to learn a lot about Cuba's penetration of U.S. foreign policy circles. The article explained that Rocha made a series of recorded admissions to an undercover FBI agent who posed as a Cuban intelligence operative who reached out to Rocha on WhatsApp, calling himself "Miguel" and saying he had a message "from your friends in Havana." The article noted that federal authorities have said little about what Rocha did to aid Cuba, and FBI and State Department investigators have been conducting a confidential intelligence damage assessment that could take years. Additional reporting on the story was provided by [NY Daily News](#) (02/29, Wilkinson), [Washington Post](#) (02/29, Wu), [CNN](#) (02/29, Rabinowitz), [BBC News](#) (02/29, Grant), [CBS News](#) (02/29, Yilek, Legare), [New York Times](#) (02/29, Mazzei, Adams, Londono), [The Daily Beast](#) (02/29, Yen), [Reuters](#) (02/29, Singh), and [Miami Herald](#) (02/29, Torres).

### **The FBI's New Tactic: Catching Suspects With Push Alerts**

The [Washington Post](#) (02/29, Harwell, Schaffer) reported that the FBI adopted a novel surveillance tactic to identify and apprehend suspects by utilizing push alert tokens from phones, leading to the arrest of individuals involved in crimes such as kidnapping and child sexual exploitation. Specifically, in a case involving an individual known online as "LuvEmYoung," the FBI, through cooperation with a foreign law enforcement officer, obtained a push token from

the encrypted messaging app TeleGuard, which led to Google revealing email addresses associated with the token. This method traced back to Michael Aspinwall in Toledo, who was charged and arrested for sexual exploitation of minors and distributing child pornography. According to the article, the technique has sparked privacy concerns, especially with potential applications extending to surveilling individuals for activities like violating state abortion bans. Privacy advocates and the Electronic Frontier Foundation have expressed worry that such surveillance methods, initially intended for extreme cases, could broaden to less universally accepted applications, including political surveillance.

### **Biden Administration Moves to Renew FBI Spy Tool While Bill Is Stalled in Congress**

[Washington Examiner](#) (02/29, Oliver) reported that the Biden administration announced plans to renew Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), a surveillance program allowing warrantless surveillance of foreigners for national security purposes, despite concerns over FBI misuse and calls for reform from Congress. According to the article, the FBI had been criticized for inappropriately querying this database for information on U.S. citizens, including campaign donors and individuals involved in protests. The article noted that despite internal reforms initiated by Director Wray that led to a significant reduction in noncompliance, the renewal process, set to begin in March, proceeds amid congressional deadlock over statutory reforms. The article also noted that critics, including senior policy analysts and congressional members, expressed concerns that the DOJ's move to secure a year-long renewal could bypass necessary congressional oversight and reforms.

### **Inside the White House Program to Share America's Secrets**

[Time](#) (02/29, Calabresi) reported that the Biden Administration has developed a program to strategically declassify intelligence, a move that started with the U.S. response to Russia's preparations to invade Ukraine in the fall of 2021. This effort, led by National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines, and CIA Director William Burns, aims to counter misinformation and support strategic goals, such as deterring Serbian aggression against Kosovo by revealing troop buildups. According to the article, the program has been used to expose Russian, Chinese, and Iranian activities, and to counter false narratives, demonstrating a shift in how the U.S. leverages classified information for national security and diplomatic purposes. The article explained that Congress has faced challenges in renewing Section 702 of the mass-surveillance program, crucial for national security but controversial due to past FBI abuses, including misleading surveillance applications related to Carter Page and the Trump campaign. Additionally, the FBI's discovery of classified documents at Mar-a-Lago, leading to charges against former President Trump for obstructing the retrieval of these documents, underscored ongoing security and privacy concerns. The article explained that the Justice Department Inspector General's report in 2019, revealing the FBI's warrant application abuses, and the FBI's extensive warrantless searches on Americans, have contributed to a crisis of public trust in the intelligence community. The article assessed that this environment has fueled conspiracy theories and skepticism towards the intelligence apparatus, highlighting the complexities of balancing transparency, national security, and civil liberties.

### **White House: Chinese Cars On U.S. Roads Could 'Undermine Our National Security'**

[Reuters](#) (02/29, Staff Writer) reported that Maxim Marchenko, a 51-year-old Russian based in Hong Kong, pled guilty to charges of smuggling American-made, military-grade microelectronics to Russia and money laundering, as announced by top U.S. justice officials. According to the article, he was accused alongside two unnamed co-conspirators of using shell companies to fraudulently procure OLED micro-displays, which have both civilian and military uses, including in advanced weaponry systems like rifle scopes and night-vision goggles. Assistant Attorney General Matthew Olsen emphasized the Justice Department's commitment to holding those accountable who support the Kremlin's actions against Ukraine. The [press release](#) noted the FBI's involvement.

### **Opinion: Obama's CIA Asked Foreign Intel Agencies to Spy on Trump Campaign**

An opinion piece by [The Epoch Times](#) (02/29, Chernin) discussed how the U.S. intelligence community, during the Obama administration, reportedly sought help from the "Five Eyes" intelligence alliance to spy on Donald Trump's campaign before the 2016 presidential election. According to the article, this operation, which allegedly involved foreign intelligence services like British intelligence targeting Trump's associates, predates the FBI's Crossfire Hurricane investigation and suggests political weaponization of intelligence. The article raised concerns about the integrity of democratic processes and the potential collusion between U.S. intelligence agencies and their foreign counterparts to influence the election outcome.

### **Opinion: Biden's TikTok Debut Underscores His Contradictory China Policy**

An opinion piece by [The Hill](#) (02/29, Moore) reported that President Biden's TikTok debut on Super Bowl Sunday, aimed at engaging "Gen Z" voters, has sparked debate over the contradictory nature of his administration's China policy, particularly given the platform's Chinese ownership and concerns over Communist Party control. According to the article, this move came despite Biden's stated goal of "de-risking" the U.S. economy from China and previous actions by his administration, including banning TikTok on official devices due to national security concerns. The article explained that Director Wray had previously warned about the potential for China to use TikTok to harvest personal data from American users, framing it as a significant national security concern.

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## CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

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### **Special Counsel Wants to Know if Potential Jurors in Classified Documents Case Believe 2020 Election Was Stolen**

[CNN](#) (02/29, Sneed, Rabinowitz) reported that prosecutors want to ask potential jurors in the Mar-a-Lago classified documents case against former President Donald Trump whether they believe the 2020 election was stolen – one of several proposed queries for the jury pool that prosecutors and the defendants are at odds over, according to a new court filing. The article added that prosecutors and defense attorneys submitted a list of questions for potential jurors for the judge overseeing the case to review. The filing outlines which questions the parties agree are necessary to ask people called for jury duty when the case goes to trial, and which questions they disagree on asking. The article stated that according to the new jury questionnaire filing, defense attorneys object to asking questions about potential jurors' feelings on the DOJ and FBI, and their opinions and news consumption around the FBI's 2022 search of Mar-a-Lago. The defense also opposes specific references to Trump's properties, including the Mar-a-Lago estate, in some of the questions. According to the article, meanwhile, the defendants are proposing – to the objection of special counsel Jack Smith's office – that jurors be asked if they're registered to vote if they voted in 2020 and whether they have a registered party affiliation. The special counsel also opposes a question proposed by the defense seeking negative views potential jurors have of politicians. The [Washington Examiner](#) (02/29, Deese) also reported on the story.

### **FBI Informant in Hunter Biden Case Left Trail of Broken Promises**

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (02/29, Forrest, Balhaus, Viswanatha) reported that for years, the man now charged with lying about President Biden and his son Hunter brought information to the FBI while trying to cash in on his connections with the agency. The article added that Alexander Smirnov pitched himself to business associates in the U.S. as everything from an expert on taking companies public to being a de facto FBI official with vast operational authority in Ukraine, according to interviews. Associates often questioned whether Smirnov could deliver, including on claims that he could leverage his relationships with the Ukrainian president and the ruler of Dubai to help them. The FBI, over time, began to question the veracity of its confidential source's tips, too. The article noted that after telling Smirnov a half-dozen times between 2010 and 2020 that he might need to testify in court over information he provided the agency, the FBI in recent years grew skeptical of some of his claims, according to court filings. That included allegations central to Republican lawmakers' effort to impeach Biden that the president and his son had received millions of dollars in bribes from a Ukrainian company, Burisma. The article mentioned that prosecutors now say the Biden allegations were fabrications, and Smirnov recently acknowledged that one story about Hunter Biden came from Russian intelligence sources. Smirnov, 43 years old, has been detained as he awaits trial on charges of lying to the FBI, with a federal judge in Los Angeles declaring there was "nothing garden-variety" about the case. Smirnov has pleaded not guilty.

### **Jeffrey Epstein Grand Jury Records From Underage Girl Abuse Probe to Be Released Under Florida Law**

The [Associated Press](#) (02/29, Anderson) reported that grand jury transcripts from a 2006 Florida investigation into Jeffrey Epstein's abuse of dozens of underage girls will be released publicly later this year under legislation signed into law Thursday by Gov. Ron DeSantis. A local judge cited the new law in denying the release of the records for now. According to the article, the measure, which takes effect July 1, would carve out a limited exception to the secrecy that generally shrouds grand jury testimony in specific cases such as that involving Epstein, DeSantis said at a signing ceremony in Palm Beach, Florida, where many of the crimes took place at Epstein's home. The [Hill](#) (02/29, Timotija), [NPR](#) (02/29, Allen), [Business Insider](#) (02/29, Griffiths, Shamsian), the [Daily Beast](#) (02/29, Yen), and [Fox News](#) (02/29, Ruiz) also reported on the story.

### **Florida Couple Arrested for Allegedly Kidnapping Cousin's Baby, Posing as Amazon Delivery Driver**

[Fox News](#) (02/29, Price) reported that a Florida couple has been arrested for allegedly kidnapping a baby from a Washington state city where one of the suspects posed as an Amazon delivery driver in an elaborate ruse, according to court documents. The article stated that King County prosecutors have charged Marilly Jarina Ardila-Urrego, 33, and Chun Ho Vincent Lai, 42, with first-degree kidnapping, first-degree burglary, second-degree assault of a child, first-degree robbery, and second-degree assault, with aggravating factors for preying on a vulnerable victim and the sophistication of planning. The article added that the two planned to kidnap the infant of one of Ardila-Urrego's relatives. The couple lives in Florida, and traveled up to Washington state solely to kidnap the 7-month-old baby, prosecutors said. The article mentioned that shortly after the victim's husband left for work, Vincent Lai, allegedly posed as an Amazon deliveryman holding a box, and knocked on the mother's Federal Way apartment door, prosecutors said. The woman, who was expecting a delivery, opened the door after looking through the peephole and was punched multiple times in the face and knocked to the ground. The article noted that after collecting evidence and surveillance video, FBI agents were able to track the location of Ardila-Urrego's phone, according to charging documents. They also found a prior police incident of a domestic-violence-related "involvement" between Ardila-Urrego and Lai in Florida, linking the FBI to information about Lai's car, prosecutors said. Ardila-Urrego, Lai, and the kidnapped 7-month-old were all in the car, and the Florida couple were arrested. The baby was returned home. Bail for Ardila-Urrego and Lai was set at \$750,000. [USA TODAY](#) (02/29, Arshani) also reported on the story.

### **Man Already Serving Life Sentence Convicted of Killing Tucson Girl Who Vanished From Parents' Home**

The [Associated Press](#) (02/29, Staff Writer) reported that a man already serving a life sentence for the 2014 death of an Arizona teenager was convicted Thursday of first-degree murder in the killing of another Tucson girl years earlier. Pima County Superior Court jurors also found Christopher Clements, 42, guilty of kidnapping and burglary in the death of Isabel Celis, who was 6 when she vanished from her parents' home in 2012. According to the article, Clements became a suspect in Celis' death in 2017, when he told FBI agents that he could lead them to the girl's remains — but said he had nothing to do with her death — in exchange for having charges in an unrelated burglary case dropped, Tucson police said.

### **Oklahoma City FBI Office Vandalized, Suspect in Custody**

[KOCO \(ABC-5\)](#) (02/29, Greco) reported that windows at the FBI office in Oklahoma City are boarded up after someone smashed them out. According to the article, earlier this month, someone jumped over the security fence, used a hammer, and started crushing the glass windows and doors. Documents say agents warned him to stop, but the suspect refused and kept going. He was eventually taken into custody. FBI officials said the suspect is not mentally competent but is still being held in custody.

### **Former Missouri School Principal Admits Hiring Hitman to Kill Pregnant Teacher**

[Fox News](#) (02/29, Coulter) reported that a former St. Louis middle school principal pleaded guilty to charges in federal court after admitting he hired his friend to kill his pregnant girlfriend in 2016. Federal prosecutors said Cornelius Green, formerly a principal at Carr Lane Visual and Performing Arts Middle School, paid Phillip Cutler \$2,500 to murder 30-year-old teacher Jocelyn Peters. Cutler is scheduled to go to trial for his alleged role. The article added that Green pleaded guilty Wednesday to federal charges of murder-for-hire and conspiracy to commit murder-for-hire. A DOJ [press release](#) stated that the case was investigated by the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department and the FBI.

### **FBI Says Georgia Fugitive May Be in Phoenix**

[KNXV \(ABC-15\)](#) (02/29, Gonzales) reported that the FBI is asking everyone to be on the lookout for a fugitive out of Georgia who could be in the Valley or Puerto Penasco (Rocky Point), Mexico. According to the article, the FBI Atlanta Office believes David DeWayne Young could be hiding in Rocky Point and has potential ties to the Phoenix area. The article stated that Young is wanted in Georgia as part of a law enforcement operation in January 2023 called Operation Ghost Busted. He is charged with drug trafficking conspiracy tied to the Ghost Face Gangsters criminal street gang.

### **Edina Financial Advisor Stole \$1.6m From Clients**

[Patch](#) (02/29, Bornhoft) reported that an Edina financial adviser is accused of misappropriating \$1.6 million in client investment funds, announced U.S. Attorney Andrew M. Luger. The article added that Kristi Margaret Berge, 47, is charged with one count of wire fraud. She is scheduled to make her initial appearance in federal court on

March 7. Prosecutors identified Berge as the founder and CEO of Edina-based Keep Safe Investments, a financial planning and investment services firm. She also co-owned Edina-based J&K Connect LLC, a company that invested in real estate through buying, renovating, and re-selling properties, according to the FBI. The article noted that between June 2020 and February 2023, Berge repeatedly withdrew client funds in varying amounts between \$5,000 and \$220,000, and deposited the funds into bank accounts she controlled, authorities said. In total, Berge withdrew \$1.6 million in this manner and — instead of putting it in retirement savings plans and other secure investment accounts — used it to buy properties in Edina for her real estate business, according to the FBI. Berge concealed her fraud by falsely labeling her illicit withdrawals as "management" or "administrative," authorities said.

### **FBI Raids Office, Homes Tied to California Investment Company Amid Criminal Investigation**

The [Orange County Register](#) (02/29, Schwebke) reported that FBI agents raided the Newport Beach office and homes of two real estate investment executives this week, seizing boxes of materials as part of an ongoing criminal investigation. The article added that agents descended on the Newport Beach and Laguna Beach residences of AB Capital's co-owners, said Brian Werlemman, a wealth manager who alleges he was defrauded out of about \$2.7 million in 2018 as part of an elaborate Ponzi scheme orchestrated by the company. The raids lasted several hours, with FBI agents using a bullhorn to announce their presence to those inside the homes, Werlemman said. The article mentioned that Laura Eimiller, spokesperson for the FBI's Los Angeles Field Office, confirmed that the searches are connected to an ongoing criminal investigation but declined to provide further details.

### **Most Victims Targeted in Sextortion Scams Are Teenage Boys, Say FBI Agents**

[WMC \(NBC-5\)](#) (02/29, Jaglois) reported that FBI agents in Memphis are warning parents that sextortion cases are on the rise. The article quoted Taneka Blacknell, an FBI Supervisory Special Agent for the FBI's Memphis field office, who said, "This is not sexual. It's a financially motivated crime, because of how we've historically looked at victims — boys versus girls, the subjects know that, so they're quick to pretend to be girls, pretend to be girls fascinated with boys, and convincing them to share this inappropriate and explicit material."

### **'Rust' Assistant Director Admits Negligence in Gun Safety Check**

[UPI](#) (02/29, Moran) reported that the first assistant director of Rust testified in court that he was "negligent" by failing to check safety measures before a prop gun got into the hands of actor Alec Baldwin, who accidentally shot and killed cinematographer Halyna Hutchins while on the movie set in 2021. The article added that David Halls, the first assistant director on Rust, gave emotional testimony Thursday during the trial of armorer Hannah Gutierrez, 26, who has been charged with involuntary manslaughter in the incident. The article stated that Baldwin, who is also facing involuntary manslaughter charges and scheduled to stand trial in July, has consistently maintained he never pulled the trigger on the gun that fired and killed Hutchins and wounded the film's director, Joel Souza. The FBI and independent firearms experts insist it was nearly impossible for the weapon to fire without the trigger being pulled.

### **Kansas City Chiefs Superfan Pleads Guilty to Bank Robbery and Money Laundering**

[CNN](#) (02/29, Alonso) reported that a Kansas City Chiefs superfan known as ChiefsAholiC has pleaded guilty to federal bank robbery and other charges, admitting to a violent string of robberies of banks and credit unions in seven states, then to laundering the stolen money through casinos, a federal prosecutor in Missouri announced. The article added that Xaviar Michael Babudar, 29, also pleaded guilty Wednesday to money laundering and taking stolen property across state lines, admitting he engaged in 11 bank and credit union robberies or attempted robberies in 2022 and 2023. The article noted that under his plea deal, Babudar must pay at least \$532,675 to the victim's financial institutions and forfeit "any property involved in his money laundering activity, including an autographed painting of Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes II that has been recovered by the FBI."

### **FBI Searching for Man Who Robbed Bank in Texas**

[KLTV \(ABC-7\)](#) (02/29, Frazier) reported that Texas police say that a bank in Texas was robbed on Thursday. The article added that when officers responded to the scene, they were told that a white male entered the bank, pointed a gun at them, and demanded money. He then ran from the scene, got into a stolen car, and fled. According to the article, Texas police and the FBI are investigating.

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**CYBER DIVISION**

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## **A Large Us Health Care Tech Company Was Hacked. It's Leading to Billing Delays and Security Concerns**

The [Associated Press](#) (02/29, Bose) reported that healthcare providers across the country are reeling from a cyberattack on a massive U.S. healthcare technology company that has threatened the security of patients' information and is delaying some prescriptions and paychecks for medical workers. The hack could also disrupt discharging people from the hospital, a major hospital association said. According to the article, Change Healthcare announced Thursday that a ransomware group that had claimed responsibility for the attack was at fault. Change Healthcare also said it is assessing the impact of the attack, which it first acknowledged on Feb. 21 and has affected billing and care-authorization portals across the country. The article added that the company said its investigation determined that Change Healthcare, Optum, UnitedHealthcare and UnitedHealth Group systems have been affected. Change also confirmed Thursday that ransomware group ALPHV, or Blackcat, made the breach. The article noted that an FBI spokesperson in Tennessee said he could not confirm or deny whether the FBI is investigating. The FBI also said it's "aware of this incident" but didn't have anything else to provide because the incident "is ongoing." [Reuters](#) (02/29, Satter, Bing, Wingrove), [UPI](#) (02/29, Cunningham), and [CBS News](#) (02/29, Sganga, Triay) also reported on the story.

## **FBI, CISA Release IoCs for Phobos Ransomware**

[Dark Reading](#) (02/29, Vijayan) reported that the FBI and the US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) have released details on the tactics and techniques threat actors are using to deploy the Phobos ransomware strain on target networks. The advisory is part of an ongoing stop-ransomware effort by the two entities working in collaboration with the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC). It is similar to several alerts they have issued in recent months on particularly pernicious ransomware threats. The article added that with previous advisories, the latest one includes indicators of compromise that security and IT administrators can use to quickly spot and respond to potential Phobos infections.

## **Filigran, a French Cybersecurity Startup Used by the FBI, Just Raised \$16.2 Million Using This 12-Slide Pitch Deck**

[Business Insider](#) (02/29, Burroughs) reported that Filigran, a French cybersecurity startup, has raised \$16.2 million in new funding. Founded in 2022, Filigran provides a series of products to help private companies and public institutions defend against threats using an open-source program. The article added that Filigran's threat intelligence platform is used by Hermes, Airbus, and the FBI to help better understand security issues, which the rise of AI attacks has exacerbated. The article stated that the company claims to have identified several use cases for generative AI within its product offering. Filigran's work with the FBI is part of a wider story of federal agencies working with and giving back to the open-source community.

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## **CAPITOL VIOLENCE NEWS**

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### **Trump to Stay on Illinois Ballot as He Appeals Jan. 6 Ban**

[Bloomberg](#) (02/29, Willmer, Larson) reported that an Illinois judge has extended a hold on her previous decision to bar Donald Trump from the state's primary ballot due to his involvement in the January 6 Capitol riot, allowing Trump to remain on the ballot while the appeal process unfolds. According to the article, this procedural win for Trump delays any immediate impact on his candidacy until after the appeal, with a similar case in Colorado possibly being resolved by the US Supreme Court first. The article explained that the Supreme Court's review of the Colorado ruling, which also disqualified Trump under the 14th Amendment for his actions related to the Capitol riot, could set a precedent affecting Trump's eligibility in other states. Additional reporting on the story was provided by [WBBM \(CBS-2\)](#) (02/29, Feurer, Perlman), [Chicago Tribune](#) (02/29, Pearson), and [Fox News](#) (02/29, Casiano).

### **Ex-Sheriff's Deputy Who Attacked Police During Capitol Riot Is Sentenced to Nearly Six Years in Prison**

The [Associated Press](#) (02/29, Kunzelman) reported that Ronald Colton McAbee, a former Tennessee sheriff's deputy, was sentenced to five years and 10 months in prison for his role in the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol, where he assaulted police officers while wearing a bulletproof vest marked "SHERIFF" and bearing a Three Percenters militia insignia. According to the article, McAbee, who had been in jail since his arrest, received credit for the two years and seven months served. The article noted that during the riot, he dragged and punched officers, later expressing regret for his actions, although prosecutors highlighted his initial pride in his actions the

day after the riot. Additional reporting on the story was provided by the [Washington Post](#) (02/29, Hsu), [Axios](#) (02/29, Habeshian), and [Courthouse News](#) (02/29, Knappenberger).

### **Colorado Man Arrested by FBI Agents in Connection With Jan. 6, 2021 Breach at U.S. Capitol**

[KMGH \(ABC-7\)](#) (02/29, Butzer) reported that Matthew James Melsen, a 34-year-old from Wheat Ridge, was arrested by FBI agents on February 28 for his involvement in the January 6, 2021, breach at the U.S. Capitol. According to the article, charged with felony offenses including civil disorder and assaulting law enforcement, along with several misdemeanors, Melsen was identified through police body-worn camera footage. During the riot, he aggressively interacted with officers, including pushing one officer and attempting to grab another's baton, and was later seen near a tunnel where violent attacks against law enforcement occurred. The article noted that Melsen was labeled as #375 on the FBI's list of individuals involved in the Capitol breach, contributing to the more than 1,300 people charged with related crimes, 469 of whom were charged for assaulting or impeding law enforcement. Additional reporting on the story was provided by the [Colorado Sun](#) (02/29, Prentzel), The [Denver Post](#) (02/29, Factor), and [CBS News](#) (02/29, Richardson).

### **Defiant Jan. 6 Rioter Spars With Judge at Sentencing Hearing**

The [Washington Post](#) (02/29, Rizzo) reported that Brandon Fellows, a 29-year-old former tree cutter and chimney repairman, was sentenced to 3½ years in prison for his participation in the January 6, 2021, Capitol riot, after exhibiting defiant behavior towards U.S. District Judge Trevor N. McFadden during his sentencing. According to the article, Fellows, who represented himself and was convicted of obstructing an official proceeding among other charges, had previously called McFadden a "modern-day Nazi" and exhibited contemptuous conduct towards officials throughout his trial. The article noted that his attempts to challenge the judge during sentencing, including a 45-minute PowerPoint presentation and interruptions, ultimately failed to sway the proceedings. The [New York Times](#) (02/29, Shanahan) also reported on the story.

### **Notorious Russian Hacking Group Is Threatening to Release Trump Court Documents**

[Business Insider](#) (02/29, Goodwin) reported that LockBit, a Russian-based ransomware group, has threatened to release court documents related to former President Donald Trump's Fulton County, Georgia, election interference case unless a ransom is paid. According to the article, the group, which has frustrated international authorities and evaded shutdown attempts, demanded money in a statement supporting Trump for the 2024 election. The article explained that despite a deadline passing without the documents' release, the US Treasury Department describes LockBit as a significant cybercriminal operation involved in "ransomware-as-a-service," accumulating over 2,000 victims and more than \$120 million in ransoms. The article noted that the group's claims about the documents' significance to the upcoming US election remain unverified, and an international police effort involving the FBI recently seized some of LockBit's servers, temporarily disrupting its operations.

### **Conservative Reporter Says FBI Plans To Arrest Him Over Jan. 6 Stories**

[Daily Caller](#) (02/29, Silverio) reported that Steve Baker, an investigative reporter for The Blaze, announced that the FBI plans to arrest him due to his reporting on the January 6, 2021, Capitol riot. According to the article, he was informed of a signed arrest warrant that mandates him to self-surrender at a Dallas courthouse, with his attorney previously being threatened by the FBI and DOJ. The article explained that Baker's charges are described as non-violent misdemeanors, and his attorney finds the government's actions unusual and potentially retaliatory, considering the timing follows Baker's breaking of two major stories that embarrassed the DOJ. The article noted that Baker, who claims he was at the Capitol as an independent journalist and did not engage in any destructive behavior, views the arrest warrant as unnecessary and humiliating.

### **Michigan Man Sentenced to Prison for Assaulting Officers With Hockey Stick During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach**

[WWJ \(CBS-21\)](#) (02/29, Powers) reported that Michael Joseph Foy, a 32-year-old man from Wixom, Michigan, was sentenced to 40 months in prison for his involvement in the January 6, 2021, Capitol breach. Foy, who had traveled to Washington, D.C., to attend the "Stop the Steal" rally, was convicted on June 22, 2023, of obstruction of an official proceeding and assaulting, resisting, or impeding certain officers, both felonies. The article explained that during the riot, Foy used a hockey stick to violently attack law enforcement officers, hitting at least 11 officers within 16 seconds, and encouraged other rioters after entering the Capitol through a broken window. The article noted that he was arrested on January 21, 2021, and more than 1,313 people have been charged in connection with the Capitol breach.

### **Texas Man Who Threw American Flag at Capitol Police Pleads Guilty to Jan. 6 Assault**

The [Houston Chronicle](#) (02/29, Ferguson) reported that Brian Scott Jackson, a 48-year-old man from Katy, pleaded guilty on Wednesday to assault charges for his actions during the January 6, 2021, Capitol riot, as stated by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia. Jackson, who was arrested in June 2022 alongside his brother Adam Lejay Jackson, threw an American flag attached to a long pole at police officers trying to block rioters from storming the Capitol. According to the article, both brothers had attended former President Donald Trump's "Stop the Steal" rally and later boasted about their involvement in the riot on social media and in text messages, with Brian Jackson expressing pride in his actions and using racial slurs. The article noted that Adam Jackson also pleaded guilty to assaulting officers and is scheduled for sentencing in March.

### **Trump's Immunity Bid Isn't the Only Jan. 6 Case at the Supreme Court in April**

[MSNBC](#) (02/29, Rubin) reported that the Supreme Court is set to hear not only former President Donald Trump's immunity claim in April but also the case of Joseph Fischer, an alleged January 6 rioter, a week earlier. Both cases involve the same obstruction law, but their circumstances differ significantly. According to the article, Trump's case pertains to the broader attempt to overturn the 2020 election results, while Fischer's focuses on the statute's application against him specifically. The article explained that the outcome of Fischer's case could inform the federal election interference trial involving Trump, particularly if the Supreme Court's decision impacts how the obstruction charge can be utilized. The article noted that this sequencing potentially benefits Special Counsel Jack Smith, as it clarifies the legal landscape regarding the obstruction statute before Trump's trial proceeds, assuming the Supreme Court does not grant him immunity.

### **Opinion: The Pipe Bombs Before Jan. 6: Capital Mystery That Doesn't Add Up**

An opinion piece by [The Epoch Times](#) (02/29, Kelly) reported that the discovery of pipe bombs near the DNC and RNC headquarters on January 6, 2021, remains an unsolved case filled with anomalies, including a bomb-sniffing dog's failure to detect the bombs and the mysterious circumstances surrounding their placement and potential to detonate. According to the article, despite the DOJ's extensive investigations into the Capitol riot, the individual responsible for planting the bombs has not been apprehended, and interest in solving this act of domestic terrorism seems to have waned among official Washington and major news organizations. The author assessed that the unresolved nature of the case, combined with the lack of transparency and accountability, has contributed to a growing distrust in the government's handling of the situation.

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## **OTHER FBI NEWS**

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### **Judge Fines Ex-Fox News Reporter, Catherine Herridge, for Not Revealing Sources**

The [New York Times](#) (02/29, Robertson) reported that a federal judge held a veteran investigative reporter in contempt of court on Thursday for not revealing her sources for articles she wrote about a scientist who was investigated by the FBI. The article added that the journalist, Catherine Herridge, formerly of CBS News and Fox News, was ordered to pay \$800 a day until she divulged the information. The judge, Christopher Cooper of the U.S. District Court in Washington, stayed the fine for 30 days to give Herridge time to appeal. The article stated that the case, which has alarmed First Amendment advocates, relates to a series of articles that were written by Herridge and her colleagues in 2017, while she worked at Fox News. The articles revealed that the FBI had investigated the scientist, Dr. Yanping Chen, a Chinese American who is the president of the University of Management and Technology in Arlington, Va., over suspicions of Chinese military ties and whether she had lied on U.S. immigration forms. The FBI ended its investigation without bringing charges against Dr. Chen, a year before Herridge and her colleagues published and aired their reporting. According to the article, in 2018, Dr. Chen sued the FBI and other government agencies, accusing them of violating the Privacy Act by leaking information to Herridge. The Privacy Act has protections for personal information collected by federal agencies. The article stated that Judge Cooper ruled last year that Herridge must reveal her confidential sources. On Thursday, he held her in civil contempt for disobeying that order. He said he had not issued the order lightly, deciding that Dr. Chen's need for the information overcame Herridge's First Amendment protections. The [Associated Press](#) (02/29, Richer, Tucker), [National Review](#) (02/29, Bernstein), [Washington Post](#) (02/29, Barr), [CNN](#) (02/29, Darcy), [Daily Wire](#) (02/29, Saavedra), [Daily Caller](#) (02/29, Angela), and the [Los Angeles Times](#) (02/29, Battaglio) also reported on the story.

### **FBI Surprises Middle School Student in Alabama Who Dreams of Becoming an Agent**

[WBRC \(Fox-6\)](#) (02/29, Brooks) reported that 7th-grade students at Sumiton Middle School each wrote a letter to someone in a career field they are most interested in. Cayson Brand wrote his to the FBI in Washington, D.C. The article stated that the Birmingham division paid the student a visit on Thursday. Brand was given a letter in response from Director Wray. The article quoted Administrative Officer for FBI Birmingham, Joan Davis, who said, “The letter could have been filed away, or a response could have been mailed to the student. But for us, this is about touching the community and being part of the community, we are definitely looking at the next generation. The next generation of agents, intelligence analysts, accountants. We have an array of opportunities for folks to join the FBI.” The article added that the entire 7th-grade class learned more about the FBI and what they do. Davis said while they don’t recruit as young as 7th grade, it’s important for them to connect with the community.

### **Opinion: What I Learned When I Read 887 Pages of Plans for Trump’s Second Term**

An opinion piece by the [New York Times](#) (02/29, Lozada) stated that every new administration that wins power away from the opposing party contends that whatever its predecessors did was terrible and that victory constitutes a popular mandate to fix or get rid of it all. Elections have consequences, politicians love to remind us, and a big one entails trying to change everything, right away. The article added that it is possible to read “Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise” — an 887-page document proposing to remake the executive branch, department by department, agency by agency, office by office — as one more go-round in this Washington tradition. With contributions by dozens of conservative thinkers and activists under the leadership of the Heritage Foundation’s Project 2025, the book announces itself as part of a “unified effort to be ready for the next conservative administration to govern at 12:00 noon, Jan. 20, 2025.” There is much work ahead, it states, “just to undo the significant damage that will have been done during the Biden years.” According to the author, the FBI director, the document argues, must be as politically accountable to the president as any other senior official. “To ensure prompt political accountability and to rein in perceived or actual abuses,” it asserts, “the next conservative administration should seek a legislative change to align the FBI director’s position with those of the heads of all other major departments and agencies.” Trump has complained that the FBI and DOJ have been weaponized against him; these reforms would ensure their politicization.

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## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

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### **German Police Find a Grenade and Other Weaponry at Arrested Red Army Faction Suspect’s Apartment**

- Associated Press: German Police Find a Grenade and Other Weaponry at Arrested Red Army Faction Suspect’s Apartment

### **Document From 2022 Reveals Putin’s Punishing Terms for Peace**

- Wall Street Journal: Document From 2022 Reveals Putin’s Punishing Terms for Peace

### **Putin Says West Risks Nuclear Conflict if It Intervenes More in Ukraine**

- New York Times: Putin Says West Risks Nuclear Conflict if It Intervenes More in Ukraine

### **Israeli Forces Fire on Palestinian Civilians Amid Aid Delivery Chaos**

- Wall Street Journal: Israeli Forces Fire on Palestinian Civilians Amid Aid Delivery Chaos

### **How One Woman Duped China’s Censorship Machine**

- Wall Street Journal: How One Woman Duped China’s Censorship Machine

### **Calls for a Boycott Roil Iran’s Parliamentary Elections**

- New York Times: Calls for a Boycott Roil Iran’s Parliamentary Elections

### **Two Scientists in Canada Passed on Secrets to China, Investigations Find**

- New York Times: Two Scientists in Canada Passed on Secrets to China, Investigations Find

## **Opposition Leader in Chad Is Killed in a Shootout Months Before Elections**

- New York Times: Opposition Leader in Chad Is Killed in a Shootout Months Before Elections

## **Thailand to Ban Recreational Cannabis Use by Year-End, Health Minister Says**

- Reuters: Thailand to Ban Recreational Cannabis Use by Year-End, Health Minister Says

## **A Fire at a Shopping Mall in Bangladesh's Capital Kills at Least 43 People**

- Associated Press: A Fire at a Shopping Mall in Bangladesh's Capital Kills at Least 43 People

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## **OTHER WASHINGTON NEWS**

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### **Biden and Trump Make Dueling Border Visits Amid Migrant Crisis**

- Wall Street Journal: Biden and Trump Make Dueling Border Visits Amid Migrant Crisis
- New York Times: In Dual Border Visits, Biden and Trump Try to Score Points at a Political Hot Spot
- USA TODAY: Joe Biden, Donald Trump Clashing Visits Thrust Border Fight Further Into Spotlight
- Fox News: Dueling Biden, Trump Visits to Besieged Border Come Amid Fresh Slew of Violent Crimes by Illegal Immigrants
- Axios: Biden Pushes Failed Border Deal in Texas Visit, Blasts GOP for Neglecting Crisis

### **U.S. Launches Investigation Into Chinese-Made 'Smart Cars' for National Security Threats**

- Associated Press: U.S. Launches Investigation Into Chinese-Made 'Smart Cars' for National Security Threats
- CNN: Biden Administration Opens Investigation Into Foreign-Made Smart Car Components, Particularly From China
- Investopedia: U.S. Opens Probe Into Chinese Smart Cars, Auto Technology on National Security Concerns
- Financial Times: Joe Biden Says Chinese Smart Cars Could Pose U.S. Security Threat
- Reuters: U.S. to Probe if Chinese Cars Pose National Data Security Risks

### **Maryland State House Placed on Lockdown Thursday Evening**

- Washington Post: Maryland State House Placed on Lockdown Thursday Evening
- Associated Press: Maryland State House Lockdown Prompted by Anonymous Threat Is Lifted After Nothing Suspicious Found
- Forbes: Lockdown Lifted At Maryland State House After Security Threat

### **Great Lakes Tribes Call On Biden to Speak out Against Line 5**

- WoodTV: Great Lakes Tribes Call On Biden to Speak out Against Line 5

### **IRS Launches Crackdown on 125,000 Wealthy 'Non-filers'**

- Associated Press: IRS Launches Crackdown on 125,000 Wealthy 'Non-filers'

### **How the Supreme Court Is Mitch McConnell's Greatest and Most Controversial Legacy**

- Washington Examiner: How the Supreme Court Is Mitch McConnell's Greatest and Most Controversial Legacy

### **House Republicans 'Got Played' by Democrats on Tax Bill, GOP Senator Claims: 'Devil Is in the Details'**

- Washington Examiner: House Republicans 'Got Played' by Democrats on Tax Bill, GOP Senator Claims: 'Devil Is in the Details'

### **Senate Delays Shutdown Threat for a Week With Passage of Stopgap Legislation**

- Washington Examiner: Senate Delays Shutdown Threat for a Week With Passage of Stopgap Legislation

## **Biden Urges Trump to 'Join' Him in Telling Congress to Pass Border Legislation**

- Washington Examiner: Biden Urges Trump to 'Join' Him in Telling Congress to Pass Border Legislation

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## **BIG PICTURE**

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### **New York Times**

- As Hungry Gazans Crowd an Aid Convoy, a Crush of Bodies, Israeli Gunshots and a Deadly Toll
- The 'Luxury Route' to the U.S. for African Migrants
- In Dual Border Visits, Biden and Trump Try to Score Points at a Political Hot Spot
- Texas Wildfires Burn Through the Heart of Cattle Country, Upending Lives
- Richard Lewis, Acerbic Comedian and Character Actor, Dies at 76

### **Wall Street Journal**

- Israel Fires on Civilians Amid Aid Delivery
- Biden, Trump Travel to Border, Putting Spotlight on Migrants
- Why Hamas Thinks It Still Could Win the War
- Your Bike Just Got Stolen. These Vigilantes Will Get It Back
- U.S. Fears Chinese Cars Pose Big Security Threat

### **Washington Post**

- Chaotic Aid Delivery in Gaza Turns Deadly
- Biden and Trump Trade Barbs at Border
- Giving Beloved Pets a 'Peaceful Experience'
- Alabama City Spotlights Right's Souring on Ukraine
- Congress Passes Stopgap Bill to Fend off Shutdown
- Teixeira to Plead Guilty in Massive Discord Leak

### **Financial Times**

- Alabama Lawmakers Vote to Protect IVF After Controversial Court Ruling
- U.S. Inflation Eases to 2.4%, According to Federal Reserve's Target Index
- Texas Battles Second-Largest Wildfire in U.S. History

### **ABC News**

- Texas Wildfire Now the Largest in State's History; Biden, Trump Make Dueling Visits to Texas Border; Over 100 Palestinians Killed in Aid Convoy.

### **CBS News**

- Biden, Trump Make Dueling Visits to Southern Border; Oklahoma Centenarian Celebrates Leap Day Birthday.

### **NBC News**

- Biden and Trump Clash in Texas on Border Policy; Disputed Versions of Deadly Stampede and Shooting in Northern Gaza as War Death Toll Exceeds 30,000; Historic Texas Wildfire Burns More Than 1 Million Acres.

### **Fox News**

- Putin Issues New Warning for the West in National Address; Marc Thiessen on Border Crisis: Biden Set the Fire and He Has All the Water He Needs; Biden Visits the Southern Border and Accuses Republicans of Standing in the Way.

## WASHINGTON SCHEDULE

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### White House

#### President Biden

- 10:00 AM: The President receives the Presidential Daily Briefing
- 1:00 PM: The President holds a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni of Italy
- 5:45 PM: The President departs the White House en route to Camp David
- 6:15 PM: The President arrives at Camp David

#### Vice President Harris

- No events scheduled.

#### US Senate

- No events scheduled.

#### US House of Representatives

- No events scheduled.

#### Cabinet Members

- **Secretary of Defense Austin** hosts an enhanced honor cordon and meeting welcoming Slovakian Minister of Defense and Deputy Prime Minister Robert Kalinak to the Pentagon at 2:00 PM EST at the River Entrance.
- **Secretary of State Blinken** attends President Biden's meeting with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni at the White House at 1:00 PM.
- **Secretary of Education Cardona** will participate in the National Conference of State Legislatures Raise the Bar Virtual Convening at 1:30 PM.

#### Visitors

- **Slovakian Minister of Defense and Deputy Prime Minister Robert Kalinak** meet with Secretary Austin at the Pentagon.
- **Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni** meets with President Biden and Secretary Blinken at the White House.

#### General Events

- [CSIS: Gaza: The Human Toll—Episode 7](#) – Friday, March 1, 2024. Location: Online Event, 8:00 AM. The CSIS live studio conversations, 'Gaza: The Human Toll,' are a product of the CSIS Bipartisan Alliance for Global Health Security, with co-sponsorship of the CSIS Humanitarian Agenda and the CSIS Middle East Program. The show will convene regularly during this crisis period to capture clearly and accurately the evolving humanitarian and health situation inside Gaza, understand how the conduct of the conflict is shaping outcomes and future policy and operational choices, think carefully about what may lie ahead, and hear from key operational international agencies and NGOs providing humanitarian assistance, as well as other experts with vital insights. Throughout these conversations, speakers will explore current and proposed U.S. policies. In this episode, J. Stephen Morrison and Michelle Strucke will be joined by Lana Wreikat, Deputy Director, UNICEF Emergency Operations, Avril Benoît, Executive Director, Doctors Without Borders/Médecins

Sans Frontières USA, Richard (Rik) Peeperkorn, World Health Organization (WHO) Representative for Occupied Palestinian Territory, to discuss the dire health and humanitarian crises in Gaza.

- CATO Institute: China's Gambit: The Calculus of Coercion – Friday, March 1, 2024. Location: CATO Institute, 12:00 PM. The rise of China has led to concerns about its use of military threats to coerce other nations. Emerging from an award-winning article in the journal *International Security*, *China's Gambit* examines when, why, and how China attempts to coerce states over perceived threats to its national security. Author Ketian Zhang demonstrates that while China has used coercion for territorial disputes and issues related to Taiwan and Tibet, it is curiously selective in the timing, target, and tools of coercion. Join us for a discussion with a luncheon to follow.
- AEI: Chasing the Ghosts of the Affordable Care Act – Friday, March 1, 2024. Location: AEI, 10:00 AM. Almost 14 years ago, President Barack Obama signed into law the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The law survived a series of legal and political challenges during its implementation, but they came at a cost to its initial ambitions. In a forthcoming study, "The Ghosts of the Affordable Care Act," Miami University Law Professor Gabriel Scheffler examines the enactment-entrenchment trade-offs that limit the scope and durability of major social program legislation. The ACA was never repealed, but significant parts of it were "replaced" or discarded. At this forum, Professor Scheffler will examine the rules of the game that shaped the ACA's survival and evolution. A panel of veteran health policy practitioners will offer a range of perspectives on how we got here and the implications for future options.

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