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September 19, 2024  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Daily News Briefing

(In coordination with the Office of Public Affairs)

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- New York Times

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## IN THE NEWS

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### Director Wray Says FBI Investigation of Trump Assassination Attempt Involves 'Full Force' of the Department

#### Continued Reporting: Trump Assassination Attempt on Florida Golf Course

[Fox News](#) (09/18, Hagstrom) and [The Epoch Times](#) (09/18, Phillips) reported that Director Wray emphasized that the FBI is devoting the "full force" of its resources to investigate the recent assassination attempt on former President Trump. Director Wray made these comments at the Aspen Cyber Summit, where he addressed the broader implications of the attack. He stated, "For the second time in just over two months, we've witnessed what appears to be an attempt to attack our democracy and our democratic process." He reassured the public of Trump's safety and stressed the ongoing nature of the investigation, noting that the FBI is working diligently to uncover the details of the incident. Director Wray further elaborated, "I'm relieved that former President Trump is safe, and I want the American people to know the men and women of the FBI are working tirelessly to get to the bottom of what happened. Our work is very much ongoing, and we're just a few days into the investigation, so we're limited in what we can say at this point." While highlighting the early stages of the investigation, he outlined the extensive resources being mobilized, saying, "What I can say is that we have dedicated the full force of the FBI to this investigation, and that runs the gamut from criminal to national security resources ... from tactical support to evidence response teams ... from forensic scientists to operational technology personnel. Together, we're working around the clock to investigate this." The articles also detailed the involvement of various law enforcement agencies, including the Secret Service and the Florida Attorney General's office. The suspect, Ryan Wesley Routh, allegedly waited for nearly 12 hours on a golf course before being discovered by Secret Service agents. Routh is currently in custody, facing federal gun charges, with his next court appearance scheduled for September 1. In response to the incident, Secret Service acting director Ronald Rowe traveled to West Palm Beach, and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis ordered a state-level investigation. Meanwhile, Trump and his allies have criticized Democrats, claiming that extreme rhetoric from the opposing party is fueling violence against the former president. According to the articles, on Sept. 16, FBI special agent Jeffrey Veltri said at a news conference that Routh "invoked his right to an attorney" when FBI agents tried to interview him after he was arrested by sheriff's deputies in Martin County, Florida. In 2019, the FBI received a tip that Routh, a convicted felon, was in possession of a firearm, and the case was ultimately closed, Veltri said. In 2002, Routh was convicted of having possession of a weapon of mass destruction related to an incident in North Carolina, the FBI has said. The articles noted that Routh's social media posts and comments he made to media outlets suggest he was an avid backer of Ukraine in the ongoing war with Russia. Routh also made posts on social media platform X that were critical of Trump and wrote a self-published, Ukraine-focused book in 2023 that suggested that Iran should kill the former president. "The subject had an active online presence, and we are going through what he posted and any searches conducted online,"

Veltri said. "In addition, we are going through media reports and public statements he made that he wanted to recruit Afghan soldiers and others to fight for Ukraine." [Hawaii News Now](#) (09/18, Huff) noted that the FBI descended on an Oahu home Tuesday, looking for evidence against Routh. The FBI evidence collection team arrived at his house at about 8 a.m., and an FBI Public Information Officer said they were conducting "court-approved activities."

#### *USSS Makes Pitch for More Resources While Congress Seeks to Hold Them Responsible*

[CNN](#) (09/18, Grayer, Cohen) reported that acting USSS Director Ronald Rowe is requesting additional resources from Congress following two apparent assassination attempts against former President Donald Trump. The article explained that while some lawmakers acknowledge the need for increased funding, others, like House Speaker Mike Johnson and Rep. Michael Waltz, express concerns about mismanagement within the agency and demand accountability before approving more resources. The article highlighted that the House task force created to investigate the assassination attempt against Trump at his July 13 rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, is working behind the scenes to expand its probe to also include Sunday's apparent assassination attempt. The panel has already requested a full briefing with the Department of Justice and FBI by the end of this week on top of continuing their ongoing investigation into the first assassination attempt against Trump.

#### *FBI Agent Leading Trump Assassination Probe Faces Allegations of Anti-Trump Bias*

[Fox News](#) (09/18, Colton) also reported that FBI Special Agent in Charge Jeffrey Veltri, who is leading the investigation into the second assassination attempt on former President Trump, is facing allegations of anti-Trump bias. According to a whistleblower's account presented to Congress last year, Veltri allegedly posted anti-Trump rhetoric on social media, although the FBI has dismissed these claims as "demonstrably false." During a Monday press conference, Veltri addressed the seriousness of the investigation, stating, "We view this as extremely serious and are determined to provide answers as to what led up to the events that took place." He acknowledged that the investigation is still in its early stages, saying, "I want to emphasize we are just a little over 24 hours into this investigation, so we are going to provide as much as we can publicly while our investigation is ongoing. We must also stress the U.S. attorney's office is pursuing charges, and that limits some details we can publicly disclose." Despite Veltri's assurances, reports resurfaced regarding a whistleblower's 2022 testimony to the House Judiciary Committee, which alleged that Veltri was ordered by the FBI to delete anti-Trump posts from his social media. The whistleblower claimed that Veltri's anti-Trump sentiments were well known, and that top FBI officials, including Director Wray, instructed him to scrub his accounts to prevent public exposure of his political bias. The FBI has reiterated its support for Veltri, stating in response to the resurfaced allegations, "The FBI has full confidence in SAC Veltri's leadership of the Miami Field Office and the investigation of the attempted assassination of former President Trump. This investigation is of the highest priority of the FBI." The bureau emphasized that the investigation involves "hundreds of personnel" from various FBI offices and is being conducted thoroughly and "by the book." In addition to the current claims, the whistleblower also alleged that Veltri played a role in improperly suspending security clearances for FBI agents with conservative views. The whistleblower's lawyer, Tristan Leavitt, has called for a full audit of the FBI's security clearance process, specifically highlighting Veltri and other officials' alleged involvement in political bias.

#### *FBI's Ryan Routh Tip Highlights Vetting Demand Challenge, Former Agent Says*

[Fox News](#) (09/19, Coulter) reported that Routh was the subject of an FBI tip in 2019. The tip alleged that Routh was a felon in possession of a firearm, but the complainant did not verify the information when interviewed. Former FBI Supervisory Special Agent Scott Duffey explained that the FBI receives numerous tips daily, and while tips involving threats to life are prioritized, many tips do not lead to interviews or further action if there is no clear violation of the law or imminent danger. "If the individual is not coming off as being an imminent danger to themselves, the community, or the FBI agent and hasn't given up any information that is incriminating, the FBI agent has the ability to write down the information and put it in a file," Duffey said. "Then it will be forever in a file at the FBI. The FBI can share or forward that information to local police and say, 'Is there something that you have that could be done?'"

Additional reporting on the story was provided by the [Washington Post](#) (09/18, Dawsey, Scherer) (2) (3), [Associated Press](#) (09/18, Richer, Matat), [BBC](#) (09/18, FitzGerald, Drenon), [USA Today](#) (09/18, Kochi), [MSNBC](#) (09/18, Benen), [Al Jazeera](#) (09/18, Asiedu, Sherman), [Washington Times](#) (09/18, Ferrechio).

[Fox News](#) (09/18, Video) provided video coverage of Director Wray's statements.

### **FBI Disrupts Second Chinese Hacking Group, Director Wray Says**

[Reuters](#) (09/18, Satter) reported that U.S. law enforcement has successfully disrupted a second Chinese hacking group, referred to as "Flax Typhoon," which had compromised thousands of devices. Director Wray announced the disruption at a cybersecurity conference in Washington, explaining that Flax Typhoon was run by a Chinese company called the Integrity Technology Group, which posed as an IT firm but actually "collected intelligence and performed reconnaissance for Chinese government security agencies." According to the article, Director Wray said the operation against Flax Typhoon took place last week "as part of our ongoing efforts to take China's botnets offline." Like Volt Typhoon, he said that Flax Typhoon was targeting critical infrastructure, but also corporations, media organizations, universities, and government agencies. To help camouflage their operations, Flax Typhoon routed their malicious traffic through something called "a botnet," a network of hijacked devices that in this case included cameras and digital storage devices, Director Wray said. He added that when the FBI tried to take control of the botnet's infrastructure, the hackers responded with a cyberattack before abandoning the fight. He then warned that the FBI would continue to clash with China's hackers. The [Associated Press](#) (09/18, Tucker) reported that Director Wray said that "Flax Typhoon's actions caused real harm to its victims, who had to devote precious time to clean up the mess when they discovered the malware." He also explained, "This was another successful disruption, but make no mistake — it's just one round in a much longer fight. The Chinese government is going to continue to target your organizations and our critical infrastructure, either by their own hand or concealed through their proxies, and we'll continue to work with our partners to identify their malicious activity, disrupt their hacking campaigns, and bring them to light." The [press release](#) quoted FBI Deputy Director Paul Abbate: "The disruption of this worldwide botnet is part of the FBI's commitment to using technical operations to help protect victims, expose publicly the scope of these criminal hacking campaigns, and to use the adversary's tools against them to remove malicious infrastructure from the virtual battlefield. The FBI's unique legal authorities allowed it to lead an international operation with partners that collectively disconnected this botnet from its China-based hackers at Integrity Technology Group." Additional reporting on the story was provided by the [Washington Post](#) (09/18, Menn, Nakashima), [Fox News](#) (09/18, Sorace), [CNN](#) (09/18, Lyngaas), the [Washington Times](#) (09/18, Lovelace), [CyberScoop](#) (09/18, Starks, Vicens, Vasquez), [The Record](#) (09/18, Warminksky), [MeriTalk](#) (09/18, Burgan), [BleepingComputer](#) (09/18, Ilascu), [The Epoch Times](#) (09/18, Thornebrooke), [Inside Cybersecurity](#) (09/18, Friedman), [VOA News](#) (09/18, Seldin), [AFP](#) (09/18, Staff Writer), [SecurityWeek](#) (09/18, Naraine), [TechCrunch](#) (09/18, Franceschi-Bicchierai), [The Record](#) (09/18, Martin), [Security Boulevard](#) (09/18, Burt), [UPI](#) (09/19, Coote), and [Law360](#) (09/19, Berg).

### **FBI Says Iranian Hackers Tried but Failed to Interest Biden's Campaign in Stolen Trump Info**

The [Associated Press](#) (09/18, Klepper, Tucker) reported that Iranian hackers attempted to interest President Joe Biden's campaign in stolen information from Donald Trump's campaign, according to statements from the FBI and other federal agencies. The emails, containing excerpts of non-public Trump campaign material, were sent in an effort to interfere in the 2024 election. According to the article, there is no indication that anyone associated with Biden's campaign responded to these emails, which were perceived as phishing attempts. The FBI and other agencies have linked these actions to Tehran, describing the hack as part of a broader effort to undermine voters' trust in the election. The article noted that the FBI informed Trump aides that hacked information had been sent to Biden's campaign, just days before the Trump campaign publicly acknowledged the breach. Additional reporting on the story was provided by [Reuters](#) (09/18, Pitas, Singh), the [New York Times](#) (09/18, Thrush), the [Washington Post](#) (09/18, Dawsey), [CNN](#) (09/18, Rabinowitz, Perez, Lyngaas), [Fox News](#) (09/18, Rumpf-Whitten), [ABC News](#) (09/18, Date, Barr, Sarnoff), [NBC News](#) (09/18, Kosnar, Richards), [CBS News](#) (09/18, Staff Writer), [Politico](#) (09/18, Miller, Sakellariadis), [USA Today](#) (09/18, Meyer), [BBC](#) (09/18, Debusmann Jr, Epstein), the [Washington Examiner](#) (09/18, O'Keefe), [New York Post](#) (09/18, Griffin), [The Hill](#) (09/18, Beitsch), [Bloomberg](#) (09/18, Strohm), [The Telegraph](#) (09/18, White), [The Independent](#) (09/18, Marcus), [The Daily Beast](#) (09/18, McDougall), [CyberScoop](#) (09/18, Johnson), [AFP](#) (09/18, Staff Writer), and [UPI](#) (09/18, Walsh).

### **Body Found of Man Accused of Opening Fire on Kentucky Highway, Police Say**

The [Associated Press](#) (09/18, Schreiner) and the [Washington Post](#) (09/18, Iati) reported that law enforcement officials in Kentucky announced on Wednesday that they had found a body believed to be the man accused of opening fire on a significant Kentucky highway this month, injuring several people and inciting an 11-day manhunt. The articles explained that Kentucky State Police troopers and two civilians searching among deep brush behind Exit 49 of Interstate 75 on Wednesday came across a deceased person police believe to be Joseph Couch, 32.

According to reports, State Police Commissioner Phillip "P.J." Burnett Jr. said at a news conference that vultures circling overhead and the smell of decomposing flesh led police and the civilians, who had also been looking for Couch, to the body. The body will be transported on Thursday to Frankfort, Ky., where a state police lab is located, to be formally identified. [Spectrum News](#) (09/18, Staff Writer) added that Burnett Jr. thanked the FBI and other agencies assisting with the search. A tweet on [WKYT \(CBS-21\)](#) (09/18, Umbro) stated that "@FBILouisville says FBI stands 'strong' and 'united' with local law enforcement as the search for Couch shifts from forest manhunt to an active investigation." The story was also reported on by [ABC News](#) (09/18, Hutchinson, Pereira), [BBC](#) (09/18, Faguy), [CBS News](#) (09/18, Sundby, Tanyos), [CNN](#) (09/18, Simonson), [Fox News](#) (09/18, Betz), [NBC News](#) (09/18, Smith, Cohen), the [New York Post](#) (09/18, Griffin), the [New York Times](#) (09/18, Selig, Sanders), [Reuters](#) (09/18, Trotta), [USA TODAY](#) (09/18, Baarlaer, Nguyen), and the [Washington Post](#) (09/18, Telford, Weil).

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## COUNTERTERRORISM

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### **Philadelphia Teen Hoped to Make Bombs for Terror Group and Considered Pride Attack**

[NBC News](#) (09/18, Mitman) reported that an 18-year-old Philadelphia teen, Muhyee-ud-din Abdul-Rahman, has been charged in connection with an alleged plot to make bombs for a terror group and had considered targeting the city's LGBTQ community during last year's Pride March. According to the article, FBI agents raided Abdul-Rahman's home, where bomb-making materials were discovered, and officials revealed that he communicated with Khatiba al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (KTJ), a group affiliated with Al-Qaeda, with plans to travel to Syria to become a bomb-maker. The article noted that Abdul-Rahman had searched for parade locations, including trashcans along the Pride March route, and was found with tactical gear, military items, and other equipment at the time of his arrest. Additional reporting on the story was provided by the [Associated Press](#) (09/18, Shipkowski), [CBS News](#) (09/18, Ballesteros, Seiders, Snyder), [WPVI \(ABC-6\)](#) (09/18, Ballesteros), [WCAU \(NBC-10\)](#) (09/18, Mitman), [WTFX \(Fox-29\)](#) (09/18, Payne), the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (09/18, Palmer), and [Newsmax](#) (09/18, McManus).

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## COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

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### **How Elon Musk Amplified Content From a Suspected Russian Election Interference Plot**

[NBC News](#) (09/18, Ingram) reported that Elon Musk repeatedly amplified content from Tenet Media, which was allegedly part of a Russian covert operation to influence U.S. public opinion before the 2024 election. According to the article, FBI Director Christopher Wray described the operation as an attempt to "trick Americans into unwittingly consuming foreign propaganda," with Tenet Media ceasing operations after a federal indictment linked its employees to Russia-backed media. The article noted that Musk's engagement with Tenet Media's content appeared to be unwitting, as he shared their posts over 60 times, amplifying conservative, Russia-aligned viewpoints.

### **Internal Watchdog Says State Department Mishandled Iran Envoy's Clearance**

[Politico](#) (09/18, Toosi) reported that the State Department mishandled the security clearance suspension of Iran special envoy Rob Malley, causing "significant confusion" about his permitted work activities. According to the article, Malley's clearance was suspended over a year ago, and he has since been under FBI investigation for allegedly mishandling classified information, including potentially moving it to his personal email. The article noted that the FBI probe is also examining whether foreign actors could have accessed the information, while Republican lawmakers continue to question both the FBI investigation and the State Department's handling of Malley's leave.

### **Microsoft President Says Election Has Become 'Iran vs. Trump,' and 'Russia vs. Harris'**

[WIRED](#) (09/18, Cameron) reported that representatives from Google, Apple, and Meta testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee on the need to address foreign influence campaigns ahead of the upcoming U.S. elections. According to the article, Senator Mark Warner stressed the importance of combating disinformation funded by Russia, Iran, and China, while the FBI revealed in an affidavit that it had seized 32 Russian-linked domains used for spreading propaganda, including AI-generated content. The article noted that despite tech companies' efforts to ban entities like RT, Russian influence actors have repeatedly used their platforms for paid ads. [The Hill](#) (09/18, Nazzaro) added that Microsoft President Brad Smith highlighted the serious threat of foreign actors, including

Russia, Iran, and China, attempting to influence the 2024 U.S. election. According to the article, Smith referenced an FBI announcement about Iranian hacking targeting the Trump campaign and Russia's involvement in a disinformation video falsely accusing Kamala Harris of a hit-and-run. The article noted that the FBI observed "increasingly aggressive Iranian activity" this election cycle, while Smith urged the tech community to defend against foreign influence, especially through AI-generated content.

### **Opinion: Why the Secrecy Around the Foreign Source of the Springfield Hoax Bomb Threats?**

An opinion piece from the [National Review](#) (09/18, Geraghty) reported that Ohio Governor Mike DeWine's office has not disclosed the foreign source behind a series of bomb threat hoaxes targeting Springfield schools, aiming to prevent further threats. According to the article, the FBI has publicly warned that Russia, China, and Iran seek to influence the 2024 election by sowing discord, which aligns with the motives behind these threats. The article noted that the Intelligence Community views Russia as the leading foreign influence actor, with Iran increasing efforts and China focusing on down-ballot races. The author assessed that the government's lack of transparency raises concerns about its handling of foreign threats and national security.

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## **CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS**

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### **Veteran CIA Officer Who Drugged and Sexually Assaulted Dozens of Women Gets 30 Years in Prison**

The [Associated Press](#) (09/18, Mustian, Goodman) reported that a longtime CIA officer who drugged, photographed and sexually assaulted more than two dozen women in postings around the world was sentenced to 30 years in federal prison Wednesday after an emotional hearing in which victims described being deceived by a man who appeared kind, educated and part of an agency "that is supposed to protect the world from evil." According to the article, Brian Jeffrey Raymond, with a graying beard and orange prison jumpsuit, sat dejectedly as he heard his punishment for one of the most egregious misconduct cases in the CIA's history. It was chronicled in his own library of more than 500 images that showed him in some cases straddling and groping his nude, unconscious victims. Prosecutors say the 48-year-old Raymond's assaults date to 2006 and tracked his career in Mexico, Peru, and other countries, all following a similar pattern. A DOJ [press release](#) quoted FBI Assistant Director in Charge David Sundberg of the Washington Field Office, who said, "For 14 years, Raymond exploited his trusted position as a U.S. government representative to lure women into his confidence, he then drugged and sexually assaulted them and took explicit photos and videos of them without their consent. The FBI thanks the brave women who shared information that furthered this investigation. We recognize our domestic and foreign law enforcement partners who helped bring Raymond to justice for his reprehensible crimes." [Fox News](#) (09/18, Casiano), [Washington Post](#) (09/18, Hsu), and [Newsweek](#) (09/18, Venegas) also reported on the story.

### **Continued Reporting: FBI Investigates Suspicious Packages Sent to Election Officials in Multiple States**

The [New York Post](#) (09/18, King) reported that election officials in more than a dozen states have received suspicious packages in recent days, triggering security fears less than seven weeks before millions of Americans go to the polls to elect the next president and Congress. Several state election offices, including in Kansas and Iowa, were briefly evacuated after receiving the parcels, which have not been found to contain hazardous material. The article quoted spokespeople for the US Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) and FBI, who said, "Some of the letters contained an unknown substance and we are working closely with our law enforcement partners to respond to each incident and safely collect the letters, we are also working with our partners to determine how many letters were sent, the individual or individuals responsible for the letters, and the motive behind the letters." In at least one case, the sender of a package was listed as the "United States Traitor Elimination Army." Many of the bundles contained a white, powdery substance, according to local officials. [USA TODAY](#) (09/18, Gomez), the [Guardian](#) (09/18, Tait), and [CBS News](#) (09/18, Video) also reported on the story.

### **Continued Reporting: Trump Assassination Attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania**

*The Secret Service's Failure to Halt a Tragedy at a Trump Rally*

The [New York Times](#) (09/18, Sullivan, Kelly) reported that several lapses are emerging as key reasons the U.S. Secret Service failed to protect former President Donald J. Trump from an assassination attempt at a campaign rally on July 13 in Butler, Pa., a [New York Times](#) investigation has found. According to the article, the agency's failures at the Butler Farm Show grounds — where a gunman's bullets grazed Trump's ear, wounded two rally attendees and killed another — are expected to be laid bare in coming weeks in an internal assessment delivered by the Secret Service

itself and in a report from an independent Senate investigation. But the pressures on the agency have taken on even greater urgency in light of what the FBI identified as another attempt on Mr. Trump's life at his golf course in West Palm Beach, Fla., on Sunday. The article mentioned that Senator Richard Blumenthal, Democrat of Connecticut and the chairman of a Senate subcommittee investigating the security failures in Butler, said that what happened on July 13 was clearly preventable. "Some of the lapses," he said, "are so egregious as to be almost unbelievable." Interviews with federal, state and local officials and a review of documents provide an outline of how the planning process left vulnerabilities that allowed a 20-year-old video game enthusiast to open fire on Trump. The article stated that the most glaring problem was the multiple levels of deficient and confusing communications between the Secret Service and the local law enforcement agencies it was working with that day. The most prominent of those breakdowns involve warehouses, owned by AGR International, next to the rally site. The gunman, Thomas Crooks of Bethel Park, Pa., climbed on the roof of one of them to shoot at Trump. The article noted that the Times documented in interviews a series of discussions between the Secret Service and local law enforcement officials about the warehouses, showing not only that the failure to secure them was avoidable but also that the risk was very much on the minds of the personnel charged with securing the area. On July 12, during a six-hour walk-through, the Secret Service was still discussing ways to prevent the warehouses from being accessed by the public, including the possibility of adding a police patrol or parking farm equipment nearby. Despite all the talk, the warehouses were left unguarded.

### **A Former Officer Texted a Photo of the Bloodied Tyre Nichols to His Ex-Girlfriend**

The [Associated Press](#) (09/18, Sainz) reported that a former Memphis police officer charged in the fatal beating of Tyre Nichols sent his ex-girlfriend a photo of the badly injured man on the night he was punched, kicked and hit with a police baton following a traffic stop, according to trial testimony Wednesday. Brittany Leake, a Memphis officer and Demetrius Haley's former girlfriend, testified during the criminal trial that she was on the phone with Haley when officers pulled Nichols over for a traffic stop. She said she heard a "commotion," including verbal orders for someone to give officers his hands. According to the article, the call ended, but Haley later texted the photo in a group chat comprising Haley, Leake and her godsister, she testified. Prosecutors displayed the photo for the jury. It showed Nichols with his eyes closed, on the ground with what appeared to be blood near his mouth and his hands behind his back. The article noted that Haley, Tadarrius Bean and Justin Smith are on trial after pleading not guilty to charges that they deprived Nichols of his civil rights through excessive force and failure to intervene, and obstructed justice through witness tampering. The Memphis Police Department fired the three men, along with Emmitt Martin III and Desmond Mills Jr., after Nichols' death. The beating was caught on police video, which was released publicly. The officers were later indicted on the federal charges. Martin and Mills have taken plea deals. The article stated that earlier Wednesday, Martin was on the witness stand for a third day. Defense attorneys tried to show inconsistencies between Martin's statements to investigators and his court testimony. Martin acknowledged lying about what happened to Memphis Police Department internal investigators, to try to cover up and "justify what I did." But Martin said he told the truth to FBI investigators after he pleaded guilty in August, including statements about feeling pressure on his duty belt where his gun was located during the traffic stop, but not being able to see if Nichols was trying to get his gun. Martin has testified that he said "let go of my gun" during the traffic stop. [ABC News](#) (09/18, Negussie) also reported on the story.

### **Continued Reporting: Jeffrey Epstein Accomplice Ghislaine Maxwell's Sex Crime Convictions Upheld on Appeal**

[MSNBC](#) (09/18, Rubin) reported that a federal appeals court upheld the sex crime convictions of Jeffrey Epstein accomplice Ghislaine Maxwell on Tuesday. The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said it found "no errors" in what it called a complex case, rejecting several arguments from Maxwell, including that Epstein's unusual non-prosecution agreement with federal prosecutors in Florida barred prosecutors from the Southern District of New York from bringing the case against her. According to the article, the Florida agreement, which followed state and federal investigations into allegations of Epstein's unlawful sexual activity, didn't bind the New York office, the three-judge 2nd Circuit panel ruled, despite the fact that the 2007 agreement said that the United States agreed not to bring any criminal charges against any potential Epstein co-conspirators. The article added that the panel cited precedent that says plea agreements only bind the U.S. Attorney's office in the district where the plea is entered, unless it affirmatively appears that the agreement contemplates a broader restriction. There's "nothing in the NPA that affirmatively shows that the NPA was intended to bind multiple districts," the panel said, referring to the non-prosecution agreement, adding that nothing presented to the appellate judges indicated that the New York office

was notified or had approved of the Florida agreement. Maxwell coordinated, facilitated and contributed to Epstein's sexual abuse of women and underage girls, the panel noted in recounting the history of the case.

### **Six Members of a Kansas Cult Convicted After Forcing Kids to Work 16 Hours a Day**

The [Independent](#) (09/18, Bedigan) reported that six members of a Kansas-based cult have been convicted over a conspiracy in which they forced children as young as eight to work 16-hour days under the threat of "eternal hellfire." The former members of the United Nation of Islam kept dozens of victims in "deplorable conditions" in overcrowded facilities that were often overrun with mold and rats. According to the article, Kaaba Majeed, 50, Yunus Rassoul, 39, James Staton, 62, Randolph Rodney Hadley, 49, Daniel Aubrey Jenkins, 43, and Dana Peach, 60, were convicted of conspiracy to commit forced labor following a 26-day trial. The six defendants were all former high-ranking members of the cult, or were wives to the organization's founder, Royall Jenkins. A DOJ [press release](#) quoted Special Agent in Charge Stephen Cyrus of the FBI Kansas City Field Office, who said, "Under the guise of false pretenses and coercion, these victims, some of whom were as young as eight years old, endured inhumane and abhorrent conditions, today's convictions should serve as a stark warning that forced labor will not be tolerated by the FBI."

### **Pennsylvania Man Pleads Guilty to Fantasy Football-Related Bomb, Mass Shooting Threats**

[CBS News](#) (09/18, Dougherty) reported that a Philadelphia man has pleaded guilty to making fake fantasy football-related bomb and mass shooting threats in Norway and Iowa, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. In a news release, federal prosecutors said 25-year-old Matthew Gabriel pleaded guilty to two counts of interstate and foreign communication of a threat to injure. The incidents happened in August 2023 and March 2024. Federal prosecutors said Gabriel and a member of his fantasy football league got into an argument in their group chat in August 2023. After learning his league-mate was headed to Norway to study abroad, Gabriel submitted an anonymous online tip to the Norwegian Police Security Service, claiming the member of his group chat was planning to carry out a mass shooting. A DOJ [press release](#) quoted Wayne A. Jacobs, Special Agent in Charge of FBI Philadelphia, who said, "You do not get to express emotions through violence or threats of violence, we thank our international partners for their assistance in bringing together this case. The FBI will continue to work alongside partners at all levels to protect our community."

### **California Woman Sentenced to Nine Years in Prison for Fraudulent Scheme to Steal California Unemployment Insurance Benefits**

[CBS News](#) (09/18, Castaneda) reported that a judge sentenced a Northern California woman to nine years in prison on Tuesday for fraudulently obtaining more than \$1 million in unemployment benefits during the height of the COVID pandemic. According to the article, Kaymeisha Keyes, 33, of San Joaquin County pleaded guilty in February to wire fraud and aggravated identity theft as part of a scheme to defraud the state's Employment Development Department. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California said Keyes filed dozens of fraudulent claims with the department to obtain unemployment benefits under the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act between April 2020 and August 2021. The article added that according to prosecutors, Keyes collected stolen personal information from people, including names, birth dates, and Social Security numbers, and used their identities to file fraudulent claims of lost employment during the pandemic. Keyes used the third-party security firm ID.me to submit fake driver's licenses with photos of Keyes and her associates and requested the unemployment funds to be sent to addresses she controlled, including her home in Tracy. Once the unemployment funds, loaded on EDD debit cards, were in her possession, prosecutors said she activated the cards and spent the money on herself. The scheme sought more than \$2 million in unemployment benefits; Keyes was able to obtain more than \$1 million in EDD funds. A DOJ [press release](#) noted that this case was the product of an investigation by the FBI, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Office of Correctional Safety, and the California EDD – Investigation Division with assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

### **DC Council Begins Investigation Into Trayon White Over Bribery Accusations**

The [Washington Examiner](#) (09/18, Mallon) reported that the Council of the District of Columbia voted on Tuesday to conduct an investigation into Councilman Trayon White related to his federal bribery charges and other possible violations of council rules. The article added that this was the first council meeting since White was arrested by FBI agents outside of a luxury high-rise in the Navy Yard neighborhood last month. He is accused of accepting a \$156,000 bribe in exchange for using his position of power to push for city officials to re-sign several contracts for violence intervention services valued at \$5.2 million. White has pleaded not guilty on federal charges. The motion

for the investigation was passed unanimously by the council, with White and Councilman Kenyan R. McDuffie, the chairman of the ad hoc committee investigating White, both voting "present."

### **FBI Conducts Investigation at Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing In Indiana**

[WRTV \(ABC-6\)](#) (09/18, Howell) reported that federal agents, along with assistance from the Zionsville Police Department, conducted an investigation this morning at the Rahal Letterman Lanigan headquarters. The [Indianapolis Star](#) (09/18, Benbow) reported that Zionsville Mayor John Stehr said, "The FBI asked us to assist this morning as they served a warrant at the Rahal Letterman Lanigan headquarters building, our officers stayed outside as the FBI agents entered the building." [Racer](#) (09/18, Pruett) reported that the FBI is alleged to have instructed employees within RLL to leave their computers and related electronic devices in place, gather their belongings, and depart the building as agents began an investigation. The source of the investigation is alleged to involve a former employee of the Andretti Global IndyCar team, who left the team to join RLL in a senior engineering role, and the alleged transfer of intellectual property from their former team to their current team. The FBI is also alleged to have visited the Andretti shop in August to look for proof of possible IP-related improprieties. [WXIN \(Fox-59\)](#) (09/18, Schroeder) also reported on the story.

### **Florida Sheriff Spending Detailed Amid Possible FBI Investigation**

[WBBH \(NBC-20\)](#) (09/18, Elias) reported that the outlet has uncovered new documents that reveal tens of thousands of tax dollars going to consulting fees inside the Lee County Sheriff's office each month. This is after allegations of money laundering and claims that Sheriff Carmine Marceno is under investigation by the FBI. According to the article, the contract for former honorary deputy and consultant Ken Romano shows he was paid \$5,700 a month and he claims he was ordered to give back \$1,700 to the sheriff's father to help pay for a car. Meanwhile, the outlet has uncovered 14 other similar contracts with people who are receiving taxpayer money including a former state senator, a personal trainer, and even what appears to be a dog. The contracts combined total a whopping \$53,000 a month in taxpayer money or \$636,000 annually. Romano signed a contract to work as a contractor for Marceno and it shows he was paid \$5,700 a month for what he said in a recording, was next to no work. "If I went in five times in the six months I worked there, it was a lot," Romano could be heard saying in a recording that has reportedly been turned over to the FBI by Marceno's former deputy and now write-in opponent in the November election. Romano said every month he would take \$1,700 and funnel it to Marceno's father so he could pay for a Mercedes. The article added that FGCU Constitutional Law Professor Dr. Pamela Seay explained that with an active FBI investigation, it's more likely that not all participants, including the sheriff, have been asked not to comment until the investigation is complete.

### **Two Juveniles Charged With Felonies for Allegedly Making School Shooting Threats in Indiana**

[CBS News](#) (09/18, Bizzle) reported that a 14-year-old girl and an 11-year-old boy from Northwest Indiana are facing charges, accused of making threats about school shootings this week. The Lake County Sheriff's Department said a police officer on Sunday was made aware of a girl, 14, from Gary, Indiana, who reportedly posted a threatening comment to a TikTok video. The article added that during an investigation, the suspect told police she was viewing a video on TikTok and posted a comment about shooting at a school, but couldn't remember the exact statement and that it did not mention a specific school or student. Relatives of the girl confirmed that she had told them about the comment. The officer also learned that the FBI had been investigating the incident. They found the account where the post was made and tracked it to a phone at a Gary address. The account originally displaying the comment has since been banned by TikTok, the department said. The girl was placed into custody at the Lake County Juvenile Center and was charged with felony intimidation.

### **FBI Agent Who Worked on North Carolina Girl Case 24 Years Ago Sees Hope in New Evidence**

[WCNC \(NBC-36\)](#) (09/18, Ruffes) reported that the disappearance of the 9-year-old from Shelby 24 years ago "haunts" retired FBI agent Richard Shaffer, who said he carried her photo with him for years. According to the article, it has been more than 24 years since Richard Shaffer arrived on scene in Shelby, called in by then-Cleveland County Sheriff Dan Crawford to help investigate the disappearance of a 9-year-old girl from her home. Even after all that time, the retired FBI agent still remembers the neighborhood and first interaction with Asha Degree's family. Investigators learned Asha disappeared from her bedroom in the middle of the night on Valentine's Day, sometime between 2:30 a.m. and 6:30 a.m. There was no sign of forced entry and no promising scent trail for search dogs to follow. The article added that at least two people claimed they saw a young female walking along North Carolina Highway 18 around 4 a.m. One person said when they turned around to check on her, the girl ran into the woods and was not seen again. Another tipster told detectives they saw a young woman get into a green

car from the 1970s. The FBI said they were looking for a Ford Thunderbird or Lincoln Mark IV in connection with Degree's disappearance. The article noted that last week, several search scenes around Cleveland County and beyond stirred the community with curiosity and hope. Evidence collected included an older green vehicle similar in appearance to the one wanted in connection with Degree's disappearance. Days later, investigators confirmed the scenes were related to Asha's case and that new evidence pointed to her being a "victim of homicide," with her death concealed. While it is not the break in the case many were hoping to hear, it is a break that, Shaffer hopes, is the start of more answers for the Degree family. The [Independent](#) (09/18, Del Rey) also reported on the story.

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## FINANCIAL CRIME & CORPORATE SCANDALS

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### SEC Settles Insider Trading Case Tied to Theft From Law Firm

[Reuters](#) (09/18, Thomas) reported that the cousin of an FBI trainee who illegally obtained information about a planned Merck & Co acquisition from U.S. law firm Covington & Burling has agreed to pay nearly \$33,000 to settle civil insider trading charges brought by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. The article added that the SEC on Wednesday entered a consent judgment against Philip Markin, who was accused of making more than \$16,000 trading illegally on shares of Pandion Therapeutics after receiving information stolen by his cousin Seth, a former FBI agent-in-training. The article mentioned that Seth Markin pleaded guilty last year after prosecutors said he stole information about Merck's then-pending \$1.85 billion acquisition of Pandion from his girlfriend at the time, a law firm associate at Covington who was working on the Merck deal at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Seth Markin then tipped off others about the deal, including his cousin Philip, the SEC alleged. Seth Markin pleaded guilty to related criminal charges last year. The SEC also brought civil complaints against Seth Markin and two others who allegedly traded on Pandion stock, all of which have resulted in consent judgments against them.

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## CYBER DIVISION

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### Hackers Demand \$6 Million for Files Stolen From Seattle Airport Operator in Cyberattack

The [Associated Press](#) (09/18, Staff Writer) reported that hackers are demanding \$6 million in bitcoin from the operator of the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport for documents they stole during a cyberattack last month and posted on the dark web this week, an airport official said Wednesday. The article added that the Port of Seattle, which owns and runs the airport, has decided not to pay, the official said. The airport previously linked the attack to a ransomware gang called Rhysida, and now the FBI is conducting a criminal investigation, said Lance Lyttle, the port's managing director of aviation. Lyttle told a U.S. Senate committee that the airport appears to have stopped the attack, but the hackers were able to encrypt some data. The article mentioned that port officials have said paying the ransomware would not be a good use of taxpayer money. The airport is still recovering from the attack, which began Aug. 24. The attack was launched at a busy time, a week before the Labor Day holiday weekend. The [Seattle Times](#) (09/18, Takahama) also reported on the story.

### CISA, FBI Issue Alert on Cross-Site Scripting Vulnerabilities

[ExecutiveGov](#) (09/18, Petersen) reported that the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and the FBI have released a Secure by Design Alert concerning cross-site scripting vulnerabilities, or XSS. CISA said Tuesday that XSS can be prevented and ought not to be present in software products, yet they continue to appear, providing threat actors with exploit opportunities. The article added that according to the alert, XSS can be brought about by the failure of a software maker to properly escape, validate or sanitize inputs, making it possible for threat actors to inject malicious scripts into web applications. The alert calls on leaders at technology manufacturers to instruct personnel to conduct a review of such deficiencies and develop a strategic plan to prevent them moving forward. The alert also recommends that technology manufacturers review the principles of secure by design software as outlined in a previous guidance.

### DOJ, FBI Need Better Metrics for Tracking Ransomware Disruption Efforts, Audit Finds

The [Record](#) (09/18, Greig) reported that the DOJ and FBI need to redefine what counts as success in fighting the scourge of ransomware, a new internal audit recommends. In the 26-page audit released Tuesday, DOJ Inspector

General Michael Horowitz outlined the department's actions related to ransomware from April 2021 to September 2023. The report also takes into consideration the takedown of LockBit, which took place in early 2024. The article added that the inquiry found three areas the DOJ and FBI need to improve on to more effectively fight ransomware. The DOJ needs a better way "to determine what metrics for the ransomware threat, including metrics tracking disruption efforts, are most impactful, and which demonstrate the effectiveness of its actions to combat the ransomware threat." According to the article, documents examined by the investigators found that "success" at the DOJ in relation to ransomware is based on increasing the percentage of reported ransomware incidents "where cases are opened, added to existing cases, resolved or action was taken within 72 hours to 65 percent." The FBI said action was taken within 72 hours in 47% of ransomware incidents, an improvement on the 39% for 2022. The FBI and DOJ also sought to increase the number of seizures or forfeitures in ransomware matters by 10 percent in 2022 and 2023. The article noted that the report lauds the DOJ and FBI for several infrastructure takedowns involving ransomware gangs like LockBit, Hive and AlphV — which allowed them to distribute hundreds of decryption keys to current and past victims. The FBI specifically has developed a strategy centered on targeting the actors, infrastructure, and finances that comprise and enable the ransomware ecosystem. The investigators said they believed ransomware disruptions — including the number of disruptions and the number of decryptor keys provided to victims — should be tracked by the DOJ as important metrics of success. But according to the audit the DOJ has not published an action plan around ransomware for the next two-year period nor reported any progress over the previous two fiscal years on performance.gov, as required. The article mentioned that Bradley Weinsheimer, associate deputy attorney general, sent a letter in response to the report concurring with the findings and pledging to work on the issues. FBI Assistant Director of the Cyber Division Bryan Vorndran similarly agreed with the recommendations and said the FBI would better define the role of the National Cyber Investigative Joint Task Force.

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## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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### **51 Arrested Globally as Police Dismantle Encrypted Network, Ghost**

The [Epoch Times](#) (09/18, Summers) reported that a global police operation has dismantled an encrypted communication platform called Ghost, which was allegedly used by criminals, leading to 51 arrests worldwide. The Europol-led operation involved a series of "coordinated raids and technical interventions" and took down Ghost servers in France and Iceland, according to Europol's Sept. 18 statement. According to the article, Ghost was used as a tool to "carry out a wide range of criminal activities, including large-scale drug trafficking, money laundering, instances of extreme violence and other forms of serious and organized crime," Europol stated. The European Union's law enforcement agency stated that 51 suspects were arrested: 38 in Australia, 11 in the Republic of Ireland, one in Canada, and one in Italy. Among those arrested in Australia was Jay Je Yoon Jung, 32, who is allegedly the platform's creator and administrator. The article added that an operational task force to tackle and track the network was established by Europol in March 2022, involving law enforcement authorities from Australia, Canada, France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United States. A joint investigation team was then set up between French and U.S. authorities in January. Although the FBI was involved in the operation, there have been no arrests in the United States so far as a result of intercepted messages on Ghost. The [Independent](#) (09/18, Aodha) reported that the infiltration of the platform led to a series of searches carried out on Monday evening at 27 premises across Dublin and counties in the east of Ireland, involving 300 gardai. Representatives from Europol, the Australian Federal Police and the FBI were in Ireland for the operation. [9 News](#) (09/18, Staff Writer), [Computer Weekly](#) (09/18, Skelton), [Aljazeera](#) (09/18, Staff Writer), [Info Security](#) (09/18, Poireault), and [BBC](#) (09/18, Halpin) also reported on the story.

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## CAPITOL VIOLENCE NEWS

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### **Texas Man Convicted Of Two Misdemeanor Counts for Joining the Mob on Jan. 6, 2021**

[WUSA \(CBS-9\)](#) (09/18, Fischer) reported that federal prosecutors are seeking the maximum sentence for Ryan Zink, a Texas man convicted of two misdemeanors related to his participation in the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot. According to the article, Prosecutors argued that Zink has shown no remorse for his actions, has falsely portrayed himself as a

victim, and continued to promote his involvement in the riot during an unsuccessful run for Congress. While part of the mob on Jan. 6, they said, he rushed through Capitol grounds yelling, "We knocked down the gate!", "We want Trump!" and "We're about to bum rush this s\*\*\*!" Afterward, he commented on Facebook "they are trying to charge us with sedition they will have to kill me im [sic] not coming quietly." The article noted that Zink's defense attorney argues that he was acting as a reporter on January 6th and is asking for a sentence of no prison time, no restitution, and a \$50 fine.

### **Wyoming Man Arrested by FBI for Actions During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach**

The [Wyoming Tribune](#) (09/18, Staff Writer) reported that August Garcia, a Laramie man, was arrested by the FBI for his involvement in the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol breach, including allegedly assaulting law enforcement officers. According to the article, Garcia entered the Capitol through the Parliamentarian Door, where he was captured on video physically confronting U.S. Capitol Police officers and participating in the riot alongside others. The article noted that Garcia's case is being handled by the U.S. Attorney's Office and the DOJ's Counterterrorism Section, with the FBI continuing its investigation into the events of Jan. 6, as more than 1,500 individuals have been charged to date. The article also noted that the FBI received a tip from a known source who provided images of Garcia and could allegedly identify him through open-source research, according to the complaint and arrest warrant.

### **Two Men Arrested in Northwest Ohio on Jan. 6 Riot Charges**

The [Toledo Blade](#) (09/18, Staff Writer) reported that two men, Todd Michael Bills and Richard Gutowski, were arrested in northwest Ohio for their alleged involvement in the Jan. 6, 2021, U.S. Capitol riot. According to the article, both men face federal charges, including entering a restricted building and disorderly conduct, with Bills being arrested by the FBI in Toledo and Gutowski in Defiance. The article noted that FBI records indicated Bills' presence at the Capitol based on cellphone data and video evidence, while Gutowski had voluntarily reported himself to the FBI shortly after the riots.

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## **OTHER FBI NEWS**

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### **Ship Owner Cut Corners on Repairs Before Deadly Baltimore Bridge Collapse, U.S. Says in \$100M Lawsuit**

The [Associated Press](#) (09/18, Skene, Richer) reported that the owner and manager of the cargo ship that caused the deadly Baltimore bridge collapse recklessly cut corners and ignored known electrical problems on the vessel, the DOJ alleged Wednesday in a lawsuit seeking to recover more than \$100 million that the government spent to clear the underwater debris and reopen the city's port. The article mentioned that the lawsuit filed in Maryland provides the most detailed account yet of the cascading series of failures on the Dali that left its pilots and crew helpless in the face of looming disaster. The DOJ alleges that mechanical and electrical systems on the massive ship had been "jury-rigged" and improperly maintained, culminating in a power outage moments before it crashed into a support column on the Francis Scott Key Bridge in March. Six construction workers were killed when the bridge toppled into the water. The article added that DOJ officials refused to answer questions Wednesday about whether a criminal investigation into the collapse remains ongoing. FBI agents boarded the vessel in April. The ship was leaving Baltimore for Sri Lanka when its steering failed because of the power loss. Six men on a road crew, who were filling potholes during an overnight shift, fell to their deaths. The collapse snarled commercial shipping traffic through the Port of Baltimore for months before the channel was fully opened in June. [Reuters](#) (09/18, Shepardson, Goudsward), [CNN](#) (09/18, Rabinowitz), [Politico](#) (09/18, Marquette), and the [Daily Beast](#) (09/18, Thompson) also reported on the story.

### **FBI Springfield Reminds Public There Are Consequences to Hoax Threats**

[WICS \(ABC-20\)](#) (09/18, Staff Writer) reported that FBI Springfield is reminding the public of the consequences of making a hoax threat against a school or other public place. These threats—often issued via text message, phone calls, email, or posted on social media—are taken very seriously. FBI Springfield works closely with local law enforcement partners to fully analyze and investigate all threats to determine credibility. The article quoted Special Agent in Charge Christopher Johnson, who said, "The FBI takes every single hoax threat very seriously because they put innocent people at risk and can cause severe emotional distress for victims. Making hoax threats is not a prank, it's a federal crime that can result in prison time, as always, we encourage members of the public to remain vigilant and immediately report anything they consider suspicious to law enforcement." [WMBD \(CBS-31\)](#) (09/18, Lisitza) also reported on the story.

## **FBI Launches Awareness Campaign After Sharp Increase in Various Scams**

[KVOA \(NBC-4\)](#) (09/18, Nylander) reported that the FBI is trying to raise awareness of various schemes as it sees a sharp increase in victims. The FBI has just launched a new attempt at trying to save people's money. It's called "Take a Beat." As in, pause and think before ever sending that random person or robot over the phone your money. The article quoted Agent Paul Sparke of FBI Tucson, who said, "They end up scamming them out of thousands sometimes tens of thousands of dollars. Especially here in Tucson and up in Phoenix, we have a high percentage of retirees, people who are living on fixed incomes so we really see the harsh impact and the reality." According to the article, to try and turn things around, the FBI has launched its "Take a Beat" initiative to raise awareness about the many scams out there from the classic romance scams and fishy phone calls, to more elaborate cryptocurrency schemes.

## **How an Overlooked County Landed the New FBI Headquarters and Tech Jobs**

The [Christian Science Monitor](#) (09/18, Hills) reported that the change in Prince George's County, Maryland, is obvious to people who've long lived and worked in this community bordering Washington, D.C., and the Potomac River. The county has nearly completely recovered from the considerable job losses caused by the pandemic and rebounded from the Great Recession, when it had the highest foreclosure rate in the state. The article added that Prince George's, with a population of almost 1 million people, is also America's second-wealthiest majority-Black county – just recently surpassed by neighboring Charles County – but businesses and people here struggled during the pandemic, like the rest of the country. The article stated that signals of the county's revitalization range from splashy announcements, like the FBI last year picking Prince George's as the site of its headquarters, to ambitious infrastructure projects, like plans for 10 additional Metro subway stations. Between 2011 and 2021, the county led the state in job growth. The article mentioned that Maryland officials also raised equity arguments during and after their bid to woo the FBI headquarters across the border from Washington. A 2023 report from Urban Institute found that investment has not been evenly distributed across the Washington region. In particular, average investment per household in Prince George's County is significantly lower than in other area counties.

## **Congress Attempts to Dodge a Government Shutdown as Funding Push Fails to the House Over Controversial Voting Bill**

[USA TODAY](#) (09/18, Beggin) reported that with just 12 days to go until a potential government shutdown, the House attempted – and failed – to pass a 6-month funding extension that was tied to a contentious piece of voting legislation on Wednesday. The article added that the chamber voted 220-202 to defeat the measure, which would fund the government at existing levels through the end of March 2025 and advance a bill that would require people to show proof of citizenship in order to vote. The effort has been a pet project of House Speaker Mike Johnson, (R-LA), and former President Donald Trump. However, the legislation has received widespread criticism from Democrats, as non-citizens already can't vote in federal elections. Critics also argued it could make voting harder for millions of Americans who don't have easy access to their citizenship documents. The article stated that during a government shutdown, federal agencies that are classified as "nonessential" are sent home and paid once the government reopens. "Essential" workers – those necessary to keep the most crucial elements of the federal government functioning – would keep working and receive their pay. The U.S. military and federal law enforcement agencies including the FBI, DEA, and prison staff, as well as the Secret Service, Coast Guard and border security agents would also keep working.

## **Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Announces Long-Awaited Policy Banning Deputy Gangs**

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (09/18, Blakinger) reported that nearly two years after Sheriff Robert Luna took office and promised to eradicate deputy gangs, and three years after state lawmakers greenlit a measure requiring police agencies to ban the groups, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department unveiled a much-awaited anti-gang policy Wednesday to comply with the law. According to the article, the controversial tattooed groups and their alleged misconduct have plagued the nation's largest Sheriff's Department for decades, spurring oversight investigations, an FBI probe and a stream of lawsuits. But leaders have been hamstrung in their efforts to eradicate the inked groups, in part because being in a gang was never explicitly grounds for firing. The article noted that when it takes effect in 30 days, officials say the policy will ban being in a deputy gang or hate group and require department employees to participate in investigations into the groups. It also will require that allegations of gang membership be referred to the state commission responsible for certifying – or revoking the certification of – peace officers across California. Violating the policy can result in discipline, including termination.

### **Continued Reporting: Texas Pipeline Burns for a Third Day; Residents Allowed to Return Home**

The [Associated Press](#) (09/18, Lozano) reported that a pipeline fire that forced hundreds of people to flee their homes in the Houston suburbs burned for a third day Wednesday, with officials saying they don't expect it to be extinguished until sometime Thursday evening. Officials said residents who had to evacuate would be allowed to return to their homes starting Wednesday evening. Authorities have offered few details about what prompted the driver of an SUV to hit an aboveground valve on the pipeline on Monday, sparking the blaze. The article added that the pipeline company on Wednesday called it an accident. Deer Park officials said preliminary investigations by police and FBI agents found no evidence of a terrorist attack. [CBS News](#) (09/18, Staff Writer), and [Reuters](#) (09/18, Staff Writer) also reported on the story.

### **Opinion: Trump Says Crime Is Up. The FBI Says It's Down. Who's Right?**

An opinion piece by the [Washington Post](#) (09/18, Geraghty) stated that crime is down from last year, and down significantly from the bad old days of the 1990s, but it is only now returning to pre-pandemic levels. The author added that in June, Attorney General Merrick Garland greeted the latest quarterly update of available FBI statistics like a conquering hero, saying, "This data makes clear that last year's historic decline in violent crime is continuing. In the first three months of this year, violent crime has decreased by over 15 percent compared to same period last year, and murder has decreased by over 26 percent." The author mentioned that during the presidential debate with Kamala Harris, Trump argued that "the FBI — they were defrauding statements. They didn't include the worst cities. They didn't include the cities with the worst crime. It was a fraud." According to the author, Trump was partially correct; there's no reason to think that the FBI statistics are deliberately fraudulent, but large gaps and inconsistencies in the collection of data mean the numbers aren't offering a complete picture. The article noted that the Marshall Project explains, in 2021, "in an effort to fully modernize the system, the FBI stopped taking data from the old summary system and only accepted data through the new system. Thousands of police agencies fell through the cracks because they didn't catch up with the changes on time." That year, Miami-Dade, New York City and Los Angeles did not submit their data. Philadelphia reported nine months' worth of data; Chicago reported seven months, and Phoenix reported only one month. For 2021, the FBI noted, "crime estimates will fill in the gaps where data is not available." The author explained that getting a grip on what's happening with crime in the United States over the past few years is considerably more difficult than politicians, government officials, and journalists tend to acknowledge.

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## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

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### **Lebanon Reels as More Devices Explode, Casualties Rise**

[Wall Street Journal](#), [BBC](#), [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#), [Washington Post](#)

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## **OTHER WASHINGTON NEWS**

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### **Sean Combs Must Stay in Jail Until Trial After Judge Rejects Appeal**

[New York Times](#), [Associated Press](#), [Rolling Stone](#), [BBC](#), [Washington Post](#)

### **Federal Reserve Signals End to Inflation Fight With a Sizable Half-Point Rate Cut**

[Associated Press](#), [New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#), [BBC](#), [CNBC](#)

### **New Jersey's OceanFirst Bank Settles U.S. Redlining Charges**

[Reuters](#)

### **111 Republican Former Officials Endorse Harris, Say Trump Is 'Unfit to Serve'**

[CNBC](#)

### **EPA Retaliated Against Three Scientists, Says Watchdog**

[The Hill](#)

### **Work Has Begun on an Inauguration Stage at the Capitol. The Last One Became Part of Jan. 6 Attack**

[Associated Press](#)

## **Trump Tries to Close Off a Chief Line of Attack: That He's a Danger to Democracy**

[New York Times](#)

## **Judge Trims Legal Fees for Office Depot Over 'Excessive' Billing in Copyright Case**

[Reuters](#)

## **Facebook Parent Meta Platforms Beats Lawsuit Over Apple Privacy, Sandberg Disclosures**

[Reuters](#)

## **Judge Dismisses an Assault Lawsuit Against Knicks Owner James Dolan and Harvey Weinstein**

[Associated Press](#)

## **Trump Doubles Down on Calls to Shut down Government if GOP Can't Pass Stopgap With Election Security**

[Washington Times](#)

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## **BIG PICTURE**

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### **New York Times**

- New Explosions Rock Hezbollah, Leaving 20 Dead
- For Militants, Toll Is Mental And Physical
- Big Fed Rate Cut Shows Optimism
- Trump's Post-Election Threats Unnerve Officials
- California Mountain Town Residents Defy Risks
- How Failures by Secret Service Let Gunman Near Trump Rally

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## **WASHINGTON SCHEDULE**

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### **White House**

#### **President Biden**

- 10:00 AM: The President receives the President's Daily Brief
- 12:40 PM: The President departs the White House en route to the Economic Club of Washington, D.C.
- 1:15 PM: The President deliver remarks at the Economic Club of Washington, D.C.
- 1:55 PM: The President departs the Economic Club of Washington, D.C.
- 2:00 PM: The President arrives to the White House
- 2:15 PM: Press Briefing by Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre and Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers Jared Bernstein
- 7:35 PM: The President departs the White House en route to the Walter E. Washington Convention Center
- 8:45 PM: The President delivers remarks at the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute 47th Annual Awards Gala
- 9:30 PM: The President departs the Walter E. Washington Convention Center
- 9:35 PM: The President arrives to the White House

#### **Vice President Harris**

- No events scheduled.

## US Senate

- Hearings to examine how scammers are stealing from older adults, focusing on fighting fraud. – 10:00 AM – Host: Aging
- Hearings to examine fusion energy technology development and commercialization efforts. – 10:00 AM – Host: Energy and Natural Resources
- Hearings to examine long-term economic benefits and impacts from Federal infrastructure and public transportation investment. – 10:00 AM – Host: Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
- Business meeting to consider an original resolution directing the Senate Legal Counsel to bring a civil action to enforce a subpoena of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate, an original resolution authorizing the President of the Senate to certify the report of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate regarding the refusal of Dr. Ralph de la Torre to appear and testify before the Committee, and other pending calendar business. – 10:00 AM – Host: Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
- Business meeting to consider S.1306, to reauthorize the COPS ON THE BEAT grant program, S.2220
- Business meeting to consider an original resolution directing the Senate Legal Counsel to bring a civil action to enforce a subpoena of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate, an original resolution authorizing the President of the Senate to certify the report of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate regarding the refusal of Dr. Ralph de la Torre to appear and testify before the Committee, and other pending calendar business. – 10:00 AM – Host: Commerce, Science, and Transportation

## US House of Representatives

- Hearing: VAs Open Cash Register: Fraud Waste Abuse and Revenue Operations. – 9:30 AM – Host: Committee on Veterans' Affairs
- Hearing: How the CCP Uses the Law to Silence Critics and Enforce its Rule – 9:15 AM – Host: Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party
- Markup: Ratification of Subcommittee Assignments; H.J.Res. 144 Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5 United States Code of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco Firearms and Explosives Department of Justice relating to "Definition of 'Engaged in the Business' as a Dealer in Firearms"; H.R. 115 the Midnight Rules Relief Act of 2023; H.R. 358 the Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act; H.R. 8205 the Keeping Violent Offenders Off Our. – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on the Judiciary
- Hearing: Money is Policy Part II: Analyzing Select State Department Grant Awards – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Foreign Affairs
- Hearing: Israel and the Middle East at a Crossroads: How Tehrans Terror Campaign Threatens the U.S. and our Allies. – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Foreign Affairs
- Hearing: "Beyond the Border: Terrorism and Homeland Security Consequences of Illegal Immigration" – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Homeland Security
- Hearing: Holding the Biden-Harris EPA Accountable for Radical Rush-to-Green Spending. – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Energy and Commerce
- Hearing: The Cost of the Biden-Harris Energy Crisis. – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on the Budget
- Hearing: A Legacy of Incompetence: Consequences of the Biden-Harris Administrations Policy Failures. – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Oversight and Accountability

- Hearing: Member Day Hearing on Proposed Rules Changes for the 119th Congress – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Rules
- Hearing: Navigating the Blue Frontier: Evaluating the Potential of Marine Carbon Dioxide Removal Approaches – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
- Markup: Full Committee Mark-up of 16 bills: H.R. 3283 Rep. Miller-Meeks Facilitating DIGITAL Applications Act; H.R. 4235 Rep. Kim of CA Wildfire Technology Demonstration Evaluation Modernization and Optimization Act or the Wildfire Technology DEMO Act; H.R. 5103 Rep. Donalds Fishery Improvement to Streamline untimely regulatory Hurdles post Emergency Situation Act or the FISHERIES Act; H.R. 6012 Rep. Carbajal Fire Safe Electrical Corridors Act of 2023; H.R. 6085 Rep. – 10:15 AM – Host: Committee on Natural Resources
- Hearing: Federal Trade Commission Practices: A Discussion on Past Versus Present – 10:30 AM – Host: Committee on Energy and Commerce
- Hearing: Oversight of Extremism Policies in the Army. – 1:00 PM – Host: Committee on Armed Services

### Cabinet Members

- **Secretary of State Blinken** is on travel to Egypt and France from September 17-19, 2024.
- Secretary of State Blinken meets with French Foreign Minister Stéphane Séjourné in Paris, France at 5:15 PM (LOCAL).
- Secretary of State Blinken meets with French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris, France at 6:00 PM (LOCAL).
- Secretary of State Blinken participates in a working dinner with European Quint counterparts in Paris, France at 7:15 PM (LOCAL).
- **Secretary of Education Cardona** will deliver remarks and attend the CHCI Leadership Conference and Awards Gala at 5:PM (LOCAL).

### Visitors

- No events scheduled.

### General Events

- Brooking Institution: Hatch-Waxman at 40 – Thursday, September 19, 2024. Location: Brooking Institution, 9:30 AM. At the heart of U.S. drug price reduction policy is a law that is about to turn 40 years old: the Hatch-Waxman Act (HWA). The HWA, signed in September 1984, attempts to balance lower prices through generic competition with innovation incentives to brands. The law does so by lowering barriers to entry for generics and by granting various new exclusivities to the brands. The exclusivities give branded manufacturers 5-year data exclusivity for new chemical entities (NCEs) and 3-year exclusivity for NCE extensions or modifications that are supported by clinical data.
- Brooking Institution: Great power competition and overseas bases – Thursday, September 19, 2024. Location: Brooking Institution, 3:00 PM. What challenges and risks do Chinese and Russian bases pose to the United States' military strategy? How do the great powers' military postures interact and with what consequences for regional and global security? In their latest edited volume, "Great Power Competition and Overseas Bases: Chinese, Russian, and American Force Posture in the Twenty-First Century," Andrew Yeo and Isaac Kardon examine the emerging dynamics of geostrategic competition for overseas military bases and base access. On September 19, the Center for Asia Policy Studies and the Strobe Talbott Center for Security, Strategy, and Technology at Brookings will host Yeo, Kardon, and two contributors to their edited volume to discuss key findings and evaluate the implications of overseas bases in great power competition. Brookings Foreign Policy Director of Research Michael E. O'Hanlon will deliver welcoming remarks.

- Brooking Institution: The future of US climate policy: Issues at stake in the 2024 election – Thursday, September 19, 2024. Location: Brooking Institution, 3:00 PM. Climate policy has been a significant focal area at the federal level over the past three years, notably with the passage of legislation such as the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The IRA and IIJA will be essential for the transition of the United States to a carbon-free society by 2050. They will also have wide-reaching state and local impacts, including in Michigan. The 2024 election is an ideal time to examine how current U.S. climate policy is working and what the next few years could look like. For instance, many challenges remain in the implementation of the IRA and the IIJA (e.g., permitting and land use), while the impacts on major industries like automotive manufacturing are still being studied. On September 19, Brookings and the University of Michigan will bring together their policy and research expertise to explore important aspects of recent legislation as well as the future of climate policy in the United States. Please join us for a reception following the program.
- CSIS: What's Happening in North Korea? The Capital Cable #98 – Thursday, September 19, 2024. Location: Online event, 9:30 AM. What's going on in North Korea? Why did Kim Jong-un publicly reveal his visit to a uranium-enrichment facility? What can we expect from North Korea for the rest of 2024? And how will North Korea react to a new U.S. administration in 2025? Joining Mark Lippert and Victor Cha to discuss this and more are Dr. Jung Pak, former Senior Official for the DPRK, Mr. Sydney Seiler, former national intelligence officer for North Korea at the National Intelligence Council, and Dr. Katrin Katz, former National Security Council.
- CSIS: America's Warfighting Navy with Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Franchetti– Thursday, September 19, 2024. Location: Online event, 10:00 AM. Please join the CSIS International Security Program (ISP) and the U.S. Naval Institute for a Maritime Security Dialogue event featuring Admiral Lisa Franchetti, Chief of Naval Operations. Admiral Franchetti and Dr. Seth G. Jones, CSIS senior vice president and ISP director, will discuss the upcoming release of the 2024 Navigation Plan (NAVPLAN) and Admiral Franchetti's strategic guidance for the Navy. CAPT Bill Hamblet, USN (Ret.), Editor-in-Chief, Proceedings, U.S. Naval Institute, will offer opening remarks.
- CSIS: "On Day One": A U.S. Economic Contingency Plan for a Taiwan Crisis – Thursday, September 19, 2024. Location: Online event, 11:30 AM. How should the U.S. respond economically on "day one" of a significant crisis in or around the Taiwan Strait? How swiftly and dramatically would U.S. economic decisions ripple out globally? To answer these and related questions, the Freeman Chair is pleased to host a discussion with Eyck Freymann, a Hoover Fellow at Stanford University and non-resident research fellow at the China Maritime Studies Institute at the US Naval War College, and Hugo Bromley, Research Associate at the Centre for Geopolitics and an affiliated research associate at Robinson College, Cambridge. They are authors of the recent report *On Day One: An Economic Contingency Plan for a Taiwan Crisis* (Hoover Institution Press, July 2024), which lays out guiding recommendations for "avalanche decoupling" in the case of a Taiwan Strait crisis. Jude Blanchette, Freeman Chair in China Studies, will moderate the discussion.
- CSIS: The Implications of GSP Renewal for Great Power Competition – Thursday, September 19, 2024. Location: Online event, 2:00PM. The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program, which provides duty-free treatment to goods from designated beneficiary countries, lapsed in 2020. Despite ongoing discussions about its importance, it has yet to be reauthorized, leading to continued uncertainty for beneficiary countries and the businesses that rely on this program. The lapse of GSP is part of a broader collapse in U.S. trade policy over the last 15 years. Free trade agreements, once a cornerstone of U.S. economic policy, have become politically contentious. However, the cessation of GSP comes at a time when China has become the leading trading partner for many developing countries. The lack of an American alternative offer is accelerating deeper economic ties between these countries and China, with long-term geopolitical implications. This panel will examine the strengths and weaknesses of the potential reauthorization of GSP and how the U.S. can reassert leadership in global trade, support economic growth in the developing world, and counter China's growing global influence.
- CARNEGIE: The International Side of Industrial Policy: A Conversation with DNSA Daleep Singh– Thursday, September 19, 2024. Location: Carnegie, 4:00 PM. Major U.S. industrial policy actions on semiconductors, clean energy, and defense-adjacent industries depend heavily on cooperation with America's allies and

partners. TSMC, SK, and Samsung, for example, have announced tens of billions of dollars in U.S. investments over the past four years, and the Biden-Harris Administration has leveraged companies and expertise from Japan, Canada, and Norway for announcements related to U.S. ports and shipbuilding. U.S. officials, meanwhile, have encouraged allies to adopt industrial policy measures of their own in key sectors, such as Europe's clean energy-focused Green Deal. Please join the Carnegie Endowment's American Statecraft Program for a conversation on these issues with Deputy National Security Advisor Daleep Singh.

- [CARNEGIE: International Models for Governing Gaza](#)– Thursday, September 19, 2024. Location: Carnegie, 9:00 AM. Various proposals are circulating for the "day after" in Gaza, many of which envision interim international arrangements to assist with the rehabilitation. International transitional authorities have been established in the past for the administration of war-torn territories, notably the United Nations administrations of Kosovo and East Timor, and the High Representative's administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Is an international transitional authority a viable and attractive option for Gaza? What would its mandate be? Would the mission have a defined political horizon (such as Palestinian statehood)? What do the historical parallels tell us? What would be the role of the United Nations and regional parties in such an arrangement? How would the cooperation of the immediately affected parties—Israelis and Palestinians—be achieved? Join Paul Dziatkowicz as he moderates an expert panel discussion to explore these issues and others concerning the future of governance in Gaza. This event is co-organized by the Middle East Program of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Oxford University.
- [American Building the Future: Innovative Solutions to the U.S. Housing Crisis](#) – Thursday, September 19, 2024. Location: Center of American Progress, 9:00 AM. Inadequate supply is the root cause of the housing affordability crisis. The rate of production of new units has been too low for more than a decade, and the supply of entry-level single-family homes and affordable rental units has greatly lagged behind demand. Nationally, nearly half of all rental households are cost burdened. To solve the U.S. housing crisis, the path ahead must dramatically boost the supply of housing through policies that will spur building—by reforming local zoning regulations and identifying innovative financing opportunities—and do so in a way that is sustainable and fosters communities that Americans want to live, work, and gather in. Please join the Center for American Progress for a policy summit that lays out a vision for a future with affordable, accessible housing, and policy solutions to turn that vision into a reality for all types of communities.
- [AEI: The Forgotten Solution to the Housing Crunch: A Premiere of the AEI Housing Center's Documentary on Light-Touch Density](#) – Thursday, September 19, 2024. Location: AEI Auditorium, 11:00 AM. American home prices have risen nearly 50 percent in just four years, and the two sides of the housing reform war haven't budged an inch. One side wants high-density apartments, and the other opposes changing single-family detached zoning. Is there a third way to keep housing more affordable? One American city suggests there is. Please join us for the premiere of *The Forgotten Solution to the Housing Crunch*, a nine-minute documentary that highlights Charlotte, North Carolina, and explains how light-touch density (LTD) can create housing abundance by legalizing small-scale residential development that is compatible with single-family detached neighborhoods. LTD adds homes, but unlike subsidized housing, it requires no subsidies, income limits, rent control, or federal government involvement in zoning decisions. Formal and informal discussions will follow the documentary premiere.
- [Wilson Center: Uruguay Goes to the Polls](#)– Thursday, September 19, 2024. Location: Wilson Center, 10:00 AM. In 2019, Uruguayans elected conservative Luis Lacalle Pou as president following 15 years of rule by the center-left Frente Amplio coalition. Five years later, Lacalle Pou remains popular. Ineligible to run for immediate reelection on October 27, he is instead running for Senate and a close ally and former member of his cabinet, Álvaro Delgado, is representing the National Party. A centrist former mayor of Canelones, Yamandú Orsi, won the Frente Amplio primary in June. Incumbent parties have had it rough in Latin America in recent years, but the ruling National Party has several advantages, including growing agricultural production following a prolonged drought. The Frente Amplio will emphasize public concerns about crime and a scandal involving Uruguayan passports issued to criminals. Either candidate would likely maintain strong ties to the United States, but the election could reshape Uruguay's approach to foreign policy challenges such as the collapse of democracy in Venezuela. To learn more, please join the Wilson Center's Latin America Program on Thursday, September 19, 2024, from 10:00 am to 11:00 am ET, for a conversation about Uruguay's presidential election, with insights from experts including Lacalle Pou's father, former

President Luis Lacalle Herrera, who will participate from Montevideo, alongside Pedro Isern and and Gabriel Oddone. Nicolás Saldías and Amparo Mercade will join us in Washington.

- Wilson Center: Making Socialism Work: Economic Reform and the Soviet Enterprise, 1960s-2000s – Thursday, September 19, 2024. Location: Wilson Center, 2:00 PM. Focused almost exclusively on Moscow, scholars typically suggest that the Kosygin Reform of 1965 had little effect on the Soviet economy. But by looking instead at the level of the factory — in this case the Shchekino Chemical Combine, a large producer of chemical fertilizers located in the Tula Region — Title VIII Research Scholar James Nealy will demonstrate how the Kosygin Reform had a long-lasting influence on production in the Soviet Union and in post-Soviet Russia. In doing so, this talk aims to demonstrate precisely how much we can learn about authoritarian regimes by simply looking outside of traditional centers of power.
- Hudson Institute: Common Threads Colorado: Space-Based ISR-Confronting Global Threats – Thursday, September 19, 2024. Location: Hudson Institute, 8:45 AM. Wilson Center: Mexico's Constitutional Reforms Conference | Implications for US-MX Relations - Wednesday, September 11, 2024. Location: Wilson Center, 1:00 PM. The Commission on the National Defense Strategy released its bipartisan and unanimous report in July 2024. The commission concluded that the threats to American national security and interests are greater than at any time since World War II. The nature of the threats facing the United States also makes the security environment more complex than the Cold War. For a discussion of the report and how the US can respond to these threats, join Commissioners Eric Edelman and Mariah Sixkiller and Hudson's Rebecca Heinrichs for this live event.
- Hudson Institute: October 7 and the Coming Wars for Freedom – Thursday, September 19, 2024. Location: Hudson Institute, 5:00 PM. Wilson Center: Mexico's Constitutional Reforms Conference | Implications for US-MX Relations - Wednesday, September 11, 2024. Location: Wilson Center, 1:00 PM. Join renowned philosopher and author Bernard-Henri Lévy for a conversation with Hudson Senior Fellow Liel Leibovitz on how the attack of October 7 and the subsequent war in Gaza are likely to shape geopolitics for decades to come.

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