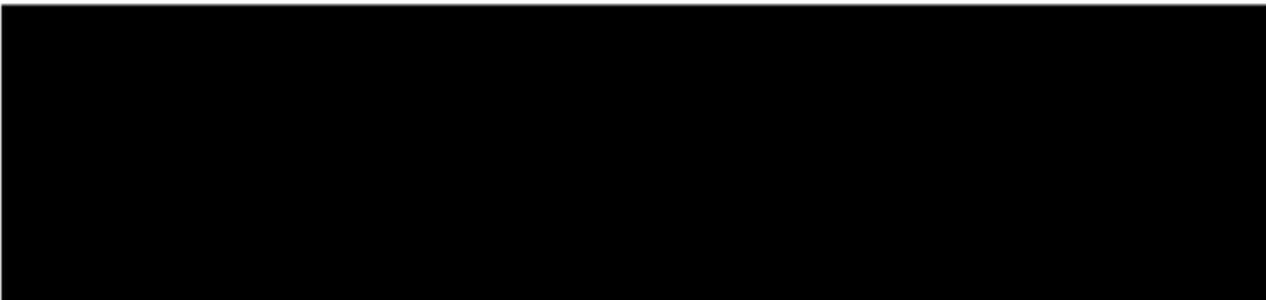


From:

To:



Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] - FBI Public Affairs News Briefing Friday, October 23, 2020

Date: Fri, 23 Oct 2020 10:26:44 +0000

Importance: Normal

From: Bulletin Intelligence
Sent: Friday, October 23, 2020 6:26:13 AM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: FBI@BulletinIntelligence.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] - FBI Public Affairs News Briefing Friday, October 23, 2020

Mobile version and searchable archives available at fbi.bulletinintelligence.com.

 FBI News Briefing

TO: THE DIRECTOR AND SENIOR STAFF

DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2020 6:30 AM EDT

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LEADING THE NEWS

Intelligence Officials Warn Of Russian And Iranian Interference In US Election.

All three broadcast news networks covered what David Muir of [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (10/22, story 3, 2:35, 6.71M) called a "new warning about election interference. US authorities say Russia and Iran have obtained voter registration information, and that Iran has used that information to send threatening messages to voters." ABC's Pierre Thomas reported on the "new details about alleged covert efforts by Russia and Iran to weaponize illegally obtained information about American voters." FBI Director Wray: "We are not going to tolerate any criminal activity that threatens the sanctity of your vote." Thomas: "Two of America's primary adversaries successfully penetrated voter registration databases at the local level along with gleaning voter data from publicly available sources." DNI Ratcliffe: "We have already seen Iran sending spoofed emails designed to intimidate voters, incite social unrest." Pete Williams reported on [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (10/22, story 3, 1:55, Holt, 5.51M), "Voters in Florida and a few other states began receiving emails this week appearing to come from the Proud Boys known to support President Trump, especially after he fleetingly referred to them in the first presidential debate." Ratcliffe: "We have already seen Iran sending spoofed emails designed to intimidate voters, incite social unrest, and damage President Trump."

National Security Advisor O'Brien said on [Fox News' The Story](#) (10/22), "The Iranians are the most recent to have engaged in this activity that was exposed by Director Wray and Director Ratcliffe and I commend our intelligence services for uncovering it quickly. We think transparency is the best deterrent for this sort of activity in the future. The Iranians understand that we are very unhappy with this and there will be consequences as a result of it." O'Brien added, "We are confident in what we can do to protect the American people and protect our elections."

Asked on [WIND-AM](#)^{Vi} Chicago (10/22, 8K) about the remarks by Ratcliffe and Wray, White House Senior Communications Advisor Ben Williamson said. "We're on top of this. This is an Administration that has spent and invested millions, if not billions, of dollars in election security, making sure our systems are secure, making sure we're holding foreign actors accountable for any evidence we see of foreign interference."

[NBC News](#) (10/22, Dilanian, 6.14M) reports that a pair of US intelligence officials told them that the Administration "has known for weeks that Iran and Russia had successfully hacked local governments and obtained voter registration and other personal data." The officials "said Iran's intent wasn't entirely clear, but that one goal is sowing chaos and undermining confidence in the election. Both officials said it would hurt the Trump campaign if a white nationalist group was exposed as having sought to bully Democrats."

Meanwhile, [CBS News](#) (10/22, Quinn, 3.68M) reports that officials in the three states targeted by Iran – Florida, Alaska, and Arizona – "say their voter databases have not been compromised." The [Miami Herald](#) (10/22, Gross, Ceballos) reports that after the FBI accused Iran of ending the emails, they "appeared to have come to a halt." However, "two Florida members of Congress are now requesting an FBI briefing for the Florida delegation and at least seven local election officials say they have not been given any information from authorities on the scope of the issue other than what has been publicly reported."

[The Hill](#) (10/22, Klar, Miller, 2.98M) reports looks at the takeaways from the incident, including the idea that Iran "should not be underestimated," and also highlighted the differences in tone of Wray and Ratcliffe.

Meanwhile, [Bloomberg](#) (10/22, Tarabay, Mehrotra, 4.73M) reports that Ratcliffe "said the Iranian operation was meant to hurt the president, which is far from clear based on the contents of the video and emails. Cyber-researchers are also wondering what sort of intelligence Ratcliffe unearthed to accuse Iran of meddling within just hours of the spoofing operation. Attributing malicious operations to nation-states typically takes months and years, not hours."

Mistakes In Video Enabled Analysts To Attribute Purported Proud Boys Emails To Iran. [Reuters](#) (10/22, Bing, Stubbs) reports government analysts and private sector investigators quickly attributed "to Iranian hackers a wave of thousands of threatening emails aimed at U.S. voters because of mistakes made in a video attached to some of the messages, according to four people familiar with the matter." The emails which "demanded that voters change their party affiliation to the Republican Party and vote for President Donald Trump or 'we will come after you,' appeared to come from an official-looking Proud Boys email address," but "the address was inauthentic, security analysts said." While the hackers attempted "to blur aspects of the video to hide their identity," they "were unable to obfuscate all of the incriminating information, the sources said. ... Analysts then cross-referenced those clues left in the video with data from other intelligence streams, including communications interceptions."

Google Reports "Inauthentic Emails" This Week From Iran. In its election news blog, [NBC News](#) (10/22, Shabad, 6.14M) reports that Google "said in a statement Thursday that the tech company and others have seen evidence that an operation linked to Iran 'sent inauthentic emails to people in the U.S. over the past 24 hours.'" Google added, "We referred the matter to the FBI and will continue to work with law enforcement and others in the industry to identify and remove any related content." [Business Insider](#) (10/22, 3.67M) says Google's statement "tallies closely with parts of a statement from" Ratcliffe "given at a press conference on Wednesday."

Russia, Iran Deny Accusations. [Reuters](#) (10/22) reports that an Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman on Thursday said, "Iran's strong rejection of American officials' repetitive, baseless and false claims was conveyed to the Swiss ambassador...As we have said before, it makes no difference for Iran who wins the U.S. election." Switzerland "represents U.S. interests in Iran because Washington and Tehran have no diplomatic ties." Similarly, [Reuters](#) (10/22) reports that Russia "on Thursday denied allegations from the United States that it had tried to interfere with the 2020 presidential election, calling accusations of hacking unfounded."

US Officials Remain More Concerned About Russia Than Iran. The [New York Times](#) (10/22, Barnes, Perlroth, Sanger, 18.61M) reports that "while senior Trump administration officials said this week that Iran has been actively interfering in the presidential election, many intelligence officials said they remained far more concerned about Russia, which in recent days has hacked into state and local computer networks in breaches that could allow Moscow broader access to American voting infrastructure." The [Washington Post](#) (10/22, Nakashima, Harris, Barrett, 14.2M) similarly says that while the Administration "has highlighted the threat Iran poses to the U.S. election, a different foe – Russia – remains the more potent adversary, and has in recent months stolen data from at least two county systems in California and Indiana, according to U.S. officials."

[Newsweek](#) (10/22, Lemon, 1.53M) reports that Democratic Lawmakers "have criticized President Donald Trump's administration," particularly Ratcliffe, "over what they see as conflating Iranian election interference with Russian efforts, which they argue are far more serious and pose a significantly greater threat." [CQ Roll Call](#) (10/22, Ratnam, 154K) reports that Ratcliffe's warning on Wednesday "immediately drew skeptical reactions from Democratic lawmakers, some of whom had been briefed in private about the interference. They specifically disputed that the actions by Iran were intended to harm Trump." Instead of listening to

Ratcliffe, "the House Homeland Security Committee said in its Twitter feed that Americans should listen" Wray and Krebs.

[The Hill](#) (10/22, Klar, 2.98M) reports that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, for her part, on Thursday "said Iran is a 'bad actor' but not on par with Russia in terms of seeking to influence the U.S. election." Pelosi and other Democrats "sought to draw attention on Russian interference after" Ratcliffe "warned Wednesday both countries are behind efforts to sway public opinion related to the presidential election." [ABC News](#) (10/22, 2.97M) reports that Pelosi said, "I think we have to be very careful about any statements coming out about the election from the intelligence community at this time."

[CNN](#) (10/22, Herb, Fung, Hansler, Cohen, 83.16M) reports that an ODNI spokesperson "on Thursday responded to the criticism of Ratcliffe, arguing that his comments were consistent with the intelligence community's previous assessments about Tehran's intentions when it comes to interference in the 2020 race." Amanda Schoch said in a statement to CNN, "As NCSC Director Bill Evanina said on August 7th, the IC assesses 'that Iran seeks to undermine U.S. democratic institutions, President Trump, and to divide the country in advance of the 2020 elections.'" CNN adds that "not all Democrats were critical of Ratcliffe," with SSCI Vice Chairman Mark Warner telling "reporters Thursday that he understood why Ratcliffe made the comments he did about the effort being intended to hurt Trump."

New Alert: Russians Targeting Government, Aviation Computer Networks. Jeff Pegues of the [CBS Evening News](#) (10/22, story 3, 2:00, O'Donnell, 3.96M) reported, "The cyber security alert says the Russian hacks began last month, targeting dozens of government and aviation computer networks in the United States, successfully obtaining data from at least two victim servers. Since 2016, Russian hackers posed the greatest threat to US election systems. In that election, it is widely assumed that they scanned and probed voter databases in all 50 states. Today's alert proves they haven't stopped."

[Axios](#) (10/22, Rummel, 521K) reports that Energetic Bear, a Russian state-sponsored hacking organization, "has stolen data from two servers after targeting state and federal government networks in the U.S. since at least September," the FBI and CISA announced. However, the FBI and CISA "said Thursday they do not have evidence that Energetic Bear compromised elections data or government operations." [Politico](#) (10/22, Geller, 4.29M) reports that while "hackers have 'exfiltrated data from at least two victim servers,' the agencies said they saw no indication that the intruders had 'intentionally disrupted any aviation, education, elections, or government operations.'" Energetic Bear "is best known among security researchers for its intrusions into European energy companies, including firms in the oil, gas and electric sectors." [USA Today](#) (10/22, 10.31M) reports that CISA Director Christopher Krebs "described the activity Thursday has a 'broad scanning' effort by the Russians that had not interfered with actual voting."

[Bloomberg](#) (10/22, Mehrotra, 4.73M) reports that while the FBI and CISA "don't have any evidence that attacks have disrupted victims in aviation, education, elections or government, they raise concerns that the successful compromises could open the door to more malicious attacks in the near future." [Reuters](#) (10/22, Satter) reports that the names of the targeted governments "were not disclosed. DHS did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The FBI provided no further details but said in a statement that it was 'shining a spotlight on Russia's nefarious behavior.'"

The [AP](#) (10/22, Tucker, Bajak) reports that US officials "have repeatedly said it would be extremely difficult for hackers to alter vote tallies in a meaningful way, but they have warned about other methods of interference that could disrupt the election, including cyberattacks on networks meant to impede the voting process." Still, [NPR](#) (10/22, Ewing, 3.12M) reports that the "agencies involved have been warning for months, including with similar bulletins about cyber-risks confronting U.S. elections infrastructure, which they have suggested likely would focus on systems adjacent to core operations — such as a website that shows results — as opposed to the casting and counting of ballots themselves." [CNN](#) (10/22, Herb, Fung, Hansler,

Cohen, 83.16M) says that the "warnings issued Thursday indicate the heightened security posture of the US government days ahead of the presidential election."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) also briefly reports on the new alert, as does [CyberScoop](#) (10/22, Lyngaas), [CNET News](#) (10/22, Hautala, 1.99M), [The Hill](#) (10/22, 2.98M), among others.

Senate Intelligence Committee Leaders Warn Iran, Russia Not To Interfere In Election. The [Washington Times](#) (10/22, Blake, 492K) reports that "leaders of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence warned foreign adversaries Thursday not to meddle in next month's elections while urging Americans to stay vigilant." Sens. Marco Rubio (R-FL), acting Chairman, and Mark Warner (D-VA), Vice Chairman, "were responding to the government disclosing attempts by Iran and Russia to interfere in the race." DNI Ratcliffe "said Wednesday that Iran and Russia have accessed voter information and taken 'specific actions to influence public opinion' about the elections." A statement from the Senate leaders said, "To our adversaries, we reiterate DNI Ratcliffe's warning against interfering in America's electoral process. ... Republicans and Democrats are united when we say that continued attempts to sow dissent, cast doubt on election results, or disrupt our election systems and infrastructure will necessitate a severe response."

[The Hill](#) (10/22, Kelly, 2.98M) reports that DNI Ratcliffe had "said Iranian actors had sent 'spoofed' emails to intimidate voters, 'incite social unrest and damage President Trump.'" Rubio and Warner "urged Americans and the media 'to be skeptical of sensationalist, last-minute claims about election infrastructure' and made a bipartisan show of force as a warning against any foreign actors aiming to interfere in the U.S. elections."

State Officials Working With FBI On Election Security.

[WDTV-TV](#) Bridgeport, WV (10/22) reports that while "U.S. intelligence officials say foreign governments are once again trying to influence voters," West Virginia "isn't one of the four states involved in the interference, according to Secretary of State Mac Warner." The West Virginia official is "working closely with federal authorities to ensure a secure election, including the FBI's Pittsburgh Field Office. Michael Christman is the Special Agent In Charge." Christman said, "Cybersecurity is typically the greatest threat we're concerned with. ... We want to make sure that every citizen has the ability to vote in an unimpeded manner." Warner commented, "We can't stop somebody from attacking us. All we can do is react to it in a fashion that says we have a training plan in place, we will be transparent with the public as to what we know and when we know it." Also reporting is the [Charleston \(WV\) Gazette-Mail](#) (10/22, 121K).

The [AP](#) (10/22) reports, "The U.S. attorney's office in Birmingham says Assistant U.S. Attorney Jason Cheek will serve as the region's elections officer" during the upcoming election. U.S. Attorney Prim Escalona "says anyone with information about fraud or discrimination should notify Justice Department officials," such as "intimidating voters at polling places, buying votes or stuffing ballot boxes are all prohibited." FBI agents will be "available nationwide to receive allegations of election fraud and other election abuses on Nov. 3."

[KRNVTN-TV](#) Reno, NV (10/22) reports that Nevada has a "heightened risk of voter fraud due to the increase in mail in ballots." The state's Election Integrity Task Force in Nevada "is made up of Attorney General Aaron Ford, the Secretary of State's office and other local governing bodies." Special agent Aaron Rouse "says that voter fraud claims will be taken seriously and will be investigated thoroughly and quickly throughout the state."

The [Idaho Falls \(ID\) Post Register](#) (10/22) reports, "Bart Davis, U.S. Attorney for Idaho, announced Thursday that his office," the FBI, and DOJ "will be standing by to field complaints of voter intimidation or election interference." Davis said the DOJ "must act to protect the integrity of the election process." DOJ has "a longstanding Election Day program to monitor these issues, and that it is a federal crime to intimidate or bribe voters, buy or sell votes, impersonate voters, alter vote tallies, or mark ballots for other voters against their wishes." Davis has

"appointed three assistant U.S. attorneys, in three regions of the state, to serve as elections officers for the district and field complaints," and all "will be on duty while polls are open."

[WJAR-TV](#) Providence, RI (10/22, 144K) reports that on Thursday, Rhode Island Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea was joined at a press briefing "by the FBI, Rhode Island State Police, Board of Elections and the Attorney General to discuss the upcoming election." The Rhode Island official "estimates about half of all voters in the state will cast their ballots before Election Day," and "early voting numbers won't be added to the total votes until 10 p.m. on election night." FBI Boston Special Agent in Charge Joseph Bonavolonta said, "As far as these disinformation campaigns, the reason why they're so powerful is because you look at everybody's reliance these days on social media platforms."

PROTESTS

"Anarchist" Cities Sue Trump Administration Over Designation.

The [AP](#) (10/22, Johnson, Matthews) reports, "New York, Seattle and Portland – three cities recently labeled 'anarchist jurisdictions' by the U.S. Justice Department – filed a lawsuit Thursday to invalidate the designation and fight off the Trump Administration's efforts to withhold federal dollars." The suit "ridiculed the designation, calling the President's action 'offensive to both the Constitution and common sense,'" and "noted that the consequences of withholding federal money during a pandemic are 'deadly serious.'" The cities argue that "the President can't add conditions to money Congress has appropriated," and claims "the Administration violated due process rights and the 10th Amendment."

The [New York Times](#) (10/22, Fitzsimmons, 18.61M) reports that the Administration's "attempt to strip New York City of federal funds...could cost the city as much as \$12 billion – money for the cash-starved subway, for the Police Department and for the city's efforts to treat coronavirus patients, city officials said on Thursday." According to the Times, "although the city was granted \$2.65 billion in Covid-related funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, only \$199.6 million of it has been doled out."

[The Oregonian](#) (10/22, 1M) reports that Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler (D) "said the money at risk is 'critical to protecting vulnerable residents,'" including "federal funds for coronavirus relief, funds for HIV treatment, and funds for newborn screenings." New York City Corporation Counsel Jim Johnson "said the cities are acting now because the federal government has begun taking concrete steps to withhold funds."

Judge Dismisses Third-Degree Murder Charge In Floyd Case.

[ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (10/22, story 7, 0:20, Muir, 6.71M) reported, "A Minnesota judge tonight has upheld eight of nine charges against the former police officers in the George Floyd case. Derek Chauvin, seen with his knee on Floyd's neck, still facing second degree unintentional murder and manslaughter charges, though a lesser charge was dropped. The other three officers had all charges upheld, each facing aiding and abetting murder and manslaughter. The trial for all four is set for March."

The [AP](#) (10/22, Forliti) reports that Hennepin County District Judge Peter Cahill "dismissed a third-degree murder charge filed against the former Minneapolis police officer who pressed his knee against George Floyd's neck, saying there was not enough probable cause for that count to proceed to trial." Gov. Tim Walz (D) "activated the Minnesota National Guard in anticipation of protests" after similar demonstrations broke out "after Chauvin was released on bail earlier this month, resulting in dozens of arrests." Cahill "said Chauvin's decision to continue kneeling on Floyd's neck after he went silent and motionless 'is strong evidence of Chauvin's intent to inflict bodily harm,'" but that "nothing about the manner in which Chauvin pressed his knee down on Floyd's neck...was eminently dangerous to anyone other than Floyd," making the third-degree murder charge inappropriate in this case.

[Reuters](#) (10/22, Layne) reports Walz “announced that he had activated the Minnesota National Guard as a ‘precautionary step’ following the ruling, which he said marked ‘a positive step in the path toward justice for George Floyd.’” Cahill also “upheld a manslaughter charge against Chauvin and all six charges against three other officers – Thomas Lane, J. Alexander Kueng and Tou Thao – for allegedly aiding and abetting Chauvin in the murder. Kueng and Lane helped hold Floyd down by restraining his back and legs, Cahill noted, while Thao kept a group of bystanders at bay.”

The [New York Times](#) (10/22, Ismay, 18.61M) reports that the ruling “came in response to a motion by lawyers representing Mr. Chauvin and three other former officers to dismiss all charges against them for lack of probable cause.” Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison said in a statement, “This is an important, positive step forward in the path toward justice for George Floyd, his family, our community, and Minnesota.” Prosecutors also “announced charges against a truck driver who drove a fuel truck through a protest on a bridge in Minneapolis six days after Mr. Floyd was killed” on Thursday. Bogdan Vechirko “was charged with a felony count of threats of violence and a gross misdemeanor count of criminal vehicular operation.”

The [Washington Post](#) (10/22, Bailey, 14.2M) reports that the Floyd ruling is the first “in a series of major decisions expected in the case,” as Cahill considers “whether the men will be tried together, as prosecutors have requested, or separately, as the former officers want. Defense attorneys have also requested to move the trial out of Hennepin County, questioning whether it is possible to seat an impartial jury in Minneapolis and citing security concerns in a city that was rocked by days of civil unrest after Floyd’s death and remains deeply on edge.” The Post says Walz acted “on a request from Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey” in the activation of “100 Minnesota National Guard troops” and state patrol officers.

The [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#) (10/22, 1.04M) reports “Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey requested support from the guard ‘out of an abundance of caution and for the sake of preparedness,’ spokesman Mychal Vlatkovich said.” The Tribune says “Cahill’s rulings Thursday are his most significant pretrial decisions since he was assigned the case this past summer,” resolving “issues that had some activists worried Floyd’s death would go unheard in the court system like many previous cases of police killing Black civilians. And they quelled some fears that Minneapolis would once again erupt in protest, arson and looting if the former officers were to avoid criminal prosecution.”

Protests In Illinois After Police Shooting Of Black Teens.

The [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (10/22, story 7, 0:25, O'Donnell, 3.96M) reported that Waukegan Mayor Sam Cunningham “is calling for calm after the deadly police shooting of a Black teenager. Protesters took to the streets today over the killing of 19-year-old Marcellis Stinnette and the wounding of 20-year-old Taffarra Williams. Investigators say the officer, who is Hispanic, opened fire, as the couple’s car rolled in reverse towards him, and that the couple had fled from another officer earlier Tuesday night. No weapons were found in the car.”

COUNTER-TERRORISM

Report: Far-Right Groups Responsible For Two-Thirds Of Domestic Terrorist Attacks.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, Strobel, Levy, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports white supremacists and other right-wing groups accounted for two-thirds of domestic terrorist attacks and plots so far in 2020, but the threat posed by antifascist and other leftist groups is rising, according to a new [report](#) by the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Ninth Circuit Orders Resentencing Of California Man Who Pleaded Guilty To Terrorism Charges.

The [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (10/22, Egelko, 2.67M) reports, "A federal appeals court ordered a reduction Thursday in the 15-year, 8-month prison sentence of an Oakland man who talked online of planning to kill thousands of people in the Bay Area, saying the evidence failed to show Amer Alhaggagi was seriously planning or promoting terrorism." Alhaggagi, "a Berkeley High graduate, pleaded guilty in July 2018 to attempting to provide material support or resources to a foreign terrorist organization, the Islamic State." US District Judge Charles Breyer "imposed a 188-month sentence in February 2019, saying Alhaggagi had taken actions, such as opening the social media and email accounts, that were intended as 'intimidation or coercion' of the U.S. government," but "on Thursday, a divided panel of the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco rejected the terrorism finding and ordered Alhaggagi resentenced."

White Supremacist Group Talked Of Paramilitary Training In Secret Vetting Calls.

[CNN](#) (10/22, Sidner, Simon, 83.16M) reports, "Young men hoping to join a White supremacist group spoke about hosting paramilitary trainings and how to legally bring firearms to those events, according to secret recordings of vetting calls published by the Southern Poverty Law Center Thursday." CNN adds, "Some 83 hours of calls with more than 100 participants linked to The Base group were analyzed by the SPLC, which monitors hate, for a new podcast, 'Sounds Like Hate.' Military training or knowledge of firearms was an important asset, according to the released calls. So was having a place to train." According to CNN, "The SPLC's release of parts of the calls comes at a time when US intelligence services say domestic violent extremists, specifically White supremacist groups are the 'the most persistent and lethal threat in the Homeland.'"

Man Who Supplied Weapons To San Bernardino Terrorists Faces Sentencing.

The [Orange County \(CA\) Register](#) (10/22, Rokos, 546K) reports, "Attorneys will argue for significantly different prison terms Friday, Oct. 23, when Enrique Marquez Jr. is sentenced for supplying the weapons used in the Dec. 2, 2015, terrorist shooting in San Bernardino that killed 14 people and wounded 22 others." According to the OCR, "The ruling by U.S. District Court Judge Jesus G. Bernal in Riverside could mean a 19-year difference in Marquez's prison term. Marquez, 28, pleaded guilty in February 2017, but his sentencing has been delayed by attorney motions and Marquez's unsuccessful attempt to withdraw his plea to one of the charges." The OCR adds, "Marquez was convicted of providing material support to terrorists and making a false statement on federal firearms-purchase forms on which Marquez said the firearms he was buying in 2011 and 2012 were for his use. Instead, he sold them to Syed Rizwan Farook as part of an aborted plan to wage attacks on motorists."

Texas Man Pleads Guilty To Planting Fake Bomb On Railroad Tracks.

[WFAA-TV](#) Dallas (10/22, Harris, 307K) reports from Dallas, Texas, "A Dallas man pleaded guilty Thursday to one count of misinformation and hoaxes related to a Dec. 2018 case where he planted a fake bomb in the middle of a Kansas City Rail Line railroad track in Dallas, according to the U.S. Department of Justice." Mark Ashley Robert, 37, "put the device on the railroad track in the early morning hours of Dec. 21, 2018, according to court documents. A railroad conductor was the one who spotted it." The Dallas Police Department Bomb Squad "was called to the scene, and after determining that it was not a real explosive device, turned the fake bomb over to the FBI for fingerprint examination."

French Officials Confirm Teacher's Killer Was In Contact With A Jihadist In Syria.

[The Guardian \(UK\)](#) (10/22, 4.19M) reports, "The killer of Samuel Paty, the teacher decapitated outside his school last week after showing his class two cartoons of the prophet Muhammad, was in contact with an Islamist fighter in Syria," according to French media. France "confirmed on Thursday that seven people, including two schoolchildren, had been charged with terrorism

offences after Abdullakh Anzorov, 18, killed the teacher with a 30cm knife on Friday." Anzorov "had contact with an as yet unidentified Russian-speaking jihadist in Syria who was located through an IP address that had been traced back to Idlib." He "had been granted asylum and a residence permit until 2030, had first established contact with the jihadist in September this year via Instagram."

US Military Quietly Helping Taliban Fight Isis In Afghanistan.

The [Washington Post](#) (10/22, 14.2M) reports that "the U.S. military has been quietly helping the Taliban to weaken the Islamic State in its Konar stronghold and keep more of the country from falling into the hands" of ISIS, according to various sources. Unlike the Taliban, the US views ISIS "as an international terrorist organization with aspirations to strike America and Europe." The US coordinates with the Taliban merely "by observing battle conditions and listening in on the group." The Konar operations reflect the "outsourcing of what has long been a core U.S. military mission – fighting the Islamic State and al-Qaeda – to the uneasily coordinated forces of the Afghan government and the Taliban, with U.S. counterterrorism forces in some cases helping both."

COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE

Schumer, Wyden Urge FBI Not To Probe Biden Family Prior To Election.

[Fox News](#) (10/22, 27.59M) reports, "Sens. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., and Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. wrote a letter to FBI Director Christopher Wray demanding the FBI 'reject pressure' to investigate the Biden family after the Hunter Biden email story from the New York Post. 'The FBI must reject pressure from Donald Trump to announce investigations of Joe Biden or his family to influence the presidential election, or else it risks doing lasting harm to our democracy and national security,' a news release of the letter read. 'We are deeply concerned about the possibility that in response to these reports the Trump Administration will take actions before Election Day that would seek to damage the Democratic presidential candidate and undermine the rule of law,' Wyden and Schumer wrote in their letter. 'In carrying out this critical national security mission, law enforcement's handling of this matter must be above politics and beyond reproach,' the lawmakers wrote."

[NBC News](#) (10/22, 6.14M) reports, "They referred in a press release to 'a widely questioned article in the New York Post, that alleged to have obtained stolen Hunter Biden emails from the president's lawyer Rudy Giuliani' and noted that Trump has called on the Justice Department to investigate. They are urging Wray 'to resist pressure from President Trump and other partisan actors to take any actions intended to benefit President Trump politically on the eve of the election. Succumbing to such pressure would deeply undermine our national security interests and the credibility of law enforcement, and could have devastating consequences for the resiliency of our democracy.'"

Ex-Hunter Biden Partner Says Joe Biden Was Set To Get Cut Of Business Deal.

The [Washington Times](#) (10/22, 492K) reports that a former business partner of Hunter Biden's "has come forward to confirm" that Joe Biden "was involved in a deal and got a cut of the action from China. Tony Bobulinski, who was the CEO of a firm with Hunter Biden, said in a statement that the elder Mr. Biden is the 'Big Guy' reference in his son's emails and was set to get a 10% cut of the deal." Bobulinski said in a statement, "It wasn't just Hunter's business, they said they were putting the Biden family name and its legacy on the line."

White House Deputy Press Secretary Brian Morgenstern said on [Newsmax TV](#) (10/22), "We know a lot more today than we did over the last several days. We now have another Hunter Biden business partner coming out and basically saying they were trading on the family name with foreign entities, with foreign powers, and that we may have Chinese energy deals

here with the Biden family participating in them. That's something they'll have to explain." Morgenstern said on [Fox Business' Evening Edit](#), "If we're looking to elect a president for the American people, not our foreign adversaries, this is something the...people definitely need to know immediately. This is absolutely groundbreaking news for our nation."

[Breitbart](#) (10/22, 673K) reports Biden's campaign called reports of Hunter Biden's "overseas business dealings... 'Russian misinformation' just hours before Thursday evening's final presidential debate." [Fox News](#) (10/22, Wulfsohn, 27.59M) reports on its website that Bobulinski had been scheduled to attend the debate "as a special guest of President Trump." The [New York Times](#) (10/22, Goldman, 18.61M) runs a piece titled "What We Know And Don't About Hunter Biden And A Laptop."

Senate Judiciary Committee To Move Forward On Facebook, Twitter Subpoenas.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, Hughes, Needleman, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports the Senate Judiciary Committee has authorized Chairman Lindsey Graham to issue subpoenas to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey. The [Washington Times](#) (10/22, Lovelace, 492K) says "the forthcoming subpoenas will request the CEO's testimony on the "suppression and/or censorship" of two New York Post articles involving the former vice president's son on information about the company's content moderation practices and on other instances of Facebook and Twitter limiting the visibility of material online." [Roll Call](#) (10/22, DeChiaro, 154K) reports Graham "said Democrats on the committee had asked him to delay voting on the subpoena authorization but that he decided to move forward because of bipartisan interest in Zuckerberg and Dorsey."

Trump, Ratcliffe Reportedly Seeking Declassification Of Russia Inquiry Document.

[Reuters](#) (10/22, Hosenball, Bing, Landay) reports President Trump and DNI Ratcliffe "have pushed for quick declassification of a document disputing the 2017 intelligence community finding that Russia acted to help Trump get elected in 2016," according to three officials familiar with the matter. Two of the source said the "effort faces strong objections from inside the intelligence agencies," in part because the presidential election is so soon.

The [Daily Caller](#) (10/22, 716K) reports that Trump and Ratcliffe are requesting the declassification "at the request of California Republican Rep. Devin Nunes." The intelligence community concluded "that Russia's meddling in the 2016 election broke in favor of Trump, regardless of the later finding that Trump's campaign had not colluded with nation."

[The Hill](#) (10/22, Coleman, 2.98M) reports that Ratcliffe said, "I have requested that the document undergo a formal declassification review in response to a request" from Nunes. A former intelligence official told Reuters the CIA and NSA "were attempting to prevent the document's declassification 'because it would damage national security assets and jeopardize sources and methods.'"

John Brennan Discusses DNI Ratcliffe's "Credibility," Trump's Relationship With Intelligence Community.

In an interview clipped three times on the Washington Post website ([1](#), [2](#), and [3](#)), former CIA Director John Brennan "says he wishes John Ratcliffe had more 'credibility.'" DNI Ratcliffe this week "warned that both Iran and Russia had obtained voter data that could be used to endanger the upcoming election," but, in the interview, Brennan "said Ratcliffe was not specific about what Russia has done." Brennan said, "I think there are questions about whether or not what he said is being motivated by his political interests." Brennan also "said he thinks one day we'll know more about President Trump's relationship with Russia." Moreover, Trump's "attacks on the intelligence community will have long-lasting effects, but he has confidence the agencies will be resilient and respond positively to a Biden administration, if he is elected." Brennan said, "I have confidence that the communities are going to be resilient and they're going to respond very positively to the words of encouragement they're going to be hearing from President Biden and the rest of his national security team."

Ignatius: Ratcliffe Facing "Moment Of Truth." In a column for the [Washington Post](#) (10/22, 14.2M) entitled, "Can Trump's Spy Chief Be Trusted?," David Ignatius writes that DNI Ratcliffe's performance "has often seemed to emphasize...serving the political interests of the man who appointed him, President Trump." The President "is desperately seeking a silver bullet to fire at former vice president Joe Biden — some nugget from the intelligence world that would justify his wild accusations of 'hoaxes' and 'criminals.' Sources tell me Trump has been raging inside the White House for Ratcliffe to deliver the goods." Ratcliffe, Ignatius writes, "is facing a moment of truth: Will he serve the intelligence community that he heads" or "will he join Trump in an assault on the very agencies he leads."

Reports Suggest Sonic Attacks Targeting Americans Are Widespread.

According to the [New York Post](#) (10/22, McKay, News, 4.57M), "reports emerged this week suggesting that" potential sonic attacks first reported four years ago "might be far more pervasive than what was publicly known." Russia is increasingly seen "as being behind the global barrage of possible sonic attacks." Former CIA Moscow bureau chief Dan Hoffman said, "There are a number of Americans who have fallen ill now, and we need to know why and who is behind it. ... This is something worthy of a congressional hearing." A US government probe is complicated by "the vast array of differing prognostics and experiences." For instance, some "have pointed to individuals in either homes or hotels hearing high-pitched tones or jarring thuds from one direction or all around," others "endure a kind of tremoring or a wind-like pressure," and "some hear nothing at all." Secretary of State Pompeo "said Wednesday that the mysterious maladies are still under review and dismissed claims that American workers were not adequately protected." Also reporting is [Fox News](#) (10/22, McKay, 27.59M).

Intelligence Officials Warning About Election Interference Earlier Than In 2016.

Carrie Cordero, a "senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security," writes in the [Washington Post](#) (10/22, 14.2M) that "Wednesday's joint news appearance during television prime time by top intelligence and law enforcement officials was the latest and most dramatic step yet to warn Americans in real time about foreign governments' efforts to influence the election." Their "coordinated news appearance also had the effect of letting adversaries know in a very public way that the U.S. government knows what they're up to." In 2016, a joint assessment by the ODNI and DHS "came late in the election cycle and was overshadowed by competing events and distractions." This year, it "took days, not weeks or months," for that determination to be made. Before Wednesday's announcement, the FBI and CISA "had released information about threats to election infrastructure." Cordero says "NCSC's Evanina's recent participation in a nine-minute video alongside Wray, Krebs and NSA Director Paul Nakasone warning the public about foreign influence activities and committing to protecting the country, was important."

Opinion: Both Parties Contributing To Lack Of Faith In Elections.

Opinion columnist Eli Lake writes in an op-ed in [Bloomberg View](#) (10/22, 4.73M) that DNI Ratcliffe and FBI Director Christopher Wray "were right to knock down Iran's Proud Boy fakery before it spread." Wray was further "right to make clear that the U.S. government would not tolerate 'foreign interference in our elections or criminal activity that threatens the sanctity of your vote or undermines public confidence in the outcome of the election.'" However, "Russia, Iran, China and other foreign adversaries have a lot of company when it comes to activity that 'undermines public confidence in the outcome of the election.'" For instance, President Trump "has been casting doubt on the reliability of mail-in voting, rattling off random examples of error-laden ballots mailed to voters and other ballots destroyed." Additionally, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi this year "forwarded a tendentious story that postal-service reforms recommended by an Obama-appointed inspector general amounted to 'a campaign to sabotage the election' by disenfranchising voters."

Russia Will Be Blamed For Either Outcome Of US Election, Ambassador Says.

[Newsweek](#) (10/22, 1.53M) reports that Russian Ambassador Andrei Kelin "told Russia's Tass state news agency on Thursday that he expects a 'coordinated campaign' to accuse Moscow of meddling in the U.S. election." He said Russia "will be blamed for the outcome...regardless of the result, amid concerns that the Kremlin is once again seeking to sway the vote." Kelin "painted Russia as the victim of disinformation efforts." The FBI is investigating "whether Moscow was involved in reports claiming compromising emails were recovered from a laptop purportedly belonging to Hunter Biden." Additionally, the US this week "brought charges against six members of the Russian Sandworm military intelligence hacking unit, who are accused of launching cyberattacks against Russian rivals around the world." On Wednesday, DNI Ratcliffe "said...that Russia had obtained U.S. voter registration information, though did not say whether Moscow had used the data nor what the purpose of taking it was."

NYTimes: US Intelligence Officials Believe Russia Is Greater Threat To Election.

[Business Insider](#) (10/22, Sheth, 3.67M) reports, "US intelligence officials have discovered that Russia plans to interfere in the November election to help President Donald Trump by 'exacerbating disputes around the results' if the race is too close to call," according to a New York Times report. On Wednesday, DNI Ratcliffe "said...Russia and Iran were attempting to 'influence public opinion' ahead of the election," though "US officials believe Russia poses a far greater threat to the election than Iran does, according to The Times." Russian actors have now "breached state and local networks in a move that could allow them broader access to American voting infrastructure," The Times said." According to unnamed officials, "while Ratcliffe accurately described initial conclusions about Iran's interference, Russia's election meddling is far more serious."

In a video on [CNBC](#) (10/22, 3.62M), former Principal Deputy DNI Sue Gordon "joins [Shepard] Smith to talk about how voter data can be used against the American people during elections." A cybersecurity company has "found a hacker selling voter information data of nearly 150 million Americans on the dark web," showing "how easily a foreign adversary can get their hands on all kinds of information." Gordon said there are "so many locations where the information is, if we don't protect them well, our adversaries are going to find it." Gordon added it can be weaponized by "creating havoc on election [day] and where people go, what people believe," and creating "mischief" and "chaos." Regarding recent news that Russian actors have hacked US networks, Gordon said "this is a very accomplished set of actors" that has a "whole toolkit." The breach is an "incredibly concerning, albeit not surprising view of what Russia can do."

Clapper: Foreign Actors Aim To Exploit, Amplify Divisiveness In US.

In a video on [CNN](#) (10/22, 83.16M), former DNI James Clapper "tells John Berman that the nation's polarization is why Russian disinformation campaigns are so successful against America." Berman said foreign actors are creating a "perception hack," meaning they want the "perception that they're inside the system, and sow distrust," according to David Sanger. Clapper said his office's "first key judgment in 2016" was that "the initial objective was to sow doubt, discord, and discontent." Clapper added that Russian actors "exploit and amplify the polarization and divisiveness" in the US.

Opinion: Iran's Election Interference Aims Also To Discredit Democracy.

Ariane M. Tabatabai, the Middle East fellow at the Alliance for Securing Democracy at the German Marshall Fund, writes in an opinion piece for the [Washington Post](#) (10/22, 14.2M) that DNI Ratcliffe's "assessment that Iran was active" in attempting to interfere in the US election "alongside Russia quickly raised eyebrows." Tabatabai writes it is "unlikely that Iran's primary goal was to hurt Trump's campaign or boost his challenger." Iran's "main goal" is instead "to exacerbate divisions along ethnic, religious, socioeconomic and partisan lines in the United

States, and to sow chaos and confusion." The strategy "not only allows Iran to retaliate for what it sees as similar efforts by the U.S. government on Iran, but it also helps Iran discredit democracy as a system of government." Tabatabai concludes that fighting "over which candidate Iran wants to boost or hurt, rather than focusing on how to respond in a unified way to these threats, will only play into Tehran's hands."

States Increase IT Support For Elections Organizers As Systems Move Online.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, Loten, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports that more states are shifting election-system services – such as online voter registration, absentee ballot applications, and more – online, according to National Association of Secretaries of State President Maggie Toulouse Oliver. As a result, more IT workers will be needed to handle complex issues such as network outages or cybersecurity threats. According to National Association of State Chief Information Officers Executive Director Doug Robinson, many states are providing indirect support for their elections agencies through capabilities such as provisioning IT infrastructure and cybersecurity. For instance, Connecticut and Ohio have both increased their cybersecurity training and infrastructure, including offering assistance to local elections organizers from the National Guard.

Wisconsin Officials Urge Voters To Ignore "Noise" About Election Interference And Vote.

[WDJT-TV](#) Milwaukee (10/22, 65K) reports that Wisconsin officials "expressed confidence in the security of their systems following National Intelligence and the FBI confirming foreign interference in the U.S. election." Wisconsin Elections Commission administrator Meagan Wolfe said on Thursday, "There is no evidence that Wisconsin's or any state's systems have been accessed or compromised in any way." UW-Madison political science professor commented, "I'm glad that the FBI and DNI alerted the public before the election." Kim added, "I think that there might be a lot of disinformation campaigns, especially on social media so voters should be alerted about that."

India, US To Negotiate Deal For Access To Satellite Data During Pompeo Visit.

[Reuters](#) (10/22, Miglani, Ghoshal) reports that a potential deal between the US and India would give the latter "access to satellite data for better accuracy of missiles and drones, government and industry officials said, as it tries to narrow the gap with the powerful Chinese military." The two countries "are expected to announce the pact during the visit next week" of Secretary of State Pompeo and Defense Secretary Esper "for talks in New Delhi with Indian counterparts Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Rajnath Singh." The US "has also been pushing for stronger security ties with India to help balance China's growing regional influence." A deal "would provide India with access to a range of topographical, nautical and aeronautical data," and "allow the United States to provide advanced navigational aids and avionics on U.S.-supplied aircraft to India." An unnamed defense industry source said, "It is a foundational agreement, which the U.S. has signed with many of its partners for greater interoperability."

Filing: Garrison Courtney Almost Won Legal Immunity.

The [Daily Beast](#) (10/22, 1.39M) reports, "A sentencing memo filed in federal court" by the DOJ "reveals for the first time the full extent of fake spy Garrison Courtney's stunning ruse." He "came 'dangerously close' to getting a legal sign-off that could have made it impossible for prosecutors to bring him to justice, authorities said in the new filing." Courtney also personally extracted "\$4.4 million...from his victims over the course of more than four years," and "was in line for nearly \$4 billion in Army, Navy, and Air Force contracts had the FBI not caught him." Courtney, "served as a high-level spokesperson" for the DEA "before embarking on his criminal career, pleaded guilty this summer to one count of wire fraud."

Lawyer: Snowden Has Won Permanent Residency In Russia.

The [AP](#) (10/22) reports, "Edward Snowden has been granted permanent residency in Russia, his lawyer said Thursday." The former NSA contractor "has been living in Russia since 2013 to escape prosecution in the U.S. after leaking classified documents detailing government surveillance programs." Snowden's lawyer "told the Interfax news agency that the application was submitted in April, but because of the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown restrictions, it took immigration authorities more time to consider it." The former NSA contractor "was able to obtain permanent residency rights because of the changes in Russia's immigration laws made in 2019, the lawyer said." Also reporting are [Bloomberg](#) (10/22, Meyer, 4.73M), the [Daily Caller](#) (10/22, 716K), the [Washington Times](#) (10/22, Blake, 492K), [Reuters](#) (10/22), and [CNN](#) (10/22, Ilyushina, 83.16M).

Treasury Department Sanctioning Iran's Ambassador To Iraq Over Qods Force Agenda.

[The Hill](#) (10/22, Castronuovo, 2.98M) reports, "The Treasury Department on Thursday announced that it was sanctioning Iran's ambassador to Iraq for his role in carrying out" the IRGC-QF's "'destabilizing foreign agenda' in Iraq, according to a press release." Treasury "said in the statement that Iraj Masjedi, a general in the Revolutionary Guard, 'has directed or supported groups that are responsible for attacks that have killed and wounded U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq.'" Treasury Secretary Mnuchin said in the press release, "The Iranian regime threatens Iraq's security and sovereignty by appointing IRGC-QF officials as ambassadors in the region to carry out their destabilizing foreign agenda."

Bosnian Prosecutors Charge Intelligence Chief With Abuse Of Office.

The [AP](#) (10/22) reports that Bosnian prosecutors have charged Intelligence Security Agency head Osman Mehmedagic "with abuse of power for allegedly using agency resources to spy on a man who filed a criminal complaint against him." Mehmedagic and Cyber Security director Muhamed Pekic "allegedly sought to obtain information and photographs concerning the man.'" The pair was "also charged with violating the right to privacy of postal communication." Prosecutors said "the accused abused their position in multiple ways, as well as (through) legal proceedings and official acts." A Bosnian court must confirm the indictment."

Declassified Polish Documents Spark Debate Over Potential Spy Activity.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, Hinshaw, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports that a Polish archivist recently found a folder containing files regarding a British diplomat who was officially an embassy secretary, but was found sneaking around military bases in Warsaw. The diplomat, named James Bond, has now become at topic for debate by Polish historians. Some believe he was simply a secretary, while others find it unlikely he was not a spy.

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Man Arrested In North Carolina With Guns, Explosives Planned To Assassinate Biden.

[WBTV-TV](#) Charlotte, NC (10/22, Ochsner, 57K) reports on its website a man was arrested in Kannapolis, North Carolina "with a van full of guns and explosives with plans to carry out an act of terrorism, including trying to assassinate Joe Biden." An order filed in federal court "outlines the plans by a man identified as Alexander Hillel Treisman," who "is originally from the state of Washington, Kannapolis Police have said." Treisman "currently faces pornography charges," but "the order details a list of factors related to the defendant's plans for a possible act of terror as grounds he should remain in custody."

The [AP](#) (10/22, O'Hare) reports, "A North Carolina man indicted last month on child pornography charges had searched earlier this year for Democratic presidential candidate Joe

Biden's home online, traveled near the home and wrote a checklist that ended with the word "execute," according to federal court documents." According to the Express-News, "The information was contained in documents related to a detention hearing for Alexander Hillel Treisman, held in U.S. District Court in Durham. A magistrate, in an order signed Oct. 8, ordered Treisman to remain in custody. An officer with the U.S. Marshal's Service and the Joint Terrorism Task Force testified that a search of Treisman's electronic devices and account showed a timeline of internet searches between March and May of this year seeking information about Biden's home address, state gun laws, rifle parts and night vision goggles."

[Fox News](#) (10/22, Rambaran, 27.59M) reports, "Treisman, who goes by the alias Alexander S. Theiss, was arrested in late May after employees at a bank in Kannapolis, N.C., reported a suspicious white van abandoned in a parking lot, according to reports by WBTV. 'Through the windows, KPD officers observed an AR-15 style rifle, a box for a Taurus .380 handgun, a cannister of the explosive material Tannerite, and a box of 5.56 caliber ammunition,' a federal judge wrote in a court order last month, referencing testimony from an FBI agent who investigated the case as part of the Joint Terrorism Task Force."

Kentucky Governor: Release "Everything" From Breonna Taylor Grand Jury.

[CNN](#) (10/22, Sanchez, Joseph, 83.16M) reports, "Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear late Thursday called on the state attorney general to release 'all information' related to the Breonna Taylor grand jury proceedings. The call came after a second anonymous grand juror issued a statement saying the panel was not given an opportunity to consider homicide charges in the case against police officers who served a no-knock warrant at Taylor's home the night she was killed." CNN adds, "The unusual statements – grand juries are intended to be secret, with some exceptions – followed a ruling from Jefferson County Circuit Court Judge Annie O'Connell and shed further light on a case that has led to protests across the country and exemplified the ways that the 'war on drugs' disproportionately hurts Black Americans."

White Teen Sentenced For Planning To Attack Black Churchgoers.

The [AP](#) (10/22) reports from Gainesville, Georgia, "A white 17-year-old girl was sentenced Thursday to four years in juvenile detention for planning to stab north Georgia churchgoers to death because they were Black." According to the AP, "The girl pleaded guilty to attempted murder as part of a plea agreement and was sentenced in Gainesville, Georgia, news outlets reported. The girl, who was 16 at the time of her arrest in 2019, sobbed while reading an apology, The Times of Gainesville reported. The Associated Press is not reporting her name because she was sentenced as a juvenile. She will be on probation for 10 years and must stay at least 150 feet (about 45 meters) from any African Methodist Episcopal church during that time, the newspaper reported after Thursday's hearing in Hall County Superior Court. She also must undergo counseling, the newspaper said."

Massachusetts Gang Member Pleads Guilty To Drug Conspiracy Charges.

The [New Bedford \(MA\) Standard-Times](#) (10/22, 53K) reports from Boston, "A leader of the Massachusetts Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation (Latin Kings) pleaded guilty Thursday to drug conspiracy charges." Bienvenido Nunez, "also known as 'King Apache,' 33, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute cocaine base." Senior US District Judge Rya W. Zobel "scheduled sentencing for Feb. 11, 2021. Nunez was charged in December 2019, at which time he was identified as the Inca, or leader, of the Massachusetts Latin Kings, a press release from the U.S. Department of Justice stated. Nunez admitted that he conspired with other Latin Kings members and leaders to possess cocaine base (also known as crack cocaine) with the intent to distribute it. In September 2019, Nunez conspired with others to obtain cocaine base from members of the Latin Kings in New Bedford for resale."

Montana Man Sentenced For Meth Possession.

The [Great Falls \(MT\) Tribune](#) (10/22, 114K) reports, "A Billings man who admitted to trafficking methamphetamine after investigators found more than 30 pounds of the drug and \$11,380 in his vehicle and residence was sentenced Thursday to 10 years in prison, officials said. The sentence also came with five years of supervised release, U.S. Attorney Kurt Alme said." Jerry Ray Schuster, 57, "pleaded guilty in January to conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute meth and to possession with intent to distribute meth. U.S. District Judge Susan P. Watters presided. Schuster was allowed to self surrender." Prosecutors "said an investigation into meth trafficking led to Schuster and a co-defendant, Byrne Martin Mestas. Mestas, 63, of Billings, was sentenced to 15 years in prison in August for conviction on a conspiracy charge in the case."

Missouri Man Arrested On Child Pornography Charges.

[KFVS-TV](#) Cape Girardeau, MO (10/22, Ruch, 39K) reports Dmitriy Seregeyevic Seleznev "was arrested on October 7 around 1:30 p.m. by Vancouver police and agents with the Federal Bureau of Investigation at a business in Vancouver, Washington." He was "charged with one count of child pornography, a Class X felony; four counts of child pornography, Class 1 felonies; two counts of indecent solicitation of a child, Class 2 felonies; two counts of traveling to meet a minor, Class 3 felonies; and two counts of grooming, Class 4 felonies."

Continuing Coverage: Florida Attorney Arrested On Serial Bank Robbery Charges.

The [AP](#) (10/22) reports Florida attorney Aaron Honaker has been charged by the FBI as being a "serial bank robber," who "tried to rob five banks in the last three weeks before being arrested on his way to another bank." The FBI filed a criminal complaint against Honaker on Wednesday.

Philadelphia Mob Member Sentenced For Racketeering.

The [Inquirer \(PA\)](#) (10/22, Roebuck, 347K) reports Philadelphia mob member Joseph Servidio was sentenced Thursday to 15 years in prison after he "pleaded guilty to charges alleging he pumped pills laced with heroin and fentanyl into Atlantic City." The investigation began in 2016, when an arrested mob member became a cooperating witness for the FBI.

FBI Searching For Missouri Man.

[KCTV-TV](#) Kansas City, MO (10/22, Brown, 133K) reports that the FBI Kansas City Field Office "is asking for help in locating a fugitive who is wanted for his involvement in meth distribution and conspiracy to commit money laundering." Suspect Christopher Brian Rogan has an arrest warrant dating back to July 21, when he was accused of participating in a conspiracy to "distribute methamphetamine and conspiracy to commit money laundering."

[KMBC-TV](#) Kansas City, MO (10/22, 205K) reports that the FBI "said Rogan should be considered armed and dangerous."

Also reporting are [WDAF-TV Kansas City \(MO\)](#) Kansas City, MO (10/22, 242K) and [KSDK-TV](#) St. Louis (10/22, 493K).

FBI Searched California Home.

The [San Diego Union-Tribune](#) (10/22, 755K) reports that federal agents "served an early-morning search warrant last week on the home of well-known San Diego criminal defense lawyer Vikas Bajaj, who has been identified in court documents as the purchaser of three firearms from a former sheriff's captain who pleaded guilty to illegal gun sales in September." The agents "remained at the home until just about 10:30 a.m., after carrying out bags and boxes of materials."

Oregon Man Charged After Threatening Police, Courthouse With Firearms.

The [Salem \(OR\) Statesman Journal](#) (10/22, Barreda, 115K) reports that an Otis, Oregon man "was arrested last week and charged with threatening to harm law enforcement officers and others inside the Lincoln County Courthouse." Daniel Kessler, 44, "is charged with two counts of

furnishing a firearm used in a felony, four counts of unlawful use of a weapon and three counts of unlawful possession of firearms. On Oct. 15, officials from the Lincoln County Sheriff's office received a call about a man who was preparing to harm specific law enforcement officers while in possession of multiple firearms. Detectives, with help from other agencies, found the suspect's threats were credible and that he 'had the means to follow through with his plans,' officials said." Kessler "was in possession of several firearms when investigators searched his residence and took him into custody on Tuesday. A previous court order prohibited Kessler from lawfully possessing firearms."

FBI, DC Police Arrest Two For Child Sex Trafficking.

The [Washington Patch](#) (10/22, 1.03M) reports that FBI agents and Metropolitan Police Department's Youth and Family Services Division officers "arrested two men in connection with a sex trafficking of children offenses that took place in the District." James Coleman is the only publicly identified figure so far.

Texas Court Delays Bribery Trial Until 2021.

The [San Angelo \(TX\) LIVE!](#) (10/22) reports that the bribery trial of former San Angelo police chief Tim Vasquez will "not happen until 2021." Vasquez "is accused of receiving bribes from a San Antonio radio vendor."

California Gang Members Indicted On Racketeering Charges.

[KPIX-TV](#) San Francisco (10/22, 110K) reports that six members of the Norteño gang's "murder squad" have "been indicted by a federal grand jury charging them with racketeering conspiracy and the killing of a number of perceived gang rivals." The indictment "describes how the murder squad orchestrated seven shootings, killing eight people and injuring several others."

[Monterey County \(CA\) Herald](#) (10/22, 84K) also reports.

North Carolina Man Sentenced For Sex Trafficking.

[WCCB-TV](#) Charlotte, NC (10/22, 3K) reports U.S. District Judge Robert Conrad Jr. "sentenced 31-year-old Xaver Boston of Charlotte, North Carolina on October 22nd to 40 years in prison with 30 years of supervised release for sex trafficking and promotion of prostitution." Judge Conrad "[said] Boston will have to pay \$354,000 in restitution and \$25,000 according to 18 U.S. Code 3014 and the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015."

North Carolina Man Sentenced On Drug, Firearms Charges.

The [Asheville \(NC\) Citizen-Times](#) (10/22, 138K) reports U.S. District Judge Martin Reidinger "sentenced 35-year-old Jerrell Tito Bowman to 185 months in prison and eight years of supervised release on drug and gun charges." Bowman had "plead guilty to possession with intent to distribute cocaine, crack cocaine, heroin, Fentanyl, and marijuana, possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime, and possession of a firearm by a felon on June 29, 2020."

Attorney Seeks Documents in Michigan Triple Murder; MGM Grand Mentioned.

The [Detroit News](#) (10/22, Martindale, 825K) reports Nicholas Bahri, a West Bloomfield Township man "charged in three execution-style slayings this month, including a 6-year-old boy, had a brief probable cause hearing Thursday in Warren's 37th District Court that was adjourned into next year at the request of his attorney." Bahri's court appointed attorney, Randy Rodnick, "sought the adjournment to obtain copies of investigative reports, videos and other materials that police allege link Bahri to the slayings." Rodnick also asked "for copies of all fingerprint and DNA records and reports; phone records and video footage - including from a gas station where Bahri allegedly purchased gasoline to burn the rental car, and from the MGM Grand Casino in

Detroit." Rodnick "said gathering the information has been time-consuming because multiple police agencies in several counties have participated in the investigation, including the FBI."

FINANCIAL CRIME & CORPORATE SCANDALS

Judge In Mangano Case Orders Hearing On Alleged Perjury.

[Newsday \(NY\)](#) (10/22, Kessler, 932K) reports, "A federal judge has scheduled a December hearing to determine if the corruption convictions of former Nassau County Executive Edward Mangano and his wife, Linda, should be overturned because of defense claims that a key government witness in the case lied on the witness stand, according to court records." Newsday adds, "Defense attorneys for the Manganos maintain that the witness, former Long Island restaurateur Harendra Singh, committed perjury while testifying in a civil case. In separate filings addressing the allegations, federal prosecutors deny Singh perjured himself. The hearing scheduled for December 21st at the federal court in Central Islip would see both federal prosecutors and defense attorneys question Singh before U.S. District Judge Joan Azrack. The motion to overturn the Manganos' convictions and grant them a new trial is one of a number filed by the couple's defense attorneys to overturn the verdicts."

Florida Woman Pleads Guilty To Embezzlement.

The [Osceola \(FL\) News-Gazette](#) (10/22, McBride) reports, "A Kissimmee woman has pleaded guilty has pleaded guilty to committing wire fraud after stealing more than \$600,000 from two different companies." According to the plea agreement, around May 2017, Kavita L. Harack, 34, "was hired to work as an accountant in the Orlando office of a display services company. Between April 2018 and May 2019, she directed 74 fraudulent payments from the display services company to four bank accounts held in her or her husband's name. Harack disguised the transfers to these personal accounts as vendor payments. After the display services company terminated Harack in May 2019, she was hired to work in the accounting department of a project design company in Orlando. Between July 2019 and December 2019, Harack directed four fraudulent payments from the project design company into two of her personal accounts, again disguising the transactions as vendor payments."

Athens, Alabama City Schools To Dismiss Superintendent Under FBI Probe.

[Alabama Live](#) (10/22, Koplowitz, 734K) reports that the Athens, Alabama Board of Education "intends to fire Superintendent Trey Holladay, who was placed on administrative leave in June after learning he was under investigation by the FBI, the school system's president said Thursday." According to Alabama Live, "Details have not been publicly released about the nature of the investigation, which an FBI spokesman described to AL.com in June as a 'law enforcement action' at Holladay's home. Athens City Board of Education President Russell Johnson said in a statement Thursday night that the board reached a \$250,000 settlement with Holladay that includes terminating the superintendent's contract on Oct. 31. Holladay had about two years remaining on the contract, Johnson said." The FBI investigation into Holladay "remains ongoing, Johnson said. He added that the board was not told when the probe is expected to be completed."

New York Court Upholds Dismissal Of State Mortgage Fraud Charges Against Manafort.

The [AP](#) (10/22, Sisak) reports a New York court has upheld a decision "dismissing state mortgage fraud charges against Paul Manafort on double jeopardy grounds, affirming a lower court finding that they mirrored the federal charges" that led to Manafort's imprisonment. The court "ruled that Manhattan prosecutors failed to show that the state charges they brought against Manafort last year warranted an exception to state double jeopardy protections."

The [New York Times](#) (10/22, Zaveri, 18.61M) reports Manafort attorney Todd Blanche said in a statement, "As we have said from the time the district attorney announced charges against Mr. Manafort, this is a case that should never have been brought because the dismissed indictment is a clear violation of New York law." The [New York Daily News](#) (10/22, Crane-Newman, 2.52M) reports Manafort "was sentenced to 7 1/2 years in prison in March 2019 for hiding millions of dollars in offshore accounts and then lying to get loans after income dried up from his work for pro-Russian Ukrainian politicians." [Politico](#) (10/22, Gerstein, 4.29M) also reports.

Goldman To Pay Nearly \$3B, Take Millions From Executives To Settle 1MDB Probe.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, Hoffman, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports Goldman Sachs admitted Thursday that it broke US corruption laws and agreed to pay nearly \$3 billion to officials in four countries to settle an investigation into its dealings with the Malaysian investment fund 1MDB. In what the journal casts as a move to assuage shareholders Goldman said four executives: chief Executive David Solomon, President John Waldron, Chief Financial Officer Stephen Scherr and the head of Goldman's international business, Richard Gnodde will give up \$31 million in pay this year. In addition, the bank will take back millions in past pay from Solomon's predecessor, Lloyd Blankfein and other former executives. The [Washington Post](#) (10/22, Bogage, 14.2M) says, "Prosecutors in the Eastern District of New York charged the bank with conspiracy to violate the anti-bribery provisions of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act." The settlement "includes the largest monetary penalty ever assessed under corporate criminal bribery law."

The [AP](#) (10/22, Balsamo, Sweet) reports, "Goldman Sachs Malaysia entered the plea in federal court in Brooklyn." The [New York Times](#) (10/22, Goldstein, Flitter, 18.61M) says Goldman "admitted its Malaysian subsidiary 'knowingly and willingly' conspired to violate the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act because some former employees paid bribes to officials in connection with the looting of a sovereign wealth fund, a scandal that toppled that country's leader and triggered criminal cases that spanned the globe."

On its website, [CNN](#) (10/22, Disis, Isidore, Simko-Bednarski, Business, 83.16M) reports Goldman "has already settled the case with Malaysian authorities, agreeing this summer to a \$3.9 billion deal. As part of that settlement, Malaysia agreed to drop all criminal and regulatory proceedings in the country that involved Goldman, including proceedings against the bank's subsidiaries and certain current and former directors." CNN adds the settlements "include partial credits for payments made to other countries, leaving Goldman with a total bill for the scandal of \$5.1 billion, according to a company filing. It could still face civil penalties."

[Bloomberg](#) (10/22, Natarajan, 4.73M) says Goldman, which was "pilloried after the 2008 financial crisis, just saw a decade of image repair tarnished." Bloomberg adds, "The misconduct described in the settlements is landing at a moment when polls suggest Democrats might take control of both chambers of Congress and the White House," which "may make it a smart time for a company to settle with an administration whose players and priorities it knows."

FTC Nearing Decision On A Facebook Antitrust Case.

Citing "two people with knowledge" of the FTC's talks, the [New York Times](#) (10/22, Kang, 18.61M) reports the agency "is moving closer to a decision about filing an antitrust lawsuit against Facebook for its market power in social networking." The FTC's five members met Thursday "to discuss its investigation into Facebook and whether the company had bought smaller rivals to maintain a monopoly, the people said." Those people said the FTC "has prepared three documents about Facebook – one on its potential antitrust violations, another analyzing the company's economics, and a third assessing the risks of litigation – which have been circulated among F.T.C. leaders, the people said." They said a decision about a case has not been made.

California Court Refuses To Hear Bayer's Appeal Of Roundup Verdict.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, Bunge, Randazzo, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports an appeal by Bayer to reverse a jury verdict that its Roundup herbicide caused Dewayne "Lee" Johnson's cancer has been rejected by the California Supreme Court. The Journal says the Court's decision leaves Bayer few options to avoid paying the \$20.4 million judgment.

CYBER DIVISION

EU, UK To Enforce Sanctions On GRU Officers Over 2015 Cyberattack On Germany.

The [AP](#) (10/22) reports that the EU "on Thursday imposed sanctions on two Russian officials and part of Russia's GRU military intelligence agency over a cyberattack against the German parliament in 2015." The EU is imposing "travel bans and asset freezes...on the two men: Igor Kostyukov, head of the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, and Dmitry Badin, a military intelligence officer." Badin is "also being sought by U.S. authorities." An EU statement said, "This cyber-attack targeted the parliament's information system and affected its operation for several days. A significant amount of data was stolen and the email accounts of several MPs as well as of Chancellor Angela Merkel were affected."

[Reuters](#) (10/22) reports, "Britain will enforce asset freezes and travel bans against" two GRU officers and one GRU unit "responsible for 2015 cyber attacks on Germany's parliament, the foreign office said on Thursday." The sanctions, "which come into force immediately, were made under the European Union's regime." UK Foreign Minister Dominic Raab said, "The UK stands shoulder-to-shoulder with Germany and our European partners to hold Russia to account for cyber attacks designed to undermine Western democracies." He added, "This criminal behaviour brings the Russian government into further disrepute."

[CyberScoop](#) (10/22) reports that the sanctions "stand to bolster the U.S. position, too." Assistant Attorney General for National Security John Demers said it is "part of a broader trend toward international allies' attribution of attacks that is 'very helpful' and something the U.S. has made an important objective." Demers added, "If it's just us, it's easy for the Chinese government or the Russian government or the Iranians to just say, 'Oh, no, this is just the U.S. being mad at us over whatever other issue, and they're just using this as a political tool.'"

[Reuters](#) (10/22) reports that Assistant Attorney General for National Security John Demers "accused China on Thursday of helping North Korea launder money from massive cyber thefts it has carried out to raise funds in the face of international sanctions." Demers "also said North Korea was likely getting support from China in the form of cyber expertise and training." He said, "There is support through Chinese cyber infrastructure, there's likely support in terms of sharing expertise and training from the Chinese side."

Security Researcher Says He Accessed Trump's Twitter Account.

[TechCrunch](#) (10/22, 605K) reports Dutch security researcher Victor Gevers "says he accessed President Trump's @realDonaldTrump Twitter account last week by guessing his password: 'maga2020!'" The account "was not protected by two-factor authentication, granting Gevers access to the president's account. ... It's the second time Gevers has gained access to Trump's Twitter account." In 2016, Gevers and two others "extracted and cracked Trump's password from the 2012 LinkedIn breach. The researchers took his password - 'yourefired' - his catchphrase from the television show The Apprentice - and found it let them into his Twitter account."

LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

DOJ Effort Would Link Federal Police Grants To Use-Of-Force Standards.

The [Washington Post](#) (10/22, Barrett, 14.2M) reports, "The Justice Department is preparing to announce a new effort to withhold federal grant money from police departments that don't meet or try to meet certification standards on the use of force." The Post says the "ambitious idea with so far few specifics" is "to be unveiled days before a national election in which police conduct has been hotly debated." The Post cites "a five-page draft document," which "broadly defines how the Trump administration intends to apply an executive order signed by the president on safe policing." The draft says the effort seeks to "improve policies and procedures – ensuring transparent, safe, and accountable delivery of services to our communities."

FBI Agents Visit South Dakota Winter Housing Camp.

The [Rapid City \(SD\) Journal](#) (10/22, Zions, 106K) reports, "The FBI on Thursday visited Camp Mniluzahan, a Lakota-run winter camp established on tribal land outside Rapid City jurisdiction." The Journal adds, "The camp was established by Creek Patrol members on Sunday after an initial attempt to create it on public land Friday in Rapid City. The Rapid City Police Department ordered the group to take down four tipis, saying they violated city ordinances related to tents, public events and the flood plain. Officers arrested six people who stayed inside a tipi. The Thursday meeting with the FBI agents was not tense like the event on Oct. 16. FBI agents and some Creek Patrol members laughed and shook hands toward the end of the short meeting."

[KNBN-TV](#) Rapid City, SD (10/22, Murat) reports, "New developments Thursday regarding a homeless camp recently removed from Rapid City's jurisdiction, the Federal Bureau of Investigations paying the camp a visit in their new remote location. This week, the Mni Luzahan Creek Patrol set up a remote camp site for a number of people considered homeless in the community. After tensions rose over the weekend when tipis were set up to house people in a flood zone along Rapid Creek, the patrol opted to move the camp to tribal land outside of the city's jurisdiction." KNBN-TV adds, "A Facebook video streamed by Carrie MiddleTent early Thursday afternoon shows Creek Patrol members speaking with three FBI agents."

Walmart Sues Federal Government Over Opioid Crisis.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, A1, Kendall, Randazzo, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports Walmart filed a lawsuit Thursday claiming the Justice Department and DEA are trying to scapegoat it for the government's regulatory and enforcement failures with regard to the opioid crisis. The [AP](#) (10/22, D'Innocenzio) calls Walmart's lawsuit "a pre-emptive strike in the battle over its responsibility in the opioid abuse crisis. The government is expected to take civil action against" the company, "seeking big financial penalties, for the role its pharmacies may have played in the crisis by filling opioid prescriptions." [Reuters](#) (10/22, Nivedita) reports Walmart said in a statement, "We are bringing this lawsuit because there is no federal law requiring pharmacists to interfere in the doctor-patient relationship to the degree DOJ is demanding." [Bloomberg](#) (10/22, Feeley, 4.73M) provides similar coverage.

WPost: Judgment Against Purdue Pharma Is "Modest."

In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (10/22, 14.2M) says Purdue Pharma has "agreed to plead guilty to misleading the Drug Enforcement Administration in ways that resulted in otherwise-impermissible amounts of its drug" OxyContin "reaching the market, and to paying doctors and others kickbacks for helping increase sales." The company will pay "\$8.3 billion worth of fines and other payments that also resolves potential federal civil complaints against the company." The Post argues while it may be "useful...to the Trump campaign as Election Day approaches, this measure of justice is modest indeed."

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

US Congressman Seeks To Designate CCP As Criminal Organization.

Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA) writes in an op-ed in [The Hill](#) (10/22, 2.98M) that the Chinese Communist Party "is an aggressive criminal organization, and...Americans are finally waking up to the threat" it poses to the US. The CCP has "allowed a local outbreak of coronavirus to develop into a global pandemic, all for its attempt at self-preservation." This year has also seen "the arrest of two Chinese military agents at the Houston Consulate for attempted theft of coronavirus vaccine research; the arrest of a NYPD officer accused of spying for the CCP;" and more. Perry is sponsoring H.R. 8491, a bill that would "designate the CCP as a transnational organized crime group and a member of the Top International Criminal Organization Target (TICOT) list."

OTHER FBI NEWS

Sources: Trump Weighing Firing Of Wray After Election.

[USA Today](#) (10/22, 10.31M) reports President Trump is "considering a number of key staff changes after the election, including the dismissal of FBI Director Christopher Wray, two administration officials said Thursday." To USA Today, "removing Wray would rock the law enforcement agency yet again, three years after the firing of FBI Director James Comey." Two officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, "said Trump regards Wray as having gone out of his way to separate himself from the president on multiple occasions." The FBI declined to comment.

Professional Gambler Sues Bharara, DOJ Claiming Misconduct In Insider Trading Case.

[Reuters](#) (10/22) reports, "Professional gambler Billy Walters sued former U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara and others on Thursday, alleging that leaks to the media were part of a conspiracy to violate his due process rights in the run-up to his insider trading conviction." According to Reuters, "The Manhattan federal court lawsuit seeks unspecified damages and a declaration that Bharara, former FBI agent David Chaves and other agents and prosecutors violated his Fifth Amendment right to a fair trial by leaking information about their investigation of Walters to the media. Walters was convicted in 2017 of insider trading charges and sentenced to five years in prison. He was released to home confinement earlier this year due to the pandemic."

The [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#) (10/22, 345K) reports, "Walters, who served more than half of a five-year prison sentence before he was released because of the coronavirus pandemic, alleged that authorities tried to get Walters to incriminate himself over a wiretap by planting news stories. Federal prosecutors admitted in 2016, before Walters was indicted, that an FBI agent leaked confidential details of an investigation to reporters at The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times." The lawsuit named Bharara "and the Department of Justice, alleging prosecutors initially made no effort to stop the leaks or find the source. Walters went to trial and was found guilty in New York of masterminding a six-year insider trading scheme with former Dean Foods Co. Chairman Tom Davis. In addition to his prison sentence, Walters was fined \$10 million."

OTHER WASHINGTON NEWS

Senate Judiciary Committee Advances Barrett Nomination As Democrats Boycott Vote.

Norah O'Donnell reported on the [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (10/22, story 5, 1:35, 3.96M) that "Amy Coney Barrett is one step closer to a seat on the Supreme Court." CBS' Nancy Cordes: "Nearly half the Judiciary Committee, all the Democrats, were absent, having walked out in protest. ... Republicans unanimously approved Judge Amy Coney Barrett, 12-0." Senate Judiciary Chairman Lindsey Graham: "The committee did the right thing." Cordes: "Republicans have moved at

lightning speed and are set to confirm Barrett just 38 days after the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. By comparison, they sat on President Obama's nomination of Merrick Garland for 293 days and never held a vote."

The [AP](#) (10/22, Mascaro, Jalonick) reports Republicans "powered past a Democratic boycott" to advance the nomination. Democrats "refused to show up in protest of the GOP's rush to install [President] Trump's nominee. ... Never has the Senate confirmed a Supreme Court nominee so close to a presidential election." The Democrats "displayed posters at their desks of Americans they say have benefited from the Affordable Care Act now being challenged in court." [Townhall](#) (10/22, McCarthy, 177K) reports Sen. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) "ripped her Democratic colleagues' political stunt. As only one of two female Republican members on the committee, Sen. Blackburn deemed Judge Barrett a 'sharp, qualified legal superstar,' who answered every question that she could while before the Senate Judiciary Committee." [USA Today](#) (10/22, Hayes, 10.31M) reports, "The full Senate plans to vote on Barrett's confirmation to the Supreme Court on Monday, likely allowing Barrett to take her place as the ninth justice just days before Election Day."

The [New York Times](#) (10/22, Fandos, 18.61M) says Barrett, "a 48-year-old appeals court judge who has styled herself in the mold of former Justice Antonin Scalia, promises to shift the court meaningfully to the right, entrenching a 6-to-3 conservative majority. Her presence will likely shape American society for decades to come, with potentially sweeping implications for corporate power and the environment, abortion rights and gay rights, and a wide range of other policy issues including health care access, gun safety and religious freedom."

The [Washington Post](#) (10/22, Kim, Firozi, Cassata, 14.2M) reports Barrett "repeatedly declined to offer her legal views on presidential authority and voter intimidation" during her confirmation hearings, "and insisted that she wasn't familiar with Trump's positions on issues such as climate change and the health-care law." [Politico](#) (10/22, Levine, 4.29M) reports that "prior to becoming a federal judge, Barrett criticized Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts' decision to uphold" the Affordable Care Act. [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (10/22, story 7, 0:15, Holt, 5.51M), [Reuters](#) (10/22), the [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, Hughes, Subscription Publication, 7.57M), the [Los Angeles Times](#) (10/22, Haberkorn, 4.64M), the [Washington Times](#) (10/22, Swoyer, 492K), the [Fox News](#) (10/22, McFall, 27.59M) website, and [The Hill](#) (10/22, Carney, 2.98M) are among the other sources covering the vote.

Trump Plans To Nominate Kirsch To Barrett's Seventh Circuit Seat. The [Washington Times](#) (10/22, Swoyer, 492K) reports Trump "announced his intent to nominate Thomas L. Kirsch II for the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Wednesday to fill the seat left open" after Barrett's expected confirmation. Kirsch currently serves as the US Attorney for the Northern District of Indiana.

Murkowski Signals She Will Vote Against Barrett. [Politico](#) (10/22, Everett, 4.29M) reports Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) "met with Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett this week but remains opposed to an election year confirmation to the high court." While Murkowski "wouldn't say explicitly that she will vote against Barrett, she did affirm her belief that now is the wrong time for a confirmation." She said, "I've shared for a while that I didn't think we should be taking this up until after the election, and I haven't changed." Asked if that means "she's a 'no' on Barrett's votes that begin on Sunday, she replied: 'That means I haven't changed my mind on that.'"

Biden Says He Would Create Commission To Consider Court Reforms.

The [AP](#) (10/22) reports that Joe Biden, in an interview with CBS' "60 Minutes" that has not yet aired, said he "won't rule out studying the addition of members to the U.S. Supreme Court as part of a commission he plans to name to look at court reforms if he's elected." [Bloomberg](#) (10/22, Benjaminson, 4.73M) reports Biden "says he would set up a bipartisan commission to study reforms to the U.S. court system, spurred by his party's calls to expand the number of seats" on the Court. Biden said, "What I will do is I'll put together a national commission of,

bipartisan commission of, scholars, constitutional scholars, Democrats, Republicans, liberal/conservative. And I will – ask them to over 180 days come back to me with recommendations as to how to reform the court system because it's getting out of whack – the way in which it's being handled." [Reuters](#) (10/22) reports that last week, Biden "said...he was 'not a fan' of court-packing but has kept his options open."

The [New York Times](#) (10/22, Savage, Glueck, 18.61M) reports Biden's campaign "offered few specifics about who would serve on the panel or how the campaign had settled on the idea." The [Washington Post](#) (10/22, Linskey, 14.2M) says Biden "has repeatedly avoided saying directly whether he would accept a court expansion plan promoted by Democrats angry at Republicans' speedy confirmation process for Amy Coney Barrett." [Politico](#) (10/22, Everett, 4.29M) reports Biden "has faced criticism for declining to offer a clear response to progressives' calls for action." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) says in an editorial that Biden is continuing to dodge the question of whether he backs increasing the number of seats on the court. [Roll Call](#) (10/22, Lesniewski, 154K) also reports.

Pelosi Says Negotiators Are "Just About There" On Stimulus Deal.

[CQ Roll Call](#) (10/22, Lerman, 154K) reports House Speaker Pelosi "raised doubts Thursday about getting a coronavirus aid bill passed before the Nov. 3 elections, even if a bipartisan deal is reached in the coming days." [CNBC](#) (10/22, Pramuk, 3.62M) reports that Pelosi indicated Thursday that "while Democrats and the White House are close to reaching a coronavirus stimulus deal, it could take a lot longer to write and vote on a bill." Pelosi "plan[ned] to speak to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin again Thursday as they try to craft an aid agreement." Pelosi "said the sides are 'just about there' on reaching a deal," but "she cautioned that passing it into law will take time as she and the Trump administration try to iron out remaining issues." Pelosi told reporters, "If we can resolve some of these things in the next few days, it'll take a while to write the bill." [Bloomberg](#) (10/22, Wasson, House, 4.73M) reports that Pelosi "said they still haven't settled three of the main sticking points: Democrats' demands for aid to state and local governments, school funding and Republican insistence on a liability shield for employers."

The [New York Times](#) (10/22, Cochrane, Broadwater, 18.61M) says Pelosi "was noncommittal on Thursday about bringing a stimulus measure to the House floor for a vote before the November election." Likewise, [Reuters](#) (10/22) reports NEC Director Larry Kudlow "said talks were continuing on a possible COVID-19 aid deal but that larger policy differences with Democrats were unlikely to be resolved with the Nov. 3 election less than two weeks away." Kudlow said on [Fox Business' Varney & Co.](#) (10/22, 64K) that "the talks continue to talk, and committee people in both houses are discussing key issues, Senate and House chairs, but having said that, there are still significant policy differences between the two teams, and those policy differences have not yet been solved."

White House Deputy Press Secretary Brian Morgenstern said on [WMAL-AM](#) Washington (10/22) that House Speaker Pelosi "has moved the goalposts over the last 93 days...and we have stayed consistent with our priorities. ... But I think we've seen what appears to be some good faith negotiating over the last day or so, and so we're hopeful that in the next day or two, the Appropriations Committee can make some more progress."

White House Senior Communications Advisor Ben Williamson said on [WIND-AMVi](#) Chicago (10/22, 8K) that "we are hopeful we can get an agreement at least on language here by the end of the week. Americans are hurting, and they deserve us to keep working whether or not politics come into play. They deserve for their representatives to put politics aside and pass something."

White House Director of Strategic Communications Alyssa Farah said on [Fox Business Mornings with Maria](#) (10/22) , "This is really the most optimistic we've felt about getting a deal. There's still obviously some concerns. ... But we are seeing, I think the Speaker's really hearing from her caucus and from her constituents, frankly, getting pressure that she needs to put something on the table."

[Reuters](#) (10/22, Cornwell) reports, "Senate Republicans remained skeptical of a possible deal costing trillions of dollars." Senate Appropriations Chairman Shelby told reporters, "I think we're not going anywhere. A lot of talk, no action." The [Washington Post](#) (10/22, Werner, Stein, 14.2M) says some Senate Republicans are "growing increasingly frustrated" with Mnuchin "as he makes what they see as unacceptable compromises in his quest for a stimulus deal." The Post says Mnuchin has "committed to a top-line figure of around \$1.9 trillion, much too high for many Senate Republicans to swallow. That includes at least \$300 billion for state and local aid, also a non-starter for many in the GOP." Shelby "said he had yet to see any details of the proposals that Pelosi and Mnuchin had been battling around. He said White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows had tried to call him, but they had not connected, and Meadows had been in touch with some of his staff." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, Peterson, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) provides similar coverage.

NEC Chief Economist Joe LaVorgna was asked on [MSNBC](#) (10/22, 1.31M) about reports that Senate Majority Leader McConnell will not support a package before the election. LaVorgna said, "I would say people are trying to drive a wedge on the Republican side and I don't think that's particularly fair." LaVorgna was also interviewed on [WHO-AM](#) (10/22, Des Moines, IA) and [WHO-AM](#) (10/22, Des Moines, IA).

Stocks Finish Higher On Hopes Of Additional Stimulus. [Reuters](#) (10/22, Chavez-Dreyfuss) reports stocks finished higher Thursday "as investors cheered the prospect of more fiscal stimulus to support a pandemic-damaged U.S. economy." The Dow ended the day 152.84 points higher at 28,363.66, the S&P 500 added 17.93 points to close at 3,453.49, and the Nasdaq climbed 21.31 points to 11,506.01. The [AP](#) (10/22, Choe, Troise, Veiga) and the [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, Bartholomew, Eisen, Subscription Publication, 7.57M), and [Bloomberg](#) (10/22, Haigh, 4.73M) provide similar coverage.

FDA Officially Approves Remdesivir As Cases Spike.

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (10/22, story 4, 3:00, Muir, 6.71M) reported, "Tonight, the FDA has now approved the first drug to treat COVID-19. Hospitalizations rising in 40 states, six now hitting record highs." ABC's Matt Gutman added that FDA's announcement is "basically the gold seal of approval. ... It means that the agency recognizes that remdesivir is relatively safe to use, and that it's effective in shortening the duration of the virus. And that means it can free up more beds at slammed hospitals."

Janet Shamlian of the [CBS Evening News](#) (10/22, story 2, 2:05, O'Donnell, 3.96M) called the FDA approval "a major milestone," noting "the experimental drug was previously authorized only for emergency use and was used to treat the President. The news coming as coronavirus hot spots worsen. ... 39 states report their average number of new cases is rising. Hospitalizations are climbing in 36 states, and straining resources."

[NBC Nightly News](#) (10/22, story 4, 2:00, Holt, 5.51M) reported, "The FDA has just approved remdesivir as a COVID-19 treatment. The drug which was given to President Trump shortens recovery time for some patients. This comes as seven states set new daily records for COVID cases."

The [AP](#) (10/22, Marchione) reports that the "antiviral medicine given to hospitalized patients through an IV," being marketed by manufacturer Gilead as Veklury, "cut the time to recovery by five days – from 15 days to 10 on average – in a large study led by the U.S. National Institutes of Health." The drug is approved for use in "people at least 12 years old and weighing at least 88 pounds (40 kilograms) who are hospitalized for a coronavirus infection," though the FDA "will still allow the drug's use in certain cases under its previous emergency authorization" for patients under 12.

[Reuters](#) (10/22, Beasley) reports that despite positive results from NIH and the new approval, "the World Health Organization (WHO) last week said its global trial of COVID-19 therapies found that remdesivir did not have a substantial effect on patients' length of hospital

stay or chances of survival,” though the study has yet to be reviewed. Gilead “has questioned the potential for bias in the WHO study, which was not ‘blinded,’ meaning that participants and their doctors were aware of which treatments were being used.”

[Bloomberg](#) (10/22, Langreth, 4.73M) reports the approval also allows “Gilead to market the drug and talk about its benefits to doctors, nurses, and patients. That could help solidify its position as a go-to medicine for Covid-19 patients even as other drugs for the disease begin to reach the market.”

[USA Today](#) (10/22, Rice, 10.31M) reports that Gilead Chief Medical Officer Merdad Parsey said the drug has approvals or authorizations in around 50 countries.

The [New York Times](#) (10/22, Levenson, 18.61M) reports the FDA’s announcement “indicated that the drug had cleared more rigorous regulatory hurdles involving a more thorough review of clinical data and manufacturing quality since it was given emergency authorization in May.” FDA Commissioner Hahn said in a statement, “Today’s approval is supported by data from multiple clinical trials that the agency has rigorously assessed and represents an important scientific milestone in the Covid-19 pandemic.” The Times says that though “the drug did not go through an outside panel of experts, called an advisory committee, before being approved,” Center for Science in the Public Interest President Peter Lurie “said that was not unusual.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, Walker, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports that prior to the pandemic, Gilead sought to test the drug’s efficacy in treating other strains of coronavirus, including MERS.

Azar Dismisses Report Of Tensions With Hahn.

HHS Secretary Azar was asked on [CBS This MorningVi](#) (10/22, 2.09M) about a Politico [report](#) alleging tension between himself and FDA Commissioner Hahn. Azar said, “Commissioner Hahn and I speak almost every day, we have a very close productive relationship, and we’re working together. As I have made very clear and the Commissioner has made clear, the FDA will make the decision whether to approve therapeutics or vaccines according to their science, data, regulatory, and legal standards. Those calls will be made ultimately by the top career officials at the FDA and I 100% support that approach.”

Azar: New CDC Guidelines On Close Contact A “Call To Action.”

Asked on [CBS This MorningVi](#) (10/22, 2.09M) about updated guidance from the CDC, HHS Secretary Azar said, “We in the past had said that to be a close contact of somebody who might be infectious, you needed to have 15 minutes of continuous, unbroken contact with them within six feet. Now the caution is that...if you have iterative interactions within that six feet, even if it’s not 15 minutes unbroken, that you might also be a close contact. What this means is, it’s a real call to action to reiterate: wash your hands, watch your distance, and when you cannot watch your distance, wear your face coverings.”

FDA Advisory Committee Debates Safety, Efficacy Standards For Vaccine.

The [Washington Post](#) (10/22, McGinley, Johnson, 14.2M) reports that vaccine experts on Thursday “rigorously debated the Food and Drug Administration’s planned standards for clearing a coronavirus vaccine quickly for broad use, discussing what level of evidence would be sufficient to establish safety and effectiveness.” The FDA advisory committee, “in an all-day virtual meeting, did not consider any specific vaccine,” and instead sought “to try to reassure the public that any vaccine will be held to a high standard, not the relatively low bar used this year for emergency use authorization for treatments.”

Calling the meeting “an usual step,” the [AP](#) (10/22, Neergaard, Perrone) reports Dr. Marion Gruber, director of FDA’s vaccine research office, told the advisers that public scrutiny “is critical to build trust and confidence” in whichever vaccines emerge.

Pfizer Expands Vaccine Trial To Include Teens. [USA Today](#) (10/22, Weintraub, 10.31M) reports that “after months of testing its COVID-19 candidate vaccine in adults, Pfizer recently lowered the age of participation to 16, aiming to include at least 3,000 older teens.” Pfizer is the “only one of the leading drug companies to allow minors into a vaccine trial.”

Palantir System To Help Track Manufacture, Distribution Of COVID Vaccines.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, Loftus, Winkler, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports that according to state and local health officials, Palantir Technologies, a data-mining company, is assisting the federal government in setting up a system, called Tiberius, to track the manufacture, distribution, and administration of COVID-19 vaccines.

Consensus Emerges COVID Rarely Transmitted By Contact With Contaminated Surfaces.

The [Washington Post](#) (10/22, Chang, 14.2M) reports, “Although studies continue to show that the novel coronavirus can be detected on contaminated objects after days or weeks, a consensus has emerged among scientists that the virus is rarely transmitted through contact with tainted surfaces and that it’s safe to stop taking such extreme measures as quarantining your mail and wiping down your groceries.” David Morens, a senior advisor to NIAID Director Fauci, said, “To the best of my knowledge, in real life, scientists like me – an epidemiologist and a physician – and virologists basically don’t worry too much about these things.”

Chicago Imposes Curfew As Cases Spike.

The [Chicago Tribune](#) (10/22, Pratt, Byrne, Petrella, 2.65M) reports that “days after threatening to roll back restrictions on Chicago businesses if COVID-19 cases continue to spike, Mayor Lori Lightfoot followed through Thursday by imposing a 10 p.m. curfew on all nonessential city businesses.” In addition, Lightfoot said the city “will again prohibit indoor service at traditional taverns and brewery taprooms without food licenses, and asked residents to cap any social gatherings at six people.” The moves came as the city’s “seven-day average of new cases has hit 645, up dramatically from where the city was at the start of the month.”

The [Chicago Sun-Times](#) (10/22, Spielman, 875K) reports Lightfoot “openly acknowledged the tremendous hardship on restaurants and bars that are the lifeblood of Chicago neighborhoods.” Said the Mayor, “These are really, really tough things to do. Particularly recognizing how dramatically our hospitality industry — our restaurants, our bars, our hotels — have been deeply, profoundly impacted by the economic consequences of this COVID-19 shutdown.”

Iowa’s Economy Suffering Despite No Lockdown.

The [New York Times](#) (10/22, A1, Casselman, Tankersley, 18.61M) reports President Trump and “many supporters blame restrictions on business activity, often imposed by Democratic governors and mayors, for prolonging the economic crisis initially caused by the virus. But the experience of states like Iowa,” which never imposed a lockdown, “shows the economy is far from back to normal even in Republican-led states that have imposed few business restrictions.” According to the Times, a “growing body of research has concluded that the steep drop in economic activity last spring was primarily a result of individual decisions by consumers and businesses rather than legal mandates.”

Three Cases Reported At Los Angeles Megachurch That Defied Public Health Orders.

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (10/22, Cosgrove, 4.64M) reports that an evangelical megachurch in Los Angeles “that has defied L.A. County public health orders and held indoor worship services for the last several weeks has been struck with an outbreak of the coronavirus, public health officials confirmed Thursday.” Grace Community Church in Sun Valley has seen three confirmed cases, according to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

Southwest Will No Longer Block Middle Seat Starting In December.

[NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (10/22, story 9, 1:40, Holt, 5.51M) reported, "Southwest Airlines says it will not block the middle seat on planes starting December 1st, leaving just Delta and Alaska keeping those seats empty." NBC's Tom Costello added, "Southwest and Delta have been blocking middle seats to give passengers a few feet of social distance in the pandemic, but with new research suggesting it is safe to fly, Southwest says it will sell every available seat starting December 1st. American and United are already filling middle seats, Delta plans to do so in the first half of next year."

USA Today Criticizes Administration's Consideration Of Herd Immunity Strategy.

[USA Today](#) (10/22, 10.31M) editorializes that a "White House struggling to show competence as a pandemic surges in the midst of a reelection campaign" has been considering, according to news reports, herd immunity. USA Today argues that it is "a convenient solution for Donald Trump" that "fits neatly within his failure to produce a national plan for curtailing coronavirus with rapid testing, contact tracing and isolating the infected. And it endorses his mantra that states fully reopen for economic recovery, even as the disease spreads." However, USA Today write, "infectious disease experts say it's junk science, and worse, would risk doubling or tripling the number of Americans dead from COVID-19."

Court Bars Census Bureau From Giving Administration Data On Migrants.

In what the [New York Times](#) (10/22, Wines, 18.61M) describes as "a blow to President Trump's plan to upend the centuries-old method of apportioning seats in the House of Representatives," a three-judge panel in the US District Court for the Northern District of California "on Thursday barred the Census Bureau from giving the White House a count of the nation's unauthorized immigrants." In July, Trump ordered the Bureau "to give him a state-by-state count of people living in the United States without authorization, saying he planned to subtract them from the 2020 census totals that will be used to divvy up House seats among the states next year."

Trump Says He Is Looking Forward To Supreme Court Overturning ACA.

The [New York Times](#) (10/22, Grynbaum, Haberman, 18.61M) reports that in an interview with CBS' Lesley Stahl, footage of which was released by the White House on Thursday, President Trump "makes a notable pronouncement about his opinion of the Affordable Care Act, telling Ms. Stahl that he wants the Supreme Court to abolish" the law. Trump is quoted as saying, "I hope that they end it; it'll be so good if they end it." Pressed by Stahl "on how he would handle a scenario where millions of Americans abruptly lost their health insurance, Mr. Trump said repeatedly that he had 'a plan.' When Ms. Stahl pointed out that he has not shown a plan publicly, Mr. Trump falsely claimed that he had."

Cotton, Loeffler Ask DOJ To Investigate Racial Segregation On College Campuses.

The [Washington Free Beacon](#) (10/22, 78K) reports Sens. Tom Cotton (R-AR) and Kelly Loeffler (R-GA) are calling on the Department of Justice to investigate "racially segregated events on college campuses in a letter first obtained by the Washington Free Beacon." Cotton and Loeffler are urging Attorney General Barr to investigate the University of Michigan-Dearborn, the University of Kentucky, and "other universities for allegedly violating Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibits racial discrimination at federally funded institutions."

Sources: Kushner Floating Launch Of Trump-Branded Media Outlet.

[Business Insider](#) (10/22, LoBianco, Moses, 3.67M) reports White House senior adviser Jared Kushner "has been talking up the idea of starting a Donald Trump-themed news outlet or some other media company, possibly as soon as after the election, five Republicans familiar with the discussions told Insider." Kushner has "floated the idea to Republicans and media types

throughout the year, according to three of the people. But the increased chatter about the rise of another conservative media outlet, possibly branded under the Trump name, has kicked up even more over the past few weeks as the president's reelection chances continue to sink."

Trump Issues Order Removing Protections For Federal Workers.

The [New York Times](#) (10/22, Lipton, 18.61M) reports President Trump signed an executive order issued late Wednesday "that could substantially expand his ability to hire and fire tens of thousands of federal workers during a second term, potentially allowing him to weed out what he sees as a 'deep state' bureaucracy working to undermine him." The executive order, "described by one prominent federal union leader as 'the most profound undermining of the Civil Service in our lifetimes,'" would allow federal agencies to "go through their employee rosters and reclassify certain workers in a way that would strip them of job protections that now cover most federal employees." In a statement, the White House said the new employee classification was justified because under current rules "removing poor performers, even from these critical positions, is time-consuming and difficult."

The [Washington Post](#) (10/22, Yoder, 14.2M) reports the order would "shift those employees from what is called the 'competitive service' – covering the bulk of the 2.1 million executive branch employees – into the 'excepted service,' which in general applies to political appointees below the level requiring Senate confirmation." American Federation of Government Employees President Everett Kelley said in a statement, "This is the most profound undermining of the civil service in our lifetimes. The president has doubled down on his effort to politicize and corrupt the professional service."

[Politico](#) (10/22, Mueller, 4.29M) reports unions and Democrats "were quick to criticize the move as a bid to inject politics into the public sector workforce." House Oversight and Reform Chair Carolyn Maloney said in a statement, "President Trump's new executive order would overturn a 150-year-old precedent that created an expert non-partisan civil service and return us to the 'spoils system' of political governance." [The Hill](#) (10/22, Beitsch, 2.98M), among other news outlets, similarly report the order.

USPS IG: Mail Service Deteriorated Under DeJoy.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, Palazzolo, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports an analysis by the US Postal Service's inspector general found that a dramatic slowdown in mail delivery resulted from actions that Postmaster General Louis DeJoy initiated or accelerated after he took office in June.

Colorado Wildfire Grows By More Than 100,000 Acres, Forcing Evacuation.

The [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (10/22, story 4, 1:20, O'Donnell, 3.96M) reported, "Two rapidly growing wildfires could merge into one mega fire in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado." CBS' Omar Villafranca added, "Driven by high winds and dead, dry timber, the fire grew at a staggering pace overnight, exploding from 19,000 acres to more than 125,000 acres in mere hours." Thousands of residents are under mandatory evacuation orders.

The [Washington Post](#) (10/22, 14.2M) reports the "East Troublesome Fire, burning in Grand County and extending now into Rocky Mountain National Park, forced hundreds to quickly evacuate from Grand Lake and Granby overnight, with more evacuations taking place Thursday."

The [Denver Post](#) (10/22, Tabachnik, 720K) reports the "raging fire has firefighters and emergency officials concerned about the possibility that it could merge with the Cameron Peak fire, the largest fire in state history, as the two have each burned into Rocky Mountain National Park." The two fires are "about 10 miles apart." The [New York Times](#) (10/22, Brennan, Healy, 18.61M) reports the National Weather Service "said the critical danger posed by gusting winds was likely to last through Monday."

[NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (10/22, story 5, 1:30, Holt, 5.51M) reported, "In Colorado...two of the largest fires in the state's history [are] spreading out of control." The [AP](#) (10/22, Nieberg) reports the fires have burned "the second-most acreage since 2000 and included the state's two largest on record."

On [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (10/22, story 5, 1:40, Muir, 6.71M), Clayton Sandell said, "Seven fires [are] now scorching the state, burning more than 375,000 acres."

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Europe Imposes More Restrictions As Hospitals Prepare For Second Wave.

The [AP](#) (10/22, D'Emilio) reports that "Italy's three largest cities and dozens of regions of France face curfews as authorities try to slow the spread of the coronavirus in Europe, where most countries are now imposing or mulling new restrictions on activity in response to rapidly rising caseloads." Italy set a record on Thursday with more than 16,000 infections, but "hasn't repeated the drastic" national lockdown enacted in March. However, "the Czech Republic's government on Thursday re-imposed exactly the same heavy restrictions it slapped on citizens in the spring – and which Prime Minister Andrej Babis had repeatedly said would not be repeated – amid a record rise in infections." Greece, Poland, Germany, Denmark, and Portugal all posted new daily records, as well.

The [New York Times](#) (10/22, McCann, Leatherby, 18.61M) reports that in Europe, "a second wave of serious illness is here, new data released on Thursday shows, making it clear that the pandemic is still dangerous and that adherence to control measures over the next few weeks will be crucial in preventing hospitals from becoming overrun for a second time this year." While "the number of Covid-19 patients in hospitals across the continent is still less than half of the peak in March and April...it is rising steadily each week, according to data from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control." Hospitals are now "scrambling to prepare for an onrush of Covid-19 patients, at a time when bed and intensive care capacity will already be under strain during the winter flu season."

Report: Bombing Kills Syrian Cleric Key To Deals With Rebels.

The [AP](#) (10/22) reports that a roadside bombing on Thursday "killed a senior Syrian cleric who played a key role in government deals with rebel fighters, according to Syrian state media and a government website." The blast that killed Damascus Mufti Adnan Afioni "took place in the town of Qudsaya, west of the capital of Damascus." It was not known who planted the bomb and no group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

US Provided Air Cover For Taliban As It Battled ISIS.

Wesley Morgan, in a piece for the [Washington Post](#) (10/22, 14.2M) titled "The U.S. Is Secretly Helping The Taliban Fight ISIS In Afghanistan," writes that US Special Operations forces "intervene[d] in the fighting in Konar province in eastern Afghanistan...by using strikes from drones and other aircraft to help the Taliban." A member of the Joint Special Operations Command counterterrorism task force said earlier this year, "What we're doing with the strikes against ISIS is helping the Taliban move." Morgan adds that last year, the Administration's "public line was that it was hammering the Taliban 'harder than they have ever been hit before,' as the president put it," but, "in reality, even as its warplanes have struck the Taliban in other parts of Afghanistan, the US military has been quietly helping the Taliban to weaken the Islamic State in its Konar stronghold."

Afghan Airstrike Targeting Taliban Kills 12 Children.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, Rasmussen, Amiri, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports that an Afghan airstrike killed 12 children in the northern province of Takhar, local officials said

Thursday. The Afghan Ministry of Defense said the victims were all Taliban militants, but it would still launch an investigation into the incident.

Radical Cleric Seeks To Reimpose Islamic Law In Afghanistan.

The [New York Times](#) (10/22, Zucchino, Rahim, Huylebroek, 18.61M) reports in Herat, Afghanistan, "religious vigilantes loyal to a local cleric patrol the streets, routinely detaining and interrogating couples they suspect are unmarried." The cleric, Mawlawi Mujib Rahman Ansari, insists "he is not affiliated with the Taliban," but his "edicts are an echo of that movement's harsh Islamic codes – and perhaps a portent of what could come as the insurgency negotiates a power-sharing deal with the government."

Twenty NATO Members Not Forecast To Meet 2% Of GDP Defense Spending Target By 2024.

The [AP](#) (10/22, Cook) reports that US allies in Europe and Canada "have increased defense spending for a sixth consecutive year but most of them will still fail to achieve a NATO spending ambition by the target date of 2024." In 2014, NATO members "pledged to halt the cuts and move toward spending 2% of their gross domestic product on defense by 2024." The AP says France and Norway are "forecast to join eight other countries spending at least 2% of their GDP on defense this year. Those others are Britain, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and the United States – which has a bigger budget than all 29 of its allies combined." However, the AP says that "the other 20 allies will not make the cut, according to the projections."

Putin Hints At Russia-China Military Alliance.

The [AP](#) (10/22) reports that on Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin "said...there is no need for a Russia-China military alliance now, but noted it could be forged in the future." The AP says that when "asked during a video conference with international foreign policy experts Thursday whether a military union between Moscow and Beijing was possible, Putin replied that 'we don't need it, but, theoretically, it's quite possible to imagine it.'" According to the AP, "Putin's statement signaled deepening ties between Moscow and Beijing amid growing tensions in their relations with the United States." [Bloomberg](#) (10/22, Meyer, Kravchenko, 4.73M) reports Putin also urged President Trump "to agree to his proposal for a one-year extension of the New START arms-control treaty as talks enter a vital phase."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, Deng, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports on the latest rise of nationalism in China, while the [Los Angeles Times](#) (10/22, 4.64M) runs a lengthy feature on the ambitions of China's President under the headline "Dreams Of A Red Emperor: The Relentless Rise Of Xi Jinping." In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) says the Trump Administration was right to advance a \$1.8 billion arms sale to Taiwan given China's aggression.

Hopes For Armenia-Azerbaijan Deal Fade Despite Upcoming Pompeo Meeting.

[Reuters](#) (10/22, Bagirova, Hovhannisyanyan) reports that "hopes of ending nearly a month of bloodshed in the mountain enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh looked slim on Thursday as Azeri and ethnic Armenian forces fought new battles on the eve of talks in Washington." Reuters says Secretary of State Pompeo's "plan...to meet the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia on Friday raised hopes this week that the two former Soviet republics would agree to end their deadliest fighting since the mid-1990s. ... But those hopes have been dented by the continued heavy fighting in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, a breakaway territory that is inside Azerbaijan but controlled by ethnic Armenians, and by angry rhetoric from both sides."

The [AP](#) (10/22, Demourian) reports that Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry "accused Armenia of firing several ballistic missiles from its territory at the Azerbaijani cities of Gabala, Siyazan and Kurdamir, which are located far from the area of fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh." However,

"The Armenian military rejected the claim as a 'cynical lie.'" The AP reports that Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev "has said that to end hostilities Armenian forces must withdraw from Nagorno-Karabakh. He has insisted that Azerbaijan has the right to reclaim its territory by force since nearly three decades of international mediation hasn't yielded progress." [Reuters](#) (10/22) reports that on Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin "said...Moscow believed that nearly 5,000 people had been killed." Putin is quoted as saying, "There are a lot of casualties from both sides, more than 2,000 from each side."

Sudanese Government Prepared To Normalize Relations With Israel As Part Of US Deal.

[Reuters](#) (10/22, Abdelaziz) reports that Sudan's Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok is "ready to proceed with normalizing relations with Israel once a yet-to-be-formed transitional parliament has approved the step," according to "two Sudanese government sources." Reuters says "the comments are the clearest sign that Hamdok, under pressure from the United States, is willing to contemplate Sudan establishing ties with former adversary Israel." However, "such a move would not be imminent, because the parliament still needs to be established under a power-sharing deal between the military officers and civilians who have been running Sudan jointly since the overthrow of autocrat Omar al-Bashir in 2019."

The [AP](#) (10/22, Federman, Magdy) reports that on Thursday, Sudanese officials "confirmed...that a senior U.S.-Israeli delegation flew to Sudan on a private jet this week to wrap up a deal that would make Sudan the third Arab country to normalize ties with Israel this year." The AP says "such a deal would deepen Sudan's engagement with the West after President Donald Trump's conditional agreement this week to remove the North African nation from the list of state sponsors of terrorism."

Hariri Named Lebanon's Prime Minister For Fourth Time.

[Reuters](#) (10/22, Francis, Dahan) reports that on Thursday, Saad al-Hariri was named Lebanon's prime minister "for a fourth time...and pledged to form a new government to tackle the country's worst crisis since its 1975-1990 civil war." According to Reuters, "after his nomination, Hariri said he would quickly form a cabinet of specialists to bring in economic and financial reforms set out in a French plan to get foreign aid. But he faces major challenges to navigate Lebanon's sectarian politics to agree a cabinet, which must then fix a mounting list of woes: a banking crisis, currency crash, rising poverty and state debts."

The [Washington Post](#) (10/22, Dadouch, 14.2M) says, "Hariri's return as prime minister brings Lebanon back full circle, fueling anger at a static political system that has been controlled by the same families for decades." The Post adds, "His designation came amid one of Lebanon's most tumultuous periods: The spread of the novel coronavirus and government-enforced lockdowns exacerbated a titanic economic struggle – but both crises briefly paled in comparison to a massive blast that tore through the capital, Beirut, on Aug. 4, killing nearly 200 people and damaging much of the city."

Nigeria's Buhari Does Not Mention Shooting Of Protesters In Speech On Unrest.

The [AP](#) (10/22, Olukoya) reports Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari "spoke to the nation about the unrest that has gripped the country in recent days, but without making any mention of the shootings of peaceful protesters at Lekki toll plaza on Tuesday night that prompted international outrage." Buhari "called on Nigeria's youths 'to discontinue the street protests and constructively engage the government in finding solutions. Your voice has been heard loud and clear and we are responding.'" [Reuters](#) (10/22, Onuah, George) says the unrest "has become a political crisis for Buhari, a former military leader who came to power at the ballot box in 2015 and is commander-in-chief of the armed forces."

Guinean President Easily Wins Third Term.

[Reuters](#) (10/22, Samb) reports Guinea's President Alpha Conde "has won a landslide re-election victory, preliminary results showed on Thursday, giving him a third term in office after a bitterly fought election that has sparked deadly street violence. With 37 of 38 electoral districts counted, Conde, 82, received 2.4 million votes, versus 1.26 million for his nearest rival, opposition candidate Cellou Dalein Diallo."

Polish Court Bans One Of Country's Only Forms Of Legal Abortion.

The [AP](#) (10/22, Scislowska) reports Poland's Constitutional Court ruled Thursday "that a law allowing abortion of fetuses with congenital defects is unconstitutional, shutting a major loophole in the predominantly Catholic country's abortion laws that are among the strictest in Europe." The decision "came in response to a motion from right-wing lawmakers who argued that terminating a pregnancy due to fetal defects – the most common reason cited for legal abortions in Poland – violates a constitutional provision that calls for protecting the life of every individual." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (10/22, Hinshaw, Ojewski, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) says the ruling Law and Justice Party has tried to remove the fetal-exemption clause since taking power in 2015. The [New York Times](#) (10/22, Pronczuk, 18.61M) says the ruling "effectively impos[es] a near-total ban in a nation that already had some of the strictest abortion laws in Europe."

US Cosponsors International Declaration Opposing Abortion. The [Washington Post](#) (10/22, Berger, 14.2M) reports Secretary of State Pompeo and HHS Secretary Azar on Thursday took part in a virtual signing ceremony in which the United States "joined Brazil, Egypt, Hungary, Indonesia and Uganda...to co-sponsor a nonbinding international declaration opposing abortion, in a rebuke of the U.N. Human Rights Council, which has enshrined abortion access as a universal right."

WPost Analysis: Bolivia Returns To Morales After Year Of Turmoil.

The [Washington Post](#) (10/22, Machicao, McCoy, 14.2M) writes that "after a year of explosive political developments – a disputed election, the flight of the longtime president, and the appointment of an interim government accused of attacking opponents – Bolivia now finds itself back largely where it all began." The party of ousted President Evo Morales "is back," and "Morales himself – the larger-than-life figure who fled the country last year after being accused of election fraud – says he'll be back, too." Bolivia's Supreme Electoral Tribunal "has yet to declare a winner in Sunday's election, but preliminary results indicate that Arce, the candidate of Morales' Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) party, captured a majority to avoid a runoff vote."

In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (10/22, 14.2M) says Bolivia "has been lucky to avoid a civil war, which many feared would follow the Oct. 18 vote – though 23 people were killed and 700 injured, mostly by the security forces, during the 2019 post-election upheaval, according to Human Rights Watch. ... History rarely grants do-overs. Bolivia, its people and its presidents – past and present – must make the most of this one."

Vatican Dismisses US Concerns, Extends Agreement With China On Bishops.

The [AP](#) (10/22, Winfield) reports that on Thursday, the Vatican and China "extended a controversial accord on bishop nominations...over strong opposition from the White House and conservative Catholics given Beijing's crackdown on religious believers." According to the AP, "the Vatican justified the extension by saying the agreement was purely ecclesiastic and pastoral in nature, not political, though it noted that continued dialogue would allow for discussion on other problems, including human rights abuses." The AP says the 2018 agreement, "which has never been published, envisages a process of dialogue in selecting bishops though Pope Francis has said he has the final word."

The [New York Times](#) (10/22, 18.61M) reports that the extension comes weeks after Secretary of State Pompeo "traveled to the Vatican on an unsuccessful mission to kill it." The

Times says that in September, Pompeo “angered some of the Vatican’s top officials, including those negotiating with the Chinese, by publicly calling on the church to break off talks with China to preserve its moral standing.”

WPost: Pope’s Comments On Civil Unions “Welcome.” The [Washington Post](#) (10/22, 14.2M) says in an editorial, “Pope Francis’s comments on same-sex civil unions mark a welcome watershed. If they lead to real change in church policy, all the better.”

THE BIG PICTURE

Headlines From Today’s Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[Goldman Pays Billions – And Takes Millions From Top Execs – To End 1MDB Scandal](#)
[Donald Trump, Joe Biden Clash Over Covid, Ethics In Calmer Presidential Debate](#)
[Walmart Files Pre-Emptive Lawsuit Against Federal Government In Opioid Case](#)
[Declassified Files Reveal a Possible Spy In Poland – Named James Bond](#)
[In Xi Jinping’s China, Nationalism Takes A Dark Turn](#)

New York Times:

[In Calmer Debate, Biden and Trump Offer Sharply Different Visions for Nation](#)
[Trump’s Cash Crunch Limits His Options and Prompts Finger-Pointing](#)
[Russia Poses Greater Election Threat Than Iran, Many U.S. Officials Say](#)
[In Texas Towns Gutted by Covid-19, a Fragile Effort to Sustain a Cherished Sport](#)
[Iowa Never Locked Down. Its Economy Is Struggling Anyway](#)
[A #MeToo Awakening Stirs in Iran](#)

Washington Post:

[Trump Attacks, Biden Parries, The Race Remains The Same](#)
[Russia Still Viewed As Main Threat To Elections](#)
[Married In Obama’s America. Living In Trump’s.](#)
[Fast-Track Vaccine Trials To Start Reporting Results](#)
[Second Trump-Biden Debate Has Fewer Interruptions But More Counterpunches](#)

Financial Times:

[Biden Vows To Set Up Bipartisan Committee On US Court Reform](#)
[Goldman Subsidiary Pleads Guilty In 1MDB Scandal](#)
[How Much Will A Covid-19 Vaccine Cost?](#)
[Top Lawyer Attacks £100,000-Plus Pay For Junior Solicitors In City](#)

Washington Times:

[Trump Intensifies Attacks Against Biden Proposals](#)
[Son’s Ex-Business Partner Confirms Biden Involvement](#)
[Senate To Subpoena Social Media Titans On ‘Suppression’](#)
[Pompeo, Asians To Huddle On China](#)
[Thai Leader’s Fortunes Turn With Popular Uprising](#)
[Republican Vote Sends Barrett Confirmation To Full Senate](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night’s Network News:

ABC: Final Debate; Final Debate-Expert Comment; Foreign Interference in Election; COVID-FDA; Wildfires; Ghislaine Maxwell; George Floyd Case; COVID-Infected Woman Dies On Flight; Early Winter Storm Warnings; Michigan-Cancer Survivor Runs For Nonprofits.

CBS: Final Debate; COVID-FDA; Foreign Interference in Election; Wildfires; Senate-SCOTUS Vote; Food Insecurity; Illinois-Police Shooting of Black Teen; Macy’s-In-Person Santa Visits Canceled; 102 Year Old Skydives for Her Birthday.

NBC: Final Debate; Final Debate-Expert Comment; Foreign Interference in Election; COVID-FDA; Wildfires; Ghislaine Maxwell; Senate-SCOTUS Vote; Election 2020-Small Business Owners; COVID-Airlines; California-Officer Rescues Woman From Burning Vehicle; Atlanta-5 Year Old Writes Book To Help Other Children Through Pandemic.

Network TV At A Glance:

Final Debate – 14 minutes, 0 seconds

COVID-FDA – 7 minutes, 5 seconds

Foreign Interference in Election – 6 minutes, 30 seconds

Wildfires – 4 minutes, 30 seconds

Story Lineup From This Morning's Radio News Broadcasts:

ABC: Final Debate-Healthcare; Final Debate-Expert Analysis; North Carolina-Mail-In Ballots; Iran-New Sanctions; COVID-FDA.

CBS: Final Debate-Hunter Biden; Trump-'60 Minutes'; COVID-FDA; Senate-SCOTUS Vote; Wildfires.

FOX: Final Debate-Hunter Biden; Final Debate-Coronavirus; New Jersey-Mail-In Ballots; Stocks.

NPR: Final Debate-Expert Analysis; Foreign Interference in Election; COVID-FDA; Stocks.

WASHINGTON'S SCHEDULE

Today's Events In Washington.

White House:

- President Trump — Delivers remarks at a Make America Great Again Victory Rally at The Villages, FL; delivers remarks at a Make America Great Again Victory Rally in Pensacola, FL.
- Vice President Pence — Second Couple cast election ballots in Indiana.

US Senate:

- Senate considers SCOTUS nominee Amy Coney Barrett – Senate convenes and considers the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett to be U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice

Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC

US House:

- House meets in pro forma session – House of Representatives meets in pro forma session * Chamber on recess from 2 Oct – 16 Nov

Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC; 11:30 AM

Cabinet Officers:

- Energy Secretary Brouillette keynotes CSIS virtual event on 'The U.S. Innovation Ecosystem' – 'The U.S. Innovation Ecosystem' Center for Strategic and International Studies online discussion, the final event of the Energy Innovation Series, to examine the energy innovation chain from conception to commercialization and deployment and how to spur more innovation in the U.S. Includes keynote from Secretary of Energy Dan Brouillette, with other speakers including Department of Energy Chief Commercialization Officer Conner Prochaska, Greentown Labs CEO Emily Reichert, and Information and Technology Foundation Senior Fellow David Hart; *1:00 PM*

Visitors:

- No visitors scheduled.

This Town:

- Brookings online discussion on the defense industrial base – 'The defense industrial base and the future of warfare' Brookings Institution Foreign Policy program online event exploring the future of the defense industrial base and challenges facing policymakers and

the industry. Speakers include Democratic Rep. Anthony Brown and Bell President and CEO Mitch Snyder; *10:00 AM*

- Axios virtual event on voter turnout and national security in the upcoming election – Axios News Shapers virtual event on the upcoming election, with discussion on voter turnout and how national security will play a 'key role' in the election, with Democratic Rep. Karen Bass, Voto Latino CEO and President Maria Teresa Kumar, and former National Security Advisor Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Henry McMaster; *3:30 PM*
- Armenian foreign minister speaks on Atlantic Council online event on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict – Armenian Foreign Minister Mnatsakanyan speaks on Atlantic Council Eurasia Center online event, discussing his talks with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Armenia's position on the Nagorno-Karabakh, and the prospects for establishing a true ceasefire and finding a negotiated solution to the issue; *4:30 PM*

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