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Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] - FBI Public Affairs News Briefing Tuesday, February 23, 2021

Date: Tue, 23 Feb 2021 11:27:29 +0000

Importance: Normal

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

 FBI News Briefing

TO: THE DIRECTOR AND SENIOR STAFF

DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2021 6:30 AM EST

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LEADING THE NEWS

Garland Tells Senators He Will Not Be "The President's Lawyer," Vows Focus On Capitol Riot.

All three broadcast networks covered the Senate Judiciary Committee confirmation hearing for Attorney General-designate Garland. David Muir said on [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (2/22, story 6, 1:00, 8.08M) that Garland "said, 'I am not the President's lawyer, I'm the United States'

lawyer.' And if confirmed, he revealed his top priority will be to investigate the Capitol riots." ABC's Rachel Scott: "He called that attack on Capitol Hill heinous, saying that he would prosecute the white supremacists and others who stormed the Capitol on January 6."

Norah O'Donnell said on the [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (2/22, story 6, 2:00, 4.77M) that Garland "appears to be on his way to Senate confirmation." CBS' Kris Van Cleave: "Nearly five years after being nominated to the US Supreme Court, Merrick Garland finally got his Senate confirmation hearing today for attorney general. ... He'd take over a department beset by low morale and under fire by Democrats for decisions made during the Trump Administration, and from Republicans for its investigation of the Trump Administration." Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX): "You do not view your role as attorney general as being Joe Biden's wingman." Garland: "I'm not the President's lawyer. I am the United States' lawyer." Van Cleave: "After a summer of social unrest following the killing of George Floyd by a white police officer, Garland said civil rights enforcement will be a priority." Garland: "There's no question that there is disparate treatment in our justice system."

Pete Williams said on [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (2/22, story 5, 1:25, Holt, 6.17M), "Garland says the siege at the Capitol shows that violent extremism is more of a threat now than it was 26 years ago when the Oklahoma City federal building was bombed, and Garland led that federal prosecution. He says the Capitol investigation will range beyond the actual rioters. ... Garland pledged to make sure the White House and politics don't interfere with investigations, including the special council's inquiry into the FBI's investigation of the Trump campaign and the tax investigation of the President's son, Hunter." Garland: "I would not have taken this job if I thought that politics would have any influence over prosecutions and investigations."

The [AP](#) (2/22, Balsamo, Tucker, Jalonick) says Garland, "among Biden's most widely supported nominees" sought to "assure lawmakers that the Justice Department would remain politically independent on his watch." The [New York Times](#) (2/22, Benner, Savage, 20.6M) reports Garland "vowed to uphold the independence of a Justice Department that had suffered deep politicization under the Trump administration." [USA Today](#) (2/22, Behrmann, Santucci, 12.7M) reports, "Garland was often pressed by Republican senators over the political independence of the Justice Department, and was pressed, to which he agreed, to commit to not prosecute Biden's political foes. Very few GOP lawmakers mentioned Trump's Justice Department, and the accusations Attorney General Bill Barr faced for using the power of the agency to help President Donald Trump politically."

The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Barrett, 10.52M) reports Garland "drew parallels to the domestic terrorism threat the Justice Department faced in confronting the Ku Klux Klan, as well as the prosecution he led of Timothy McVeigh in the bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995. 'We are facing a more dangerous period than we faced in Oklahoma City at that time,' Garland asserted, promising a broad investigation into not just the rioters, but those who aided them."

The [Washington Times](#) (2/22, Mordock, 626K) reports that Garland "sidestepped senators' questions about the Russian collusion probe and Hunter Biden's business dealings on Monday but vowed an aggressive prosecution of last month's U.S. Capitol rioters." The Times adds that Garland "also pledged to advance Mr. Biden's gun control agenda," and that "while Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee appeared unsatisfied with his answers, several signaled that they would vote for his confirmation next week."

[Politico](#) (2/22, LeVine, Gerstein, 6.73M) reports, "Republicans did use the opportunity to gingerly push Garland to commit to allowing federal prosecutors to press on with politically sensitive investigations into the Department of Justice probe of Donald Trump's ties to Russia and into the business affairs of Biden's son, Hunter," but "beyond vowing that politics would play no role in his decisions, Garland made few promises. Despite that, there was little acrimony and many Democrats and Republicans on the panel appeared to treat his confirmation almost as a foregone conclusion."

The [New York Daily News](#) (2/22, Sommerfeldt, 2.51M) reports that Garland will “become the third Jewish attorney general in American history if confirmed by the Senate.” He told the committee, “I come from a family where my grandparents fled antisemitism and persecution. The country took us in, and protected us. I feel an obligation to the country to pay back and this is the highest, best use of my own set of skills to pay back.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/22, Gurman, Viswanatha, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports under the headline “Garland Makes Case For New Era At Justice Department” that the nominee “received a mostly warm reception during his daylong confirmation hearing.” The [Los Angeles Times](#) (2/22, 3.37M) reports Senate Judiciary Chairman Richard Durbin “told reporters he expected his panel would vote on the nomination early next week, with a floor vote coming a few days later.”

Jennifer Rubin writes in the [Washington Post](#) (2/22, 10.52M) that Garland “was the model of judicial deportment, precision and character.” Garland, she adds, “reiterated his commitment to keep the department free of political interference.” Dana Milbank writes in the [Washington Post](#) (2/22, 10.52M) that Garland sent “a clear message to the violent white supremacists and other domestic terrorists who thrived during the Trump years, most visibly in their attack on the Capitol last month: There’s a new sheriff in town.”

[Reuters](#) (2/22, Chiacu), the [New York Post](#) (2/22, Nelson, 7.45M), [Axios](#) (2/22, Allassan, 1.26M), [Politico](#) (2/22, LeVine, Gerstein, 6.73M), [The Hill](#) (2/22, Carney, Beitsch, 5.69M), [Roll Call](#) (2/22, Ruger, 130K), and the [CNN](#) (2/22, Rogers, Herb, 89.21M) and [Fox News](#) (2/22, Raasch, 23.99M) websites are among other sources covering the hearing.

Garland Sees “No Reason” Why Durham Probe Should Not Be Left In Place. [Fox News](#) (2/22, Singman, 23.99M) reports that Garland “said he sees ‘no reason’ why” Durham “should not be left in place to continue his investigation into the origins of the Trump-Russia probe – but he wouldn’t explicitly make a committal.” Ranking Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley “pressed Garland on whether he would commit to allowing Durham to continue his probe through the Biden administration. ‘Will you commit to providing Special Counsel Durham with staff, resources and funds needed to thoroughly complete his investigation?’ Grassley asked.” Garland “said that, at this point, he does not have ‘any information about the investigation as I sit here today.’ ‘I understand that he has been permitted to remain in this position and sitting here today, I have no reason to think that was not the correct decision,’ Garland said, adding that he does ‘have to have an opportunity to talk with’ Durham.”

The [Washington Examiner](#) (2/22, Dunleavy, 888K) reports that Grassley “asked Garland if he was saying that Durham would only be removed ‘for cause.’ Garland didn’t commit to that either. ‘I would have to have an opportunity to talk with him,’ Garland said. ‘I have not had that opportunity. As I said, I don’t have any reason, from what I know now, which is really very little, to make any determination on that ground. But I don’t have any reason to think that he should not remain in place.’ Garland also would not commit to releasing Durham’s full report. ‘I am a great believer in transparency,’ Garland said. ‘I would, though, have to talk with Mr. Durham and understand the nature of what he’s been doing and the nature of the report. But I am very much committed to transparency and to explaining Justice Department decision-making.’”

Garland Refuses To Comment On Comey’s Tenure As FBI Director. [Fox News](#) (2/22, Singman, 23.99M) reports that Garland “wouldn’t comment on whether he believed James Comey was a good FBI director during his confirmation hearing despite being pressed by Republican senators to assess Comey’s job performance.” Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC, “after pressing Garland on his thoughts related to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, asked whether he believed Comey was a good FBI director. ‘Senator, I really don’t want to get into analyzing any of the previous directors,’ Garland said.” Later, Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX) “pointed to Comey’s move prior to the 2016 election to rail against Clinton’s conduct, even though the Justice Department had decided not to bring any charges against her,” and “Garland said it wouldn’t be ‘useful’ for him to weigh in on the actions of Comey, as a former official, but said he

would 'zealously' work to restore the department's longstanding policy of not making any derogatory comments beyond what would appear in an indictment."

Garland Concurs With IC That China Is A "Threat" To US Interests. [Fox News](#) (2/22, Barrabi, 23.99M) reports that Garland "concurred Monday with the U.S. intelligence community's view that China is a 'threat' in certain ways to U.S. interests but declined to say whether he views the country's leadership in Beijing as an enemy." Sen. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) "cited remarks from former Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe...that China 'poses the greatest threat to America today.' Blackburn asked Garland if he considered the Chinese Communist Party an 'enemy' of the United States. 'Well, I don't have the same familiarity with the intelligence information that the director of the national intelligence has, so in terms of comparing, say, the threat from China and the threat from Russia, I'm just not competent to make that comparison,' Garland said in response. 'Certainly, from what the director said, there's no doubt that China is a threat with respect to hacking of our computers, hacking of our infrastructure, theft of our intellectual property,' Garland said."

Garland Vows DOJ Probe Of New York Nursing Homes Will Be Free Of Conflicts. [Fox News](#) (2/22, Barrabi, 23.99M) reports that Garland "pledged Monday that the Justice Department would avoid conflicts of interest in any investigation of New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo's handling of the state's nursing home crisis during the coronavirus pandemic." Fox News adds, "The U.S. Attorney's office in the Eastern District of New York is reportedly in the early stages of an investigation into the Cuomo administration." The investigation "is said to be focused on members of Cuomo's coronavirus task force, which includes Secretary to the Governor Melissa DeRosa." Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) noted that SDNY US Attorney Audrey Strauss "is DeRosa's mother-in-law. 'In this instance, the acting US attorney is the mother-in-law of the senior official of the Cuomo administration that admitted to the cover-up,' Cruz said. 'Will you at least commit to not having the investigation done by a person with a conflict of interest?' 'Of course,' Garland said in response."

Garland Supports Release Of Report On FBI's Handling Of Nassar Probe. The [Orange County \(CA\) Register](#) (2/22, Reid, 594K) reports, "Garland told the Senate Judiciary Committee Monday that he supports releasing the results of a U.S. Department of Justice investigation into the FBI's handling of the Larry Nassar/USA Gymnastics sexual abuse scandal." Garland "also said if confirmed he would also consult with the Justice Department's inspector general about the USA Gymnastics/Nassar investigation." The OCR adds, "Between August and October 2018, Office of Inspector General investigators and FBI agents from local field offices interviewed" gymnasts "and their parents about the FBI's investigation of Nassar, according to interviews and documents obtained by the Southern California News Group. The Justice Department, however, still has not released the OIG report on the FBI's role in the Nassar scandal nearly 2 1/2 years after the OIG official leading the investigation told parties in the case that the investigators' report had been forwarded to the Justice Department's Public Integrity Section."

Garland: Handling Of Epstein Case Was "Horrendous." [USA Today](#) (2/22, Jansen, 12.7M) reports that Garland "called the treatment of alleged sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein 'horrendous,' but said he couldn't comment on why the Justice Department acted the way it did." Epstein, "who died by suicide in jail, was indicted in 2019 for sexually exploiting and abusing dozens of minor girls at his homes in New York and Florida. Federal prosecutors in New York alleged that for years, Epstein paid some of his victims to recruit more underage girls," but "the charges came years after former U.S. Attorney Alexander Acosta resolved a sex-crimes case through a non-prosecution deal without notifying his alleged victims. A Justice Department investigation found Acosta showed 'poor judgment,' but Acosta said the review debunked allegations he cut a 'sweetheart deal.'"

CAPITOL VIOLENCE NEWS

FBI Has Identified More Than 500 Suspects, Made More Than 200 Arrests In Capitol Siege Probe.

In a posted video, [CBS News](#) (2/22, 5.39M) reports that the FBI "said it has identified over 500 suspects in the federal investigation into the deadly riot, and made more than 200 arrests."

Oath Keeper Alters Claim That She Met With Secret Service Before Attack On Capitol. [Reuters](#) (2/22, Ax) reports Jessica Watkins, "a leader of the far-right group Oath Keepers who is charged with participating in the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol," on Monday "reversed her story...about having met with Secret Service agents in Washington on the day of the insurrection," and in a new court filing her attorney instead "said she had merely spoken with some agents while passing through a security checkpoint." According to Reuters, "Watkins is asking the court to release her to home confinement while she awaits trial, citing in part the risk of maltreatment she faces in jail as a transgender woman."

[USA Today](#) (2/22, Voyles Pulver, Axon, 12.7M) reports, "The lawyer's original motion, filed over the weekend, raised questions about whether the Secret Service had coordinated rally security with paramilitary groups that later stormed the U.S. Capitol. Federal authorities allege Watkins coordinated with a group of at least eight other people who wore tactical gear and helmets and marched in military fashion into the Capitol." The Secret Service "wasted no time rejecting the original claim that it had worked with Watkins or any private citizens on security for the rally. The agency said it relied only on the assistance of government partners. 'Any assertion that the Secret Service employed private citizens to perform those functions is false,' the agency said Monday. Watkins' federal public defender filed a 'clarification' later on Monday saying the motion never meant to imply Watkins met with the Secret Service."

DC Judge Rules Proud Boys Leader Now Compliant With Pretrial Services Agency. The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Alexander, 10.52M) reports, "A D.C. Superior Court judge Monday concluded Henry 'Enrique' Tarrío, the Proud Boys leader accused of burning a Black Lives Matter banner in the city, is currently following rules of his pretrial release but warned Tarrío he could be jailed until trial if he fails to remain in compliance." According to the Post, "In a Feb. 4 letter to the court, an official from the Pretrial Services Agency in the District, which monitors defendants who are released pending trial, alerted the court that Tarrío had failed to report by phone, had not verified his address and was deemed a loss of contact." Tarrío, 33, "was arrested in the District on Jan. 4 and charged with destruction of property in the burning of a Black Lives Matter banner outside a D.C. church in December."

Florida Woman Arrested For Threatening To Kill FBI Agents Amid Siege Probe. The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Shepherd, 10.52M) reports, "After FBI agents phoned Suzanne Kaye in late January, the Boca Raton, Fla., retiree...posted a video to her Facebook, Instagram and TikTok accounts. 'Just got a call from the FBI,' Kaye said. 'They want to come talk to me about my visit to D.C. on January 6.'" Kaye "then spewed an obscenity-laden screed against the federal law enforcement agency. 'You think I'm going to ... let you come talk to me?' she said. 'I'm an American. I know my ... rights. My First Amendment right to free speech, my Second Amendment right to carry a gun to shoot your f----- a-- if you come to my house.' The FBI took her comments seriously, and charged Kaye in a criminal complaint filed on Feb. 15 with making a communication in interstate commerce that threatened to kill agents from the FBI."

Former Florida Police Officer Charged In Capitol Riot Probe. The [AP](#) (2/22, Anderson) reports from St. Petersburg, Florida, "A former Florida police officer and Marine Corps veteran is the latest person to be charged with taking part in the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol." The AP adds, "Court documents filed Sunday show that Nicholes Lentz is charged in a criminal complaint with illegally being in a restricted building and disruptive and disorderly conduct." Lentz, 41, "is a former North Miami Beach police officer who also served with the Marines in Afghanistan and Iraq, according to an FBI affidavit. There have been numerous people affiliated with law enforcement and the military charged with participating in the riot. Lentz was identified through Facebook posts, including by North Miami Beach Mayor

Anthony DeFillipo. According to the FBI, Lentz was interviewed by agents last week at his home in Boynton Beach and admitted being at the Capitol on Jan. 6."

Kansas Man Linked To Proud Boys Arrested In Capitol Siege Probe. The [AP](#) (2/22, Stafford) reports from Liberty, Missouri, "A man linked to the Kansas City metro chapter of the Proud Boys was charged Monday with conspiring with members of the group to participate in the riots at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6." Ryan Ashlock, of Gardner, Kansas, "was arrested Monday without incident, the FBI said. An affidavit alleges Ashlock conspired with five other members of the Proud Boys who have already been charged in the riots." Ashlock "traveled to the riots with other Proud Boy members, marched with them to the Capitol, and helped knock down metal barricades between police and protesters outside the Capitol, according to the affidavit. He separated from the group when police pepper-sprayed him, and it was unclear if Ashlock entered the Capitol, the FBI said."

Two Senate Committees To Hold Hearings On Capitol Riot.

The [New York Times](#) (2/22, Broadwater, 20.6M) reports that as the House of Representatives "haggle[s] over the formation of a 9/11-style commission to investigate the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol," the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and the Rules and Administration Committee are "pressing ahead with a series of investigative hearings to scrutinize the security breakdowns that failed to prevent the deadly pro-Trump rampage." The Times says lawmakers on Tuesday will "question the officials who were in charge of securing the Capitol during the attack, when Capitol Police officers and members of the District of Columbia's police force called in as reinforcements were overrun as the vice president and members of the House and the Senate were gathered inside."

[Politico](#) (2/23, Cheney, Desiderio, 6.73M) reports, "Lawmakers will get their first chance Tuesday to expose the security failures that allowed rioters to overtake the Capitol on Jan. 6 and threaten the presidential transition of power." Politico adds, "At a rare joint oversight hearing, senators are set to hear from security officials who were on duty when a mob of former President Donald Trump's supporters ransacked the building and sent them fleeing for their lives. The story of Jan. 6 has become clearer as hundreds of rioters have faced charges, but high-level decision-making by top congressional security officials has so far remained a black box," and "that lack of transparency from the upper echelons of the Capitol Police leadership in particular has sparked pushback from the police force's union. It's also clouded congressional efforts to increase security and ensure the Hill learns from the insurrection chaos. Senators expect Tuesday's hearing to be only the first step in their efforts to investigate the run-up and response to the siege."

However, the [Washington Post](#) (2/22, DeBonis, Demirjian, 10.52M) warns that the hearing "could also become a battleground for competing narratives over what prompted the riot and who was responsible for it – a question that has become even more pointed following former president Donald Trump's acquittal on impeachment charges earlier this month."

House Leaders Divided Over Composition Of 1/6 Commission. [Politico](#) (2/22, Cayle, Cheney, 6.73M) reports House Speaker Pelosi "and her Republican counterparts" are "battling over the contours of a panel inspired by the 9/11 Commission to investigate the deadly Capitol insurrection on Jan. 6, with Republicans demanding equal representation." Politico says they "have already traded one offer each but still remain at odds over several issues including membership on the proposed commission, according to multiple sources familiar with the talks." Politico adds that while Pelosi "proposed tilting the panel in favor of Democrats, with her party getting to pick seven of the members while Republican leaders choose four additional appointees," Republicans "are insisting on an equal split – each party gets to appoint five members – in their counteroffer, sources told Politico," and they "are pressing Democrats to avoid specifically prescribing avenues of inquiry that might steer the panel in certain directions, as opposed to allowing panelists to determine their own course." [The Hill](#) (2/22, Marcos, 5.69M) provides similar coverage.

Capitol Police Officer Discusses Attack On Capitol. In an exclusive, the [ABC News](#) (2/22, Thomas, Ordonez, Larramendia, 2.44M) reports on its website that Capitol Police officer Harry Dunn "said the rotunda no longer resembled the room he once knew on Jan. 6, the day of the siege on the Capitol," and he "recalls gasping for air through the pepper spray and bear mace, blood on his knuckles and the relentless noises from the rioters." In an interview on Monday, Dunn became the first US Capitol Police officer "to speak publicly about the events of Jan. 6." [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (2/22, story 7, 1:50, Muir, 7.55M) also aired a segment of the interview. According to ABC's Pierre Thomas, Dunn "said the mob hurled the N-word at him, a Black officer, that weapon of a word." Dunn: "What the hell just happened? I got called a [bleep]. Couple dozen times today. Protecting this building. Is this America?" Thomas added Dunn "wanted to make it clear he's speaking for himself and not his department. A force that's still trying to cope with that nightmarish day. But he's so proud of the men and women who fought beside him in that fight for democracy."

COUNTER-TERRORISM

FBI Agents Association Head: Make Domestic Terrorism A Federal Crime.

In an op-ed for [USA Today](#) (2/22, 12.7M), Brian O'Hare, president of the FBI Agents Association, writes, "The FBI Agents Association supports a law that creates penalties for those violent acts that meet the definition of domestic terrorism already included in the federal criminal code." O'Hare adds that "making domestic terrorism a federal crime...would offer an additional tool and increase the effectiveness of law enforcement personnel dedicated to protecting the public," and "would target acts of violence that have no place in the political discourse secured by our Constitution and Bill of Rights." O'Hare argues that "calling out domestic terrorism for what it is promotes deterrence. Imagine being a victim of domestic terrorism only to discover that it isn't against the law. Victims deserve to have the crimes against them – and the trauma they cause – named accurately. Making domestic terrorism a federal crime would be a logical and important affirmation of our shared values and would send a clear message about our country's commitment to resolving political differences peacefully."

Families Of Victims Of Pensacola Navy Base Mass Shooting Sue Saudi Arabia.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Hsu, 10.52M) reports the families of three US service members killed in the "mass shooting at Naval Air Station Pensacola in 2019" and 13 others injured in the attack "alleged Monday that the government of Saudi Arabia facilitated the attack, which U.S. authorities concluded was an act of international terrorism." According to the Post, "A 152-page complaint in federal court in Pensacola, Fla., makes new allegations that the shooter, Royal Saudi Air Force 2nd Lt. Ahmed Mohammed al-Shamrani, executed the attack with the support of 'accomplices,'" including "fellow Saudi air force trainees." The [AP](#) (2/22, Tucker) reports the lawsuit "also says Saudi trainees were aware that he had purchased and stored firearms and ammunition in his barracks, and that they had failed to report his posting of and sharing extremist and anti-American material on social media."

The [Pensacola \(FL\) News Journal](#) (2/22, Blanks, 196K) reports that "an explosive 152-page complaint filed Monday in federal court in Pensacola brought on behalf of the 16 plaintiffs and their families outlines in chilling detail the events leading up to Dec. 6, 2019, as well as why attorneys feel the Saudi Arabian government owes the American victims and families money for their pain and suffering." The complaint "alleges the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had every reason to know that 2nd Lt. Mohammed Saeed Al-Shamrani harbored serious anti-American sentiments and terroristic tendencies long before he joined the Royal Saudi Air Force in 2015," and it "even goes as far as to say that Saudi Arabia might have known Al-Shamrani was planning to carry out a terrorist attack on U.S. soil and did nothing to stop him. The complaint points to his active and public social media accounts in which he voiced disdain for

America, including an ominous message posted to Twitter on Sept. 11, 2019, stating that 'the countdown has begun.'"

The [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) (2/22, Darnell, 1.46M) reports, "The lawsuit said Royal Saudi Air Force 2nd Lt. Ahmed Mohammed al-Shamrani executed the attack with the support of 'accomplices.' Those included fellow Saudi Air Force trainees, whom he told of his plans at a dinner the night before and during a November 2019 visit to the 9/11 memorial in New York City to pay tribute to the hijackers, the plaintiffs allege. The families also accused the Trump administration and Saudi government of reneging on pledges of support for families."

[ABC News](#) (2/22, Katersky, 2.44M) reports, "According to the lawsuit, Saudi Arabia knew of Al-Shamrani's radicalization and anti-American sentiments, which were publicly associated with a Twitter account bearing his name." ABC News adds, "In May, Attorney General William Barr and FBI Director Christopher Wray said Al-Shamrani had communicated directly with al-Qaida operatives in an attack that they described as 'a brutal culmination of years of planning and preparation,' based on newly revealed evidence obtained from the shooter's iPhones. Al-Shamrani made efforts to destroy his phones, even shooting a bullet through one of them, Barr said."

[Fox News](#) (2/22, Manfredi, 23.99M) reports, "The lawsuit seeks unspecified compensatory damages for an attack the families say was caused by Saudi Arabia and its 'intentional, knowing, reckless, willful and/or grossly negligent' act to send a terrorist operative 'Trojan horse' into a U.S. program tied to 'billions of dollars in military arms sales from the United States to the Kingdom.'"

Austin: Extremists And White Supremacists Tiny Fraction Of US Military, But Have "Outsized" Impact.

The [Washington Examiner](#) (2/22, McIntyre, 888K) reports that, in his first Pentagon news conference Friday, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin "was careful to say that while the department does not yet have hard data on the number of extremists in the ranks, he suspects they make up a tiny fraction of the 1.3 million member active-duty force." Austin said, "I really and truly believe that 99.9% of our servicemen and women believe in [their] oath. They believe, embrace the values that we are focused on, and they're doing the right things. I expect for the numbers to be small, but quite frankly, they'll probably be a little bit larger than most of us would guess ... But I would just say that, you know, small numbers, in this case, can have an outsized impact."

Opinion: ISIS Is Down But Not Dead Yet.

In a commentary in the [Daily Beast](#) (2/22, 933K), Gayle Tzemach Lemmon, author of 'The Daughters of Kobani,' writes, "The ghost of the 2003 Iraq war has hung over and shaped every decision the US has made on the Syrian civil war since 2011. The incoming Administration will soon grapple with the question: how to handle the Islamic State as it finds openings and regroups." She contends, "The success of the US-SDF relationship isn't well known, but it contains US policy implications: as the new administration considers Middle East policy, it now faces the question of whether to continue America's limited presence in northeastern Syria and how to employ diplomacy to move toward an end to the war in Syria." She concludes, "There are always conflicting priorities in the first 100 days of any administration, but as those who crafted the counter-ISIS policy return to government, ensuring ISIS does not return to power...should be among the top."

COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE

Opinion: John Durham May Not Bring More Additional Charges.

In a commentary in [The Hill](#) (2/22, 5.69M), former FBI agent Mark Ferbrache writes, "It is becoming apparent that the prosecution of former FBI attorney Kevin Clinesmith may be the zenith of special counsel John Durham's investigation into the roots of the FBI's 'Crossfire Hurricane' investigation involving Russia and Donald Trump's 2016 campaign. Recent reporting suggests no other senior FBI or Department of Justice (DOJ) officials will face criminal charges." He contends, "There are hints that Durham's 20-month autopsy of Crossfire Hurricane may amount to findings of violations of FBI policies and investigative procedures, and other noncriminal matters. Other than additional false statement charges, the activities under investigation may not reach a criminal threshold." He concludes, "Some will believe that anything less than criminal charges resulting from Durham's efforts will demonstrate a disappointing failure by an inept justice system."

Researchers Say Chinese Used Spyware Developed By NSA.

[Reuters](#) (2/22, Satter) reports Israeli researchers "said on Monday Chinese spies used code first developed by the NSA to support their hacking operations, another indication of how malicious software developed by governments can boomerang against their creators." Tel Aviv-based Check Point Software Technologies "issued a report noting that some features in a piece of China-linked malware it dubs 'Jian' were so similar they could only have been stolen from some of the NSA break-in tools leaked to the Internet in 2017."

[Gov Info Security](#) (2/22) reports the new Check Point research "demonstrates how the Chinese hacking group reportedly stole, cloned and then exploited a zero-day vulnerability created by the Equation Group, which is widely believed to be tied to the NSA's elite Tailored Access Operations team." The report also raises "additional questions about how some of the NSA's most prized cyber weapons have been discovered or stolen by nation-state hacking groups and then turned on their developers over the years."

The [Washington Times](#) (2/22, Lovelace, 626K) reports that Check Point's Eyal Itkin and Itay Cohen write that "The exploit was replicated by the APT during 2014 to form 'Jian' and used since at least 2015, until finally caught and patched in March 2017." They add that the "security flaw was reported to Microsoft by Lockheed Martin's Computer Incident Response Team, which hinted at a possible attack against a U.S. target." [Wired](#) (2/22, Greenberg, 3.42M) reports that a "source familiar with Lockheed Martin's cybersecurity research and reporting confirms to WIRED that the company found the Chinese hacking tool being used in a US private sector network—not its own or part of its supply chain—that was not part of the US defense industrial base, but declined to share more details."

However, [Dark Reading](#) (2/22, Sheridan) reports that while "they may exploit the same vulnerability, Check Point researchers point to 'meaningful changes' between the original EpMe tool and the repurposed Jian tool." Cohen said, "EpMe, the exploit by Equation Group, is much more comprehensive and more professional."

[ZDNet](#) (2/22, Osborne, 298K) reports that the "investigation into Jian also exposed a module containing four privilege escalation exploits that were part of Equation Group's DanderSpritz post-exploitation framework."

[Gizmodo](#) (2/22, 596K) reports that the "alleged hacker group behind 'Jian,' APT 31, is known for specializing in intellectual property theft (the group also goes by colorful nicknames such as 'Zirconium' and 'Judgment Panda')." The group has also previously been linked to hacks of U.S. presidential campaigns, including Joe Biden's.

Kieren McCarthy writes for the [Register \(UK\)](#) (2/23) that the report "again raises the question over whether it is in the US intelligence community's best interests to share the details of any exploitable vulnerabilities they find – rather than try to keep them a secret and use them themselves – because, ultimately the tools will leak (or the bugs be discovered by others) and expose US businesses and institutions to hacking attempts."

[Security Week](#) (2/22, Arghire) also runs a report, among others.

North Macedonia Issues Arrest Warrant For Ex-Secret Police Chief.

The [AP](#) (2/22) reports North Macedonia "issued an international warrant late Monday for the country's former secret police chief who disappeared before an expected court verdict on his alleged involvement in a massive wiretapping scandal." Police searched several locations in capital Skopje on Sunday for "Sasho Mijalkov who, along with 11 former government and police officials, is on trial over the 2016 scandal that toppled the country's conservative VMRO-DPMNE party after a decade in government." Mijalkov "is accused of masterminding phone taps on more than 20,000 people, including politicians, judges and journalists between 2006-2016."

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Authorities Arrest Wife Of "El Chapo" On Drug Charges.

The [AP](#) (2/22, Balsamo) reports Emma Coronel Aispuro, the 31-year-old wife of "Mexican drug kingpin" Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman was arrested on Monday at Dulles International Airport in Virginia "and accused of helping her husband run his multibillion-dollar cartel and plot his audacious escape from a Mexican prison in 2015." The AP describes her arrest as "the latest twist in the bloody, multinational saga involving Guzman, the longtime head of the Sinaloa drug cartel," while [Reuters](#) (2/22, Stempel, Daniel) highlights that her arrest "is the highest profile U.S. capture of a Mexican on drug charges since former Mexican Defense Minister Salvador Cienfuegos was detained in October, and experts said it indicated a deterioration in bilateral security relations."

The [New York Times](#) (2/22, Feuer, Goldman, 20.6M) reports court documents "filed in Ms. Coronel's case said she relayed messages for Mr. Guzmán that helped him make drug shipments from 2012 to 2014 and evade capture by the legions of American and Mexican authorities who had been pursuing him for years." The Times adds evidence "emerged at Mr. Guzmán's trial that Ms. Coronel was also a chief conspirator in a sophisticated plot to break him out of the Altiplano prison in Mexico by digging a nearly mile-long tunnel into the shower of his cell."

[Reuters](#) (2/22, Stempel, Daniel) reports that the "investigation into Coronel was handled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), rather than the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The charges relate to alleged trafficking activity between 2014-2107 prior to the high-profile Brooklyn trial where Guzman was convicted on drug trafficking offenses."

The [Washington Examiner](#) (2/22, Dunleavy, 888K) reports that the "indictment against Coronel Aispuro penned by an FBI special agent detailed multiple unnamed high-ranking cooperating witnesses who fed the bureau information about the cartel and the role played by El Chapo's wife and family." The FBI "agent wrote that one of the witnesses said that during the unsuccessful attempt to help El Chapo escape after he was rearrested in 2016, Coronel Aispuro claimed \$2 million had been paid to the Mexican official who oversaw Mexico's prisons in an unsuccessful effort to free El Chapo."

[USA Today](#) (2/22, McCoy, 12.7M) reports that federal authorities said in court documents, "Coronel grew up with knowledge of the narcotics trafficking industry, and married Guzman when she was a teenager. Coronel understood the scope of the Sinaloa Cartel's drug trafficking; Coronel knows and understands the Sinaloa Cartel is the most prolific cartel in Mexico."

[CNN](#) (2/22, Carrega, 89.21M) reports that she "is expected to make her initial appearance Tuesday in US District Court in Washington, DC, via video conference." CNN adds that Jeffrey Lichtman and Mariel Colon "told CNN they are representing Coronel." Colon said, "We're just trying to get the full scope of the government allegations at this time."

Meanwhile, the [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Hsu, Sheridan, 10.52M) reports she "grew up in Sinaloa state, the traditional heart of Mexico's illegal drug industry, but was born in California, making her a U.S. citizen." The Post adds that she "slipped over the border in 2011 to give birth to the couple's twin daughters, Maria Joaquina and Emali, in a Los Angeles County hospital."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/22, de Cordoba, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that Coronel "is the daughter of a prominent member of the Sinaloa drug cartel, a Mexican drug trafficker who is serving a 10-year prison sentence."

[The Hill](#) (2/22, Pitofsky, 5.69M) also reports on the arrest, as do the [Daily Beast](#) (2/22, Melendez, 933K), [The Guardian \(UK\)](#) (2/22, Agren, 5.53M), [ABC News](#) (2/22, Mallin, 2.44M), the [Washington Times](#) (2/22, Mordock, 626K), and others.

Investigation Faults Police For Treatment Of Elijah McClain.

The [AP](#) (2/22, Nieberg, Slevin) reports that an investigation conducted on behalf of the city of Aurora, Colorado, of the fatal arrest of Elijah McClain released Monday "criticizes how police handled the entire incident, faulting officers for their quick, aggressive treatment of the 23-year-old Black man and the department for having a weak accountability system that failed to press for the truth about what happened." The AP adds the probe "found "two contrasting stories" of what happened to McClain in August 2019 after someone reported him as suspicious. One, based on officers' statements to investigators, where police describe a violent, relentless struggle. And another based on body camera footage in which McClain can be heard crying out in pain, apologizing, explaining himself, and pleading with the officers as they restrained him, applied 'pain compliance' techniques, and sat or kneeled on him."

The [Denver Post](#) (2/22, Schmelzer, 660K) says the investigation found Aurora police and paramedics "made substantial errors at nearly every stage of their interaction with Elijah McClain and the detectives tasked with investigating the incident that led to the 23-year-old's death stretched the truth to exonerate the officers involved." On [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (2/22, story 8, 0:20, 8.08M), David Muir said that the "scathing independent investigation" found police "had no legal basis to stop him while walking home or for using a choke hold."

On the [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (2/22, story 7, 1:40, O'Donnell, 4.6M), Omar Villafranca reported the investigation "says Aurora, Colorado did not have the right to stop, frisk, or violently restrain Elijah McClain in August 2019," and "according to report, EMS 'administered a ketamine dosage based on a grossly inaccurate and inflated estimate of Mr. McClain's size,' adding that 'higher doses can carry a higher risk of sedation complications for which this team was not clearly prepared.' McClain suffered cardiac arrest and later died in the hospital." On [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (2/22, story 7, 1:40, Holt, 6.17M), Gabe Gutierrez said the investigation "also found that 'the post-event investigation was flawed' because the department 'failed to ask basic, critical questions about the justification for the use of force.'"

[CNN](#) (2/22, Jimenez, Vera, Levenson, 89.21M) reports on its website that Sheneen McClain "cried [while] reading" the report about the death of her son. She told CNN, "It was overwhelming knowing my son was innocent the entire time and just waiting on the facts and proof of it." She added, "My son's name is cleared now. He's no longer labeled a suspect. He is actually a victim."

Medical Clinic Shooting Suspect Was Allegedly Angry About Opioids.

The [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#) (2/20, Chhith, 855K) reported, "Gregory Ulrich was angry at doctors for cutting off his opioid prescription after he overdosed four years ago, leading him to" allegedly open fire inside a medical clinic in Minnesota, "according to newly unsealed search warrants." Court records also show that Ulrich has past convictions for "two drunken-driving offenses, an open-bottle offense and several crimes related to possessing illegal drugs."

Abducted Teen Rescued After Shootout, FBI Investigating.

[KLRT-TV](#) Little Rock, AR (2/22, McCoy) reports, "Authorities in North Carolina held a news conference Monday detailing the search for an abducted 14-year-old girl who was found by Lonoke police on Saturday night and rescued after a shootout that left one officer injured." William Ice of Pennsylvania abducted the teen by targeting her "through email accounts, Skype and other sites that leave a minimal digital footprint as possible." Authorities tracked Ice and

after spotting his SUV, Ice "began shooting at them" and "fled the scene but crashed the vehicle shortly after the pursuit began." Ice was discovered with a self-inflicted gun wound; the teen was found unharmed. "Multiple agencies including the FBI are still investigating."

Man Arrested In Fatal Shooting Of Woman In Los Angeles.

The [My News LA \(CA\)](#) (2/22) reports, "A 28-year-old man was arrested Monday, accused in the fatal shooting of a woman in Koreatown." Lamont Dorsey "was taken into custody about 7:20 a.m. Monday in the 900 block of South Olive Street by a Los Angeles Police Department-FBI fugitive task force, the department said. Dorsey, was being held without bail Monday on suspicion of murder, was accused in the Jan. 9 shooting death of 38-year-old Katherine McNally." The shooting "occurred about 1:10 a.m. near the intersection of Council Street and Mariposa Avenue. Witnesses told police McNally was walking to her vehicle with her dog when the suspect approached and shot her, LAPD Officer Rosario Cervantes said."

Kidnapped North Carolina Teen Returns Home.

[WCNC-TV](#) Charlotte, NC (2/21, 168K) reports, "A 14-year-old girl, Savannah Grace Childress, returned home to North Carolina on Sunday – 10 days after investigators said she was kidnapped from her home by a man who contacted her online through her school-issued laptop, according to multiple law enforcement agencies. The kidnapper shot and killed himself after leading law enforcement officers on a chase and crashing into a snowbank." Savannah "was discovered by officers with the Lonoke Police Department in a McDonald's parking lot in Lonoke, Arkansas. Around 8 p.m. on Saturday, officers spotted a Dodge SUV driven by the kidnapper, 38-year-old William Robert Ice from Jackson Center, Pennsylvania. Multiple agencies joined in the search for Childress including the State Bureau of Investigation and Federal Bureau of Investigation."

Marijuana Conspiracy Case Defendant Sentenced To More Than Three Years In Prison.

[GVWire \(CA\)](#) (2/22, Reed) reports California resident Tien Van Phan "was sentenced Monday to three years and six months in prison for conspiring to distribute and possess with intent to distribute marijuana that was shipped from Fresno to Kansas City, Missouri." The Phan "case resulted from an investigation by the Central Valley High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Task Force and included agents from the Drug Enforcement Administration" and the FBI. The [KPIX-TV](#) San Francisco (2/22, 110K) website also covers Phan's sentence.

Assaults On Asian Americans Renews Hate Crimes Data Collection Criticism.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Nakamura, 10.52M) reports, "A spate of high-profile assaults on Asian Americans has renewed long-standing criticism from Democrats and" members of civil rights groups who suspect that the US government does not have a system in place that can accurately count hate crimes. The Post adds, "In a statement, the FBI said participation" in its hate crimes data collection program is "voluntary." The FBI "added that it anticipates the reporting methods would improve in the coming years as a greater percentage of local police" organizations begin using the National Incident Based Reporting System.

New York City Man Arrested In Connection With Manhattan Store Robbery.

An [AM New York](#) (2/22, Davenport, 487K) article says New York City resident Eric Spencer has been arrested in connection with a local robbery investigation. After a "Manhattan Chanel store" was robbed earlier this month, the FBI and the City of New York Police Department (NYPD) "traced Spencer to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where he was arrested." According to NYPD Commissioner Dermot Shea, the "arrest highlights the importance of good investigative work and the continuing efforts of the FBI-NYPD Joint Major Theft Task Force." The AM New York story also quotes "FBI Assistant Director William F. Sweeney Jr.," who thanked the NYPD

detectives who did “outstanding work in this investigation.” Sweeney also said the FBI’s “partnership with the NYPD is airtight.”

Online coverage of Spencer’s arrest is run by other media outlets, including [Fox News](#) (2/22, Betz, 23.99M), [WNBC-TV](#) New York (2/22, Miller, Dienst, 289K), [WABC-TV](#) New York (2/22, 351K), [WCBS-TV](#) New York (2/22), [WNYW-TV](#) New York (2/22, 117K), [WPIX-TV](#) New York (2/22, Murphy, 66K), and [WINS-AM](#) New York (2/22, Dole, 61K). The [New York Post](#) (2/22, Celona, Moore, Woods, 7.45M) and the [New York Daily News](#) (2/22, Brown, 2.51M) also cover Spencer’s arrest.

FINANCIAL CRIME & CORPORATE SCANDALS

States Paying Billions In Fraudulent Unemployment Claims Amid Pandemic.

[The Hill](#) (2/22, Wilson, 5.69M) reports, “A tsunami of fraudulent unemployment claims sweeping the nation has cost states and the federal government tens of billions of dollars in payments, many to overseas crime syndicates and nefarious hackers who have gained access to Americans’ Social Security numbers and other identifying information. The scope of the crisis is not yet known, though the early estimates are eye-popping: California officials have identified at least \$11.4 billion in fraudulent claims, and they suspect another \$20 billion may be fraudulent. New York officials have referred more than 400,000 fraudulent claims to federal investigators, totaling \$5.5 billion in claims, most of which were caught before they were paid.” In Ohio, “more than 100,000 people have reported potential fraudulent activity in their names to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. Ohio and Michigan officials each estimated the potential fraud cost their states hundreds of millions of dollars.”

Political Vendor Linked To Tennessee Lawmaker’s Campaign.

The [Chattanooga \(TN\) Times Free Press](#) (2/22, Sher, 168K) reports from Nashville, Tennessee, “A Republican political campaign vendor whose firm received \$202,600 in payments from Tennessee House Republicans during the 2020 election cycle was also involved in independent expenditures aiding at least two Senate GOP incumbents last fall, records show.” The Free Press adds, “Registered in late 2019 as a business entity in Sante Fe, New Mexico, Phoenix Solutions LLC and its head, Matthew Phoenix, have come under public scrutiny since the Jan. 8 raids by the FBI on the offices and homes of certain Tennessee legislators.” According to the Free Press, “One common thread among the players being investigated has been their dealings with Phoenix and another new political entity, the Faith Family Freedom Fund. Transactions involving Phoenix and House member campaigns and even ‘constituent mail’ sent at taxpayer expense have already been reported, but the Chattanooga Times Free Press has also identified state senators who benefited from the firm’s work.”

CYBER DIVISION

Congress To Hold Hearings On SolarWinds Hack.

[Politico](#) (2/22, Matishak, 6.73M) reports in its weekly cybersecurity newsletter that the Senate Intelligence Committee on Tuesday “will hold the first public congressional hearing on the SolarWinds hack.” The panel previously received “a closed-door briefing about the incident from the NSA, the FBI, CISA and ODNI, and held an informal session with FireEye CEO Kevin Mandia, whose company discovered the compromise.” Mandia will appear “before the committee again tomorrow, along with Sudhakar Ramakrishna, the president and CEO of SolarWinds; Brad Smith, the president of Microsoft; and George Kurtz, the president and CEO of CrowdStrike, which the U.S. Treasury Department reportedly hired to investigate the breach of dozens of email accounts of top agency officials.”

[Business Insider](#) (2/22, Elder, Holmes, 2.74M) reports tech CEOs on Tuesday “will sit opposite senators in hearings on the sprawling SolarWinds cyberattacks, in the type of proceedings that have become familiar in recent years.” Experts “say these will be dramatically different because the government badly needs the cybersecurity industry’s help.” In the past, senators “lambasted tech CEOs, demanding answers about social media and aggressive business tactics.” But the Senate Intelligence Committee hearings with Microsoft, FireEye, CrowdStrike, and SolarWinds “will provide a glimpse into how a powerful cybersecurity industry and the federal government will work together to fight off nation-state attacks.”

[CNET News](#) (2/22, Reichert, 3.77M) reports two House committees are holding “a hearing on the SolarWinds attack.” The US House committees on homeland security and on oversight and reform “will host a hearing on the SolarWinds hack this week.” The hearing on February 26 “will see SolarWinds CEO Sudhakar Ramakrishna, former SolarWinds CEO Kevin Thompson, Microsoft president Brad Smith and FireEye CEO Kevin Mandia testify.” The hearing will “look into the role of private companies in preventing, investigating and remediating cyberattacks that affect the government and cause damage to our national security.”

Legislators To Review Proposed Cyber Diplomacy Act.

[Politico](#) (2/22, Matishak, 6.73M) reports in its weekly cybersecurity newsletter that on Thursday the House Foreign Affairs Committee “will mark up the revived Cyber Diplomacy Act.” The legislation would create “a high-level Office of Cyber Issues at the State Department, headed by an official with the rank of ambassador.” The House “approved the measure by voice vote in the last Congress, but the Senate never took it up, so it expired.” Democratic lawmakers were “wary of the State Department creating a new cyber diplomacy bureau in the final days of the Trump Administration.” The Government Accountability Office and some former officials “have raised concerns about the plan, arguing it fails to coordinate the full spectrum of digital issues.”

Georgia Launches Cyber Fraud Task Force.

[Yahoo! News](#) (2/22, 10.87M) reports the US Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Georgia has “joined forces with Metro-Atlanta District Attorneys, the Office of the Attorney General, the FBI Atlanta Field Office, US Secret Service, state, and local law enforcement to combat the criminal movement of cyber fraud proceeds through banks in the Atlanta area by employing Business Email Compromise (BEC) fraud schemes.”

New Study Says Most Cyberattacks In 2020 Originated From Criminal Groups.

[Politico](#) (2/22, Matishak, 6.73M) reports in its weekly cybersecurity newsletter that CrowdStrike said in a report that about “80 percent of cyberattacks in 2020 came from criminal groups, compared to roughly 20 percent that came from more sophisticated state-sponsored actors.” That compares to a “slightly less lopsided split in 2019, when 69 percent of attacks came from criminals and 31 percent came from nation-states.” At the same time, CrowdStrike said, “the overall numbers of both targeted and [criminal] intrusions are significantly larger [in 2020] than in 2019.”

DOD’s New Cybersecurity Regulations May Fuel Contract Disputes.

[Law360](#) (2/22, Subscription Publication, 9K) reports DOD published an interim rule last year “to establish new methods for assessing contractor implementation of cybersecurity requirements.” The interim rule will require “thousands of defense contractors to conduct at least a basic assessment of their compliance with the 110 security requirements specified by the National Institute of Standards and Technology Special Publication 800–171.” The interim rule “will prompt potential contract disputes, as could involve terminations for default, payment reductions for noncompliance, challenges to DOD cybersecurity assessments and monetary claims.”

Ukraine Blames Russia For New Cyber Attacks.

[Reuters](#) (2/22) reports Ukraine on Monday "accused unnamed Russian internet networks of massive attacks on Ukrainian security and defense websites, but gave no details of any damage done or say who it believed was behind the assault." Kyiv has previously "accused Moscow of orchestrating large cyber attacks as part of a 'hybrid war' against Ukraine, which Russia denies." A statement from Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council "did not disclose who it believed organized the attacks or give any details about the effect the intrusions may have had on Ukrainian cyber security." The council said the attacks "attempted to infect vulnerable government web servers with a virus that covertly made them part of a botnet used for so-called distributed-denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks on other resources."

DHS Approves Viasat To Receive Cyber Threat Intelligence.

[ExecutiveGov](#) (2/22) reports Viasat has been approved to "receive cyber threat intelligence through the DHS Enhanced Cybersecurity Services (ECS) program." Ken Peterman, president, Government Systems, Viasat, said, "The added DHS ECS intelligence coupled with the advanced capabilities inherent in the Viasat cyber offering, enables us to better fortify our customers' cyber posture and maintain a vigilant and watchful defense against the world's most advanced adversaries." As an accredited ECS provider, Viasat "will receive DHS-provided sensitive and classified cybersecurity threat indicators and information to defend US-based public and private computer networks."

Study Finds Cybercrime Rose As More Workers Went Virtual In 2020.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Riley, 10.52M) reports in its Cybersecurity 202 column that a new study from CrowdStrike found that "intrusions threatening organizations' cybersecurity across the globe grew 400 percent in 2019 and 2020 combined." Nearly four out of five of those compromises in 2020 "stemmed from cybercriminals." Overall, hacking efforts by both cybercriminals and state-sponsored groups "grew in 2020 and are unlikely to let up in 2021." Adam Meyers, senior vice president of intelligence at CrowdStrike, "said that a sudden shift to remote work was a major factor in the increase." He said, "The rapid impact that covid had back in March on the threat and attack surface of enterprise was pretty profound." The report comes as "hackers are already evolving their techniques for 2021." Meyers said, "Threat actors are not going to rest on their laurels. They're going to continue to kind of adapt their operations to this new normal. It's getting to be a crowded space."

Legislators Press DOD To Prioritize Navy, Air Force And Cyber In Budget.

[Defense News](#) (2/22, Gould, Larter, 73K) reports legislators say the US Navy, US Air Force and cyberwarfare "must start taking a larger share of the defense budget if the US is going to compete with China." Speaking at a recent Hudson Institute virtual event, House Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee Chairman Joe Courtney (D-CT) "said the Pentagon is at an 'inflection point' over whether the Navy, Air Force and cyber 'are going to take a larger portion of the pie chart' when the fiscal 2022 budget is released this spring." The comments "align with a growing consensus inside the Pentagon that to meet the challenge from China's rapidly expanding blue water fleet, paired with investments in long-range anti-ship missiles and bombers, the Navy must grow substantially."

DOD Focuses On 5G Applications For Space.

[NextGov](#) (2/22) reports the US military "moved to explore next-generation networking capabilities and tools that could advance how it moves vast volumes of data on and beyond planet Earth." According to a request for information published by the latter Thursday, Space Force officials and others in the Air Force office responsible for enterprise data transport "intend to tap 'rapidly emerging 5G technologies to support space data transport terrestrially, in space, and in the space-ground links.'" The document noted, "Any aspect of 5G applied to any aspect

of space systems is of potential interest.” The Pentagon players “involved in this RFI confirmed that they’re concentrating on adapting 5G radio access networks to space-ground communications in contested environments – and on applying 5G network slicing and orchestration ‘to realize a federation of existing and emerging space data transport networks that include the legacy space control networks, ground data transport infrastructure, commercial augmentation services networks, partner networks, and potentially commercial 5G networks.’”

LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

FBI Targets Violent Crime In Louisville, Kentucky.

[WAVE-TV](#) Louisville, KY (2/23, Martinez, 90K) reports from Louisville, Kentucky, “On average in Louisville, one person is shot dead every 45 hours while another is hit by gunfire every 16 hours. It’s a new reality as the city’s homicide rate has increased by a record 115%.” WAVE-TV adds, “While Louisville Metro Police Department investigators work as many cases as they can, they now have some back up and a box full of tools at their disposal: the Louisville FBI Field Office has now increased their resources and attention to curbing violent crime.” Louisville “can become more aggressive in combating crime, particularly when juvenile offenders are being used by adult criminals to commit their crimes. Given that so many of Louisville homicide victims and suspects are just teens, their manipulation is something FBI Assistant Special Agent in Charge Brian Jones said is definitely happening.”

Virginia Lawmakers Vote To Abolish Death Penalty.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Vozzella, Schneider, 10.52M) reports the Virginia General Assembly on Monday approved two bills to abolish the death penalty in the state, “and were headed to Gov. Ralph Northam (D), who is expected to sign them.” According to the Post, Virginia “would then become the first in the South to abandon the ultimate punishment.” The [AP](#) (2/22, Lavoie, Rankin) calls the vote “a dramatic turnaround for a state that has executed more people in its long history than any other.” The [Richmond \(VA\) Times-Dispatch](#) (2/22, Green, 401K) reports Virginia “has executed 113 people in modern times, second only to Texas, since the U.S. Supreme Court allowed the death penalty to resume in 1976.”

Pritzker Signs Criminal Justice Reform Bill.

The [Chicago Sun-Times](#) (2/22, Hinton, 970K) reports Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker (D) “signed a sweeping criminal justice bill into law Monday, moving Illinois closer to ending cash bail and requiring police officers to wear body cameras – arguing the package will lead to ‘true safety, true fairness and true justice,’” but Republicans “disagreed, calling the new law ‘an insult to our first responders, law enforcement and the law-abiding citizens.’” The [Chicago Tribune](#) (2/22, Petrella, 2.03M) says the legislation was “praised by reform advocates and panned by many in law enforcement.”

Arbery’s Mother Discusses Racial Injustice.

For the [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (2/22, story 8, 2:20, Holt, 6.17M) “State Of The Struggle” series, Blayne Alexander interviewed Wanda Cooper-Jones, mother of Ahmaud Arbery, about how the country “is grappling with racial injustice.” Alexander also reported that after Arbery’s death, Georgia “passed a hate crime law, previously one of just four states that did not have one. But Cooper-Jones says she thinks the Biden Administration will help heal America’s racial divide.” Alexander added President Biden last month “signed an executive order declaring racial equity a government priority.” Biden: “I firmly believe the nation is ready to change.”

Murphy Signs Legislation Legalizing Marijuana In New Jersey.

The [New York Times](#) (2/22, Closson, 20.6M) reports New Jersey Gov. Philip Murphy (D) on Monday "signed into law three bills that effectively permit and regulate the use of recreational marijuana in New Jersey, making it the most populous state in the Northeast to fully legalize the drug." According to the Times, "New Jersey is now one of 14 states to legalize the recreational use of cannabis for adults 21 and older, while also easing several penalties for underage possession and allowing for the creation of a regulated market that could provide a welcomed boost to the state's economy as it recovers from the pandemic." However, the Times adds that legal sales "likely remain months away at the earliest, as the state takes on its next task of creating a heavily regulated industry large enough to support public demand, with licenses still to be doled out to dispensaries."

LAWFUL ACCESS

Treasury's IG Warns Law Enforcement Agencies May Need Warrants To Use GPS Data Pulled From Mobile Apps.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/22, Tau, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports a new Treasury Department IG report warns that law-enforcement agencies may need to obtain a warrant before tapping cellphone GPS data pulled from mobile apps. The IG for tax administration indicated a landmark 2018 Supreme Court case might complicate that ability to track suspects through location data without a warrant. The report recommended stricter controls on data usage.

[The Hill](#) (2/22, Rodrigo, 5.69M) reports that, according to a new Treasury Department watchdog report, law enforcement agencies "may be on shaky legal ground when purchasing cell phone location data without a warrant." The agency's inspector general "said in the report reviewing the Internal Revenue Service's use of a commercial platform, Venntel, to track devices that a 2018 Supreme Court case may block warrantless tracking using data from apps." The *Carpenter v. United States* case "holds that warrants must be obtained by law enforcement to get data from wireless carriers, and many government lawyers have argued that it does not apply to GPS data taken from apps." The watchdog's report, "which came at the request of Sens. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), suggests that that interpretation is flawed."

OTHER FBI NEWS

Family Of Malcolm X Releases Letter Alleging FBI, NYPD Involvement In Assassination.

[USA Today](#) (2/22, Yancey-Bragg, 12.7M) reports, "The family of Black civil rights leader Malcolm X is calling for a thorough investigation into his murder after unveiling new evidence alleging the New York police and the FBI conspired in his 1965 assassination." USA Today adds, "Three of Malcolm X's daughters joined nationally known civil rights attorney Ben Crump at a press conference Saturday where relatives of a former New York police officer read a letter that alleged the New York Police Department and the FBI covered up details of the assassination. The family and their lawyers said the letter provides new evidence about the assassination, which has long interested scholars and activists."

The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Trent, 10.52M) reports, "Family members of Malcolm X have revealed a letter written by a New York police officer that they say shows the NYPD and the FBI were behind the 1965 assassination of the famed Black leader." The Post adds, "The 2011 letter by the now-dead officer, Raymond A. Wood, stated that Wood had been compelled by his supervisors at the New York Police Department to coax two members of Malcolm X's security team into committing crimes, leading to their arrests just a few days before the assassination. They were then unable to secure the entry to New York's Audubon Ballroom, where Malcolm X

had been speaking when he was killed.” Wood “maintained that the arrests were part of a conspiracy by the NYPD and the FBI to murder Malcolm X, who had become disenchanted with the Nation of Islam and left the Black separatist group to start his own organization, the Muslim Mosque.”

[Reuters](#) (2/22) reports, “Raymond Wood’s letter stated that he had been pressured by his NYPD supervisors to lure two members of Malcolm X’s security detail into committing crimes that resulted in their arrest just days before the fatal shooting. Those arrests kept the two men from managing door security at the ballroom and was part of conspiracy between the NYPD and FBI to have Malcolm X killed, according to the letter. ‘Under the direction of my handlers, I was told to encourage leaders and members of the civil rights groups to commit felonious acts,’ Wood’s letter stated.”

[CBS News](#) (2/22, Bolden, 5.39M) reports, “Wood stated he was coerced by his NYPD supervisors to entice members of Malcolm X’s security detail into committing crimes that resulted in their arrest days before the deadly shooting. ‘It was my assignment to draw the two men into a felonious federal crime so that they could be arrested by the FBI and kept away from managing Malcolm X’s door security on February 21, 1965,’ Wood wrote. ‘At that time, I was not aware that Malcolm X was the target.’ Those arrests were a part of conspiracy between the NYPD and FBI to have Malcolm X killed, according to the letter.”

[The Hill](#) (2/22, Budryk, 5.69M) reports, “In the letter, Wood said his superiors in the department directed him to entrap members of Malcolm X’s security team into crimes that would lead to them being arrested and unavailable to provide security on the day. Wood denied knowing Malcolm X was the target of the plot. ‘Any evidence that provides greater insight into the truth behind that terrible tragedy should be thoroughly investigated,’ Ilyasah Shabazz said in the news conference.” The Hill adds, “In a statement Monday, William Sweeney, Assistant Director in Charge for the FBI’s New York office, said ‘Over the past several months, we have worked cooperatively with the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office to assist in its review of the matter and provide relevant documents from FBI holdings.’”

Gun, Badge Stolen From FBI Agent’s Car In California.

[SFGate \(CA\)](#) (2/22, Bote, 1.9M) reports, “Early Sunday, an FBI agent was visiting some friends in Lafayette, reportedly partaking in an outdoor brunch at American Kitchen,” and “then, sometime around noon, per the FBI’s San Francisco field office, a white Kia owned by the agent had its rear window smashed and its contents – a .40 caliber Glock 22 pistol, a law enforcement badge and credentials – stolen.” American Kitchen owner Victor Ivry “told the San Francisco Chronicle that the theft ‘happened in a matter of seconds’ and only affected the agent’s vehicle. No suspects have been identified in the theft. ‘The investigation remains ongoing and we cannot provide further comment at this time,’ said a statement from the agency. The FBI is now collaborating with police ‘in the interest of public safety’ to recover the stolen materials.”

Netflix Documentary To Examine “Operation Varsity Blues.”

The [AP](#) (2/22) reports from Los Angeles, “A Netflix documentary will use actor recreations of FBI wiretaps to tell the story of Rick Singer, the man at the center of the college admissions scandal that sent actors Felicity Huffman, Lori Loughlin and several other prominent parents to prison.” Netflix “announced Monday that ‘Operation Varsity Blues’ will be released on March 17. Named for the FBI operation that exposed the scandal, the documentary will focus not on the convicted celebrities like Huffman and Loughlin, but on how Singer persuaded them and many other wealthy clients to cheat to get their children into elite colleges.” Netflix “said in its announcement that the documentary will use ‘an innovative combination of interviews and narrative recreations of the FBI’s wiretapped conversations between Singer and his clients.’”

Florida Man Claims FBI Targeted Him In 1971 For Civil Rights Activities.

The [Tampa Bay \(FL\) Times](#) (2/22, Guzzo, 762K) reports from St. Petersburg, Florida, "Fifty years ago, Askia Muhammad Aquil was acquitted. The St. Petersburg resident – then named Otha Favors – was acquitted of marijuana possession," of "operating a business without a license, contributing to the delinquency of a minor and occupying a room for immoral purposes." He "was acquitted on two firearms charges and one obscenity charge. From February through August of 1971, he was brought to trial five times in Pinellas and Hillsborough counties, each ending the same way." The Times adds, "His only 'crime,' Aquil said, was being Black and a vocal leader in the civil rights movement. Aquil and his attorney back then claimed that the FBI, local law enforcement and the media were working together to silence him," and "today, Aquil said, he has proof. In recent years, he obtained FBI records detailing surveillance of local civil rights organizations in the early 1970s."

OTHER WASHINGTON NEWS

Biden, Marking 500K COVID Deaths, Says "We Will Get Through This."

Norah O'Donnell opened the [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (2/22, lead story, 4:05, 4.77M) with "the kind of news few ever thought possible – news which somehow, no matter how many times we say it, is still so hard to comprehend. ... More than half a million Americans have now been killed by the coronavirus, 500,000 Americans taken by a virus we didn't even know existed a little over a year ago. Tonight, President Biden led the nation in a candlelight vigil, paying tribute to those who are gone. Above him at the White House, the flag now flies at half-staff for a country which has endured great loss on the battlefield during natural disasters and to violence, tonight still feels different, the weight to have the grief felt by Americans of all walks of life is crushing."

On [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (2/22, lead story, 4:40, 8.08M), David Muir said, "We all mark that painful and sobering number, 500,000 American lives now lost to the coronavirus. President Biden just moments ago saying we must remember each person and the life they lived, noting more Americans have died in a single year in this pandemic than in World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War combined. Tonight, a nation mourns, bells tolling at the Washington National Cathedral. ... That's the equivalent of nearly the entire city of Atlanta gone – more lives lost than those who live in Kansas City or Oakland or Miami or Minneapolis."

Miguel Almaguer said on [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (2/22, lead story, 2:35, Holt, 6.18M), "The President, with the enormity of the death toll on his shoulders, paused to remember the half million Americans who have lost their lives to the virus. Grandparents and mothers and fathers and even children, more fatalities from the yearlong pandemic than the number of Americans who died on the battlefield in World War I, World War II, and Vietnam combined." President Biden: "The people we lost were extraordinary. They spanned generations. Just like that, so many of them took their final breath alone in America."

The [AP](#) (2/22) reports, "With sunset remarks and a national moment of silence," the President "confronted head-on the country's once-unimaginable loss – half a million Americans in the COVID-19 pandemic – as he tried to strike a balance between mourning and hope. Addressing the 'grim, heartbreaking milestone' directly and publicly, Biden stepped to a lectern in the White House Cross Hall, unhooked his face mask and delivered an emotion-filled eulogy for more than 500,000 Americans he said he felt he knew. ... A president whose own life has been marked by family tragedy, Biden spoke in deeply personal terms, referencing his own losses as he tried to comfort the huge number of Americans whose lives have been forever changed by the pandemic." [CNN](#) (2/22, Vazquez, 89.21M) reports on its website that the President "also expressed optimism, telling Americans: 'We will get through this, I promise you.'"

The [New York Times](#) (2/22, Sanger, Stolberg, 20.6M) reports the President "urged the nation on Monday night to 'resist becoming numb to the sorrow' that the novel coronavirus had

inflicted, marking the staggering milestone of more than a half-million Americans dead from the pandemic in a solemn ceremony at the White House. The country passed the grim toll around 5 p.m., and bells began tolling at the National Cathedral, resounding across a capital with flags lowered to half-staff. About an hour later, Mr. Biden appeared in the Cross Hall of the White House and pulled a card from his jacket pocket that he said was updated each day with the number of those infected – and those who died – from Covid-19.”

[USA Today](#) (2/22, Morin, 12.7M) reports Vice President Harris, Dr. Biden, and Doug Emhoff “were also present during the remarks and moment of silence.” The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Cunningham, Schemm, 10.52M) says the event “recalled scenes from almost exactly a month ago, on the eve of Biden’s inauguration, when he and Harris convened a vigil for coronavirus victims at the Lincoln Memorial.” [Reuters](#) (2/22, Mason), [Bloomberg](#) (2/22, 3.57M), [Axios](#) (2/22, Chen, 1.26M), [Politico](#) (2/22, Din, 6.73M), [The Hill](#) (2/22, Chalfant, 5.69M), and the [Fox News](#) (2/22, Lea, 23.99M) website are among the other outlets covering the ceremony.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/22, Lucey, Restuccia, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that “while the daily tally of new cases is down sharply from peak levels reached earlier this year, it is still elevated compared with totals in the late summer and early autumn.” The [AP](#) (2/22, Deslatte, Webber) reports that “despite the rollout of vaccines since mid-December, a closely watched model from the University of Washington projects more than 589,000 dead by June 1.” The [New York Times](#) (2/22, Tompkins, Bosman, Pietsch, 20.6M) reports that the US “accounts for about 20 percent of the world’s known Covid deaths, but makes up just 4.25 percent of the global population.”

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (2/22, King, Lee, Kaleem, 3.37M) says “the toll is hard to fathom. ... Last month, based on average 24-hour fatality counts, it was as if the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, had happened every single day. Recorded U.S. deaths from COVID-19 are about one-fifth of the world’s nearly 2.5 million known fatalities, twice as many as in Brazil, the next-hardest-hit country. California alone accounts for almost 50,000 deaths, about 10% of the country’s total.”

The [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (2/22, Vaziri, 2.44M) reports, “From the first confirmed fatality in Santa Clara County on Feb. 6, and the early days of the emergence of coronavirus infections, it took until the end of May before the country recorded its first 100,000 deaths. The pandemic has since swept across the world and the U.S., stressing the nation’s health care system, rattling its economy and rewriting the rules of everyday society. The death toll reached 400,000 on Jan. 19, meaning the last 100,000 deaths occurred in just over a month.” The [New York Daily News](#) (2/22, Wilkinson, Matthews, 2.51M) reports, “The deadliest single day was Jan. 12, when 4,401 Americans died, according to the data. Approximately 1 in every 656 people in the U.S. has now died from the disease.” [USA Today](#) (2/22, Ortiz, Miller, Aspegren, 12.7M) and the [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) (2/22, 1.46M) are among the other newspapers marking the milestone.

Gallup Poll: 67% Approve Of Biden’s Handling Of Pandemic. A [Gallup](#) poll (2/3-2/18) finds that 67% of Americans approve of Biden’s handling of the pandemic. Eugene Robinson writes in the [Washington Post](#) (2/22, 10.52M) that even as we reach the “unspeakable milestone” of 500,000 deaths from COVID, “there is unambiguous good news in the fight against the virus. It is possible, finally, to imagine a day when this devastating pandemic is brought to an end.” Robinson adds that “we now have serious, competent leadership that believes in science, not conspiracy theories.”

FDA Outlines Fast Path For New Vaccines, Booster Shots To Cover New Virus Variants.

[Bloomberg](#) (2/22, Langreth, Cortez, 3.57M) reports, “Drugmakers won’t have to perform massive trials for new vaccines or booster shots developed to combat worrisome new variants of the coronavirus,” the FDA said in documents released on Monday. The agency “said immunizations that protect against the variants could receive clearance based on so-called

immunogenicity studies, where researchers vaccinate people and then conduct laboratory tests to measure the strength of their immune response.”

The [New York Times](#) (2/22, Landler, Castle, 20.6M) says the recommendations, “which call for small trials more like what’s required for annual flu vaccines, would greatly accelerate the review process at a time when scientists are increasingly anxious about how the variants might slow or reverse progress made against the virus.” [Reuters](#) (2/22, Erman), the [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Cunningham, Schemm, Shammass, Thebault, 10.52M), and the [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/22, Burton, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) also have reports.

J&J Says It Should Have Enough Doses For More Than 20M By End Of March.

[The Hill](#) (2/22, Sullivan, 5.69M) reports Johnson & Johnson said Monday that it “plans to have enough doses of its vaccine for more than 20 million Americans by the end of March” if its vaccine is authorized by the FDA. The Hill says and FDA advisory committee “is meeting Friday to consider the application, and emergency authorization could come soon after.” [Politico](#) (2/22, Oweremohle, 6.73M) also reports.

Pfizer Expects To Deliver More Than 13M Doses Per Week By Mid-March.

[Reuters](#) (2/22, O'Donnell) reports Pfizer “expects to deliver more than 13 million doses of its COVID-19 vaccine per week to the United States by the middle of March, more than doubling its shipments from early February,” Chief Business Officer John Young “said in prepared testimony ahead of a Tuesday congressional hearing.” Young “added that Pfizer is...prepared to provide a total of 300 million shots to the United States by the end of July and has raised global production expectations for 2021 to at least 2 billion doses.”

Politico Analysis: Effort To Get More Minorities Vaccinated Off To Slow Start.

[Politico](#) (2/22, Kenen, Ehley, 6.73M) says “the race to vaccinate as many people as possible while more contagious coronavirus variants march across America is colliding with lagging efforts to steer shots to people of color and underserved communities bearing the brunt of the pandemic.” Though the Administration “has prioritized equitable vaccine distribution, putting that goal into practice is difficult,” and “so far, the efforts aren’t necessarily translating into huge numbers of vaccinations in hard-to-reach populations that, by definition, are hard to reach.” The share of first doses “going to white Americans has increased slightly since the first month of inoculations, from 60.4 percent to 63.7 percent,” but “the share of doses to Black Americans has also risen slightly, from 5.4 percent to 6.3 percent.” However, “it fell for Latinos from 11.5 percent to 8.8 percent.”

Health Workers Frustrated That Vaccine Half-Doses Must Be Thrown Away.

Lester Holt said on [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (2/22, story 9, 2:30, 6.17M) that “as Americans struggle to get the COVID vaccine, health workers are frustrated by thousands of potential doses thrown away.” NBC’s Catie Beck: “Shots go into arms 4,000 times a day at the INOVA vaccine clinic in Fairfax, Virginia. ... But while the clinic’s pharmacy team hustles to keep up with demand, they are flagging a flaw in the process. ... Residual vaccine left in vials and forced to be thrown out.” While “a single vial of Pfizer vaccine used here yields six full doses...pharmacists say there is often a half-dose left, which under FDA rules cannot be used.” INOVA Health System Chief Pharmacy Officer Melanie Massiah-White: “It is huge for such a scarce resource. It is significant. Currently, we are just throwing those out at the end of the day.”

Most Governors Have Chosen To Not Yet Get Vaccinated.

[Bloomberg](#) (2/22, 3.57M) reports that while “nine Republican and nine Democratic governors have received at least one” COVID vaccine dose, according to a Bloomberg count, “at least 28 governors have held off, saying they plan to wait to avoid the appearance of using the power of

their office to cut the line.” Some of those who have chosen to get vaccinated “said they were trying to encourage others to follow in a bid to combat high hesitancy rates.”

“Politicized Fights” Over COVID Rage At State Level.

The [New York Times](#) (2/22, A1, Gabriel, 20.6M) reports, “In state Capitols, the politicized fights” over COVID “are boiling over. State lawmakers across the country, most of them Republicans, are moving aggressively to strip the powers of governors, often Democrats, who have taken on extraordinary authority to limit the spread of the virus for nearly a year.” Legislatures “in more than 30 states are trying to restrict the power of governors to act unilaterally.” In response, governors say “a pandemic cannot be fought by committee. They say that the same Republicans who politicized the science of the pandemic last year...should not be trusted with public health.”

Vaccine Produced In Baltimore Mostly Going Out Of State.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Jamison, 10.52M) reports that in Baltimore, Emergent BioSolutions “is manufacturing almost all of the yet-to-be approved Johnson & Johnson and AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccines for the U.S. population – an anticipated hundreds of millions of doses in the coming months.” But “in a sign of the complexities in a global supply chain that is struggling beneath the weight of demand, most of those doses will not go to residents of this city, or even the state of Maryland.”

Chicago Teachers And School Staff May Be Required To Report Vaccination Status.

The [Chicago Sun-Times](#) (2/22, 970K) reports, “Current and newly hired Chicago Public Schools teachers and staff could be required to let the district know if they’ve received a COVID-19 vaccination under a new policy proposed by officials Monday.” The new rule “also would allow officials to mandate COVID-19 vaccination as a condition of employment. But CPS said it wouldn’t immediately use that authority if the policy is approved.”

Los Angeles School District To Resume Some Services Next Week.

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (2/22, Blume, 3.37M) reports Los Angeles Unified School District Superintendent Austin Beutner announced Monday that Los Angeles schools “will resume some services next week for a small percentage of students with special needs.” Beutner said, “In anticipation of a more complete reopening of schools in April, we will begin next week to offer child care, one-on-one and small group instruction, services for students with special needs and a return to athletic conditioning.”

Cuomo Says NYC Movie Theaters Will Be Allowed To Reopen On March 5.

The [New York Times](#) (2/22, Gold, 20.6M) reports New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) said Monday that New York City movie theaters in “will be permitted to open for the first time in nearly a year on March 5. ... The theaters will only be permitted to operate at 25 percent of their maximum capacity, with no more than 50 people per screening.” In addition, the [New York Daily News](#) (2/22, Slattery, 2.51M) reports, “moviegoers will have to wear masks, socially distance and sit in assigned seats, and the venues must meet the state’s air filtration standards, the same rules that apply to theaters upstate that reopened in the fall.”

Some Women Concerned COVID Vaccines Can Cause Miscarriage Or Infertility Due To Online Rumors.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, A1, Cha, 10.52M) reports many women are concerned about the safety of the coronavirus vaccines because of online rumors that the vaccines can cause miscarriage or infertility. For example, Niharika Sathe, a 34-year-old internal medicine physician in New Jersey, heard about the rumor from a friend while she was early in her pregnancy, but after “scrutinizing information from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists”

and others, she concluded "the rumor had no basis in fact, and both she and her friend wound up getting the vaccine."

Howard University Surgeon: Many Skipping Preventive Care Appointments During Pandemic.

In an op-ed for the [New York Times](#) (2/22, 20.6M), Wayne A.I. Frederick, President of Howard University and a professor of surgery at Howard University School of Medicine, that according to a study published in the Journal of the National Medical Association in December, 43% of Americans "have missed preventive care appointments during the pandemic." Frederick adds that "we are already seeing the measurable effects of skipped appointments: This week the [CDC] reported that in the first six months of 2020, life expectancy in the United States fell on average by one year."

Biden Touts Changes To PPP Intended To Benefit Small And Minority-Owned Businesses.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Gregg, 10.52M) reports that on Monday, the Treasury Department "announced...that it will make targeted changes to its Paycheck Protection Program pandemic relief loans in an attempt to direct more funding toward the smallest of small businesses." The Post says that "among other changes to the loan program, businesses with more than 20 employees will be shut out of the PPP for a two-week period starting Wednesday." On Monday, President Biden "criticized the PPP's early rollout for privileging those with banking connections at the expense of the smallest borrowers." Biden said the new rules are meant to ensure the program "looks out for mom-and-pop businesses even more than it already has." The Post adds that Biden "did not say whether his administration would seek additional funding for the PPP." [Politico](#) (2/22, Warmbrodt, 6.73M) quotes Biden as saying, "One of the things I've heard again and again from small business owners...is that knowing about support is one thing, getting it is another." Politico says Monday's announcement "marks Biden's first major move to put his stamp on the program and reflects his pledge to make economic equity a top priority."

[CNBC](#) (2/22) reports on its website that Administration officials have "said there are still many minority and very small firms in low-income areas that have not been able to receive aid," so "the program will...set aside \$1 billion for businesses without employees in low- and moderate-income areas, which are 70% owned by women and people of color." According to CNBC, "The changes aim to make it easier for firms with no employees – sole proprietors, independent contractors, and self-employed people such as house cleaners and personal care providers – that could not qualify previously because of business cost deductions."

However, the [New York Times](#) (2/22, Cowley, Tankersley, 20.6M) says "the changes risk throwing an already turbulent program into chaos as banks and other lenders try to accommodate the last-minute shifts. With just five weeks to go before March 31, when the latest iteration of the program is scheduled to end, lenders were left scrambling to adapt to new rules that won't even be fully explained to them until later this month." [The Hill](#) (2/22, Chalfant, 5.69M) provides similar coverage.

House Budget Committee Approves Biden's Rescue Plan.

The [New York Times](#) (2/22, Benner, Savage, 20.6M) reports that on Monday, Democrats on the House Budget Committee approved President Biden's \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan "on a nearly party-line vote, bringing the pandemic aid plan closer to passage later this week." Rep. Lloyd Doggett (D-TX) "joined Republicans on Monday in voting against advancing it," but "a spokeswoman later said that Mr. Doggett, who joined the session remotely right after his plane landed in Washington, misunderstood the vote and supports the legislation." [USA Today](#) (2/22, Wu, Hayes, 12.7M) says the measure "now heads to the House Rules Committee for consideration later in the week where it is also expected to win approval before heading to the

full floor for consideration." House Majority Leader Hoyer "has told lawmakers to expect the House to vote on it later in the week."

[Reuters](#) (2/22) reports Senate Majority Leader Schumer "said later that efforts in the House and Senate have kept the bill on track to be approved by both chambers and sent to Biden for his signature before federal unemployment benefits expire on March 14." [Bloomberg](#) (2/22, 3.57M) reports that "this will be the first real test for Democrats' full control of government since former President Donald Trump's impeachment trial, with implications for the rest of Biden's agenda and the pandemic-battered economy."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/22, Peterson, Duehren, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says the bill "has already started a messy fight in the Senate, where Democrats are divided over whether to include a provision that would gradually raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour over four years," but to the [AP](#) (2/22, Fram), Democratic leaders "have a potent dynamic on their side as Congress preps for its first votes on the party's \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief bill: Would any Democrat dare cast the vote that scuttles...Biden's leadoff initiative?" While "internal Democratic disputes remain over issues like raising the minimum wage, how much aid to funnel to struggling state and local governments and whether to extend emergency unemployment benefits for an extra month," Democrats "across the party's spectrum show little indication they're willing to embarrass Biden with a high-profile defeat a month into his presidency." [NBC Nightly News](#) (2/22, story 2, 1:00, Holt, 6.18M), and the [CNN](#) (2/22, Grayer, 89.21M) and [Fox Business](#) (2/22, Lea, 3.06M) websites, provide similar coverage.

In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (2/22, 10.52M) says that amid growing concerns about the bill's cost, Biden "has challenged his critics," asking, "What would they have me cut?" The Post says, "The first trim should be to Mr. Biden's proposed \$1,400 direct payments, the current House version of which would cost \$422 billion. ... That's a lot of money to shower on the non-poor." The Post adds that it is "increasingly clear that the pandemic reduced states and local governments' revenue far less than initially feared, especially considering federal aid they have already received. ... Yet the House bill contemplates \$510 billion in new aid." The Post argues that given the "investments he hopes to begin making later this year in infrastructure, climate research and other high-priority needs," when Biden asks, "What would they have me cut?" he "should listen with an open mind to good-faith answers to that question."

California Lawmakers Approve \$7.6B COVID Relief Package. Under "a \$7.6-billion COVID-19 economic relief package approved" by the California legislature Monday, the [Los Angeles Times](#) (2/22, McGreevy, 3.37M) reports, "Californians who qualify for a \$600 state stimulus payment could see the money arrive as soon as a month after filing their tax returns." The plan also includes "more than \$2.1 billion in grants and fee waivers for small businesses. Those companies can soon apply for the grants, followed by an approval process that state officials estimate would take 45 days."

White House Continues To Back Tanden For OMB Despite Mounting Senate Opposition.

The [AP](#) (2/22, Hazell) reports the nomination of OMB Director-designate Tanden was "thrown further into doubt on Monday as moderate Republican Sens. Susan Collins of Maine and Mitt Romney of Utah said they would vote against confirming her." The AP notes that on Friday, Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) "became the first Democratic lawmaker to oppose the confirmation of Tanden." However, according to Reuters, even "with doubts growing about Tanden's chances for confirmation, the White House called her 'an accomplished policy expert,'" and President Biden "said he was sticking with her."

[Bloomberg](#) (2/22, Hunter, Fabian, Cook, 3.57M) reports that the three senators "criticized Tanden's temperament, saying her past habit of attacking Republicans on Twitter – including Collins, whom she once called 'the worst' – left her unsuited for the budget job." Bloomberg adds that Collins "also criticized Tanden for deleting more than 1,000 tweets ahead of her nomination, saying it suggested she wouldn't be transparent in office." But Bloomberg adds that "even with the new GOP opposition, the White House said it would stand behind Tanden's

nomination to lead the Office of Management and Budget." On Monday, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said, "Neera Tanden is an accomplished policy expert who would be an excellent Budget Director and we look forward to the committee votes this week and to continuing to work toward her confirmation through engagement with both parties." The [New York Post](#) (2/22, Jacobs, 7.45M) also reports Psaki "called it 'an overstatement' to say that there was not a new tone of unity in Washington simply because of her nomination."

In addition, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/22, Restuccia, Collins, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports Psaki "said White House officials spoke to senators of both parties about the nomination over the weekend and are taking no one for granted," but [The Hill](#) (2/22, Samuels, Chalfant, 5.69M) reports Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH), the ranking member of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, on Monday "said just before announcing his opposition to Tanden that nobody from the White House has reached out to try to convince him to vote for her."

Meanwhile, [Roll Call](#) (2/22, Shutt, 130K) describes Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) "is another closely-watched Republican vote," and reports Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX) "said the wave of Republican opposition combined with Manchin's 'no' vote would likely end Tanden's confirmation process." [Politico](#) (2/22, LeVine, Everett, 6.73M) says that without Romney or Collins "supporting her nomination, it's increasingly unlikely that Tanden will be confirmed." Politico points out that Tanden is "scheduled to receive a vote" in the committee this week, and Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), "who is often aligned with Manchin, sits on that committee but has not declared her position on Tanden."

[Reuters](#) (2/22, Zengerle) says the fight over her nomination "underscored the influence a small group of moderates will have as Biden seeks to achieve his policy goals in the narrowly divided Congress," [USA Today](#) (2/22, Wu, 12.7M) also reports that Senate Budget Chairman Bernie Sanders "has been noncommittal on her nomination, grilling Tanden, the former head of the liberal Center for American Progress, on her past statements and her former organization's corporate donations."

The [New York Times](#) (2/22, Cochrane, Rappeport, 20.6M) highlights that if she is not confirmed, Tanden "would be the first casualty for Mr. Biden, who has so far been able to win Senate support for several other cabinet picks, though many nominees have yet to face full Senate votes." Per the [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Kim, Linskey, Stein, 10.52M), "The pending defeat also is a blow to Biden's ability to advance his agenda in a chamber he served for decades, with his knowledge of the institution a key selling point as he campaigned for the presidency." The Post adds the fight over her nomination "comes at a critical moment for the White House budget office as the administration tries to leverage trillions of dollars in relief funds to help a battered American economy recover from the pandemic."

However, [Politico](#) (2/22, Barron-Lopez, Cadelago, 6.73M) says women's rights activists "and allied Democrats are growing increasingly vocal about what they call the unfair targeting of women and people of color nominated by Joe Biden to top posts in his administration." Politico adds White House officials observed "that many of the lawmakers objecting to Tanden's social media missives – including Manchin – voted to confirm Richard Grenell, the acid-tongued Trump booster, to the post of U.S. ambassador to Germany," while "Democrats on and off the Hill likewise argued that Tanden, who is of South Asian descent, was one of several nominees of color being treated differently than Trump-era nominees who lobbed personal attacks or expressed bigoted views." The [AP](#) (2/22, Hazell) reports Tanden "would be the first woman of color to lead the agency" if confirmed.

In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (2/22, 10.52M) says that while Tanden "has been undiplomatic," the case "against her confirmation is weak – especially when you compare her with many of the people Republican senators have endorsed in the past." The Post adds, "It is not fair to hold Mr. Biden's nominees to a far higher standard because the president has called for unity while his predecessor denigrated it." The Post concludes, "For the most part,

Republican senators thus far have been supporting Mr. Biden's nominations with admirable bipartisanship. They will only look silly if they allow some hurt feelings to get in the way now."

House Democratic Leaders Want Biden To Replace Tanden With Young, Sources Say. "House Democratic leaders are quietly mounting a campaign for Shalanda Young, a longtime congressional aide, to replace Neera Tanden as nominee...people familiar with the matter tell" [Axios](#) (2/22, Nichols, Goba, 1.26M), although it also reports Young, a former staff director for the House Appropriations Committee who is "currently waiting for a confirmation hearing in the Senate to be deputy OMB director, may still face competition from Gene Sperling, who has the distinction of twice leading the National Economic Council."

Haaland Commits To "Strike The Right Balance" On Oil, Natural Gas.

The [AP](#) (2/22, Daly) reports that in testimony prepared for her confirmation hearing on Tuesday, Interior Secretary-designate Haaland "said she is committed to 'strike the right balance' [on oil and natural gas drilling] as the agency manages energy development and seeks to restore and protect the nation's sprawling federal lands." According to the AP, "Haaland's remarks are intended to rebut criticism from some Republicans who have complained that her opposition to drilling on federal lands will cost thousands of jobs and harm economies throughout the West."

However, the [New York Times](#) (2/22, Davenport, 20.6M) reports that while Haaland's nomination "was hailed as historic" because she is "the first Native American ever nominated to serve in cabinet – in this case to head a department that, for much of the nation's history, has mistreated and neglected Indigenous Americans," none of Biden's other nominees so far have "divided the political parties as sharply." The Times adds that for her supporters, she "embodies the hope of the Biden era, an activist second-term representative from New Mexico who would break ground like no other member of the cabinet, ethnically and politically," but her "detractors have zeroed in on her activism, especially her forthright denunciations of any and all oil and gas exploration on public land and her fierce opposition to the natural gas extraction method known as hydraulic fracturing, or fracking." [Bloomberg](#) (2/22, Dlouhy, 3.57M) says Haaland's "opposition to fracking, early endorsement of the Green New Deal and participation in protests against an oil pipeline in South Dakota have made her one of President Joe Biden's most controversial cabinet nominees." Bloomberg adds that while some Republicans, including Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT) are "already warning she's unlikely to get their support," the Senate "ultimately is still expected to confirm Haaland."

In addition, [Politico](#) (2/22, Adragna, Lefebvre, 6.73M) reports her supporters "say they see a familiar pattern in the Republicans' rhetoric and their unusual move to voice their opposition even before her nomination hearing was scheduled." According to Politico, they "say she's facing a level of criticism above and beyond the normal fiery Washington political rhetoric," and also "said the reflexive GOP opposition is impossible to separate from the federal government's actions over many generations that marginalized and isolated tribal communities." [The Hill](#) (2/22, Frazin, 5.69M) provides similar coverage.

Conservatives Target Democratic Senators In Anti-Becerra Push.

[Politico](#) (2/22, Ollstein, 6.73M) says that even though "conservatives know they likely don't have the votes to block" HHS Secretary-designate Becerra from being confirmed, they are "launching new ad blitzes and pressure campaigns targeting Senate Democrats up for reelection and others they believe can be swayed, aiming to make a vote to confirm him a political liability." Among the targets are Sens. Maggie Hassan (D-NH) and Raphael Warnock (D-GA).

Adeyemo Says Treasury Should Work With Congress And Allies Against Economic Rivals.

[Reuters](#) (2/22, Shalal, Alper) reports Deputy Treasury Secretary-designate Wally Adeyemo, in testimony prepared for his confirmation hearing before the Senate Finance Committee, says the

department "should work with Congress and use its tools to respond to authoritarian governments and combat unfair economic practices in China and elsewhere," and also calls on the US "to work closely with allies to 'confront those that threaten our economic and national security.'"

Biden Administration Opens First Migrant Facility For Children.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Foster-Frau, 10.52M) reports that "dozens of migrant teens" traveled on Monday to Carrizo Springs, Texas, to "the first migrant child facility opened under the Biden administration." The Post adds the "emergency facility – a vestige of the Trump administration that was open for only a month in summer 2019 – is being reactivated to hold up to 700 children ages 13 to 17," and officials "say the camp is needed because facilities for migrant children have had to cut capacity by nearly half because of the coronavirus pandemic." Meanwhile, the Post says the number of unaccompanied children to cross the border "has been inching up, with January reporting the highest total – more than 5,700 apprehensions – for that month in recent years." A [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/22, Hackman, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) article headlined "Rise In Migrant Children Tests Biden Border Strategy" provides similar coverage.

Klain Is In Frequent Contact With Progressives.

The [Daily Beast](#) (2/22, 933K) reports that the "lines of communication...between the progressive left and President Joe Biden" are open. Chief of Staff Klain "speaks to Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) 'quite often,' recently talked to freshman Rep. Jamaal Bowman (D-NY), a newly minted Squad member, and has conversations with many 'less famous' individuals in the Democratic Party's left wing on a regular basis, he told The Daily Beast in an interview." Klain said, "Progressives are a big part of our party and making sure their voices are heard here at the White House is a big part of my job." His "frequent communication with top leaders on the left is part of a critical, emerging infrastructure within the White House. The goal, described by three White House officials, including the chief of staff, is not only to elevate their ideas and concerns, but to make them a permanent part of the policy making process."

Biden Raised \$22.1M For Transition.

[Bloomberg](#) (2/22, Korte, 3.57M) reports data released Monday by the GSA show that President Biden "raised \$22.1 million to pay for the costs of his transition, far exceeding the \$6.5 million his predecessor raised four years ago. ... Biden's transition was also costlier. He spent \$24.4 million through mid-February, while Trump spent \$4.7 million through the same period in 2017." Bloomberg adds that Trump's "refusal to accept the results of the election led to a delay in releasing \$6 million in public money designated for presidential transitions. The GSA waited almost three weeks after the Nov. 3 election to ascertain Biden as the apparent winner." Biden's transition team "raised \$7.3 million between the election and the GSA releasing funds."

White House Aides Say Ignoring Trump Is Easier Now That Biden Is President.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Parker, Viser, 10.52M) reports that while White House Communications Director Kate Bedingfield says the White House's "focus is entirely on President Biden's agenda, and Donald Trump doesn't factor in that for us," the "reality may prove more difficult." During a CNN town hall in Milwaukee, the President "emphasized his eagerness to move past his predecessor," but "kept talking about the very guy he said he wants to ignore." But, "senior Biden officials argue that ignoring Trump is easier now that Biden is president. The major crises facing Biden, including the deadly coronavirus pandemic and the stalled economy, are the top concerns of a majority of Americans, these officials said." Chief of Staff Klain said, "In some ways, it's much easier to ignore Trump now that we're in the White House, because we're not running against him."

NYTimes' Rogers: Washington Weekends Have Returned To Normal Under Biden.

Katie Rogers of the [New York Times](#) (2/22, 20.6M) writes, "President Biden did not do anything this weekend. Well, let's rephrase: President Biden did not do anything alarming this weekend." Rogers continues, "There were exactly eight tweets, each one rooted in what can best be described as reality. There was a visit to spend time with an ailing friend, Bob Dole, the former Republican senator. And there was a stop at church with the grandchildren." According to Rogers, "Since Mr. Biden assumed office, the weekends have been portraits of domesticity," and Biden's "demonstrable uninterest in generating audacious headlines only emphasizes how much the Trump-size hole in Washington has created a sense of free time in all realms of the capital."

EPA Reverses Course, Backs Ethanol Industry In Lawsuit Headed To SCOTUS.

The [AP](#) (2/22) reports that the EPA announced Monday "that it will support the ethanol industry in a lawsuit over biofuel waivers granted to oil refineries under President Donald Trump's administration." The agency "said it is reversing course and will support a January 2020 decision" by the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals "in a lawsuit filed by the Renewable Fuels Association and farm groups. The lawsuit is headed to arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court this spring."

Texas Winter Storm Sparks Two Federal Inquiries.

[NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (2/22, story 4, 2:15, 6.21M) reported federal investigators have announced "two new inquiries triggered by" the "massive winter storm" in Texas. One is "examining the natural gas and power market for potential wrongdoing. The second, an all out examination of the US electric grid, searching for vulnerabilities relating to extreme weather or climate change."

Texas AG Traveled To Utah During Power Outages. The [Houston Chronicle](#) (2/22, 982K) reports that as "millions of Texans languished in their homes last week without heat, many of them racking up astronomical electricity bills," Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton (R), who is "in charge of consumer protection left to take an out-of-state trip." According to a campaign spokesman Paxton "left the state during the middle of the power outage crisis to meet with a fellow attorney general in Utah" for a "previously planned meeting." His wife, state Sen. Angela Paxton (R), joined him on the trip. The Chronicle says this "marks the third instance of a Texas public official leaving the state during the disaster that affected nearly every one of the state's 254 counties." The [Dallas Morning News](#) (2/22, 772K) provides similar coverage.

Patrick: Energy Officials Said They Were Prepared Ahead Of Winter Storm. The [Dallas Morning News](#) (2/22, 772K) reports that Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick (R) "said of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas and other players in Texas' energy system," "We were told they were prepared. ... They weren't prepared as they told us they were. And you were cold at night. And your water went out and some people died in the storm. ... We're going to get to the bottom of it." Patrick "said the Legislature would convene hearings this week on the matter, adding that the heads of energy companies and other stakeholders would be issued subpoenas, if necessary, to compel testimony."

Meanwhile, in what the [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (2/22, story 4, 2:00, O'Donnell, 4.6M) described as "a new crisis," some Texans are "stuck with sky high electric bills" after the storm. Marcus Moore of [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (2/22, story 4, 1:15, Muir, 8.08M) reported, "Texas allows power companies to charge variable pricing, which keeps the prices low when demand is low. But prices can spike astronomically when demand goes up." [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (2/22, story 4, 2:15, 6.21M) reported state leaders are promising "solutions for sky high energy bills. The governor restricting companies from cutting power if customers can't pay."

The [New York Times](#) (2/22, A1, Healy, 20.6M) says while power has been restored across much of Texas and warmer weather is forecast "for much of this week, millions of Texans whose

health and finances were already battered by a year of Covid-19 now face a grinding recovery from a storm estimated to cost upward of \$20 billion, the costliest in state history, according to the Insurance Council of Texas." The Times adds, "For many lower-income families whose ceilings collapsed and kitchens flooded after frozen pipes burst, the disaster did not melt with the snow."

Rampell: Texas' Deregulation Resulted In "Humanitarian And Economic Disaster." Catherine Rampell writes in the [Washington Post](#) (2/22, 10.52M) that Republicans have long "worshipped at the altar of deregulation. ... In particular, they touted the Texas energy market as a sort of paragon of their deregulatory fantasy, an invisible-hand success story that should be expanded nationwide." During "the usually balmy Texas winter, this deregulated system has functioned fine. But severe weather can bring it crashing down." Rampell adds that while "Texas's widespread power failures will create some new employment opportunities for plumbers and electricians," for "everyone else, the state's failure to ensure minimum quality standards has been a humanitarian and economic disaster."

SCOTUS To Take Up Cases Related To Abortion And Immigration.

The [AP](#) (2/22) reports the Supreme Court "will take up challenges to controversial Trump administration policies affecting family-planning clinics and immigrants, even though the Biden administration has announced it is reviewing them." [USA Today](#) (2/22, Fritze, 12.7M) reports the Court will consider "a hotly contested effort to cut funding to medical centers that refer patients for abortions" that has been "described by critics as a 'gag rule.'" The [New York Times](#) (2/22, Liptak, 20.6M) reports the Court will also take up a case involving "the so-called public charge rule, which seeks to discourage some immigrants from using public services." The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Barnes, 10.52M) also reports.

Supreme Court Denies Trump Effort To Block Release Of Tax Returns To Manhattan DA.

The [New York Times](#) (2/22, A1, Liptak, Rashbaum, Protess, Weiser, 20.6M) reports the Supreme Court on Monday "rejected a last-ditch attempt by former President Donald J. Trump to shield his financial records, issuing a brief, unsigned order that ended Mr. Trump's bitter 18-month battle to stop prosecutors in Manhattan from poring over his tax returns as they investigate possible financial crimes." The Times calls it "a decisive defeat for Mr. Trump, who had gone to extraordinary lengths to keep his tax returns and related documents secret, taking his case to the Supreme Court twice. There were no dissents noted." The [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (2/22, story 5, 0:25, O'Donnell, 4.77M) said Trump "suffered a major Supreme Court defeat," and [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (2/22, story 6, 0:15, Holt, 6.17M) said the Court "gave Donald Trump a big loss."

Cecilia Vega reported on [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (2/22, story 5, 0:40, Muir, 8.08M) that Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. "could see these documents in a matter of days. We're talking about eight years' worth of personal and business tax returns - I'm told potentially millions of pages. ... These documents are protected by grand jury secrecy rules, [meaning] the public may never see them." The [AP](#) (2/22, Gresko) reports, "The Supreme Court waited months to act in the case" and "offered no explanation for the delay, and the legal issue before the justices did not involve whether Trump was due any special deference because he was president."

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (2/22, 3.37M) reports Trump "faces possible criminal and civil charges on several fronts, but the New York investigation of his business dealings has moved further than any of the other probes." Vance "has not revealed what the grand jury is investigating, but in court filings his office said it was looking into potential 'protracted criminal conduct at the Trump Organization.' Shortly after the court issued its order, Vance tweeted: 'The work continues.'"

[USA Today](#) (2/22, Phillips, Fritze, 12.7M) reports, "In a lengthy statement after the Supreme Court's decision Monday, Trump described the investigation as a 'witch hunt' and 'fascism.' He reiterated the false claim that he won the election, not President Joe Biden, and criticized the Supreme Court, to which he appointed three justices during his four years in office."

The [New York Times](#) (2/22, A1, McIntire, 20.6M) writes that "when New York prosecutors finally get to examine" Trump's federal tax returns, "they will discover a veritable how-to guide for getting rich while losing millions of dollars and paying little to no income taxes. Whether they find evidence of crimes, however, will also depend on other information not found in the actual returns."

Among the many other outlets covering the story are [Reuters](#) (2/22, Hurley), [Bloomberg](#) (2/22, 3.57M), the [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/22, Bravin, Paul, Subscription Publication, 8.41M), [Axios](#) (2/22, Basu, 1.26M), [Politico](#) (2/22, Gerstein, Cheney, 6.73M), [The Hill](#) (2/22, Samuels, 5.69M), and the [CNN](#) (2/22, 89.21M), [Fox News](#) (2/22, Singman, 23.99M), and [CNBC](#) (2/22, Higgins, 7.34M) websites. In related news, [USA Today](#) (2/22, Fritze, 12.7M) reports the Supreme Court "declined Monday to hear an appeal from the adult movie [performer] Stormy Daniels who sued [Trump] for defamation."

Supreme Court Rejects Election Challenges.

The [AP](#) (2/22, Gresko) reports, "The Supreme Court on Monday rejected a handful of cases related to the 2020 election, including disputes from Pennsylvania that had deeply divided the justices just before the election." The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Barnes, 10.52M) reports the Court "turned away Republican challenges to the presidential election results in Pennsylvania, refusing to take up a months-long dispute over extending the deadline in that state for receiving mail-in ballots." Justices Samuel Alito, Neil Gorsuch, and Clarence Thomas "said it deserved the court's attention, even though the number of votes at issue would not call into question Biden's victory." The [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (2/22, Lai) reports, "The decision not to hear the legal challenges brought by top Republican state lawmakers and the state GOP ends litigation that prevented Pennsylvania from counting 10,000 mail ballots that arrived in the three days after Election Day and had remained in legal limbo."

[USA Today](#) (2/22, Fritze, 12.7M) reports that "a blistering dissent" by Thomas "prompted blowback Monday from Democrats. ... In an 11-page dissent from the court's decision not to take up a challenge to the expanded use of mail ballots in Pennsylvania, Thomas acknowledged that the outcome of the election was not changed by the way votes were cast in the battleground state. But he raised questions about the reliability of mail-in voting that echoed many of the same arguments Trump raised in the weeks before and after the election." [CNN](#) (2/22, 89.21M) headlines an online analysis "Justice Clarence Thomas Reveals Some Sympathy For Trump's Baseless Fraud Claims." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/22, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says in an editorial that the Supreme Court was wrong not to seize the opportunity to examine "last year's judicial rewrite of Pennsylvania election law...to prevent future mischief."

Dominion Voting Systems Sues Lindell For \$1.3B.

The [AP](#) (2/22, Karnowski, Bauder) reports Dominion Voting Systems has "filed a \$1.3 billion defamation lawsuit Monday against the founder and CEO of Minnesota-based MyPillow, saying that Mike Lindell falsely accused the company of rigging the 2020 presidential election." The [New York Times](#) (2/22, Maheshwari, Hirsch, 20.6M) reports that the complaint "filed in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia alleged that Mr. Lindell 'exploited' false claims about election fraud to support his company's sales."

The [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#) (2/22, 855K) says Lindell "has openly invited a lawsuit from Dominion for more than a month, insisting that proof of election fraud would come out in the legal discovery process." [USA Today](#) (2/22, Brown, 12.7M), the [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Brown,

10.52M), and the [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/22, Corse, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) also report on the lawsuit.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

WHO's Tedros Urges Rich Nations Not To Hoard Vaccine Doses.

The [AP](#) (2/22, Moulson, Keaten) reports World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Monday "pleaded with rich countries...to check before ordering additional COVID-19 vaccine shots for themselves whether that undermines efforts to get vaccine shots to poorer nations." Tedros "thanked the G-7 countries for their 'significant' pledges," but after speaking with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on Monday, he "said some rich countries' approaches to manufacturers to secure more vaccines are 'affecting the deals with COVAX, and even the amount that was allocated for COVAX was reduced because of this.'"

New COVID Cases Down In Worst Hotspots Worldwide.

The [New York Times](#) (2/22, McCann, Leatherby, Holder, 20.6M) reports that a month after "the pandemic looked bleak," there has been "a surprisingly fast, if partial, turnaround. New cases have declined to half their peak globally, driven largely by steady improvements in some of the same places that weathered devastating outbreaks this winter." The Times concedes cases "are an imperfect measure, and uneven records and testing mask the scope of outbreaks, especially in parts of Africa, Latin America and South Asia," but "fewer patients are showing up at hospitals in many countries with the highest rates of infection, giving experts confidence that the decline is real." However, the Times adds, "The positive signs come with a number of caveats and risks," including the appearance of "more contagious variants" and that the declines come from "just six countries with enormous epidemics."

UK Studies Show Vaccines Have Contributed To Sharp Drop In Hospitalizations; Government Reveals Plan To Reopen.

The [AP](#) (2/22, Kirka) reports, "Two U.K. studies released Monday showed that COVID-19 vaccination programs are contributing to a sharp drop in hospitalizations." The AP says preliminary results of a study in Scotland "found that the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine reduced hospital admissions by up to 85% four weeks after the first dose, while the Oxford-AstraZeneca shot cut admissions by up to 94%," and preliminary data from a study of healthcare workers in England "showed that the Pfizer vaccine reduced the risk of catching COVID-19 by 70% after one dose, a figure that rose to 85% after the second." UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock said that the new studies show "that the jab protects you, and protects those around you."

[Bloomberg](#) (2/22, Paton, 3.57M) says the studies "highlight the significant impact the inoculations are already having in countries with the most advanced campaigns to protect their populations." Bloomberg adds the vaccine "also shows high levels of protection against the variant, called B.1.1.7, first identified in southeast England, officials said."

Meanwhile, the [New York Times](#) (2/22, Mueller, 20.6M) reports the findings "reinforced and went beyond studies out of Israel, which has also reported that the vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech offered significant protection from the virus in real-world settings, and not only in the clinical trials held last year." In addition, [Politico Europe](#) (2/22, Collis, 15K) says the findings come as the UK "plans to lift lockdown restrictions – in place since before Christmas – including letting all children return to school on March 8, and allowing groups of up to six people meet outdoors starting on March 29."

The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Booth, Adam, 10.52M) reports Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Monday "outlined detailed plans in Parliament, telling lawmakers that there would be four stages, with a minimum of five weeks between each stage." The [AP](#) (2/22, Lawless, Kirka)

reports Johnson "said the government's plan would move the country 'cautiously but irreversibly' out of lockdown," with June 21 scheduled to kick off "the final stage of the plan, in which all legal limits on social contact are removed and nightclubs can reopen after 15 months of closure." The [New York Times](#) (2/22, Landler, Castle, 20.6M) reports that by pursuing the "phased approach," Johnson is seeking to "avoid the mistakes of last year, when he often imposed restrictions too late and lifted them too early. In the process he tested the public's patience with abrupt reversals, mixed messages and serial lockdowns – none of which spared Britain from the highest death toll in Europe." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/22, A1, Colchester, Douglas, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) provides similar coverage.

Many Elementary Schools In Germany Return To In-Person Learning.

The [AP](#) (2/22, Jordans) reports, "Elementary students in more than half of Germany's 16 states returned to school Monday after more than two months at home, the first major relaxation of the country's pandemic measures since before Christmas." Additionally, kindergartens "reopened their doors for pre-school children, giving much-anticipated relief to stressed parents trying to juggle working from home and childcare during the lockdown." This latest "move was agreed at a meeting between German Chancellor Angela Merkel and state governors two weeks ago."

France's Contracts With Consulting Firms For Vaccine Strategy Raise Questions.

The [New York Times](#) (2/22, Alderman, 20.6M) reports, "As France raced to complete a complex blueprint in December for vaccinating its population against the coronavirus, the government quietly issued millions of euros in contracts to the consulting giant McKinsey & Company." These deals, "which were not initially disclosed to the public, were intended to help ensure that millions of tiny vaccine vials would make their way quickly to distribution points for nursing homes, health care providers and the elderly." Despite this spending, "within weeks, France's vaccination campaign was being derided for being far too slow," and "McKinsey has become a magnet for controversy in a country where an elite civil service is expected to manage public affairs, and private sector involvement is viewed with wariness."

Bulgaria Confronts Long Lines After Announcing Open Vaccine Availability.

The [New York Times](#) (2/22, Dzhambazova, 20.6M) reports that while Bulgaria initially had a low vaccination rate, Prime Minister Boiko Borisov subsequently "called for 'green corridors' allowing anyone who wanted a vaccination to get one, regardless of whether they were in a priority group under the country's vaccination plan." According to the Times, while the Bulgarian government hoped the program would "administer around 10,000 shots per day, he said," the reaction "appears to be better than expected: The lines evoked the period of communist rule, when people would spend hours waiting to get basic supplies like oil or meat." The Times adds, "Since Friday, 30,000 people received their first vaccination, according to data provided by the health ministry. In comparison, around 120,000 total doses have been administered since vaccination campaign began in December."

Gaza Strip Starts Vaccination Drive.

The [AP](#) (2/22, Akram) reports, "The Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip began its coronavirus vaccination drive on Monday following the arrival of the first vaccines to the blockaded coastal area." Initially, "former health ministers and several medical workers were inoculated with Russia's Sputnik V jabs in front of dozens of cameras." Next, "medical workers and patients with chronic diseases are to start receiving injections on Tuesday." The Gaza Strip "has received just 22,000 doses of vaccines, a tiny fraction of what is needed to immunize the strip's 2 million people, including some 1.4 million people over age 18."

WPost: US Should Declassify Intelligence On Pre-Pandemic Wuhan Illnesses.

In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (2/22, 10.52M) writes that the US “possesses classified intelligence information about illnesses in the autumn of 2019, before the global pandemic, at the Wuhan Institute of Virology...which was carrying out research on bat coronaviruses very similar in genetic makeup to the pandemic virus.” The Post says, “The intelligence should be declassified, and soon.” The Post concludes, “Full transparency is needed from China, but also from the United States. ... The truth matters, and the United States should not hide any relevant evidence.”

Boot: Trump Officials Trying To Undermine Biden’s Foreign Policy.

Max Boot writes in the [Washington Post](#) (2/22, 10.52M) that former President Donald Trump’s appointees “served in the worst administration in history” and “now would be a good opportunity for Trump’s aides and enablers to favor us with their silence as President Biden tries to clean up the messes he inherited. Instead, many of Trump’s supporters are trying to undermine the new president from the start.” Boot adds, “Last week, the right-wing attack machine accused Biden of being an apologist for China’s horrific abuse of the Uighurs,” which is “a gross distortion of Biden’s remarks during a CNN town hall.” Their criticism “is just as egregious when it comes to Biden’s approach to Iran.” Boot argues that while there is “no guarantee that the Biden approach will work,” we “know the Trump policies failed. Biden deserves a chance to chart a different course without being sniped at by Trump’s followers.”

US Sanctions Two More Of Burma’s Military Leaders.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/22, Mandhana, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports the Treasury Department on Monday added two more of Burma’s “top military officers to its blacklist of leaders sanctioned earlier in February after the coup toppled the democratically elected government. The two sanctioned men, Lt. Gen. Moe Myint Tun and Gen. Maung Maung Kyaw, are members of the ruling State Administration Council.” The move comes in the wake of warnings from Biden Administration officials “that more sanctions would be forthcoming if the coup leaders didn’t hand power back to the legitimate government and stop violence against political opponents.”

Secretary of State Blinken [tweeted](#) Monday, “The U.S. stands with the people of Burma who demand the restoration of the democratically elected government. Today’s designations are another step to promote accountability for military leaders who perpetrate violence and attempt to suppress the will of the people.”

Meanwhile, the [AP](#) (2/22) reports that on Monday, “protesters gathered in Myanmar’s biggest city...despite the ruling junta’s threat to use lethal force against people who join a general strike against the military’s takeover three weeks ago. More than 1,000 protesters gathered near the U.S. Embassy in Yangon despite barriers blocking the way, but left to avoid a confrontation after 20 military trucks with riot police arrived nearby.”

The [New York Times](#) (2/22, Beech, 20.6M) says “the military’s show of force did little to quell Monday’s general strike, which proceeded peacefully in hundreds of cities and towns.” The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Mahtani, 10.52M) reports, “Despite the sometimes festive and triumphant atmosphere at protests, demonstrators are increasingly bracing for a crackdown.”

Four Pakistani Aid Workers Killed In North Waziristan.

The [New York Times](#) (2/22, Ur-Rehman, 20.6M) reports that “gunmen killed four aid workers in an ambush in the northwestern Pakistani district of North Waziristan on Monday.” According to the Times, “A vehicle carrying the aid workers, who were all Pakistanis and who were affiliated with a program for developing household skills for women, was fired upon by unidentified attackers in the town of Mir Ali.” The Times says the attack “could signal a revival of insurgency in the region bordering Afghanistan that was once a stronghold of the Pakistani Taliban.”

China’s FM Rejects International Condemnation Of Muslim Uighurs’ Treatment.

[Reuters](#) (2/22, Nebehay) reports that on Monday, the government of China “rejected ‘slanderous attacks’ about conditions for Muslim Uighurs living in Xinjiang, as European powers and Turkey voiced concerns and called for U.N. access to the remote western region.” Foreign Minister Wang Yi “told the U.N. Human Rights Council that it was taking counter-terrorism measures in accordance with the law and that Xinjiang enjoyed ‘social stability and sound development’ after four years without any ‘terrorist case.’” According to Reuters, Wang “invited U.N. scrutiny but gave no timetable.” Reuters says the Biden Administration has “endorsed a last-minute determination by the Trump administration that China has committed genocide in Xinjiang and has said the United States must be prepared to impose costs on China.”

Canada’s House Of Commons Approves Motion Calling China’s Treatment Of Uighurs Genocide. The [AP](#) (2/22, Gillies) reports Canada’s House of Commons passed a non-binding motion Monday “to declare that China is committing genocide against more than 1 million Uighurs in the western Xinjiang region but Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his Cabinet abstained from the vote.” The motion “passed 266-0 as virtually all but Trudeau and his Cabinet voted for the measure that also called on the International Olympic Committee to move the 2022 Winter Olympics from Beijing.” The AP cites “a senior government official” who “said declaring something in Parliament is not going to adequately get results in China and that work with international allies and partners is needed.” [Reuters](#) (2/22, Scherer) says Trudeau “has been reluctant to use the word genocide, suggesting that seeking broad consensus among Western allies on Chinese human rights issues would be the best approach.”

China Plans Changes To Committee That Selects Hong Kong’s Chief Executive.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/22, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports China plans changes to a 1,200-member committee that selects Hong Kong’s chief executive in order “to curb the influence of Hong Kong opposition groups” on the body, “according to people familiar with the proposal.” Chinese lawmakers are expected to vote in March on revisions that “would drastically reduce, or potentially eliminate, the 117 seats assigned to Hong Kong’s district councilors, a bloc now dominated by opposition groups.” The seats “would be given to some of the more than 200 Hong Kong-resident members of China’s top political advisory body, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, the people said.”

EU To Sanction Russian Officials Over Navalny’s Detention.

[Reuters](#) (2/22, Emmott, Siebold) reports that on Monday, European Union foreign ministers “agreed...to impose sanctions on four senior Russian officials close to President Vladimir Putin in a mainly symbolic response to the jailing of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.” The agreement, which “came after France, Germany, Poland and the Baltic states urged the 27-member bloc to send a message to Putin that debate and protest must be allowed in Russia.” Reuters reports that an unnamed EU diplomat “said the proposed new travel bans and asset freezes would target, among others, Alexander Bastrykin, whose Investigative Committee handles investigations into major crimes and reports directly to Putin.” The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Birnbaum, 10.52M) says the sanctions “will go into effect in about a week.”

[Politico Europe](#) (2/22, 15K) reports Navalny and some of his “top aides” have “called loudly and publicly for the EU to sanction oligarchs close to Putin, especially those who maintain a large portion of their wealth in Europe – a demand that poses a thicket of legal obstacles.”

Georgia Parliament Appoints Garibashvili Prime Minister.

The [AP](#) (2/22) reports Georgia’s parliament “voted Monday evening to appoint a new prime minister and Cabinet after Giorgi Gakharia resigned last week over a court ruling to arrest the top opposition politician.” Lawmakers “voted 89-2 for Irakli Garibashvili and his Cabinet.” Garibashvili’s candidacy “was put forward by the ruling Georgian Dream party.”

Protesters Demand Armenian PM’s Resignation.

The [AP](#) (2/22) reports thousands of people marched in Armenia's capital Yerevan on Monday, "demanding Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's resignation amid pressure for him to step down since November over his handling of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Azerbaijan."

Police, Protesters Clash In Greece.

The [AP](#) (2/22) reports 31 protesters were arrested in Thessaloniki, Greece Monday "during a demonstration against a new campus security law." Protesters occupied the principal's building at the University of Thessaloniki for several hours and "clashes broke out when police entered the building to remove them."

Migrants Trying To Reach Europe Found Hiding Amid Cargo At North African Port.

The [AP](#) (2/22, Brito, Parra) reports 41 people "found hiding amid cargo" in "the port of Melilla, one of Spain's two small territories in North Africa," were "attempting to sneak aboard a ship that would take them across the Mediterranean Sea to mainland Spain. Four of them were discovered buried in recycling containers beneath glass bottles, some broken with sharp edges."

Politico Analysis: Middle East Is Not A Top Priority For Biden.

According to [Politico](#) (2/22, Bertrand, Seligman, 6.73M), President Biden is "tired of dealing with the Middle East," and his "signals" to that effect are "not meant to be subtle, his advisers say." Biden "has made only one call to a head of state in the Middle East – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday – which itself was delayed by more than three weeks." A "former senior national security official and close Biden adviser" tells Politico, "If you are going to list the regions Biden sees as a priority, the Middle East is not in the top three. It's Asia-Pacific, then Europe, and then the Western Hemisphere. And that reflects a bipartisan consensus. ... They are just being extremely purposeful to not get dragged into the Middle East."

In Third Attack In A Week, Three Rockets Land Near US Embassy In Baghdad.

[Politico](#) (2/22, Seligman, 6.73M) reports three Katyusha rockets landed near the US Embassy in Baghdad Monday, "the third such attack in Iraq in the span of one week." A defense official said "there are no reports of U.S. personnel injured," but the official "was still waiting confirmation." Politico adds, "The attack comes after at least four rockets struck Balad Air Base on Saturday night, wounding one person," and "a dozen rockets targeted coalition forces outside Erbil International Airport, killing one non-U.S. contractor and wounding nine more people, including five Americans" last week.

[The Hill](#) (2/22, Kheel, 5.69M) reports State Department spokesman Ned Price said Monday, "We are outraged by the recent attacks. ... When it comes to our response, we will respond in a way that is calculated, within our own timetable, and using a mix of tools at a time and place of our choosing, as you've heard me say before. ... What will not do is lash out and risk an escalation that plays into the hands of Iran and contributes to their attempts to further destabilize Iraq."

WPost Analysis: IAEA Deal "Momentarily" Eases US-Iran Tension.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Fahim, 10.52M) says an agreement announced Sunday that would allow the IAEA "to continue some monitoring of Iran's atomic program momentarily eased a standoff between Tehran and Western nations and may provide a narrow opening for diplomacy as the Biden administration attempts to restart negotiations with Iran." However, "a vote by Iran's parliament Monday condemning the agreement served as a reminder of domestic head winds, in Tehran and Washington, that could hinder a speedy return to the nuclear deal between Iran and global powers." The Post adds, "Under vague terms of the deal announced Sunday, Iran would still end implementation of what is known as the Additional Protocol, which enforces monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), but would continue to

allow what Rafael Grossi, the agency's head, called 'necessary monitoring and verification' of Iran's nuclear program."

[CNBC](#) (2/22, Turak, 7.34M) reports on its website that Iran's Parliament "previously voted to suspend its so-called Additional Protocol with the IAEA if U.S. oil and banking sanctions were not lifted by this week, meaning much of the rigorous inspection carried out by the U.N. agency as part of the 2015 Iranian nuclear deal will end." But CNBC says "the fact that some access will still be allowed for inspectors prevents a much worse escalation that would've left the international community entirely in the dark on Iran's nuclear activities."

Emirati And Qatari Delegations Meet For The First Time In Years.

[Reuters](#) (2/22) reports that on Monday in Kuwait, "delegations from the United Arab Emirates and Qatar met...for the first time since an agreement last month to end a rift of more than three years." According to Reuters, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt "agreed in January at a summit in Saudi's al-Ula to restore diplomatic, trade and travel ties with Doha, which had been severed in 2017 over accusations that Qatar supported terrorism, a charge it denies." Reuters adds that "since the agreement, air and travel links have resumed between Qatar and the four states."

Italy's Ambassador To DR Congo Killed In Shootout.

[Reuters](#) (2/22, Mahamba, Bujakera) reports that on Monday, Luca Attanasio, Italy's ambassador to Democratic Republic of Congo, was killed "along with his bodyguard and a World Food Programme driver when their convoy was attacked in the east of the country." According to Reuters, "The assailants stopped the convoy by firing warning shots, killed the Congolese driver and were leading the passengers into the forest when park rangers opened fire." Attanasio "was hit in the abdomen and died several hours later at the U.N. hospital in the regional capital Goma, Congo's interior ministry said." Attanasio's bodyguard, Vittorio Iacovacci was also killed, as well as driver Mustapha Milambo. The [AP](#) (2/22, Kamale, Winfield), the [New York Times](#) (2/22, Specia, Pianigiani, 20.6M), the [Washington Post](#) (2/22, Bearak, 10.52M), and [Politico Europe](#) (2/22, 15K) have more coverage of the envoy's killing.

Rwandan Opposition Figure Shot And Killed In South Africa.

The [New York Times](#) (2/22, Chutel, Dahir, 20.6M) reports Rwandan opposition figure Seif Bamporiki "was shot and killed in South Africa on Sunday in what the police said was most likely a robbery but that political allies said resembled earlier assassinations of government critics." Bamporiki "was shot in Cape Town sometime after 4 p.m. while making a delivery, his political party, the Rwanda National Congress, said in a statement." Bamporiki, a Rwandan exile, "arrived in Nyanga township to hand over a bed from his store to a client when two men approached his truck and one of them shot him, the party said." The Rwanda National Congress "said the killing was reminiscent of past cases" in which critics of Rwandan President Paul Kagame were "lured [to] a compromising and insecure environment" and murdered.

THE BIG PICTURE

Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[WeWork Co-Founder Adam Neumann Nears Settlement With SoftBank](#)

[Consumer Demand Snaps Back. Factories Can't Keep Up.](#)

[Covid-19 Vaccinations Cut Hospitalizations And Deaths, UK Finds](#)

[You Can Ski During Covid – Just Make Your Car The Lodge](#)

[Boeing 777 Engines Made By Pratt & Whitney Already Faced New Scrutiny](#)

New York Times:

[Supreme Court Denies Trump's Final Bid to Block Release of Tax Returns](#)
[Trump's Tax Returns Aren't the Only Crucial Records Prosecutors Will Get](#)
[State Lawmakers Defy Governors In A Covid-Era Battle For Power](#)
[Garland, At Confirmation Hearing, Vows To Fight Domestic Extremism](#)
[As Pandemic Told Hold, Suicide Rose Among Japanese Women](#)
['Like We're Being Cursed': First Covid And Now Waterlogged Homes](#)

Washington Post:

[Garland Priority: Inquiry Into Riot](#)
[Justices Say Trump Can't Shield Tax Returns](#)
[Argentina Sends Its Bill For Pandemic To The Rich](#)
[Another Vaccine-Hesitant Group: Young Women](#)
[Governor's Race In Va. To Be A Key Barometer](#)
[Biden Close To Defeat On Pick For OMB Chief](#)

Financial Times:

[Russia's Rubber-Stamp Courts Play Starring Role In Kremlin Crackdown](#)
[Brazilian Markets Rattled By Bolsonaro's Removal Of Petrobras Chief](#)
[Iran Inspection Deal Opens Window For Nuclear Talks With US](#)
[Ex-Cosmo Editor Teams Up With Ice Hockey Owner In Spac Deal](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:

ABC: COVID; COVID Stories; United Airlines-Engine Failure; Texas-Winter Storm; SCOTUS-Trump Taxes; Garland-Confirmation Hearing; Capitol Siege-Officer Interview; Colorado-Elijah McClain Case; NASA-Perseverance; Reminder of Those Who Have Died.

CBS: COVID; COVID Stories; United Airlines-Engine Failure; Texas-Winter Storm; SCOTUS-Trump Taxes; Garland-Confirmation Hearing; Colorado-Elijah McClain Case; NASA-Perseverance; SpaceX-Youngest American To Fly To Space; Reminder of Those Who Have Died.

NBC: COVID; Biden-COVID Relief; United Airlines-Engine Failure; Texas-Winter Storm; Garland-Confirmation Hearing; SCOTUS-Trump Taxes; Colorado-Elijah McClain Case; Racial Injustice; Vaccines; NASA-Perseverance; SpaceX-Youngest American To Fly To Space; Youngest Woman To Row Solo Across Atlantic.

Network TV At A Glance:

COVID – 11 minutes, 20 seconds
United Airlines-Engine Failure – 6 minutes, 10 seconds
Texas-Winter Storm – 5 minutes, 30 seconds
Garland-Confirmation Hearing – 4 minutes, 25 seconds
Colorado-Elijah McClain Case – 3 minutes, 40 seconds
SCOTUS-Trump Taxes – 1 minutes, 20 seconds
NASA-Perseverance – 1 minutes, 10 seconds

WASHINGTON'S SCHEDULE

Today's Events In Washington.**White House:**

- President Biden and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau virtually hold first bilateral meeting, discussing the coronavirus (COVID-19) response, climate change, and economic ties; engages in a discussion virtually with essential workers.

- Vice President Harris — Joins the President for a bilateral meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

US Senate:

- Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on impacts of emerging technologies on national security – Hearing on 'Emerging Technologies and Their Impact on National Security', with testimony from Schmidt Futures co-founder Dr Eric Schmidt; Microsoft Corporation President Brad Smith; and National Defense Industrial Association President and CEO Gen. (Ret.) Herbert Carlisle
Location: Rm 106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 9:30 AM
- Senate Energy and Natural Resources committee considers nomination of Deb Haaland to be Interior Secretary – Nominations hearing considers Deb Haaland to be Secretary of the Interior * Then-President-elect Joe Biden nominated the Democratic Rep. Deb Haaland on 17 Dec 2020. If confirmed by the Senate, she will become the first Native American to run the Department of the Interior
Location: Rm 366, Dirksen Senate Office Bldg, Washington, DC; 9:30 AM
- Senate HELP Committee considers Xavier Becerra to be HHS Secretary – Nominations hearing considers Xavier Becerra to be Secretary of Health and Human Services * Then-President-elect Joe Biden nominated the California attorney general on 7 Dec 2020. If confirmed by the Senate, Becerra will be the first Latino to head the Department of Health and Human Services
Location: Rm 430, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 10:00 AM
- Senate Homeland Security Committee / Rules and Administration Committee joint hybrid hearing on the 6 Jan attack on the U.S. Capitol – Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Senate Committee on Rules and Administration joint hybrid hearing on 'Examining the January 6 Attack on the U.S. Capitol', with testimony from Metropolitan Police Department Acting Chief Robert Contee III; former U.S. Capitol Chief of Police Steven Sund; former Senate Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper Michael Stenger; and former House of Representatives Sergeant at Arms Paul Irving * Held via videoconference and in Rm G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building; *10:00 AM*
- Fed Chair Powell presents Monetary Policy Report to Senate Banking Committee (virtual) – Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs remote hearing on 'The Semiannual Monetary Policy Report to the Congress', with testimony from Federal Reserve Board Chair Jerome Powell; *10:00 AM*
- Senate Judiciary Committee concludes consideration of Merrick Garland to be AG – Nominations hearing considers Merrick Garland to be Attorney General, second and final day, with testimony from external witnesses * Hearing began yesterday, with a vote on the nomination next week * Then-President-elect Joe Biden nominated the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit judge last month
Location: Rm 216, Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 10:00 AM
- Nominations hearing considers Adewale Adeyemo to be Deputy Secretary of the Treasury
Location: Rm 219, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 10:00 AM
- Senate Intelligence Committee hybrid hearing on the SolarWinds hack – Hybrid hearing 'Examining the SolarWinds Hack', with testimony from SolarWinds President and CEO Sudhakar Ramakrishna; FireEye CEO Kevin Mandia; Microsoft President Brad Smith; and CrowdStrike President and CEO George Kurtz * At least nine govt agencies and about 100 private companies were targeted in the likely Russian hack that gave the actor complete access to files and emails, though the Russian govt has denied involvement. The breach hijacked widely used software from Texas-based SolarWinds to install malicious software through a what appeared to be a routine security update * Held via WebEx and in Rm 106, Dirksen Senate Office Building; *2:30 PM*

US House:

- House Appropriations subcommittee hearing on the IRS (virtual) – Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee virtual hearing on 'Oversight of the Internal Revenue Service', held via Cisco Webex, with testimony from IRS Commissioner Charles Rettig; *10:00 AM*
- Dem Rep. Rosa DeLauro hosts CDC Member Roundtable on COVID-19 (virtual) – House Appropriations Committee Chair Rosa DeLauro hosts virtual CDC Member Roundtable on COVID-19, with CDC Director Dr Rochelle Walensky, Principal Deputy Director Dr Anne Schuchat and National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Disease Director Dr Nancy Messonnier, and members of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee; *10:00 AM*
- House Commerce subcommittee hearing with COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers – Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee remote hearing on 'Pathway to Protection: Expanding Availability of COVID-19 Vaccines', held via Cisco Webex, with testimony from Pfizer Group President and Chief Business Officer John Young; Moderna President Stephen Hoge; Johnson & Johnson Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies Medical Affairs Vice President Richard Nettles; AstraZeneca BioPharmaceuticals Business Unit President and Executive Vice President Ruud Dobber; and Novavax Executive Vice President, Chief Commercial Officer, and Chief Business Officer John Trizzino; *10:30 AM*
- House Armed Services subcommittee hybrid hearing on 'the science and technology enterprise' – Cyber, Innovative Technologies, and Information Systems Subcommittee hybrid hearing on 'Innovation Opportunities and Vision for the Science and Technology Enterprise', with testimony from former Acting Deputy Secretary of Defense Christine Fox; former DARPA Director Dr Victoria Coleman; and American Enterprise Institute Resident Fellow Klon Kitchen * Held via WebEx and in Rm 2118, Rayburn House Office Building; *11:00 AM*
- House Infrastructure subcommittee hybrid hearing on 'the urgent need for wastewater infrastructure investment' – Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee hybrid hearing on 'Building Back Better: The Urgent Need for Investment in America's Wastewater Infrastructure', with testimony from Lima, OH, Mayor David Berger; Puyallup Tribal Council Chairman Bill Sterud; Buffalo Sewer Authority General Manager Oluwole McFoy; EJ Americas Vice President and General Manager Thomas Teske; Milwaukee Water Commons co-Executive Director Brenda Coley; and Laborers International Union of North America Legislative Director David Mallino * Held virtually and in Rm 2167, Rayburn House Office Building; *11:00 AM*
- House Reform subcommittee hybrid hearing on 'revitalizing the federal workforce' – Government Operations Subcommittee hybrid hearing on 'Revitalizing the Federal Workforce', with testimony from American Geophysical Union Executive Vice President for Strategic Leadership and Global Outreach Janice Lachance; American Federation of Government Employees National President Everett Kelley; and Stanford University Professor of Law Anne Joseph O'Connell * Held via WebEx and in Rm 2154, Rayburn House Office Building; *11:00 AM*
- House meets for legislative business – House of Representatives meets for legislative business, with agenda including consideration of 'H.R. 264 – To designate the facility of the U.S. Postal Service located at 1101 Charlotte St in Georgetown, SC, as the 'Joseph Hayne Rainey Memorial Post Office Bldg'', 'H.R. 813 – To designate the facility of the U.S. Postal Service located at 1050 Sunset Rd SW in Albuquerque, NM, as the 'Jose Hernandez Post Office Bldg'', 'H.R. 772 – To designate the facility of the U.S. Postal Service located at 229 Minnetonka Ave S in Wayzata, MN, as the 'Jim Ramstad Post Office'', 'H.R. 208 – To designate the facility of the U.S. Postal Service located at 500 W Main St, Suite 102 in

Tupelo, MS, as the 'Colonel Carlyle 'Smitty' Harris Post Office', 'H.R. 546 – Effective Assistance of Counsel in the Digital Era Act', and 'H.R. XX – PRAADA'

Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC; 2:00 PM

- House Rules Committee hearing – Hearing on 'H.R. 803 – Protecting America's Wilderness and Public Lands Act' and 'H.R. 5 – Equality Act', via Cisco Webex; 2:00 PM
- House Armed Services subcommittee hybrid hearing on space and nuclear weapons – Strategic Forces Subcommittee hybrid hearing on 'Near-Peer Advancements in Space and Nuclear Weapons', with testimony from Stanford University Center for International Security and Cooperation Affiliate Gen. (Ret.) Robert Kehler; Brookings Institution Nonresident Fellow Madelyn Creedon; Center for Strategic and International Studies Aerospace Security Project Director Todd Harrison; and Hudson Institute Senior Fellow Tim Morrison * Held via WebEx and in Rm 2118, Rayburn House Office Building; 3:00 PM

Cabinet Officers:

- President Biden's Cabinet meets virtually with Canadian ministers to discuss a range of bilateral and global issues

Visitors:

- No visitors scheduled.

General Events:

- U.S. Supreme Court hearing – U.S. Supreme Court hearing, via teleconference: 'Wilkinson v. Dai', 'Wilkinson v. Alcaraz-Enriquez' (consolidated) (Whether a court of appeals can presume that an immigrant's testimony is credible if an immigration judge or the Board of Immigration Appeals did not specifically find that he was not credible?); 10:00 AM
- Brazilian economy minister discusses nation's accession to the OECD (virtual) – Center for Strategic and International Studies hosts Brazilian Minister of the Economy Paulo Guedes, who discusses his country's potential accession to the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development. Other speakers include Brazilian Ambassador to the U.S. Amb. Nestor Forster; 10:00 AM
- POLITICO Live 'Red, Fresh and Blue' event with newly elected members of Congress (virtual) – Republican Rep. Michelle Steel and Democratic Rep. Carolyn Bourdeaux – discussing how they are gaining their footing and looking to make a mark in their first term; 10:00 AM
- National Forum on COVID-19 Vaccine continues (virtual) – National Forum on COVID-19 Vaccine continues, hosted virtually to promote the most effective strategies to build trust and confidence in coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccines, use data to optimize vaccine implementation, and provide participants with practical information for increasing vaccine access in communities nationwide, especially for persons at increased risk of COVID-19 and those who may face barriers to vaccination. Day two speakers include White House COVID-19 Response Team Vaccinations Coordinator Bechara Choucair, CDC Director Rochelle Walensky, Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr., New Jersey Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli, Maine CDC Director Nirav Shah, Louisiana State Health Officer Joseph Kanter, Washington, DC, Department of Health Director LaQuandra Nesbitt, Oregon Health Authority State Public Health Director Rachael Banks, South Carolina State Epidemiologist Linda Bell, and West Virginia State Health Officer Ayne Amjad; 11:00 AM
- EU High Representative Borrell speaks at Atlantic Council (virtual) – Atlantic Council presents a discussion with EU High Representative Josep Borrell, who discusses 'opportunities for U.S.-EU cooperation under a new U.S. administration'; 11:00 AM
- Dem Sen. Chris Murphy discusses U.S. foreign policy in the Persian Gulf (virtual) – Council on Foreign Relations hosts Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy, who discusses the future of U.S.

foreign policy in the Persian Gulf, the status of American support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen, and the foreign policy priorities for the 117th Congress; *12:00 PM*

- National Association of State Treasurers Legislative Conference continues (virtual) – National Association of State Treasurers Legislative Conference continues. Day two speakers include U.S. Chamber of Commerce Transportation and Infrastructure Vice President Ed Mortimer and AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department President Greg Regan * Taking place virtually due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic; *12:00 PM*
- Reagan Institute hosts GOP Rep. Liz Cheney for discussion on foreign policy (virtual) – Reagan Institute hosts virtual event with House Republican Conference Chair Liz Cheney on 'Building a 21st Century Foreign Policy', with Rep. Cheney discussing America's role in the world given the landscape of national security threats and challenges * The Reagan Institute carries out the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation's mission in Washington, DC; *1:00 PM*
- AASHTO Washington Briefing (virtual) – American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Washington Briefing opens, held virtually; *1:00 PM*
- Rare Disease Diversity Coalition convening (virtual) – Rare Disease Diversity Coalition virtually hosts first meeting, to discuss the impact that racial disparities, inequities, access to care and coronavirus (COVID-19) have on rare disease patients of colour. Speakers include Democratic Rep. G.K. Butterfield, White House COVID-19 Equity Task Force Dr Marcella Nunez-Smith, and NBA star Alonzo Mourning; *1:00 PM*
- CSIS discussion with Joint Chiefs of Staff Vice Chairman (virtual) – Center for Strategic and International Studies presents 'Missile Defense and Defeat', a conversation with Joint Chiefs of Staff Vice Chairman Gen. John Hyten, who discusses 'the interrelation of active missile defense, non-nuclear missile defeat, and deterrence'; *3:00 PM*

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