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**Subject:** [EXTERNAL EMAIL] - FBI Public Affairs News Briefing Monday, January 25, 2021

**Date:** Mon, 25 Jan 2021 11:33:12 +0000

**Importance:** Normal

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 FBI News Briefing

**TO: THE DIRECTOR AND SENIOR STAFF**

**DATE: MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2021 6:30 AM EST**

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## CAPITOL VIOLENCE NEWS

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### Additional Arrests, Charges In Capitol Violence.

The [CBS Evening News](#) (1/22, story 10, 0:14, O'Donnell, 4.08M) reported that five-time Olympic swimming medalist Klete Keller on Friday "appeared in court...on charges of taking part in the deadly assault on the US Capitol. Keller was seen wearing his team USA jacket. He's charged with disorderly conduct and obstructing officers."

The [AP](#) (1/22) reports Donovan Crowl, who is accused of helping plot the attack on the US Capitol, was denied bail. Magistrate Sharon Ovington "didn't see a way to ensure public safety if she allowed" him free. [Reuters](#) (1/22, Lynch) reported Crowl is a member of the Oath Keepers, and he "and his associates Thomas Caldwell and Jessica Watkins are the first suspects to be charged with plotting to take over the U.S. Capitol."

The [AP](#) (1/23) reported Andrew Craig Ericson, of Muskogee, Oklahoma was arrested. He allegedly "livestreamed video of himself entering the building with other rioters and taking beer out of a Capitol refrigerator," as well as posting "photos online of himself posing in House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office." An affidavit indicates that "the FBI began investigating Ericson after a witness sent screengrabs or photos of Ericson's Snapchat account that showed him inside the Capitol during the Jan. 6 invasion."

The [AP](#) (1/22) reported Karl Dresch of Calumet, Michigan "will remain in custody after FBI agents found guns and ammunition at his" home, as "he's a convicted felon who can't possess firearms or ammunition under state or federal law, said U.S. Magistrate Judge Maarten Vermaat."

The [AP](#) (1/22, Pitt) reported US Magistrate Judge Celeste Bremer said that right-wing conspiracy theorist Douglas Jensen, who "is seen prominently in videos taunting a U.S. Capitol police officer and pursuing him up stairs during the Jan. 6 riot," may be put in home confinement while awaiting trial. The judge ordered Jensen "remain in jail until Jan. 27 to give federal prosecutors time to appeal her decision."

[USA Today](#) (1/23, Moran, 12.7M) reported Dustin Byron Thompson and Robert Anthony Lyon, both of Ohio, "charged with knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted federal building or grounds without lawful authority, violent entry, and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds." Additionally, Thompson also was charged with stealing a coat rack during the US Capitol riots.

The [AP](#) (1/22) reported Kash Lee Kelly of Hammond, Indiana, "appeared Thursday before a federal magistrate to face charges of illegal entry into a restricted federal building and violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds."

The [New York Times](#) (1/22, Fuchs, 20.6M) reports John Lolos, who was escorted off a flight from DC after making "a ruckus aboard a plane on the tarmac," was arrested after a police officer at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport "spied a video that appeared to show Mr. Lolos exiting the Capitol on the day of the attack, according to an affidavit from a Capitol Police special agent."

Meanwhile, the [Washington Post](#) (1/22, Kornfield, 10.52M) reports Texas real estate agent Jenna Ryan, "the woman who documented herself flying via private plane to Washington and entering the Capitol with a mob of Donald Trump supporters," has begun "soliciting donations for her legal defense." The Post says Ryan had publicly sought but did not get "a presidential pardon from Donald Trump before he left office." The Post adds Ryan "claimed that she has

raised \$1,000 through PayPal," but her account "was closed on the grounds that it was soliciting funds for purposes other than legal defense."

The [Washington Post](#) (1/22, Peiser, 10.52M) also reports former Houston police officer Tam Dinh Pham, who "was arrested on Wednesday on charges of unlawful entry of the Capitol and violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds," claimed he only entered the Capitol because he "wanted the rare opportunity to view 'historical art,' investigators said." According to the Post, Pham is "one of more than a dozen off-duty police officers under investigation for allegedly participating in the violent and chaotic insurrection earlier this month."

[The Hill](#) (1/23, Axelrod, 5.69M) reports in its "Briefing Room" blog that prosecutors filed charges against another two men for "assaulting a police officer during the violent Jan. 6 riot at the Capitol, and another was charged with obstructing justice." According to The Hill, "Emanuel Jackson, 20, and Scott Fairlamb, 43, allegedly assaulted officers, while Jeffrey Sabol, 51, is accused with obstruction." The [New York Post](#) (1/22, Feuerherd, 7.45M) reports Sabol "allegedly dragged a police officer down a set of stairs during the Jan. 6 Capitol riot – and then bought a plane ticket to Switzerland and attempted suicide in Westchester County in the days after the siege."

***Prosecutors Charge FAA Employee For Storming Capitol.*** The [Washington Times](#) (1/23, Blake, 626K) reports the Department of Justice on Friday announced that Kevin Strong, a Federal Aviation Administration employee from California, "was arrested and charged after confessing to breaching the U.S. Capitol." The Times adds the FBI "notably...said it opened an investigation into Mr. Strong on Dec. 30, 2020, precisely one week before the Capitol building was breached while both the House of Representatives and Senate convened."

The [AP](#) (1/22) reports, "A member of the FAA's internal investigations department notified the FBI a day after the siege that Strong had been at the Capitol," an affidavit said. FBI agents went seized two guns at to Strong's home. "Strong told agents that he was inside the Capitol and provided them with photographs and videos he took while inside."

[Bloomberg](#) (1/22, Yaffe-Bellany, 3.57M) also covers this story.

***Federal Judge Blocks Release Of Man In Capitol Riot With Plastic Handcuffs.*** The [AP](#) (1/24) reports, "U.S. District Judge Beryl A. Howell for the District of Columbia set aside an order by a judge in Tennessee" that would release Eric Munchel, "a Tennessee man who authorities say carried flexible plastic handcuffs during the riot at the U.S. Capitol earlier this month." The AP adds, "an FBI search of Munchel's home turned up the tactical gear he wore in the Jan. 6 storming of the Capitol, five pairs of plastic handcuffs, multiple weapons, hundreds of rounds of ammunition and a drum-style magazine."

***Son Tipped Off FBI About Father Who Participated In Capitol Violence.*** The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Pietsch, 20.6M) reports that according to an FBI affidavit, Guy W. Reffitt, who was arrested for being part of the Capitol violence, told his son, Jackson Reffitt, that he had stormed the Capitol and that if Jackson "reported him to the police, he would have no choice but to do his 'duty' for his country and 'do what he had to do.'" He added, "If you turn me in, you're a traitor. And you know what happens to traitors. Traitors get shot." However, Jackson "had already reported his father to the F.B.I. weeks before the riot."

Additional coverage includes [CNN](#) (1/23, 89.21M).

### **Alleged Capitol Rioter Who Threatened To "Assassinate" Rep. Ocasio-Cortez Charged.**

[Reuters](#) (1/23, Bing) reports the Justice Department on Friday "revealed charges...against a Texas man who allegedly stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 and threatened on social media to kill" Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY). Reuters adds prosecutors "asked a judge on Friday to keep the man, Garret Miller, in jail ahead of a court appearance, according to court records."

The [AP](#) (1/23) reports authorities "say he called for violence in online posts, including a tweet that simply read 'Assassinate AOC,' a reference to the liberal Ocasio-Cortez." Miller also posted: "They are right next time we bring the guns," an FBI agent wrote in an affidavit.

The [New York Times](#) (1/23, Levenson, 20.6M) reports, "Surveillance video from inside the Capitol, a selfie and a video posted by Mr. Miller and comments he made on social media showed that he had been part of a crowd that had pushed past the police to enter the Capitol."

Additional coverage includes [NBC News](#) (1/23, 4.91M), the [Dallas Morning News](#) (1/23, Thompson, 772K), and [BuzzFeed News](#) (1/23, Lytvynenko).

**Law Enforcement Investigating Threats Against Lawmakers.** The [AP](#) (1/24, Balsamo) reports, "Federal law enforcement officials are examining a number of threats aimed at members of Congress" as the trial nears, according to "a U.S. official. ... The threats, and concerns that armed protesters could return to sack the Capitol anew, have prompted the U.S. Capitol Police and other federal law enforcement to insist thousands of National Guard troops remain in Washington as the Senate moves forward with plans for Trump's trial, the official said."

### **Federal Law Enforcement Officials "Privately Debating" Whether To Charge Some Involved In Capitol Riots.**

The [Washington Post](#) (1/23, Barrett, Hsu, 10.52M) reports federal law enforcement officials "are privately debating whether they should decline to charge some of the individuals who stormed the U.S. Capitol this month – a politically loaded proposition but one alert to the practical concern that hundreds of such cases could swamp the local courthouse." The Post adds that the internal talks "are in their early stages, and no decisions have been reached," even as "officials are keenly sensitive that the credibility of the Justice Department and the FBI are at stake in such decisions," according to people familiar with the discussions. While some federal officials argued internally that those who only committed unlawful entry "and were not engaged in violent, threatening or destructive behavior" should not be charged, "other agents and prosecutors have pushed back against that suggestion, arguing that it is important to send a forceful message that the kind of political violence and mayhem on display Jan. 6 needs to be punished to the full extent of the law, so as to discourage similar conduct in the future."

The [New York Times](#) (1/22, Feuer, Hong, 20.6M) reports that FBI "agents and prosecutors have put together cases" against those so far charged in the Capitol violence "largely by scouring the news and social media for incriminating photographs and videos, with some of the evidence almost comically easy to obtain." However, "The F.B.I.'s most challenging work, legal scholars say, may have only just begun," as conspiracy charges are harder to prove.

### **Videos Provide Insights Into Capitol Violence, Shooting.**

In a nearly 2,000-word article, the [New York Times](#) (1/23, A1, Goldman, Dewan, 20.6M) reports that during "the four-and-a-half-hour attack on the Capitol on Jan. 6, one of the moments when the mob came closest to the lawmakers they were pursuing took place just after 2:30 p.m." when Ashli Babbitt was fatally shot by an unidentified Capitol Police lieutenant "in a confrontation that was captured on video and widely viewed around the world." The Times adds that while officials "have not provided the full details of Ms. Babbitt's death," videos, legal documents "and witness accounts point to a dire set of circumstances and an officer left to confront a mob."

The [Washington Times](#) (1/24, Scarborough, 626K) reports, "In more than 100 U.S. District Court affidavits, FBI agents, federal marshals and police officers justify arrest warrants on charges of conspiracy, violent entry, assaulting officers and disorderly conduct" with the help of "videos rioters took and posted of their own law-breaking." The images offer "a picture of the Capitol invasion by a number of Trump supporters after hearing his speech on how the election was stolen for President Joseph R. Biden."

### **Military, Police Investigate Members Facing Charges For Capitol Riot.**

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/23, Seetharaman, Elinson, Kesling, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that according to its tally, "at least 18 current and former police officers, firefighters and

military members” have been charged for their involvement in the Capitol riot, which is prompting investigations within the military and law enforcement agencies nationwide.

In a more than 2,000-word article, the [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Kindy, Berman, Bellware, 10.52M) says that the “revelation that the Capitol mob – covered in emblems of extremist groups – included off-duty law enforcement officers possibly assisted by working police is escalating pressure on sheriffs and police chiefs nationwide to root out staff with ties to white supremacist and far-right armed groups.” A Post analysis found “more than a dozen off-duty law enforcement officers were allegedly part of the Jan. 6 mob and are under investigation,” while “at least a dozen Capitol Police officers are also under investigation for possibly playing a role in the rioting by assisting or encouraging the mob.”

An [AP](#) (1/24, Bellisle, Bleiberg) survey of US law enforcement agencies has “found that at least 31 officers in 12 states are being scrutinized by their supervisors for their behavior in the District of Columbia or face criminal charges for participating in the riot.”

[NJ News](#) (1/23, Warren, 1.47M) reported, “In court records posted online on Saturday, a special agent from the Federal Bureau of Investigation gave more details about the actions of Marissa Suarez and Patricia Todisco,” who were at the Capitol riot. Suarez, then a probationary corrections officer at the Monmouth County Corrections Facility, used an “emergency holiday” to get off work for that day. Security footage, videos, and photos from the riot put both women inside the Capitol.

[CNN](#) (1/24, Sidner, Rappard, 89.21M) reports FBI agents arrested Army veteran Jessica Watkins, who they say is “a militant leader who traveled to Washington, DC, and stormed the US Capitol, encouraging others to do the same.” She posted on her Parler account: “Yeah. We stormed the Capitol today. Teargassed, the whole, 9. Pushed our way into the Rotunda. Made it into the Senate even.”

Meanwhile, Max Brantley, in a blog on the [Arkansas Times](#) (1/23, 61K), writes that two Arkansas State Police “troopers, Cpl. Karen Clark and Trooper Alan Aiken, who attended the Trump rally/march” also went to the Capitol. A “carefully worded statement” said that after the state police interviewed the troopers “the FBI did not believe it was necessary to conduct any further interviews with the troopers.”

### **Prosecutors Describe Weapons Used Against Police During Capitol Riot.**

The [Washington Post](#) (1/22, Hsu, Weiner, 10.52M) reports federal law enforcement agents nationwide “detailed on Friday the weapons they say rioters wielded against police during the Jan. 6 storming of the U.S. Capitol, arguing for some men to be jailed until trial while arresting others for the first time.” On the [CBS Evening News](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/22, story 11, 0:16, O'Donnell, 4.08M), Norah O'Donnell reported new court documents “show federal agents recovered a sniper rifle and numerous high-powered weapons in the home of Eric Munchel of Nashville. Investigators believe he and his 56-year-old mother may have stashed weapons outside the Capitol before entering the building.”

### **National Guard Troops Will Remain At Capitol Through Trump Impeachment Trial, Sources Say.**

[Politico](#) (1/24, Desiderio, Seligman, Bertrand, 6.73M) reports that the upcoming Senate impeachment trial of former President Trump “poses a security concern that federal law enforcement officials told lawmakers last week requires as many as 5,000 National Guard troops to remain in Washington through mid-March, according to four people familiar with the matter.” Politico adds that the “contingency force will help protect the Capitol from what was described as ‘impeachment security concerns,’ including the possibility of mass demonstrations coinciding with the Senate’s trial, which is slated to begin the week of Feb. 8.”

However, Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR), on [Fox News’ Sunday Morning Futures](#) (1/24), said he does not think that keeping National Guard troops in the Capitol is “necessary. I’m on the Senate intelligence committee, I consulted with Senate leadership. I’m not aware of threat

reporting that suggests we need the troops with razor wire around the capitol. What happened January 6th was in part a failure of senior security leaders on Capitol Hill to anticipate the kind of violence we saw from the mob that broke into the capitol. ... The inauguration is behind us. These troops did a great job. I respect their service. They deployed on short notice. It's time to send home the troops. If there are threats, if the threat reporting warrants it we can always bring troops back but we don't need to turn the people's house, the center of our republic, into an armed camp."

### **Lawmakers Pursue "Independent 9/11-Style Commission" To Investigate Capitol Attack.**

[The Hill](#) (1/23, Wong, 5.69M) reports "momentum is growing" among "rank-and-file House Democrats" for "an independent 9/11-style commission to investigate why law enforcement agencies were not better prepared on Jan. 6 when a pro-Trump mob stormed the U.S. Capitol, breached the building and threatened to assassinate the nation's top leaders." The Hill adds Reps. Rodney Davis (R-IL), John Katko (R-NY), and James Comer (R-KY), the ranking members of the House Administration, Homeland Security, and Oversight committees, "rolled out legislation creating a Jan. 6 commission that would be comprised of five Democrats and five Republicans." The Hill says that while the push "got a big boost" from House Speaker Pelosi "said it was all but inevitable that Congress would create a commission," though she "made clear her immediate focus is on evaluating and shoring up the current security at the Capitol complex, which includes the Capitol itself and a handful of surrounding buildings that house lawmaker offices and committees."

**McCarthy Blames FBI For Not Stopping Attack On Capitol.** House Minority Leader McCarthy said on [Full Court Press](#)Vi (1/24, 393K) regarding the January 6 Capitol attack, "The FBI knew that this was planned. The FBI knew so many days in advance, told the Capitol Police, and I am the Republican leader, no one told us. What did the Sergeant at Arms know? Why didn't he allow the National Guard in there? These are the people that have a great deal of responsibility for protecting that Capitol and letting that Capitol get broken into. If they knew ahead of time, the FBI, did they tell the Speaker and a Sergeant at Arms and didn't tell the Republicans? Did they deny the National Guard to come forward because they didn't like the look of that?" He added, "I think this is what we have to get to the bottom of and when you start talking about who has responsibilities."

However, House Majority Whip Clyburn was asked on [Full Court Press](#)Vi (1/24, 804) about claims that members of Congress "may have aided and abetted rioters." Clyburn said, "When I first heard that, I kind of cringed thinking that kind of accusation should not be made. But since that time, I have seen and heard enough to tell me that there was some coordination taking place between people inside those buildings and people who were outside of them."

### **Rep. Biggs: Left's, Media's Lies About Capitol Riot Assaulting His Reputation.**

[USA Today](#) (1/23, Hansen, 12.7M) reported Rep. Andy Biggs (R-AZ), "who voted to set aside election results in Arizona and Pennsylvania and has been linked to one of the prominent organizers of the pro-Trump protests in Washington," in an extended statement said that in the wake of the Capitol riot he and other conservatives have received death threats, which he blamed on "the Left's lies." Biggs also "cast recent coverage of him as political, defamatory," and false. Ali Alexander, who helped organize the "Stop the Steal" rally in Washington, "singled out Biggs, along with Reps. Paul Gosar, R-Ariz., and Mo Brooks, R-Ala., as having been integral to an event intended to put 'maximum pressure' on Congress."

### **NYTimes Analysis: Far Right In Other Countries Emboldened By Capitol Riot.**

In a more than 2,000-word article, the [New York Times](#) (1/24, Bennhold, Schwirtz, 20.6M) reports that when "insurrectionists stormed the Capitol in Washington this month, far-right extremists across the Atlantic cheered," yet "the events of Jan. 6 at the U.S. Capitol have laid

bare their violent potential." The Times says that while "no concrete plans for attacks have been detected in Germany" so far, according to officials, "some worry that the fallout from the events of Jan. 6 have the potential to further radicalize far-right extremists in Europe." The Times adds that despite uncertainty about "exactly how deep and durable the links are between the American far right and its European counterparts," officials "are increasingly concerned about a web of diffuse international links and worry that the networks, already emboldened in the Trump era, have become more determined since Jan. 6."

### **WPost: Officials Should Not Use Insurrection To "Justify Further, Permanent Fortifications" In DC.**

The [Washington Post](#) (1/22, 10.52M) editorializes, "Just hours after the inaugural festivities for President Biden concluded Wednesday night, work crews started to remove the temporary barriers and fencing that closed off key areas of the nation's capital." While DC residents, "who saw their daily routines disrupted but understood the need for the unprecedented security after the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, should welcome the news," the Post argues "they also should be wary, because if the past is any guide, the events of Jan. 6 will be used to try to justify further, permanent fortifications that will close off even more precious public spaces in the capital city."

## **PROTESTS**

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### **Two Men Plead Guilty To Charges In Fire At Minneapolis Police Precinct During George Floyd Protests.**

[The Hill](#) (1/23, Polus, 5.69M) reports, "Two St. Paul, Minn., men have pleaded guilty to charges in a fire at a Minnesota police precinct during the George Floyd protests last May, according to the Department of Justice."

## **COUNTER-TERRORISM**

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### **White House Orders ODNI, FBI, DHS To Conduct Assessment Of Domestic Extremism.**

The [New York Times](#) (1/22, Fandos, 20.6M) reports that the White House has ordered ODNI, along with the FBI and DHS, "to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the threat from domestic violent extremism." According to the Times, "The new task for the intelligence community comes only days after Avril D. Haines, the director of national intelligence, pledged to members of Congress during her confirmation hearing that she would do just such an assessment." The Times says White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki "announced the assessment at her regular briefing" on Friday. Psaki is quoted as saying, "This assessment will draw on the analysis from across the government and, as appropriate, nongovernmental organizations." The [Washington Post](#) (1/23, A1, Zapotosky, Harris, 10.52M) reports that Psaki "said the review would be overseen by Joshua Geltzer, a former senior director for counterterrorism, along with current officials."

[Reuters](#) (1/22) reports that in addition to the assessment, Psaki "said that...the White House would build out capability within its National Security Council to counter domestic violent extremism, including a policy review on how the federal government can share information about the threat better." [USA Today](#) (1/22, Garrison, 12.7M) reports that Psaki "did not elaborate on what potential policy changes could be ahead."

The [AP](#) (1/22, Tucker) reports that the disclosure by Psaki "is a stark acknowledgment of the national security threat that officials see as posed by American extremists motivated to violence by extremist ideology. The involvement of the director of national intelligence, an office created after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks to prevent international terrorism, suggests that

American authorities are examining how to pivot to a more concerted focus on violence from radical extremists at home.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/22, Leary, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that Psaki told them, “This review will be entirely apolitical and will cover the full range of domestic violent extremist threats.”

[The Hill](#) (1/22, Easley, 5.69M) reports that there are “concerns in some quarters that the riots will be used as justification to limit Constitutionally-protected political speech. ... Psaki said the administration’s efforts would be done with ‘respect for Constitutionally protected free speech and political activities.’”

[Bloomberg](#) (1/22, Sink, Parker, 3.57M), the [Washington Times](#) (1/22, Sherfinski, 626K), [Business Insider](#) (1/24, Al-Arshani, 2.74M), [Fox News](#) (1/22, Singman, 23.99M), [NBC News](#) (1/22, Dilanian, 4.91M), and [NPR](#) (1/22, Lucas, 3.69M) also report on the announcement.

**Expert: Right-Wing Extremism Could Become Broader National Movement In Wake Of Capitol Attack.** The [AP](#) (1/23, Selsky) reported, “Right-wing extremism has previously played out for the most part in isolated pockets of America and in its smaller cities,” but the attack on the Capitol “brought together, in large numbers, members of disparate groups, creating an opportunity for extremists to establish links with each other.” Brian Michael Jenkins, a terrorism expert and senior adviser to the president of the RAND Corporation think tank, warned, “The events themselves, and participation in them, has a radicalizing effect. And they also have an inspirational effect.” He warned that “the extremist groups and people who saw Trump as a savior could transform into a broader national movement in which factions coordinate and combine their assets.”

**Professor: Remember That Extremists Of Both Genders Attacked The Capitol.** Michigan State University Associate Professor Jakana Thomas, in an op-ed in [The Conversation](#) (1/23, 162K), writes that “to distill the violent insurrection” at the US Capitol on January 6 “into a tale of angry male rage is to overlook the threat that women in the mob posed to congressional officials, law enforcement and U.S. democracy that day.” Thomas cites “a long history of women’s participation in extremist violence” and warns, “my research shows that gender bias can become deadly when it stops effective counterterrorism policies, such as surveillance, searches and interrogations, from being implemented.”

**Gottheimer Proposes Bill To Double Penalty For Insurrection.** [The Hill](#) (1/22, Beitsch, 5.69M) reports Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ) on Friday introduced the Stopping Domestic Terrorists Act, which “would double the prison time faced by rioters like those who stormed the Capitol, upping the maximum penalty for insurrection from 10 to 20 years.”

### **FBI Investigating IED Bombing Of Anti-LGBTQ Church In California.**

The [Washington Post](#) (1/23, Kornfield, 10.52M) reported that First Works Baptist Church in California, which “espouses anti-LGBTQ beliefs and has been the recent target of protests, was bombed with an improvised explosive device early Saturday morning, authorities said.”

The [New York Times](#) (1/23, Waller, Levenson, 20.6M) reported, “Officials said no one was injured in the attack.” The FBA and other “local authorities are investigating” the Saturday morning bombing. “Laura Eimiller, a spokeswoman with the F.B.I.’s Los Angeles field office, said that no one had been taken into custody and that it was too early to determine a motive behind the bombing.” She said, “We have not ruled anything out.” The Los Angeles County church “had recently been the target of protests for its extremist views against L.G.B.T.Q. people, women and the Black Lives Matter movement.” The [AP](#) (1/23) reports Eimiller “said it was premature to call the incident a hate crime, but ‘that’s always going to be considered as a theory when a house of worship is attacked.’”

Additional coverage includes the [Los Angeles Times](#) (1/23, 3.37M), [The Hill](#) (1/23, Castronuovo, 5.69M), [CNN](#) (1/23, Moshtaghian, Elassar, 89.21M), [NBC News](#) (1/23, 4.91M), [ABC News](#) (1/23, 2.44M), [Fox News](#) (1/24, Wallace, 23.99M), and [KABC-TV](#) Los Angeles (1/23, 402K).

### **Fauci Admits Receipt Of Mysterious Powder.**

[The Hill](#) (1/24, Budryk, 5.69M) reports Dr. Anthony Fauci admitted in a recent New York Times interview that he "had received an envelope of powder from an unknown source at one point during the coronavirus pandemic." He said, "[O]ne day I got a letter in the mail, I opened it up and a puff of powder came all over my face and my chest. That was very, very disturbing to me and my wife because it was in my office." He "said the substance was tested and determined to be a 'benign nothing,' but that it was a frightening experience regardless." The FBI investigated the incident.

### **Whitmer Kidnapping Plot Defendant To Plead Guilty.**

The [Detroit Free Press](#) (1/22, Baldas, 2.16M) reports Ty Garbin is scheduled to plead guilty next week to his alleged role in the foiled plot to kidnap Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (D-MI). Garban's lawyer, Mark Satawa, "and other defense lawyers have argued that there was no real plan to kidnap the governor, and that the suspects were merely engaged in tough talk and puffery, and their ownership of guns was legal." The Free Press adds, "According to court documents, the FBI reviewed encrypted group chats that indicated Garbin with Fox and others planned to meet an associate on Oct. 7 'to make a payment on explosives and exchange tactical gear,'" but the FBI arrested them instead. Additional coverage includes [WXYZ-TV](#) Detroit (1/22, 201K).

**Federal Prosecutors Seek To Share Grand Jury Information On Plot With State Prosecutors.** The [Detroit Free Press](#) (1/22, Baldas, 2.16M) reported, "Federal prosecutors are asking a judge to unseal secret grand jury testimony in the alleged plot to kidnap" Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (D-MI). The Free Press adds, "the latest filing suggests that more militia members may have helped the FBI" than the one already known. The documents filed in US District Court indicated that "federal prosecutors want to give confidential information in their case to state investigators to help them build their terrorism case against eight suspects who allegedly supported the kidnap plan, and, were plotting a violent attack on the state Capitol." The [Detroit News](#) (1/22, Snell, 1.16M) reported that the court filing disclosed that "unidentified militia members have provided ongoing cooperation to a secret, federal grand jury investigation."

### **Minnesota Man Charged With Threatening "To Cause Pain" To Member Of Congress.**

The [Washington Times](#) (1/22, Mordock, 626K) reports that Jason Robert Karimi of St. Paul, Minnesota "was charged Friday with threatening to 'cause pain in every way possible' to a member of the U.S. House of Representatives." The man "left a vulgar and threatening message voicemail on the office phone of the lawmaker, according to court documents."

## **COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE**

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### **DOJ Mulling Amnesty Program For US Academics To Divulge Foreign Funding.**

Citing individuals familiar with the situation, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/22, Korn, Viswanatha, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports in an exclusive that the Justice Department is mulling an amnesty program that would enable US academics to divulge foreign funding and not have to worry about being punished over their disclosures.

### **Ex-CIA Engineer Tells Judge He's Incarcerated Like An "Animal."**

The [AP](#) (1/24, Neumeister) reports a former CIA software engineer "charged with leaking government secrets to WikiLeaks says it's cruel and unusual punishment that he's awaiting trial in solitary confinement, housed in a vermin-infested cell of a jail unit where inmates are treated like 'caged animals.'" Joshua Schulte "has asked a Manhattan federal judge to force the federal Bureau of Prisons to improve conditions at the Metropolitan Correction Center, where he has been held for over two years under highly restrictive conditions usually reserved for terrorism

defendants." In court papers Tuesday, Schulte "maintained he is held in conditions 'below that of impoverished persons living in third world countries.'"

### **Sen. Grassley Asks DOJ For Answers On Closing Flynn Investigation.**

The [Washington Examiner](#) (1/22, Dunleavy, 888K) reports that Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) is calling on DOJ "to provide answers about the reported ending of an investigation into the leak of potentially classified information from Michael Flynn's calls with a Russian ambassador to the media." Last week, Grassley said "after I had requested that the Flynn-Kislyak calls be declassified in the interest of public disclosure," the DNI did so. He added, "accordingly, it is clear that the information leaked to and published by the Washington Post on January 12, 2017, was sensitive information at that time and the leak was most likely designed to undermine the Trump administration in its first days." The [Daily Caller](#) (1/23, Ross, 375K) reports, "The investigation focused on leaks to Post columnist David Ignatius, who reported on Jan. 12, 2017, that Flynn had spoken with Kislyak, possibly about U.S. sanctions against Russia." The column "set in motion a series of events that led the FBI to interview Flynn at the White House on Jan. 24, 2017."

**WSJournal: Power Should Answer Questions About Flynn's Unmasking During Confirmation Hearing.** In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says that during her upcoming confirmation hearing, President Biden's nominee to lead the US Agency for International Development, Samantha Power, "owes the American people a full explanation" about her role in the unmasking of, Michael Flynn, former President Trump's first national security adviser.

### **Declassified Notes: Christopher Steel Told FBI He Thought Fiona Hill Knew Dossier Source.**

The [Washington Examiner](#) (1/22, Dunleavy, 888K) reports, "Christopher Steele told the FBI he believed Fiona Hill...knew about the involvement of Steele's main source with his discredited dossier of salacious and unproven Trump-Russia collusion claims, newly declassified records show." Hill was "the top Russia expert on former President Donald Trump's National Security Council." DOJ "previously released an almost entirely blacked-out version of Steele's FBI interview in late 2020, but Just The News reported this week that a less-redacted version had been made public, focusing on the former MI6 agent speaking with the FBI in London" in 2017. [Daily Caller](#) (1/22, Ross, 375K) says the notes show "Steele disclosed details about a Clinton operative's dossier on Donald Trump." He "told the FBI that Cody Shearer sought to purchase a purported sex tape of Trump with Russian prostitutes from an ethnic Russian businessman who claimed to have ties to Russia's intelligence service," and that "he was doubtful of the Shearer dossier because of the reputation of the source, who he identified as Ruslan Mansimov."

## **CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS**

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### **FBI: Multiagency Investigation Found 33 Missing Children In Southern California.**

[USA Today](#) (1/23, Hauck, 12.7M) reports that the FBI announced Friday its success in finding 33 missing children in Southern California as a result of a multi-agency operation. [CNS News](#) (1/24, 181K) reports that the FBI "worked with the Los Angeles Police Department, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and more than two-dozen law enforcement and non-governmental partners to identify, locate and recover 33 missing children."

[KOCO-TV](#) Oklahoma City (1/24, Staff, 116K) reports that FBI officials "said two were recovered multiple times during the operation – it's not uncommon for victims who are rescued to return to commercial sex trafficking either voluntarily or by force, fraud or coercion." [The Hill](#) (1/23, Polus, 5.69M) reports that the FBI "notes that eight of the 33 recovered children were

being sexually exploited when found, and that many were considered vulnerable, missing children prior to their recovery.”

[KGET](#) (1/22) reports that the multi-agency partners “descended on the Desert Star Motel in Bakersfield at about 7 a.m. this morning to break up a crime ring targeting some of the most vulnerable members of the community.”

[Fox News](#) (1/23, Aitken, 23.99M) reports that “Operation Lost Angels” was launched Jan. 11 “as part of Human Trafficking Awareness Month,” and it “resulted in the arrest on state charges of one suspected human trafficker and the opening of multiple investigations.”

[KCAL-TV](#) Los Angeles (1/22) reports that the FBI “says its caseload for both sex and labor trafficking related crimes have increased in recent years, and the agency was conducting more than 1,800 pending investigations – including those involving minors – as of November 2020.”

Also reporting are [CNN](#) (1/23, McCleary, 89.21M), [Newsweek](#) (1/22, 2.67M), and [Cherokee \(GA\) Tribune & Ledger-News](#) (1/22, Mayer, Californian).

### **FBI Investigating Mass Shooting In Indiana.**

The [AP](#) (1/24) reports that the FBI has launched an investigation into the mass shooting of five individuals, including a pregnant woman, in Indianapolis on Sunday. The victims “were discovered by police who had been called about 4 a.m. to investigate reports of a person shot on the city’s near northeast side but first discovered a juvenile male with gunshot wounds.”

The [Daily Beast](#) (1/24, 933K) reports that Indiana police “provided little information about the victims or the motive but said the FBI and federal prosecutors had been alerted.”

### **Judge Bars Rittenhouse From Associating With Known White Supremacists Under New Bail Conditions.**

The [AP](#) (1/23) reports a judge has barred Kyle Rittenhouse, the “Illinois teen charged with fatally shooting two people during a protest in southeastern Wisconsin last year,” from “associating with known white supremacists” as part of his bail conditions.

### **Grand Jurors From Breonna Taylor Investigation Call For Impeachment Of Kentucky AG.**

[The Hill](#) (1/22, Castronuovo, 5.69M) reports, “Three grand jurors from the investigation into the police raid that killed 26-year-old Breonna Taylor are now calling for Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron (R) to be impeached over allegations that he mishandled the case.” The jurors argue “that Cameron breached the public’s trust and also misrepresented key grand jury findings, according to the Louisville Courier Journal, which first reported the complaint.”

### **More States Passing Anti-Coercive Control Legislation in Domestic Abuse.**

The [New York Times](#) (1/22, Ryzik, Benner, 20.6M) reports that a string of recent efforts by states passing laws that allow “coercive control behaviors, such as isolating partners, to be introduced as evidence of domestic violence in family court,” are addressing “what experts say is a common, long-held misperception that an abusive situation is only a partner throwing a punch, rather than an incremental constricting of someone’s life, to dominate them.”

### **Federal Defenders Argue Charge Was Adopted In 1968 To Quash Civil Rights Advocacy.**

The [Oregonian](#) (1/22, Bernstein, 1.02M) reports Chief Deputy Federal Public Defender Stephen Sady and Assistant Federal Public Defender Robert Hamilton “are urging dismissal of the rare felony civil disorder charge filed against more than a dozen people arrested in last year’s social justice protests in Portland,” Oregon. They argue “the offense was created in 1968 to quash civil rights advocacy,” with then-Louisiana Sen. Russell B. Long intending it to “neutralize” civil rights leaders in general and “specifically target Martin Luther King Jr.” Additionally, the defense attorneys “argue that the federal law is too broad and vague, shouldn’t be used in prosecutions

that are more fitting for state court and violates freedom of expression under the First Amendment." They also say the alleged offense "lacks any reasonable connection to interstate commerce interference."

### **FBI Agent: Judge's Son, Husband Drove Off Gunman.**

[NJ News](#) (1/22, Atmonavage, 1.47M) reported FBI special agent Joe Denahan said in an interview on NBC's "Dateline" that when gunman Roy Den Hollander attacked the home of US District Judge Esther Salas, her son Daniel, who was killed, and her husband Mark, who was critically injured, put up a "strong enough defense of their home that it precluded" Hollander from entering the home. Denahan said, "Whatever it was, Hollander must have felt that way and that is why he fired immediately and then fled." The episode offered "an extensive look at the attack on Salas' home that killed her only child, how law enforcement identified Den Hollander as the killer and the judge's commitment to prevent a similar tragedy from happening." Hollander targeted Salas presumably she was "involved in litigation to end the U.S. military's male only draft."

### **Despite Losing Illinois State House Speaker's Gavel, Madigan Remains Center Of Federal Corruption Probe.**

The [Chicago Tribune](#) (1/22, Meisner, Long, 2.03M) reported that while Michael Madigan is no longer speaker of the Illinois state House of Representatives, he "remains the unnamed politician at the center of an ongoing federal corruption probe that so far has led to bribery charges against one of his closest confidants and several others tied to utility giant Commonwealth Edison." While Illinois; "government has a history of lawmakers resigning while facing federal heat, including some who wound up escaping criminal charges," Madigan's "profile arguably remains sky high, and the investigation swirling around him doesn't appear to be one investigators would easily abandon."

### **Puerto Rico Governor Declares State Of Emergency Over Violence Against Women.**

The [Miami Herald](#) (1/24, Ortiz-Blanes, 647K) reports Puerto Rico Gov. Pedro Pierluisi "declared a state of emergency Sunday over a tide of violence against women, a measure local activists have demanded for years to address a scourge that continues to go largely unpunished." According to the Herald, "The order is the latest measure to bring attention to violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean, considered one of the most dangerous regions in the world to be female."

### **New Suspect Charged In Connection To Murder Of Retired Illinois Firefighter.**

The [AP](#) (1/22) reports Jaylen Saulsberry "was charged with first-degree murder in the killing of 65-year-old Dwain Williams and was taken into custody Tuesday at O'Hare International Airport." Saulsberry "had been extradited from Pennsylvania, where the FBI arrested him this month on a separate warrant."

### **Texas Man Arrested Over Child Pornography Possession.**

The [Dallas Morning News](#) (1/22, 772K) reports former AlphaBest Education site director Colton Lee Johnson "was arrested on child pornography charges."

### **Continuing Coverage: FBI Investigating Natural Gas Sabotage In Colorado.**

The [Denver Post](#) (1/23, 660K) reports that the FBI is continuing its investigation into a series of sabotage incidents on natural gas lines in Colorado.

### **Former Mississippi Police Officer Pleads Guilty To Obstruction.**

The [AP](#) (1/22) reports former Mississippi police officer Mark Coleman "has pleaded guilty to obstruction of a federal investigation by destroying and hiding text messages and images of a

juvenile girl." He "faces up to 20 years in federal prison."

### **Minnesota Man Indicted For Threatening Lawmaker.**

The [AP](#) (1/22) reports Jason Robert Karimi "was charged earlier this month with one count of interstate communication of a threat, and he made his first court appearance Friday." He had said in the voicemail, "I want to see you as scared as possible, terrified and (defecating) your pants ... we're coming for ya." Capitol Police "reviewed the voicemail, and authorities traced the number to Karimi."

The [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#) (1/22, 855K) reports Karimi "told the agent he intended only 'political pain,' and that frequently uses the tactic of 'political threatening' to get noticed."

### **Federal Prosecutors Considering Death Penalty Against Rhode Island Man.**

The [Springfield \(MA\) Republican](#) (1/24, 592K) reports that federal prosecutors "are still deciding on whether or not they will seek the death penalty in the criminal case against Louis D. Coleman III, the Providence man accused of kidnapping and killing Jassy Correia."

### **Cuyahoga County Executive Armond Budish's Investigation Profiled.**

The [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#) (1/24, 1.22M) profiles the ongoing investigation into Cuyahoga County Executive Armond Budish, who "push[ed] to shore up the county's budget by turning the Cuyahoga County Jail into a revenue generator." The decision "took the executive and his administration down a winding road that caught criminal investigator's attention in the wake of a historic string of inmate deaths." The FBI and the Ohio Attorney General's Office are investigating.

### **Continuing Coverage: Hawai'ians Indicted For Federal Hate Crime.**

[Honolulu Civil Beat \(HI\)](#) (1/24) reports that federal prosecutors indicted Levi Aki Jr and Kaulana Alo Kaonohi, who previously plead guilty on charges in connection to the attack on Chris Kunzelman in 2013. The indictments says Kunzelman "was brutally assaulted in a "racially motivated" attack as he attempted to move belongings into the house on Feb. 13, 2014."

### **Former California City Councilman Pleads Guilty To Obstruction.**

The [Los Angeles Daily Breeze](#) (1/22, 133K) reports former Los Angeles Councilman Mitch Englander "pleaded guilty to obstructing an investigation into allegations of bribery at City Hall," and he "is expected to be sentenced on Monday, Jan. 25." Englander "was the first public official to be arrested after the FBI agents raided Jose Huizar's office in City Hall."

### **New York Police Rescue Two Abducted Children.**

The [Rochester \(NY\) Democrat & Chronicle](#) (1/23, 410K) reports Dimitri Cash Jr and Shekeria Cash "were forcibly abducted from their foster home by two masked men" last week, and New York State Police as well as Greece Police Department successfully found them within two days.

### **New Mexico Man Charged In Connection To Oil Tanker Hijacking.**

The [El Paso \(TX\) Times](#) (1/23, 168K) reports Noe Garcia "was arrested after he was accused of hijacking a fuel tanker truck and leading law enforcement officers on a chase through El Paso and Las Cruces."

### **Georgia Gang Leader Sentenced To Life In Prison.**

The [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) (1/23, 1.46M) reports Gangster Disciples board member Donald Glass "was sentenced to life plus 10 years in prison for his crimes" on Friday. Trial evidence "showed that the Gangster Disciples were responsible for 24 shootings from 2011 through 2015, including 12 murders."

### **Texas Dentist On Trial Over Child Pornography.**

[KCBD-TV](#) Lubbock, TX (1/22, Staff, 29K) reports Texas Dentist Jason White “appeared in federal court Friday morning at 10 a.m. for his detention hearing,” and his attorneys “argued for his release from jail, while prosecutors argued to keep him in custody.” The judge “told the courtroom he needs to evaluate the testimony and new evidence before he could make his decision,” and the latest evidence “is from an eighth possible victim who has come forward.”

### **Michigan Man Sentenced Over Bank Robberies.**

[MLive \(MI\)](#) (1/22, 828K) reports Justin Mychal Smith, who “pleaded guilty to armed bank robbery and brandishing a firearm during a robbery,” was “sentenced Thursday, Jan. 21, by U.S. District Judge Janet Neff in Grand Rapids.” He will spend the next 17 years in prison.

### **Opinion: FBI Should Investigate Claims Of Voter Fraud In 2020 Election.**

Kevin R. Brock, former assistant director of intelligence for the FBI and principal deputy director of the NCTC, writes in [The Hill](#) (1/22, 5.69M) that the FBI should investigate “whether fraudulent votes were cast in the 2020 election.” Brock argues this “might be the only way to help placate a bitterly divided nation.” Before the election, FBI Director Christopher Wray said, “If we see indications of federal election crimes, we will aggressively investigate.” Brock adds that if “allegations of voter fraud go completely unaddressed and censored, the cauldron of bitter division will continue to boil.”

### **Defendant Pleads Guilty To Selling Drugs, Taking Part In Shootings.**

Running Southern California News Group coverage, the [Los Angeles Daily News](#) (1/22, 256K) reported that a defendant admitted “to taking part in 2016 shootings across the San Fernando Valley,” as well as “selling narcotics and illegal firearms.” Friday’s guilty plea was entered by Jesus Gonzalez, Jr., according to the coverage, which highlighted the FBI’s involvement with the investigation of this case.

### **North Carolina Man Found Guilty Of Drug, Firearm Charges.**

The [Shelby \(NC\) Star](#) (1/22, 42K) reported that North Carolina resident Marcus Isaiah Curry has been found “guilty of four counts of distribution of crack cocaine, possession with intent to distribute cocaine and crack cocaine, possession of firearms in furtherance of drug trafficking and possession of firearms by a convicted felon.” On Friday, US Attorney Andrew Murray “thanked the FBI” and the Gastonia Police Department in North Carolina for conducting investigative work that led to this outcome. The [WCCB-TV](#) Charlotte, NC (1/22, Gilstrap, 3K) and [WHNS-TV](#) Greenville, SC (1/22, Gore, 191K) websites also covered this story.

## **FINANCIAL CRIME & CORPORATE SCANDALS**

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### **NYC Ticket Brokers To Pay \$3.7M In Federal Scalping Settlements.**

The [New York Times](#) (1/22, Bahr, 20.6M) reports federal prosecutors “announced on Friday that three New York ticket brokers have agreed to pay \$3.7 million in civil penalties to settle allegations that they bought tens of thousands of event tickets and resold them to customers at inflated prices.” According to the Times, “The lawsuits against the three companies, filed by federal prosecutors on Long Island, had accused the brokers of reselling thousands of illegally obtained tickets for millions of dollars in revenue between Jan. 1, 2017, and the present day, often at significant markups.”

### **Philadelphia Man Charged With Personal Protective Equipment Scam.**

The [AP](#) (1/22) reported Gauravjit Singh of Philadelphia was charged with wire fraud, “accused of scamming \$700,000 from two New York-based companies by falsely promising to sell

personal protective equipment." A FBI special agent wrote in an affidavit, "Instead of purchasing and delivering medical gowns, Singh used the funds for personal expenses."

## CYBER DIVISION

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### **Online Forums Backing Trump, QAnon Fragmented Since Capitol Attack.**

According to the [Washington Post](#) (1/22, Timberg, Harwell, 10.52M), "A huge chunk of Twitter's QAnon community has vaporized, seemingly overnight. A pro-Trump message board has rebranded itself, jettisoning the former president's name from its URL in its move toward a broader message. And other right-wing forums are grappling with internal rebellion and legal war." The Post says the changes "since the Jan. 6 Capitol attack raise questions about the long-term viability of pro-Trump communities now that their inspirational leader has been impeached, lost his own Twitter account and left the White House." The Post adds that experts "say the communities are likely to recover...but it's less clear whether online activists central to President Donald Trump's rise and political power will remain a large, coherent force in the years ahead."

However, a [Washington Post](#) (1/22, Tharoor, 10.52M) analysis says "a half-decade of Trumpism has accelerated a conversation about the threat of far-right extremism across Western democracies." The Post adds that despite Trump "and the right's demonization of antifa – a loosely knit group of far-left activists – domestic data shows that far-right or white-supremacist plots in the United States vastly outnumbered those hatched by leftist or anarchist radicals in 2020. And the threat is all too real." The Post also warns that President Biden faces a challenge in responding, as the US "cannot censor or criminalize certain forms of hate speech the way Europe can, though the Biden administration is expected to lean more aggressively on tech companies to deal with disinformation and the spread of extremism on their social media networks."

### **Democrat Senators Seek Answers On Impact Of SolarWinds Data Breach.**

[The Hill](#) (1/22, Miller, 5.69M) reports incoming Senate Judiciary Chairman Dick Durbin and eight other Senate Democrats are seeking "answers on the impact of the recently discovered breach of IT group SolarWinds on the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the U.S. Courts (AO), both of which were compromised." They wrote in a letter, "We are alarmed at the potential large-scale breach of sensitive and confident records and communications held by the DOJ and the AO, and write to request information about the impact and the steps being taken to mitigate the threat of this intrusion."

[Law360](#) (1/22, Subscription Publication, 9K) reports that Sens. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), and Patrick Leahy (D-VT) also signed the letter. They are urging "national court officials to reveal whether sealed legal filings were exposed during a hacking campaign attributed to Russian spies who exploited a flaw in software offered by information technology provider SolarWinds Corp." They requested "details on which specific courts were targeted, in what court officials earlier this month called an 'apparent compromise' of the judiciary's Case Management/Electronic Case Files system."

**Supply Chain Weaknesses Exposed In SolarWinds Hack.** The [AP](#) (1/25, Tucker) reports that the SolarWinds hackers "got inside by sneaking malicious code into a software update pushed out to thousands of government agencies and private companies." Former NCSC Director William Evanina said, "We're going to have to wrap our arms around the supply-chain threat and find the solution, not only for us here in America as the leading economy in the world, but for the planet." Evanina added, "We're going to have to find a way to make sure that we in the future can have a zero-risk posture, and trust our suppliers."

### **German CyberBunker Investigation Said To Lead To Shuttering Of Darkweb Marketplace.**

Ed Caesar, in a column in the [New Yorker](#) (1/23, Caesar, 5.31M), described how data seized as part of a German police investigation into an organization called CyberBunker led investors to the administrators of DarkMarket, "a kind of eBay for the dark Web" that was shuttered last week. DarkMarket "had a few interesting quirks," such as barring the sale of weapons, fentanyl, and images of child abuse, as well as falsely advertising that it was administered exclusively by women.

### **For Years Former ADT Employee Used Home Video Feeds To Watch Customers Have Sex.**

[Mashable](#) (1/22, Morse, 524K) reported that former ADT technician Telesforo Aviles pleaded guilty "to accessing customers' home video feeds thousands of times over the course of four and a half years" by adding himself to approximately 200 people's accounts. Authorities said in a press release, "Plea papers indicate he watched numerous videos of naked women and couples engaging in sexual activity inside their homes." ADT wrote in a statement, "We are grateful to the Dallas FBI and the U.S. Attorney's Office for holding Telesforo Aviles responsible for a federal crime."

### **Overall Bitcoin-Related Crime Down In 2020, But Ransomware Up.**

[CNBC](#) (1/24, Rooney, 7.34M) reports blockchain data firm Chainalysis said that in 2020 "illicit activity made up 0.34% of all cryptocurrency transaction volume," down from 2% the year before. However, Chainalysis head of research Kim Grauer said, "Ransomware was by far the biggest category in terms of activity growth and we're seeing an all time high for dark-net market activity." Ransomware "increased by 311% year over year."

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

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### **FBI Used Ghislaine Maxwell's Phone To Locate Her.**

The [New York Post](#) (1/23, Gray, 7.45M) reported the FBI tracked Ghislaine Maxwell's phone with cell tower data, "but couldn't come any closer than a square mile of her exact whereabouts." So, "the FBI obtained a search warrant July 1 that allowed agents to both send and receive signals from the fugitive's cellphone" and used that to locate her.

### **Florida Man To Be Arraigned On Kidnapping Charges After Extradition From Spain.**

The [Miami Herald](#) (1/22, Weaver, 647K) reports Serge Nkorina "has been extradited from Spain to Miami" and "will be arraigned Tuesday in Miami federal court on the kidnapping charges involving the 2019 abduction of a physician." Nkorina is accused of partnering with a man "who has already pleaded guilty in the kidnapping conspiracy case."

## **LAWFUL ACCESS**

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### **Facebook Exec: Fewer Child Abuse Cases Would Be Brought After Implementing End-to-end Encryption.**

[Vice](#) (1/20, 1.13M) reported that Facebook admitted the truth in warnings by "children's charities, lawmakers, and even Facebook's own shareholders" that the company's plans to roll out end-to-end encryption across all its platforms "will be a boon for child abusers." For months "the social media giant has refused to admit it would cause a problem," but Facebook's head of global policy management, Monica Bickert, told the House of Commons Home Affairs committee, "I would expect the [number of cases] to go down."

## **OTHER FBI NEWS**

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### **Biden Praised For Not Replacing Christopher Wray As FBI Director.**

In a column, in the [Los Angeles Times](#) (1/22, 3.37M), Michael McGough wrote that President Biden was "wise" to keep Christopher Wray as FBI director, as "the ideal of a 10-year term for the FBI director serves the important purpose of insulating the bureau from political pressure." Along with Biden's choice of Merrick Garland, who didn't endorse Biden, as his attorney general, the "decisions send a signal that the new president is serious about not interfering in prosecutorial decisions."

### **Treasury To Propose Rules On Extending Anti-Money Laundering Requirements To Antiquities Market.**

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/22, Sun, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reported that as part of the National Defense Authorization Act extending the Bank Secrecy Act to antiquities market dealers, the US Treasury Department will propose new rules to extend those anti-money-laundering requirements.

### **Chicago Sun-Times: Documents On Black Panthers Killing Shows Need For Police, Criminal Justice Reform.**

In an editorial, the [Chicago Sun-Times](#) (1/24, 970K) writes that "Newly uncovered FBI records are a poignant reminder of just how long African Americans and others have been demanding fair treatment from the law" and "a stark reminder why lasting police reform can no longer be delayed." The FBI documents about the raid on a Black Panthers apartment during which shot and killed Panther leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, show "that complicity in the raid ran higher up the ladder at the FBI than previously confirmed." While "full of blacked-out redactions," the documents are "the first direct documentation that William C. Sullivan, director of the FBI's Domestic Intelligence Division, and George Moore, head of the Extremist Section of the Domestic Intelligence Division, played key roles in planning" the "FBI-coordinated assassination," as well as in covering it up. The Sun-Times concludes, "We are reminded again that true police and criminal justice reform in the United States can no longer be denied or delayed."

### **California State Senator Introduces Bill To Update Forensic Science Standards.**

[Courthouse News](#) (1/22, 21K) reports California state Senator Scott Wiener "introduced a bill Friday that seeks to change the legal standards regarding expert testimony and forensic evidence before and after trials to make it easier for the falsely accused to challenge wrongful convictions." Senate Bill 243 "is part of a larger slate of criminal justice reform bills that focus particularly on wrongful convictions."

### **NBC Contributor Condemns Efforts To Attack FBI In New Book.**

[NBC News](#) (1/24, 4.91M) reports NBC News national security contributor Frank Figliuzzi, who "spent 25 years in the FBI, ending his career as the agency's top counter intelligence official," published his new book, "The FBI Way: Inside the Bureau's Code of Excellence." It "argues that the FBI has succeeded because it applies a strict code of conduct to its own," and he rejected efforts to attack the agency in an interview with NBC News. He said in his remarks, "I would assert that the FBI has a track record of success, leadership that's based on values, what's called values-based performance, values-based leadership. The track record of the Bureau is far greater than most fortune 100 corporations."

### **New Jersey FBI Agent Profiled.**

[South Jersey Local News](#) (1/23) profiles FBI Agent Jeff Anderson, who "secured a position as an FBI intelligence analyst in 2004." His work "has gone before Congress, the President, the director of the FBI and more to help inform policymakers."

## **Cleveland Plain Dealer To Lawmaker: Now Is Not Time To Replace US Attorney DeVillers.**

The [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#) (1/24, 1.22M) argues in an editorial that Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) "needs to back off efforts...to find a replacement for" US Attorney David DeVillers, who is "in the midst of one of the most consequential public corruption prosecutions in Ohio history." According to the Plain Dealer, allowing DeVillers to remain in his position as the Ohio Statehouse-related corruption case matures "would be the ideal outcome for Ohio – and for justice."

## **OTHER WASHINGTON NEWS**

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### **Biden To Reinstate And Broaden Travel Restrictions To Confront COVID Spread.**

Tom Llamas opened [ABC World News Tonight](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, lead story, 3:35, 4.79M) by reporting that the COVID pandemic has hit "disturbing new milestones in the US – the country with more than 25 million cases of COVID-19, the highly contagious UK variant now in at least 23 states. Amid growing concerns about mutations, the Biden Administration [is] ready to reinstate and expand the COVID travel restrictions." The Administration is also "ramping up vaccinations, calling it a top priority. The CDC says more than 20 million shots have now been administered, [NIAID Director] Fauci calling the goal of 100 million vaccinations in 100 days 'a floor, not a ceiling." ABC's Andrew Dymburt: "President Biden [is] planning to block most noncitizens traveling from South Africa after a new variation of the coronavirus from that country has begun to spread around the globe. The Administration [is] also reinstating a ban on almost all non-US citizens traveling from Brazil, UK, Ireland, and more than 26 countries former President Trump sought to cancel. ... President Biden is determined to deliver on his promise of 100 million shots in his first 100 days in office." Chief of Staff Klain: "One hundred million shots is a bold and ambitious goal, but we need to keep going after that."

Kate Snow said in the lead story on [NBC Nightly News](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, lead story, 2:30, 3.76M), "President Biden is preparing to sign tough new restrictions on international travelers coming into this country." NBC's Shaquille Brewster: "In a dramatic effort to contain the spread of new COVID-19 variants, [Biden] is set to impose a travel ban on most non-US citizens entering the country who have recently been in South Africa, where a new, more contagious strain of COVID is spreading widely. Biden will also reinstate an entry ban on nearly all non-US travelers who have been in Brazil, the UK, Ireland, and 26 other European countries. That ban, in effect since March, was rescinded by President Trump just days before his term ended." Surgeon General-designate Murthy: "We're in a race against the variants. The virus is going to change, and it's up to us to adapt and make sure we're staying ahead."

The [AP](#) (1/24, Madhani) reports Biden "will formally reinstate COVID-19 travel restrictions on non-U.S. travelers from Brazil, Ireland, the United Kingdom and 26 other European countries that allow travel across open borders, according to two White House officials." [Reuters](#) (1/24, Shepardson) reports CDC Principal Deputy Director Anne Schuchat said Sunday, "We are adding South Africa to the restricted list because of the concerning variant present that has already spread beyond South Africa." [CNN](#) (1/24, Saenz, LeBlanc, 89.21M) says on its website that "the decision to reinstate the travel restrictions – and expand restrictions in the case of South Africa – marks the latest effort by the Biden administration to break from Trump's discursive approach to the pandemic as cases continue to climb nationwide." [USA Today](#) (1/24, Rivera, 12.7M) and [Politico](#) (1/24, Beasley, 6.73M) also report.

### ***US Passes 25M Confirmed Cases; Epidemiologist Pegs Total At More Than 105M.***

The [AP](#) (1/24) says "the new milestone" of 25 million US cases, "reported Sunday by Johns Hopkins University, is a grim reminder of the coronavirus' wide reach in the U.S., which has seen far more confirmed cases and deaths than any other country in the world." [NPR](#) (1/24, Schwartz, 3.69M) reports on its website that according to Johns Hopkins tracker, the US passed

"the tragic marker as of Sunday morning. The true number of cases, however, is likely far higher: Many people become infected but never get tested, so they aren't reflected in the count." The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Conlen, Lu, Glanz, 20.6M) reports Columbia University epidemiologist Jeffrey Shaman "estimates that more than 105 million people have already been infected across the U.S., well above the number of cases that have been reported. And his projections show millions more infections are yet to come as the vaccine rolls out." [Axios](#) (1/24, Rummler, 1.26M) notes that the President "has said he expects the country's death toll to exceed 500,000 people by next month, as the rate of deaths due to the virus continues to escalate."

However, Snow said on [NBC Nightly News](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, story 3, 2:20, 3.76M), "There is a glimmer of hope in the battle against this raging pandemic. The holiday COVID surge that so many warned us about may finally be waning." NBC's Meagan Fitzgerald: "For the first time in months, COVID numbers are trending downward, signaling the holiday surge may be over. ... Hospitalizations are down or plateauing in every state except New York. Over the last week, the number of new infections dropped 20%, even while testing stayed steady. In California, the positivity rate is down nearly 4%. And in Illinois, daily new cases decreased by a third in the last two weeks. Health experts say this new trend is happening because the public is listening."

**Administration Defends Vaccination Plan, Lays Out Challenges Ahead.** Llamas reported on [ABC World News Tonight](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, story 2, 3:00, 4.79M), "America's vaccine supply is struggling to keep up with all the demand. Hospitals from New York to Hawaii [are] cancelling thousands of appointments. The major questions now: How much of a vaccine supply does the country have, how much is on the way, and when can shipments be expected?" Kelly O'Donnell said on [NBC Nightly News](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, story 2, 2:15, Snow, 3.76M) that the US is confronting "vaccine anxiety, [with] confusion and concern voiced by several governors and top health officials." CDC Director Walensky: "The current supply crunch is the one that is what I'm most worried about." O'Donnell: "The scale of that supply crunch is a big unknown for the new director of the CDC." Walensky: "I can't tell you how much vaccine we have, and if I can't tell it to you, then I can't tell it to the governors, and I can't tell it to the state health officials."

Walensky, on [Fox News Sunday](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, 952K), said, "We have to go faster. We are limited by numerous constraints here. The first is the supplier and we are working closely with the manufacturer so that it does not become a constraint. We also need to sort of make sure that the supply gets to pharmacies, that we have enough vaccinations, that we have enough places and outreach to do the vaccination, so yes, I think that the supply is probably going to be the most limiting constraint early on."

The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Goldstein, Wang, Firozi, Knowles, 10.52M) covers Walensky's remarks and reports that "as officials push to ramp up inoculation efforts to help crush the pandemic, increasing understanding of coronavirus variants is also presenting a challenge." Fauci said Sunday that "that based on British findings, he now believes the coronavirus strain first detected in the United Kingdom is more deadly and spreads faster."

Klain said on [NBC's Meet The Press](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, 3.03M), "Like all complex processes, this is a very complex process that needs help on all fronts. We need more vaccine. We need more vaccinators, more vaccination sites. In the Biden Administration, we're tackling all three. ... We're going to take responsibility at the federal government, we're going to own this problem and work closely with the states. They're key partners in getting this done. We'll set up federal vaccination centers to make sure that in states that don't have enough vaccination sites we fill those gaps. We're going to work closely with the manufacturers to ramp up production."

Fauci, on [CBS' Face The Nation](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, 2.87M), said, "I believe that in the [Trump] Administration, I think maybe two out of those days had reached one million [shots per day]. And the average along that period of time was about 450,000 per day. This is hard. Now what we've got to realize that although more recently there have been a couple of days where you've had a million, that has been predominantly in areas that are relatively easy from the standpoint

of getting it done in a nursing home or in a situation in a hospital setting. ... It is going to be a challenge. I think it was a reasonable goal that was set. We always want to do better than the goal you've set."

Murthy, on [ABC's This Week](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, 2.83M), said, "Success has to be gauged, not just by the number of vaccines we deliver, but also by how fairly we deliver those vaccines, how equitably we deliver them. We know from the COVID crisis over the year, rural areas are having a harder time getting access to the vaccines and seniors have struggled. And what we've got to do is not only increase supply, which we can do using the Defense Production Act, we've also got to set up the kind of distribution channels like mobile units, strategically placed vaccination centers that can reach people."

The [New York Post](#) (1/24, Moore, 7.45M) says Administration representatives on Sunday "admitted they are behind in getting the coronavirus vaccine into the arms of Americans – but blamed the delay on the Trump White House." Klain "said the process to distribute the vaccine – particularly outside of nursing homes and hospitals out into the community as a whole – 'did not really exist' when the new team entered the White House."

**Becerra: "The Plane Is In A Nosedive."** HHS Secretary-designate Becerra, on [CNN's State Of The Union](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, 948K), said, "I believe President Biden has made it very clear. The plane is in a nosedive, and we got to pull it up, and you aren't going to do that overnight, but we'll pull it up. We have to pull it up. Failure is not an option here. The President has put forward a rescue plan that should be followed by a recovery plan. ... We have to be coordinating and talking to people. We can't just tell the states, 'Here's PPE, some masks, here's some vaccine. Go do it.' No, no. When we hand them over we stay with them and provide resources to make it happen. We do that, if we get people following the President's guidance of wearing a mask for these first 100 days, we're going to get control of this thing."

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (1/24, King, 3.37M) reports Becerra "likened the U.S. spread of COVID-19 to a 'plane in a nose dive' as the new administration vowed to rapidly ramp up vaccinations." The [New York Daily News](#) (1/24, Shahrigan, 2.51M) reports Becerra "touted the president's plans to 'rescue the people, rescue the economy,' apparently alluding to Biden's goal to get 100 million Americans vaccinated during his first 100 days, as well as a nearly \$2 trillion economic relief package that's in the works."

[Fox News](#) (1/24, Blitzer, 23.99M) says on its website that Becerra "tried to straighten out the Biden administration's message on the coronavirus pandemic after President Biden presented a fatalist outlook on the immediate future. At a Friday news conference, Biden said 'there's nothing we can do to change the trajectory of the pandemic in the next several months.' ... On Sunday, Becerra indicated that the administration indeed has a plan, but that it will not have immediate results."

**Biden Calls For New Pandemic Testing Board.** [USA Today](#) (1/24, Alltucker, 12.7M) reports the President "seeks to reset the nation's inconsistent coronavirus testing efforts with a \$50 billion plan and more federal oversight. Biden's plan calls for a newly created Pandemic Testing Board to coordinate a 'clear, unified approach' to testing for COVID-19, a marked difference from the Trump administration's policy of states establishing their own plans with federal support."

### **Fauci Reflects On "Difficulties, And The Toll," Of Working With Trump.**

In an interview with the [New York Times](#) (1/24, McNeil, 20.6M), NIAID Director Fauci "described some of the difficulties, and the toll, of working with President Donald J. Trump." Asked about his plans for the Biden Administration, Fauci said, "We are living through a historic pandemic, the likes of which we haven't seen in 102 years. I think what I bring to the table is something that's very much value-added. I want to keep doing it until I see us crushing this outbreak, so that people can get back to normality. And even after then, I've left some unfinished business. There's still H.I.V., to which I've devoted the overwhelming proportion of my professional life. I

want to continue the work that we're doing on influenza, on H.I.V., on malaria and tuberculosis. As I said, this is what I do."

### **Birx Says Trump Was Being Provided With "Parallel Set Of Data And Graphics."**

The [AP](#) (1/24) reports former White House coronavirus adviser Deborah Birx said Sunday that during her tenure on President Donald Trump's task force, she "had to grapple with COVID-19 deniers in the White House and that someone gave the president 'parallel' streams of data that conflicted with hers." Birx told [CBS' Face The Nation](#)<sup>Vi</sup> "that she was at times censored by the Trump administration but denied ever withholding information. Birx said she would see Trump 'presenting graphs that I never made' and that 'someone out there or someone inside was creating a parallel set of data and graphics that were shown to the president.'"

[The Hill](#) (1/24, Budryk, 5.69M) reports Birx "said she was unsure" who provided Trump with the differing data, "but that she suspected at least some of the data had been provided by former White House adviser Scott Atlas, who is not an expert on infectious diseases and repeatedly battled with Birx and other experts about the best way to contain the pandemic." [CBS News](#) (1/24, Quinn, 5.39M) reports on its website, "Birx stressed that for the new administration, having a team at the White House to respond to the ongoing pandemic 'is going to be really, really important.'"

### **Hundreds Of ICUs Straining For Resources Due To High Number Of Patients With COVID.**

The [AP](#) (1/24, Johnson, Forster) reports that as they confront a high number of patients with COVID, hundreds of ICUs in the US, mainly in the South and the West, "are running out of space and supplies and competing to hire temporary traveling nurses at soaring rates." According to an AP analysis of federal hospital data, "more than 40% of Americans now live in areas running out of ICU space, with only 15% of beds still available."

Meanwhile, the [Boston Globe](#) (1/24, Dayal McCluskey, 1.04M) reports on the growing use of field hospitals, which "are stark reminders of the severity of a pandemic that has sickened and killed thousands of people...and is far from over." However, the Globe says field hospitals have some advantages for patients, who "can do something forbidden in traditional hospitals during the pandemic: walk around and socialize." The Globe adds that while patients in traditional hospitals "are confined to their rooms because of the risk of spreading infection," those at field hospitals "already have COVID, and all the health care workers wear full personal protective equipment at all times," so it is "safe for patients to leave their beds and interact."

### **Advocates Say Those With Disabilities Should Be Given Vaccination Priority.**

The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, A1, Contrera, 10.52M) reports the CDC "has said health-care personnel and residents of long-term-care facilities should be first in line" for COVID vaccination, and "disability advocates say guidance should be interpreted to include all people with disabilities who receive long-term care." But as federal guidance "has been translated into vaccine distribution plans made by states, those with disabilities have been downgraded to lower priority status." Many states "are leaving people with disabilities who live in large institutions and group homes out of their Phase 1a plans, instead moving them to 1b or 1c," in Indiana and Rhode Island, "group homes have been pushed to Phase 2, with the likelihood that vaccinations are months away."

### **Study: Essential Workers In California At Highest Risk Of Death From COVID.**

[Fox News](#) (1/24, Ruiz, 23.99M) reports on its website that a new study "looking at which jobs carry the most risk of death for California workers" from COVID "found that cooks have the deck stacked against them," as do "people who operate packaging machines, followed by agricultural workers, bakers, construction laborers, factory hands and shipping clerks, according to Dr. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, the vice dean of Population Health and Health Equity at

University of California San Francisco, who worked on the study," which is still awaiting peer review. Fox News adds that the researchers have "called for those same laborers to be prioritized for vaccines."

### **California Officials Examine Death Of Person Hours After Vaccination.**

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Toy, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports the Placer County Sheriff's Office and Placer County Public Health Department are investigating after a person who died several hours after received a COVID vaccine. However, a spokeswoman for the Placer County Sheriff's Office and Coroner's Office did not link the death to the vaccine.

### **Jackson Lee Urges Abbott To Permit Local Jurisdictions To Respond To COVID.**

The [Houston Chronicle](#) (1/24, 982K) reports Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) on Friday sent a letter asking Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R) to "rescind the executive order he issued in response to COVID-19, saying that the recent closure of the Heights Hospital shows that local officials need more decision-making power to adequately respond to the pandemic." The Chronicle adds Jackson Lee "said that Abbott's March executive order 'poses an imminent threat of disaster for all the counties in the state' because it limits the ability of local officials to implement rules and closures." According to the Chronicle, Jackson Lee also "sent a similar letter to Jeffrey Zients, who is leading President Joe Biden's COVID-19 response team, and asked that he intervene and 'prevail upon' Abbott."

### **West Virginia Playing Leading Role In Vaccine Rollout.**

In a more than 2,300-word article, the [New York Times](#) (1/24, A1, Mervosh, 20.6M) reports that since the US "began distributing vaccines more than a month ago, it has moved far more slowly than officials hoped and has been stymied by widespread logistical problems," but West Virginia "has stood out for its success in getting people vaccinated." The Times says that 9% of West Virginians "have received a first dose of the coronavirus vaccine, a larger segment than in every state but Alaska and double the rate of some," and "no state has given a larger share of its residents second doses, a crucial step to securing the best chance at immunity." The Times highlights that West Virginia has also "given out 83 percent of its doses, by far among the highest," although "even the most efficient state vaccine operations do not have enough shots for all who want them."

### **New Orleans Turning To "Carnival Dance Culture" To Promote Vaccinations.**

The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Hoffman, 20.6M) reports that while Mardi Gras this year has been canceled due to COVID, the "new, upbeat 'Sleeves Up, NOLA' campaign deftly uses local personalities and the Carnival dance culture to encourage citizens to get a Covid shot." The Times adds there are a number of campaigns nationwide "to persuade people of the importance of getting a Covid shot," but the "homegrown approach, using neighborhood personas and invoking local culture with 'laissez les bons temps rouler' dance moves and costumes, may make it particularly effective, say experts in vaccine hesitance and behavioral change."

### **Chicago Teachers Refuse To Return To In-Person Learning.**

The [Chicago Sun-Times](#) (1/24, Issa, 970K) reports members of the Chicago Teachers Union on Sunday "voted to defy Chicago Public Schools' reopening plans and continue working from home Monday because of health and safety concerns." The Sun-Times adds Chicago officials "said in recent days they would view the collective refusal of in-person work as a strike, but in response to Sunday's vote results said they will delay the scheduled return of thousands of teachers and staff until Wednesday 'to ensure we have the time needed to resolve our discussions without risking disruption to student learning,'" and the [Chicago Tribune](#) (1/24, Rosenberg-Douglas, Ruthhart, 2.03M) reports Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot (D) "struck an

optimistic tone." She said, "What I know is that we're still at the table, we're still bargaining, we've narrowed the range of issues and it's certainly my hope that we will get a deal done."

The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Reiss, 10.52M) reports the CTU "said it does not have any agreement with the district on any terms but will continue to negotiate." The [AP](#) (1/24, Tareen) reports Chicago Public Schools, the third-largest district in the country, had "wanted roughly 10,000 kindergarten through eighth grade teachers and other staffers to return to school Monday to get ready to welcome back roughly 70,000 students for part-time in-school classes starting Feb. 1," but the CTU "opposes the plan over concern for the health of its members and called on them to continue teaching from home in defiance of the district's plan."

On [NBC Nightly News](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, story 10, 3:25, 3.76M), Kate Snow reported, "What's playing out in Chicago is happening all across the country." Rehema Ellis added, "It's a tale of two school systems playing out across the country. Private schools are mostly in person. Nearby public schools are hybrid or remote." According to Ellis, 76% of US private schools "have managed to stay open for in-person learning. While only 38% of public schools have." Meanwhile, [Bloomberg](#) (1/24, Campbell, Singh, 3.57M) reports President Biden "has vowed to reopen most schools in his first 100 days and has directed the departments of Education and Health and Human Services to provide guidance on reopening."

### **Georgia School Board Members Refused To Wear Mask To Honor Teacher Who Died Of COVID.**

The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Kornfield, 10.52M) reports that while an employee of the Cobb County, Georgia school district recently "pleaded" with members of the Board of Education to wear masks "in honor of Hendricks Elementary School kindergarten art teacher Patrick Key, 53, who died Christmas Day after he was hospitalized for about six weeks" with COVID, at least two members, "including Superintendent Chris Ragsdale, who were not wearing face coverings remained maskless" during the memorial. The Post says that for Key's family, "the inaction came across as indifference to the community's loss, prompting them to speak out against the board's mute reaction." After Key died, "Dana Johnson, a teacher at Kemp Elementary School, and Cynthia Lindsey, a paraprofessional at Sedalia Park Elementary School, also lost their lives to the disease caused by the virus."

### **Klain Praises Republican Cooperation On Cabinet Nominees, Urges Mayorkas Confirmation.**

Chief of Staff Klain, on [NBC's Meet The Press](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, 3.03M), discussed the Administration's relations with Senate Republicans. Klain said, "I think by and large, we've seen a lot of progress on this front. Obviously we got some Senate hearings held, held by Republican-led committees for our nominees before the switchover this past week. We've seen two Cabinet nominees confirmed already, and we hope to get votes on a number of others this week. I which we could get a little less Republican blocking on [DHS Secretary-designate] Mayorkas. Our homeland is under threat. I wish we could move faster. Hopefully we'll see progress this week. We're grateful to the Senate Republicans who worked with us on these national security nominees."

### **USAGM Announces New Leadership For RFE/RL, RFA, MBN.**

The [AP](#) (1/24) reports Acting US Agency for Global Media CEO Kelu Chao on Sunday announced the "new heads of three federally funded international broadcasters after abruptly firing Donald Trump-appointees" leading Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks on Friday, "just a month after they had been named to the posts." [The Hill](#) (1/24, Bowden, 5.69M) reports USAGM in a statement "said Daisy Sindelar would take over as acting head of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, while Bay Fang would take over Radio Free Asia and Kelley Sullivan would assume control of the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN)." The Hill adds that the "shakeup" comes after President Biden "moved within hours of taking office to force out" former USAGM CEO Michael Pack, "who was installed by President

Trump last year and accused of working to ferret out journalists with negative opinions of the president from the various news organizations under the agency's purview."

Meanwhile, [Fox News](#) (1/24, Stimson, 23.99M) reports on its website that Voice of America Director Robert Reilly and Deputy Director Elizabeth Robbins on Thursday "were removed from the government-funded broadcaster over longstanding Democratic fears it was turning into a pro-Trump propaganda outlet," with Reilly "replaced by VOA veteran journalist Yolanda Lopez." Fox News adds that Jeffrey Shapiro, Director of the Office of Cuba Broadcasting, "another U.S. funded outlet that reports news to Cubans, also resigned, USAGM confirmed."

### **Senators Express Concern About Biden Relief Plan's Stimulus Payments.**

In what [Politico](#) (1/24, Barron-Lopez, Everett, 6.73M) describes as "an opening setback in the new administration's complex pandemic negotiations with Congress," in a call with White House officials on Sunday, "a bipartisan group of senators" said that "the stimulus spending in President Joe Biden's coronavirus relief plan provides too much money to high-income Americans." Nonetheless, "multiple senators on the call" said the exchange "was civil and there was a 'consensus' on the need to act urgently on vaccine distribution." Politico adds that the call between "a bipartisan group of 16 senators" and NEC Director Deese, coronavirus coordinator Jeff Zients, and Louisa Terrell, head of White House legislative affairs, was "a sign that the Biden White House will be more hands on than former President Donald Trump, who nearly refused to sign the last relief bill after making a flurry of last-minute requests after the bill already passed Congress."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Peterson, Duehren, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says there was discussion among some lawmakers of passing a smaller package focused on vaccine funding before the impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump begins the week of February 8. [Reuters](#) (1/24, Cornwell, Shalal) reports an aide to a Democrat who was on the call "said the discussion had been 'robust' and that the two sides would continue to work together." According to the aide, "everyone agreed" on the call that quick production and efficient distribution of the vaccine was the number one need. [Bloomberg](#) (1/24, Wasson, Wingrove, Dennis, 3.57M), which describes the call as "the latest sign Biden faces challenges in enacting Covid economic stimulus, his top legislative priority," says participants "characterized it as an initial outreach by the White House as President Joe Biden seeks what would be the second-largest emergency spending bill ever," while the [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Werner, Kim, 10.52M) says the call was "an early test for whether Biden's relief plan has a chance of getting the kind of support it would need to pass Congress with bipartisan backing."

The [AP](#) (1/24, Madhani, Mascaro) reports Sen. Angus King (I-ME) said the talks were a "serious effort." King said, "There was not a hint of cynicism or lack of commitment to at least trying to work something out. ... If they were just trying to jam this through, I don't think it would have interrupted the Packers game." The AP adds, "There was also no discussion of pushing it through on a procedural move that could be done without Republicans, King said."

**Sen. Sanders Says Democrats Will Use Reconciliation To Pass Biden's Relief Package.** However, the [New York Post](#) (1/24, Lapin, 7.45M) reports incoming Senate Budget Chairman Bernie Sanders "warned" on [CNN's State Of The Union](#)<sup>Vi</sup> Sunday that Democrats are prepared to use reconciliation to push through Biden's relief package. Sanders said if Republicans do not support the bill, Democrats will use the process "as soon as we possibly can." Sanders said, "What we cannot do is wait weeks and weeks and months to go forward. We have to act now. ... I criticized Republicans for using reconciliation to give tax breaks to billionaires. ... And if they want to criticize me for helping to feed children who are hungry – or senior citizens in this country who are isolated and alone and don't have enough food, they can criticize me. ... I think it's the appropriate step forward."

On its website, [Fox News](#) (1/24, Wallace, 23.99M) says Sanders "said the Senate must break through the 'old approach' that it could take years to get anything done." Sanders argued

that “we don’t have time to sit around weeks on impeachment and not get vaccines into the arms of people. ... We can chew bubble gum and walk at the same time. The American people are hurting and they want us to act. That’s what our candidates ran for in this election. ... That’s what the guys in Georgia won on and we have got to reaffirm the faith in the American people in government that we can respond to their pain.”

### **Biden To Repeal Trump’s Transgender Military Ban, Sources Say.**

[Reuters](#) (1/24, Hunnicutt) reports President Biden “is poised to repeal his predecessor Donald Trump’s ban on transgender people enlisting in the U.S. military, a person familiar with the matter said.” Reuters adds the source “said Biden could lift the ban as soon as Monday,” although the White House “did not immediately respond to a request for comment.” A source also told the [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Youssef, Lubold, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) that Biden wanted Defense Secretary Austin to be sworn in before he proceeded with lifting the ban.

### **Civil Rights Leaders Pledge To Maintain Pressure On Administration.**

The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Wootson, 10.52M) reports that days after Vice President Harris “became the first Black and south Asian woman to win a national election, racial justice activists are trying to balance their elation over having representation at the highest levels of government with a determination to press the administration on racial issues that have festered for decades and spilled protesters into American streets last year.” The Post adds civil rights leaders insist President Biden’s commitment to a diverse Administration “will not deflect their demand for action on everything from fair policing to economic inequity to environmental justice,” even as “some worry the White House will seek to use Harris’s seat at the table to justify delay as it grapples with competing crises – chief among them the pandemic, whose U.S. death toll could reach 500,000 next month.” However, Symone Sanders, a spokeswoman for Harris, said the Administration is taking “a whole-of-government approach” to “each of these crises.”

### **Schumer Pushes Back On McConnell’s Effort To Preserve Filibuster.**

The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Lerer, 20.6M) reports since President Biden left the vice presidency four years ago, the Senate “has become a far less collegial and productive place.” Days after his inaugural address, in which he called for unity, “the Senate is already locked in a stalemate, with leaders of the two parties unable to agree on basic rules of operation.” The Times says Biden “enters with a deeper understanding of the legislative process and politicians than any president since Lyndon Johnson, a former Senate majority leader,” but the question is whether his “legislative prowess is, well, a little bit sepia toned. When Mr. Biden talks about bipartisanship now, a fair number of Democrats in Washington quietly roll their eyes.” Former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid “is urging Mr. Biden not to waste much time trying to win over his former Republican colleagues. Like many Democrats, he’d like Mr. Biden to eliminate the legislative filibuster.”

Meanwhile, the [Washington Post](#) (1/24, DeBonis, Kim, 10.52M) reports Senate Minority Leader McConnell has told Republican senators “he would deliver [Senate Majority Leader] Schumer a sharp ultimatum: agree to preserve the legislative filibuster, the centerpiece of minority power in the Senate or forget about any semblance of cooperation.”

On its website, [Fox News](#) (1/24, Fordham, 23.99M) reports that during a news conference Sunday, Schumer said, “Mitch McConnell will not dictate to the Senate what we should do and how we should proceed. ... McConnell is no longer the majority leader, and in every Senate in the past, they have come to an agreement on an organizing resolution, Democrats and Republicans, to move forward. McConnell is standing in the way. ... We will move forward and decide on the organizing resolution where Democrats make the decisions, not Mitch McConnell.”

***Durbin: McConnell’s Demand For Filibuster Protection A “Non-Starter.”*** [Politico](#) (1/24, Hooper, 6.73M) reports Senate Majority Whip Durbin on Sunday said McConnell’s

"demand for absolute protection of the filibuster in the deal to run a 50-50 Senate is a 'non-starter.'" Durbin told [NBC's Meet The Press](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, 3.03M), "If we gave him that, then the filibuster would be on everything, every day." Durbin "said although Schumer offered McConnell 'word for word' the same agreement as the last time there was a 50-50 Senate, McConnell came back still wanting absolute protection for the filibuster." He added, "Well, that's a non-starter." [The Hill](#) (1/24, 5.69M) quotes Durbin as saying, "The American people want us to take action, action on this pandemic, action on this economy and on a host of other issues, and if this filibuster has become so common in the Senate that we can't act, that we just sit there helpless, shame on us. Of course we should consider a change in the rule under those circumstances. ... But let's see. Let's see if we can initiate a real bipartisan dialogue and get something done. That's the bottom line."

**Progressive Group Posts Billboard Urging Schumer To End Filibuster.** [Axios](#) (1/24, Goba, 1.26M) reports Just Democracy, "a coalition of more than 40 progressive groups led by Black and brown organizers seeking to reform government," is "pressuring...Schumer on his home turf by running a digital billboard in Times Square urging the new majority leader to end the Senate filibuster." The ad includes quotes from Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), former President Barack Obama, and Reid, "all condemning the filibuster. None of them is working in conjunction with the organizers on the billboard."

### **GOP Senators Divided On Trump Trial As House Prepares To Deliver Article Of Impeachment.**

The looming second impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump received wide coverage Sunday, with both of the broadcast network newscasts that aired covering the story. On [ABC World News Tonight](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, story 3, 2:55, Llamas, 4.79M), Rachel Scott reported, "In just 24 hours, the House will deliver the article of impeachment to the Senate. ... Democrats say they have even more evidence to add to their case" against Trump, with "the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal describing the President's final days in office and his desperate attempts to cling to the White House." The Times reported that Trump "schemed to remove his acting attorney general and replace him with a Department of Justice lawyer who would help in his fight to overturn the election," while the Journal reported Trump "also allegedly tried to push the Justice Department to go directly to the Supreme Court to challenge Joe Biden's victory."

Monica Alba said on [NBC Nightly News](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, story 4, 1:00, Snow, 3.76M) that House Speaker Pelosi "is expected to send over that single article of impeachment for inciting the insurrection at the Capitol over to the Senate on Monday evening. That sets the stage for the trial to begin February 9. Democrats would need 17 Republican senators to join them in order to convict former President Trump, but some GOP lawmakers are already indicating that's unlikely." The [AP](#) (1/24, Jalonick, Mascaro) reports, "A growing number of Republican senators say they oppose holding an impeachment trial, a sign of the dimming chances" that Trump will be "convicted on the charge that he incited a siege of the U.S. Capitol."

Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR), on [Fox News' Sunday Morning Futures](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, 1.33M), said, "I made it absolutely clear the day the House passed its article of impeachment that a trial after the President has left office is beyond the Senate's constitutional authority. I think a lot of Americans are going to think it's strange that the Senate is spending its time trying to convict and remove from office a man who left office a week ago."

Sen. Mike Rounds (R-SD), on [NBC's Meet The Press](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, 3.03M), said, "I think it's a moot point because right now Donald Trump is no longer the president. He is a former president. The Constitution – and I know there are other people that may disagree with me – specifically points out that you can impeach the president, and it does not indicate that you can impeach someone who is not in office."

Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL), on [Fox News Sunday](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, 952K), said, "I think the trial is stupid. I think it's counterproductive. We already have a flaming fire in this country, and it's taking a bunch of gasoline and pouring it on top of the fire. ... The House didn't have much of a record of witnesses and so forth because they frankly rammed it through very quickly...but I just want to repeat, I think this is going to be really bad for the country."

However, [Reuters](#) (1/24, Cornwell) reports that "at least one Republican," Sen. Mitt Romney (R-UT), "said he believed the trial, which could lead to a vote banning Trump from future office, was a necessary response to the former president's inflammatory call to his supporters to 'fight' his election defeat before the Jan. 6 attack." Romney said on [CNN's State Of The Union](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, 948K), "I believe that what is being alleged and what we saw which is incitement to insurrection is an impeachable offense. If not, what is? ... These allegations are very serious. They haven't been defended yet by the President. He deserves a chance to have that heard, but I think it's important for us to go through the normal justice process and for there to be resolution."

On [Fox News Sunday](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, 952K), Romney discussed whether a trial is constitutional, saying, "If you look at the preponderance of the opinion – legal opinion not by people who are partisan, but by scholars over the years about whether and impeachment trial can and should be held after someone has left office – the preponderance of opinion is that, in fact, yes, an impeachment trial is appropriate after someone leaves office." The [Boston Globe](#) (1/24, 1.04M) reports Romney "criticized Trump for his actions and words before and after the November election during his interview on Fox. 'I think it's pretty clear that over the last year or so there has been an effort to corrupt the election in the United States,' Romney said. 'It was not by President Biden, it was by President Trump.'"

The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Edmondson, 20.6M) reports lawmakers "burrowed into dueling positions over the impending impeachment trial" on Sunday, and the [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Wang, Dawsey, Goldstein, 10.52M) says "the fractures within the Republican Party were evident Sunday as GOP senators appeared split over whether it was constitutional to hold an impeachment trial for a president who had already left office. ... Members of the Republican National Committee also were in a heated debate over the weekend on how to respond to impeachment – and how fiercely to defend Trump, who maintains support among a majority of the 168 committee members, party officials and members said." The [Los Angeles Times](#) (1/24, 3.37M) says that "even for Republicans who no longer need fear angry tweets – Trump has been banned from Twitter – the prospect of an open vote on whether to convict him is clearly unsettling."

[USA Today](#) (1/24, Hayes, King, 12.7M) says the trial "is unprecedented in nearly every way possible. No president had been impeached twice, and no president has been tried by the Senate after he left office – a question that divides constitutional scholars over what is legally permissible." The [New York Daily News](#) (1/24, Shahrighian, 2.51M) similarly says the trial "is sure to be extraordinary on several levels."

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), on [ABC's This Week](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, 2.83M), said, "I think we're going to get more and more evidence over the next few weeks – as if it's not enough that he's sent an angry mob down the mall to invade the Capitol, didn't try to stop it, and a police officer was killed. I don't really know what else you need to know." Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) said on [CNN's Inside Politics](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, 689K), "We're talking about a President who stood in front of a mob and told them to go to the Capitol and invade, told them to go to the Capitol and stop the lawful business of government, so that he could try to stay in the White House. That is so fundamentally wrong."

Rep. Madeleine Dean (D-PA), one of the House impeachment managers, said on [CNN's State Of The Union](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, 1.02M), "I was up in the gallery at the time of the attack. I was there when they said sit down, prepare to kneel or lie on the floor, take out your gas masks. ... I was there as the pounding on the doors began and the piercing of the doors on the floor of

the House took place. This was a terrifying moment. ... They chanted, 'Hang Vice President Pence.' They sought to assassinate the Speaker. This cannot go unanswered. The world has witnessed what has happened. We will put forward a very strong case for impeachment for disqualification for conviction."

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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### **Dutch Police Clash With Protesters Demonstrating Against COVID Lockdowns.**

The [AP](#) (1/24, Dejong) reports Dutch police "clashed with protesters demonstrating against the country's lockdown in the capital, Amsterdam and the southern city of Eindhoven on Sunday, a day after rioting youths protesting the country's curfew torched a coronavirus testing facility in a Dutch fishing village." [Reuters](#) (1/24, Sterling) reports, "National broadcaster NOS said riot police had been deployed in at least 10 cities and towns after a curfew went into effect at 9 p.m." [NBC Nightly News](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (1/24, story 8, 0:20, Snow, 3.76M) provided similar coverage in a brief report.

### **UK Vaccinates Most Of Over-80 Population Amid Concerns About New Variant.**

The [AP](#) (1/24) reports, "Britain is expanding a coronavirus vaccination program that has seen almost 6 million people get the first of two doses – even as the country's death toll in the pandemic approaches 100,000." UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock "said Sunday that three-quarters of the U.K.'s over-80s have received a vaccine shot." He also "said three-quarters of nursing home residents have also had their first jab."

Meanwhile, the [New York Times](#) (1/24, Landler, Mueller, 20.6M) reports the government's disclosure on Friday "that a new variant of the virus could be deadlier than the original raised a stir about why such alarming information was put out when the evidence was so inconclusive," but it also "silenced those who called for life to go back to normal any time soon." The Times adds the government "is expected to announce in coming days that it will prolong and tighten the nationwide lockdown imposed by Prime Minister Boris Johnson this month. Schools may stay closed until Easter, while travelers arriving from overseas could be required to quarantine in hotels for 10 days." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Fidler, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says the appearance of the new variants poses a challenge to efforts to combat COVID.

### **Mexican President Tests Positive For COVID.**

The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Sheridan, Sieff, 10.52M) reports Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador on Sunday announced he "tested positive for the coronavirus and was experiencing 'light' symptoms." The Post says López Obrador "has frequently minimized the severity of the pandemic and has rarely worn a mask, even as covid-19 has killed nearly 150,000 people in Mexico – the fourth-highest total in the world, and the 19th-highest as a percentage of the population, according to figures compiled by Johns Hopkins University." The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Kitroeff, 20.6M) reports López Obrador on Friday "posted a photo of himself indoors, again without a mask, conducting a call with President Biden," along with Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard "and Alfonso Romo, a former top aide – and neither was wearing masks. And on Saturday, the president met with local business leaders in Monterrey."

Meanwhile, the [AP](#) (1/24, Sherman) says the announcement "came shortly after news emerged that he would speak with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday about obtaining doses of the Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine." The AP adds, "Other Latin American leaders who have tested positive for the coronavirus are Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro, Guatemala's Alejandro Giammattei, Honduras' Juan Orlando Hernández and Bolivia's then-interim President Jeanine Áñez. All have recovered."

***Mexico's Vaccination Program Stalls Due To Delays from Pfizer.*** The [Los Angeles Times](#) (1/24, Linthicum, 3.37M) reports that hospitals in many states in Mexico "are near

capacity, ventilators and oxygen tanks are in scarce supply and more people are dying than ever before." While "large-scale vaccination is widely seen as the clearest way out...this last week the government announced that its inoculation program – one of the most ambitious in Latin America – had essentially come to a standstill." Mexico, a "country of 128 million people, has received just 766,350 doses of vaccine, all produced by Pfizer-BioNTech." The number "was supposed to hit 1.5 million by the end of the month, but Pfizer now says it can't meet that goal because it is remodeling one of its factories in Europe to eventually boost production."

### **Fewer Indians Getting Vaccinated Than Expected.**

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Bellman, Agarwal, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says India is struggling to roll out its vaccines due to a lower-than-expected turnout due to problems with its notification app and due to concerns about vaccine safety.

### **Israel Adds Additional COVID Restrictions.**

The [AP](#) (1/24, Federman) reports Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday announced the closure of the country's international airport "to nearly all flights, while Israeli police clashed with ultra-Orthodox protesters in several major cities and the government raced to bring a raging coronavirus outbreak under control." The AP says that new virus variants, "coupled with poor enforcement of safety rules in ultra-Orthodox communities, has contributed to one of the world's highest rates of infections," which "threatened to undercut Israel's highly successful campaign to vaccinate its population against the virus." According to the [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Hendrix, 10.52M), "Even Jewish immigrants scheduled to arrive under the country's Law of Return will be barred during the shutdown, an interruption in the flow of newcomers that reportedly was opposed by Israel's immigration minister."

### **Egypt Launches COVID Vaccination Program With Sinopharm's Shot.**

The [AP](#) (1/24, Magdy) reports, "Egypt on Sunday launched a vaccination campaign against the coronavirus, with the first shots of Chinese state-owned pharmaceutical giant Sinopharm's vaccine given to healthcare workers in the Suez Canal city of Ismailia."

### **Turkey Passes 25,000 Deaths From COVID.**

The [AP](#) (1/24) reports Turkey on Sunday "passed 25,000 COVID-19-related deaths since the start of the outbreak in March, the health ministry said." According to the AP, "Turkey has recorded more than 2.4 million infections since the first case was recorded on March 11."

### **Biden Officials Vow A Different Approach To Trade.**

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Davis, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports Biden Administration officials are vowing a different approach to international trade. American officials will no longer look to open markets for companies whose foreign investments do not increase exports or jobs in the US. The Journal says Biden's tax proposals are aimed at urging US companies to keep jobs in the US. For example, a tax credit would be earned for expanding facilities in the US but moving production outside the US would result in higher taxes.

### **Other Countries Watching As Biden Prepares To Outline "Buy American" Plan.**

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Hayashi, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports President Biden is expected to provide details of his "Buy American" plan on Monday and other countries with an interest in his pledge to repair relations with US trading partners will be watching closely. The Journal says other countries are concerned that Biden's plan could result in their countries being denied US procurement funds as Washington spends to combat the pandemic.

### **China Surpasses US As Leading Destination For Direct Foreign Investment.**

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Jeong, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports China surpassed the US as the world's leading destination for direct foreign investment last year. According to UN figures released Sunday, in 2020, new investments by overseas businesses in the US fell 49% as US economic output in 2020, according to U.N. figures released Sunday, as the country struggled to curb the spread of the new coronavirus and economic output dropped amid efforts to slow the spread of coronavirus. Meanwhile, direct investment by foreign companies in China rose 4%, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

### **Chinese Fighter Jets Fly Near Taiwan.**

[Reuters](#) (1/24) reports on rising "tensions" near Taiwan "just days into U.S. President Joe Biden's new administration." According to Taiwan, "Chinese air force planes including 12 fighter jets entered Taiwan's air defence identification zone for a second day on Sunday." Reuters says China's actions "mark a ratcheting up with fighters and bombers being dispatched rather than reconnaissance aircraft as had generally been the case in recent weeks."

The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Ramzy, 20.6M) describes the move as "a show of force to the Biden administration that signals Beijing's plans to maintain pressure on Taiwan even as it calls for a reset with the United States." State Department spokesman Ned Price said in a statement that the US "notes with concern the pattern of ongoing P.R.C. attempts to intimidate its neighbors, including Taiwan. ... We urge Beijing to cease its military, diplomatic, and economic pressure against Taiwan and instead engage in meaningful dialogue with Taiwan's democratically elected representatives." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Wong, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) provides similar coverage.

***NYTimes Analysis: Biden Must Contend With Threat China Poses To US Military In Space.*** The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Broad, 20.6M) reports in an analysis that the question of "how to contend with the threat that China poses to the American military in space and, by extension, terrestrial forces that rely on the overhead platforms" is "among the most important national security issues now facing" Biden. The Biden Administration has not indicated "what it plans to do with President Donald J. Trump's legacy in this area: the Space Force." Trump "presented the initiative as his own, and it now suffers from an association with him and remains the brunt of jokes on television. But its creation was also the culmination of strategic choices by his predecessors, Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, to counter an emboldened China that raised bipartisan alarm."

In a separate story, the [New York Times](#) (1/24, Broad, 20.6M) says China "is intent on dominating the democratized space age. It is building ground-based lasers that can zap spacecraft and rehearsing cyberattacks meant to sever the Pentagon from its orbital fleets." Defense Secretary Austin "told the Senate that he would keep a 'laserlike focus' on maintaining and sharpening the U.S. 'competitive edge' against China's increasingly powerful military." He "called for new American investment in 'space-based platforms' and repeatedly referred to space as a war-fighting domain."

### **Biden Speaks With Macron.**

[Reuters](#) (1/24) reports President Biden spoke Sunday with French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday and expressed "his desire to strengthen bilateral ties, the White House said, as Biden made the traditional ally one of the first countries contacted during his initial days in office." According to the White House statement, Biden "emphasized his commitment to bolstering transatlantic relations, through NATO and the U.S. partnership with the European Union." Biden and Macron "also agreed on the need for close coordination, including through multilateral organizations, in tackling common challenges such as climate change, COVID-19 and the global economic recovery, the statement said."

### **Kremlin Spokesman Says US Interfering In Russian Affairs.**

[Reuters](#) (1/24) reports a Kremlin spokesman said in a television appearance Sunday that Russian President Vladimir Putin would be willing to talk if the US showed a willingness to do so. But, the spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, also "accus[ed] Washington of meddling in mass protests in support of detained opposition leader Alexei Navalny." Ahead of demonstrations on Saturday "which saw police detain more than 3,000 people and use force to break up rallies across Russia," the US Embassy in Moscow "issued a 'Demonstration Alert,' warning U.S. citizens to avoid the protests and naming the venues in Russian cities where protesters planned to gather." Peskov said, "Of course, those publications are inappropriate. ... And of course, indirectly, they are absolute interference in our internal affairs. So, this is a direct support of the breach in the Russian Federation's law." The [AP](#) (1/24) says while the protests "attracted thousands of people in Russia's major cities, including an estimated 15,000 in Moscow, and demonstrations occurred in scores of other cities," Peskov "dismissed the turnout as insignificant." He said, "Now many will say that many people came out for the illegal actions. No, few people came out; many people vote for Putin."

The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Troianovski, 20.6M) says the Kremlin "tried to ignore" Navalny for years, but by Sunday, Russian officials had drastically reversed course. Peskov's television appearance was part of what the Times calls a "tightly scripted, all-hands attack on Mr. Navalny," that "underlined how the opposition leader's dramatic return to Russia a week earlier and his arrest have changed the landscape of Russian politics." While Putin "remains in firm control of the levers of power," Russians "unhappy with their president – long a weak, diverse and atomized group – suddenly have a clear leader around whom to rally, and the government appears unsure about how to fight back."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Kantchev, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says the demonstrations have presented the Kremlin with a choice. It can cave to the pressure from protesters and undercut its authority by releasing Navalny, or it can leave Navalny in jail, which could foment more protests and unify the opposition.

### **Scottish Leader Promises Referendum On Independence From UK.**

The [AP](#) (1/24) reports First Minister Nicola Sturgeon "said Sunday that she intends to hold a 'legal referendum' on independence from the U.K. if she wins Scottish elections scheduled for May." The move would put Sturgeon "on a constitutional collision course with Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who opposes another secession vote." Although Scotland "voted to remain in the U.K. by a margin of 55%-45% in a 2014 referendum that was billed as a once-in-a-generation event," Sturgeon "argues that Brexit has transformed the situation by dragging Scotland out of the European Union against its will."

### **Estonia To Have Its First Female Prime Minister.**

The [AP](#) (1/24, Tanner) reports Estonia's "center-right Reform Party and the ruling, left-leaning Center Party" reached "a deal on Sunday to form a new government to be led by a female prime minister for the first time in the Baltic country's history." The party councils "voted in favor of joining a Cabinet headed by Reform's prime minister-designate and chairwoman Kaja Kallas." Each party will have "seven ministerial portfolios in addition to Kallas' prime minister post in the 15-member government, which would muster a majority at the 101-seat Riigikogu Parliament."

### **Portuguese President Easily Reelected.**

The [AP](#) (1/24, Hatton) reports Portugal's President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa "was returned to office for a second term Sunday, in an election held amid a devastating COVID-19 surge that has made the European country the worst in the world for cases and deaths." Rebelo de Sousa won "61.5% of the vote, with 98.5% of districts reporting. He had been widely expected to win." The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Minder, 20.6M) says while the center-right Rebelo de Sousa "secured a new, five-year term," the vote "also confirmed the rise of a far-right politician who

formed his party less than two years ago." [Reuters](#) (1/24, Waldersee, Pereira) provides similar coverage.

### **Israel Opens Embassy In UAE.**

The [AP](#) (1/24) reports Israel said Sunday "it has opened its embassy in the United Arab Emirates, following through on last year's U.S.-brokered agreement to establish full diplomatic ties with the Gulf country." According to Israel's Foreign Ministry, "the embassy would be in a temporary office while a permanent location is prepared. Eitan Na'eh, a veteran Israeli diplomat, will serve as the head of mission."

### **Michaeli Chosen To Lead Israel's Labor Party.**

The [AP](#) (1/24) reports Israel's Labor Party has chosen Merav Michaeli, "a veteran lawmaker and former journalist, as its new leader ahead of March elections." Michaeli "faces a difficult task as she tries to revive the fortunes of the iconic party," which has "struggled to remain relevant over the past two decades as peacemaking with the Palestinians ground to a halt and the electorate appears to have embraced Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hard-line ideology."

### **Despite Pressure From Lebanon, Syrians Say It Is Unsafe To Leave.**

The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, 10.52M) reports the millions of Syrians who have "sought safety in Lebanon and across the region since the Syrian uprising began nearly a decade ago" are now "stuck between untenable options: ongoing instability and violence back in Syria as President Bashar al-Assad consolidates control, and deteriorating conditions in cash-strapped Lebanon, where politicians are pressing refugees to leave." Studies have found "a majority" of Syrians "say they want to return – but don't think conditions will be safe enough for several more years." But, "Lebanon says it's time to leave. And Assad, in need of money and resources for reconstruction, has been urging Syrians to come back."

### **Filipinas Say They Were Trafficked To Syria.**

The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, McQue, 10.52M) cites interviews with 17 Filipinas who say they were "recruited to work in the United Arab Emirates" and were "trafficked to Syria to work as maids, at times subjected to physical and sexual attacks by their employers and denied the salaries they were promised." The women "are often imprisoned in their employers' homes, and those who have escaped have fled to the Philippine Embassy in Damascus, where some of them say that about 35 women are now seeking shelter, unable to return home."

## **THE BIG PICTURE**

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### **Headlines From Today's Front Pages.**

#### ***Wall Street Journal:***

[China Overtakes US As World's Leading Destination For Foreign Direct Investment](#)  
[Covid-19 Bill Negotiations Offer First Test Of Biden's Bipartisanship Effort](#)  
[Covid-19's Financial Toll Mounts As Homeowners Keep Postponing Mortgage Payments](#)  
[For Wars Of The Future, Pentagon Looks To Distant Past: The B-52](#)  
[Dropping WhatsApp? Nostalgia Drives Users To ICQ](#)

#### ***New York Times:***

[Capitol Riot Puts Spotlight On 'Apocalyptically Minded' Global Far Right](#)  
[How West Virginia Became A US Leader In Vaccine Rollout](#)  
[Jeffrey Clark Was Considered Unassuming. Then He Plotted With Trump.](#)  
[How Space Became The Next 'Great Power' Contest Between The US And China](#)

[How Democrats Planned For Doomsday](#)

[How Alvin The Beagle Helped Usher In A December Senate](#)

**Washington Post:**

[Feud Grinds Senate To A Halt](#)

[Shipping Woes Spell Trouble For Consumers](#)

[A Pitfall On The Path To Unity](#)

[Filipina Maids Trafficked To Syria Tell Of Abuse, Rape](#)

[Disabled And Caregivers Struggle To Get Vaccine](#)

[Chiefs Vow To Root Out Officers With Extremist Ties](#)

**Financial Times:**

[Vaccine Delays In Poorer Nations Threaten Advanced Economies](#)

[Polish President Calls On EU To Step Up Sanctions On Russia](#)

[Chuck Schumer: The Man Who Must Steer The Biden Agenda](#)

[Deutsche Probes Alleged Mis-Selling Of Investment Banking Products](#)

**Washington Times:**

[Democrats Question Election Results: 'We Just Trust The Machines And We Shouldn't'](#)

[Biden Administration Faces Early Tests From China, Russia](#)

[Parler's Freedom From Censorship Comes At Cost Of Users' Privacy](#)

['Victory Smoke In The Capitol, Boys': Affidavits Reveal Capitol Rioters Trail Of Videos, Media Posts](#)

['We're Fighters Here': PragerU Fights Big Tech's 'Cancel Culture And The Mob'](#)

['Many Options': Democrats Eye 14th Amendment As Impeachment Alternative](#)

**Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:**

**ABC:** Biden-COVID Plan; Vaccine Distribution; Impeachment; Tacoma-Officer Drives Through Crowd; Winter Storm; Houston-Carjacking; Cincinnati-Train Derailment; Phoenix-Inmates Escape; Los Angeles-Driver Rescued From Fiery Crash; Netherlands-Drug Kingpin Arrested; Nonprofit For Military Pet Owners.

**NBC:** Biden-Travel Ban; Biden-Vaccines; COVID; Impeachment; Tacoma-Officer Drives Through Crowd; Winter Storm; NFL-Tom Brady; Netherlands-COVID Curfew; China-Mine Collapse; COVID-Schools; College Students Delivers Free Pizzas To Those In Need.

**Network TV At A Glance:**

Impeachment – 3 minutes, 55 seconds

Tacoma-Officer Drives Through Crowd – 3 minutes, 5 seconds

## WASHINGTON'S SCHEDULE

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**Today's Events In Washington.**

**White House:**

- President Biden — Signs executive actions over the course of the week, including 'strengthening Buy American provisions, advancing equity and support for communities of color and other underserved communities, reforming the criminal justice system, addressing the climate crisis, expanding access to healthcare, restoring dignity to the immigration system and border policies, and reuniting families separated at the border'
- Vice President Harris — No public schedule released.

**US Senate:**

- [Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Business Meeting](#)

*Location: Rm 106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 6:00 PM*

- House delivers article of impeachment against former President Donald Trump to Senate – House of Representatives transmits article of impeachment against former President Donald Trump, for 'incitement of insurrection', to the Senate \* House impeached Trump earlier this month, following the 6 Jan attack on the U.S. Capitol which followed the then-president's remarks at a nearby 'Stop the Steal' rally, making him the first U.S. president to be impeached twice. 10 Republicans voted in favor, unlike in December 2019, when only Democrats supported his impeachment for 'abuse of power' and 'obstruction of Congress', which followed allegations that he pressured Ukraine to interfere with the 2020 election by withholding security assistance and then attempted to cover it up \* Senate is required to begin an impeachment trial the day after the article is transmitted, with a two-thirds majority required in the final vote to convict. Trump's 2020 Senate impeachment trial saw him acquitted on both articles, although Republican Sen. Mitt Romney voted in favor of one

*Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC*

- Senate Finance Committee final vote on treasury secretary nominee – Executive Session, to hold the final vote on the nomination of Janet Yellen to be Secretary of the Treasury. On Friday the Senate unanimously approved Yellen's nomination as the first woman Treasury secretary, indicating that she would easily win full Senate approval \* President-elect Joe Biden nominated the former Federal Reserve chair in November. She was the first female Federal Reserve chair and would be the first female treasury sec

*Location: Rm 106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC*

#### **US House:**

- House of Representatives meets in pro forma session

*Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC; 1:30 PM*

- House delivers article of impeachment against former President Donald Trump to Senate – House of Representatives transmits article of impeachment against former President Donald Trump, for 'incitement of insurrection', to the Senate \* House impeached Trump earlier this month, following the 6 Jan attack on the U.S. Capitol which followed the then-president's remarks at a nearby 'Stop the Steal' rally, making him the first U.S. president to be impeached twice. 10 Republicans voted in favor, unlike in December 2019, when only Democrats supported his impeachment for 'abuse of power' and 'obstruction of Congress', which followed allegations that he pressured Ukraine to interfere with the 2020 election by withholding security assistance and then attempted to cover it up \* Senate is required to begin an impeachment trial the day after the article is transmitted, with a two-thirds majority required in the final vote to convict. Trump's 2020 Senate impeachment trial saw him acquitted on both articles, although Republican Sen. Mitt Romney voted in favor of one

*Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC*

#### **Cabinet Officers:**

- No public schedules released.

#### **Visitors:**

- No visitors scheduled.

#### **General Events:**

- U.S. Supreme Court releases an order list; 9:30 AM
- U.S. Supreme Court convenes for public non-argument session; 10:00 AM
- Court hearing for woman accused of helping steal Dem Rep. Nancy Pelosi's laptop (virtual) – Virtual court hearing held for Riley June Williams, accused of theft, obstruction and trespassing, as well as violent entry and disorderly conduct on U.S. Capitol grounds \* Williams is accused of helping steal House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's laptop during the 6 Jan attack on the U.S. Capitol \* Before Judge Robin Meriweather \* Case no. 1:21-mj-00099 \*

The FBI has said that an unidentified former romantic partner of Williams tipped them off and claimed that she had hoped to sell the computer to Russian intelligence

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