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 FBI News Briefing

TO: THE DIRECTOR AND SENIOR STAFF

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2020 6:30 AM EDT

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LEADING THE NEWS

Trump To Announce Deployment Of Federal "Help" Into Cities To Control Violence.

The [Washington Times](#) (7/15, Boyer, 492K) reports President Trump is "planning to direct federal law enforcement 'help' for Democratic-run cities that have seen a rise in violence this summer," calling them "war zones." In a meeting with Attorney General Barr and "other federal officials" at the White House on Wednesday, the President said he'll make a "very exciting" official announcement next week. Said Trump, "The left-wing group of people that are running our cities are not doing the job that they're supposed to be doing," adding that he will soon announce "what we're planning to do to help them."

[Fox News](#) (7/15, Singman, 27.59M) reports, "The president was joined Wednesday by his chief of staff, Mark Meadows, White House counsel Pat Cipollone, Attorney General William Barr, acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf, FBI Director Christopher Wray, and acting Immigration and Customs Enforcement Director Matthew Albence. Also attending were U.S. attorneys from Nevada, New York and Virginia, as well as director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons Michael Carvajal and Regina Lombardo, director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives."

In an interview with [Townhall](#) (7/15, Pavlich, 177K), Trump similarly “warned federal action is on the table,” saying, “We are going to have to do something very comprehensive,” he said. “It means sending people in. It means sending people in to clean it up. ... There’s a point at which we’re allowed to go in and that point is rapidly being reached.” When asked “about what threshold must be met before federal action is taken,” the President said, “carnage and death.”

White House senior adviser Stephen Miller said on [KDKA-AM](#)^{Vi} Pittsburgh (7/15), “You’re witnessing an open attack by the American left on the institution of law enforcement in this country and they will not be satisfied until law enforcement as we know it is gone forever. While this used be something that was done surreptitiously, behind the scenes, quietly, it is now out in the open, in full view for everybody to see. So if this isn’t enough to get every day Americans outraged by the far left and the Democratic party, I can’t imagine what will because you’re seeing the human consequences left-wing ideology in the city streets of New York city, Chicago, Pittsburgh Philadelphia, Atlanta, Seattle all over the country.”

Miller said on [WBAP-AM](#)^{Vi} Dallas (7/15, 13K), “There’s a direct connection between the push to defund police and the surge in violent crime that you’ve seen in some of our nation’s most Democratic controlled cities and they are trying to relive the horribly failed experiments that began in the 1970s with alternatives to prison and efforts on rehabilitation instead of putting people behind bars. ... This is not limited to cities that are run by Democrats for a few reasons. Number one is that criminals can move around into city that they want to. ... Secondly the push is to defund police nationally. It is a national effort. If the left takes over Washington, DC, they are going to try to control every police department from Washington, DC.”

Deputy Assistant to the President Ben Williamson said on [The Brian Mudd Show \(Radio\)](#)^{Vi} (7/15), “There is no stronger supporter of law enforcement than this President. ... This President is the only thing standing between families and the mob. Law enforcement, at times, are often times the last call and that’s why this President is willing to back them.” Williamson added, “As we move forward to the fall you are going to see a continued unequivocal support for the good men and women of our police departments. ... The men and woman of our law enforcement deserve our total support and that is what they are going to get from this White House in the months ahead.”

PROTESTS

Floyd’s Family Sues Minneapolis, Four Officers Over His Death.

[NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (7/15, story 6, 2:15, Holt, 5.7M) reported the family of George Floyd sued the city of Minneapolis on Wednesday over his death in police custody. The Floyd family’s attorney, Ben Crump, said, “We seek to make it financially prohibitive that the police won’t wrongfully kill marginalized people.” [Reuters](#) (7/15, Trotta) reports the suit names as defendants the city of Minneapolis and “four officers who participated in his arrest,” Derek Chauvin, J. Alexander Kueng, Thomas Lane and Tou Thao.

The [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#) (7/15, Furst, Walsh, 1.04M) reports City Attorney Erik Nilsson said in a statement that “George Floyd’s death is a tragedy. The city is reviewing the civil lawsuit filed by his family and will be responding to it. Criminal charges are pending against four Minneapolis police officers, and it’s very important that the criminal case proceed without interference.”

New Police Video Reveals Floyd’s Pleas Before His Death. [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (7/15, story 6, 2:15, Holt, 5.7M) said it has “viewed unreleased body cam video that sheds new light on what happened before” Floyd’s death. NBC’s Gabe Gutierrez added that “almost two months” after his death, “for the first time previously unreleased police body camera footage showed George Floyd told officers at least 28 times that he couldn’t breathe.” [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (7/15, story 10, 0:15, Muir, 7.16M) reported that “a judge now allowing the public to

view newly released body camera images by appointment only, not for broadcast." In the video, "Floyd can be heard saying 'I'm not a bad guy.'"

The [CBS Evening News](#) (7/15, story 8, 1:45, O'Donnell, 4.16M) reported the "video revealed that Floyd told the officers he couldn't breathe more than 20 times, and that [Officer Derek] Chauvin refused to ease up, saying 'No, he's staying put where we got him.'" According to the [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#) (7/15, Xiong, Sawyer, 1.04M), the video also "showed that medics who arrived at the scene did not appear alarmed or rushed in assisting Floyd after taking his pulse, and that about three minutes passed before anyone began performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation on Floyd, who had been unresponsive for several minutes by then."

The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Bailey, 14.2M) reports the videos "were filed as evidence in the former officers' criminal case."

Giuliani Denounces "Marxist Terrorist" BLM, Says He Could End NYC Violence.

Appearing on [Fox News' Fox & Friends](#) (7/15, 831K), former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani denounced what he called the "Marxist terrorist organization Black Lives Matter." Giuliani said, "They don't care about Black lives. ... There is no demonstration for...the 9,000 other Black men killed not by the police last year or the ones that are getting killed, 20 per week in New York now. They don't care about them. They only care about Black lives that can be exploited, and they try to turn the community against the police. And the minute the community loses the police, then the bad guys take over." Giuliani continued, "I went into those communities not to harass Black people, but to save their lives. And I saved more Black lives than any mayor in the history of the city. ... I could turn this around in a month."

NYPD Officers Injured During Protests. [ABC World News Tonight](#) (7/15, story 7, 0:20, Muir, 7.16M) reported, "Four New York City police officers, including the city's police chief, [were] injured during protests on the Brooklyn Bridge" on Wednesday. Video from the scene "showing some officers trying to push back the crowd. Others treating wounds." The [CBS Evening News](#) (7/15, story 11, 0:15, O'Donnell, 4.16M) reported the attack "happened as protestors, both pro- and anti-police, clashed on the Brooklyn Bridge. ... Thirty-seven people were arrested."

The [AP](#) (7/15) reports "surveillance video posted on social media by the police department showed a man on the bridge's pedestrian walkway rushing toward a group of officers and reaching over a fence to bash their heads with a cane." The [Fox News](#) (7/15, Pagones, 27.59M) website reports, however, that "it was not immediately clear if the video showed the only incident of violence or if others had occurred off-camera."

The [New York Times](#) (7/15, Shanahan, 18.61M) reports Police Chief Terence A. Monahan suffered "an injured hand," while the [New York Post](#) (7/15, Moore, 4.57M) reports that "at least two cops suffered serious injuries." The [Washington Examiner](#) (7/15, Picket, 448K) is among other news outlets also reporting the clash.

NYTimes: Proposed New Rules Threaten Press Freedom. The [New York Times](#) (7/15, 18.61M) editorializes that "increased public scrutiny of American policing...has revealed in recent weeks an urgent need for sustained and systemic reform," but the NYPD "has chosen to respond by pressing ahead with new rules to grant wider latitude to bar journalists from covering official police activity." The Times argues that the department's proposed regulations "would add new reasons to revoke reporters' credentials that allow them past police lines."

Former Seattle Resident Faces Federal Arson Charges Over Police Precinct Fire.

[The Hill](#) (7/15, Klar, 2.98M) reports, "A former Seattle resident is facing federal arson charges for allegedly setting fire to an abandoned police precinct last month as part of the Capitol Hill Organized Protest occupation, known as CHOP, U.S. Attorney Brian T. Moran said Wednesday." Isaiah Thomas Willoughby, 35, "was arrested without incident at a Seattle residence on Tuesday night. 'This is the third case we have charged federally for the criminal acts that tainted

otherwise peaceful protests. Other crimes remain under investigation and may result in additional federal charges,' Moran said in a statement." The Hill adds, "The case is being investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the FBI and the Seattle Police Department."

DOJ Spokeswoman Calls Portland Mayor "A Disgrace" For Rejecting Federal Help During Protests.

[Fox News](#) (7/15, Halon, 27.59M) reports, "Department of Justice spokeswoman Kerri Kupec slammed Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler as a 'disgrace' Wednesday after he rejected federal assistance in dealing with massive protests in his city." Kupec "told 'Bill Hemmer Reports' that she was 'particularly dismayed ... considering that just over the weekend, a protester went after one of our U.S. Marshals with a hammer, hitting him over and over again. Protesters were surging federal buildings, armed with sledgehammers, with slingshots, with lasers.' 'I don't care if you're Republican or Democrat, but if you're an elected official and you're prioritizing your own personal politics and violent anarchists and agitators over the safety and security of the very people who elected you, that's not leadership,' Kupec added. 'That's a disgrace.'"

Esper Issues Diversity Memo To Pentagon Officials.

The [Washington Times](#) (7/15, Glenn, 492K) reports that senior Pentagon officials have until August 15 to tell Defense Secretary Esper "what they are doing to implement policies to handle questions of racism and discrimination with each of the military services." In a memorandum released Wednesday, Esper "issued several directives that follow recommendations that came from throughout the Department of Defense." Specifically, Esper "wants military officials to review hairstyle and grooming policies for any signs of racial bias," as well as "review appearance standards and policies and make 'appropriate policy modifications' by mid-September."

Williamson: Trump Speaks Up For "Forgotten Men And Women."

Deputy Assistant to the President Ben Williamson said on the [Brian Mudd Show](#) (7/15), "In this culture that we live in, you are crowded out if you are Trump supporter, if you are a conservative, and it is a problem and that is why the President always talks about the silent majority of forgotten men and women. When you see him hit back from the podium...or when you see him speak out at rallies, or on Twitter, that's really who he is speaking up for, it is the people that he feels like have been threatened by this 'cancel culture' and not allowed to speak out about their viewpoints just because they happen to be different from whatever the mainstream media happens to be promoting."

Joe Scarborough, meanwhile, writes in his [Washington Post](#) (7/15, 14.2M) column that "Americans should take their exceptionalism seriously and subject the country to an exceptional moral standard. The pursuit of that higher purpose was reignited after the killing of George Floyd. The journey can only end when every citizen is raised free of fear and filled with the same dream that so many of us take for granted."

Dozens Face Felony Charges After Protesting Taylor's Death.

The [New York Times](#) (7/15, Fortin, Waller, 18.61M) reports that "dozens of protesters were charged with a felony on Tuesday after they gathered on property owned by Kentucky's attorney general to demand charges against the police officers responsible for the shooting death of Breonna Taylor." Police said 87 demonstrators were arrested and charged with "intimidating a participant in a legal process – a felony – along with disorderly conduct and criminal trespass."

Oklahoma Police Face Murder Charges After Tasing Man More Than 50 Times.

[ABC World News Tonight](#)Vi (7/15, story 6, 1:40, Muir, 7.16M) reported on “newly released video of a deadly police encounter in Wilson, Oklahoma,” during “an attempted arrest. Two police officers using a stun gun on a man allegedly more than 50 times as he laid on the ground begging for help. The man become unresponsive and died days later, and tonight, the officers are now facing murder charges.”

Chicago Police Superintendent Shakes Up Leadership Amid Increased Violence.

The [Chicago Tribune](#) (7/15, Sweeney, 2.65M) reports Chicago Police Superintendent David Brown on Wednesday announced what it calls “significant department leadership changes, including the retirement of a second veteran member and naming his second-in-command.” The announcements come as the department battles “a troubling uptick in violence” and as law enforcement “nationally is facing intense, sustained criticism in the wake of a series of high-profile excessive-force incidents.” Said Brown in announcing the changes, “It is time for the next generation to cement its mark on history. This is a pivotal time for CPD and for law enforcement, no doubt. I am confident – confident – that this new group of leaders will bring us into the future.”

Berkeley Moves Toward Removing Police From Traffic Stops.

The [AP](#) (7/15, Har) reports Berkeley, California, “is moving forward with a novel proposal to replace police with unarmed civilians during traffic stops in a bid to curtail racial profiling.” The City Council voted Wednesday to approve “a police reform proposal that calls for a public committee to hash out details of a new Berkeley Police Department that would not respond to calls involving people experiencing homelessness or mental illness.” The committee also would pursue creating “a separate department to handle transportation planning and enforcing parking and traffic laws.”

Anti-Police Protester Charged With Murdering Eight-Year-Old Atlanta Girl.

The [AP](#) (7/15, Thanawala, Martin) reports that a “suspect has been charged with felony murder and aggravated assault in the shooting that killed an 8-year-old Atlanta girl near the site of an earlier police shooting.” According to the AP, “Police issued warrants...for 19-year-old Julian Conley in the slaying of Secoriea Turner.” Conley’s attorney “said Conley was peacefully protesting and witnessed the shooting but did not open fire himself, though he was armed.”

North Carolina City Approves Reparations For Black Residents.

In what [USA Today](#) (7/15, Burgess, 10.31M) calls “an extraordinary move,” the Asheville City Council “apologized for the North Carolina city’s historic role in slavery, discrimination and denial of basic liberties to Black residents and voted to provide reparations to them and their descendants.” The “unanimously passed resolution does not mandate direct payments,” but instead, the city “will make investments in areas where Black residents face disparities.”

Diversity Job Openings Increased In Wake Of BLM Protests.

The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, McGregor, 14.2M) reports that “American companies cut back sharply on hiring for jobs related to diversity and inclusion when the coronavirus pandemic struck in mid-March, with openings falling twice as fast as for other listings, according to data from one of the country’s biggest career sites.” But as “corporate America offered new commitments to work for inclusion amid the national reckoning on racial injustice that erupted after the killing of George Floyd in police custody, the same category of job openings rebounded.” For example, D&I postings “rose 50 percent in June on Glassdoor, the largest percentage increase over a four-week period since January 2016, though they are still well below their March peak.”

NYTimes: BLM Protests Highlight Diversity In Small-Town America. A [New York Times](#) (7/15, Robertson, 18.61M) analysis says that while “Black Lives Matter could be

responsible for the largest protest movement in US history” in the wake of George Floyd’s death, another “significant consequence of recent weeks could be the realization for many Americans in small towns that their neighbors are more multiracial and less willing to be quiet about things than most people had assumed.”

Smithsonian’s National Museum Of African Art Accused Of Racism.

The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, McGlone, 14.2M) reports that a group of “former employees and board members of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African Art have written a letter charging the museum with promoting a culture of racism and saying formal reports about racial bias and attacks have been ignored.” In a letter sent last week to Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III, the “unidentified individuals say that more than 10 former and current black employees of the museum dedicated to African art and culture have experienced ‘incidents of racial bias, hostile verbal attacks, retaliation, terminations, microaggressions and degrading comments’ that date back at least five years.”

Statue Of Black Protester Raised In Place Of Bristol Slave Trader.

The [New York Times](#) (7/15, Landler, 18.61M) reports Jen Reid “had never marched in a Black Lives Matter protest before she took to the streets of Bristol, England, on June 7,” but “by the end of that angry day, she had clambered up to stand in the place of a 17th-century slave trader, whose bronze statue had been pulled down and dumped in the city’s harbor.” The image of Reid, “her fist clenched, her right arm thrust upward in a gesture of defiance, spread widely on social media,” and “for many, it seemed the perfect replacement for the notorious merchant, Edward Colston.” On Wednesday, a sculpture of Reid by prominent British sculptor Marc Quinn was installed.

COUNTER-TERRORISM

Trump Touts Terrorism Charges Against MS-13.

The [AP](#) (7/15, Mustian) reports that federal authorities announced terrorism charges Wednesday against “a leader of MS-13, continuing a nationwide crackdown against a notorious street gang” that President Trump described as “vile and evil.” An indictment unsealed against Melgar Diaz “marked the first time the Justice Department has brought terrorism charges against a member of MS-13.” Attorney General Barr described Diaz as “the person who would green-light assassinations” for the gang in the US. Speaking to reporters at the White House, President Trump hailed the move saying, “We believe the monsters who murder children should be put to death. There’s never been any move like this before.”

The [Washington Times](#) (7/15, Dinan, 492K) calls the charges “groundbreaking,” and quotes the President as saying, “We’re using ‘terrorism,’ which gives us extra strength.” On [Twitter](#) Wednesday, the President shared a post by the White House, which wrote, “The Trump Administration is fighting for safety, security, and rule of law. In the last three years, @ICEgov has deported over 16,000 gang members and arrested over 2,000 members of MS-13.”

[Newsday \(NY\)](#) (7/15, Kessler, Fuller, Hernandez, 932K) reports that Trump and Barr “announced Wednesday a nationwide federal attack on the MS-13 street gang, and their intention to seek the death penalty for the leader of Brentwood clique of the gang for the alleged killings of two Brentwood High School teenage girls and five other slayings on Long Island.” Newsday adds, “The intention to seek the death penalty for Alexi Saenz, 25, of Central Islip, known by the gang nicknames of ‘Blasty,’ or ‘Big Homie,’ if carried out after conviction at a trial, would be the first federal execution involving a murder in New York since 1954.” Barr “described Long Island as ‘one of the hotbeds of MS-13 activity, or at least it was.’”

[Reuters](#) (7/15, Hosenball) reports, “The department also said it was bringing terrorism-related charges against a MS-13 member for the first time, as well as charges against alleged

leaders of gang cells known as the 'Hollywood Locos' and 'Los Angeles Program.'" Reuters adds, "In an indictment unsealed on Tuesday, federal prosecutors in Alexandria, Virginia, charged alleged MS-13 leader Armando Eliu Melgar Diaz with conspiring to provide material support to terrorists, as well as drug trafficking and racketeering. The Justice Department said this was the first time an MS-13 member has been charged with terrorism-related offenses. Court records indicate a warrant was been issued for Diaz' arrest in May."

The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Weiner, 14.2M) reports, "Armando Eliu Melgar Diaz, 30, oversaw 20 gang cliques in 13 states, including New York, California, Maryland and Virginia, according to prosecutors in the Eastern District of Virginia. He lived on and off in Virginia starting in 2003 but has stayed in El Salvador since 2016, according to prosecutors. Melgar Diaz is in custody facing criminal charges in El Salvador, with no indication he will soon be extradited. But the Justice Department simultaneously announced 21 arrests in New York and Nevada involving MS-13 and the decision to seek the death penalty against an alleged leader in the gang who was arrested in 2017."

[WBTW-TV](#) Florence-Myrtle Beach, SC (7/15, Hensley, 91K) reports, "Two MS-13 gang members accused in connection to several murders that took place in New York were arrested in the Charlotte area, the FBI says." Jose Moises Blanco, 30, "who is also known as 'Cuervo,' was arrested in Salisbury Tuesday morning. Another suspect, 28-year-old Oseas Gonzalez, who also goes by 'Cordero,' was also taken into custody in Charlotte. They are facing charges in connection to six murders, two attempted murders, a kidnapping conspiracy and narcotics trafficking conspiracies, as well as related charges including assault in aid of racketeering and firearms offenses." The FBI "says Blanco and Gonzalez operated in MS-13 subdivisions on Long Island, the 'Sailors' and 'Hollywood.'" William F. Sweeney Jr., assistant director in charge of the FBI's New York Field Office, "says the groups took part in vicious crimes in Long Island. 'Victims were hacked with machetes, one shot numerous times and another decapitated,' Sweeney said."

Among news outlets also reporting are the [Commack \(NY\) Patch](#) (7/15, Costello, 1.03M), [WNBC-TV](#) New York (7/15, 344K), the [Daily Caller](#) (7/15, 716K), and the [New York Daily News](#) (7/15, Crane-Newman, 2.52M).

White House senior adviser Stephen Miller said on [Fox Business' Lou Dobbs Tonight](#) (7/15, 49K), "[Wednesday] was a historic day. One of the largest and most successful MS-13 operations in American history was carried out, and the soulless barbarian that hacked to death two girls in New York is now going to be facing the death penalty and for the first time ever, one of these barbarians is being charged with terrorism. ... What you are seeing is a contrast. You have this President taking out criminal gangs and terrorists at record speed and with record force and focus and then you have the radical left, the liberal mayors, the crazy socialists unleashing violence and mayhem upon our cities. That's the choice that every American faces. Public safety under this President or lawless mayhem under the radical left."

US, Gulf Allies Blacklist ISIS Financial Network.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/15, McBride, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports the Treasury Department announced Wednesday that the US has joined six other Gulf nations in sanctioning a financial network linked to ISIS and its affiliates. The joint sanctions target financial-services companies al Haram Exchange, Tawasul Company and a third that, according to the Treasury Department, "have played a vital role in transferring funds to support Syria-based ISIS fighters and have provided hundreds of thousands of dollars of liquidity to ISIS leadership."

US Africa Command Says Russian Mercenaries Planted Land Mines In Libya.

The [AP](#) (7/15, Magdy) reports the US military on Wednesday "accused Russian mercenaries fighting on the side of eastern Libya forces of planting land mines and improvised explosive devices in and around the Libyan capital, Tripoli." The US Africa Command, or AFRICOM, "said verified photographic evidence shows 'indiscriminately placed booby traps and minefields'

around the outskirts of Tripoli and all the way east toward the strategic coastal city of Sirte since mid-June." Moscow has repeatedly "denied playing any role on Libya's battlefields." AFRICOM "said it assessed that a Kremlin-backed company introduced the weapons into Libya." It "posted photos of improvised explosive devices and a concealed anti-personnel mine, allegedly found in a residential area in Tripoli." AFRICOM's director of intelligence Rear Adm. Heidi Berg said, "Imagery and intelligence assessments show how Russia continues to interfere in Libyan affairs. Wagner Group's reckless use of landmines and booby traps are harming innocent civilians."

UN Frees Up "Expense" Money For Several Declared Terrorists.

The [AP](#) (7/15, Gannon) reports the UN has "freed up 'expense' money for several men designated as terrorists at the request of the Pakistani government, including one with a \$10 million US bounty on his head." Pakistan's Foreign Ministry "said in a statement Wednesday the money will cover basic expenses and doesn't involve any restoration or unfreezing of bank accounts." The statement said, "These exemptions are being enforced and monitored as per law." Pakistani officials didn't "reveal how many designated terrorists were on the list sent to the UN or how much money was released or the nature of the expenses for which the outlawed individuals required the money."

COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE

Graham Wants To Declassify Document Related To Steele Dossier.

The [Washington Examiner](#) (7/15, Dunleavy, 448K) reports Senate Judiciary Chairman Lindsey Graham "wants to declassify a key Russia investigation document related to the FBI interview of one of British ex-spy Christopher Steele's sources," which he believes "casts 'grave doubt' on the credibility of Steele's anti-Trump dossier." Graham said on a Fox News podcast that he "has seen the memo and wants more information from DOJ Inspector General Michael Horowitz's December report on the Russia investigation to be made public."

Trump Says He Would Consider Giving Flynn Job At White House.

[Politico](#) (7/15, Cohen, 4.29M) reports that in an interview with Catherine Herridge of CBS News on Tuesday, President Trump "said...that he would welcome retired Gen. Michael Flynn back into his administration now that the former national security adviser's legal troubles are on the verge of receding." Trump is quoted as saying, "He's gone through hell. He's been destroyed, but he'll make a comeback." Politico reports that "when asked if he would take Flynn back at the White House, Trump replied, 'I would.'" [The Hill](#) (7/15, Samuels, 2.98M) reports the president has "declined to say whether he will intervene in Flynn's case, noting that it is still playing out." Trump told CBS, "I don't think he's going to need a pardon because he's been proven to be innocent. I don't think he's going to need a pardon."

[CBS News](#) (7/15, Farhi, 3.68M) reports Trump has long "claimed that Flynn was the victim of rogue federal agents conducting a politically motivated investigation." A second Justice Department investigation "examining the origins of the Mueller probe is underway but has yielded no known indictments." Trump "said he is letting that investigation, led by US Attorney John Durham, proceed without intervening." He said, "I've totally taken myself out of it."

Schiff Worried "More Serious Abuse" Of Law Enforcement Is Looming With Durham Probe.

The [Washington Examiner](#) (7/15, Chaitin, 448K) reports that how Attorney General William Barr "may yet unleash the power of the Justice Department has House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff (D-CA) unnerved." Schiff invoked US Attorney John Durham, "who is conducting a criminal inquiry of the federal Russia investigation, as he discussed his dread that

'more serious abuse' of federal law enforcement will happen in the coming days." Schiff said in a recent episode of the Talking Feds podcast, "One of the concerns I have with Bill Barr is that the worst is yet to come. I mean, he's got a terrible, destructive track record as it is, and it may get worse in the coming days. But what we have seen largely is Barr's intervention to protect the president." As examples, Schiff "mentioned Barr's rollout of special counsel Robert Mueller's report and 'intervention' in cases spun off from the Russia investigation to 'help Trump cronies.'"

Pompeo "Confident" Foreign Countries Will Attempt To Interfere In Upcoming Elections.

The [Washington Times](#) (7/15, Blake, 492K) reports Secretary of State Mike Pompeo "said Wednesday he is 'confident' that several countries will attempt to have an impact on the US electoral process this November." Pompeo said about the presidential race, "Foreign efforts to interfere in American elections is something we constantly must contend with, and we'll contend with that here." Pompeo "said the US did a good job at defending the midterm elections from Russian interference and credited the work done by the Homeland Security and State departments." He said, "I think the American people should rest assured that whether it's threats of Chinese interference, Iranian interference, Russian interference or North Korean interference, any country, or even non-state actors who now have capabilities to try to meddle in our elections, know that this administration takes seriously its responsibility to make sure every American's vote is counted, counted properly and that foreign influence is minimized."

DCSA Reports Nearly Half Of Those With Security Clearances Enrolled In Continuous Evaluation Program.

[ClearanceJobs](#) (7/15, 6K) reports the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA) continues "to make progress on security clearance processing times and enrolling new applicants into its Continuous Evaluation (CE) program." In numbers released for the National Industrial Security Program Policy Advisory Committee (NISPPAC), DCSA "shows 2.2 million total security clearance holders enrolled in CE – that's nearly half of the total security cleared population, and over two-thirds of the DOD clearance population, based on the most recently released figures (the ODNI has not made a version of its annual report on security clearance determinations releasable since FY2017)." With today's CE enrollment figures "at 2.2 million, that means the CE rollout is well underway." Of those enrolled in CE currently, 69% "are Secret clearance holders, and 31% are TS or TS/SCI security clearance holders."

NNSA Administrator Says She Is Confident US Will Resume Plutonium Production By 2030.

The [AP](#) (7/15) reports the 2030 deadline set by the US government "to resume and ramp up production of the plutonium cores used in the nation's nuclear arsenal is nothing short of challenging, but the head of the National Nuclear Security Administration said Wednesday she's confident her agency can do it." Administrator Lisa Gordon-Hagerty "said much has been learned since 1945 but the fortitude of the agency's workforce remains as pressure mounts to finish multibillion-dollar construction projects in New Mexico and South Carolina necessary for the plutonium production mission along with extensive training for technicians and other workers." She said, "That 2030 deadline is a big deal. In 2030, we need to be manufacturing 80 pits per year. If we don't make that, that only means the requirement for more pits will grow and it will cost more money."

NRO Launches "Revolutionary" Satellites From Virginia.

[C4ISR & Networks](#) (7/15, Strout) reports NRO successfully launched "four classified payloads into orbit July 15 from NASA's Wallops Flight Facility – the agency's first dedicated launch from the Virginia facility." The agency's director "noted that the four payloads will demonstrate revolutionary capabilities." NRO Director Chris Scolese said, "NROL-129 represents a

collaboration between the NRO and our industry partners to design, build, launch and operate a system of satellites that will demonstrate revolutionary capabilities of value to the nation and our allies. Despite facing challenges in 2020, we have found new and better ways to collaborate with our partners from a distance, relentlessly pursuing our mission and denying sanctuary to our adversaries." The [Delmarva \(MD\) Daily Times](#) (7/15, 28K) reports NRO Director Chris Scolese "said in a statement that he mission, named NROL-129, represents a collaboration between the NRO and its industry partners to design, build, launch and operate a system of satellites that 'will demonstrate revolutionary capabilities of value to the nation and our allies.'"

[Spaceflight Now](#) (7/15, Clark, 2K) reports a solid-fueled Northrop Grumman Minotaur 4 rocket "vaulted into orbit Wednesday from Virginia's Eastern Shore and deployed four top secret spacecraft for the NRO, extending the program's success record ahead of three more Minotaur missions planned in 2021." The 78-foot-tall (23.8-meter) launcher "fired away from pad 0B at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport in Virginia at 9:46 a.m. EDT (1346 GMT) Wednesday after a 46-minute delay to wait for fishing boats to clear a hazard area near the launch site." The Minotaur 4 "darted into a mostly sunny sky at breathtaking speed and broke the sound barrier just 17 seconds after liftoff." Also reporting on the story is [U.S. News & World Report](#) (7/15).

Airbus Targets NRO Imagery Sales With New US Corporate Entity.

[Breaking Defense](#) (7/15, Hitchens) reports Airbus is "angling for a bigger share of the US space and intelligence market with a reorganization of its US operations and an independent board of directors – with its eye squarely on NRO's upcoming contest for commercial remote sensing providers." The new entity, called Airbus U.S. Space & Defense, "is based near the Pentagon in Rosslyn, Virginia." It brings "all of Airbus's US operations under one corporate hat." While Chris Emerson, the newly appointed CEO Emerson "said the firm's primary focus is commercial users hungry for imagery, he said the firm also intends to respond to the NRO's request for proposals (RFP) to expand its pool of commercial suppliers of imagery, including advanced synthetic aperture radar (SAR) that has been traditionally supplied by the NRO's own highly-classified satellites."

Op-Ed: Trump's Call For CIA To Cooperate With Russia Was A Disaster.

In an op-ed in the [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Sipher, Hall, Wise, Polymeropoulos, 14.2M), former CIA station chief John Sipher, retired CIA officer Steven L. Hall, former DIA deputy director Douglas H. Wise, and retired CIA officer Marc Polymeropoulos write, "There has been justifiable outrage after news reports surfaced about Russian intelligence services paying the Taliban 'bounties' to kill US soldiers in Afghanistan. It is especially galling given the Trump Administration's directives to the IC upon taking office in January 2017 to cooperate with Russia on counterterrorism." They contend, "Each attempt failed. ... Each effort has failed for the same reason: Putin's Kremlin is not interested in a constructive relationship with the US. Instead, Putin sees himself in a political war with us. And he benefits domestically by blaming the US for all his ills." They conclude, "The periodic desire to work with the Russians on terrorism is akin to someone who buys a baboon as a pet, only to be surprised to have their face ripped off. Then, after recovering, he goes out and buys another baboon."

Former CIA Officer Peterson Discusses The Tiananmen Crisis And Training CIA Analysts.

[CBS News](#) (7/15, 3.68M) reports that, "in this episode of 'Intelligence Matters DECLASSIFIED: Spy Stories from the Officers Who Were There,' host Michael Morell interviews Martin Petersen, former senior CIA intelligence officer and Asia expert who spent over three decades at the agency." Petersen "recounts the agency's early assessments of unrest that led to the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests in China." Morell and Petersen "discuss the training CIA analysts receive and Petersen shares the remarks he would make to all entering analyst classes."

"Intelligence Matters DECLASSIFIED" is a "new series dedicated to featuring first-hand accounts from former intelligence officers."

Relatives Of Woman Poisoned By Novichok Wait For Judges' Inquest Ruling.

The [Belfast \(UK\) Telegraph](#) (7/16, Farmer) reports relatives of a woman "who died after being poisoned by the nerve agent Novichok are waiting for a ruling after taking High Court action in a bid to get 'key questions' asked about Russian state involvement." Members of Dawn Sturgess's family "say a coroner wrongly decided to limit what issues will be considered at an inquest." A barrister representing them "said the question of who was responsible for the use of Novichok was a matter of 'almost-unparalleled public concern.'" Michael Mansfield QC on Wednesday "told two judges an act of 'state terrorism' could not be 'artificially truncated.'" Lawyers representing Mr Ridley and Home Secretary Priti Patel "disagree and say the challenge should be dismissed." Lord Justice Bean and Mr Justice Lewis "are expected to deliver a ruling in the near future."

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Ghislaine Maxwell Reportedly Refuses To Reveal Name Of Spouse To FBI.

The [London \(UK\) Evening Standard](#) (7/15, Somerville, 856K) reports, "Ghislaine Maxwell is secretly married but has refused to disclose her husband's identity to FBI agents, a court has heard." According to the Evening Standard, "The shock revelation by federal prosecutors came after the British socialite pleaded not guilty to charges she had trafficked at least three underage girls for billionaire paedophile Jeffrey Epstein." Assistant US Attorney Alison Moe "revealed Maxwell had a spouse while questioning who would co-sign her bond at a bail hearing in New York. She told the courthouse late on Tuesday: 'In addition to failing to describe in any way the assets of the proposed co-signer of a bond, the defendant [Maxwell] also makes no mention whatsoever about the financial circumstances or assets of her spouse, whose identity she declined to provide to pretrial services. There's no information about who will be co-signing this bond or their assets, and no details whatsoever.'"

The [Telegraph \(UK\)](#) (7/15, Ensor, Mendick, 956K) reports, "According to the court hearing, Maxwell used the alias 'Jen Marshall' and posed as a journalist when viewing a hideaway in Bradford, New Hampshire, which she bought through a company, registered in Boston, for £800,000 in November last year. She was arrested at the house – called Tuckedaway – earlier this month in a morning raid by FBI agents and police. Estate agents said that during the viewing she was accompanied by a man with a British accent who used the pseudonym 'Scott Marshall'."

[The Guardian \(UK\)](#) (7/15, Bekiempis, 4.19M) reports, "Maxwell's arraignment and bail proceeding was conducted via video, and audio repeatedly cut out for those observing from the courthouse; transcripts that became available late last night filled in some of these gaps. However, many details of Maxwell's secretive personal life were audible – including information on how she wound up living on the 156-acre Bradford, New Hampshire, estate where she was arrested on 2 July." The [New York Daily News](#) (7/15, Brown, 2.52M) also reports.

In an opinion piece for the [Washington Post](#) (7/15, 14.2M) , Helaine Olen writes, "On one hand, it seems incredible that Maxwell would think a federal judge might release her to what prosecutors identified as a luxury hotel," but "on the other hand, it might just be the first time ever Maxwell couldn't use money to manipulate people and get her way. The Epstein scandal, from its very beginnings, has always been as much about the role of money in our very unequal society as it is about sex. As David Boies, a lawyer who represents several of the women who say they were victimized by Epstein and Maxwell (including Annie Farmer, who gave a brief statement at Tuesday's hearing), told me in an interview Wednesday, 'For two decades, Jeffrey

Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell bought their way out of everything, with a combination of money, political influence and sex.”

Sheriff Says Former Texas Jail Deputy Allowed Inmate Attack.

The [AP](#) (7/15) reports from San Antonio, Texas, “A Bexar County Jail deputy stood by while six inmates brutally beat another in a shower and then waited 30 minutes for the assailants to clean up while the victim laid bleeding before he called for help, authorities said in announcing that the deputy had been charged and fired from his job.” Jean Camacho-Morales, 33, “was arrested on Tuesday, which was a day after the attack,” and “faces counts of official oppression, tampering with government records and aggravated assault with substantial bodily harm – the last count because Texas law requires all parties involved in a crime to be charged with the offense.” The AP adds, “The sheriff’s office’s public integrity unit, internal affairs department and the FBI are investigating the attack.”

[NBC News](#) (7/15, Kessler, 6.14M) reports, “Camacho-Morales, who had been with sheriff’s department based in San Antonio for almost 6 years, is accused of allowing an attack at a county detention center that left an inmate with facial fractures and a damaged spine. ‘This is exactly the type of misconduct that this country is reeling against today,’” Bexar County Sheriff Javier Salazar said on Tuesday, adding, “This is why, people like this is why, millions of dollars of property damage occurred in riots and civil unrest across the country, because of folks like this.”

[KSAT-TV](#) San Antonio (7/15, Webber, Stewart, Spicer, 198K) reports that Salazar “says although the beating, itself, was committed by fellow inmates, Camacho still played a role in it. ‘While this poor victim is lying back there in a shower, beaten pretty severely, he stood by and did nothing, and then allowed the attack to continue,’ Salazar said. Additionally, he said, Camacho then delayed reporting the incident and lied about what happened. ‘He allowed this man to lie there in a pool of his own blood for several minutes, probably upwards of a half hour during which time other inmates that were involved actually were able to clean up,’ Salazar said.”

North Carolina Man Sentenced On Drug, Weapons Charges.

The [Fayetteville \(NC\) Observer](#) (7/15, Brown-Peyton, 151K) reports, “A Fayetteville man was sentenced to 10 years in prison for drug and weapons charges on Wednesday, according to the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of North Carolina.” Joey Eduardo Ayala, 36, “was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge James C. Dever III. Ayala pleaded guilty March 11 to distribution of 28 grams or more of cocaine base (crack), possession with intent to distribute a quantity of marijuana and possession of a firearm in the furtherance of drug trafficking, according to court documents.”

Two California Men Charged In Deadly Kidnapping.

The [AP](#) (7/15) reports from Los Angeles, “Two men were charged Wednesday with kidnapping a Chinese national from a Los Angeles-area shopping mall in a \$2 million ransom scheme that went wrong when the victim died from his injuries, authorities said.” Anthony Valladares, 28, of Pasadena and Alexis Ivan Romero Velez, 24, of Azusa “were arrested Tuesday and could face life in prison if convicted, according to a statement from the U.S. attorney’s office. Federal prosecutors contend that Valladares was hired as ‘muscle’ and Velez to be the driver of a minivan in the July 16, 2018, kidnapping of Ruo Chen ‘Tony’ Liao from a mall parking lot in suburban San Gabriel. Valladares told investigators that he was to be paid \$1,000 for his role in the kidnapping and said he hired Romero as the driver, according to an FBI affidavit.”

Vallejo, California Officials Confirm Key Evidence In Police Shooting Probe Was Destroyed.

The [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (7/16, Hernández, Serrano, 2.67M) reports, "Vallejo city officials said Wednesday that a key piece of evidence in a high-profile fatal police shooting – the windshield of the police vehicle the officer shot through – was destroyed, and said they have asked the FBI or another agency to take over the criminal investigation of the shooting." The Chronicle "earlier reported that Vallejo police had discarded the windshield and returned into service the unmarked police pickup truck involved in the shooting. Last week, Vallejo police released body camera footage showing one of its police officers firing from the back seat of the pickup truck, which had just pulled into a Walgreens parking lot after reports of people taking merchandise from the store on June 2. The shooting killed 22-year-old Sean Monterrosa on a night when demonstrations across the Bay Area and beyond were calling for an end to police brutality and killings of Black people and other people of color."

Investigators Give Report On Indiana Lynching Complaint To Prosecutors.

[Reuters](#) (7/16) reports, "The Indiana law enforcement investigation of a hate-crime report lodged by a Black civil rights activist who said several white men tried to lynch him at a lakeside park was turned over to prosecutors on Wednesday for review, officials said." According to Reuters, "The contents of the submission were not immediately made public," but "the Monroe County Prosecuting Attorney's Office is expected to evaluate evidence it received to decide whether to bring charges in the incident this month." Reuters adds, "The investigative report was prepared by the law enforcement division of the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR), whose officers were the first to respond to the confrontation in a wooded area along the shores of Lake Monroe near Bloomington, Indiana." The alleged victim, Vauhxx Booker, "said he looked forward to results of a separate FBI investigation of the incident."

Pennsylvania Man Sentenced On Drug, Weapons Charges.

The [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#) (7/15, Varine, 380K) reports that a Butler, Pennsylvania man "has been sentenced to nearly six years in prison after a conviction on federal drug and weapons laws, U.S. Attorney Scott W. Brady announced Wednesday." Brandon "Bopp" Morris, 35, of Butler, "according to court documents, provided three 'bricks' of heroin and an ounce of crack cocaine to a state police informant in June 2016, arranged and paid for in advance. Later that month, troopers searched Morris' East Brady Street home and found nearly 40 grams of raw heroin as well as individual packets, nearly 120 grams of crack cocaine, more than \$7,600, a 12-gauge shotgun and drug paraphernalia. State police and the FBI worked together on the investigation."

FBI Arrests Suspected Crime Boss In Oahu.

The [Honolulu Star-Advertiser](#) (7/15, Bernardo, 691K) reports the FBI arrested "multiple people on Oahu this morning including Honolulu businessman Mike J. Miske Jr. as part of a federal indictment in connection with the kidnapping and murder of a 23-year-old Hawaii Kai man." The indictment unsealed today "named Miske and 10 others charged with multiple offenses." Authorities allege the men "engaged in racketeering activity involving murder, kidnapping, arson and robbery." The other defendants are "either employed or associated with Miske's alleged criminal organization, authorities said." FBI Special Agent in Charge Sam Miranda "said it modeled itself after old-style gangster organizations such as the Mafia, and Miske was the leader, using fear and intimidation."

[KITV-TV](#) Honolulu (7/15, 12K) reports Miske and 10 other people "were indicted this morning for fraud, tax evasion schemes, robbery extortion, narcotics trafficking and other charges."

[KHON-TV](#) Honolulu (7/15, 54K) reports the indictment "alleges that Miske offered to pay several of his co-defendants to kidnap and murder Johnathan Fraser, who went missing in July of 2016." Miske had, according to the indictment, purchased a Boston Whaler "that could be used to dump Fraser's body into the ocean after Fraser was kidnapped and killed."

[KGMB-TV](#) Honolulu (7/15, Kawano, 47K) reports Hawaii US Attorney Kenji Price said the criminal group "has wreaked havoc" on Oahu for years, and "described the investigation into Miske as 'sprawling,' and said it involved poring over financial documents and tracking the digital footprints of the businessman and his associates, who used encrypted messaging or met in person to shield their plans from investigators." When federal authorities were "finally ready to execute raids on the alleged organized crime boss, the FBI flew in dozens of agents from Quantico to assist." The [Hawaii Free Press](#) (7/15) reports the FBI flew in "dozens of agents for this operation, including a SWAT team from Quantico, Virginia, sources told Hawaii News Now."

[KITV-TV](#) Honolulu (7/15, 12K) reports the FBI is "on the look out for Norman Akau, the only person on the indictment still at large."

[KGMB-TV](#) Honolulu (7/15, 47K) reports in a video, and [Honolulu Civil Beat \(HI\)](#) (7/16, Jung) also reports.

Second Chicago Police Officer Receives Prison Time For Corruption Charges.

The [AP](#) (7/15) reports the second of two "Chicago police officers convicted of using bogus search warrants to raid homes and steal cash and drugs has been sentenced." David Salgado was sentenced Wednesday to "five years and 11 months in prison, according to the U.S. Attorney's office in Chicago." Salgado's ex-partner, Sgt. Xavier Elizondo, "was sentenced last month to seven years and three months in prison." Jurors found Elizondo "and Salgado guilty in October on conspiracy and obstruction of justice charges." Elizondo was also convicted "on one count of attempting to destroy evidence, while Salgado was also found guilty of one count of lying to the FBI." According to prosecutors, "Elizondo and Salgado carried out their scheme between at least June of 2017 and January of 2018 while they were working on a gang crime squad." They worked with "two people who, posing as confidential informants, provided false information to persuade judges to sign the officers' search warrants."

The [Chicago Sun-Times](#) (7/15, Seidel, 875K), [WFLD-TV](#) Chicago (7/15, 42K), and [WBBM-TV](#) Chicago (7/15) also report.

Pittsburgh Store Owner Charged In Stolen Goods Scheme.

The [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#) (7/15, Ove, 616K) reports the owner of a Pittsburgh electronics store "has been indicted on charges of conspiring to sell stolen goods through his business." Milton Barr, owner of "Ninja Electronics, is accused of conspiracy to commit mail fraud and money laundering, the U.S. attorney's office said Wednesday." The grand jury "said he engaged in a mail fraud scheme to deliver stolen goods through the mail and laundered the proceeds. The investigation was handled by the criminal division of the IRS, the FBI and U.S. postal inspectors, along with Pittsburgh police and police in Ross and Shaler."

Romanian Pleads Guilty To Salt Lake City ATM Skimming Scheme.

[KSL-TV](#) Salt Lake City (7/15, Schwanitz, 234K) reports a Romanian citizen pleaded guilty "in federal court Wednesday to stealing money and bank card information from customers at several Salt Lake City ATM locations." Alexandru Licsor admitted in court "that he installed skimmer devices equipped with magnetic card readers, data recorders, digital cameras, and batteries at Zions Bank ATMs along the Wasatch Front, according to the office of U.S. Attorney John Huber." FBI agents arrested Licsor "in Romania in late 2019 after tracking him around the globe for years."

Three Jersey City Gang Members Charged.

The [Hudson County \(NJ\) View](#) (7/15, Heinis) reports three Jersey City gang members "were charged in connection with shooting a 12-year-old in the leg earlier this month, U.S. Attorney Craig Carpenito announced." They are scheduled to "make their initial appearances July 16, 2020, by videoconference before U.S. Magistrate Judge James B. Clark III." Carpenito credited the "Jersey City Police Department, the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office, special agents of

the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Newark Field Division, and special agents of the FBI, for the investigation leading to the charges and arrests.”

West Hollywood Man Sentenced To Five Years For Art Fraud.

The [My News LA \(CA\)](#) (7/15) reports a West Hollywood man “pleaded guilty Wednesday in federal court in Miami to criminal charges stemming from the sale of bogus artworks he claimed were created by famed modern artists, and he was immediately ordered to serve five years in prison.” Philip Righter pleaded guilty to “three felony charges in a case filed in Los Angeles and admitted selling works he falsely claimed were created by artists such as Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol.” Righter also admitted using “fake artwork as collateral for loans on which he later defaulted, and using bogus pieces for fraudulent write-offs on his income tax returns.” After the FBI and the “Los Angeles Police Department interviewed him about bogus Haring art he attempted to sell to the Miami art gallery, he began using the names of other people to execute his scheme, court documents state.”

FBI Arrest Holyoke, Man Woman For Drug Trafficking.

The [Springfield \(MA\) Republican](#) (7/16, DeForge, 395K) reports from Holyoke, Massachusetts that police “arrested a man and a woman for drug trafficking after finding 4,294 bags of heroin and other drugs in their car Wednesday night.” Jose Gonzalez and Meighan Plourde were arrested at “about 4 p.m. after Holyoke Police narcotics detectives and members of the FBI’s Western Mass Gang Task Force stopped the 2006 BMW they were driving on Forestdale Ave., Holyoke Lt. James Albert said.” Both are being held “overnight at Hampden County jails and are scheduled to be arraigned by a Holyoke District Court judge on the charges, Albert said.”

Continuing Coverage: Indiana Woman Arrested For Alleged Animal Abuse.

The [Indianapolis Star](#) (7/15, 633K) reports that the FBI Indianapolis Field Office announced Wednesday the indictment and arrest of Krystal Scott, who “was charged with two counts of making and distributing animal crush videos, which are videos of typically small animals being tortured and killed.” The Boise Police Department opened an investigation into Scott after receiving reports about the videos on social media on June 16, and the FBI “learned that Scott was able to obtain animals by responding to online advertisements of individuals giving away unwanted pets.”

[Kokomo \(IN\) Perspective](#) (7/15, Zimmerman) reports that the FBI raided Scott’s home on Tuesday, and the raid “yielded ‘numerous animal parts and skulls that were consistent with the size of cats and dogs.’” Scott “began posting images and videos on social media on or about May 3,” and the videos “depicted Scott ‘torturing and graphically killing cats and dogs by hanging, skinning, and other means.’”

The [AP](#) (7/15) reports Scott “faces up to seven years in prison and a \$250,000 fine if convicted of the charges.”

FBI Investigating Cold Case Murder In California.

[KCAL-TV](#) Los Angeles (7/15) reports that the FBI “is seeking the arrest of [Saul Aguilar, Jr.]” who is “accused in a murder from more than 20 years ago” in California. He “is suspected of shooting and killing his ex-girlfriend in December 1997,” and the initial warrant “was issued in January 1998 after Aguilar was charged with murder.”

Explosive Device Found Near Texas Hospital.

The [Wichita Falls \(TX\) Times Record News](#) (7/15, 64K) reports that the Wichita Fall community “reported a suspicious device with explosive material,” and it “was found in a vacant building that was under construction two blocks north of [United Regional Hospita] on Seventh Street.” Local FBI, ATF, and Denton Bomb Squad technicians defused the device successfully.

Nebraska Man Pleads Guilty To Producing Child Pornography.

The [Lincoln \(NE\) Journal Star](#) (7/15, Pilger, 399K) reports Titus Miller, who was "indicted for making sexually explicit videos of children at a local child care center where he worked as a night manager," has "pleaded guilty Wednesday in a deal with prosecutors." He "is looking at 75 years in prison at least at his sentencing Oct. 15, under federal sentencing guidelines." Miller was identified through a separate investigation into an Alabama man accused of possessing child pornography.

[KHGI-TV Lincoln \(NE\)](#) Lincoln, NE (7/15, 36K) reports FBI Omaha Special Agent in Charge Kristi Johnson said, "Titus Miller's sexual abuse of five innocent children is an especially heinous crime. The FBI will use all its investigative strength to bring those who exploit children to justice. The FBI's Lincoln office, together with the Lincoln Police Department, worked tirelessly on the investigation which has now concluded with Miller's guilty plea."

Nebraska Man Sentenced To Life Imprisonment For Murder.

[KHGI-TV Lincoln, NE](#) (7/15, 36K) reports Joseph Lloyd James, who had previously pleaded guilty to first-degree murder, "was sentenced on Wednesday, July 15, to life imprisonment...in Indian Country." He "waived his right to appeal, to seek a pardon, or seek a commutation." FBI Omaha Special Agent in Charge Kristi Johnson said, "The Santee Sioux Nation Tribal Police, Knox County Sheriff and Nebraska State Patrol partnered with FBI Omaha to investigate the brutal murder of Phyllis Hunhoff. Those efforts brought us to Joseph James's life sentence today. The FBI will continue to work with our law enforcement and Native American partners and to fight crime on tribal land."

[Norfolk \(NE\) Daily News](#) (7/15, News, 56K) also reports.

Suspected Massachusetts Gang Member Ordered Held Without Bail.

The [Quincy \(MA\) Patriot Ledger](#) (7/15, DiFazio, 86K) reports Jose R. Rodriguez "was ordered held after a dangerousness hearing administered virtually through Quincy District Court" on Wednesday. He "faces a number of charges related to the shooting including assault with intent to murder and assault and battery on a child with substantial injury" in connection to the June 3 shooting at the South Shore Plaza Mall. FBI agents are supporting the investigation.

Connecticut Woman Charged With Obstruction.

The [Manchester \(CT\) Journal Inquirer](#) (7/15, 47K) reports that, according to a recently unsealed indictment, Katherine Pires "is accused of hindering the investigation of a 1998 Farmington homicide." She "is suspected of providing a false alibi for her husband's best friend three weeks after the killing, then making up a story more than 20 years later that also directed suspicion away from him." She "is facing a felony count of second-degree hindering prosecution and a misdemeanor count of interfering with police, both based on statements she made to two police detectives on June 26, 2019."

FBI Supporting Investigation Into Missing Connecticut Teenager.

The [Cumberland \(MD\) Times-News](#) (7/15, 66K) reports that the FBI is supporting the investigation into the disappearance of Jonathan Adams, who "was last seen late Saturday and was reported missing by his family the next morning." He "has been residing with family in Hampshire County since March."

FBI Offering Reward In DC Shooting Investigation.

The [Washington Patch](#) (7/15, 1.03M) reports that the FBI has added a \$5,000 reward for information "leading to the arrest and conviction of suspects in the July 4 fatal shooting of 11-year-old Davon McNeal" in Washington, DC. McNeal was shot on July 4, and the Metropolitan Police Department "has arrested two suspects to date involved in the shooting: Daryle Bond of

Southeast, and Christian Wingfield." However, two other suspects, Carlo General and Marcel Gordon remain at-large.

New York Man Pleads Guilty To Smuggling Prison Contraband.

The [New York Daily News](#) (7/15, Marcius, 2.52M) reports former Rikers prison guard Joshua Alba "pleaded guilty Wednesday to smuggling tobacco and other contraband into the storied city jail complex." The plea deal says Alba "delivered tobacco and other contraband to an inmate at the Anna M. Kross Center at Rikers from December 2018 to July 2019, collecting at least \$5,000 in cash bribes."

Continuing Coverage: Missing California Teenager Located.

The [Siskiyou \(CA\) Daily News](#) (7/15, 16K) reports Siskiyou County Sheriff Jon Lopey announced the safe recovery of an unidentified 14-year-old girl, who "was found safe after leaving Siskiyou County in the company of [Patrick James Montross], who was visiting the area from New York." She was initially reported missing last Wednesday, and a Nevada Highway Patrol trooper spotted Montross' vehicle on Thursday. The FBI supported the investigation.

Texas Man Pleads Guilty To Bank Robberies.

The [Sherman \(TX\) Herald Democrat](#) (7/15) reports Jimmy James Mammoth, Jr "pleaded guilty to attempted bank robbery before U.S. District Judge Thad Heartfield on July 13." He also "admitted his participation in a string of other robberies and attempted robberies, specifically, the robbery of the Arbor 8 movie theater in Austin, Texas, on March 17, 2019; an attempted robbery of the Benchmark Bank in West Lake Hills, Texas, on June 4, 2019; the robbery of the Broadway Bank in Wimberley, Texas, on June 19, 2019; and the robbery of the First National Bank of Hughes Springs in Kilgore, Texas, on June 28, 2019. Mammoth further agreed to pay restitution for the above crimes." The FBI investigated the case.

New Jersey Senior Charged With Child Pornography Possession, Distribution.

[Tap Into New Jersey](#) (7/15) reports John Schulenburg "has been charged with one count of distribution of child pornography and one count of possession of child pornography." He was "arrested on a criminal complaint on this conduct on Nov. 6, 2019, and was released on \$100,000 unsecured bond." The investigation began in July 2019, when a user "shared multiple files of featuring images of child sexual abuse from an internet address traced to Schulenburg's residence" to an undercover officer. The FBI Newark's Child Exploitation Human Trafficking Task Force supported the investigation.

New Jersey Gang Members Charged In Connection To Shooting Of Minor.

[Daily Voice](#) (7/15, 98K) reports Marc Taylor, Jashawn Tate and Damari Blackwell "were scheduled for first appearances via videoconference Thursday before U.S. Magistrate Judge James B. Clark III in Newark" in connection to the July 7 gang shootings near the Marion Gardens Housing Complex, Rutgers Avenue, and the Curries Woods Housing Projects. The FBI is supporting the investigation.

FBI Searching For Missing California Toddler.

[KFSN-TV](#) Fresno, CA (7/15, 167K) reports that the FBI is participating in the search for two-year-old Thaddeus Sran, who "disappeared from his [Fresno] home on C Street between 10 p.m. on Tuesday and 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday." The police "say detectives are investigating his disappearance as a possible abduction."

Mississippi Couple Taken Into Custody In Connection To Disappearance.

The [Biloxi \(MS\) Sun Herald](#) (7/15, 116K) reports that the Picayune Police Department announced Wednesday the arrest of Dustin and Erica Gray, who "were identified as people of

interest in the July 6 disappearance of Willie Ray Q. Jones." They "[have] been missing since as early as Monday," and they are "wanted on a felony charge of possession of a stolen firearm."

Rhode Island Man Sentenced For Bank Robberies.

The [Lincoln \(RI\) Valley Breeze](#) (7/15, 92K) reports Christopher Oladapo, who "admitted to robbing banks in Providence and Pawtucket within a month of each other last summer," was "sentenced Wednesday to two years and six months in federal prison." He "pleaded guilty on Feb. 3 to two counts of bank robbery." The FBI supported the investigation.

Continuing Coverage: FBI Supporting Investigation Into Missing Pennsylvania Amish Teenager.

The [Harrisburg \(PA\) Patriot-News](#) (7/15, 427K) reports that the FBI is continuing to support the investigation into the disappearance of Linda Stoltzfoos, who authorities "believe was kidnapped after leaving a church service in Bird-in-Hand nearly a month ago." The FBI "is offering an up to \$10,000 reward for information leading to Stoltzfoos' whereabouts."

Prosecutor Admits "Grand Jury Gaffe" But Argues Perjury Indictment Should Stand.

The [Seattle Times](#) (7/15, Carter, 935K) reports the special prosecutor assigned "to oversee the 19-year-old investigation into the shooting death of Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas Wales in his Queen Anne home is denying misconduct alleged by a witness who wants a perjury indictment thrown out." However, in documents filed "in U.S. District Court in Seattle, the office of Special Prosecutor Steven Clymer in New York acknowledges that an unnamed attorney made a 'single, imprecise remark' when warning witness Shawna Reid in front of the grand jury that she must tell the truth, even if it involves incriminating herself." Reid is the first individual "indicted in connection with the Wales investigation in almost two decades. Prosecutors believe she has information about an individual identified in court papers as "Suspect #1," an individual whom the FBI believes has knowledge of an alleged murder-for-hire plot targeting Wales." The FBI has long "focused its investigation on a commercial airline pilot who lived near Bellevue at the time, and whom Wales had targeted in an unsuccessful federal fraud prosecution in the 1990s."

More Arrests Made Connection With Georgia Drug Investigation.

The [Gainesville \(GA\) Times](#) (7/15, Watson, 81K) reports, "Four more arrests" have been made in connection with a Georgia drug investigation conducted by the "Appalachian Regional Drug Enforcement Office and the FBI Major Offenders Task Force." The new arrests come after 48 other arrests were made in connection with the same investigation, which also led to the seizure of "more than 50 kilograms of methamphetamine."

Ten People Allegedly Sold Crack, Oxycodone In Ohio.

The [Avon-Avon Lake \(OH\) Patch](#) (7/15, 1.03M) reports 10 arrested individuals "have been accused of selling crack cocaine and oxycodone" in Lorain County, Ohio. The FBI and the DEA were involved with the investigation of this case, according to the Patch, which quotes "DEA Special Agent in Charge Keith Martin." Martin said the "DEA remains committed to working with our law enforcement partners to rid our communities of illicit drugs."

In a similar article, the [Elyria \(OH\) Chronicle](#) (7/15, 3K) reports Terrence Bowens, Cedric Green, Marcus Harder, James Milton Jr., Lavar Thornton, James Robinson, Randy Glover, Harold Kimbro, Kavis Roberts and Melanie Grantham "have been charged by the US Attorney's Office in Cleveland with possessing and distributing crack cocaine, cocaine" and oxycodone. The [Lorain \(OH\) Morning Journal](#) (7/15, Reynolds, 47K) also publishes a similar article.

Two Men Accused Of Possessing Enough Fentanyl To Kill More Than 20,000 People.

The [Hampton Roads \(VA\) Virginian-Pilot](#) (7/15, Hampton, 227K) reports Brandon Dashiell and Ronald Dashiell, Jr., "both of Elizabeth City," North Carolina, have been "arrested on drug crimes, including possession of enough fentanyl to kill more than 20,000 people." The Virginian-Pilot adds, "The FBI is helping with the investigation" of this case, according to Pasquotank County Sheriff Tommy S. Wooten II.

Feds: Puerto Rico To Rhode Island Drug "Pipeline" Shut Down

[Associated Press](#) (7/15). "PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Federal authorities have shut down what they described as a 'cocaine pipeline' that may have shipped more than 100 kilograms (220 pounds) of cocaine from Puerto Rico to Rhode Island. Five people have been charged in connection with the alleged drug ring that shipped the cocaine through the US Postal Service, according to a statement Tuesday from US Attorney for Rhode Island, Aaron Weisman."

Four People Charged With Plotting To Kill DEA Agent.

The [AP](#) (7/15) reports Manuel Garcia Gomez, Jorge Humberto Velazco Larios, Eva Denisse Gomez Garcia and Alicia Yuritzi Juarez Martinez "have been charged...with plotting to have" an unidentified DEA agent killed. The agent was not killed or harmed, according to the AP article which says Gomez and Larios have been "arrested, while Garcia and Martinez are believed to be fugitives in Mexico." The AP reports that a grand jury indictment issued in Texas "says Gomez was jailed in Johnson County on a methamphetamine charge when he offered \$20,000 — \$5,000 upfront and \$15,000 upon completion — to have the agent assigned to his case killed."

An online [KDFW-TV](#) Dallas (7/15, 53K) report quotes "FBI Dallas Special Agent in Charge Matthew DeSarno," who said the four "defendants wanted to harm a DEA task force officer and that is unacceptable. Fortunately, we were able to prevent a dangerous act from occurring." The [KXAS-TV](#) Dallas (7/15, 206K) website also highlights DeSarno's statement.

The [Fort Worth \(TX\) Star-Telegram](#) (7/15, Ramirez, 406K) quotes US Attorney Nealy Cox, who said, "These defendants were plotting to murder a federal task force officer — a man who routinely risks his life to combat the scourge of drugs in our community. We are grateful to our partners at the DEA and FBI who worked tirelessly to keep the officer safe and help bring his would-be killers to justice." The Star Telegram also quotes Eduardo A. Chávez, "Special Agent in Charge of the DEA Dallas Field Division," who said, "Drug trafficking is inherently violent and traffickers will stop at nothing to protect their profits and their lifestyle."

The same quotes appear in a [Dallas Morning News](#) (7/15, Jones, 946K) report that says the alleged plot to kill a DEA agent is connected to an investigation of an organization suspected of "obtaining methamphetamine from Mexico and selling it to customers in the Dallas area."

Former ICE Informant Facing Drug Charges.

The [Miami Herald](#) (7/15, Weaver, 1.09M) reports Guillermo Eduardo Ramirez-Peyro, a former Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) informant, is facing "charges of conspiring to possess and distribute five kilos of cocaine." The article says the charges are the result of an FBI sting operation.

Drug Case Defendant Sentenced To Decade In Federal Prison.

An article published by the [Magnolia \(AR\) Reporter](#) (7/15) says Larry Peters, Jr., who resides in Prescott, Arkansas, was recently sentenced "to 120 months in federal prison, followed by" five "years of supervised release, for conspiring to distribute 50 grams or more of methamphetamine." The Peters "case was investigated by the FBI and the South Central Drug Task Force."

Oklahoma Resident Pleads Guilty To Meth Charge.

The [Talequah \(OK\) Daily Press](#) (7/15, reports, 20K) reports Oklahoma resident Brandis Nicole Fish has pleaded guilty "to possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine." The case against Fish was the result of an investigation conducted "by the Okmulgee County Sheriff's Office and the Federal Bureau of Investigation Safe Trails Task Force."

FINANCIAL CRIME & CORPORATE SCANDALS

Authorities In Maryland Uncover ID Theft Scheme Involving Fraudulent Unemployment Claims.

The [Baltimore Sun](#) (7/15, Wood, Barker, 1.33M) reports, "Maryland uncovered a 'massive identity theft' scheme leading to more than 47,500 fraudulent unemployment insurance claims totaling more than \$501 million, Gov. Larry Hogan said Wednesday. 'This criminal enterprise seeking to take advantage of a global pandemic to steal hundreds of millions, perhaps billions, of dollars from taxpayers is despicable,' Hogan said." Maryland Labor Secretary Tiffany Robinson, "appearing with the Republican governor at a State House news conference, said the division handling unemployment became suspicious when it noticed a surge in out-of-state claims. Investigators found that people were using 'stolen personal information to fraudulently attempt to obtain unemployment benefits,' U.S. Attorney Robert K. Hur said in a prepared statement."

The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Cox, 14.2M) reports, "Hogan told reporters at a news conference that the onslaught of fake claims appeared to use identities constructed from a huge cache of information taken in national data breaches in recent years. As examples, he cited breaches at the Experian credit rating agency and the federal Office of Personnel Management. Personal data in Maryland's unemployment system was not breached as part of the scam. The fake claimants posed as out-of-state companies seeking federal benefits of up to \$600 per week under a process that allows claimants to self-certify job loss, rather than to have unemployment verified by the employer." The FBI "warned last week that it had detected a 'spike' in scammers using stolen identities to claim unemployment benefits, saying the scheme had been perpetrated in several states."

Massachusetts Man Charged With PPP Coronavirus Fraud.

The [Boston Herald](#) (7/15, 410K) reports that Massachusetts tech company president Elijah Majak Buoi "is accused of filing fraudulent" PPP loan applications for more than \$13 million. He was indicted on Tuesday "on four counts of wire fraud and one count of making a false statement to a financial institution. Buoi was arrested and charged by a criminal complaint last month."

The [AP](#) (7/15) reports Sosuda Tech, LLC President and CEO Elijah Majak Buoi, of Massachusetts, "is charged with fraudulently seeking for his information technology company more than \$13 million in government loans intended for businesses struggling because of the coronavirus pandemic, federal prosecutors said Wednesday." In April and June he "allegedly submitted fraudulent applications for more than \$13 million in forgivable loans guaranteed by the Small Business Administration for COVID-19 relief through the Paycheck Protection Program, according to the U.S. attorney's office in Boston. He lied about his number of employees and his payroll expenses and falsely certified that the United States was the primary residence for his employees, prosecutors said."

The [Winchester \(MA\) Star](#) (7/15, 57K) and [WCVB-TV Boston](#) (7/15, 402K) also report.

Investment Fund Accused Of Running Ponzi Scheme Got Millions In PPP Money.

Behind a paywall, [Crain's New York Business](#) (7/15, 228K) reports that GPB Capital, which is accused of running a Ponzi scheme, received millions of dollars in PPP loans.

Three More San Francisco Departments Subpoenaed In Widening Corruption Probe.

The [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (7/15, Fracassa, 2.67M) reports, "The ongoing federal investigation into corruption at San Francisco City Hall has reached into the City Administrator's Office, the Planning Department and the Department of Public Health, three newly released subpoenas reveal." According to the Chronicle, "Through the subpoenas, the FBI appears to be interested in learning whether city contractors passed money to nonprofits, possibly at the behest of high-ranking city employees, to pay for events like department holiday parties and picnics." The Chronicle adds, "The arrest of former Public Works Director Mohammed Nuru earlier this year has pitched the city into a widening scandal that is playing out in part through investigations under way by the FBI and the City Attorney's Office."

The [San Francisco Examiner](#) (7/15, 438K) reports, "Federal authorities have homed in on an apparent trail of donations from city contractors to nonprofits that paid for holiday parties and other perks for public employees in a widening San Francisco City Hall corruption probe, newly released records show." Investigators "subpoenaed a broad range of documents from Public Works in May seeking evidence of who paid for the holiday parties as well as picnics and other events held for city employees. The investigators are also in search of details on who at City Hall solicited the donations dating back to 2010. The contributions have raised questions about whether the contractors received anything in return, like preferential treatment during the bidding process or other assistance with city business." The [SFist](#) (7/15, Barmann) also reports.

Minnesota Couple Pleads Guilty In Virginia To Fraud.

The [Richmond \(VA\) Times-Dispatch](#) (7/15, Green, 277K) reports, "A Minnesota couple pleaded guilty Wednesday in federal court in Richmond to charges of conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud in a scheme involving law enforcement impersonators who victimized older people." According to the RTD, "Authorities alleged that among the victims of Chirag Janakbhai Choksi, and his wife, Shachi Naishadh Majmudar, both 35, was a retired Chesterfield County woman who withdrew \$238,400 in cash from her bank accounts. Choksi, who also pleaded guilty Wednesday to aggravated identity theft, and Majmudar were initially charged in September with mail fraud and conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud. They were most recently named last month in a superseding indictment against them and four other defendants."

Pennsylvania Man Sentenced For Fraud Scheme.

The [Harrisburg \(PA\) Patriot-News](#) (7/15, Miller, 427K) reports, "Former Worley & Obetz CEO Jeffrey Lyons has been sentenced to 14 years in federal prison and ordered to pay \$53 million to a midstate bank and another \$550,000 to the IRS for a massive fraud scheme crashed the Lancaster County-based energy company." According to the Patriot-News, "Those penalties were imposed by U.S. Eastern District Judge Jeffrey L. Schmehl, U.S. Attorney William M. McSwain said Wednesday. The sentencing came nine months after Lyons, 59, pleaded guilty to charges that he provided false financial documents to secure tens of millions of dollar in financing from Fulton Bank between 2003 and 2018." Investigators "said Lyons used the Fulton loans to pay Worley & Obetz expenses, including his annual salary of over \$500,000, and to make the fuel company artificially seem to be profitable. Some of the money he put to personal use, including millions of dollars he used in real estate acquisitions, they said."

Fourth Guilty Plea In Scheme To Defraud Toyota.

[West Virginia MetroNews](#) (7/15, 34K) reports from Charleston, West Virginia, "A fourth person has pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in connection with a scheme to defraud Toyota out of more than \$4.3 million." Southern West Virginia US Attorney Mike Stuart said Tammy Newsome, 54, of Ashland, Kentucky, "admitted Wednesday that she lied to the departments of motor vehicles in West Virginia and Kentucky about driver's licenses she and others had obtained from residents of those two states. Newsome used the information to obtain false vehicle titles in the names of false owners. Newsome and others working at Kentucky-based

used auto dealer, Big Blue Motor Sales, were part of a scheme that purchased trucks at wholesale prices at auction and then, using the information gained from DMVs, convinced Toyota to repurchase the trucks at 150% of their value."

Former CFL Player, California Woman Sentenced In College Admissions Scandal.

[NBC News](#) (7/16, Helsel, 6.14M) reports, "A Canadian parent who once played in the Canadian Football League was sentenced Wednesday to three months in prison after pleading guilty in a college admissions cheating scheme, federal prosecutors said." NBC News adds, "David Sidoo, who played for the Saskatchewan Roughriders and BC Lions, paid about \$200,000 to have someone else to take SAT tests for two of his sons in 2011 and 2012, prosecutors said." Sidoo, 61, of Vancouver, "pleaded guilty in March to one count of conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud. In addition to the jail time, he was ordered to pay a \$250,000 fine. He was among more than 50 people charged in the scheme orchestrated by William 'Rick' Singer in which parents paid tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars to help get their children into universities."

CYBER DIVISION

High-Profile Twitter Accounts Hacked In Bitcoin Scam.

The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, A1, Lerman, 14.2M) reports, "Joe Biden, Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos and other high-profile Twitter accounts were the target of a widespread hack to offer fake bitcoin deals Wednesday in one of the most prominent security breaches on a social media site." While it was unclear "how the attacks originated or why they went on for hours, some cybersecurity experts speculated that someone may have gained access to internal Twitter controls that allowed them to take over and post on the accounts." Cybersecurity expert Rachel Tobac, the CEO of SocialProof Security, said, "This is most likely the largest attack I've ever seen. We are extremely lucky that these attackers are monetarily motivated and not sowing mass chaos all over the world." The Post says the breach "will create major optics challenges for Twitter, and it will make it more challenging moving forward to verify the authenticity of messages on the service, cybersecurity experts warned."

On the [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (7/15, story 4, 1:05, O'Donnell, 4.16M), Kris Van Cleave reported the hacked accounts "claim to be a partnership between a cyber health group and celebrities encouraging others to collectively donate 5,000 bitcoins destined for a supposed community healthcare partnership." On [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (7/15, story 5, 0:50, Muir, 7.16M), Mary Bruce reported that "it's unclear at this point how many people have fallen victim to this scam, but it does appear right now that already hundreds of transactions have taken place on this account, totaling over \$100,000."

[NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (7/15, story 5, 0:50, Holt, 5.7M) reported that in a statement, "Twitter says it is aware of a security incident impacting accounts, is investigating and taking steps to fix it, and will update everybody shortly." Twitter says "that users may be unable to tweet while it investigates."

[Reuters](#) (7/15, Menn, Satter, Paul) reports Twitter "said employees with access to its internal systems had been successfully" targeted by hackers who "used this access to take control of many highly-visible (including verified) accounts and Tweet on their behalf." The company added, "We're looking into what other malicious activity they may have conducted or information they may have accessed and will share more here as we have it." Several experts "said the incident raised questions about Twitter's cybersecurity." Oren Falkowitz, former CEO of Area 1 Security, said, "It's clear the company is not doing enough to protect itself."

[Bloomberg](#) (7/15, Frier, Tong, 4.73M) says the attacks were "stunning in scope and almost certainly coordinated." The hacked accounts posted "tweets promising to double the money sent by anyone sending funds via Bitcoin within the next 30 minutes." While Twitter "continues to investigate, cybersecurity experts have begun speculating on other potential sources of the

breach," including the possibility of a "bad actor inside Twitter, or working for a software vendor." One of the third-party platforms "used to track and publish Twitter content may have been compromised, said Kevin O'Brien, co-founder of cybersecurity firm GreatHorn."

The [New York Times](#) (7/15, Frenkel, 18.61M) calls the hack a "major show of force" by the hackers, "one of the most brazen online attacks in memory." The Times says the messages were "an iteration of a long-running scam in which hackers pose as public figures on Twitter, and promise to match or even triple any funds that are sent to their Bitcoin wallets." In the past, hackers have used "fake accounts to try to convince users that the funds will be going to public figures like Mr. Musk or Mr. Gates," but "the attacks Wednesday were the first time that the real accounts of public figures were used in the scam."

The [Financial Times](#) (7/15, Murphy, McGee, Subscription Publication, 1.34M) also reports.

FBI San Francisco Office "Aware" Of Twitter Hacking. [CNN](#) (7/15, Iyengar, 83.16M) reports the scam "has also caught the attention of the FBI." The FBI San Francisco Field office said in a statement, "We are aware of today's security incident involving several Twitter accounts belonging to high profile individuals," adding, "The accounts appear to have been compromised in order to perpetuate cryptocurrency fraud. We advise the public not to fall victim to this scam by sending cryptocurrency or money in relation to this incident."

Trump Campaign Seizes Opportunity Presented By Twitter Hack To Take Jab At Biden's Tax Policies. The [Washington Examiner](#) (7/15, Larsen, 448K) reports, "President Trump's reelection campaign quickly used rival Joe Biden getting hacked to its advantage." Trump campaign Communications Director Tim Murtaugh posted on Twitter, "I've seen creative ways to disguise a tax increase, but this takes the cake. Hacked account or not, this is a perfect metaphor for Biden's pitch to taxpayers: 'Give me your money!'"

Hawley Asks DOJ, FBI To Take "Any Necessary Measures" In Twitter Hack. The [Daily Caller](#) (7/15, Kerr, 716K) reports Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO) urged Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey "to call in the Department of Justice and the FBI to take 'any necessary measures' to secure the social media site after some of its most prominent users were compromised by suspected bitcoin scammers Wednesday afternoon." In a letter, Hawley wrote, "I am concerned that this event may represent not merely a coordinated set of separate hacking incidents but rather a successful attack on the security of Twitter itself." Hawley argued, "A successful attack on your system's servers represents a threat to all of your users' privacy and data security." Hawley also asked "how many users may have been the victim of data theft as a consequence of Wednesday's attack."

FBI Warns Of Cyber Criminals Spoofing Airport Websites And Wi-Fi.

[KTSM-TV](#) El Paso, TX (7/15, Freeman) reports from El Paso, Texas, "The FBI is warning the community to beware of cyber actors who are creating fake website domains to spoof U.S.-based airport websites." KTSM-TV adds, "On Wednesday, Cyber Supervisory Special Agent Conal Whetten spoke to the press about the risks these crimes pose for airports, travelers, and the aviation industry as a whole. According to Whetten, website domain spoofing is the act of creating a fake website with the intent to mislead users by assuming the identity of a legitimate group or organization, like a popular social media site or online retailer. 'They do this to steal personal and business data, and U.S. airports are an attractive target for cyber actors because there is a rich environment of business and personal information,' said Whetten."

FBI's "Operation Kick Boxer" Targets Child Predators.

[WDJT-TV](#) Milwaukee (7/15, 65K) reports from Milwaukee, Wisconsin that the FBI "is using a new effort to stop sex predators who target children. It is called 'Operation Kick Boxer' and it uses sting operations to identify people who manufacture and distribute child sex abuse materials." According to WDJT-TV, "Matthew Krueger, the U.S. attorney for Wisconsin's Eastern District, says it has led to arrests all over the world. He also says reports of child exploitation are up significantly this year compared to last year. 'In addition, with the pandemic, children are

spending more time online,' Krueger said. 'They're getting more used to different internet applications, getting used to using webcams and so they're more vulnerable.'"

FBI Assures Rep. Lynch Of US Commitment To Sharing Cyber Threat Information With Industry Partners.

[ExecutiveGov](#) (7/15, Rivers) reports, "The FBI has sent a letter to Rep. Stephen Lynch, D-Mass., stating that the intelligence community (IC) is committed to sharing cyber threat information to its industry partners." According to ExecutiveGov, "Jill Tyson, assistant director at the FBI's Office of Congressional Affairs, wrote a letter to Lynch, who also served as chairman of the House Subcommittee on National Security, in response to the latter's February letter calling for more stringent protection of U.S. data from foreign interference. According to Tyson's letter, the IC 'ensures the timely production of unclassified reports' regarding U.S. cybersecurity and coordinates with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency(CISA) to help affected private entities. Tyson noted that the FBI 'routinely shares information' across all industry sectors and maintains direct liaison with companies to ensure that software security updates are released and security incidents are reported."

Pompeo: US Will Sanction Huawei Employees, Mulling Action Against TikTok.

[Reuters](#) (7/15, Brunnstrom, Pamuk) reports that on Wednesday, Secretary of State Pompeo "took fresh aim at China...saying the United States would impose visa restrictions on Chinese firms like Huawei...that he accused of facilitating human-rights violations." Pompeo "also said telecommunications companies around the world 'should consider themselves on notice' that if they do business with Huawei, 'they are doing business with human-rights abusers.'" Pompeo said the State Department would "impose visa restrictions on certain employees of Chinese technology companies like Huawei that provide material support to regimes engaging in human-rights violations and abuses globally."

The [AP](#) (7/15, Lee) reports Pompeo also "said the administration is finalizing plans to minimize data theft from the popular Chinese video streaming app TikTok, although he stopped short of saying it would be banned outright." Pompeo is quoted as saying, "Whether it's TikTok or any of the other Chinese communications platforms, apps, infrastructure, this administration has taken seriously the requirement to protect the American people from having their information end up in the hands of the Chinese Communist Party."

DOJ Official Urges US Companies To Stop "Bowling" To China. Justice Department Director of Communications and Public Affairs Kerri Kupec said on [Fox News' Bill Hemmer Reports](#) (7/15), "Memo to American businesses: stop bowing to Communist China. Eighty percent of our economic espionage cases, alleged conduct that directly benefits the Chinese state, and 60% of our trade secret theft cases also have some kind of connection to China." Kupec added that in remarks to business leaders Friday, Attorney General Barr "is going to say 'enough is enough.' When are we going to stop bowing to China? When are we going to be the American businesses that prize independence, individuality, instead of kowtowing to the demands of a totalitarian regime?"

TikTok Hires Lobbyists As Tensions Grow With Administration. The [New York Times](#) (7/15, Kang, Jakes, Swanson, McCabe, 18.61M) reports TikTok, which "has become the latest target in the Trump administration's long simmering security and economic battle with Beijing," is now "desperately trying to convince lawmakers and administration officials that its allegiance lies with the United States, not China." The company, "which one year ago had virtually no lobbying presence in the nation's capital, has hired a small army of more than 35 lobbyists to work on its behalf, including one with deep ties to President Trump."

Congress Wants Apple, Google To Warn Users About TikTok Posing "National Security Risks." [USA Today](#) (7/15, Brown, 10.31M) reports Congress is "asking Apple and Google to warn users about apps that pose 'national security risks' days after the government

showed interest in banning TikTok." National Security Representative Stephen Lynch "wrote separate open letters to both tech giants on Tuesday, calling on them to do more to protect user data from being exploited by foreign 'adversaries.'" The letters said, "We remain concerned that mobile applications owned or operated by foreign developers, or that store the user data of US citizens overseas, could enable our adversaries to access significant quantities of potentially sensitive information on American citizens without their knowledge to the detriment of US national security." Lynch "added that, at a minimum, the companies should alert App Store and Play store users about the potential privacy risks associated with apps affiliated with US adversaries."

Meadows Says Trump Administration Action On Risks Posed By TikTok Likely "In Weeks." [Reuters](#) (7/15) reports a White House official "said on Wednesday President Trump's Administration is studying the national security risks of social media applications including TikTok and WeChat, with action to address the issue expected in the coming weeks." White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows told reporters, "There are a number of ... Administration officials who are looking at the national security risk as it relates to TikTok, WeChat and other apps that have the potential for national security exposure, specifically as it relates to the gathering of information on American citizens by a foreign adversary. I don't know that there's any self-imposed deadline in terms of action, but I would say that we're looking at weeks, not months."

Senate Committee To Vote On Bill Banning Federal Employees From Using TikTok. [Reuters](#) (7/15, Bose) reports a US Senate committee is likely "to vote next week on a bill from Sen. Josh Hawley (R- MO) that would ban federal employees from using social media app TikTok on government-issued devices." The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee will "take up the 'No TikTok on Government Devices Act' at its hearing on July 22." TikTok's Chinese ownership and popularity among US teens have "brought scrutiny from US regulators and lawmakers." Hawley has repeatedly "raised national security concerns over TikTok's handling of user data and said he was worried that the company shares data with the Chinese government." Hawley told reporters in March when he announced the introduction of the bill, "For federal employees it really is a no-brainer. It's a major security risk. ... Do we really want Beijing having geo-location data of all federal employees? Do we really want them having their keystrokes?"

Buck Spearheads Campaign Pressing Trump To Ban TikTok Over National Security. The [Daily Caller](#) (7/15, 716K) reports Rep. Ken Buck (R-CO) and 24 other GOP lawmakers "pressed President Trump Wednesday to ban TikTok over concerns that the social media app's suspected ties to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) pose a threat to US national security." Buck "wrote in a letter obtained by the Daily Caller News Foundation that TikTok's data collection practices present 'a very real threat to US national security'" "The letter was "addressed to Trump and demands 'strong action to stop the CCP's sophisticated espionage campaign.'"

UK Ban On Huawei Spurring Calls For Tougher EU Approach.

[Politico](#) (7/15, Cerulus, 4.29M) reports Britain's "decision to ban Huawei from its 5G networks triggered a wave of calls Wednesday to toughen up telecom security in other parts of Europe." According to Politico, "The calls suggest that while other EU countries have taken a softer approach to the Chinese telecom giant, political pressure could bring a shift to harder lines." Politico says "many EU member countries have so far opted for a more moderate stance on 5G security, backing security constraints but dismissing calls for all-out bans."

UK Denies Trump Influenced Huawei Decision. [CNBC](#) (7/15, Browne, 3.62M) reports a British minister "said Wednesday President Trump did not directly influence the US government's decision to ban Huawei equipment from its 5G networks." Health Secretary Matt Hancock told Sky News, "We all know Donald Trump, don't we? All sorts of people can try to claim credit for the decision but this was based on a technical assessment by the National

Cyber Security Centre." Hancock was "responding to a question about Trump's comments on the policy change." Trump "said Tuesday that he was the one who had convinced countries such as Britain to block Huawei." Trump may not be able "to take all the credit for the UK ditching Huawei from its rollout of super-fast 5G mobile networks." But it is his Administration's "introduction of new sanctions on the Chinese telecommunications firm that officials said ultimately led to a reversal in policy."

UK Spokesman Says US Sanctions Led To Change In UK Position. [Reuters](#) (7/15) reports a spokesman for Prime Minister Boris Johnson "said on Wednesday Britain changed its position on using China's Huawei in its 5G network because of US sanctions, when asked about President Trump's comments that he was responsible." The spokesman told reporters, "The reason for the UK's change of position was the impact of the US sanctions which were announced in May. Those sanctions were like nothing we had ever seen before, and led to the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) changing its assessments."

Huawei Hopeful It Can Still Provide 5G To Canada. The [Globe and Mail \(CAN\)](#) (7/15, 1.04M) reports Huawei Canada "says it is collateral damage in the Trump Administration's trade war with China and remains hopeful that it might still be able to sell next-generation Internet equipment to Canada." That characterization comes one day "after Britain became the last of Canada's 'Five Eyes' intelligence-sharing allies to ban the Chinese telecommunications firm from its 5G wireless Internet." Alykhan Velshi, Huawei Canada's vice president of corporate affairs, "says the company hopes the Trudeau government's ongoing 5G review steers clear of political machinations" by the Trump Administration to undermine the company. He said, "We see ourselves as being caught in the middle of the US-China trade war. Canada is also unfortunately caught in the middle of it."

Huawei's Expansion Prospects Threatened By Setbacks. [CNN](#) (7/15, Pham, 83.16M) reports Britain's decision "to ban Huawei...is a huge blow to the Chinese conglomerate's global ambitions and hopes of leading the next generation of wireless technology." Despite the US campaign "against the company over the last two years, Huawei has managed to grow its 5G business, securing dozens of contracts with telecom carriers, many of them in Europe." But the United Kingdom's reversal "is a big loss for Huawei, and could spell more trouble ahead." The company's supply chain has been "upended by the latest US restrictions, prompting renewed concerns about the security risks of using its product." Carisa Nietzsche, a researcher at the Center for a New American Security, a Washington think tank, said Britain's "decision will prompt a reassessment in European capitals about whether they will be able to mitigate the risk of including Huawei in their 5G networks."

China Says It Will Act To Protect Its Interests After UK Huawei Ban. [Reuters](#) (7/15) reports China "said on Wednesday it will take all necessary measures to safeguard its interests following Britain's decision to purge all Huawei equipment from its 5G network by the end of 2027." Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying "told reporters that China strongly opposes Britain's decision and said the decision was driven by the politicization of commercial and technological issues and not by national security."

EU Court Strikes Down Privacy Shield.

[TechCrunch](#) (7/16, Lomas, 605K) reports that a "highly anticipated ruling by Europe's top court has just landed — striking down a flagship EU-US data flows arrangement called Privacy Shield." the Court of Justice's finding is that "the requirements of US national security, public interest and law enforcement have primacy, thus condoning interference with the fundamental rights of persons whose data are transferred to that third country", and that mechanisms in Privacy Shield "are not up to the required legal standard of 'essential equivalence' with EU law."

Companies Worry EU Court Ruling Could Disrupt Global Data Transfers. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/15, Stupp, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports businesses operating in Europe are concerned a court ruling expected in coming days might hamper the transfer of personal data to other countries. The EU's top court will make a decision this week whether a

widely used tool that transfers data from within the EU to outside countries is legal. Companies have begun seeking alternative ways to maintain the movement of personal information as the ruling nears. [Law360](#) (7/14, Subscription Publication, 8K) reported Europe's top court is "poised to decide on Thursday the fate of a pair of popular cross-border data transfer mechanisms, in a ruling that is expected to have sweeping implications for the way information flows out of the European Union and how regulators scrutinize these exchanges." The European Court of Justice "has been asked to determine whether EU citizens are adequately protected when companies use a tool known as standard contractual clauses to transfer personal data outside the bloc, particularly in light of concerns about the access that US intelligence agencies may have to this information."

[BBC News Online \(UK\)](#) (7/16, 1.02M) reports the privacy ruling "has the potential to cause chaos for companies which transfer data out of the EU." Legal experts are "confident that a 'worst-case' judgment will not be reached, but still warn of far-reaching implications." It involves a case "against Facebook by a privacy advocate who objected to his information being sent to the US." Thousands of companies "rely on the existing measures, which are at risk." The case before the European Court of Justice (ECJ) "is complex, but hinges in part on the concern that US law requires Facebook to hand over personal data to authorities such as the National Security Agency or FBI."

Draft National Defense Authorization Act Includes Numerous Solarium Cyber Amendments.

[Defense Systems](#) (7/15, Johnson, 93K) reports that, "following the release of the Cyberspace Solarium Commission report earlier this year, members of the group almost immediately identified the annual National Defense Authorization Act as a prime vehicle to implement much of their agenda." As the defense authorization process "enters its final stages, they're doing all they can to deliver on that prediction." Markups of the House and Senate versions "already have a number of Solarium provisions baked in, and members have introduced dozens of proposed amendments that draw from recommendations in the report." Solarium co-chair Sen. Angus King (I-ME) has "sponsored or co-sponsored 18 additional amendments, while on the House side Rep. Jim Langevin (D-RI) has been involved in submitting at least 16 Solarium-related amendments to the Rules Committee." King "expressed cautious optimism about the prospects for the raft of later amendments, saying 'we're making progress' and noting that a number of proposals enjoy broad or bipartisan support."

Bipartisan Concerns Arise Over Cyber Director Legislation. [NextGov](#) (7/15, Baksh) reports House Oversight Committee lawmakers from both parties "expressed apprehension that a bipartisan bill proposing to create a national cyber director's office would lead to fiscal waste and overlapping responsibilities." Rep. Jim Langevin (D-RI) "introduced the legislation and plans to propose its amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act." Langevin and fellow members of the Cyberspace Solarium Commission "testified before the committee Wednesday on the merits of the proposal, which was a key recommendation of the bipartisan, public-private commission." They "argued the need for a Senate-confirmed individual who would have the president's ear and be dedicated to coordinating the government's cybersecurity activities across various departments with 'budget certification authority.'" Rep. James Comer (R-KY), ranking member on the committee, said, "In evaluating this legislative proposal, we have a duty to the American people to be a good steward of taxpayer dollars and not create more bureaucracy."

Air Force Cyber Org Reaches Full Operational Capability.

[C4ISR & Networks](#) (7/15, Pomerleau) reports that "less than a year after being created," the Air Force's Sixteenth Air Force/Air Forces Cyber "has finalized its organizational structure and has reached the milestone known as full operational capability, its commander said July 15." The new organization "has an expansive mission that includes serving air components and

combatant commanders across the globe in intelligence while also working as the Air Force component to U.S. Cyber Command and the Air Force component to the NSA.”

Yahoo News: 2018 Presidential Finding Allowed CIA To Conduct Offensive Cyber Operations.

In an “exclusive,” [Yahoo! News](#) (7/15, Dorfman, Zetter, McLaughlin, Naylor, 12.82M) reports that the CIA has “conducted a series of covert cyber operations against Iran and other targets since winning a secret victory in 2018 when President Trump signed what amounts to a sweeping authorization for such activities, according to former U.S. officials with direct knowledge of the matter.” The “presidential finding” give the CIA “more freedom in both the kinds of operations it conducts and who it targets, undoing many restrictions that had been in place under prior administrations.” Unlike previous limited presidential findings, this one, “driven by the National Security Council and crafted by the CIA, focuses more broadly on a capability: covert action in cyberspace.” Zack Dorfman of the Aspen Institute (and an author of the Yahoo News story) writes about the reported new authorization for [Axios](#) (7/15, 521K).

The [Daily Caller](#) (7/15, Datoc, 716K) reports that the Yahoo report, “which quotes numerous current and former U.S. intelligence sources, says the previously secret authorization has resulted in more than a dozen destabilizing attacks against the aforementioned countries.” In its coverage of the Yahoo report, [National Review](#) (7/15, Evans, 731K) reports that while “many in the CIA were reportedly elated with the new order, there was some pushback within the U.S. government against certain operations such as ‘document dumping.’”

The [Daily Beast](#) (7/15, Charbonneau, 1.39M) also covers the Yahoo piece, as does [Forbes](#) (7/15, Ray, 9.71M).

In an op-ed for [Yahoo! News](#) (7/15, 12.82M), former national security official Richard Clarke writes that the new authority “may presage an escalation in the ongoing cyberwars and the distinct possibilities of excessively provocative U.S. action, retaliation on U.S. soil and attacks on financial institutions.”

LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

Kansas City, Missouri Officials Discuss “Operation LeGend.”

[WDAF-TV](#) Kansas City, MO (7/15, Pepitone, 242K) reports from Kansas City, Missouri, “Two hundred twenty-five federal agents are on their way to help police try to get violent criminals off the streets. ‘Operation LeGend,’ named for 4-year-old murder victim LeGend Tallifero, is designed to be an unprecedented government response to the highest number of homicides Kansas City has ever seen, so far this year.” WDAF-TV adds, “There has been concern by some in the urban core that a surge of federal agents in Kansas City would result in reduced freedoms and a martial law type of environment.”

[KCTV-TV](#) Kansas City, MO (7/15, Aguilar, Oberholtz, 133K) reports, “The U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Missouri and the mayor of Kansas City laid out details of Operation Legend on Wednesday. It’s an effort announced by The White House last week to respond to the spike in violence crime in Kansas City.” According to KCTV-TV, “There are 250 federal agents from the FBI, ATF, DEA and U.S. Marshals Service preparing to come to Kansas City to assist Kansas City police with investigations. Kansas Citians won’t be seeing feds patrolling the streets and there won’t be troops or tanks. Mayor Quinton Lucas and U.S. Attorney Tim Garrison wanted to make it very clear. This is simply ramping up investigative efforts to solve more homicides.”

[KMBC-TV](#) Kansas City, MO (7/15, Holwick, 205K) reports, “Mayor Quinton Lucas and U.S. Attorney Timothy Garrison held a news conference Wednesday to explain what the operation is and what it will look like. ‘I know you are all grieving, and I know you all deserve justice,’ Lucas

said. 'We're trying to use evidence-based, targeted enforcement against the most prolific violent offenders,' Garrison said."

Studies Tie Increased Gun Sales This Year To Spike In Gun Violence.

The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Ingraham, 14.2M) reports that researchers from the Brookings Institution and the University of California at Davis have both concluded that the fact that "Americans purchased millions more guns than usual this spring" is tied to the "significant increase in gun violence across the United States." The Post says "a team from the University of California Firearm Violence Research Center...found a massive increase in gun buying during the first half of the year," and estimated that "firearm violence nationally jumped nearly 8 percent from March through May because of excess gun-buying." The Brookings study "indicated gun sales jumped even higher in June, with potentially even greater effects on rates of gun violence."

Judge Blocks Federal Execution Scheduled For Wednesday Night.

The [AP](#) (7/15, Balsamo, Tarm) reports that on Wednesday, US District Judge Tanya Chutkan "halted the execution of a man, said to be suffering from dementia, who had been set to die by lethal injection in the federal government's second execution this week after a 17-year hiatus." Wesley Ira Purkey, "convicted of a gruesome 1998 kidnapping and killing, was scheduled for execution Wednesday night at the U.S. Penitentiary in Terre Haute, Indiana, where Daniel Lewis Lee was put to death Tuesday after his eleventh-hour legal bids failed." Chutkan "imposed two injunctions prohibiting the federal Bureau of Prisons from moving forward with Purkey's execution," and the Justice Department "immediately appealed in both cases."

The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Berman, Elfrink, 14.2M) reports Chutkan ruled "Purkey's arguments that he is not competent to be executed require 'a fair hearing.'" The Post points out that Chutkan "has stood between the Justice Department and its plans for capital punishment before, blocking the execution schedule it laid out last year to let death-row inmates proceed with their challenges to its new lethal-injection protocol." On Monday, "hours before the department had scheduled its first federal execution in 17 years, Chutkan blocked it and other planned executions, saying it was necessary so other legal challenges mounted by the inmates could proceed in court."

US Overdose Deaths Rose To Record High In 2019 In Reversal Of Positive Trend.

[Politico](#) (7/15, Ehley, 4.29M) reports that in 2019, "drug overdose deaths climbed to a record high...reversing a historic decline in 2018 that President Donald Trump touted as one of his administration's key accomplishments." Politico, citing the CDC, says "there were 70,980 reported deaths from overdoses in 2019, surpassing the peak of 70,699 deaths in 2017." According to Politico, "The numbers represent a 4.6 percent increase from the previous year, a trend that the Trump administration and experts say is continuing as overdose deaths spike amid a pandemic that's taken a toll on America's mental health."

The [AP](#) (7/15, Johnson) reports preliminary data released Wednesday by the CDC "show the trend is driven by fentanyl and similar synthetic opioids, which accounted for 36,500 overdose deaths." Fatalities "involving cocaine and methamphetamine also are rising." The figures show rising overdose deaths in more than 30 states, but "a cluster of states in the Northeast – Massachusetts, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Rhode Island – saw declines."

OTHER FBI NEWS

FBI Warns Of Fake Phone Calls Claiming Agents Will Shut Down El Paso, Texas Due To COVID-19.

The [El Paso \(TX\) Times](#) (7/15, Martinez, 123K) reports, "FBI officials are warning of prank phone calls attempting to cause fear by falsely claiming that federal agents will shut down El Paso due to the COVID-19 pandemic." According to the Times, "The unknown callers are telling El Paso residents the shutdown will last for two weeks, starting Friday, FBI officials said. The callers are not making any demands, but are 'just spreading false information and instilling unease and mistrust in the community,' officials said. 'The FBI will not be closing down the City or any parts of El Paso,' officials said. 'The employees of the FBI El Paso Division are here to help keep the citizens of El Paso safe from criminal activities not to enforce COVID restrictions.'"

Bureau Of Prisons Releases Ex-Rep. Fattah From Prison Early.

The [Inquirer \(PA\)](#) (7/15, Brennan, Roebuck, 347K) reports, "The U.S. Bureau of Prisons has accomplished what attorneys for former U.S. Rep. Chaka Fattah could not after two appeals – springing the disgraced pol early from lockup." According to the Inquirer, "A BOP spokesperson confirms that Fattah, a Philadelphia Democrat sentenced in 2016 to 10 years on corruption charges, returned to the city on June 8 from a federal prison near Scranton and will serve the rest of his sentence either in a halfway house or under house arrest," but "the BOP refused to say why the congressman had been released, more than five years before his scheduled 2025 release date."

Retired FBI Special Agent Arrested For Allegedly Charging At Children With Truck.

The [Springfield \(MA\) Republican](#) (7/15, Barry, 395K) reports from Longmeadow, Massachusetts, "Longtime FBI Special Agent Cliff Hedges was arrested last month after allegedly rushing a group of middle school-age children on bicycles with his truck after the youths taunted him in a parking lot." Hedges "is scheduled for arraignment in Springfield District Court on July 28, according to court records. He faces four counts of assault with a dangerous weapon, one count of leaving the scene of an accident with property damage and one count of negligent operation of a motor vehicle." Hedges, 61, "retired from the FBI after a high-profile career in Springfield when he investigated murderous biker gangs and led a long-running investigation into public corruption at City Hall and other state- and city-run agencies that yielded dozens of convictions."

Former Federal Prosecutor Berman Takes Teaching Job At Stanford.

The [New York Times](#) (7/15, Weiser, 18.61M) reports, "Geoffrey S. Berman, the former U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York who was abruptly fired last month by President Trump, will be a visiting professor at Stanford Law School for the fall 2020 term, the school said on Wednesday." Berman will "teach a course on prosecutors and their decision-making, how they decide what crimes to charge and what punishments to seek." Berman, "who received his law degree from Stanford in 1984, said in a statement that he looked forward to serving as 'a resource to students who are interested in criminal and national security law,' and having the opportunity to pass on what he had learned about the 'critical role of the prosecutor in the administration of justice.'"

OTHER WASHINGTON NEWS

Trump Criticizes Navarro Op-Ed, Says He Has "A Very Good Relationship" With Fauci.

The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, A1, Wagner, Kornfield, 14.2M) reports that on Wednesday, President Trump "chided" Director of Trade and Manufacturing Policy Navarro "for having written an extraordinary [op-ed](#) for USA Today in which he heavily criticized" NIAID Director Fauci. Trump told reporters, "He made a statement representing himself. He shouldn't be doing that." The Post says Trump's comments "were part of a concerted effort by the White House to distance itself from the op-ed – which had the headline 'Anthony Fauci has been wrong about

everything I have interacted with him on' – in which Navarro laid out several disagreements with Fauci." [Bloomberg](#) (7/15, 4.73M) reports Navarro wrote that Fauci "has regularly been wrong, saying he didn't favor Trump's travel ban from China, initially downplayed the risk of the virus and flip-flopped on masks."

[Reuters](#) (7/15, Holland) reports a White House official said that Navarro "was told 'explicitly in recent days to de-escalate the situation,'" and that Chief of Staff Meadows "thought Navarro's article was 'unacceptable.'" However, Noah Bierman of the [Los Angeles Times](#) (7/15, Bierman, 4.64M) writes, "According to one administration official, who was not authorized to speak on the record, Navarro had the president's permission to write the column. 'Not only was he authorized by Trump, he was encouraged,' the official said."

[Politico](#) (7/15, Forgey, 4.29M) reports White House Director of Strategic Communications Alyssa Farah "insisted in a [tweet](#) Wednesday morning that the West Wing's press shop had not approved" the Navarro op-ed. The [New York Times](#) (7/15, Rogers, 18.61M) reports that for his part, "after several days spent weathering attacks from White House officials," Fauci "hit back on Wednesday, calling recent efforts to discredit him 'bizarre' and a hindrance to the government's ability to communicate information about the coronavirus pandemic."

All three broadcast networks covered the controversy on their Wednesday evening newscasts. Jonathan Karl reported on [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (7/15, story 3, 2:10, Muir, 7.16M), "After enduring days of attacks from White House officials some named, some not, the usually mild-mannered [Fauci] today said enough is enough." Fauci: "Let's stop this nonsense and figure out how can we get our control over this now." Karl: "The President, who has also criticized Dr. Fauci, distanced himself from Navarro's words." Trump: "Well, he made a statement representing himself. He shouldn't be doing that. No, I have a very good relationship with Anthony."

On the [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (7/15, story 5, 1:25, O'Donnell, 4.16M), Paula Reid similarly reported that Trump "insists he is on good terms" with Fauci, "even as direct attacks are launched against the top doctor from the West Wing of the White House." Reid said Fauci "called the of the to discredit him 'bizarre,' especially when the pandemic is raging." Fauci: "They realize that was a major mistake on their part because it doesn't do anything but reflect poorly on them." Geoff Bennett said on [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (7/15, story 4, 2:00, Holt, 5.7M) that Trump is "distancing himself from his top adviser Peter Navarro, who wrote a scathing take-down" of Fauci.

In an interview with [The Atlantic](#) (7/15, Nicholas, Yong, 3.47M), Fauci said he told Meadows, "When the staff lets out something like that and the entire scientific and press community push back on it, it ultimately hurts the President. And I don't really want to hurt the President. But that's what's happening. I told him I thought it was a big mistake. That doesn't serve any good purpose for what we're trying to do." When asked if the Administration has tried to cut back on Fauci's television appearances, Fauci replied, "I can't make a comment on that, but I think you know what the answer to that is." [Reuters](#) (7/15, Chiacu) and the [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Farzan, Armus, 14.2M) briefly cover the interview.

[USA Today](#) (7/15, Subramanian, Wu, 10.31M) reports supporters of the President "have aired their frustrations over Fauci's prominence in the administration's coronavirus response in recent weeks, but medical experts fear a 'clash of messages' could dilute public health warnings." The [Washington Examiner](#) (7/15, Leonardi, 448K) reports Vice President Pence told reporters Wednesday that Fauci "is a 'valued member' of the White House Coronavirus Task Force."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/15, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) says in an editorial that the anti-Fauci effort is counterproductive, as it underscores the lack of a coherent message from the White House on coronavirus and gives the President's opponents another rallying point.

Redfield Says Following Guidelines "Could Bring This Outbreak To Its Knees."

On [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (7/15, lead story, 3:00, 5.7M), Lester Holt asked, "What if there was a magic bullet that could bring COVID under control in two months or less? According to the head of the CDC, we already have one." On [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (7/15, story 8, 1:40, Muir, 7.16M), Alex Perez reported CDC Director Redfield said the virus "could be controlled in weeks if people follow the guidelines." Redfield: "If we really embrace masking, if we really embrace the social distancing and hand-washing, we could bring this outbreak to its knees."

The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Witte, 14.2M) reports, "Masks on Wednesday moved ever closer to becoming a new national reality in America's pandemic-scarred life, with businesses, states and health experts preaching their promise as the country's last line of defense against a fast-growing viral threat." Though the White House "continued to resist pushing for a national mask mandate, evidence abounded that face coverings were becoming a de facto requirement."

Administration Faces Criticism For Transferring COVID Patient Information From CDC To HHS.

On [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (7/15, story 4, 0:40, Muir, 7.16M), Jonathan Karl reported on the "new directive that says hospitals should send information on coronavirus patients to the Department of Health and Human Services instead of to the CDC as they had been doing. This has raised some concerns about how that data will be used and whether it will be shared, but the head of the CDC late today said that his agency will have full access to all of the information." The [AP](#) (7/15, Stobbe, Condon) reports CDC Director Redfield said the CDC "has agreed to step out of the government's traditional data collection process 'in order to streamline reporting.'"

However, Paula Reid said on the [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (7/15, story 6, 0:30, O'Donnell, 4.16M) that the Administration is "under fire for its decision to reroute critical hospital data on COVID patients away from the CDC to a private database" at HHS, which "could make the data less transparent to the public and researchers, and hinder the fight against the virus." Obama Administration HHS Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response Nicole Lurie: "What they are basically doing here is cutting the legs off of CDC. They are denying it the essential information they need to make decisions and to inform the American public." [Politico](#) (7/15, Bettelheim, 4.29M) reports "a group of public health experts including former CDC Director Tom Frieden called the change unproductive, noting that inadequate funding for health data at CDC and local agencies is already hindering a response" to COVID-19.

The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Goldstein, Sun, 14.2M) reports the new rules "took effect Wednesday and will determine the allocation starting next week of critical supplies from the federal government, including protective gear and remdesivir."

Coronavirus Cases Continue To Rise; US Death Count Tops 140,000.

David Muir opened [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (7/15, lead story, 4:50, 7.16M) by reporting that coronavirus is "only worsening in the US. ICUs across the South filling at an alarming rate; Florida, the new epicenter, more than 50 ICUs already maxed out. Tonight the death toll is rising in 25 states; more than 137,000 lives now lost. Florida, after setting a daily record for deaths, report[ed] 112 more lives lost today." Texas reported "a record 110 deaths"

Wednesday. On the [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (7/15, lead story, 4:15, 4.16M), Norah O'Donnell reported, "One of the leading models used by the White House says to expect nearly 90,000 more Americans to die from the virus by November 1. That alarming report comes as a surge of infections sweeping the US keeps expanding. Forty-one states are now seeing spikes; more than 67,000 new cases were reported nationwide in just the past 24 hours. That is yet another one-day record." As of Wednesday evening, there were more than 3.6 million confirmed US cases, and more than 140,000 confirmed deaths.

The [AP](#) (7/15, Tucker, Kantouris, Jackson) reports that Arizona, Florida, and Texas "together reported about 25,000 new coronavirus cases on Wednesday as restrictions aimed at

combating the spread of the pandemic took hold in the United States." The AP adds, "Among the sternest measures were in New York," where Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) "added to a list totaling 22 states whose visitors will be required to quarantine for 14 days if they visit the Tri-State region. Out-of-state travelers arriving in New York airports from those states face a \$2,000 fine and a mandatory quarantine order if they fail to fill out a tracing form." The [New York Times](#) (7/15, 18.61M) reports that "cases have been increasing in 41 states over the past two weeks, and hard-hit cities and counties across the Sun Belt are beginning to put refrigerated trucks on standby over fears that their morgues could soon run out of room."

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (7/15, Money, Shalby, 4.64M) reports California "reported its largest number of new coronavirus infections in a single day Tuesday." The 11,142 cases "were easily the most confirmed in any one day since the pandemic began, surpassing the previous record of 9,816 on July 9." The [Los Angeles Times](#) (7/15, Dolan, 4.64M) reports that San Francisco Director of Public Health Grant Colfax said the rate of transmission "continued to climb in the Bay Area and the city would not move forward with reopening." [ABC World News Tonight](#) (7/15, story 2, 2:05, Muir, 7.16M) had a feature on first responders in the hard-hit state.

The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Nirappil, Wiggins, Chason, Hedgpeth, 14.2M) reports, "The greater Washington region recorded its highest daily coronavirus caseload in weeks Wednesday." The District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia "combined to report the region's highest single-day case increase since June 4. Leaders in the region are monitoring a recent rise in cases in hopes of staving off outbreaks that have occurred elsewhere in the country."

The [Miami Herald](#) (7/15, Marchante, 1.09M) reports the Florida Department of Health on Tuesday "confirmed 9,194 new cases of COVID-19, bringing the state's total known cases to 291,629." The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Beachum, Bellware, Knowles, 14.2M) reports in Alabama, "where officials reported 2,141 new infections Wednesday, 87 percent of the state's ICU beds were occupied earlier this week."

Alexis Madrigal writes in [The Atlantic](#) (7/15, 3.47M), "The deaths are not happening in unpredictable places. Rather, people are dying at higher rates where there are lots of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations: in Florida, Arizona, Texas, and California, as well as a host of smaller southern states that all rushed to open up. ... Many people who don't want COVID-19 to be the terrible crisis that it is have clung to the idea that more cases won't mean more deaths. ... But given the policy choices that state and federal officials have made, the virus has done exactly what public-health experts expected."

Oklahoma Governor Tests Positive, But Still Opposes Mask Mandate.

The [Tulsa World](#) (7/15, 205K) reports Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt (R) "said Wednesday that he has tested positive for COVID-19, becoming the first nation's governor to contract the virus but remaining steadfast against a mask mandate." Stitt said, "I feel fine. I was pretty shocked that I was the first governor to get it." [Reuters](#) (7/15, Hay, O'Brien) reports Stitt "had faced a backlash in recent days after posting on Twitter a picture of himself and two of his children at a crowded restaurant, even as state health authorities urged social distancing."

National Parks May Be Battleground In Reopening Fights.

The [New York Times](#) (7/15, Williamson, Mervosh, 18.61M) reports US national parks "are grappling with how to safely stay open" amidst the coronavirus pandemic. There is mounting pressure "to close Grand Canyon and other national parks in states across the South and the West that face spiking caseloads." According to the Times, "As locked-down Americans clamor to return to the outdoors and families seek out safe vacations from limited options, the national parks could become the latest battleground in the fight over reopening."

Oxford Researchers To Publish Early Results Of Vaccine Research Next Week.

John Torres reported on [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (7/15, story 3, 0:50, Holt, 5.7M) that there is "promising news this week on the race to develop a COVID vaccine. Early results we've been waiting for from researchers at Oxford will be published next week in the journal Lancet. What we'll be looking for is to see if this vaccine could offer double defense against the virus, meaning it doesn't just boost antibodies for COVID but also T-cells, which are those important helper cells. When both are boosted together, it provides potentially years of immunity, meaning people won't need to get regular booster vaccines. The US biotech company Moderna posted their Phase One results [Tuesday]. Both of these have been fast-tracked to the next phase of clinical trials and production." On the [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (7/15, story 3, 1:45, O'Donnell, 4.16M), Carter Evans reported, "The Phase Three Moderna trial starts at the end of the month with 30,000 participants in COVID hotspots."

Vaccine Scientist Will Not Be Forced To Disclose Stocks.

The [New York Times](#) (7/15, Weiland, 18.61M) reports, "The scientist leading the Trump administration's coronavirus vaccine program will be allowed to remain a government contractor, a decision that permits him to avoid ethics disclosures required of federal employees and maintain his investments in pharmaceutical companies." The HHS Inspector General said Moncef Slaoui, "a venture capitalist and a former executive at the pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline," would not be required to make such disclosures, "citing the unusual role that Dr. Slaoui was playing in the administration amid the pandemic."

Resurgence Of Coronavirus Cases Threatens To Derail Economic Recovery.

The [New York Times](#) (7/15, A1, Tankersley, Casselman, 18.61M) reports the US economy is "headed for a tumultuous autumn, with the threat of closed schools, renewed government lockdowns, empty stadiums and an uncertain amount of federal support for businesses and unemployed workers all clouding hopes for a rapid rebound from recession." According to the Times, "failure to suppress a resurgence of confirmed infections is threatening to choke the recovery and push the country back into a recessionary spiral – one that could inflict long-term damage on workers and businesses large and small, unless Congress reconsiders the scale of federal aid that may be required in the months to come." On Tuesday, large companies "forecast gloomy months ahead," and "some companies that used small-business loans to retain or rehire workers are now beginning to lay off employees as those funds run out while business activity remains depressed."

Fed Survey Says Economic Activity Has Rebounded But Outlook Remains

Uncertain. The [AP](#) (7/15, Crutsinger) reports the Federal Reserve "says economic activity has picked up in most regions of the country but still remains well below pre-pandemic levels with the country facing high levels of uncertainty." The Fed's Beige Book report on Wednesday found "improvements in consumer spending and other areas but said the gains were from very low levels seen when widespread lockdowns push the country into a deep recession." Also, "the report said that business contacts in the Fed's 12 regions remained wary about the future."

Fed Report Shows US Manufacturing Bounced Back In June. [Reuters](#) (7/15, Mutikani) reports US industrial output "rose by the most in more than 74 years in June as motor vehicle production accelerated amid the reopening of businesses, but the nascent economic recovery was overshadowed by surging new COVID-19 infections." The Federal Reserve "said manufacturing production jumped 7.2% last month, the largest gain since March 1947, after climbing 3.8% in May." However, "manufacturers in the region were less upbeat about the outlook over the next six months."

Congressional Leaders Posture In Showdown Over Next Coronavirus Package.

[Politico](#) (7/15, Levine, Caygle, Bresnahan, 4.29M) reports congressional leaders are "squabbling" over the next coronavirus relief package, as House Speaker Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader McConnell "straddl[e] opposite sides of a multi-trillion dollar divide, with neither

currently willing to budge.” While “congressional leaders from both parties privately believe they’ll reach a deal at some point,” Politico says “it may take several weeks of difficult negotiations – and public posturing – to strike an accord.” Both parties are aware that “the forthcoming coronavirus package is likely to be the last before the November election, increasing pressure to squeeze in demands before going home to campaign amid a pandemic-induced recession.”

WSJournal: Republicans Should Oppose Extending Enhanced Jobless Benefits.

In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/15, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) warns Republicans that extending enhanced unemployment benefits in the next coronavirus aid package will disincentivize people from returning to work and keep the unemployment rate unnecessarily elevated. If lawmakers deem additional stimulus is warranted, the Journal suggests cutting the payroll tax would be a better alternative.

Bernanke: Giving State Governments Aid Will Help Economic Recovery. In an op-ed for the [New York Times](#) (7/15, Bernanke, 18.61M), former Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke urges Congress to not “repeat mistakes of the recent past” and give states the aid they need to weather the financial storm caused by the coronavirus pandemic. During the Great Recession, a “turn to austerity at the federal level,” along with state and local budget cuts, “meaningfully slowed the recovery.” Bernanke concludes: “To continue to provide services that its citizens need and to avoid severe budget and employment cuts that will drag down the economy, states and localities need more federal help. Providing that help is in everyone’s interest.”

Virginia Becomes First State To Adopt Coronavirus Safety Rules For Workplaces.

The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Rosenberg, 14.2M) reports, “The state of Virginia will adopt the first set of coronavirus-related workplace safety mandates in the country, after a board approved the emergency regulation Wednesday – a move the state took after months of inaction from a federal agency tasked with nationwide enforcement.” Businesses could “face steep financial penalties if they are found to have violated the policies,” which “prohibit workers suspected of having the coronavirus from showing up to work, require companies to notify workers of possible exposure to infected co-workers within 24 hours, and include mandates about physical distancing, protective gear, sanitation, disinfecting and hand-washing.” State officials “said that they were pushed to act because of the lack of enforcement on behalf of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.”

Walmart To Require Customers Wear Masks In Its Stores.

The [AP](#) (7/15, D’Innocenzio) reports Walmart announced on Wednesday that it “will require customers to wear face coverings at all of its namesake and Sam’s Club stores, making it the largest retailer to introduce such a policy that has otherwise proven difficult to enforce without state and federal requirements.” According to the AP, “The policy will go into effect on Monday to allow time to inform customers.” The AP adds that “currently, about 65% of its more than 5,000 stores and clubs are located in areas where there is already some form of government mandate on face coverings.” [CNBC](#) (7/15, Repko, 3.62M) says on its website, “Many retailers, including Walmart, have dealt with a patchwork approach of state and local rules about face coverings. Without a national mandate, their employees have often had to police mask wearing policies – whether their own policy or a local government mandate.”

Trump Announces Changes To NEPA Regulations To Speed Permitting For Infrastructure Projects.

President Trump traveled to Atlanta Wednesday to announce changes to National Environmental Policy Act regulations that he said will make it easier to build highways and other infrastructure projects. While much of the coverage, particularly from media outlets in Georgia, focuses on Trump’s argument that the changes will speed the permitting process for infrastructure

projects, including the expansion of I-75 south of Atlanta, several reports describe the move as weakening NEPA and highlight criticism from Democrats and environmentalists.

[WSB-TV](#) Atlanta (7/15, 105K) reports on its website that Trump "announced that he's making changes in the environmental review process that they believe will cut the permitting time for big infrastructure projects from seven to two years." Trump said, "Together we're reclaiming America's proud heritage as a nation of builders and a nation that can get things done. Because with these horrible roadblocks that were put in front of us, you couldn't get it done. ... No matter how good you were, you couldn't get it done. You'd wait and wait. You'd go to the next step, you'd say you can't start the next step until you finish the first." On its website, [WGCL-TV](#) Atlanta (7/15, Edney, 48K) quotes Trump as saying, "Our infrastructure will be the envy of the world the way it was a long time ago. ... We're going back to around 1952, a long time ago, you have to get permits, we want safety, we want our environment, but you're going to get your answers quickly. If the answer is a big beautiful yes, you'll start construction immediately."

[WXIA-TV](#) Atlanta (7/15, 23K) reported that Trump "called his announcement a historic breakthrough the cuts through mountains of red tape in Washington." [WRBL-TV](#) Columbus, GA (7/15, 14K) reported that Trump "emphasized removing this outdated law, this 50-year-old law that makes it very difficult to manage permits, especially for environmental reviews." Trump: "We are cutting the federal permitting timeline for a major project from 20 years or more, hard to believe, down to two years or less. So, we have it down to about two years right now and, I think, two years or less and our goal is one year."

[WAGA-TV](#) Atlanta (7/15, 97K) showed Trump saying, "We will give every project a clear answer, yes or no. Yes or no. The two-year process where just to submit is two years is not acceptable. It is going to be a very quick yes or no, after study, but the studies are going to go quickly and they are going to go simultaneously."

The [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) (7/15, Stevens, 895K) reports that Trump "said one of the beneficiaries of this rules change is an expansion of I-75 south of Atlanta that would allow 77 new lane miles for commercial vehicles." [WAGA-TV](#) Atlanta (7/15, Bruner, 49K) reports on its website that Transportation Secretary Chao "said the policy change will directly benefit Georgia's infrastructure." Chao said, "These changes are going to expedite the environmental reviews for the I-75 commercial vehicle lane project in Atlanta, Georgia, so it's very good news." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/15, Puko, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports that business groups and trade unions, who argue environmental reviews have become a means to impose unnecessary delays on infrastructure projects, support the new rules.

The [New York Times](#) (7/15, Friedman, 18.61M) reports that Trump, speaking at the UPS Hapeville Airport Hub in Atlanta, argued that "mountains and mountains of red tape" and long permit processes have delayed major infrastructure projects across the country. Trump said, "All of that ends today. ... We're doing something very dramatic." But, the Times report also says Trump "unilaterally weakened one of the nation's bedrock conservation laws."

Similarly, The [AP](#) (7/15, Freking) reports that Trump announced "he is rolling back a foundational Nixon-era environmental law that he says stifles infrastructure projects, but that is credited with keeping big construction projects from fouling up the environment and ensuring there is public input on major projects." The AP says critics called his announcement "a cynical attempt to limit the public's ability to examine and influence proposed projects under one of the country's bedrock environmental protection laws."

The [Dallas Morning News](#) (7/15, Jones, 946K) says environmentalists "have reacted with horror at the regulator[y] changes, warning that developers, power companies and highway builders will take advantage of the Nixon-era protections, leading to irreversible environmental damage and to injustice among poor people most likely to live near such projects," while the [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Eilperin, Sonmez, 14.2M) reports that "critics warned that the White House is going beyond its legal authority by trying to change a law without congressional authorization."

Trump Takes Aim At Biden's Climate Plan. [The Hill](#) (7/15, Beitsch, 2.98M) reports that Trump "mocked" Joe Biden's climate plan during his speech. Trump said, "Our past vice president opposes – think of this – all of our permitting reforms. ... Biden is happy to tie up projects in red tape, and we want to get things built." The Hill adds that Biden opposes "Trump's rollback to NEPA." His campaign said in a statement, "No one should be fooled that Donald Trump is attempting to destroy a bipartisan, cornerstone law to distract from the fact that 'Infrastructure Week' never happened and never will happen as long as he is president. ... He has failed to deliver any real plan to create jobs and instead is cutting corners to once again ignore science, experts, and communities and reservations entitled to clean air, water, and environments."

White House Counselor Kellyanne Conway said on [WSB-AMVi](#) Atlanta (7/15, 52K), "This President has really been about cutting regulations that are I would say intrusive, invasive, duplicative, expensive, expansive from day one. ... Joe Biden is making promises now that he never bothered to fulfill in the five decades he has been in Washington. We know how this goes. If you are in Washington, of Washington you can't possible reform Washington. You owe too many people too many things. And that was a very refreshing aspect of Donald Trump's candidacy and indeed his presidency to many Americans."

Trump Praises Georgia's Handling Of Coronavirus. [WSB-TVVi](#) Atlanta (7/15, 206K) reported that Georgia "has asked for additional federal aid and funding and supplies. The President said it is coming." In an interview with WSB, Trump said, "We're working with your Governor, Brian. We are working with him very much, and we're going to be helping Georgia a lot, as we have been. It is a special place, great people and they've done really well, really well with the virus and with every other thing. They've really done an incredible job."

Bottoms Says Trump Broke The Law By Not Wearing Mask At Airport. Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms (D) said on [MSNBC](#) (7/15, 7.86M), "Donald Trump is actually violating the law, as he stands on our tarmac without a mask. The city of Atlanta owns and operates Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, the busiest in the world, and in Atlanta, in our city control assets, we have a mandate that you should have on the mask. So I am very glad to see that the others on the tarmac are heeding the law in Atlanta, but it's not surprising to me that Donald Trump is once again breaking that."

Some Democrats Urge Biden To Try To Put Georgia In Play. [Bloomberg](#) (7/15, 4.73M) casts Trump's trip to Georgia as an effort to keep the "reliably Republican state" in his column. Biden "has yet to push hard for votes" in the state, but some Democrats believe they "are ripe for the taking." According to Bloomberg, "Democrats say they hope the Biden campaign and the national party will seize the opportunity to not only capture the state's 16 electoral votes but also win two U.S. Senate seats."

Trump Visit Sparks Attacks In Georgia Senate Races. The [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) (7/15, Galloway, Bluestein, Mitchell, 895K) reported in its "The Jolt" blog Wednesday morning that Trump's visit to Atlanta was "preceded by more intense political maneuvering than usual." The campaign of Sen. Kelly Loeffler (R-GA) issued an attack focused on Chip Lake, a strategist for her rival Rep. Doug Collins (R-GA), who was "a notable Georgia GOP voice of opposition to Trump during the 2016 campaign and shortly after." The Collins campaign pointed out "that Loeffler's newly hired legislative director in Washington, Wesley Coopersmith, has an anti-Trump history."

Trump Will Challenge Manhattan DA's Efforts To Seek His Financial Records.

[Reuters](#) (7/15, Stempel) reports President Trump "plans further challenges to a Manhattan prosecutor's efforts to seek his financial records, despite a U.S. Supreme Court decision allowing the pursuit." The [AP](#) (7/15, Neumeister) reports Trump's lawyers indicated that they are "considering challenging a subpoena for his tax records by criminal prosecutors on grounds that it's a fishing expedition or a form of harassment or retaliation against him." The arguments were "outlined in a letter to a Manhattan federal judge overseeing legal squabbles related to

Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr.'s request to Trump's longtime accountant for eight years of the president's personal and corporate tax records in a criminal probe."

The [New York Times](#) (7/15, Rashbaum, Weiser, 18.61M) reports that in the new filing, Trump's lawyers "noted that the high court's decision allowed him to raise other objections: that the subpoena was 'motivated by a desire to harass or is conducted in bad faith,' and that it would impede his constitutional duties." The Times says the DA "issued the subpoena to the president's accounting firm last August, seeking the records as part of an investigation into hush-money payments made" to an adult film performer "who said she had an affair with Mr. Trump." The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Jacobs, 14.2M) reports that Vance's office, "which is facing a looming statute of limitations should he decide to pursue a felony case, suggested it would not allow the new matters to drag on. It said in Wednesday's filing that it could enforce the subpoena immediately but would give the president until July 27 to file his new claims before doing so."

House Democrats Want SCOTUS To Follow Up On Trump Record Ruling. [Politico](#) (7/15, Cheney, Gerstein, 4.29M) reports that "interpretations of last week's bombshell [Supreme Court] ruling in the House's effort to obtain" Trump's financial records "have polarized the legal community and lawmakers, leaving behind uncertainty about the balance of power between Congress and the president." According to Politico, the ruling "effectively delayed the House's effort to obtain Trump's financial records," and the justices "indicated that lower-court rulings upholding the House's subpoenas had failed to fully scrutinize whether the demand for the president's personal financial data is an incursion on the separation of powers."

Reuters/Ipsos Poll: Two-Thirds Want To See Trump's Tax Returns. [Reuters](#) (7/15, Kahn) reports 66% of US adults want to see Trump's tax returns, "and about half believe he has been withholding them for reasons that could hurt him politically, according to a Reuters/Ipsos public opinion poll" conducted July 13-14. In the poll, "26% said they believe Trump's taxes contain 'incriminating evidence against him,' and 10% said Trump is 'trying to hide significant financial losses.' Another 16% said they thought Trump does not want to reveal them because he 'does not pay taxes.'"

WPost Analysis: Trump Has Worked To Cover Up "Crimes" Committed To Help Him In 2016.

In an analysis titled "Two Crimes Benefited Trump's Campaign In 2016. Ever Since, The President Has Worked To Block Scrutiny Of Those Schemes," Rosalind Helderman of the [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Helderman, 14.2M) writes, "A porn star was paid to keep silent about her alleged dalliance years earlier with a presidential candidate, which a judge has agreed was an illegal violation of campaign finance laws. The private emails of Democrats were stolen and published, which prosecutors have said was an illegal intervention into the U.S. political system by foreign operatives." According to Helderman, "The two crimes were undertaken to help Donald Trump's campaign in 2016," and "for nearly four years, Trump has bullied, browbeaten and litigated his way out of efforts to pin down whether he had involvement in or knowledge of the illicit actions that were undertaken to help his presidential campaign."

House Democrats Advance Spending Bill That Would Cut ICE Funding.

The [Washington Times](#) (7/15, Dinan, 492K) reports House Democrats on Wednesday voted "to slash ICE funding, saying they were determined to punish the agency for 'willful disregard of Congress's role' in setting immigration priorities." Democrats on the House Appropriations Committee also "voted to undo the key Trump policies that helped solve last year's border surge, including new standards for asylum-seekers and deals with Mexico and Central American nations that helped slow the flow of people headed north." Rep. David Price (D-NC) "said they were intent on pushing back on 'cruel and arbitrary immigration policies' they say have distorted the immigration system."

Proposal To Overhaul Asylum System Criticized By Federal Officers.

The [New York Times](#) (7/15, Kanno-Youngs, 18.61M) reports, "A Trump administration plan to overhaul the asylum system in the United States would subject vulnerable families to danger and violate international law, officers who would carry out the policy said Wednesday." A union representing federal asylum officers "said it would effectively deny most migrants pursuing protection the right to have their claims of fear or persecution assessed." Michael Knowles, a spokesman for the National CIS Council, which represents employees with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, said, "They would close off every possibility for the average asylum seeker to even have a fair process much less getting asylum. How they think they can do it without violating their own laws and convention is beyond us."

WPost: Border Wall Is A Folly Marked By "Incompetence" And "Corruption."

The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, 14.2M) editorializes that President Trump, after "pushing the Army Corps of Engineers to award a major construction contract for his border wall to a North Dakota firm whose chief executive repeatedly went on Fox News to tout the project and his company's ability to build it," is now "bashing a segment of the wall in Texas...built as a showcase private project that, according to engineers who have examined photographs of the erosion at its base, is at risk of falling into the Rio Grande." According to the Post, "it's hard to say which looks worse for the president – the massive waste of money that has been diverted from Pentagon construction projects to build his porous wall, or the corruption that has marked the process."

Administration, Senate GOP May Prod Schools To Reopen With Incentives Or Conditions To Aid.

The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Meckler, Werner, 14.2M) reports the White House and Senate Republicans are "developing plans to prod schools to reopen by attaching incentives or conditions to tens of billions of dollars in new aid as part of the next coronavirus relief bill," according to people close to the matter. The bill may include "somewhere between \$50 billion and \$100 billion for elementary and secondary schools, with one person familiar with the talks saying the target was about \$70 billion." Some White House officials are "pushing for conditioning the aid on schools reopening in part or full, but others involved would prefer to offer incentives to schools to encourage them to take steps to reopen." The President [retweeted](#) a link to the recent Wall Street Journal editorial "The Case For Reopening Schools."

Trump Says Coronavirus "Has Virtually No Impact On Children." President Trump told [WSB-TV](#) Atlanta (7/15, 206K), "We do want to get our schools open. [The coronavirus] has virtually no impact on children. They are just stronger than we are, that's all. Their immune system or whatever it may be. But we want the schools open."

According to the [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Rucker, Abutaleb, Parker, 14.2M), Trump "has vowed that the nation's schools must reopen for the fall semester, but neither he nor his administration has detailed a plan for how to do so safely." The President "has boasted that the United States leads the world in coronavirus testing, yet he has declined to produce a national testing plan, and in many communities tests can take a week or longer to process, rendering their results all but useless in slowing the spread."

DeVos: "Being In School Is Safe For Children." Education Secretary DeVos said on [Fox News' The Story](#) (7/15), "The science tells us that being in school is safe for children. There was just a study that came out from Germany on Monday that suggests that actually kids might even be stoppers of the virus. It was over 2,000 kids and the virus did not spread, did not grow in any way."

Houston, San Francisco Schools Will Begin Fall Term Online. [Axios](#) (7/15, Ayesh, 521K) reports the Houston and San Francisco public school districts "announced Wednesday they will begin the 2020 fall semester online due to the ongoing threat of the coronavirus." Kristen Dahlgren reported on [NBC Nightly News](#) (7/15, story 2, 1:45, Holt, 5.7M) that

Houston, "the nation's seventh-largest district, [said] it will delay its start until September 8, and keep classes online the first six weeks."

The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Beachum, Bellware, Knowles, Denham, Berger, Wagner, Sonmez, Thebault, Kornfield, Iati, 14.2M) reports the Houston decision "follows similar announcements from school districts across the country that have chosen an online or hybrid format to limit the transmission of the coronavirus among students and educators who may have close contact in classrooms." Janet Shamlian reported on the [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (7/15, story 2, 1:45, O'Donnell, 4.16M), "Health officials suggest a new daily infection rate should be 5% or lower to reopen. Of the nation's ten largest school systems, only New York and Chicago meet that threshold."

Poll Finds Slight Majority Opposed To Fully Reopening Schools. [Politico](#) (7/15, Gaudiano, 4.29M) reports that, according to a Politico/Morning Consult poll, "a majority of voters oppose the Trump administration's demand that K-12 schools and day care centers be fully opened for in-person instruction during the coming academic year." According to Politico, 53% of voters "say they are somewhat or strongly opposed to fully reopening day cares or K-12 schools, while a slightly smaller 50 percent say they are opposed to fully reopening colleges and universities."

Teachers Unions Oppose Near-Term Reopening. The [Washington Times](#) (7/15, Boyer, 492K) reports the President's "urgent call to reopen schools is running smack into powerful teachers unions." The National Education Association "showed its political muscle Wednesday by airing campaign ads in six battleground states to pressure Republican senators up for reelection to approve Democrats' \$3 trillion coronavirus aid package." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/15, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) says in an editorial that teachers unions are holding students hostage to unrealistic demands such as Medicare For All and \$500 billion in additional direct aid.

National Academies: Children Should Return To In-Person Classes As Soon As Possible. The [New York Times](#) (7/15, Mandavilli, 18.61M) reports that "younger children in particular are ill-served by remote learning, according to a report issued by the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine." The Times adds, "Wading into the contentious debate over reopening schools, an influential committee of scientists and educators on Wednesday recommended that, wherever possible, younger children and those with special needs should attend school in person."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/15, A1, Hobbs, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports on how America's worst performing schools and its students are hit hardest by the drawbacks of remote learning. The Journal writes that district parents are worried by the growing disadvantage their kids are facing, especially when education is supposed to be an equalizer.

DeVos Sued By 23 AGs Over Changes To Student Loan Forgiveness Program.

The [AP](#) (7/15, Binkley) reports, "Democratic attorneys general in more than 20 states" sued Education Secretary DeVos on Wednesday, "seeking to repeal her overhaul of a student loan forgiveness program." The coalition of 22 states and the District of Columbia "say DeVos violated federal rules by issuing her policy without justification, and they say her rules fail to create a meaningful process for defrauded students to get their federal loans forgiven." The lawsuit "seeks to have DeVos' policy repealed and replaced by an earlier rule created" under then-President Barack Obama.

The [New York Times](#) (7/15, Cowley, 18.61M) reports, "The states' lawsuit says the revision violated the Administrative Procedure Act, a law that guides the federal government's rule-making process, by imposing "arbitrary and capricious" requirements." The lawsuit was "the latest legal battle over the decades-old program, known as Borrower Defense to Repayment, which allows students to ask that their federal loans be eliminated if their schools seriously misled them or violated state laws." DeVos has "called Borrower Defense a 'free money' giveaway and repeatedly tried to slash the relief available through the program."

Trump Touts Goya From Oval Office In Social Media Posts.

[Bloomberg](#) (7/15, Wingrove, Natter, 4.73M) reports President Trump "touted Goya Foods products from the Oval Office on Wednesday as the company faces a consumer boycott because its chief executive officer praised the president." Trump [tweeted](#), ".@GoyaFoods is doing GREAT. The Radical Left smear machine backfired, people are buying like crazy!" [Breitbart](#) (7/15, Spiering, 673K) reports Trump "further promoted Goya products on Wednesday, posing with several items on the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office. The president published the photo on his personal Instagram account." Bloomberg says the President's tweet "followed a [photo](#) tweeted the night before by his daughter and senior aide, Ivanka Trump, holding a can of Goya black beans."

Niece Acknowledges She "Can't Prove" Trump Cheated On SATs.

In an interview with George Stephanopoulos for [ABC's Good Morning America](#) (7/15, 3.16M), President Trump's niece Mary Trump said she was told by "a source very close to Donald" that the President had someone take the SAT for him in 1964, but she acknowledged that she has never met the man she claims took the test for Trump, someone she referred to as "Joe Shapiro," and that she does not know if that person is alive. Asked if she can "prove it's true," Mary Trump replied, "No, I can't prove it."

Postal Service's Planned Cost-Cutting Measures Could Lead To Delay In Mail Deliveries.

The [AP](#) (7/15, Daly) reports, "Mail deliveries could be delayed by a day or more under cost-cutting efforts being imposed by the new postmaster general." The plan prohibits "overtime for hundreds of thousands of postal workers and says employees must adopt a 'different mindset' to ensure the Postal Service's survival during the coronavirus pandemic." In a memo obtained by the AP, the agency "said the changes are aimed at 'making the USPS fundamentally solvent which we are not at this time.'"

Ginsburg Discharged From Hospital.

The [CBS Evening News](#) (7/15, story 7, 0:15, O'Donnell, 4.16M) reported Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on Wednesday was discharged from a hospital after being treated for a possible infection. [ABC World News Tonight](#) (7/15, story 11, 0:10, Muir, 7.16M) reported, "A spokeswoman said she's home and doing well."

The [AP](#) (7/15) reports Ginsburg "underwent an endoscopic procedure to clean out a bile duct stent, the court's spokeswoman, Kathleen Arberg, said in a statement." The stent was placed last year while she was "receiving treatment for a malignant tumor on her pancreas, which included focused radiation therapy."

The [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Itkowitz, 14.2M) reports, "Ginsburg seems to have recovered quicker than anticipated." [USA Today](#) (7/15, Wolf, 10.31M) reports Arberg had "said Ginsburg was likely to remain at the hospital for several days of intravenous antibiotic treatment," but she was discharged after only one day.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Pompeo Predicts "Whitewashed" WHO Investigation Into Origins Of Coronavirus.

The [Washington Examiner](#) (7/15, Gehrke, 448K) reports WHO officials in China "will have little choice but to 'conduct a completely, completely whitewashed investigation' into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic," according to Secretary of State Pompeo. Speaking to reporters Wednesday, Pompeo said, "I hope I'm wrong. I hope it's a thorough investigation that gets fully to the bottom, but I've watched the Chinese Communist Party's behavior with respect to that virus that emanated from Wuhan, and they have simply refused."

World Leaders Urge Equal Global Access To Coronavirus Vaccine.

Writing in the [Washington Post](#) (7/15, Trudeau, Zewde, Jae-in, Ardern, Ramaphosa, Pérez-Castejón, Lofven, Fakhfakh, 14.2M), a group of world leaders – Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Ethiopian President Sahle-Work Zewde, South Korean President Moon Jae-in, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón, Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven, and Tunisian Prime Minister Elyes Fakhfakh – call on the international community “to commit to contributing to an equitable distribution of the covid-19 vaccine, based on the spirit of a greater freedom for all.” They argue that “immunization is our best chance of ending the pandemic at home and across the world – but only if all countries get access to the vaccine.”

Canadian Officials Wary Of Reopening Even As Deaths Near Zero.

According to [Reuters](#) (7/15, Ljunggren, Lampert), “Canada’s efforts to flatten the curve of coronavirus cases have put the country on the cusp of zero deaths from COVID-19 for the first time since March, but officials see worrying signs of a new spike as provinces lift restrictions.” Health experts and politicians fear “the sacrifices Canadians made could be imperiled as the economy moves to a full reopening including schools, especially in heavily populated central Canada, and as U.S. authorities struggle to contain the spread south of the border.”

Bolsonaro Tests Positive For Coronavirus For A Second Time.

[Reuters](#) (7/15, Benassatto) reports Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro told reporters Wednesday that he has tested positive for coronavirus for a second time, “a week after he announced he had become ill with COVID-19, and said he would get tested once more in a few days.”

After Shunning Lockdown Measures, Sweden Sees High Death Rate.

The [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (7/15, story 9, 1:50, O'Donnell, 4.16M) reported that while “there has been a lot of speculation about what might have happened if we had never shut down businesses or schools...they did just that in Sweden, and many now believe the experiment failed. Deaths and unemployment are both soaring.” CBS (Palmer) added Sweden’s approach to the coronavirus “was lockdown light. No gatherings over 50, for example, but bars and restaurants stayed open. And so did primary and middle schools, as research showed that kids didn’t spread the virus.” As a result, “Sweden per capita has one of the worst COVID mortality totals in the world, 30% higher than the United States.”

Trump Calls On Iran To Halt Execution Of Protestors.

President Trump took to [Twitter](#) on Wednesday to write, “Three individuals were sentenced to death in Iran for participating in protests. The execution is expected momentarily. Executing these three people sends a terrible signal to the world and should not be done! #StopExecutionsInIran” Trump also shared the message in a [tweet](#) written in Persian.

IAEA Chief Urges Tehran To Grant Inspectors Access.

In an interview with the [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/15, Norman, Subscription Publication, 7.57M), IAEA chief Rafael Grossi said his agency is stepping up pressure on Iran over its nuclear activities, warning that if Tehran doesn’t grant it access by the end of this month, it “will be bad.” Said Grossi, “I keep insisting on the absolute necessity for us to resolve this issue very soon,” adding this “isn’t going to go away.”

Iranian Naval Ships Set On Fire In Latest Attack.

The [New York Times](#) (7/15, Fassihi, 18.61M) reports that a “large fire broke out at a shipyard in the southern Iranian port city of Bushehr on Wednesday, burning seven ships and sending plumes of black smoke billowing above the city skyline, according to videos and Iranian media

reports." The fire comes in the wake of "dozens of recent fires and explosions across Iran's forests, factories and military and nuclear facilities in the past three months."

Administration Reportedly Mulling Travel Ban On Chinese Communist Party Members.

According to the [New York Times](#) (7/15, Mozur, Wong, 18.61M), the Administration is "considering a sweeping ban on travel to the United States by members of the Chinese Communist Party and their families, according to people familiar with the proposal, a move that would almost certainly prompt retaliation against Americans seeking to enter or remain in China and exacerbate tensions between the two nations." The presidential proclamation, "still in draft form, could also authorize the United States government to revoke the visas of party members and their families who are already in the country, leading to their expulsion." Some proposed language is also aimed at limiting travel to the United States by members of the People's Liberation Army and executives at state-owned enterprises, though many of them are likely to also be party members.

Meanwhile, [Bloomberg](#) (7/15, Jacobs, Mohsin, 4.73M) reports under the headline "Trump Leans Against Sanctions On Chinese Officials For Now," that the President has "indicated to aides that he doesn't want to further escalate tensions with Beijing, and has ruled out additional sanctions on top officials for now." To Bloomberg, "Trump's private decision to refrain from further restrictions – which he made before signing the Hong Kong Autonomy Act on Tuesday – contrasts with the combative public tone he has struck for weeks with China over issues ranging from the coronavirus pandemic to trade to Hong Kong's political freedoms."

The [New York Times](#) (7/15, Myers, 18.61M) reports that elsewhere on Wednesday, Chinese officials "sharply criticized...Trump's moves to strip Hong Kong of its preferential trading status with the United States and clear the way for new sanctions on officials and companies there, vowing to retaliate with punitive measures of its own." The Times adds, "China was swift to criticize Mr. Trump's latest actions, which he announced at a rambling White House news conference on Tuesday." According to the Times, "Those moves, along with his remarks, underscored the extent to which relations with Beijing have become intertwined with the American presidential election."

US Sanctions Companies Linked To Russian Businessman With Ties To Putin.

The [AP](#) (7/15) reports the Administration has imposed sanctions on "companies connected to a Russian businessman who is close to Russian President Vladimir Putin and suspected of helping finance the covert social media campaign aimed at American voters ahead of the 2016 presidential election." The actions target "front companies that officials say Yevgeny Prigozhin has relied on to process millions of dollars and to evade sanctions in Sudan."

Pompeo Warns Nord Stream 2, Turkstream Investors They Are "At Risk" Of US Sanctions. [Reuters](#) (7/15, Gardner, Pamuk) reports Secretary of State Pompeo on Wednesday "warned investors in two Russian natural gas pipeline projects that they could face sanctions as the Trump administration seeks to curb the Kremlin's economic leverage over Europe and Turkey." Pompeo said European investors in the Nordstream 2 and part of the Turkstream pipelines could be "at risk" of US sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act of 2017.

The [AP](#) (7/15, Lee) says the move "opens the door for US...penalties to be imposed on any...company over the Nord Stream 2 and TurkStream projects, including those that had been working on the pipelines before the passage of CAATSA and had been previously exempted from the penalties."

Poland's Duda Falls Victim To Russian Pranksters Posing As UN Chief.

[Politico](#) (7/15, Gehrke, 4.29M) reports that newly reelected Polish President Andrzej Duda "fell victim to a pair of Russian pranksters pretending to be the secretary-general of the United Nations, and admitted that Donald Trump hasn't called to congratulate him on his election

victory." The jokesters "released a recording of a phone conversation with the Polish president, who thought he was speaking to António Guterres." Duda's office later confirmed the authenticity of the recording in which Duda said Trump "didn't call but maybe he sent an official letter."

New Research Suggests Global Methane Emissions Will Keep Rising.

The [New York Times](#) (7/15, Tabuchi, 18.61M) reports that research published in two scientific journals on Tuesday show that global methane emissions "soared to a record high in 2017, the most recent year for which worldwide data are available." Furthermore, researchers warn that emissions are likely to increase moving forward despite the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. Stanford University scientist Rob Jackson said, "There's a hint that we might be able to reach peak carbon dioxide emissions very soon. But we don't appear to be even close to peak methane." According to Jackson, CO2 emissions have dropped significantly due to the pandemic, but global methane emissions saw a relatively minor drop from lockdown measures.

THE BIG PICTURE

Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[China Is First Major Economy To Return To Growth Since Coronavirus Pandemic](#)
[Widespread Twitter Hack Reaches Bill Gates, Kanye West, Elon Musk, Joe Biden And Barack Obama](#)
["Are They Setting My Children Up For Failure?" Remote Learning Widens Education Gap.](#)
[Walmart, Kroger To Require Shoppers To Wear Masks In All US Stores](#)
[Scrabble Traditionalists Decry Online Innovation, Especially The Baby Dragons](#)
[Apple Wins Major Tax Battle Against EU](#)

New York Times:

[A Resurgence Of The Virus, And Lockdowns, Threatens Economic Recovery](#)
[What Black Lives Matter Has Revealed About Small-Town America](#)
[With Dueling Environmental Events, Trump And Biden Define The Race](#)
[US Weighs Sweeping Travel Ban On Chinese Communist Party Members](#)
[A Brazen Online Attack Targets VIP Twitter Users In A Bitcoin Scam](#)
[In Publishing, 'Everything Is Up For Charge'](#)

Washington Post:

[Stumbling Toward Allyship](#)
[More States And Businesses Make Masks Mandatory](#)
[White House Steps Back After Aide's Attack On Fauci](#)
[Trump Issues Demands But No Clear Plan As Virus Spirals](#)
[In Uncharted Territory, The Test Of Their Lives](#)
[Security In Doubt After High-Profile Twitter Hack](#)

Financial Times:

[Hong Kong Activist Nathan Law Calls On West To "Hold China Accountable"](#)
[Apple Wins Landmark Court Battle With EU Over €14.3BN Of Tax Payments](#)
[EU Watchdog To Probe German Regulators After Wirecard Collapse](#)
[Opec And Russia Primed To Unwind Historic Supply Cuts](#)

Washington Times:

[Tsunami Of Bankruptcies Forecast As Government Aid Runs Dry](#)

[EXCLUSIVE: National Association Of Police Organizations Endorses Trump, Bails On Past Biden Backing](#)

[‘Putting Politics Over Safely’: Teachers Unions Target Senators Seeking To Reopen Schools](#)

[‘No Place For God’: Left-Wing Protesters Turn Focus To Churches As Vandalism, Arson Escalate](#)

[‘Resistance Is Stronger’: Tehran Dissidents Expand Summit In Face Of Pandemic](#)

[Coronavirus Flare Up Wreaks Havoc South Of US Border](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night’s Network News:

ABC: Coronavirus-Rising US Cases; Coronavirus-First Responders; Trump-Fauci; White House-CDC; Twitter Hack; Oklahoma-Officers Face Murder Charges; NYC-Officers Injured During Protests; Coronavirus-Masks; NYC-Man Murdered in Condo; George Floyd Investigation; SCOTUS-RBG Released From Hospital; Stepfather & Stepdaughter Go Through Chemo.

CBS: Coronavirus-Rising US Cases; Coronavirus-Schools; Coronavirus-Vaccine; Twitter Hack; Trump-Fauci; White House-CDC; SCOTUS-RBG Released From Hospital; George Floyd Investigation; Coronavirus-Sweden; NASCAR-Bristol Speedway; NYC-Officers Injured During Protests; Woman Raises Money For Charity By Walking In Her Garden.

NBC: Coronavirus-Masks; Coronavirus-Schools; Coronavirus-Vaccine; Trump-Fauci; Twitter Hack; George Floyd Investigation; Coronavirus-Flu Season; Coronavirus-Small Businesses; Coronavirus-Symptoms; Senior Citizens Recreate Classic Album Covers.

Network TV At A Glance:

Coronavirus – 30 minutes, 30 seconds

Trump-Fauci – 5 minutes, 35 seconds

George Floyd Investigation – 4 minutes, 15 seconds

Twitter Hack – 2 minutes, 45 seconds

Story Lineup From This Morning’s Radio News Broadcasts:

ABC: Coronavirus-Rising Cases; Coronavirus-Masks; Coronavirus-Florida; Airline Layoffs; Trump Campaign Manager.

CBS: Coronavirus-Texas; Coronavirus-Masks; Trump Campaign Manager; George Floyd Investigation; Paris-Eiffel Tower’s Top Floor Reopens; US-China Relations; Stocks.

FOX: Coronavirus-Rising Cases; Coronavirus-Vaccine; National Association of Police Organizations-Trump Endorsement; California-Police Defunding.

NPR: Coronavirus-Rising Cases; Coronavirus-Masks; California-Rose Parade Cancelled; Trump-National Environmental Policy Act Changes.

WASHINGTON'S SCHEDULE

Today’s Events In Washington.

White House:

- President Trump — Receives his intelligence briefing; delivers remarks on Rolling Back Regulations to Help All Americans
- Vice President Pence — No schedule released

US Senate:

- Senate convenes for pro forma session – Senate convenes for pro forma session * Chamber on recess from 2 Jul – 20 Jul

Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC; 10:30 AM

US House:

- House Homeland Security subcommittee virtual hearing on the threat from accelerationists and militia extremists – Intelligence & Counterterrorism Subcommittee virtual hearing on

'Assessing the Threat from Accelerationists and Militia Extremists', with testimony from George Washington University Program on Extremism Fellow JJ MacNab; Global Project Against Hate and Extremism co-founder and Executive Vice President Heidi Beirich; and former New York City Police Department Chief of Strategic Initiatives John Donohue; 10:00 AM

- House Veterans Affairs subcommittee legislative hearing – Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee legislative hearing, with testimony from bipartisan Reps. Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan, Mike Bost, Colin Allred, Steve Watkins, Anthony Brindisi, Jim Banks, Antonio Delgado, and Eleanor Holmes Norton; National Cemetery Administration Deputy Under Secretary for Finance and Planning Mathew Sullivan; Veterans Benefits Administration Insurance Service Executive Director Dan Keenaghan, and Compensation Service Deputy Executive Director Laurine Carson; Veterans Health Administration National Director of Veterans Justice Programs Sean Clark; Veterans of Foreign Wars National Legislative Service Deputy Director Mathew Doyle; Wounded Warrior Project Vice President for Government Affairs Jose Ramos; Disabled American Veterans Deputy National Legislative Director for Benefits Shane Liermann; and National Organization of Veterans' Advocates Executive Director Diane Boyd Rauber + written statement from Paralyzed Veterans of America

Location: HVC-210, U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, Washington, DC; 12:00 PM

- House of Representatives meets in pro forma session
Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC; 12:00 PM
- House Financial Services subcommittee virtual hearing on mortgage servicers' implementation of the CARES Act – Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee virtual hearing on 'Protecting Homeowners During the Pandemic: Oversight of Mortgage Servicers' Implementation of the CARES Act', with testimony from National Consumer Law Center Staff Attorney Alys Cohen; HomeFree-USA founder and President Marcia Griffin; National Association of Real Estate Brokers President Donnell Williams; and Housing Policy Council President Ed DeMarco; 12:00 PM
- House Small Business subcommittee hearing on workforce development and rehiring – Innovation and Workforce Development Subcommittee hearing on 'Putting America Back to Work: The Role of Workforce Development and Small Business Rehiring', held via Cisco Webex, with testimony from Urban Institute Fellow Demetra Smith Nightingale; Workforce Center Arapahoe/Douglas Workforce Director Kelly Folks (on behalf of Workforce Boards and Centers and the Rocky Mountain Workforce Development Association); Laramie County Community College President Joe Schaffer (on behalf of American Association of Community Colleges); and Primary Aim Accounting Director Carol Friel; 1:00 PM
- House Natural Resources subcommittee remote oversight hearing energy on Native youth perspectives on mental health – Indigenous Peoples of the United States Subcommittee remote oversight hearing on 'Native Youth Perspectives on Mental Health and Healing', held via Cisco Webex; 1:00 PM

Cabinet Officers:

- Treasury Secretary Mnuchin participates in U.S. Article IV concluding meeting with IMF managing director – Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin participates in U.S. Article IV concluding meeting with International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva

Location: Department of the Treasury, Washington, DC; 1:00 PM

- Secretary of State Pompeo delivers speech on the Report of the Commission on Unalienable Rights – Secretary of State Mike Pompeo introduces State Department Commission on Unalienable Rights Report, via speech at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia

Location: National Constitution Center, Philadelphia, PA; 2:00 PM

Visitors:

- No visitors scheduled

This Town:

- NASA and ESA release first data captured by Solar Orbiter mission – NASA and the European Space Agency release the first data captured by Solar Orbiter – a joint mission to observe the sun’s outer atmosphere with high spatial resolution lenses and combine these observations with measurements taken in its surrounding environment, and to provide images and data covering the sun’s polar regions – via online news briefing with Solar Orbiter Project Scientists Daniel Muller (ESA) and Holly Gilbert (NASA), ESA Solar Orbiter Deputy Spacecraft Operations Manager Jose Luis Pellon Bailon, Royal Observatory of Belgium Extreme Ultraviolet Imager Principal investigator David Berghmans, Max Planck Institute for Solar System Research Director Sami Solanki, and University College London Mullard Space Science Laboratory Solar Wind Analyser Principal Investigator Christopher Owen; *8:00 AM*
- POLITICO discussion on the post-coronavirus workforce with Dem Rep. Bobby Scott – ‘Rebooting the American Workforce post-COVID-19’ POLITICO live, virtual discussion, presented with the Bipartisan Policy Center, to discuss the economic recovery after coronavirus (COVID-19), how the recovery will affect different sectors of the U.S. workforce, and what measures and policies need to be implemented to help Americans get back to work. Speakers include Democratic Rep. Bobby Scott, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Executive Vice President and Chief Policy Officer Neil Bradley, and former Council of Economic Advisors Member Marianne Wanamaker; *9:00 AM*
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation Annual Building Resilience Through PPP Conference concludes – U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation hosts Annual Building Resilience Through Private-Public Partnerships Conference concludes, focusing on ‘private and public sector roles in community resilience’ and examining ‘the opportunity for the private sector to take a leading role in preparing, coordinating, and responding to disasters’. Final day speakers include White House Coronavirus Task Force Coordinator Amb. Deborah Birx, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services for Preparedness and Response Jonathan Greene, U.S. NORTHCOM Deputy Commander Vice Adm. Michael Dumont, and FEMA Acting Deputy Administrator for Resilience Carlos Castillo; *9:00 AM*
- Library of Congress / U.S. Copyright Office virtual public forum on Copyright Office IT modernization – Library of Congress Office of the Chief Information Officer and U.S. Copyright Office host virtual public forum on Copyright Office IT modernization, led by Acting Register of Copyrights Maria Strong and Library of Congress CIO Bernard Barton Jr.; *10:00 AM*
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration hosts AV TEST virtual event – National Highway Traffic Safety Administration hosts an Automated Vehicle TEST Initiative virtual event, with NHTSA Deputy Administrator James Owens, Federal Transit Administration Acting Administrator Jane Williams, American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators President and CEO Anne Ferro, Governors Highway Safety Association Executive Director Jonathan Adkins, and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Safety and Mobility Director King Gee; *11:00 AM*
- U.S. Chamber hosts press call on Phase 4 coronavirus relief bill – U.S. Chamber of Commerce press call on the business community’s priorities for Congress as lawmakers continue to work on the phase 4 coronavirus (COVID-19) relief package, with U.S. Chamber of Commerce Executive Vice President and Chief Policy Officer Neil Bradley and Institute for Legal Reform President Harold Kim; *11:30 AM*
- Dem Rep. James Langevin speaks at Bank Policy Institute event – ‘Rethinking Public-Private Intelligence Sharing: Recommendations from the Cyberspace Solarium Commission’ co-hosted by Bank Policy Institute and INSA, with featured speakers including Democratic Rep.

James Langevin, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Intelligence Community Integration
Everette Jordan, INSA Financial Threats Council Chair
Leslie Ireland and Financial Systemic Analysis and Resilience Center President
Scott DePasquale; 1:00 PM

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