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Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] - FBI Public Affairs News Briefing Wednesday, March 31, 2021

Date: Wed, 31 Mar 2021 10:34:00 +0000

Importance: Normal

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

 FBI News Briefing

TO: THE DIRECTOR AND SENIOR STAFF

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2021 6:30 AM EDT

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Garland Instructs DOJ To Put More Effort Into Probing Hate Crimes.

The [AP](#) (3/30, Balsamo) reports that on Tuesday, Attorney General Garland “ordered a review of how the Justice Department can best deploy its resources to combat hate crimes during a surge in incidents targeting Asian Americans.” Garland “issued a department-wide memo announcing the 30-day review, citing the ‘recent rise in hate crimes and hate incidents, particularly the disturbing trend in reports of violence against members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community since the start of the pandemic.’ ... For federal officials to combat the trend, federal prosecutors and law enforcement officials should place an emphasis on investigating and prosecuting hate crimes, while increasing community outreach, Garland said.”

[Reuters](#) (3/30, Lynch) reports that “in his first memo to employees since taking over” the department, “Garland said he wants to find ways to improve reporting of hate crimes, ‘prioritize criminal investigations and prosecutions,’ and work with civil authorities to address cases of bias which may not rise to the statutory definition of a hate crime.” Garland also emphasized “the improved collection of data critical to understanding the evolving nature and extent of hate crimes and hate incidents in all their forms.” [USA Today](#) (3/30, Johnson, 12.7M) reports that “citing an ‘urgent’ need to reset hate crime enforcement strategy,” Garland also “vowed to ‘seek justice for the victims of hate-fueled mass murders that we have seen too many times in the past several years.’” The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Nakamura, 10.52M) reports that Garland’s goals include “improving hate crime data collection, prioritizing investigations and prosecutions, and using civil authorities to target unlawful acts of bias that do not meet the federal definition of a hate crimes.” He also “said in his memo that the review would seek to ensure that U.S. attorneys’ offices have sufficient resources to prioritize hate-crime investigations.”

[CNN](#) (3/30, Carrega, 89.21M) reports on its website that “some areas Garland highlighted for improvement include: better tracking for reported hate crimes that might violate federal law, enhancing the available tools available to respond to hate crimes, assessing whether budgets need to be increased for linguists and other resources that engage with communities that face hate crimes.” [The Hill](#) (3/30, Beitsch, 5.69M) reports that “the memo gets at a persistent problem for law enforcement: many local law enforcement agencies across the country report zero hate crimes in their precinct, leaving many advocates to argue officers are failing to report instances where bias played a motivating role in a crime.”

[Courthouse News](#) (3/30, Philo, 21K) reports, “Hate crimes in the U.S. surged in recent years. In November, the FBI released a report finding that incidents that qualify as hate crimes rose by 20% during the Trump administration.”

Additional coverage includes [Fox News](#) (3/30, Blitzer, 23.99M) and the [Washington Times](#) (3/30, Mordock, 626K).

Biden Details Federal Response To Hate Crimes Targeting Asian-Americans. The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Kanno-Youngs, 20.6M) reports that the White House “detailed actions on Tuesday to address violence against Asian-Americans, including training for local governments on anti-Asian bias, increasing accessibility to hate crime data and establishing nearly \$50 million in grants to support survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault who face language barriers. ‘We can’t be silent in the face of rising violence against Asian Americans,’ President Biden wrote in a [tweet](#) on Tuesday.”

The [New York Daily News](#) (3/30, Sommerfeldt, 2.51M) reports that the \$50 million grant program “will be administered by the Department of Health and Human Services and center around providing ‘community based, culturally specific’ resources, the White House said.” HHS “will also establish a task force to devise policies ensuring the administration’s COVID-19 response seeks to mitigate anti-Asian xenophobia and bias related to the pandemic, with a particular eye toward violence against women, the White House said.”

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (3/30, Megerian, 3.37M) reports under the initiative, "the Justice Department will track reports of anti-Asian hate crimes and expand its outreach to community organizations," while the FBI will "hold training sessions for state and local law enforcement" and "the National Science Foundation will spend \$33 million to study bias and xenophobia." The President "also plans to revive the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, which was founded by" former President Bill Clinton. Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA) said, "We commend President Biden for his leadership to ensure that the safety and well-being of the AAPI community is prioritized." [Axios](#) (3/30, Chen, 1.26M) reports that the FBI also plans to "publish a new interactive hate crime page dedicated to anti-Asian hate crimes," while the DOJ has "updated its hate crimes website accessible in Chinese, Korean, Tagalog and Vietnamese."

[Politico](#) (3/30, Wu, 6.73M) reports that the initiative will be reinstated with "an expanded mandate and an 'initial focus on anti-Asian bias and violence,' including gender-based violence," and the Administration "also vowed to appoint a permanent director of the initiative to coordinate policies across the government." Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) "applauded Biden in a statement for 'recognizing our community's pain and taking concrete actions to protect AAPI individuals from violence and root out anti-Asian bias while also supporting the victims of hate crimes.'"

The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Kanno-Youngs, 20.6M) reports that in Biden's "first week in office, he condemned the xenophobia against Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders and directed the Health and Human Services and Justice Departments to develop ways to combat racist actions. The details released by the White House on Tuesday were the next step in carrying out plans to address the problem."

Additional coverage includes [The Hill](#) (3/30, Samuels, 5.69M), the [Los Angeles Times](#) (3/30, Megerian, 3.37M), and the [Washington \(DC\) Times](#) (3/30, Sherfinski, 626K).

CAPITOL VIOLENCE NEWS

Proud Boys Leader Charged In Capitol Insurrection Says He Worked With FBI Against Antifa.

The [AP](#) (3/30, Kunzelman, Balsamo, Flaccus) reports J. Daniel Hull, an attorney for Proud Boys "thought leader" and organizer Joseph Biggs, wrote in a court filing that months before he was charged with storming the US Capitol FBI agents recruited him "to provide them with information about antifa networks." Two agents met with Biggs, who also answered questions during a series of phone calls afterwards. Hull added that Biggs "received 'cautionary' phone calls from FBI agents and routinely spoke with local and federal law enforcement officials in Portland, Oregon." The claims "buttress a widely held view among left-leaning ideological opponents of the Proud Boys that law enforcement has coddled them, condoned their violence and even protected them during their frequent street brawls with anti-fascists."

[CNN](#) (3/30, Polantz, 89.21M) reports, "Previously, another leader in the Proud Boys, Enrique Tarrio, had been an FBI informant, and others in the group had been approached in a federal investigation in 2019 tied to Roger Stone." [Politico](#) (3/30, Cheney, 6.73M) reports, "Trump-era intelligence agencies have faced criticism – long denied by top officials like FBI Director Christopher Wray – that they were pressured to inflate the threat of antifa while downplaying the threat posed by right-wing extremists."

Additional coverage includes [Newsweek](#) (3/30, Palmer, 2.67M).

Proud Boys Member Claims Music Party, Not Riot, Was Planned For Afternoon Of Capitol Siege.

[Reuters](#) (3/30) reports Attorneys for Ethan "Rufio" Nordean, a prominent figure in the Proud Boys, argue that he planned a "carefree music party" the afternoon of the Capitol insurrection, "contradict[ing] the notion that the group had a plan to 'topple the government' that day."

Proud Boys member Michale Graves, former singer for the punk rock band The Misfits, may be called on to testify that he was asked to play songs at the party. The defense lawyers are seeking "to undermine the prosecution's bid to prove conspiracy charges against some members of the right-wing Proud Boys group."

Prosecutors Urge Judge To Not Release On Bail Texan Charged In Capitol Insurrection.

The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Shepherd, 10.52M) reports prosecutors urged a judge not to release Garret Miller of Dallas, Texas prior to his trial on charges that he participated in the Capitol riots. Miller "allegedly admitted to bringing a gun into the Capitol during the deadly insurrection" and when he was arrested he was wearing "a T-shirt emblazoned with a photograph of former president Donald Trump and text declaring: 'I Was There, Washington D.C., January 6, 2021.'"

New York Man Arrested For Participating In Capitol Siege.

The [AP](#) (3/30) reports the FBI arrested William Tryon of Albany, New York, who "made an appearance in federal court in Albany on three misdemeanor charges" related to participating in the Capitol insurrection. He faces charges "of knowingly entering or remaining in a restricted building or grounds without lawful authority, knowingly engaging in disorderly or disruptive conduct in a restricted building or grounds and violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds."

[WTEN-TV](#) Albany, NY (3/30, 58K) reports Special Agent in charge Thomas Relford said in a statement, "Selkirk resident William Tryon was arrested by our office today for his role in the riot and assault on the Capitol on January 6, 2021. We will continue to coordinate with our colleagues at the FBI Washington Field Office and the United States Attorney's Office to bring to justice anyone who broke the law that day."

Alabama Man Arrested After Showing FBI Video He Took During Capitol Riot.

The [AP](#) (3/30) reports Russell Dean Alford of Hokes Bluff, Alabama "was arrested on charges of entering the U.S. Capitol during the riot by supporters of former President Donald Trump after showing FBI agents photos and video he took while inside the building." Alford was freed on \$5,500 bond.

Capitol Rioters Released Prior To Trial.

The [Washington Times](#) (3/30, Mordock, 626K) reports that, "Signaling a softer approach to defendants jailed for relatively minor offenses stemming from the Jan. 6 attack," US District Judge Royce Lamberth order Capitol insurrectionists Eric Munchel and his mother, Lisa Eisenhart, be released from jail ahead of their trial. The pair "will have their locations monitored at all times and are banned from using the internet or contacting others involved in the riot." Last week, the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit "criticized Judge Lamberth for labeling Mr. Munchel and Ms. Eisenhart as dangers to the community" and sent their case "back to Judge Lamberth saying he should release the duo."

NPR Review: Capitol Insurrection Cases Show Plans For Violence But Not Necessarily Storming The Capitol.

[NPR](#) (3/30, Lucas, 3.69M) reports an NPR review of court filings and statements from prosecutors found that "several smaller groups of people with ties to extremist organizations...coordinated ahead of time and traveled to Washington, D.C., ready for violence, but not with the explicitly stated goal of storming the Capitol." However, "former prosecutors caution that it is still early in the investigation."

US Capitol Police Officers Suing Trump Over Riot.

[Bloomberg](#) (3/30, Nayak, 3.57M) reports US Capitol Police Officers James Blassingame and Sidney Hemby, who were on duty during the January 6 riot, are suing former President Donald Trump, accusing him "of inciting the violent mob that injured scores of officers." The two "not only suffered physical injuries but Blassingame is also dealing with depression since the riot, according to the complaint." [Business Insider](#) (3/30, Frias, 2.74M) reports, "The officers are seeking unspecified monetary damages with the lawsuit, but documents say the 'amount in controversy exceeds \$75,000, not counting interest and costs.'"

Thirty-Three Texans Face Charges In Connection With Capitol Riot.

The [San Antonio Express-News](#) (3/30, Pettaway, 685K) profiles the 33 Texans arrested in connection with the Capitol insurrection, each "facing a variety of charges."

Former Federal Prosecutor: Sherwin Was Right To Discuss Capitol Siege In Interview.

Former federal prosecutor Ankush Khardori, in an op-ed for [USA Today](#) (3/30, 12.7M), argues that former Acting US Attorney for Washington, DC Michael Sherwin was right to discuss the Capitol insurrection in an interview on "60 Minutes." Everything "Sherwin said was already alleged in public documents or was otherwise unobjectionable." Additionally, "the public deserves to have some insight into how the government is handling a rare and consequential investigation." Such information "can be a vital mechanism for public accountability on the part of federal law enforcement, which is all too often unwilling to explain itself even in cases where the public interest is significant, sincere – and entirely justified."

WSJournal Warns Of Overreach In Some Capitol Riot Prosecutions.

A [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/30, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) editorial says while the Justice Department wants to make a strong statement about the Capitol riot, there are indications of prosecutorial overreach in some of the criminal cases moving through the courts. The Journal says events like the riot must be deterred, but prosecutors cannot undermine the process that gives legitimacy to democracy.

PROTESTS

Witness Testimony Continues In Chauvin Trial.

The [AP](#) (3/30, Karnowski, Forliti) reports that witnesses in the ongoing trial against former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin for the murder of George Floyd last May continued testimonies on Tuesday. Darnella Frazier, the 18-year-old "who shot the harrowing video of the arrest," testified that Chauvin continued to kneel on Floyd's neck and that his fellow officer, Tou Thao, held onlookers back, even after one identified herself as a firefighter and sought to check Floyd's pulse. According to the AP, Chauvin's lawyer, Eric Nelson, "sought repeatedly to show that Chauvin and his fellow officers found themselves in an increasingly tense and distracting situation, with the growing crowd of onlookers becoming agitated and menacing over Floyd's treatment."

The [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#) (3/30, Walsh, Xiong, Olson, 855K) reports that "Frazier agreed with Nelson that bystanders were getting louder and more angry, but she added that she didn't think anyone was ever threatening to Chauvin." The [New York Daily News](#) (3/30, Oliveira, 2.51M) reports that Frazier "also told the court that Floyd was already 'terrified' and begging for his life when she hit record on her phone," and "said it didn't seem like [Chauvin] cared about the danger Floyd was in."

All three broadcast networks opened their Tuesday evening newscasts with updates on the trial. On [ABC World News Tonight](#) (3/30, lead story, 5:30, Muir, 7.19M), Alex Perez reported that Nelson pressed two witnesses, Minneapolis firefighter Genevieve Hansen and mixed martial arts fighter Donald Williams, about their "words to Chauvin" at the scene, after video footage

showed both witnesses shouting at the officers. On [NBC Nightly News](#) (3/30, lead story, 3:05, Holt, 5.62M), Gabe Gutierrez reported, "The defense has suggested this was a heavy crowd of bystanders, but the prosecution argues it was a small group of people going about their daily lives thrust into a traumatic situation." On the [CBS Evening News](#) (3/30, lead story, 3:55, O'Donnell, 4.25M), Jamie Yuccas reported that "tomorrow, the prosecution will likely start calling witnesses considered experts in their field to detail how Chauvin's hold contributed to Floyd's death."

The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Martínez, Fazio, 20.6M) reports that Hansen "recalled pleading with the police to let her help Mr. Floyd, whom Mr. Chauvin had pinned to the ground with his knee, but being rebuffed by a police officer who was telling a crowd of bystanders to back away." The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, A1, Bailey, 10.52M) reports that "Hansen testified that she was mystified at why emergency workers didn't respond to the scene more quickly, pointing out there was a fire station three blocks away." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/30, Barrett, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that Nelson also repeatedly pointed to what the witnesses and video footage were not privy to at the scene, including conversations that may have taken place between officers, as well as how soon officers called an ambulance.

[Reuters](#) (3/30, Allen) reports that "over the first two days of witness testimony, prosecutors have shown the jury video taken from multiple angles, including" Frazier's cellphone footage. Williams on Tuesday "told jurors he believed that Chauvin was using his knee in a 'blood choke' on Floyd, a wrestling move to knock an opponent unconscious, and a 'shimmy' move to tighten pressure on Floyd's neck." The [New York Post](#) (3/30, Rosenberg, Fitz-Gibbon, 7.45M) reports that Williams also testified that he called 911 "because I believed I witnessed a murder," and described Floyd as being in "tremendous pain" and "trying to gasp for air."

[USA Today](#) (3/30, Hauck, Yancey-Bragg, McCoy, Abdollah, Ferkenhoff, 12.7M) reports that "six witnesses took the stand Tuesday...and several broke down in tears recounting their memory of the day George Floyd died." Other witnesses included Frazier's 9-year-old cousin and "two high school seniors who said they were headed to the store to get an auxiliary cord," one of whom "recorded three videos of the incident." Judge Peter Cahill on Tuesday "denied a station motion...to keep all audio and video of four key witnesses from being made public," but said witnesses would be referred to only by first name.

[The Hill](#) (3/30, Castronuovo, 5.69M) reports that the 9-year-old witness "said [Chauvin] initially ignored requests by medics to remove his knee from George Floyd's neck in the moments leading up to Floyd's death." [CNN](#) (3/30, Levenson, Cooper, 89.21M) reports on its website that one of the seniors "said she saw Chauvin dig his knee into Floyd's neck. She said at one point Chauvin got out his mace and started shaking it as bystanders called on officers to get off Floyd." [Fox News](#) (3/30, Wallace, 23.99M) reports on its website that Frazier also "agreed she felt threatened by police at the scene, describing when an officer moved to take out Mace," and "said she believed Chauvin started kneeling on Floyd's neck harder when the crowd shouted at him to stop." [Axios](#) (3/30, Chen, 1.26M) provides additional coverage on the trial.

New Jersey Man Admits To Attempting To Burn Police Car After Floyd Protest.

[Rutherford \(NJ\) Daily Voice](#) (3/30, DeMarco) reports Justin Spry of Middlesex County, New Jersey, in a plea deal, admitted "that he stuffed a rag into the gas tank of a police cruiser and set it on fire during a riot in Trenton following what had been a peaceful protest last year over the death of George Floyd." Spry pleaded guilty to attempting to obstruct, impede, or interfere with law enforcement officers during a civil disorder.

Minnesota Man Arrested For Violating Drug-Related Gun Law.

The [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#) (3/30, Mannix, 855K) reports federal agents arrested Minnesota resident Thomas Wilder Moseley on Tuesday for allegedly "violating a law against carrying a gun

while being a drug addict." Moseley was previously arrested on "Oct. 15, 2020, while he and other protesters gathered inside the Hennepin County Courthouse during a pretrial hearing for the ex-officers accused of killing George Floyd". At that "time, Moseley was wanted by police for participating in a violent demonstration outside the Fifth Precinct station." The [KSTP-TV Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN \(3/30, 244K\)](#) website also covers this story.

COUNTER-TERRORISM

Court Upholds Constitutionality Of FBI Terror Watch List.

The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Weiner, 10.52M) reports a three-judge panel of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals on Tuesday "upheld the constitutionality of an FBI watch list of more than 1 million 'known or suspected terrorists,' saying it falls under the government's power to guard its borders." In an opinion issued Tuesday, Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson III wrote, "The government has had authority to regulate travel and control the border since the beginning of the nation."

[Courthouse News](#) (3/30, Hawkins, 21K) reports Wilkinson said the delays Muslim-Americans face "aren't much different than standard delays that many travelers face." He also "said it would have been better for plaintiffs to file individual lawsuits based on their own experiences."

SCOTUS Weighs Case Involving Consumers Falsely Labeled As Terrorists.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/30, Bravin, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports after arguments before the Supreme Court Tuesday, it appeared likely a class-action lawsuit filed by some 8,000 consumers who were falsely labeled potential terrorists on their credit reports would survive.

Continuing Coverage: Judge Orders Three Men To Stand Trial Over Plot To Kidnap Whitmer.

In continuing coverage, [Fox News](#) (3/30, Wallace, 23.99M), under the headline "Michigan judge drops terrorism charges for 3 men accused in alleged Gov. Whitmer kidnapping plot," reports that Jackson County District Court Judge Michael J. Klaeren ordered Joseph Morrison, Pete Musico, and Paul Bellar stand trial in relation to the plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (D). Despite the three facing charges of "providing material support for terrorist acts, gang membership and using a firearm during a felony," Fox News focuses on Judge Klaeren dropping terrorism charges against Morrison and Musico, as well as not adding them to the charges against Bellar.

COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE

Sources Say Durham Investigating FBI's Launch Of Trump Campaign Probe.

[CNN](#) (3/30, Polantz, Perez, 89.21M) reports that, "after two years of searching for problems with the investigation into Trump's campaign advisers in 2016 and their ties to Russia, federal prosecutor John Durham hasn't found wrongdoing by Obama-era intelligence officials involved who were outside of the FBI." But Durham is "still at work, looking at early aspects of the FBI investigation into the campaign." His relatively opaque investigation "has now lasted longer than former special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election and prosecution of dozens of Russians and Trump advisers." Investigators with Durham's office "are now arranging witness interviews," according to people familiar with the probe. Grand jury subpoenas also "were being used to gather documents in recent months," the sources said. Durham's probe is "focused at least partly on actions by the FBI in its handling of a private intelligence dossier and the bureau's disclosures to the federal intelligence surveillance court," according to people briefed on the matter.

Durham Reportedly Issuing Subpoenas And Interviewing Witnesses In Trump-Russia Probe. The [Washington Examiner](#) (3/30, Dunleavy, 888K) reports John Durham's inquiry into the "origins and conduct of the Trump-Russia investigation is chugging along during the Biden Administration, with the special counsel arranging witness interviews and issuing subpoenas in recent months." A report from CNN published on Tuesday "cited unnamed sources who said that after delays last year, pinned on the coronavirus pandemic, Durham's investigators 'are now arranging witness interviews' and grand jury subpoenas 'also were being used to gather documents in recent months.'" The new report "cited 'people briefed on the matter' who said Durham's investigation was scrutinizing the FBI's 'handling' of British ex-spy Christopher Steele's discredited anti-Trump dossier as well as the FBI's 'disclosures' to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, where the bureau received a warrant followed by three renewals in 2016 and 2017 targeting former Trump campaign adviser Carter page."

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

DOJ Investing Rep. Gaetz Over Alleged Sexual Relationship With A Minor.

The [AP](#) (3/30) reports Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-FL), "a prominent conservative in Congress and a close ally of former President Donald Trump, said Tuesday he is being investigated by the Justice Department over a former relationship but denied any criminal wrongdoing." The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Benner, 20.6M) reports Gaetz is being investigated "over whether he had a sexual relationship with a 17-year-old and paid for her to travel with him, according to three people briefed on the matter." The sources said investigators "are examining whether Mr. Gaetz violated federal sex trafficking laws. ... A variety of federal statutes make it illegal to induce someone under 18 to travel over state lines to engage in sex in exchange for money or something of value." Three people briefed on the matter said that the examination of Gaetz "is part of a broader investigation into a political ally of his, a local official in Florida named Joel Greenberg, who was indicted last summer on an array of charges, including sex trafficking of a child and financially supporting people in exchange for sex."

The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Zapotosky, 10.52M) reports the investigation "began some time last year, when Trump was still in office, after a criminal case against a different Florida politician led investigators to allegations that the congressman had a sexual relationship with a 17-year-old girl and paid for her travel, a person familiar with the matter said on the condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing investigation. As that probe was underway, the person said, Gaetz's family raised allegations that the congressman was being extorted, and the FBI is separately exploring those claims."

[Axios](#) (3/30, Swan, 1.26M) reports Gaetz said in an interview, "The allegations against me are as searing as they are false. ... They are rooted in an extortion effort against my family for \$25 million...in exchange for making this case go away" that he claimed was being run by a former DOJ employee. Gaetz said, "I believe that there are people at the Department of Justice who are trying to criminalize my sexual conduct, you know when I was a single guy."

[Newsweek](#) (3/30, Villarreal, 2.67M) reports Gaetz said in a statement, "We have been cooperating with federal authorities in this matter and my father has even been wearing a wire at the FBI's direction to catch these criminals. The planted leak to the FBI tonight was intended to thwart that investigation." He added, "I demand the DOJ immediately release the tapes, made at their direction, which implicate their former colleague in crimes against me based on false allegations."

Also reporting are [Politico](#) (3/30, Din, Dixon, 6.73M), [USA Today](#) (3/30, Santucci, 12.7M), [The Hill](#) (3/30, 5.69M), the [Florida Times-Union](#) (3/30, Little, 244K), the [New York Post](#) (3/30, Garger, 7.45M), the [Daily Caller](#) (3/30, Ross, 375K), [CNBC](#) (3/30, Breuninger, 7.34M), the [Daily Beast](#) (3/30, 933K), the [Orlando \(FL\) Patch](#) (3/30, 1.44M), [ABC News](#) (3/30, 2.44M), [Fox News](#) (3/30, Creitz, 23.99M), and the [New York Post](#) (3/30, Garger, 7.45M).

NYPD Seek Suspect In Assault On Asian American Woman.

The [AP](#) (3/30, Sisak, Matthews) reports that "a vicious attack on an Asian American woman as she walked to church near New York City's Times Square is drawing widespread condemnation and raising alarms about the failure of bystanders to intervene amid a rash of anti-Asian violence across the U.S." The New York Police Department's Hate Crime Task Force on Monday released surveillance footage showing "a lone assailant...kicking the 65-year-old woman in the stomach, knocking her to the ground and stomping on her face, all as police say he shouted anti-Asian slurs and told her, 'you don't belong here.'" The task force has "asked anyone with information" regarding the suspect to contact the department.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/30, Chapman, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) on Tuesday condemned the attack and directed the New York State Police's Hate Crimes Task Force to assist in the investigation. On [ABC World News Tonight Vi](#) (3/30, story 4, 1:50, Muir, 7.19M), Eva Pilgrim reported that authorities are labeling the "unprovoked attack" as a "hate crime assault." Pilgrim goes on to report that "hate crimes against Asian Americans are up nearly 150% in major cities across the country, up by at least 833% in New York City." On the [CBS Evening NewsVi](#) (3/30, story 3, 1:50, O'Donnell, 4.25M), Nancy Chen reported that more than 3,700 hate incidents have been "reported since the start of the pandemic, leading to protesters rallying across the country, demanding change."

[USA Today](#) (3/30, Miller, 12.7M) reports that the woman "was hospitalized with serious injuries after the" attack, but was in stable condition, according to police. USA Today goes on to report that staff in a nearby apartment building were seen on the video witnessing the attack, but "did not intervene, though a union representative said they called for help." The Brodsky Organization, which manages the building, in a statement later "said it suspended the staff members...pending an investigation."

The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Hong, Kim, Watkins, Southall, 20.6M) reports that a police official identified the victim as Vilma Kari, a 65-year-old woman who immigrated to the US from the Philippines decades ago. [NBC Nightly NewsVi](#) (3/30, story 6, 2:15, Holt, 5.62M) and the [New York Post](#) (3/30, Mongelli, Woods, 7.45M) provided additional coverage on the attack.

The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Elfrink, 10.52M) reports that "the case was one of two attacks on Asian Americans in New York caught on video and publicized on Monday, on the same day that city leaders gathered in Brooklyn to urge quick action to halt a rising tide of racist violence and threats." Video of the other incident on a subway car "shows an Asian man wearing a backpack being shoved by another passenger, who then starts punching him in the face repeatedly. Eventually, the passenger locks the man in a chokehold, tightly gripping his neck until he passes out on the floor of the train."

Lawsuit: Epstein Trafficked Victim, Threatened To Feed Her To Alligators.

The [Miami Herald](#) (3/30, Brown, 647K) reports a lawsuit by a South Florida real estate broker who alleges Jeffrey Epstein trafficked her to other men "involves allegations far more sinister than" others suits against his estate and associates. She alleges that Epstein and his purported madam, Ghislaine Maxwell, "repeatedly raped her in front of her 8-year-old son...that they trafficked her to have sex with a number of other men, including an unnamed local judge; and that Epstein forced her to undergo vaginal surgery so that he could market her as a virgin." The plaintiff also said that Epstein and Maxwell threatened to feed her to alligators if she revealed what they'd done. The lawsuit also said the pair "threatened and intimidated" the plaintiff "by emphasizing Epstein's influence over the FBI, the U.S. Office of Homeland Security's Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Florida state and local law enforcement."

The [Daily Beast](#) (3/30, Briquelet, 933K) reports, "The allegations contained in Doe's lawsuit are starkly different from previous complaints filed by victims of the wealthy sex-

offender, and appear to be the first time allegations of mutilation have emerged relating to Epstein's sex ring."

Additional coverage includes the [Daily Caller](#) (3/30, Olohan, 375K).

New Grooming Allegations Against Ghislaine Maxwell Expand Time Frame To Period Prince Andrew Knew Epstein. [Newsweek](#) (3/30, Royston, 2.67M) reports new grooming allegations against Ghislaine Maxwell expand "the time frame to include the period when the pedophile was friends with Prince Andrew." The new victim's allegations span from 2001 to 2004, well after 1999, when Prince Andrew said he met Jeffrey Epstein for the first time. Prince Andrew "has been asked to give evidence to the FBI's Epstein investigation but his legal team have been keen to stress the D.O.J. treated him as a witness not a target."

██████████ Could Testify At Ghislaine Maxwell Trial. [The Sun \(UK\)](#) (3/30, 561K) reports attorneys for Ghislaine Maxwell "are seeking to subpoena the original picture of Prince Andrew "with his arm around Jeffrey Epstein's teen sex slave ██████████" A court filing "also discussed the possibility of her testifying in Maxwell's summer trial."

Texas Grand Jury Indicts Deputies For Manslaughter In Ambler's Death.

The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Hernandez, 10.52M) reports that a Texas grand jury on Tuesday indicted former Williamson County deputies James Johnson and Zachary Camden on manslaughter charges "related to the 2019 death of Javier Ambler, a Black man whose death in law enforcement custody was captured by a television film crew." While attempting to arrest Ambler, deputies shocked him "with a stun gun four times...while he complained of suffering from heart problems," and "stopped moving after deputies secured his hands. He was pronounced dead at a hospital an hour later."

The [Austin \(TX\) American Statesman](#) (3/30, Plohetski, Subscription Publication, 261K) reports that "the indictments mark the latest and most significant turn in the investigation into Ambler's death, which gained national attention and raised questions about the influence of reality TV on American policing." Ambler's family and lawyers "believe that a partnership between 'Live PD' and the Williamson County sheriff's office encouraged deputies to forsake sound policing practices to play to the cameras."

No Convictions In Trial Of White St. Louis Police Officers Accused Of Beating Black Officer.

The [AP](#) (3/30) reports, "Three white St. Louis police officers accused of beating a Black undercover colleague so severely during a protest....that he had to undergo multiple surgeries" were not found guilty, which "reignited criticisms that an all-white jury was picked to decide the case." Officer Steven Korte was acquitted of charges of deprivation of rights under color of law and of lying to the FBI. Former officer Christopher Myers was acquitted of a deprivation of rights count, "but the jury could not reach a verdict on a charge of destruction of evidence against Myers for allegedly smashing Hall's cellphone. The jury also deadlocked on the deprivation of rights charge against former officer Dustin Boone."

[Fox News](#) (3/30, Wallace, 23.99M) reports, "The St. Louis police chief announced Tuesday that the department would launch a new internal investigation" of the beating.

Prosecutors Charge Two NYC Mortuary Workers With Stealing Credit Cards From Dead People.

According to the [New York Post](#) (3/30, Rosenberg, 7.45M), "Two former mortuary technicians for the city's Chief Medical Examiner were busted by the feds Tuesday for allegedly stealing dead people's credit and debit cards - and using them to take trips to Florida and indulge in McDonald's." The Post adds Willie Garcon, 50, of Brooklyn, and Charles McFadgen, 66, of the Bronx, "are charged with access device fraud, for which they face up to 10 years in prison." Mark Lesko, acting US Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, said, "The defendants brazenly pilfered the belongings of the deceased, stole their property and enriched themselves

by making unauthorized purchases worth several thousand dollars." The Post mentions the arrests "were the result of a joint investigation between the FBI, the NYPD and the city's Department of Investigation."

Additional coverage includes the [AP](#) (3/30, Mustian).

Charleston Church Shooter To Appeal Death Sentence, Predicts White Supremacists Will Take Over US.

The [AP](#) (3/30, Kinnard) reports attorneys for Dylann Roof, "the man sentenced to federal death row for the racist slayings of nine members of a Black South Carolina congregation are set to formally argue that his conviction and death sentence should be overturned." The AP says federal court records reveal oral arguments have been scheduled "for May 25 before the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals." The AP adds Roof has "told his attorneys that he would seek appeals to drag his case out as long as he possibly could because he expected white supremacists to take over the United States, and subsequently pardon him for the massacre and declare him governor of South Carolina."

Prosecutors Charge MS-13 Gang Member In Attack On Transgender Woman.

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (3/30, Queally, 3.37M) reports prosecutors this week charged Gabriel Orellana, 19, a member of MS-13, "with assaulting a transgender woman Thursday in MacArthur Park, the latest in a string of attacks allegedly committed by the gang against members of the LGBTQ community in the area."

New Hampshire Man Receives 23-Year Prison Sentence For Sexual Exploitation Of Minor.

The [AP](#) (3/31) reports Robert Corleto, 43, of Hudson, New Hampshire on Friday was "sentenced to 23 years in federal prison on a charge of sexual exploitation of a minor." In a statement, Joseph Bonavolonta, special agent in charge of the FBI Boston division, said, "This case illustrates how easy it is for a child to be victimized in the safety of their own home, and the need to talk to them about the steps they should take to safeguard their safety."

Michigan Man Pleads Guilty To Hate Crime Over Attack On Black Teen.

The [Detroit News](#) (3/30, Hicks, 1.16M) reports Lee Mouat, 43, "pleaded guilty Tuesday to a federal hate crime for attacking an African American teen last summer, the U.S. Department of Justice said." Special Agent in Charge Timothy Waters of the FBI's Detroit Division said, "Mouat's hateful and violent conduct, motivated by racial intolerance, was intended to physically harm the victim as well as create fear within the African-American community."

FBI Says US Resident Charged In Fatal Smuggling Operation.

[USA Today](#) (3/30, Aspegren, 12.7M) reports the FBI has announced legal permanent resident Jose Cruz Noguez, of Mexicali, Mexico was arrested Monday and "charged in connection to the smuggling operation that led to 13 deaths after a semitruck slammed into an SUV packed with 25 people – many of them Mexican and Guatemalan nationals – earlier this month." According to USA Today, "Cruz has been charged with conspiracy to bring migrants to the U.S. causing serious bodily injury and bringing them in without presentation for financial gain, according to officials."

New Jersey Man Sentenced For Arranging To Meet Teen Girl.

[NJ News](#) (3/30, Goldman, 1.47M) reports Recep Sandikci of North Plainfield, NJ was sentenced to 71 months in prison for traveling from New Jersey to Menands, NY to meet a 13-year-old girl for sex in 2019, according to a statement issued Monday. The girl's mother found their correspondence and it turned it over to police, so Sandikci was arrested by FBI agents when he arrived for their meeting.

Charges Filed Against Man Who Shot At Officers In Everglades National Park.

The [AP](#) (3/30, Anderson) reports Drew Curtis Sikes of Palmetto Bay, FL has been charged with "attempting to kill a U.S. officer and with a weapons crime" after firing at officers in Everglades National Park with an AK-47 rifle Sunday. An FBI affidavit said the officers were responding to an altercation between Sikes and his wife. The [Miami Herald](#) (3/30, 647K) also reported.

New Hampshire Man To Stay In Jail After Being Charged With Wire Fraud.

The [AP](#) (3/30) reports Ian Freeman of Keene, NH, "a leader of a libertarian group and self-described minister," has pleaded not guilty to charges of "conspiracy..., wire fraud, money laundering, operating a continuing financial crimes enterprise, and operating an unlicensed money transmitting business" in connection with "an unlicensed virtual currency exchange business." US Magistrate Judge Andrea Johnstone ruled Monday that Freeman will remain in jail as "he's a flight risk and a danger to the community" and "has substantial financial resources." FBI agents found \$178,000 in a safe in his home.

Boston Police Captain Charged With Fraud.

The [AP](#) (3/30) reports Richard Evans of Hanover, MA has been arrested on charges including conspiracy to commit theft in connection with collecting "more than \$12,000 in an overtime pay fraud scheme" at the Boston police department's evidence warehouse, according to a statement issued Tuesday. Evans, a former Boston police captain, "oversaw the Boston Police Department's Evidence Control Unit, [where] conspired with officers he supervised to collect overtime pay they didn't deserve." FBI Special Agent in Charge of the Boston Division Joseph Bonavolonta said, "It is deeply troubling when officers who have sworn to uphold the law violate their oath and use their badge as a license to commit a crime."

Michigan Man Charged With Hate Crime After Striking, Injuring Black Teen.

[WXMI-TV](#) Grand Rapids, MI (3/30, Christian, 105K) reports on its website that Lee Mouat, 43, of Newport, MI pleaded guilty Tuesday "to a federal hate crime for attacking a Black teenager" on a beach. Mouat "hit [the teen] in the face with a bike lock, knocking out several of the victim's teeth, lacerating his face and mouth, and fracturing his jaw." FBI Special Agent in Charge of the Detroit Division Timothy Waters said, "Mouat's hateful and violent conduct, motivated by racial intolerance, was intended to physically harm the victim as well as create fear within the African-American community. ... The FBI and our law enforcement partners will continue to ensure that if a crime is motivated by bias, it will be investigated as a hate crime and the perpetrators will be held responsible for their actions."

[WDIV-TV](#) Detroit (3/30, Dado, 568K) reports the victim was part of a group at the state park in Monroe, MI. Mouat "repeatedly used racial slurs and said that Black people had no right to use the public beach where the incident occurred." The FBI conducted the investigation.

Texas Man Sentenced For Sex Trafficking.

[KHOU-TV](#) Houston (3/30, Homer, 340K) reports on its website that Trevian "Triggah" Thomas of Houston, TX was sentenced to 25 years in prison for sex trafficking a 14-year-old girl in 2016. The girl "suffered substantially during the time Thomas held her." The FBI Organized Crime Task Force was among the investigating agencies.

Woman Accused Of Killing Husband's First Wife May Get Bond.

The [Palm Beach \(FL\) Post](#) (3/30, 223K) reports Virginia resident Sheila Keen-Warren, accused of "dressing as a clown and fatally shooting the wife of her then-alleged lover, and now her husband" in Florida in 1990, may be granted release from jail ahead of her trial in September, after a hearing Tuesday. Keen-Warren was arrested years after the crime due to DNA evidence.

However, her defense team says, "FBI's raw data indicates that a male is the major contributor of the DNA" in the getaway car--the only DNA evidence found.

Seven Nabbed In Georgia Gang Crackdown.

The [McDuffie \(GA\) Progress](#) (3/30, Parham) reports seven people were arrested March 24 in Thomson, GA in "a joint operation targeting gang activity" intended to "deter violence after recent upticks in criminal activity." The FBI Safe Streets Task Force was among the agencies participating in the operation.

UConn Grad Student Charged With Sexual Assault.

The [Milford \(CT\) Mirror](#) (3/30, Yankowski, 25K) reports Ziyad Fekri, a Moroccan national and graduate student at the University of Connecticut, as arrested by the FBI in Elmsford, NY on Monday on charges of "domestic violence charges of assault, first-degree unlawful restraint and disorderly conduct" for "sexually assaulting a fellow student at knifepoint" on Feb. 13.

[Vernon \(CT\) Patch](#) (3/30, Dehnel, 1.44M) reports UConn police "determined that Fekri was responsible for "a number of violent assaults" over a month's time involving the same woman." Fekri is now awaiting extradition to Connecticut.

[WTNH-TV](#) Hartford, CT (3/30, Ceneviva, 212K) reports UConn police obtained a second warrant for Fekri after the woman revealed the history of abuse, charging him with "aggravated sexual assault and unlawful restraint." Fekri "was charged as a fugitive from justice by police in Greenburg, NY."

[WVIT-TV](#) New Haven, CT (3/30, 209K) reports the FBI Safe Streets Task Force made the arrest Monday.

Bridgeport Ex-Police Chief Hopes To Avoid Jail After Cheating To Get His Job.

The [AP](#) (3/30, Collins) reports former Bridgeport, CT Police Chief Armando "A.J." Perez "is urging a federal judge to not send him to prison" after he and Bridgeport Acting Personnel Director David Dunn pleaded guilty last October "to defrauding the city and making false statements to FBI agents." Dunn also hopes to avoid prison time. Perez "admitted to receiving confidential information about the police chief's examination stolen by Dunn" and "admitted that he had two officers complete his essays, passed the work off as his own and lied to federal authorities in an effort to cover up his actions."

Florida Man To Serve 14 Years In Enticement Case.

The [Fort Myers \(FL\) News-Press](#) (3/30, Greenockle, 197K) reports Frederick C. Trueblood of North Fort Myers, FL was sentenced to 14 years in prison "for attempting to entice a minor to engage in sexual activity and possessing child sexual abuse images." Trueblood exchanges messages with FBI agents he believed to be a 13-year-old girl in 2019. The FBI and Fort Myers Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force investigated the case.

California Man Arrested For "Patient Brokering".

The [AP](#) (3/30) reports Darius Moore of Santa Ana, CA was arrested by the FBI on "a charge of solicitation and receipt of payment" for taking "kickbacks to steer new patients to sober living homes." Moore allegedly "receive[d] more than \$350,000 for providing new clients to four rehabilitation facilities in Orange County, which then billed health insurers."

The [Orange County \(CA\) Register](#) (3/30, Emery, 594K) reports Moore's scheme is referred to as "patient brokering." He "is only the second criminal prosecution in the Central District of California under the Eliminating Kickbacks in Recovery Act, a federal statute approved by Congress in 2018."

Louisiana Sheriff's Employee Pleads Guilty To Taking Bribes.

[WVLA-TV](#) Baton Rouge, LA (3/30, Scheidt) reports on its website that Criminal Records Division Supervisor for the Tangipahoa Parish, LA Sheriff's Office Sonja Dyson Evans "pled guilty on March 24, 2021 to use of an interstate facility with intent to carry on unlawful activity," according to the FBI." The FBI stated that Evans "solicited and accepted bribe money from [Shawanda] Dove in exchange for fraudulent bonds used for the release of incarcerated persons."

Georgia Bank Robber Pleads Guilty.

[KPVI-TV](#) Idaho Falls, ID (3/30) reports Emory Fredrick of Columbus, GA pleaded guilty to one count of bank robbery for robbing a Wells Fargo bank in that town in 2019. Columbus police and the FBI "apprehended Fredrick within a few hours of the robbery." Acting US Attorney for the Middle District of Georgia Peter D. Leary said, "I want to thank the Columbus Police Department and the FBI for quickly apprehending the defendant and helping restore order to the Columbus community." Columbus Police Chief Freddie Blackmon said, "I am pleased with the successful prosecution of this case and I really appreciate the dedicated work of our officers and FBI. ... We will continue our partnership as we work to make Columbus a safe place to live." FBI Special Agent in Charge of Atlanta Chris Hacker said, "Fredrick's actions traumatized both bank employees and customers. Thanks to the FBI, Columbus Police Department and the public, he was apprehended quickly and unable to threaten anyone else."

Minnesota Man Sentenced For Child Pornography.

The [Burnsville \(MN\) Patch](#) (3/30, 1.44M) reports Evan C. Pasicznyk of Burnsville, MN was "sentenced to five years in federal prison for the distribution of child pornography," according to a statement issued Monday. Pasicznyk "was living in Wisconsin at the time of the crimes." His "indictment and conviction were a part of Operation Kick Boxer, which involved the Milwaukee Division of the FBI and the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office."

Six Charged In Michigan Revenge Slaying.

[MLive \(MI\)](#) (3/30, Lofton, 828K) reports six people "are charged with first-degree murder in a case that police believe involved retaliation for the death of a suspect's boyfriend" in Eastpointe, MI. Jason Foster was shot in his car in December. All of the suspects in the case had been arrested locally by January, with the exception of one, who was apprehended in Tennessee with the help of the FBI.

US Judge Sentences Honduran President's Brother To Life In Prison For Role In Drug Trafficking.

[Reuters](#) (3/30) reports US District Judge Kevin Castel on Tuesday sentenced Tony Hernandez, a former Honduran congressman and brother of Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez, to life in prison "plus 30 years" for drug trafficking, and he "will also be forced to pay \$138.5 million in forfeiture, which prosecutors in their sentencing memo here wrote was 'blood money' from drug trafficking." According to Reuters, Hernandez "was convicted on the drug charges and related weapons charges in October 2019." Reuters adds prosecutor Matthew Laroche "said Hernandez had accepted millions in bribes, including \$1 million from El Chapo Guzman, to funnel into the ruling National Party's coffers for elections in 2009, 2013, and 2017 to benefit his brother."

Tennessee Drug Investigation Leads To 37 Arrests.

On its website, [WZTV-TV](#) Nashville, TN (3/30, 210K) reports the FBI and other organizations participated in a Tennessee drug investigation that led to 37 arrests. The investigation targeted an alleged illegal drug operation that operated "inside the Tennessee prison system." The [AP](#) (3/30) also covers this story.

Texas Man Pleads Guilty In Meth Case.

In website coverage, [KETK-TV](#) Tyler, TX (3/30, Miranda) reports Texas resident Christopher Marcell Mumphrey has "pleaded guilty to possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine." Acting US Attorney Nicholas J. Ganjei stated, "As evidenced by this plea and a co-defendant's plea last week, local and state law enforcement, partnering with the FBI, are making a difference in shutting down the flow of illegal drugs in our communities." The [KLTU-TV](#) Tyler, TX (3/30, 49K) and [KYTX-TV](#) Tyler, TX (3/30, Chavez) websites also cover this story.

Cocaine Case Defendant Sentenced To More Than Decade In Prison.

An online [WDEF-TV](#) Chattanooga, TN (3/30, Parker) report says a federal judge has sentenced Jerriod Sivels "to almost 12 years in prison on cocaine distribution charges." The Sivels "case is part of an investigation into" a Tennessee drug trafficking organization. The DEA "worked with local police on the investigation." The [Chattanooga \(TN\)](#) (3/30, 16K) publishes a similar article.

Honduran President's Brother Gets Life Sentence Following US Drug Trial Conviction.

The [AP](#) (3/30, Neumeister, Torrens) reports Juan Antonio Hernández, who was convicted at the conclusion of a federal drug trial in the US, has been "sentenced to life in prison" and ordered "to forfeit \$138 million." Prosecutors who worked this case alleged that the defendant "secured and distributed millions of dollars in drug-derived bribes" to his brother, Honduras President Juan Orlando Hernández, and others politicians in that country.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/30, Subscription Publication, 8.41M), [Reuters](#) (3/30), and the [Washington Post](#) (3/30, 10.52M) also cover this story

Drug Trafficking-Linked Honduras President On Harris' Migration Surge Call List.

An online [ABC News](#) (3/30, Finnegan, 2.44M) report says Vice President Harris "will begin calling leaders from Central America this week as she" works to reduce US-Mexico border migration surge problems. Among those on Harris' call list is Honduras President Juan Orlando Hernández, who was "cast as a co-conspirator in" a recent federal drug trafficking trial in the US. Hernandez's brother "was convicted in October 2019 of drug trafficking charges and lying to" the DEA.

FINANCIAL CRIME & CORPORATE SCANDALS

Honolulu Planning Department Employees Indicted For Bribery.

[Honolulu Civil Beat \(HI\)](#) (3/31, Jedra) reports, "Five current and former Honolulu Department of Planning and Permitting employees are facing federal charges for allegedly accepting bribes," and architect William Wong also has been indicted in connection with the alleged scheme. FBI Special Agent in Charge Eli Miranda said, "Our citizens entrust their government with great authority and power. It is our responsibility to the communities we serve to represent them ethically and transparently." He added, "The FBI will bring all its resources to bear and vigorously pursue criminals who attempt to defraud the American people our institutions."

CYBER DIVISION

Fake Apps Evading Apple's App Store Screening.

The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Albergotti, 10.52M) reports, "Apple bills its App Store as 'the world's most trusted marketplace for apps,' where every submission is scanned and reviewed, ensuring they are safe, secure, useful and unique," and the company "touts user safety as its defense against accusations from lawmakers, regulators and competitors that the company uses its monopoly over app distribution on iPhones anti-competitively." However, "it's easy for scammers to circumvent Apple's rules, according to experts." Seemingly innocuous apps can be

altered once in the App Store, making them “into what amount to phishing apps that trick people into giving up their information, until Apple finds out and removes the app.” This “raises questions about the effectiveness of Apple’s review process to stop scammers.” The Post focuses on fake cryptocurrency apps used to steal peoples’ cryptocurrency balances.

Cybersecurity Firm Reports Ransomware Attacks Growing Steadily In 2021.

The [Washington Times](#) (3/30, Lovelace, 626K) reports ransomware attacks are “increasing steadily in 2021,” according to the cybersecurity firm Check Point Research. The firm “observed a 9% increase each month in 2021 in ransomware attacks hitting organizations that it tracks.” Since last October, the number of ransomware attacks that the firm “observed has risen 57%.” Lotem Finkelstein, Check Point’s manager of threat intelligence, said in a statement, “In cybercrime, we rarely see businesses that demonstrate constant growth, or rapid adjustments to changing factors, as well as quick adoptions of new technologies. Ransomware is one of those rare businesses.” According to Check Point Research, the top three countries that “saw the most ransomware attack attempts were the US, Israel and India.” The top targets for attackers “are the government and military, the manufacturing sector, and the finance and banking industry.”

Experts Say CISA Is Underfunded And Outmatched.

[Politico](#) (3/30, Vargas, 6.73M) reports the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency is “struggling to keep up with multiple competing crises, including the recently uncovered intrusions blamed on Russia and China,” according to interviews with 15 people familiar with CISA’s work. Among them are four current employees and five former agency officials. Andy Keiser, a former House Intelligence Committee staffer who is in touch with current and former CISA officials, “CISA is overworked, understaffed and in one sense fighting half-blindfolded.” The struggle at CISA “highlights a central problem facing the federal government as it works to protect the country from foreign hackers: a distracted and gridlocked Congress, focused on the crises and theatrics of Trump’s presidency, failed to prepare for the growing digital threats that experts warned were coming.” Now it may “take years for US cyber defenses to catch up to increasingly sophisticated cyber assaults.”

Sources Say SolarWinds Cyberhack Gained Access To Then-Acting DHS Chief’s Emails.

[ABC News](#) (3/30, 2.44M) reports authorities “believe that the massive ‘SolarWinds’ hack allegedly carried out by Russia last year successfully breached the email accounts of then-DHS acting secretary Chad Wolf and dozens of other officials at the Department of Homeland Security.” In fact, the email accounts of top officials at Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency “may have been compromised by the cyberattack,” according to one former government official familiar with the matter. In a statement, DHS “acknowledges a ‘small number’ of employees accounts were targeted in the breach, but there are no indicators that their networks are compromised as of now.”

Biden Administration Plans To Make Cybersecurity A Top Priority.

[Fortune](#) (3/30, 3.68M) reports President Joe Biden “said he plans to make cybersecurity a ‘top priority’ of his Administration.” But by all appearances, the US is “off to a troublingly slow start in responding to, and recovering from, recent major hacks – foremost among them being the SolarWinds debacle.”

Officials Say Cyber Executive Order Forthcoming. [The Hill](#) (3/30, 5.69M) reports top federal officials “teased an upcoming executive order to improve federal cybersecurity in the wake of two major international hacking incidents.” Officials at DHS on Tuesday “said that the Biden Administration is working on ‘close to a dozen’ action items to be included in an upcoming executive order meant to strengthen federal cybersecurity in the wake of two major breaches.” A senior DHS official told reporters during a phone call, “We continue to work

urgently to make the investments necessary, and the administration is working on close to a dozen actions for an upcoming executive order.”

Suspected Russian Hackers Stole Thousands OF State Department Emails Last Year.

[Politico](#) (3/30, Swan, Bertrand, 6.73M) cites “two Congressional sources” who say “suspected Russian hackers stole thousands of State Department officials’ emails last year” in “the second known Kremlin-backed breach on the department’s email server in under a decade.” According to the congressional sources, the hackers “accessed emails in the department’s Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs and Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs.” According to a third official, “it does not appear at this point that the classified network was accessed.” Politico says it is unclear “whether the theft of State Department emails was part of the SolarWinds espionage campaign.”

The [New York Post](#) (3/30, O’Neill, 7.45M) reports it’s unclear if the email theft “was part of the SolarWinds spying campaign, where Russians allegedly exploited a vulnerable piece of software that is used across the US.” A State Department spokesperson said, “the Department takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard its information and continuously takes steps to ensure information is protected. For security reasons, we are not in a position to discuss the nature or scope of any alleged cybersecurity incidents at this time,” according to Politico.

Officials Say DHS Studying Ways To Fix Cyber Blind Spots.

[Roll Call](#) (3/30, Ratnam, 130K) reports top DHS officials said the agency is “examining ways to improve its understanding of foreign cyber activity and attacks targeting US agencies and companies, as the agency reels from two major cyber attacks that have left hundreds of American companies and federal agencies exposed to adversaries.” A senior Homeland Security official told reporters on Tuesday, “We are interested in exploring additional mechanisms through which the government could have a more rapid understanding of malicious activity or actual intrusions affecting critical infrastructure,” The official “spoke to reporters on the condition of anonymity to describe the department’s ongoing work.” Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas is “scheduled to speak Wednesday at the annual RSA security conference, where he’s expected to lay out the department’s cyber priorities.”

Lawmakers Seek Details Hackers Accessing Chad Wolf’s Emails.

The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Riley, 10.52M) reports in its Cybersecurity 202 column that new details on the hacking of emails at DHS “emerge as Congress weighs legislation to address the fallout of the attack and shore up cyber defenses.” The looming questions “about the attack could put that process at a disadvantage.” Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-VA), chair of the Senate Select Intelligence Committee, wrote in a statement, “The more we learn about the victims of this cyber intrusion, the greater the need for the US to develop a cyber-doctrine and strategy to counter against these types of attacks.” Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) “warned that the limited information could push policymakers in the wrong direction.” He wrote, “Americans still don’t know the full scope of the SolarWinds hack, what information was taken, or even the names of every agency that was breached. It’s telling that even without that critical information, some are pushing to expand the NSA’s authority into domestic surveillance.”

WPost: Congress Must Act To Prevent Ransomware Attacks.

In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (3/30, 10.52M) says that ransomware attacks are on the rise, with “the average ransom paid by hacked organizations nearly” tripling last year, and “worse, many of the victims are those most essential to keeping communities safe, healthy and in good working order: state and local governments, schools and hospitals.” The Post argues that “Congress should eventually...prohibit these payments altogether,” and in the short-term, the federal government should “assist public-sector facilities around the country in hardening

their infrastructure to deprive opportunists of any opening, as well as in recovering when infiltrators take advantage of whatever vulnerabilities remain.”

LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

Supreme Court Ruling Doesn't Create "New Loophole" For Police Shootings.

Institute for Justice analyst Nick Sibilla, in a blog on [Forbes](#) (3/30, 10.33M), writes that in a 5-3 decision, the US Supreme Court, in *Torres v. Madrid*, may have indicated a “newfound – albeit cautious – willingness to let victims of police violence and government misconduct have their day in court.” The Court “refused to create a new loophole for police shootings,” ruling that “the application of physical force to the body of a person with intent to restrain is a seizure” with regard to the Fourth Amendment. In the case at bar, officers shot Roxanne Torres as she fled what she believed were armed carjackers.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Mexican Law Requiring US Divulge Law-Enforcement Contacts Paralyzes US Anti-Drug Efforts In Mexico.

[Reuters](#) (3/30, Shiffman, Oré) reports that current and former senior officials in the United States and Mexico say that “U.S. efforts to battle powerful drug cartels from inside Mexico have ground to a halt” in the wake of Mexico enacting a law in December “requiring U.S. authorities to report their law-enforcement contacts in the country to the Mexican government, which American investigators widely view as corrupt.” In response, investigators on both sides of the border have paused “cooperation, fearful that the new disclosure rules could compromise cases – or worse, get informants or Mexican officials helping the Americans killed.” As a result, on-the-ground operations have largely ceased, US authorities have trouble tracking US-bound drug shipments, US drug agents report being tailed by local Mexican police, “and dozens of U.S. law enforcement agents can’t get visas to work in Mexico.” Two unnamed “senior US officials said” the situation has affected the DEA, the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and Homeland Security Investigations.

Accused Sinaloa Cartel Member Charged With Kidnapping.

The [Delaware News Journal](#) (3/30, 477K) reports the DEA and the FBI were involved with an investigation that led to the arrest of Luis Raul Castro Valenzuela, an “accused member of the Sinaloa Cartel” who “has been charged in Delaware with kidnapping a woman.” Federal prosecutors in the US “are in the process of getting” Castro Valenzuela extradited from Mexico, where he was arrested. In online coverage, [WTFX-TV Philadelphia](#) (3/30, 176K) reports Castro Valenzuela “has been charged with kidnapping” and “conspiracy to distribute heroin and fentanyl.” Commenting on the arrest was “Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Baltimore Field Office Jennifer Boone,” who said “a dangerous criminal is off the streets thanks to a large-scale coordinated effort between our partners in the US and in Mexico.”

OTHER FBI NEWS

Watergate Scandal Undercover Operative G. Gordon Liddy Dies At 90.

The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Dobbs, 10.52M) reports, “G. Gordon Liddy, the undercover operative whose bungling of the Watergate break-in triggered one of the gravest constitutional crises in American history,” died at the age of 90. “Liddy was at various times an FBI agent, jailbird, radio talk-show host, best-selling author, candidate for Congress, actor and promoter of gold investments.”

Bobby Ferguson Argues He Should Be Freed Because Kilpatrick Was.

The [Detroit Free Press](#) (3/30, Baldas, 2.16M) reports convicted contractor Bobby Ferguson is asking US District Judge Nancy Edmunds for compassionate release. His attorney argue "that Ferguson's sentence was too harsh compared with" Kwame Kilpatrick's sentence and that former President Donald Trump commuting Kilpatrick's sentence "serves as a 'compelling and extraordinary' reason for letting Ferguson out, too," as the executive branch created a "gross sentencing disparity."

DOD Wary Of Policy Changes In Dealing With Extremists Within The Military.

The [Washington Examiner](#) (3/30, Mahshie, 888K) reports that, "across the Pentagon, FBI agents have descended to help define the meaning of extremism for members of the military and civilian employees." Defense Department policy "provides that service members may hold extremist ideologies but not act on them." Pentagon spokesman John Kirby on Tuesday "described his own extremism briefing earlier in the day and explained Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's hopes for the 60-day forcewide extremism 'stand-down' that will wrap up Monday." The Office of the Secretary of Defense extremism initiative "consisted of briefers from the FBI and a Pentagon intelligence directorate member giving presentations before dividing the group into small discussion sections."

USAToday: Pentagon Must Do More To Eradicate Extremism In The Military. [USA Today](#) (3/30, 12.7M) argues in an editorial that it is "long past time for the Pentagon to take" extremism in the military "seriously." While "there's no evidence extremists are disproportionately represented among America's more than 2 million active-duty and part-time troops," service members "are also a select group. While recruitment goals are always a challenge, no one can serve unless they meet specific health and psychological criteria. There must be screening for extremism." USA Today says Defense Secretary Austin's "decision early last month requiring commanders to take one day to discuss extremism with troops" was a start, but "the Pentagon needs to do a lot more."

In an accompanying op-ed for [USA Today](#) (3/30, 12.7M), Bishop Garrison, a senior adviser to the Secretary of Defense, writes that although "the vast majority of our men and women in uniform – and those civilians who support them – serve with honor, dignity and character as they defend" the nation, "we are also rightly mindful that extremism in our ranks is real, and though we may not have a full grasp on the extent of the problem – specifically the number who espouse these beliefs – we know it can have an outsized effect on our force. It doesn't take many to impair our morale, health and readiness." Garrison adds, "We are going to tackle this problem head on, making it an integral and intrinsic part of everything we do. ... Fundamentally, it comes down to good leadership – knowing our people, setting the right expectations and holding ourselves accountable to the sort of conduct and behavior the American people deserve to see from us."

OTHER WASHINGTON NEWS

Biden To Unveil First Part Of "Build Back Better" Plan In Pittsburgh Wednesday.

The [AP](#) (3/30, Lemire, Mascaro, Boak) reports President Biden "is trying to redefine infrastructure not just as an investment in America the place, but in its workers, families and people." Biden will "unveil the first part of his 'Build Back Better' package Wednesday in Pittsburgh," and the AP says "new details and proposals are emerging of a massive investment on par with the New Deal or Great Society programs." The package, "with higher taxes on corporations and the wealthy expected to be proposed to pay for it," is "transforming the old ideas of infrastructure investment into a 21st century concept that includes developing the human capital of America's population." The [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#) (3/30, Routh, 426K) says Biden will deliver the "much-anticipated infrastructure speech" at a carpenters training facility,

which is “a popular local visitors spot for politicians who want to reaffirm their pro-union bonafides.” The facility “houses a four-year apprenticeship program that turns aspiring carpenters into union journeymen under the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America.”

The [New York Post](#) (3/30, Jacobs, 7.45M) says Biden’s “Build Back Better” proposal “will be split into two packages for Congress to pass.” The first “will focus on infrastructure investments specifically. The second will focus on funding domestic policy areas of Democratic concern, such as providing universal pre-kindergarten and tuition-free community college, as well as health care.” In addition, billions will be “put toward care for the elderly and disabled, as well as housing infrastructure and manufacturing.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/30, Restuccia, Duehren, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) cites people familiar with the matter who said the White House briefed lawmakers Tuesday on a roughly \$2 trillion plan that calls for increasing taxes on companies. [Politico](#) (3/30, Snyder, Ferris, Colman, Barron-Lopez, 6.73M) cites “several sources” who were on the call with lawmakers who said “the plan would encompass not just highways and transit[,] but water systems, broadband, supply chain issues and more. It would address electrification and has a major plank on innovation, which involves research funding targeted at areas where the United States is falling behind China and other competitors, such as on semi-conductors and batteries.”

The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Stein, Kim, Romm, 10.52M) says on Wednesday, the White House is “expected to unveil a plan to spend \$2.25 trillion on a jobs and infrastructure package that could form a cornerstone of President Biden’s economic agenda.” The plan “will include approximately \$650 billion to rebuild the country’s infrastructure,” and “will also include in the range of \$400 billion toward home care for the elderly and the disabled, \$300 billion for housing infrastructure and \$300 billion to revive U.S. manufacturing.” In addition, the plan will “include approximately \$400 billion in clean-energy credits on top of the \$2.25 trillion in new spending.”

Citing “people briefed on the plan,” the [New York Times](#) (3/30, Tankersley, Cochrane, 20.6M) says Biden intends to pay for the package he will propose Wednesday “with a substantial increase in corporate taxes.” His proposals “include raising the corporate tax rate to 28 percent from 21 percent and efforts to force multinational corporations to pay significantly more in tax to the United States on profits they earn and book overseas.” The Times adds, “Proposals to pay for [the] second step include tax increases on high-earning individuals and the wealthy, like an increase in the top marginal income tax rate” to 39.6% from 37%.

[Axios](#) (3/30, Nichols, 1.26M) says Biden is “preparing to go to the mat for four tax increases worth about \$1.8 trillion to help pay for his infrastructure and social safety net plans,” while Nancy Cordes said on the [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (3/30, story 5, 0:45, O’Donnell, 4.25M), “Essentially, they’re looking to roll back the Trump tax cuts that were passed in 2017, and so they’re already facing stiff opposition from Republicans.” [The Hill](#) (3/30, Carney, 5.69M) says while Democrats “have said they want the final product to be bipartisan,” they “have acknowledged that they are likely to have to go it alone through reconciliation.” Mary Bruce said on [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (3/30, story 5, 1:40, Muir, 7.19M) that Republicans “are already pushing back against any attempt to raise taxes,” and “some Democrats are voicing concerns about this plan. The bottom line tonight, Washington is gearing up for a bruising fight.”

[Bloomberg](#) (3/30, Natter, 3.57M) says labor unions and environmental groups are lobbying the White House and congressional Democrats “to back \$4 trillion worth of spending in the coming long-term economic plan.” [Reuters](#) (3/30, Renshaw), meanwhile, reports that Biden’s “infrastructure plan...could be worth as much as \$4 trillion,” and he is “expected to propose the biggest federal tax increase in decades.”

In a separate story, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/30, Schlesinger, Restuccia, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) quotes NEC Director Deese as saying, “The risk of doing too little outweighs the risk of doing too much. ... We’re going to be unapologetic about that. Government must be a powerful force for good in the lives of Americans.”

[CNN](#) (3/30, Liptak, Mattingly, 89.21M) says on its website that Biden "is deeply conscious that it is now his moment to step up. He is looking to the bold actions favored by Democrats decades earlier to inform the opening days of his presidency, determined that small steps cannot match the current moment." A separate [New York Times](#) (3/30, Astor, Engelbrecht, Thrush, 20.6M) story says Biden "believes he has a short window...in which to push through big projects," and "part of Mr. Biden's motivation...is to avoid what many Democrats see as a mistake of the Obama administration: scaling bills down in pursuit of Republican support, only to pass a final product that, in their view, did not meet the moment."

Katrina Vanden Heuvel writes in the [Washington Post](#) (3/30, 10.52M) that as Biden rolls out his plan, the media and Republicans "will no doubt focus on the price tag." But, "far more important...is the vision – the assertion that public investment will create millions of good jobs, while addressing needs that have been starved through the conservative era." Vanden Heuvel says the "the big challenge is whether Democrats can unify again to pass a major bill either under reconciliation rules or by suspending the filibuster." Democrats, she writes, "can't allow the timid to block making a material difference in people's lives."

Democratic Senators Want Biden To Push For Recurring Direct Payments. [CNBC](#) (3/30, Pramuk, 7.34M) reports on its website that "twenty-one members of the Senate Democratic caucus wrote to" Biden on Tuesday "urging him to include recurring direct payments and enhanced jobless benefits as part of his recovery plan." According to CNBC, "The senators, led by Finance Committee Chair Ron Wyden of Oregon, aim to tie the aid to economic conditions so relief does not lapse too early." Signatories include Senate Majority Whip Durbin, Senate Banking Chair Sherrod Brown, and Senate Budget Chair Bernie Sanders.

Former Top Pence Aide Leads Campaign Against Biden's Proposed Tax Hikes. [Bloomberg](#) (3/30, Niquette, 3.57M) reports that Marc Short, who served as then-Vice President Mike Pence's Chief of Staff, is "helping lead a \$25 million to \$50 million campaign to oppose President Joe Biden's proposed tax increases, including ads targeted to the districts of Democratic members of Congress." The Coalition to Protect American Workers, "led by...Short...plans a campaign of at least \$25 million starting within a month that includes television and digital ads."

Paul Waldman and Greg Sargent write in the [Washington Post](#) (3/30, 10.52M) that the plan is exactly the "kind of government spending voters from both parties support." However, because its passage would be "another victory for President Biden," Republicans "have to find a way to convince voters it's a terrible idea, which they'll attempt through a series of misleading arguments. ... One way will revolve around fearmongering about deficits and tax hikes. Another will seek to cherry-pick from the package to portray it as stuffed with wasteful boondoggles." Democrats, they argue, "should challenge Republicans to support beefed up IRS enforcement," which "could bring in gobs of new revenue."

Both Parties Seek To Court Mothers Skeptical About Pandemic Aid. The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Lerer, Medina, 20.6M) reports as the President prepares to announce a proposal "that is expected to include significant child care aid...parents across America are weighing these new attempts to help against a year's worth of anxiety, exhaustion and logistical nightmares of patchwork schooling. For many parents, there are no real feelings of relief yet, and resentment lingers that the government is helping too late." The Times describes mothers as "a strained and wary demographic – but also one that both political parties are trying to court with competing messages about pandemic relief."

Biden's First Judicial Nominees Said To Include "Some Very Historic Picks."

On the [CBS Evening News](#) (3/30, story 6, 0:25, 4.25M), Norah O'Donnell reported President Biden on Tuesday announced "his first slate of judicial nominees today, including some very historic picks." CBS' Nancy Cordes: "He made his choices with an eye towards diversifying the federal bench. And so of the 11 nominees that were announced today, there are four African

American women, an Asian American woman, and a man who would be the first Muslim American federal judge in US history.”

The [AP](#) (3/30, Superville, Gresko) says the President “nominated a racially diverse and overwhelmingly female group to federal and other judgeships, including three Black women for the U.S. courts of appeals, one pathway to the Supreme Court. ... Several of Biden’s nominees served as public defenders. One is a former military prosecutor. Nine of the 11 are women. The slate also includes a nominee for the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.”

The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Hulse, Shear, 20.6M) reports that Biden has “put an emphasis on diversity” when choosing judicial nominees and points out that his picks have “a broad range of backgrounds, including public defenders.” The Times says former President Donald Trump “emphasized white male conservatives,” and reports that “allies say Mr. Biden...is determined to install judges with different sets of experiences from the mainly white corporate law partners and prosecutors who have been tapped for decades by presidents of both parties.”

[USA Today](#) (3/30, Fritze, 12.7M) reports the nomination of US District Court Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals “is sure to stir speculation about her potential future nomination for the Supreme Court. ... At 50, Jackson could serve decades on the court. She won Senate confirmation for the district court in 2013 on a voice vote – signaling bipartisan appeal.” The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Marimow, Viser, 10.52M) also says Jackson is “often considered a contender to be the first Black woman on the Supreme Court.” The Post says the “former public defender and member of the U.S. Sentencing Commission...is known as a gifted writer and unflappable jurist who works long hours and has handled many types of cases.”

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (3/30, 3.37M) reports, “Biden’s other two appeals court nominees were Candace Jackson-Akiwumi, a litigator and former federal public defender in Chicago, for the 7th Circuit, based in that city, and Tiffany Cunningham, for the Federal Circuit, which handles claims against the government. The 7th Circuit has not had a Black judge since 2017; Trump appointed four white judges to fill vacancies on it.” The [Chicago Tribune](#) (3/30, Meisner, 2.03M) reports Jackson-Akiwumi, “a partner at Zuckerman Spaeder in Washington, D.C., is a 2005 graduate of Yale Law School and was a law clerk for U.S. District Judge David Coar in Chicago and then for Judge Roger Gregory on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in Virginia before joining the federal defender’s office here in 2010.” The [Chicago Sun-Times](#) (3/30, 970K) reports Cunningham is “an intellectual property and patent attorney, and a partner at Perkins Coie LLP in Chicago.”

The [Denver Post](#) (3/30, 660K) reports Biden nominated Regina Rodriguez “to be the next federal judge from Colorado, a choice supported by Colorado’s U.S. senators and criticized by a progressive criminal justice group.” Demand Justice has criticized Rodriguez “for being a corporate lawyer and former prosecutor. That group has urged Biden to instead appoint more civil rights attorneys and public defenders to the federal bench.”

The [Baltimore Sun](#) (3/30, Fenton, 629K) reports Biden has nominated two women, Deborah Boardman and Lydia Griggsby, to the federal bench in Maryland. Griggsby “would be the first woman of color to serve as a judge on the district court in Maryland.” [Politico](#) (3/30, LeVine, Barron-Lopez, Gerstein, Forgey, 6.73M) reports Biden also nominated Julien Neals, County Counsel and Acting County Administrator for Bergen County, for the US District Court for the District of New Jersey.

[NPR](#) (3/30, Totenberg, 3.69M) reports on its website that the two most recent Democratic presidents, “whose party also controlled the Senate at the beginning of their terms, were slow to fill judicial seats, focusing instead on legislative priorities. ... Biden’s staff says he has learned that lesson and that the president sees filling judicial seats as a top priority.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/30, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that Biden has approximately 70 judicial vacancies to fill, and is expected to have an additional 24 or so soon.

Ian Millhiser of [Vox](#) (3/30, 1.88M) writes, “Notably, all three of his appellate nominees are Black women. As a presidential candidate, Biden promised to appoint an African American

woman to the Supreme Court. But Black women aren't just unrepresented on the nation's highest court – they're also massively underrepresented on lower courts." [The Hill](#) (3/30, Neidig, 5.69M) and [Roll Call](#) (3/30, Ruger, 130K) also report.

Senators Urge Biden To Fill Top Pentagon Vacancies.

[Politico](#) (3/30, O'Brien, 6.73M) reports that some senators "are voicing concerns that key leaders – such as a trio of civilian service secretaries – aren't in place" in the Pentagon "as the administration gets ready to deliver the broad outlines of its first budget this week and Congress ramps up its work toward annual defense legislation." Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA) told Politico, "There's a lot of key positions that I hope we'll see soon." Senate Armed Services Committee ranking member Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-OK) said he and Chair Jack Reed are "equally concerned" over the vacancies, though Reed spokesperson Chip Unruh "cited the obstruction of Biden's transition efforts by the Trump administration as a culprit for the slow pace of nominations, but predicted more senior Pentagon picks are in the offing."

Former GOP Officials Back Clarke Nomination.

[The Hill](#) (3/30, Samuels, 5.69M) reports "several former Republican officials, including former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and former Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele," wrote letters to Senate Judiciary Chair Richard Durbin and ranking member Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA) last month expressing support for Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights-designate Kristen Clarke.

Health Experts Warn About Fourth COVID Wave.

The [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (3/30, story 2, 2:40, O'Donnell, 4.25M) reported that health officials and doctors repeated their latest warnings about growing potential of a fourth COVID wave on Tuesday because new COVID infections are "rising in over half the country, 27 states, including New York, Connecticut, and Louisiana." Overall infections are "up double digits in [the] last week compared to the one before." [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (3/30, story 3, 2:00, Holt, 5.62M) reported, "Many of the sick are young and fueling the numbers." New England's infection rate is among the more troubling signs after New Jersey's hospital system "admitted more COVID patients than they released" this weekend, and New York data shows that the state is "home again to one of the highest new case rates per capita."

[ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (3/30, story 2, 2:20, Muir, 7.19M) reported that doctors across the country are blaming the last COVID wave on the growth of variant viruses. Brown University School of Public Health Dean Ashish Jha said, "It's the variants that are driving the surge. Vaccinations are doing a good job of blunting that effect but the public health relaxation we're seeing with restaurants filling up, those really are not making it any easier to control the virus."

[USA Today](#) (3/30, Weintraub, 12.7M) reports that federal officials and epidemiologists "say they're worried we could hit another tipping point, leading to a fourth significant surge of infections, hospitalizations and deaths." Average daily reported cases "are up 10% compared to a week earlier...with more than 30 million COVID-19 cases reported since early last year."

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (3/30, Smith, 3.37M) reports that California's daily COVID infection data "looks promising" after "falling to fewer than 3,000 cases a day," but health officials "are increasingly alarmed that increases in cases being seen in parts of the U.S. and Europe could eventually threaten California's progress."

The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Erlanger, 20.6M) reports that "after weeks of decline earlier this year, followed by a plateau, new virus cases are rising again, with a nearly 19 percent rise on Monday compared with the number of cases two weeks earlier." But the Times says "new cases and deaths have declined from the early January peak." [Bloomberg](#) (3/30, Levin, 3.57M) reports that while COVID deaths "are expected to bottom out in the next two weeks," the

growing infection rate “may inch [deaths] higher” as the US “races to blunt an incipient new wave of cases with its vaccination campaign.”

Administration Facing Fourth Wave With Limited Options. [Politico](#) (3/30, Goldberg, 6.73M) reports that the Biden Administration “is confronting its first surge of Covid-19 with few public health options and even some of its Democratic allies ignoring pleas to slow down reopening their states.” Biden is now “fighting two battles: speeding up the vaccine rollout while pushing crisis-weary states to tamp down infections through mask mandates, social distancing and other measures in the meantime,” and failing at either task could “jeopardize Biden’s promise for a return to some sense of normal life by July 4.”

The [AP](#) (3/30, Selsky) reports that despite Biden’s requests for states to “stick with mask mandates to slow the spread of the coronavirus,” GOP governors have continued to announce new plans to relax COVID mandates in Arkansas, Alabama, Arizona, and Indiana.

In an appearance on [CNNVi](#) (3/30, 675K), Andy Slavitt, White House senior adviser on the pandemic, said, “This virus is still spreading. ... Are we going to just wait for science to rescue us, or are we going to participate in our own rescue? ... We have the opportunity in our own hands to effect this outcome.” Asked about governors ending mask mandates, Slavitt said, “I think the governors know better. I think the governors know they’re not helping the cause. That they’re actually weighing down the cause. And they may think it’s a popular thing to do. I don’t think that’s the case. I think people want to be told what the truth of the matter is. To me, a mask feels like a very small price to pay to protect people’s lives, to save people’s lives. We’re seeing death rates go up, even with more vaccinations because we have millions and millions of people that haven’t yet been vaccinated.”

Slavitt also said on [MSNBCVi](#) (3/30, 1.09M), “We’re not out of this pandemic yet. We still have an accelerated threat. ... We also have to remember that there’s millions and millions of people who haven’t yet been vaccinated. And so lifting all of these restrictions, telling people not to wear masks, gathering in large crowds, that’s the equivalent of playing with fire.” Slavitt continued, “So the message from the Biden Administration is, we have an accelerated threat. We are accelerating our response. ... That should send a message to people that they should hold on for a couple more weeks at least.”

Asked on [ABC’s GMA DayVi](#) (3/30, 1.47M) whether the Administration’s timeline for “normalcy” is achievable, COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force member Joneigh Khaldoun said, “I certainly do think it’s possible. Again, our vaccines are rolling out very well across the country. ... If everyone does their part, wear your mask, get tested, and, of course, get your vaccine, we can have more of a sense of normalcy and absolutely I’m confident that we can do that by July 4 as the President said.”

Republicans Begin New Campaign Against Vaccine Passport Plans.

The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, A1, Linskey, Diamond, Pager, 10.52M) reports that Republicans “are opening a new front in the pandemic culture wars, attacking efforts by the Biden Administration to develop guidelines for covid-19 vaccination passports that businesses can use to determine who can safely participate in activities such as flights, concerts and indoor dining.” The increasingly charged rhetoric “is directed at a nascent initiative between the Biden Administration and private companies,” and it would “be a way to ensure people could return to normal activities without risking further spread of a virus that has killed more than 550,000 Americans.”

[The Hill](#) (3/30, Choi, 5.69M) reports Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) “called vaccine passports ‘[President] Biden’s mark of the beast’ during a Facebook livestream” on Monday. She “claimed that the Biden Administration was seeking to require that all Americans who receive vaccination be documented” during a 20-minute video, saying, “Is this something like Biden’s mark of the beast because that is really disturbing and not good.”

Molly Roberts writes in the [Washington Post](#) (3/30, 10.52M) that “vaccine passports” are “about to start a war.” Roberts writes, “All the usual marks of cultural crusading have already

appeared: the claims about constitutionality puffed full of confidence but empty of context, the accusations of hypocrisy that are themselves hypocritical, the comparisons that defy critical thought." It is not yet known "where, when and to whom we might be required to present this handy-dandy credential, so people instead invent the scenarios that either most enrage or most soothe them." Vaccine passports, Roberts adds, "are the new masks. Depending on where you are, what you read and how you vote, they are either the badge of the oppressor or the brand borne by the righteous." They "don't even exist yet, but that won't stop our riven country from turning them into exactly what we're always looking for: a reason to get mad at the other guy."

Data Show US Could Vaccinate All Adults By July 4.

[Vox](#) (3/30, 1.88M) reports that US "is administering nearly 2.8 million Covid-19 vaccine doses a day – roughly enough to vaccinate every adult (18 and older) in the country by July 4." Success "would represent almost 80 percent of the population getting vaccinated," but doctors do not "know for certain if that's enough for herd immunity."

[CNN](#) (3/30, Howard, 89.21M) reports on its website that every US state has "announced when they plan to open up coronavirus vaccinations to everyone eligible" under FDA emergency use authorizations. The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Sullivan, Pietsch, Ngo, 20.6M) reports that Arkansas, Delaware, and Wisconsin "announced plans on Tuesday to open vaccinations up to those 16 or older by next week, bringing the total to 39 states that have announced plans to open vaccinations to all adult residents by mid-April."

Whitmer Calls On White House To Quickly Ship More Vaccines To Michigan. The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Stanley-Becker, 10.52M) reports Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (D) "appealed on Tuesday to White House officials to shift away from a strict population-based formula for vaccine allocation and instead rush more doses to hard-hit parts of the country." Whitmer said to White House officials, "I know that some national public health experts have suggested this as an effective mitigation tool." Michigan's latest seven-day average of new cases stood at 5,157, a 58% increase from a week ago "and the steepest increase nationwide."

Surveys Find Declining Vaccine Hesitancy Among Black Americans.

[Reuters](#) (3/30) reports that according to a survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation, "the percentage of U.S. Black adults who say they have either received a vaccine shot for COVID-19 or want one as soon as possible rose to 55% in March from 41% in February." Reuters adds, "Overall, 61% American adults reported being vaccinated or intended to receive the shot, up from 55% in February, the March report said, adding that the biggest driver in the change was interest from Black adults."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/30, Yeip, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports on a survey done by the US Census Bureau in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Center for Health Statistics, which found 17% of respondents said they were unlikely to get vaccinated. 22% had said the same in January. The Journal says the survey also found that vaccine hesitancy among Black Americans is now just 5% higher than white Americans, whereas it had been 13% higher in January.

Pfizer Testing New Freeze-Dried Version Of Its COVID Vaccine.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/30, Hopkins, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that Pfizer has announced plans to test a new version of its COVID vaccine, which will be freeze-fried in an effort to expand storage options for rural and low-income areas. The study will include 1,100 test subjects, and it is expected to last two months.

Warren Calls For Greater Transparency, Oversight In Financial System After Archegos Meltdown.

[Bloomberg](#) (3/30, Dillard, 3.57M) reports Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) "is calling for more transparency and oversight in the financial system after the forced selloff of holdings linked to

Bill Hwang's private investment firm," Archegos Capital Management. Warren said in an email, "Archegos' meltdown had all the makings of a dangerous situation – largely unregulated hedge fund, opaque derivatives, trading in private dark pools, high leverage, and a trader who wriggled out of the SEC's enforcement." On its website, [CNN](#) (3/30, 89.21M) quotes Warren's statement as saying, "Regulators need to rely on more than luck to fend off risks to the financial system. ... We need transparency and strong oversight to ensure that the next hedge fund blowup doesn't take the economy down with it."

[CNBC](#) (3/30, Schwartz, 7.34M) reports on its website that Warren "is one of the first lawmakers to respond to what turned out to be disastrous trades by Archegos." The trades "sent the stock of ViacomCBS into a tailspin. By the time Credit Suisse and Nomura, two prime brokers of Archegos, announced early Monday that they faced losses that could be 'highly significant' to the banks, rival firms Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley had already finished unloading their positions, according to people with knowledge of the matter." [The Hill](#) (3/30, 5.69M) provides similar coverage of Warren's comments.

Kentucky Lawmakers Pass Partial Ban On No-Knock Warrants.

The [AP](#) (3/30, Blackburn) reports that the Kentucky state legislature on Tuesday "passed a partial ban on no-knock warrants...more than a year after the death of Breonna Taylor during a police raid on the Black woman's home. The legislation now heads to" Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear (D). The new "measure would only allow no-knock warrants to be issued if there was 'clear and convincing evidence' that the 'crime alleged is a crime that would qualify a person, if convicted, as a violent offender.'" The legislation would also require warrants to be executed between 6am and 10pm, add steps to the process for obtaining a warrant, and mandate that judges "sign legibly when approving them."

Relief Extended To More Than 1M Borrowers Who Had Defaulted On Some Privately Held Student Loans.

The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Cowley, 20.6M) reports the Education Department "said on Tuesday that it will temporarily stop collecting on defaulted loans that were made through the Family Federal Education Loans program and are privately held," but it "still leaves millions of other borrowers in that program responsible for payments while the bulk of the country's student loan borrowers have had theirs paused." The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Douglas-Gabriel, 10.52M) says the relief is "retroactive to March 13, 2020, when President Donald Trump declared a national emergency." The Post adds the department "will return any tax refunds seized or wages garnished over the past year," while "people who have made voluntary payments on any of their defaulted commercial FFEL loans since the start of the pandemic can request a refund."

The [AP](#) (3/30) reports President Biden "announced in January that federal student loan payments would remain suspended and interest rates would be set at 0% through at least Sept. 30," though it "applied only to those with debt held directly by the federal government, leaving out millions with private student loans." In a statement, Education Secretary Cardona said, "Our goal is to enable these borrowers who are struggling in default to get the same protections previously made available to tens of millions of other borrowers to help weather the uncertainty of the pandemic." House Education Chair Bobby Scott called the policy "a necessary step to putting money in the pockets of struggling Americans and their families."

Meanwhile, [Politico](#) (3/30, Stratford, 6.73M) reports a senior official on Monday told reporters that the Administration is "still looking at what our options there are" for the five million borrowers who are not in default under that program, "saying it was 'more complicated' for the agency to extend relief to federally-guaranteed loans that are still held by private lenders." A [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/30, Korn, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) article headlined "More Than A Million Student-Loan Holders To Get Relief" provides similar coverage.

Administration Allows Journalists Inside Border Detention Facility For Children.

The [AP](#) (3/30, Spagat, Merchant) reports the Biden Administration allowed journalists inside its main border detention facility for migrant children on Tuesday, "revealing a severely overcrowded tent structure where more than 4,000 migrants, including children and families, were crammed into pods and the youngest kept in a large play pen with mats on the floor for sleeping." CBP allowed two AP journalists "and a crew from CBS to tour the facility in Donna, Texas, in the Rio Grande Valley." Although the facility "has a capacity of 250...more than 4,100 people were being housed on the property. ... Most were unaccompanied children processed in tents before being taken to shelters run by the Department of Health and Human Services and then placed with a family member, relative or sponsor. The children were being housed by the hundreds in eight pods about 3,200 square feet...in size. Many of the pods had more than 500 children in them."

The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Jordan, 20.6M) says the Administration "has established temporary facilities for the young migrants at convention centers in San Diego and Dallas, a coliseum and expo center in San Antonio, a former oil camp in Midland, Texas, and at Fort Bliss, Texas. But it is still failing to quickly transfer the minors to the shelters, which are supposed to come with education programming and recreational space, unlike the sites managed by the Border Patrol."

[NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (3/30, story 5, 1:45, 5.62M) reported, "Border Patrol's acting executive officer Oscar Escamilla says most" of the children "came with smugglers, parents often counting on authorities to reunite them with family members in the US." Escamilla: "Only God knows what happens to them while they're coming in on their journey. Nothing is guaranteeing the safety and security of that child until they come into our custody." NBC added, "Escamilla saying he expects the number of migrants to grow." Escamilla: "They know we are releasing them. They know that right now there's nothing stopping them. We're not going to deport them back to their countries." Similarly, [Fox News](#) (3/30, Shaw, 23.99M) reports on its website that "officials offered only grim predictions for the future. In the field in McAllen, Texas Deputy Border Chief Raul Ortiz told reporters that he 'fully expects' Border Patrol to encounter more than a million migrants this year."

[ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (3/30, story 6, 2:30, Muir, 7.19M) and the [CBS Evening News](#) ^{Vi} (3/30, story 4, 2:05, O'Donnell, 4.25M) provided similar coverage, as do the [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Miroff, 10.52M), the [New York Post](#) (3/30, Lapin, 7.45M), and [CNN](#) (3/30, Alvarez, Sands, 89.21M) on its website.

Lawyers For DACA Recipients Ask Houston Judge To Delay Ruling.

The [Houston Chronicle](#) (3/30, 982K) reports, "Lawyers in a key immigration challenge briefed a Houston federal judge on how legislative developments could impact the lawsuit seeking to halt Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals." Lawyers from Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, which represents 22 DACA recipients, "have argued that President Joe Biden's memo to Homeland Security to 'preserve and fortify DACA' could alter the outcome of Texas v. United States, a 2018 suit" spearheaded by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton (R) and "filed by nine states that says the original 2012 DACA memo by the Obama administration is unlawful."

Democrats Face Internal Divisions Over Scope Of Voting Rights Bill.

The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Fandos, Wines, 20.6M) reports congressional Democrats "are quietly splintering over how to handle the expansive voting rights bill that they have made a centerpiece of their ambitious legislative agenda, potentially jeopardizing their chances of countering a Republican drive to restrict ballot access in states across the country." While President Biden and party leaders "have pledged to make the elections overhaul a top priority," they are facing "an undercurrent of reservations in their ranks over how aggressively to try to revamp the nation's elections." The Times writes that "while few Democrats are willing to publicly say so, the details of the more than 800-page bill...have become a point of simmering

contention." Some prefer crafting "a narrower bill dealing strictly with protecting voting rights to prevent the legislation...from collapsing amid divisions over other issues."

Early Voting Advances In New Jersey And Kentucky. [NBC News](#) (3/30, 4.91M) reports on its website that New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy (D) "signed into law Tuesday a bill instituting early voting," while [CNN](#) (3/30, Snyder, 89.21M) reports on its website that "Kentucky's Republican-led General Assembly this week passed bipartisan voting reform legislation setting rules for absentee and early voting – an exception to increasingly polarized partisan efforts in multiple states to remake election rules."

Civil Rights Groups Sue Over New Georgia Election Law. The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Thrush, 20.6M) reports, "A coalition of civil rights groups led by the N.A.A.C.P. have filed a federal lawsuit against Georgia officials arguing that a new law severely curtailing voting access represents 'intentional discrimination' against the state's Black voters." The lawsuit is the second brought since Gov. Brian Kemp (R) signed the bill. The plaintiffs argue that Kemp "and other Republicans violated the First, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by seeking to limit the participation of Democratic voters who are a growing force in the state's urban and suburban areas."

The [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) (3/30, 1.46M) reports Republican defendants including Kemp and Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger (R) "have said the voting law will increase confidence in Georgia's voting system after then-President Donald Trump falsely claimed he had won the election."

Jamelle Bouie writes in the [New York Times](#) (3/30, 20.6M) that the new Georgia law is "what it looks like when a political party turns against democracy. It doesn't just try to restrict the vote; it creates mechanisms to subvert the vote and attempts to purge officials who might stand in the way." While Georgia "is in the spotlight, for reasons past and present," Bouie says this "is happening across the country wherever Republicans are in control." However, Henry Olsen writes in the [Washington Post](#) (3/30, 10.52M) that Democrats' claims that Georgia's new voting law is a return to Jim Crow "besmirches an effort that largely succeeds at balancing extensive voter access with strong election integrity."

House Ethics Committee Rejects Gohmert's Appeal Of Fine.

[Roll Call](#) (3/30, Tully-McManus, 130K) reports the House Ethics Committee has rejected an appeal by Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-TX) over "a \$5,000 fine levied against him for evading the new metal detectors outside the House chamber in early February after he stepped out of the chamber to use the nearby restroom and then returned to the floor. Gohmert filed a colorful and strongly worded five-page letter of appeal" in late February.

New York Court Rules Zervos Lawsuit Against Trump May Proceed.

The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Bromwich, 20.6M) reports, "The legal issues facing former President Donald J. Trump compounded on Tuesday when the highest court in New York State allowed a defamation suit from a former contestant on his reality television show 'The Apprentice' to proceed." The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Jacobs, 10.52M) reports the lawsuit brought by Summer Zervos, "who in 2016 alleged that Trump forced himself on her in a Los Angeles hotel room a decade before, is expected to resume after a lengthy delay caused by Trump's appeals." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/30, Ramey, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) also reports.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

US Questions WHO Report Into Origins Of Pandemic.

The [AP](#) (3/30) reports that after Peter Ben Embarek, the leader of the World Health Organization team "behind a long-awaited study of the possible origins of COVID-19 with Chinese colleagues," on Monday "presented the team's first-phase look into the possible origins

of the pandemic that has killed nearly 2.8 million people and pummeled economies since it first turned up in China over a year ago," the US "and over a dozen other countries expressed concerns about the study, pointing to delays and a lack of access to samples and data – without finger-pointing at Beijing directly." The AP adds White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki "said the Biden administration was still reviewing the WHO report," while the State Department "in what it called a joint statement by 14 countries...said they were calling for 'momentum' for a second-phase look by experts and pointed to the need for further animal studies "to find the means of introduction into humans" of the coronavirus."

The [New York Daily News](#) (3/30, Balk, 2.51M) reports the statement "emphasized worries that the investigation 'was significantly delayed and lacked access to complete, original data and samples.'" On [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (3/30, story 3, 0:40, Muir, 7.19M), Stephanie Ramos reported the White House is "saying China is not being transparent and because they did not provide that data, it is not cooperation."

[CNN](#) (3/30, Gaouette, Hansler, 89.21M) reports on its website that Psaki said that President Biden "believes Americans 'deserve better information' about the origin of Covid-19." She told reporters, "I think he believes the American people, the global community, the medical experts, the doctors – all of the people who have been working to save lives, the families who have lost loved ones – all deserve greater transparency." [Fox News](#) (3/30, 23.99M) reports on its website that Psaki "joined a growing sea of voices skeptical" of the report, while NIAID Director Fauci "said he would like to see the report's raw information first before deciding about its credibility." Fauci stated, "I'd also would like to inquire as to the extent in which the people who were on that group had access directly to the data that they would need to make a determination."

The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Rauhala, 10.52M) says that while the WHO report "offers the most detailed look yet at what happened in the early days of the outbreak," it "leaves key questions unanswered and has been overshadowed by concern about Chinese influence." The Post adds the "striking and unusually public rebuke" of the investigation by the US and 13 other countries also included WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who "said in a briefing to member states on Tuesday that he expected 'future collaborative studies to include more timely and comprehensive data sharing' – the most pointed comments to date from an agency that has been solicitous toward China through most of the pandemic."

According to [Reuters](#) (3/30, Nebehay), Tedros criticized China for withholding data from the investigators and although the report "concluded that a leak from a Wuhan laboratory was the least likely hypothesis for the virus that causes COVID-19," he "said the issue required further investigation, potentially with more missions to China." [Bloomberg](#) (3/30, Mulier, Gretler, 3.57M) reports Tedros "said the probe didn't adequately analyze the possibility of a lab accident before deciding it's most likely the pathogen spread from bats to humans via another animal." [Axios](#) (3/30, Basu, 1.26M) reports the Trump Administration had accused Tedros "of being beholden to China," but he "appeared to echo some of [their] criticisms" about China's lack of transparency. The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Harris, Rauhala, Guarino, Mooney, 10.52M) says Tedros on Tuesday was "applauded by those who have argued that some circumstantial evidence points to the Wuhan lab as a possible source."

However, the [New York Post](#) (3/30, Sheehy, 7.45M) reports that while WHO researchers "acknowledged at a press conference Tuesday that there was political pressure put on them during their work, they denied bowing to it." In addition, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/30, Hinshaw, Page, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says China responded by accusing its critics of politicizing the report, which the [New York Times](#) (3/30, Hernández, 20.6M) says "is already raising more questions than answers."

On [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (3/30, story 4, 2:00, Holt, 5.62M), Keir Simmons said that the WHO's report "has very few clear-cut conclusions," but "offers many theories, including the transmission of the virus from bats to humans," and its authors "warned...it could be many years before we know where coronavirus came from." [USA Today](#) (3/30, Weintraub, 12.7M)

says the 120-page report “is the result of a trip to China taken by a 17-person WHO team from Jan. 14 to Feb. 10.” According to USA Today, the report “offered four possible origin stories for the SARS-CoV-2 virus – ranging from a lab leak to a jump from animals to humans.”

In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (3/30, 10.52M) says China “has a responsibility to open its doors. This is not a blame game, but an essential investigation into the cause of this pandemic to make another one less likely.” In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/30, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says the WHO statement should not be the end of the investigation, urging the Biden Administration to release intelligence to the public. Absent this, the Journal says China’s propaganda will win over much of the world.

[Washington Post](#) (3/30, 10.52M) columnist Josh Rogin writes that the Chinese government “and the friends of the Wuhan lab want to dismiss any efforts to call for more investigation into the lab-accident theory as conspiracy theories.” He counters that such a “conspiracy now would have to include the Trump Administration, the Biden Administration, Redfield and the growing list of scientists who insist that this possibility be explored.” While “the WHO team wants to move on to searching for the virus in packages of frozen food in other countries,” he says that at the same time, “somebody else will have to investigate the lab-accident theory, because the WHO and Beijing have no intention of treating it with the seriousness it deserves.”

World Leaders Propose Treaty On Sharing Epidemic Data.

[Reuters](#) (3/30, Strupczewski) reports the World Health Organization and the leaders of 23 countries on Tuesday “backed an idea to create an international treaty that would help deal with future health emergencies like the coronavirus pandemic by tightening rules on sharing information.” According to Reuters, “The idea of such a treaty, also aimed at ensuring universal and equitable access to vaccines, medicines and diagnostics for pandemics, was floated by the chairman of European Union leaders, Charles Michel, at a summit of the Group of 20 major economic powers last November.” Reuters says WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus “has endorsed the proposal, but formal negotiations have not begun.”

The [AP](#) (3/30, Cheng) says “there were few details to explain how such an agreement might actually compel countries to act more cooperatively.” According to the AP, “International regulations governing health and implemented by WHO already exist – and can be disregarded by countries with few consequences.” The AP adds, “Despite an obligation for nations to share critical epidemic data and materials quickly with WHO, for example, China declined to do so when the coronavirus first broke out.”

The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Erlanger, 20.6M) reports in an article detailing the treaty proposal that it “is not clear...about what would happen should a country choose not to cooperate fully or to delay sharing scientific information, as China has been accused of doing with the W.H.O.” [CNBC](#) (3/30, Ellyatt, 7.34M) reports on its website that while UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, French President Emmanuel Macron, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel signed on to the joint letter “published Tuesday in newspapers around the world,” the US and China, “which have locked horns numerous times during the pandemic, with accusations of a lack of transparency, propaganda and misinformation – were missing from the list.”

Blinken Rejects Pompeo’s Focus On Certain Human Rights Abuses.

The [AP](#) (3/30) says that “in a sharp rebuke to Trump-era policies,” Secretary of State Blinken “will formally scrap a blueprint championed by his predecessor to limit U.S. promotion of human rights abroad to causes favored by conservatives like religious freedom and property matters while dismissing reproductive and LGBTQ rights.” According to the AP, a State Department official “said Blinken will ‘decisively’ repudiate a report prepared by former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that sought to pare down the number of freedoms prioritized in U.S. foreign policy.” Citing the same official, the AP adds that Blinken “will also reverse a Trump administration decision to remove sections on reproductive rights from the State Department’s annual human rights reports on foreign countries.”

The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Jakes, 20.6M) reports that the announcement "was one of several departures Mr. Blinken made from the previous administration's approach as the State Department issued its annual report on human rights violations." Blinken "did not specifically mention abortion in his remarks about protecting women's access to family planning care," but he "noted the strain that the pandemic had placed on women, racial and ethnic minorities, and others based on their disabilities or sexual orientation."

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (3/30, 3.37M) reports Blinken said, "Past unbalanced statements that suggest such a hierarchy, including those offered by a recently disbanded State Department advisory committee (on the 'unalienable right' of religious freedom), do not represent a guiding document for this Administration." [CNN](#) (3/30, Hansler, 89.21M) reports on its website that Blinken "noted that 'one of the core principles of human rights is that they are universal.'" He added, "All people are entitled to these rights, no matter where they're born, what they believe, whom they love, or any other characteristic."

[Fox News](#) (3/30, 23.99M) reports on its website that Blinken "said the U.S. will abandon such policies as the Mexico City rule, which blocks federal funding for non-governmental organizations that provide abortion services or advocacy." He also "said the U.S. will reengage with international 'organizations, even flawed ones, like the United Nations Human Rights Council.'" [Politico](#) (3/30, Toosi, 6.73M) also reports.

Administration Formally Accuses China Of Genocide. The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Hudson, 10.52M) reports that the Biden Administration "declared China's treatment of Uyghur Muslims a genocide in an annual human rights report Tuesday, formalizing its dire assessment of a campaign of mass detention and sterilization of minority groups in the Xinjiang region." The reports reads, "Genocide and crimes against humanity occurred during the year against the predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang."

Kerry Will Reportedly Visit India And UAE On Climate Mission.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/30, Puko, Donati, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that anonymous sources said US climate envoy John Kerry is planning to visit India and the United Arab Emirates as part of a new campaign to increase international investment in climate change commitments. The forthcoming trip will precede President Biden's international climate summit.

Brazilian Military Leaders Resign After Bolsonaro Replaces Defense Minister.

The [AP](#) (3/30, Jeantet, Biller) reports the heads of the Brazilian army, navy, and air force "jointly resigned Tuesday following President Jair Bolsonaro's replacement of the defense minister, causing widespread apprehension of a military shakeup to serve the president's political interests." The AP describes the resignations as "apparently unprecedented since at least the end of military rule 36 years ago," and says analysts "expressed fears the president, increasingly under pressure, was moving to assert greater control over the military."

Likewise, the [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Traiano, McCoy, 10.52M) reports that the resignations of the military officials and six cabinet members over the past two days "have sent political shock waves across Latin America's largest country, precipitating the most politically uncertain moment of...Bolsonaro's two-year-plus tenure," while the [New York Times](#) (3/30, Londoño, Casado, 20.6M) reports the exits "fueled rampant speculation in the capital about a breakdown in the relationship between the president and the country's military, which has played a central role in the Bolsonaro administration." A [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/30, Magalhaes, Pearson, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) article titled "Brazil's Military Chiefs Step Down As President Tries To Bolster Support" provides similar coverage.

New Satellite Imagery Suggests North Korea Is Restarting Nuclear Proliferation.

[NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (3/30, story 2, 1:05, Holt, 5.62M) reported that new satellite imagery is "raising alarms about North Korea's nuclear program after a series of recent threats and

provocations." Experts "say it appears that North Korea is about to make more bombs" after released pictures show smoke "rising from North Korea's main nuclear processing plant."

NYTimes Analysis: Taliban Already Leveraging Apparent Victory Over US In Afghanistan.

In a piece titled "The Taliban Think They Have Already Won, Peace Deal Or Not," the [New York Times](#) (3/30, Nossiter, 20.6M) says the Taliban are "promoting a bold message: We have already won the war." The Times adds, "That belief, grounded in military and political reality, is shaping Afghanistan's volatile present. On the eve of talks in Turkey next month over the country's future, it is the elephant in the room: the half-acknowledged truth that the Taliban have the upper hand and are thus showing little outward interest in compromise, or of going along with the dominant American idea, power-sharing." According to the Times, "The grim sense of Taliban supremacy is dictating the response of a desperate Afghan government," and "contributes to the...falling morale among the Afghan security forces, already hammered by a 'not sustainable' casualty rate of perhaps 3,000 a month."

Three Women Working On Campaign To Eradicate Polio In Eastern Afghanistan Murdered. The [AP](#) (3/30, Faiez) reports that on Tuesday, "attackers...gunned down three women working to administer the polio vaccine in eastern Afghanistan...a day after authorities launched a new campaign against the crippling children's disease." According to the AP, "The women were killed in two separate attacks in Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province." The AP adds, "No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack but eastern Afghanistan has witnessed an increase of attacks by the Islamic State group."

The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Nossiter, 20.6M) reports that Taliban "spokesman" Zabihullah Mujahid "rejected any involvement in the incident in a WhatsApp message." According to the Times, Afghanistan, "which recorded 56 cases of polio in 2020, according to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, is one of two countries where the disease has not been eradicated, trailing behind Pakistan."

According to the [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Hassan, 10.52M), "Targeted killings in Afghanistan began last year as peace talks were launched between the Afghan government and the Taliban, and they are now a near daily occurrence," The Post says the Afghan government "blames the Taliban for the attacks, but the movement denies involvement, and nearly all the killings go unclaimed." The Post reports that "dozens of people have been killed, including government employees, journalists, civil society activists, doctors, professors and religious figures."

China Passes Law Further Undermining Democracy In Hong Kong.

[Axios](#) (3/30, Falconer, 1.26M) reports that on Tuesday, China "passed a new law overhauling Hong Kong's electoral system, which is designed to ensure only 'patriotic' figures can run for positions of power." According to Axios, "Critics argue the law effectively marks the end of democracy in the Asian financial hub as it gives the ruling Chinese Communist Party control of elections, with all opposition removed from the legislature. ... Before the law was enacted, 35 lawmakers of the 70-seat legislature were directly elected."

The [AP](#) (3/30, Soo, Moritsugu) reports that Hong Kong's legislature will be "expanded to 90 seats," but "only 20 will be elected by the public," and "election hopefuls will undergo vetting by the national security police and a committee that oversees national security in the city." According to the AP, "China's top legislature, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, amended Hong Kong's constitution to pave the way for the changes. The Hong Kong government is now tasked with revising its electoral laws and holding an election." According to the [New York Times](#) (3/30, Ramzy, May, 20.6M), "The changes give Beijing and its handpicked local leaders vast powers to block any opposition candidate China deems disloyal, aiming to stamp out the intense antigovernment sentiment that fueled protests in 2019."

The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Dou, Yu, 10.52M) reports that on Tuesday, Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam "said...that Hong Kong unwaveringly supports the amendment. Referring to the pro-democracy movements since 2014, Lam said the government needs to deal with the 'chaos' of the past few years that was enabled by 'loopholes in the legislation' and restore order in the Legislative Council." The move "drew sharp criticism from Western officials," including British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, who "called the electoral changes a 'clear breach' of China's commitments under the Sino-British Joint Declaration signed in 1984." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (3/30, Wong, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that legislative elections in Hong Kong are scheduled for December after having been delayed since last September ostensibly due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Karen Forces Seek International Help As Burma's Military Advances On Them.

[Reuters](#) (3/30) reports that the Karen National Union, "one of Myanmar's main ethnic minority rebel groups, warned of a growing threat of major conflict on Tuesday and called for international intervention against a military crackdown on opponents of last month's coup." The KNU, "which operates in the east along the border with Thailand, said it was bracing for a major government offensive. 'Now, thousands of Burma military ground troops are advancing into our territories from all fronts,' the group said in a statement." According to Reuters, the KNU "urged the international community, Thailand in particular, to help Karen people fleeing the 'onslaught' and for countries to cut ties with the junta to stop the violence against civilians."

The [AP](#) (3/30, Vejpongsa) reports that violence in eastern Burma, "including air raids that drove thousands of members of the Karen ethnic minority to seek shelter across the border in Thailand, deepened Tuesday with new air attacks by the military that seized power from an elected government last month." According to the AP, "Thailand's prime minister denied that his country's security forces had forced villagers back to Myanmar who had fled from military airstrikes over the weekend, saying they returned home on their own accord. But the situation in eastern Myanmar appeared to be getting more, not less, dangerous."

Burmese Lawmakers Announce Plan To Form New Unity Government. [Reuters](#) (3/30, McPherson) reports that civilian lawmakers "have announced plans to form a 'national unity government' on April 1 - with key roles for ethnic leaders - and are holding online talks about joint resistance to the military junta."

US Orders Non-Essential Diplomats To Leave Burma. The [AP](#) (3/30) reports that the US State Department has "ordered non-essential U.S. diplomats and their families" to leave Burma, "as a deadly government crackdown on demonstrators protesting last month's coup intensifies."

NATO Jets Intercept Russian Planes Over Europe.

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (3/30, story 7, 0:20, Muir, 7.19M) reported NATO "scrambl[ed] jets 10 times over Europe in just one day. Jets sent to track and intercept Russian military planes across Europe [on Monday]. Six groups of Russian military aircraft intercepted near alliance air space in less than six hours."

Fighting In Eastern Ukraine Has "Escalated Sharply."

The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Kramer, 20.6M) reports the war in eastern Ukraine "has escalated sharply in recent days, according to statements Tuesday from the Ukrainian and Russian governments." In what the Times calls "the deadliest engagement so far this year, four Ukrainian soldiers were killed and another seriously wounded in a battle against Russian-backed separatists in the Donetsk Region of eastern Ukraine, the country's military said." The deaths "along with a buildup of Russian forces on the border, has seized the attention of senior American officials in Europe and Washington."

Report: Biden Administration Believes Iran Seeks Negotiations To Resume Nuclear Deal.

[Reuters](#) (3/30, Irish, Mohammed) reports that three anonymous national security officials "believe Iran now wants to discuss a broader plan to return to the pact" after early efforts by the Biden Administration "stalled." One source said, "It sounds from what we are hearing publicly now, and through other means, that they may be ... not interested in [discussing] initial steps but in a road map for return to full compliance." He added, "If that's what Iran wants to talk about, we are happy to talk about it," but Iran's final decision to move forward falls to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, who "said flatly on March 21 that 'the Americans must lift all sanctions' before Tehran would resume compliance."

[Axios](#) (3/30, Ravid, 1.26M) reports that the Biden Administration's efforts to reengage with Iran "over its nuclear program are coming up against three major obstacles: a lack of direct channels of communication, divisions within the leadership in Tehran, and looming Iranian presidential elections." President Biden "says he's willing to lift sanctions and return to the 2015 nuclear deal if Iran returns to full compliance," but Iranian officials "have rejected several U.S. proposals to meet formally or even informally."

EU Set To Sanction Iranian Officials Tied To Human Rights Abuses. [Reuters](#) (3/30, Emmott, Irish) reports that the European Union is "set to agree to sanction several Iranian individuals on Wednesday for human rights abuses, the first such measures since 2013." Reuters cites "three EU diplomats." Reuters adds, "Asked why the latest measures were being taken now, one of the diplomats said the EU was seeking to take a tougher stance to uphold human rights. This month, the EU sanctioned 11 people from countries including China, North Korea, Libya and Russia." According to Reuters, the EU "has shied away from angering Iran in the hope of safeguarding a nuclear accord Tehran signed with world powers in 2015."

UN Report Claims French Airstrike In Mali Killed Civilians.

The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Maclean, 20.6M) reports that while the French Army "says it killed terrorists in Mali, with no collateral damage," during an airstrike on January 3, a new UN report "says almost all of the dead were civilians." The UN report says that the victims "had gathered for a wedding in a village in central Mali," and the wedding party was "still celebrating the next afternoon" when French planes attacked. The investigators "found that five gun-carrying members of" Katiba Serma attended the party, but two "left before the strike."

The [Washington Post](#) (3/30, Paquette, 10.52M) reports that the 36-page report was "released Tuesday by the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, a peacekeeping force known as MINUSMA." The French Defense Ministry "disagreed in a statement Tuesday, saying the targets were known to be militants: 'The Ministry of the Armed Forces maintains and reaffirms with force that on January 3, the French armed forces carried out an air strike targeting an armed terrorist group identified as such.'" The airstrike ultimately killed 22 people.

IS Claims Responsibility For Attack On Mozambique Port Town.

The [New York Times](#) (3/30, Goldbaum, 20.6M) reports that the Islamic State "claimed responsibility for a dayslong ambush of a port town in northern Mozambique last week that forced tens of thousands...to flee the area and left dozens dead, including some foreigners." According to the Times, "The attack...was an alarming escalation of the war in the gas-rich province of Cabo Delgado, where insurgents with loose ties to the Islamic State have killed at least 2,000 people...over the past three years." The Times adds that "in recent months, the local insurgency has grown in strength and seized large swaths of territory, including the region's other main port town."

[Reuters](#) (3/30, Mucari) reports that Portugal "will send soldiers to Mozambique to help train the armed forces in its former colony, where authorities battling an Islamist insurgency searched for tens of thousands of civilians who fled an onslaught on the northern coastal gas

town of Palma." Reuters adds, "Mozambique's government has confirmed dozens of deaths, including at least seven who died when militants ambushed a convoy of vehicles trying to escape a besieged hotel on Friday. Witnesses have described bodies in the streets, some of them beheaded." Reuters describes Palma as "a logistics hub for adjacent gas projects worth around \$60 billion."

[CNN](#) (3/30, Lister, Cotovio, 89.21M) reports on its website that "the group that carried out the attack is known locally as Shabaab – the Youth – but little is known about its ideology or organization." CNN adds, "What is clear is that its reach has expanded across much of Cabo Delgado, a province the size of Austria." According to CNN, Mozambique's government, "despite the assistance of private military contractors from South Africa and Russia in the past two years, has been unable to halt its momentum."

THE BIG PICTURE

Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[FTC Seeks To Block Illumina's \\$7.1 Billion Acquisition Of Life Sciences Firm Grail](#)

[Archegos Blowout Heaps Pressure On Credit Suisse](#)

[Behind Biden's Big Plans: Belief That Government Can Drive Growth](#)

[Suez Canal Opens, But Shipping Will Be Snarled For Months](#)

[No, Volkswagen Isn't Rebranding Itself Volkswagen](#)

New York Times:

[Brutal Attack On Filipino Woman Sparks Outrage: 'Everybody Is On Edge'](#)

[Biden Wants To Pay For Infrastructure Plan With 15 Years Of Corporate Taxes](#)

[The Taliban Think They Have Already Won, Peace Deal Or Not](#)

['It Wasn't Right': Young Witnesses Offer Emotional Testimony In Chauvin Trial](#)

['It Felt Like Deception': An Elite NYC Hospital Charges Huge Virus Test Fees](#)

[Matt Gaetz Is Said To Face Justice Dept. Inquiry Over Sex With An Underage Age](#)

Washington Post:

[Latest Front In Covid Culture Wars: Vaccination Passports](#)

[Details On Biden Plan Set Off Clash](#)

[Witnesses Tell Of Fear, Despair As Floyd Died](#)

[Nurses, Others Cite How Those Tied To Cuomo Got VIP Testing](#)

[A Small Town's Neighbors Take Sides Over Politics And Race](#)

[Convicted Operative At Heart Of Watergate](#)

Financial Times:

[BioNTech Lifts Covid Vaccine Target To 2.5BN Doses This Year](#)

[Banks Face Regulators' Scrutiny On Handling Of Archegos Fire Sale](#)

[How Trucks Became The Next Battleground For Self-Driving Technology](#)

[Hong Kong Set To Allow Corporate Directors To Obscure Their Identity](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:

ABC: Chauvin Trial; COVID Update; COVID-WHO; Anti Asian American Violence; Biden-Infrastructure Plan; Border Crisis; NATO-Russia; South Dakota-Mt. Rushmore Fires; SpaceX Test Rocket Explosion; Major Biden; NFL-Extended Season; Fifth Grade Teacher Does Personalized Handshakes.

CBS: Chauvin Trial; COVID Update; Anti Asian American Violence; Border Crisis; Biden-Infrastructure Plan; Biden-Federal Judge Nominees; Colorado-Salute To Fallen Officer; South

Dakota-Mt. Rushmore Fires; Pet Food Recall; NFL-Extended Season; Kids Learn About Civil Rights Movement By Dressing As Icons.

NBC: Chauvin Trial; US/North Korea; COVID Update; COVID-WHO; Border Crisis; Anti Asian American Violence; School Attacks; COVID-Baseball; Holy Week-Jerusalem; Philadelphia-Black Community's Vaccine Champion.

Network TV At A Glance:

Chauvin Trial – 12 minutes, 30 seconds

COVID Update – 7 minutes, 0 seconds

Border Crisis – 6 minutes, 20 seconds

Anti Asian American Violence – 5 minutes, 55 seconds

WASHINGTON'S SCHEDULE

Today's Events In Washington.

White House:

- President Biden — Delivers remarks on his economic vision for the future and the Biden-Harris Administration's plan to Build Back Better for the American people in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- Vice President Harris — Convenes a roundtable discussion with faith leaders on their efforts to encourage communities to take the COVID-19 vaccine.

US Senate:

- Senate on recess from 26 Mar – 12 Apr

US House:

- House of Representatives on recess from 26 Mar – 12 Apr

Cabinet Officers:

- Secretary of State Blinken addresses MCC board meeting (virtual) – Secretary of State Anthony Blinken delivers virtual remarks at Millennium Challenge Corporation board meeting
Location: State Department, Washington, DC; 10:00 AM
- USHCC Legislative Summit concludes – USHCC Annual Legislative Summit (virtual) concludes, with day two speakers including Vice President Kamala Harris, Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas, Democratic Sens. Ben Cardin and Catherine Cortez Masto and Rep. Maxine Waters, Republican Rep. Anthony Gonzalez, and UnidosUS President and CEO Janet Murguía; *11:00 AM*
- DHS Secretary Mayorkas outlines dept's cybersecurity vision (virtual) – Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas outlines his vision and roadmap for the Department's cybersecurity efforts, in virtual address hosted by RSA. Other speakers include Hampton University Department of Computer Science Professor Chutima Boonthum-Denecke and Girl Scouts of USA Interim CEO Judith Batty; *1:00 PM*
- Treasury Secretary Yellen hosts Financial Stability Oversight Council meeting – Financial Stability Oversight Council meeting, hosted by Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen and held via videoconference; *3:00 PM*

Visitors:

- No visitors scheduled.

General Events:

- U.S. Supreme Court hearing on student athlete compensation – U.S. Supreme Court hearing: 'National Collegiate Athletic Association v. Alston', 'American Athletic Conference v. Alston' (consolidated) (Whether the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit's ruling that

National Collegiate Athletic Association eligibility rules regarding compensation of student-athletes violates federal antitrust law was erroneous?); 10:00 AM

- Iraqi minister of migration and displacement discusses 'current situation of displaced communities' (virtual) – 'What's Next for Displaced Iraqis' U.S. Institute of Peace online event, with Iraqi Minister of Migration and Displacement Evan Faeq Jabro discussing the current situation of Iraqi displaced communities – including ethnic and religious minorities and those at Al-Hol camp – as well as the 'challenges to their safe return, signs of progress, and Iraqi government plans for the future'; 10:30 AM
- Press Briefing by White House COVID-19 Response Team and public health officials; 11:00 AM
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce Annual Aviation Summit (virtual) – U.S. Chamber of Commerce Annual Aviation Summit held virtually. Speakers include The Boeing Company President and CEO David Calton, Airlines for America President and CEO Nicholas Calio, FedEx Express President and CEO Donald Colleran, Spirit Aerosystems President and CEO Tom Gentile, United Airlines CEO Scott Kirby, Alaska Airlines President Ben Minicucci, American Airlines Group Chairman and CEO Doug Parker, Lufthansas Group CEO Carsten Spohr, Airbus America Chairman and CEO C. Jeffrey Knittel, Association of Flight Attendants International President Sara Nelson, Thales North America CEO Alana Pellegrini, Airports Council International north America President and CEO Kevin Burke, and FAA Assistant Administrator for Human Resources Management Annie Andrews; 12:00 PM
- Jill Biden travels to California to participate in 'Day of Action at The Forty Acres' – First Lady Dr Jill Biden visits Delano, CA, to participate in a Day of Action at The Forty Acres with California Governor Gavin Newsom, First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom, the Cesar Chavez Foundation, United Farm Workers, and the UFW Foundation
Location: Forty Acres, 30168 Garces Hwy, Delano, CA; 2:25 PM
- Made Man Foundation discussion on 'Building Better Bridges: AfCFTA and the New Africa' – 'Building Better Bridges: AfCFTA and the New Africa' Made Man Foundation discussion, with Ghanian Ambassador to the U.S. Amb. Barfour Adjei-Barwuah, Sierra Leonean Ambassador to the U.S. Amb. Sidique Abou-Bakarr Wai, National Black Chambers of Commerce Vice President Charles Debow, and Onaps Advisory Principal Dr Pam Sitienia
Location: Swahili Village Bar & Restaurant, 10800 Rhode Island Ave Suite N, Beltsville, MD; 5:00 PM

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