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January 18, 2024  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Daily News Briefing

(In coordination with the Office of Public Affairs)

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## IN THE NEWS

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### **U.S. Navy Carries Out New Round of Strikes Against Houthis in Yemen**

The [Associated Press](#) (01/17, Copp, Baldor) and the [Washington Post](#) (01/17, Lamothe) reported that on Wednesday the U.S. military fired another wave of ship- and submarine-launch missile strikes against Houthis-

controlled sites, according to the U.S. Central Command. The reports stated that U.S. forces carried out the strikes on 14 missiles that the Houthis had "loaded to be fired," military officials said in a statement released by U.S. Central Command. The missiles were on launch rails and "presented an imminent threat to merchant vessels and U.S. Navy ships and could have been fired at any time," prompting U.S. forces to strike in self-defense. According to the information, the incident occurred when a one-way attack drone was launched from a Houthi-controlled area in Yemen and struck the Marshall Islands-flagged, U.S.-owned and -operated M/V Genco Picardy in the Gulf of Aden. According to the Pentagon Press Secretary Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder said the U.S. would continue to take military action to prevent further attacks. The story was also reported on by [ABC News](#) (01/17, Martinez), [Al Jazeera](#) (01/18, Staff Writer), [Axios](#) (01/17, Falconer), [CBS News](#) (01/17, Watson), [CNN](#) (01/17, Britzky, Liebermann), [Fox News](#) (01/17, Price), [The Guardian](#) (01/17, Wintour), [The Hill](#) (01/17, Robertson), [NBC News](#) (01/17, Schapiro), [New York Times](#) (01/18, Staff Writer), [Reuters](#) (01/18, Ali, Stewart), and the [Wall Street Journal](#) (01/17, Hookway).

### **The Supreme Court Wrestles With Major Challenges to the Power of Federal Regulators**

The [Associated Press](#) (01/17, Copp, Baldor) and the [Wall Street Journal](#) (01/17, Bravin) reported that Conservative Supreme Court justices on Wednesday voiced support for weakening the power of federal regulators. According to the articles, the Supreme Court seems poised to reverse a 1984 decision that many business groups and conservative activists believe has granted too much power to unelected executive-branch bureaucrats—a ruling that conservatives during the Reagan era initially praised as a way to reign in overbearing liberal judges. During the oral arguments on Wednesday, it was reported that Justice Neil Gorsuch took the lead in overruling the precedent, *Chevron USA v. Natural Resources Defense Council*. He added that by allowing agencies to interpret laws, the government always wins even when Congress does not consider the issue. The story was also reported on by [ABC News](#) (01/17, Dwyer), [Axios](#) (01/17, Baker), [CBS News](#) (01/17, Quinn), [CNN](#) (01/17, Cole), [Fox News](#) (01/17, Bream, Mears), [The Hill](#) (01/17, Schonfeld, Frazin), [NBC News](#) (01/17, Hurley), [New York Times](#) (01/17, Liptak), [Politico](#) (01/17, Guillen, Gerstein), [Reuters](#) (01/17, Kruzell, Chung), and [Washington Post](#) (01/17, Marimow).

### **Chinese-Manufactured Drones 'Pose a Significant Risk to Critical Infrastructure and U.S. National Security,' DHS and FBI Warn**

[ABC News](#) (01/17, Barr) reported that the DHS's Cybersecurity, CISA, and the FBI warned that Chinese-manufactured drones pose a significant risk to U.S. national security and critical infrastructure, potentially allowing for the theft of American data. According to the article, this warning was based on Chinese laws that permit government access to data held by private firms, thus putting any American data connected to these drones at risk. The FBI emphasized the threats posed by these drones, stating, "The use of Chinese-manufactured UAS requires careful consideration and potential mitigation to reduce risk to networks and sensitive information." They also highlighted that a 2021 Chinese law expanded the government's access and control over companies and data within China, enforcing strict penalties for non-compliance and considering data collection as vital for China's Military-Civil Fusion strategy to gain a strategic advantage over the U.S. The article noted that CISA and the FBI urged companies and individuals to isolate Chinese-made drones from their networks and to ensure regular maintenance for adequate security measures. Additional reporting on the story was provided by [CNN](#) (01/17, Bertrand), [CyberScoop](#) (01/17, Vasquez), [The Record](#) (01/17, Smalley), [BankInfoSecurity](#) (01/17, Riotta), and [Politico Pro](#) (01/17, Miller).

### **Federal Investigators Asked Banks to Comb Customer Data for 'MAGA,' 'Trump' Terms**

The [New York Post](#) (01/17, Nava) reported that federal investigators, following the Jan. 6 Capitol riot, asked financial institutions to search customer data using terms like "TRUMP" and "MAGA," as disclosed by Rep. Jim Jordan. According to the article, in a letter to FinCEN's former director, Jordan highlighted that FinCEN advised financial institutions to monitor transactions for indications of "extremism," using general terms and including purchases like bus tickets or books with extremist views. The article explained that Jordan requested Director Wray to provide a senior official for an interview regarding the FBI's use of Americans' private information and its engagement with the private sector in law enforcement matters, specifically referencing the FBI's interaction with Bank of America, which, at the FBI's request, scrutinized customer data for specific purchases around the time of the riot. Additional reporting on the story was provided by [Newsmax](#) (01/17, Katz), [The Epoch Times](#) (01/17, Ozimek), [Fox News](#) (01/17, Singman), and [Washington Times](#) (01/17, Pickett).

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## COUNTERTERRORISM

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### **Package Mailed to Rural California Elections Office Tested Positive for Fentanyl, Authorities Say**

The [Associated Press](#) (01/17, Nguyen) reported that authorities are investigating a suspicious envelope containing a powdery substance, which tested positive for fentanyl, sent to the Yuba County Registrar of Voters headquarters in California. According to the article, this incident is part of a broader pattern where similar packages were sent to election facilities in at least five states, including California, last November. The article noted that the FBI and U.S. Postal Inspection Service intervened to intercept such packages in the mail system, and election officials nationwide have increased security measures, including training for workers on handling suspicious packages and stocking naloxone, an antidote to fentanyl.

### **Donald Day Allegedly Had Buckets of Ammunition and Threatened FBI Agents**

[The Guardian](#) (01/17, Knaus) reported that Donald Day Jr, an Arizona conspiracy theorist linked to the Wieambilla shooters in Queensland, was arrested by the FBI in December for his involvement in a terrorist attack that left two police officers and a neighbor dead. According to the article, Day had interacted with the shooters, Gareth and Stacey Train, and commented on their YouTube video, expressing a wish to join them. The article added that during his arrest, Day threatened to kill five FBI special agents, stating, "I'll come for every fucking one of you," and faced additional charges for possessing weapons as a convicted felon. His lawyers filed a motion to dismiss the case, arguing that his comments were protected under the First Amendment and did not constitute a "true threat."

### **Club Q Shooter Faces More Than a Century in Prison for Hate Crime Charges**

[BBC](#) (01/17, Drenon) reported that Anderson Aldrich, who killed five people at Club Q, an LGBT nightclub in Colorado in 2022, now faces 74 federal hate crime and weapons charges, with about 50 of these charges being related to hate crimes. According to the article, Aldrich, who already pled guilty to state charges and is serving five life sentences, made a deal with federal prosecutors to plead guilty to the new charges, thus avoiding the death penalty in exchange for multiple concurrent life sentences. The article noted that the sentencing for these federal charges could amount to up to 190 years. The article also noted that on the night of the shooting, Aldrich used various digital and interstate platforms to acquire the necessary equipment for the attack, according to the US Attorney's Office for the District of Colorado. [Fox News](#) (01/17, Mion) also reported on the story.

### **14-Year-Old Charged In Connection With School Bomb Threat**

[Patch](#) (01/17, Taliaferro) reported that after a four-month investigation, Ramapo police, with assistance from officers assigned to the FBI Task Force and the Suffern Police Department, arrested a 14-year-old in connection with a bomb threat at Suffern High School. According to the article, the incident, which occurred on September 21, led to an evacuation of the school and a coordinated response from multiple law enforcement agencies. The article noted that the juvenile was charged with Making a Terroristic Threat and Falsely Reporting an Incident 1st Degree, both D-felonies, and was processed and released pending a court appearance in Rockland County Family Court.

### **Hackers Level Bomb Threats Against Hospitals**

[Becker's Health IT](#) (01/17, Leighton) reported that on January 12, the FBI, Department of Homeland Security, and National Counterterrorism Center announced ongoing bomb threats to various public institutions, including hospitals and health systems across the U.S. The article explained that over 100 threatening messages using similar wording and publicly available encryption tools have targeted more than 1,000 institutions in 42 states and Washington, D.C., since December 8. The article noted that although these threats have been unsubstantiated, government agencies have advised affected institutions to remain vigilant and regularly exchange threat information with local law enforcement authorities.

### **Bomb Threats Received at Montana Schools, Investigation Continues**

[KBZK \(CBS-7\)](#) (01/17, McDonald) reported that a threatening email was reportedly sent to several schools across Montana, including Bozeman, claiming that bombs were planted in schools. According to the article, Bozeman School District Superintendent Casey Bertram wrote in a press release that law enforcement has informed them that the threat doesn't appear to be credible. The article noted that the Sheriff's Office swept all school facilities, and no suspicious devices were found. Sheriff Grimsrud said his office will continue investigating with the Montana Department of Justice and the FBI.

### **Opinion: Biden Administration May Be Reviving Effort to Label Concerned Parents as 'Domestic Terrorists'**

An opinion piece from the [Washington Times](#) (01/17, O'Neil) reported that in 2021, President Biden's White House collaborated with the National School Boards Association to draft a letter comparing concerned parents to domestic terrorists, leading to an FBI memo that was later retracted. According to the article, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), having met with White House officials numerous times, continued this theme by adding parental rights groups to its "hate map," and SPLC President Margaret Huang boasted about the center's involvement in crafting the Biden administration's domestic terrorism strategy. The author assessed that this collaboration and the SPLC's history of labeling parental rights groups as part of an "anti-student inclusion movement" raise concerns that the Biden administration may renew efforts to target concerned parents under the guise of combating domestic terrorism.

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## COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

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### **Inside Biden's Secret Surveillance Court**

[Politico](#) (01/17, Ng, Sakellariadis) reported that in a secretive move, the Biden administration established the Data Protection Review Court in October 2022 to address conflicts between European and American data privacy laws, impacting the flow of consumer data and the operations of U.S. intelligence agencies. According to the article, the court, authorized to make binding decisions on surveillance practices without being challenged by federal agencies, including the FBI, has caused concern within the intelligence community. The article explained that critics and experts are apprehensive about the court's secretive nature and its potential to impose new restrictions on intelligence operations, as highlighted by Adam Klein's reference to Carter Page, a former Trump campaign adviser who was surveilled by the FBI but had limited recourse under U.S. law.

### **Pentagon Faces Questions for Funding Top Chinese AI Scientist**

[Newsweek](#) (01/17, Tatlow) reported that U.S. lawmakers are questioning the Department of Defense (DoD) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) for funding Chinese-born scientist Song-Chun Zhu, who has been transferring sensitive AI research to China. According to the article, Zhu, who received over \$30 million in U.S. grants, moved to Beijing in 2020 to lead AI institutes and returned to China to build its AI capabilities. The FBI had investigated Zhu, but no outcome was made public. The article noted that lawmakers are concerned about the loss of advanced technology to China, a major competitor in military and scientific fields, and have demanded complete documentation of all DoD grants given to Zhu, including a breakdown of his research and a list of grant recipients currently in China. The DoD and UCLA, where Zhu previously worked, have been asked to address this security concern.

### **Analysis: The Case for Counterintelligence Against Chinese Espionage**

An opinion piece from [Georgetown Security Studies Review](#) (01/17, Bryja) emphasized the urgent need for robust counterintelligence measures to combat pervasive industrial espionage by China. The article highlighted Director Wray's statements on the scale of Chinese espionage, including his remark that "the PRC is targeting our innovation, our trade secrets, and our intellectual property on a scale that's unprecedented in history. They have a bigger hacking program than that of every other major nation combined. They have stolen more of Americans' personal and corporate data than every nation combined." According to the article, in 2018, the FBI calculated the cost to the U.S. economy as between \$225 and \$600 billion every year. The article added that the FBI is investigating nearly 2,500 additional Chinese operations and opens a new China-related counterintelligence case every 10 hours, representing a significant increase in cases over the last decade. The article also noted that one of the CCP's favorite espionage tools is recruiting insiders because they understand, as former FBI Assistant Director of Counterintelligence Bill Priestap pointed out, "One malicious actor on the inside of a company can undermine almost any security system, be it physical or virtual." The author concluded that to counter the Chinese Communist Party's espionage and protect the United States' economic and national security, policymakers and executives must enhance counterintelligence efforts, educate the private sector, and strengthen cybersecurity infrastructure.

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## CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

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### **Trump Lawyers Preview Arguments of 'Political Bias' in Classified Documents Case**

[NBC News](#) (01/17, Concepcion) reported that Donald Trump's lawyers on Tuesday night previewed their defense arguments in the case over the former president's handling of classified documents, saying they plan to rebut prosecutors' accusations that sensitive government documents were stored at insecure locations on his Mar-a-Lago estate. The article noted that in a motion filed Tuesday, Trump lawyers signaled they will argue that prosecutors carried out a "politically motivated and biased" investigation into his handling of classified documents, with the intent to damage the former president's 2024 campaign. The article mentioned that Trump's lawyers said they are seeking communications between prosecutors at the DOJ and associates of President Joe Biden, alleging without providing evidence that the Biden administration is orchestrating legal efforts to interfere with Trump's campaign. The [Independent](#) (01/17, Reinstein), [Law 360](#) (01/17, Karp), the [Hill](#) (01/17, Beitsch), [Epoch Times](#) (01/17, Yang), and [Washington Post](#) (01/17, Stein) also reported on the story.

### **DOJ Further Acknowledges Hunter Biden's Laptop Is Real**

[Fox News](#) (01/17, Wehner) reported that federal prosecutors further acknowledged in court documents filed Tuesday, that the laptop Hunter Biden dropped off at a computer store is in fact real, adding that the contents on the laptop matched what had previously been obtained through a search warrant on the president's son's Apple iCloud. The article added that in the court documents, Biden's DOJ said the IRS and FBI obtained a search warrant for tax violations in August 2019 and were able to get access to Hunter's Apple iCloud account. By September 2021, Apple produced backups of data from various electronic devices Hunter backed up to his iCloud account. The article mentioned that in 2020, John Paul Mac Isaac, a computer repair shop owner who turned over the laptop belonging to the president's son to authorities and members of the press, said a man he believed to be Hunter dropped off three laptops in his store in April 2019. Only one of the laptops was salvageable, and while repairing the laptop, Isaac said he discovered disturbing material.

### **'Suitcase Killer' Heather Mack Sentenced to 26 Years for Cold-Blooded Murder of Mom Over \$1.5m Trust Fund**

The [Associated Press](#) (01/17, Savage) reported that an American woman who pleaded guilty to helping kill her mother and stuffing the body in a suitcase during a luxury vacation in Bali was sentenced in Chicago Wednesday to 26 years in prison. The article noted that federal prosecutors had recommended a 28-year prison sentence for Heather Mack for conspiring with her boyfriend to kill Sheila von Wiese-Mack in 2014. Mack's attorney Michael Leonard said he expects Mack, 28, will be locked up for roughly 20 years including good behavior credits available to all federal prisoners. His estimate also accounts for the judge giving Mack credit for the two-plus years she spent in custody in Chicago after completing a jail term in Indonesia. She was deported to the U.S. in 2021. A DOJ [press release](#) indicated that the FBI was involved in the case. The [New York Post](#) (01/17, Donlevy), [New York Times](#) (01/17, Jimenez), [Chicago Tribune](#) (01/17, Meisner), [People](#) (01/17, Neumann), the [Independent](#) (01/17, Sharp), [Forbes](#) (01/17, Gleeson), [Daily Mail](#) (01/17, Potter), [Fox News](#) (01/17, Ruiz), [New York Daily News](#) (01/17, Wilkinson), [Patch](#) (01/17, Arnold), and [WBBM \(CBS-2\)](#) (01/17, Feurer, Molina, Perlman) also reported on the story.

### **MS-13 Terrorized Northern Virginia by Killing at Random, Witnesses Say**

The [Washington Post](#) (01/17, Rizzo) reported that the MS-13 members had been cruising all night in a gray Mercedes, searching for rival gang members to kill in Maryland or Virginia so they could bolster their street cred and expand their turf. They were coming up empty as dawn approached on Sept. 24, 2019. The article noted that then they spotted Antonio Smith, 37, leaving a 7-Eleven in Dumfries, Va. He was a stranger carrying a plastic bag filled with a frozen pizza and a gallon of orange juice, but the MS-13 members were desperate for a kill, according to federal prosecutors. The article quoted Mario Guevara, 28, who testified, "I shot him in the back. That was the first shot, and with the second one, he fell to the ground, he started screaming at us not to do it, he was saying in English, 'Oh, my God,' and in Spanish, 'Amigo.' He also said, 'Stop, stop.'" According to the article, although MS-13's code requires members to kill rival gang members, or "chavalas," to be promoted within the organization, prosecutors, FBI agents, witnesses and Virginia police officials have narrated in painstaking detail over the course of several recent investigations how MS-13 members often get desperate for promotions and decide to target random people with no known gang ties, passing the victims off as rivals to dupe their superiors in El Salvador into granting them higher ranks.

### **Man Wanted by FBI for Ponzi Scheme Charged for Stealing \$100M From Investors**

[WJBK \(Fox-2\)](#) (01/17, Komer) reported that an investment firm operator has been charged with running a Ponzi scheme that amassed \$100 million from investors in Detroit federal court, United States Attorney Dawn N. Ison announced Wednesday. The article noted that Darren Anthony Robinson, 53, a U.S. citizen who has operated out of

the country of Panama, was charged with committing wire fraud. Robinson appeared today in federal court in Detroit to make his initial appearance. Robinson faces up to 20 years in prison on the charge of wire fraud. The article mentioned that Robinson had been wanted by the FBI for wire fraud and money laundering and had purported ties to Panama, the United Arab Emirates, and Columbia. The article quoted James A. Tarasca, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Detroit Field Office, who said, "This defendant allegedly orchestrated a large-scale, multimillion-dollar Ponzi scheme with victims across the globe, investment fraud can be crippling for its victims, and the FBI is committed to identifying and working with anyone impacted by this scheme." [CBS News](#) (01/17, Dawson) also reported on the story.

### **FBI Investigating Multiple Quickmed Locations**

[WFMJ \(NBC-21\)](#) (01/17, Mosca, Gessner, McFerren) reported that agents with the FBI are on the scene at multiple Quickmed locations in Ohio. The article noted that FBI Cleveland Public Affairs Officer Susan Licate said that the FBI conducted "court-authorized activity" at the Liberty QUICKmed Urgent Care, QUICKmed Corporate, and additional locations. The article added that the FBI was also speaking with some YCSD board members about contracts that the district had entered into during former CEO and Superintendent Justin Jennings's time in Youngstown, including contracts involving QuickMed. [WKBN \(Fox-8\)](#) (01/17, Bemder, Simeon), and the [Tribune Chronicle](#) (01/17, Staff Writer) also reported on the story.

### **Mistrial for 72-Year-Old Accused of Killing a Deputy Five Decades Ago**

The [Washington Post](#) (01/17, Morse) reported that the trial of a 72-year-old man charged with murder in the decades-old killing of a Maryland sheriff's deputy ended in a mistrial Wednesday, the latest turn in a case that had gone dormant until detectives recently revisited the investigation. The article noted that a jury in Montgomery County began deliberating Friday after a week-long trial that turned on whether Larry David Smith was recently coaxed into admitting to the crime. Jurors informed Circuit Judge Cheryl A. McCally on Wednesday afternoon that they had reached an impasse and couldn't reach a unanimous verdict. The article mentioned that the trial took jurors back to Oct. 23, 1971, when James Hall was working a night security detail outside the Manor Country Club. He came upon at least two men who had just broken into a nearby home, police say, and one of them shot him in the head. Hall died three days later. The article added that Montgomery County Cold Case detectives reopened the case in 2021. They found an old reel-to-reel recording of an interview in case files, had it digitally converted by the FBI, and heard the voice of Smith, which in their minds put him at the scene of the crime.

### **Palestinian Students Shot in Vermont Say the Suspect Waited for and Targeted Them**

[NBC News](#) (01/17, Llamas, Alsharif) reported that it took Hisham Awartani some time to realize he'd been shot after falling to the ground during a walk near his grandmother's house with two friends, Kinnan Abdalhamid and Tahseen Ali Ahmad. According to the article, on Nov. 25, as they walked they saw a man standing across the road come down the porch of a home, pull out a pistol, and shoot them. Awartani and Abdalhamid believe the man may have seen them before and was possibly waiting for them that day. The article added that Jason Eaton, 48, was arrested two days later in connection with the shooting. He has pleaded not guilty to three counts of second-degree attempted murder. Police have not yet revealed a presumed motive for the shooting, saying the investigation is ongoing. The article mentioned that the agencies handling the investigation include the FBI, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

### **FBI Investigating Oregon Transgender Woman Over Racist, Antisemitic Social Media Posts**

The [National Desk](#) (01/17, Lewis) reported that the FBI is investigating a transgender woman for allegedly using social media to repost a mass shooting, upload sinister racial content, and threaten her "transphobic" coworkers. The article noted that Elizabeth West, 56, who lives in Oregon, reposted livestreamed footage of the 2019 Christchurch mosque shooting on Dec. 3, according to a federal affidavit. The original post's caption allegedly read, "and it'll stop one way or another." The article mentioned that in September, the FBI received a tip for one of West's Facebook posts in which she allegedly appeared to threaten violence toward her coworkers. According to the article, upon searching her home last week, FBI agents seized 16 rifles, 11 handguns, tens of thousands of ammunition rounds, gun accessories, 48 drawings, a composition notebook, and a "black shadow" journal. The drawings depict West's "veil mistress," who wields a sword and stabs, hangs, and mutilates Black men, according to the affidavit.

### **FBI Investigating Georgia County's Delayed Waste-To-Fuel Project**

[WAGA \(Fox-5\)](#) (01/17, Edwards) reported that a stalled recycling center that's come under fire from irate taxpayers has caught the attention of the FBI. With the backing of the county government, the Lamar County Regional Solid Waste Management Authority took out a \$27.5 million state loan in 2014 to build a waste-to-fuel project at the landfill that's now more than 6 years past its original completion date, with loan repayments starting in April. The article noted that some of the loan money flowed to a top landfill official who promoted the project, with a group of angry taxpayers demanding the county launch an investigation. An FBI spokesperson confirmed Wednesday that the agency has launched an investigation.

### **Colorado Funeral Home Owners Apparently Sought to Cover Up Money Problems by Abandoning Bodies**

The [Associated Press](#) (01/17, Slevin, Brown) reported that two Colorado funeral home owners sought to cover up their financial difficulties by abandoning nearly 200 bodies that they had agreed to cremate or bury, instead storing the remains in a neglected building in many cases for years, a Colorado judge said Wednesday as he ruled that the criminal case against one of the defendants can go to trial. The article noted that Judge William Moller cited evidence from prosecutors in deciding that Return to Nature Funeral Home co-owner Carie Hallford can face trial on 260 counts of corpse abuse, money laundering, forgery, and theft. At the request of her attorney, the judge also sharply reduced Hallford's bond, from \$2 million to \$100,000, increasing the chances that she can get out of jail while the trial is pending. Moller said the crimes the Hallfords are accused of were not violent and noted that Carie Hallford had no prior criminal record. The article stated that during a hearing last week, FBI agent Andrew Cohen testified about the gruesome conditions at the building in Penrose, Colorado where the decomposing bodies were found last year, stored at room temperature and stacked on top of one another. Flies and maggots were found throughout the building.

### **Ex-Abercrombie & Fitch CEO Reportedly Under FBI Inquiry for Alleged Sex Crimes**

The [Guardian](#) (01/17, Oladipo) reported that the former CEO of the clothing brand Abercrombie & Fitch is reportedly being investigated by the FBI and other law enforcement agencies for alleged sex crimes. The article noted that Mike Jeffries and his partner Matthew Smith are being investigated by federal agencies following allegations that they sexually exploited and abused young men at parties they hosted. The article mentioned that the FBI and the US attorney's office in the eastern district of New York are reportedly interviewing witnesses and issuing subpoenas as part of their investigation. The [New York Post](#) (01/17, Thaler), and the [Independent](#) (01/17, Ross) also reported on the story.

### **Eric Adams Hauls in \$650,000 for NYC Mayor's Legal Defense Fund Amid Federal Investigation**

The [Washington Examiner](#) (01/17, Kaminsky) reported that New York City Mayor Eric Adams has raised more than \$650,000 in connection to a legal defense fund he launched amid a federal corruption investigation into the Democrat. The article mentioned that the FBI and federal prosecutors are investigating whether the Adams campaign in 2021 unlawfully conspired with the Turkish government to receive contributions, an allegation that came under the spotlight after law enforcement in November raided the Brooklyn residence of Adams's friend Brianna Suggs, a major fundraiser for him. The article stated that employees of New York City are permitted to set up legal defense funds so they may receive assistance for certain expenses and bills, according to the city's Conflicts of Interest Board. Adams is being represented by the law firm WilmerHale, and the investigation centers on the possibility that the Adams campaign provided kickback benefits to a Brooklyn construction company with ties to Turkey, as well as to officials in Turkey.

### **Investigation Into High School Student Threatened Online Gets Attention From FBI**

[WTKR \(CBS-13\)](#) (01/17, Kavanagh) reported that a Virginia student said he was sent images of a decapitated head and guns. He said people he met online were threatening to kill him and hunt him down at his high school. The article noted that it started back in mid-December when 16-year-old Tyler Shonyo said people on Instagram offered him \$600 for the rights to use his high school football photos he posted on social media. He said he regrettably cashed the electronic check. The article added that then, violent threats started as the people online were demanding the money back. They started to send disturbing images, threatening to track him down at school and kill him. They claimed to know his exact location. He said they were repeatedly calling, texting, and harassing him. The article mentioned that after a news investigation aired, the FBI got involved. The article quoted an FBI statement, which said, "Internet fraud is a growing threat to businesses and individuals alike. The perpetrators of these scams are sophisticated, and their techniques are constantly being refined. While the FBI is active in working to prevent and mitigate these types of scams, we encourage organizations and individuals to remain vigilant. Resources and tips for prevention can be found on the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center website. If you

believe you have fallen victim to internet fraud and wish to report it, please file a complaint with IC3. Additionally, if there is a direct threat to life, contact law enforcement immediately."

### **Three Arrested in Bay Area Retail Theft Ring That Stole \$650K in Merchandise**

[KQVZ \(CBS-13\)](#) (01/17, Fang) reported that three people suspected of being part of a retail theft ring responsible for more than two dozen burglaries and attempted burglaries have been arrested, Attorney General Rob Bonta announced Wednesday. According to a statement from Bonta's office, the three were suspected in about 25 incidents at smoke shops, liquor stores, and high-end-retail stores between September 8, 2023, and November 14, 2023. The thefts resulted in more than \$650,000 in losses. All three suspects are facing multiple felony charges, including grand theft and second-degree burglary. The suspects' identities have not been released. The article quoted Chief Jamie Knox of the Walnut Creek Police Department, who said, "Walnut Creek detectives worked diligently and thoroughly on this investigation, we appreciated the partnership with the Concord Police Department, FBI Safe Streets, and the Attorney General's Office among others to bring this complex case to a successful conclusion."

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## **CYBER DIVISION**

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### **CISA-FBI Cybersecurity Advisory Details Indicators of Compromise From AndroXgh0st Malware Attacks**

[ExecutiveGov](#) (01/17, Bennet) reported that a joint advisory from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and FBI is warning organizations against the spread of a Python-scripted malware known as AndroXgh0st. The article noted that in a document released Tuesday, the two agencies listed tactics, techniques, and procedures being followed by threat actors that deploy the virus, which targets confidential files in applications such as Microsoft Office 365 and those of Amazon Web Services. The article mentioned that AndroXgh0st uses a botnet to exploit vulnerable networks and file formats such as .env and simple mail transfer protocols. Aside from AWS and Microsoft, other companies that have been affected are marketing e-mail platform SendGrid and its parent company Twilio, according to the cybersecurity advisory. CISA and FBI also listed known indicators of compromise, including uniform resource identifiers and POST request strings and attempted credential exfiltration. The article added that the two agencies urged organizations to prioritize patching such vulnerabilities in internet-facing systems, make sure that only necessary servers have online accessibility, and investigate unauthorized use of credentials listed in .env files.

### **Continued Reporting: FBI Warns of Escalating Online Sextortion Targeting Minors**

[WACH \(Fox-57\)](#) (01/17, Johnson) reported that the FBI Columbia Field Office is warning parents, educators, caregivers, and children about the dangers of online activity that may lead to a minor engaging in sexual activity. Sextortion involves an offender coercing a minor to create and send explicit images or videos. The article noted that from October 2021 to March 2023, the FBI and Homeland Security Investigations received more than 13,000 reports of online financial sextortion of minors. The sextortion involved at least 12,600 victims, mostly boys, and led to at least 20 suicides. In the six-month period from October 2022 to March 2023, the FBI saw at least a 20% increase in reporting of financially motivated sextortion incidents involving minor victims compared to the same six-month span the previous year. The article quoted Special Agent in Charge Steve Jensen of the FBI Columbia Field Office, who said, "Sextortion and financial sextortion take an emotional and psychological toll on victims, we encourage parents and guardians to have open dialogues with their children to stress the importance of exercising appropriate online behavior. We also want victims to know that the FBI takes these crimes seriously and our pursuit of the criminals behind these acts is relentless." [KNXV \(ABC-13\)](#) (01/17, Dao), [KGUN \(ABC-9\)](#) (01/17, Smith), [WIBW \(CBS-13\)](#) (01/17, Jones), [WIAT \(CBS-42\)](#) (01/17, Holliday), [KVOA \(NBC-4\)](#) (01/17, Abbas), [KOLD \(CBS-13\)](#) (01/17, Wallace), and [CBS News](#) (01/17, Sganga) also reported on the story.

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## **LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES**

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### **Republicans Unveil Legislation Expanding Federal Law to Prohibit Swatting**

The [Hill](#) (01/17, Nazzaro) reported that a pair of Republican lawmakers are seeking to crack down on "swatting" incidents, introducing legislation on Wednesday to prohibit such calls under the federal criminal hoax statute. The

article noted that Republican Sens. Rick Scott (FL) and Tommy Tuberville (AL) on Wednesday unveiled the bill, titled the Preserving Safe Communities by Ending Swatting Act, which would amend the federal criminal hoax statute and establish strict penalties for swatting, including up to 20 years in prison if the attempt or attempts lead to serious injury. The article added that Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) sounded the alarm over the uptick in swatting incidents last year and called on the FBI to track such attempts. The FBI launched a national database to track the incidents last June.

### **Anonymous Tips Work to Prevent School Shootings and Suicides, New Study Finds**

[CNN](#) (01/17, Campbell) reported that anonymous reporting systems used by schoolchildren to report concerning behavior among their peers has resulted in the prevention of numerous instances of suicide, school violence, and planned attacks, according to a study published Wednesday. The article noted that researchers studied data from the Say Something Anonymous Reporting System, operated by the violence prevention group Sandy Hook Promise, which includes an around-the-clock crisis center staffed by trained counselors who review tips submitted by phone and online and notify appropriate responders. The study, published in the journal *Pediatrics*, was funded by the Chaiken Foundation and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and its lead authors were affiliated with the University of Michigan and Sandy Hook Promise. The article quoted former FBI profiler Mary Ellen O'Toole, who said, "You have to educate the student body that this is not an effort to rat out your fellow student or get a fellow student in trouble, educate the students and the faculty to what the red-flag behaviors are ... and make it so that students can call in on a confidential line."

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## **CAPITOL VIOLENCE NEWS**

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### **Rep. Elise Stefanik Faces Censure Effort for Calling Jan. 6 Defendants 'Hostages'**

[UPI](#) (01/17, Walsh) reported that Democratic Rep. Dan Goldman introduced a resolution to censure Republican Rep. Elise Stefanik for her support of Jan. 6 defendants, whom she referred to as "hostages." According to the article, Goldman condemned Stefanik's actions from the House floor, stating her support for the insurrectionists was contemptuous and a betrayal of her oath of office. He also criticized Stefanik for raising concerns about the 2020 election results and her criticism of special counsel Jack Smith's investigation into the Jan. 6 case against Trump, concluding that her rhetoric must be condemned in the strongest terms. Additional reporting on the story was provided by [The Independent](#) (01/17, Graziosi), [New York Post](#) (01/17, Christenson), [The Daily Beast](#) (01/17, Olmstead), [Axios](#) (01/17, Solender), [Fox News](#) (01/17, Elkind), [New York Times](#) (01/17, Karni), [The Hill](#) (01/17, Schnell), [Forbes](#) (01/17, Dorn), [HuffPost](#) (01/17, Delaney), and [Washington Examiner](#) (01/17, Gorman).

### **Proud Boys Member Who Attacked at Least Six Officers on Jan. 6 Sentenced**

[Axios](#) (01/17, Habeshian) reported that Kenneth Bonawitz, a Florida Proud Boys member, was sentenced to five years in prison for assaulting at least six law enforcement officers during the Capitol riot, as announced by the U.S. Attorney's Office for D.C. According to the article, Bonawitz, who was armed with a knife and prepared for violence, inflicted injuries on one officer, a first responder to the September 11 terrorist attack at the Pentagon, forcing the officer into retirement from the U.S. Capitol Police. The article noted that the DOJ detailed Bonawitz's violent actions, including tackling officers to the ground, placing one in a chokehold, and lifting the officer by the neck, causing significant distress. Additional reporting on the story was provided by the [Washington Post](#) (01/17, Jackman), [Associated Press](#) (01/17, Kunzelman), [New York Times](#) (01/17, Mayorquin), [The Hill](#) (01/17, Fortinsky), and [Courthouse News Service](#) (01/17, Knappenberger).

### **Maine Court Defers Ruling on Election Official Disqualifying Trump Because of 14th Amendment**

[ABC News](#) (01/17, Murray) reported that Maine's top trial court deferred a ruling on whether to uphold the decision of Secretary of State Shenna Bellows to disqualify former President Donald Trump from the 2024 primary ballot under the 14th Amendment's "insurrection clause." According to the article, Bellows, citing Trump's involvement in the events of Jan. 6, 2021, had ruled him ineligible, a decision Trump vigorously appealed. The article noted that the court's deferment came as the U.S. Supreme Court is set to consider a similar 14th Amendment challenge to Trump out of Colorado, with oral arguments scheduled for Feb. 8, emphasizing the significant legal implications of Trump's conduct related to Jan. 6 and his efforts to overturn the 2020 election. Additional reporting on the story was provided by the [New York Times](#) (01/17, Russell), [NPR](#) (01/17, Staff Writer), and [The Guardian](#) (01/17, Pengelly).

### **The 'Sleeping Giant' Case that Could Upend Jack Smith's Prosecution of Trump**

[Politico](#) (01/17, Wehle) reported that the Supreme Court's decision to hear *Joseph W. Fischer v. United States*, a case questioning the use of a 2002 law (Sarbanes-Oxley Act) in prosecuting Jan. 6 defendants, could significantly impact Special Counsel Jack Smith's prosecution of Donald Trump. The article explained that the law, originally aimed at curbing financial crimes, has been used by the Department of Justice to charge over 300 people involved in the Jan. 6 insurrection, but if the court sides with Fischer, it could invalidate these charges, including those against Trump. The article noted that Smith's indictment of Trump includes charges under this law, and the case's outcome could affect the legality of these charges, potentially undermining the prosecution and affecting the convictions of many Jan. 6 defendants.

### **Judge Rejects Donald Trump Motion to Compel Jan. 6 Committee Evidence**

[Atlanta News First](#) (01/17, Darnell) reported that Fulton County Superior Court Judge Scott McAfee denied former President Donald Trump and co-defendant Jeff Clark's request to compel new information from prosecutors, related to evidence presented to the U.S. House Select Jan. 6 Committee. According to the article, this committee, appointed by Congressional Democrats, was tasked with investigating Trump's role in the Capitol riot. The judge's decision came in the context of Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis's indictments, which accuse Trump and his allies, including Giuliani and former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows, of attempting to illegally overturn the 2020 election results in Georgia. The article noted that Clark, a former U.S. Justice Department official, had pushed for a draft letter to be sent to Georgia officials regarding the election results, but this was refused by Justice Department superiors.

### **Suit Seeking Ken Paxton's Jan. 6 Communications Can Move Ahead**

[Bloomberg](#) (01/17, Autullo) reported that a Texas appeals court allowed a lawsuit by the government watchdog group American Oversight to proceed, seeking to obtain emails from Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton related to the Jan. 6, 2021, attack at the US Capitol. According to the article, the court ruled against Paxton, affirming the trial court's order and stating that state laws grant jurisdiction to district courts to order a government body to make information available. The article noted that the lawsuit contends that Paxton, a conservative ally of former President Donald Trump, wrongly refused to turn over all requested communications about his appearance at a rally in Washington to challenge the 2020 presidential election results, having provided only two email chains from Solicitor General Judd Stone.

### **Woman Who Marched With Proud Boys at Capitol Riot Deserves Prison Time: Feds**

[Law & Crime](#) (01/17, Sarnoff) reported that Felicia Konold and her brother Cory, from Arizona, joined Proud Boys from Kansas to overrun police during the Jan. 6 U.S. Capitol riot, deserve months in prison according to federal prosecutors. According to the article, the siblings admitted to joining the crowd that overwhelmed Capitol Police, leading to the temporary halt of Biden's electoral win certification. Prosecutors, in a sentencing memo, requested U.S. District Judge Timothy Kelly send Cory to prison for three months and Felicia for six, both with three years of supervised release and to pay \$2,000 in restitution. The article noted that Felicia prepared for the riot, as indicated by her diary entries, and bragged on social media about her influence in the events, while Cory's actions were influenced by his sister and involved stealing a police riot helmet. The article noted that their sentencing is set for Jan. 24, with federal evaluators recommending a range of zero to six months for both.

### **Jan. 6 Influencer Credited With Turning Insurrection Into Story of Victimhood: Report**

[Raw Story](#) (01/17, Gettys) reported that Brandon Straka, an online influencer and leader of the "Walk Away" campaign, has been credited with turning the narrative of the Jan. 6 insurrection into a story of victimhood. According to the article, after pleading guilty to disorderly conduct for his part in the Capitol riots, Straka claimed his life was torn apart by the DOJ and FBI, stating he was forced to take a plea deal under the threat of facing years in prison for actions he denies. The article noted that Straka has been actively reshaping the Jan. 6 story through social media and public appearances, with his efforts reportedly gaining traction among Republican lawmakers and voters, reinforcing a shift in perception about the events of Jan. 6, as highlighted by a Monmouth University poll and the Chicago Project on Security and Threats (CPOST).

### **Lawmakers Call For IRS Scrutiny of Trump-Backed Nonprofit That Aids Jan. 6 Rioters**

[NPR](#) (01/17, Dreisbach) reported that Congressional Democrats are expressing concerns about the Patriot Freedom Project, a nonprofit group providing financial support for defendants charged in the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, for its apparent support of Donald Trump's presidential campaign, potentially violating federal tax law.

According to the article, the group, closely aligned with Trump and his campaign, has engaged in activities that raise questions about compliance with 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, which prohibits political campaign involvement. The article noted that the NPR's investigation revealed instances where the group's leadership, particularly founder Cynthia Hughes, endorsed Trump and participated in political events, prompting calls for IRS scrutiny and potential legal repercussions for violating the ban on political campaign activity.

### **Analysis: Jan. 6 Documentary Produced by The Epoch Times**

[The Epoch Times](#) (01/17, Kane) reported that "The Real Story of January 6 Part 2: The Long Road Home," a documentary produced by The Epoch Times, offers a different perspective on the Jan. 6 Capitol riot, focusing on the subsequent federal prosecutions and the perceived injustices faced by those involved. According to the article, the documentary highlighted over 1,000 arrests and incarcerations, with charges ranging from assaulting government officers to seditious conspiracy, and criticizes the intensified federal enforcement under Biden's administration. The article explained that particularly notable are the stories of those targeted by the authorities, including the Munn family, subjected to a no-knock FBI raid, and FBI whistleblower Steven Friend, who faced repercussions after raising concerns about legal discrepancies within the FBI's handling of Jan. 6 protestor cases.

### **Continued Reporting: Law Enforcement Investigating Remarks Allegedly Made by Roger Stone**

[CNN](#) (01/17, Cohen, Wilson) reported that the US Capitol Police and the FBI are investigating comments allegedly made by Roger Stone, a pro-Trump political operative, in which he appears to discuss assassinating two House Democrats, Rep. Eric Swalwell and Rep. Jerry Nadler. According to the article, the investigation follows the publication of an audio recording by Mediaite, allegedly capturing a conversation between Stone and former NYPD officer Sal Greco, where Stone suggests that either Swalwell or Nadler "has to die before the election." The article noted that Stone, known for his connections to former President Donald Trump, has been scrutinized for making violent comments leading up to the Jan. 6 Capitol riot, including associations with the Oath Keepers and the Proud Boys, and his presence at a "Stop the Steal" rally the day before the attack. [MSNBC](#) (01/17, Benen) also reported on the story.

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## **OTHER FBI NEWS**

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### **Chinese Lab Mapped Covid-19 Virus Two Weeks before Sharing Information Globally, Documents Reveal**

The [National Review](#) (01/17, Bartsch) reported that Chinese researcher in Beijing uploaded a nearly complete sequence of the Covid virus structure to a U.S. database run by the National Institute of Health on December 28, 2019, two weeks before Beijing shared the viral sequence with the rest of the world, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services documents recently obtained by a House committee reveal. The article noted that when Beijing shared the SARS-CoV-2 sequence with the World Health Organization on January 11, 2020, two full weeks had elapsed since the virus was sequenced by a researcher at the Institute of Pathogen Biology in Beijing, an arm of the state-affiliated Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences which has ties to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and People's Liberation Army. The article mentioned that during that period, Chinese officials still described the disease outbreak in Wuhan, China, as a viral pneumonia "of unknown cause" to the greater public. The latest congressional investigation has again raised questions about what China knew in the crucial early days of the pandemic. As to the origins of Covid-19, different U.S. government agencies still hold disparate conclusions. While some still hold that the dangerous coronavirus emerged from an infected animal at the Huanan Seafood Market, the FBI and the U.S. Department of Energy concur that Covid most likely emerged from a lab leak in Wuhan.

### **America First Legal Launches Investigation into the FBI's "Chief Diversity Officer" for Alleged Illegal Racial and Sex Discrimination**

[America First Legal](#) (01/17, Staff Writer) reported that America First Legal (AFL) filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request with the FBI regarding Scott McMillion, the FBI's Chief Diversity Officer, from April 2021 to April 2023. As Chief Diversity Officer, McMillion directed the FBI's Office of Diversity and Inclusion. The article added that between FY 2018 and May 2023, during McMillion's tenure, the FBI increased "racial/ethnic diversity" by 5.4% and the proportion of female employees by 4.1%. The article noted that McMillion has stated that "diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility is literally within [the FBI's] DNA." He has stated that diversity is one of the FBI director's priority initiatives. Under his tenure, the FBI has sought to do "a cultural shift." Programs like the Beacon Project aim to racially gerrymander the FBI and unlawfully infuse race, color, and national origin into hiring. The article

mentioned that McMillion's statements, combined with the FBI's diversity goals and initiatives, show that the FBI likely engages in unlawful and unconstitutional racial balancing. The article stated that this conduct is patently illegal under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. T

### **FBI's New Orleans Field Office Gets New Special Agent in Charge**

[ticklethewire.com](#) (01/17, Neavling) reported that Lyonel Myrthil has been named Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's New Orleans Field Office. The article noted that at the time of his appointment, Myrthil was serving as chief of staff to the associate deputy director. The article mentioned that Myrthil joined the bureau in 2008 when he was assigned to investigate violent crime in the St. Louis Field Office. He was also a member of the FBI SWAT Team, a certified sniper, a firearms instructor, a defensive tactics instructor, and a tactical instructor. According to the article, Myrthil was appointed assistant special agent in charge of the counterterrorism branch of the Washington Field Office in 2020. He led the Joint Terrorism Task Force, domestic terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, crisis management/response, and airport liaison agent program issues. Myrthil was appointed chief of staff to the associate deputy director in 2022.

### **FBI El Paso Launches Official Instagram Account**

[KTSM \(NBC-9\)](#) (01/17, Barrios) reported that the FBI El Paso has launched an Instagram account, @fbi.elpaso, as another tool to communicate with the West Texas communities, according to a press release sent by the FBI El Paso Field Office. The article quoted a statement, which said, "Embracing social media is vital for connecting with our community. As Special Agent in Charge of the FBI El Paso Field Office, John Morales emphasized the importance of expanding the FBI El Paso Field Office's means of outreach with the community. With the addition of Instagram to our social media platforms, we, at the El Paso FBI aim to reach and engage with a wider audience, sharing insights into our work and proactively addressing public safety concerns."

### **Gov. Wes Moore Promises No Tax Hikes, Trims Money for State Programs in a 'Refocus'**

The [Washington Post](#) (01/17, Cox) reported that after warning for months that Maryland needed to rein in its costs and boost its economy, Gov. Wes Moore (D) on Wednesday released a \$63.1 billion budget proposal that aims to do that without raising taxes. The article noted that his budget, the first one created exclusively by his administration, significantly trims spending on transportation, private universities, and community colleges, among many other smaller cuts, while plowing hundreds of millions of dollars into his other priorities. Moore called the spending plan the first step in "rebasng" how the government invests in core priorities and lives within its means. The article added that among his spending priorities to boost the economy, Moore proposed another \$100 million to build a new FBI headquarters, money to bolster a new technology hub in Baltimore, and incentives to increase affordable housing.

### **Vexed House Committee Calls Mayorkas to Carpet for Ducking Impeachment Testimony**

The [Washington Times](#) (01/17, Dinan) reported that the House Homeland Security Committee said it wants Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas to testify in writing in impeachment proceedings against him. Committee Chairman Mark Green said he wanted Mayorkas to show up for a hearing this week, but the secretary declined, saying he was involved in negotiations with Mexico over the border flood. The article noted that Green, in a letter Wednesday, said if Mayorkas wants to defend himself in the impeachment proceedings he should submit something in writing. According to the article, Homeland Security says Mayorkas has already testified to Congress more than any other Cabinet official in the Biden administration, with 27 appearances in 35 months. That includes an appearance before Green's committee two months ago, alongside Director Wray and the National Counterterrorism Center director, to talk about worldwide threats. Green, though, says he wants Mayorkas to appear to talk specifically about the border chaos.

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## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

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### **U.S. Moves to Bar Guatemala's Ex-President From Entry**

- New York Times: U.S. Moves to Bar Guatemala's Ex-President From Entry
- Reuters: Guatemalan Ex-President Alejandro Giammattei Barred From Entering U.S.
- Associated Press: U.S. Bars Ex-Guatemala President Alejandro Giammattei From Entry Three Days After He Left Office

- Bloomberg: U.S. Bars Ex-Guatemalan President From Entry Due to Corruption
- Wall Street Journal: U.S. Bans Entry to Guatemala's Former President for Corruption

### **Pakistan Conducts Airstrikes in Iran**

- Wall Street Journal: Pakistan Conducts Airstrikes in Iran
- Associated Press: Pakistan Launches Retaliatory Airstrikes on Iran After Tehran Attack, Killing at Least 7 People
- New York Times: Iranian Strike Leaves Pakistan With No Easy Options for Response
- Independent: Pakistan Conducts Retaliatory Strikes Inside Iran Amid Fears of Widening Conflict
- Reuters: Pakistan Strikes Inside Iran Against Militant Targets, Stokes Regional Tensions

### **Belgian Customs Seized Record Amount of Cocaine as EU Faces Rise in Drug-Related Violence**

- Associated Press: Belgian Customs Seized Record Amount of Cocaine as EU Faces Rise in Drug-Related Violence

### **China Goes All In on Green Industry to Jolt Ailing Economy**

- Wall Street Journal: China Goes All In on Green Industry to Jolt Ailing Economy

### **The U.S. Plan for a Postwar Middle East Isn't Gaining Any Traction**

- Wall Street Journal: The U.S. Plan for a Postwar Middle East Isn't Gaining Any Traction

### **Cult Leader in Kenya to Face 191 Charges of Child Murder**

- New York Times: Cult Leader in Kenya to Face 191 Charges of Child Murder

### **Fireworks Factory Explosion in Thailand Kills at Least 20**

- New York Times: Fireworks Factory Explosion in Thailand Kills at Least 20

### **He Killed a Man. Turks Wonder Why a Well-Connected Somali Went Free.**

- New York Times: He Killed a Man. Turks Wonder Why a Well-Connected Somali Went Free.

### **UN: Palestinians Are Dying in Hospitals as Estimated 60,000 Wounded Overwhelm Remaining Doctors**

- Associated Press: UN: Palestinians Are Dying in Hospitals as Estimated 60,000 Wounded Overwhelm Remaining Doctors

### **A Prosecutor Investigating a TV Studio Attack in Ecuador Has Been Shot Dead in Guayaquil**

- Associated Press: A Prosecutor Investigating a TV Studio Attack in Ecuador Has Been Shot Dead in Guayaquil

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- CBS News: Texas Defies Federal Threat to Abandon Border Area, Setting up Legal Showdown
- NBC News: Texas Refuses to Comply With Biden Administration's Cease-And-Desist Letter About Border Access
- Associated Press: What to Know About Texas' Clash With the Biden Administration Over Border Patrol Access
- CBS News: Texas' Floating U.S-Mexico Border Barrier Can Remain, Court Rules in Reversal
- CNN: Texas Has Until the End of Today to Stop Blocking Federal Access to Miles of the US-Mexico Border

### **Judge Threatens to Boot Donald Trump From Courtroom Over Loud Talking as E. Jean Carroll Testifies**

- Associated Press: Judge Threatens to Boot Donald Trump From Courtroom Over Loud Talking as E. Jean Carroll Testifies
- NBC News: Judge Threatens to Remove Trump From Courtroom During Day 2 of E. Jean Carroll Trial: Highlights
- CNN: Takeaways From E. Jean Carroll's Testimony at a Contentious Day 2 of the Trump Defamation Trial
- BBC: E Jean Carroll Trial: Judge Threatens to Remove Trump From Court
- The Guardian: Trump Rages in Court as E Jean Carroll Testifies During Defamation Trial

### **Johnson Casts Doubt on Border Deal to Unlock Ukraine Aid, Defying Biden**

- New York Times: Johnson Casts Doubt on Border Deal to Unlock Ukraine Aid, Defying Biden

### **The U.S. Plan for a Postwar Middle East Isn't Gaining Much Traction**

- Wall Street Journal: The U.S. Plan for a Postwar Middle East Isn't Gaining Much Traction

### **Fact Check: 1995 Oklahoma City Bombing Not Linked to Hillary Clinton Whitewater Scandal**

- Reuters: Fact Check: 1995 Oklahoma City Bombing Not Linked to Hillary Clinton Whitewater Scandal

### **Trump Tells New Hampshire Voters He'd 'Never Allow' a Federal Reserve Digital Dollar**

- Bloomberg: Trump Tells New Hampshire Voters He'd 'Never Allow' a Federal Reserve Digital Dollar

### **Entrepreneur Ramaswamy Drops Out of White House Race, Endorses Trump**

- Reuters: Entrepreneur Ramaswamy Drops Out of White House Race, Endorses Trump

### **Haley Steps up Attacks on Trump, but Some in N.H. See Her Holding Back**

- Washington Post: Haley Steps up Attacks on Trump, but Some in N.H. See Her Holding Back

### **Democratic Denver Mayor to Lead Coalition of Mayors Asking For Federal Help for Immigrants**

- Washington Examiner: Democratic Denver Mayor to Lead Coalition of Mayors Asking For Federal Help for Immigrants

### **U.S. Attorney General Met With Uvalde Victims' Families Before DOJ Releases Report on Law Enforcement Response to Massacre**

- CNN: U.S. Attorney General Met With Uvalde Victims' Families Before DOJ Releases Report on Law Enforcement Response to Massacre

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### **New York Times**

- Johnson Digs in Against a Deal on Immigration
- Justices Hint At Less Power For Regulators
- Beijing Foiled In Drive to Lift The Birthrate
- Asthma Drug Caused Despair. Alerts Fell Short
- Icy Cold Drains E.V. Batteries And Strains Drivers' Patience
- U.S. to Return Yemen's Houthis to Terrorism List

### **Wall Street Journal**

- Holiday Shopping Exceeded Optimistic Forecasts
- Iraq Seeks Exit of U.S.-Led Coalition

- Spotify Struggles With Big Bets
- China Turns Again to Factories In Bid to Kick-Start Economy '
- The Reason the Office Isn't Fun Anymore

### **Washington Post**

- Insights Into Aging Well From a Nonagenarian
- Israel Blamed for Aid Delays as Famine Looms in Gaza, Aid Delivery Remains Difficult and Dangerous
- Fine Print Is Letting the House off Hook
- Drug Traffickers Have Made the Galápagos Islands Their Gas Station
- Haley Steps up Her Attacks, But Some Want More

### **Financial Times**

- U.S. Lawmakers Set for Taipei Visits in Show of Support for Taiwan
- U.S. Conducts Fourth Strike On Houthis Over Trade Disruption
- U.S. Treasury Team Set for Beijing Talks on Economic Co-operation

### **ABC News**

- NYC Police on the Hunt for Alleged Serial Knife Attacker; GOP Hopefuls Hit New Hampshire as Primary Nears; Biden Meets With Senate, House Leaders Over Ukraine Aid.

### **CBS News**

- Dangerous Cold Snap Continues to Grip u.s.; Family of Teen Who Died by Suicide Warns of Dangers of Financial Sextortion.

### **NBC News**

- Trump Attends Court as Critical NH Primary Looms; With Boeing 737 Max 9 Fleet Still Grounded, FAA Completes First Group of Inspections; Palestinian American College Student Paralyzed in Vermont Shooting Speaks Out for the First Time.

### **Fox News**

- Bipartisan Dignity Act Attempts to Extend Immediate Legal Status to Dreamers; Undersea Oversight: Supreme Court Hears Fishermen Appeal Over Monitors; Biden Admin Redesignates Houthis as Specially Designated Global Terrorists.

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## **WASHINGTON SCHEDULE**

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### **White House**

#### **President Biden**

- 10:00 AM: The President receives the Presidential Daily Briefing
- 11:40 AM: The President departs the White House en route to Joint Base Andrews
- 12:00 PM: The President departs Joint Base Andrews en route to Raleigh, North Carolina
- 1:00 PM: The President arrives in Raleigh, North Carolina
- 2:15 PM: The President delivers remarks on how his Bidenomics and Investing in America Agenda are repairing and rebuilding our infrastructure, lowering costs, supporting a small business boom, and creating good-paying jobs.

- 5:25 PM: The President departs Raleigh, North Carolina en route to Joint Base Andrews
- 6:25 PM: The President departs Joint Base Andrews en route to the White House
- 6:35 PM: The President arrives at the White House

#### Vice President Harris

- No events scheduled.

#### US Senate

- Hearings to examine addressing long COVID, focusing on advancing research and improving patient care. – 10:00 AM – Host: Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee
- Hearings to examine national security challenges, focusing on outpacing China in emerging technology. – 10:00 AM – Host: Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee
- To receive a closed briefing from the Secretary of State. – 1:45 PM – Host: Foreign Relations Committee

#### US House of Representatives

- Hearing: "Voices for the Victims: The Heartbreaking Reality of the Mayorkas Border Crisis" – 9:30 AM – Host: Committee on Homeland Security
- Hearing: Legislative Hearing on H.R. 897 Rep. Carl Alabama Underwater Forest National Marine Sanctuary and Protection Act; H.R. 3925 Rep. Salazar Youth Coastal Fishing Program Act of 2023; H.R. 5441 Rep. LaLota Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Reauthorization Act of 2023; and H.R. 6235 Rep. Bonamici Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2023. – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Natural Resources
- Hearing: Unleashing Main Street's Potential: Examining Avenues to Capital Access – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Small Business
- Hearing: Hearing. – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
- Hearing: Fueling Americas Economy: Legislation to Improve Safety and Expand U.S. Pipeline Infrastructure – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Energy and Commerce
- Hearing: Hearing Entitled: Oversight of the SEC's Proposed Climate Disclosure Rule: A Future of Legal Hurdles – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Financial Services
- Hearing: "Preparing Students for Success in the Skills-Based Economy" – 10:15 AM – Host: Committee on Education and the Workforce
- Hearing: Oversight hearing titled "Reporting for Duty: Examining the Impacts of the Department of the Interior's Remote and Telework Policies." – 10:15 AM – Host: Committee on Natural Resources
- Hearing: NIL Playbook: Proposal to Protect Student Athletes' Dealmaking Rights – 10:30 AM – Host: Committee on Energy and Commerce
- Hearing: Legislative hearing on the following bills: H.R. 6062 Rep. Radewagen - To restore the ability of the people of American Samoa to approve amendments to the territorial constitution based on majority rule in a democratic act of self-determination as authorized pursuant to an Act of Congress delegating administration of Federal territorial law in the territory to the President and to the Secretary of the Interior under Executive Order 10264 dated June 29 1951 under which the Constitution of – 2:00 PM – Host: Committee on Natural Resources
- Hearing: The Next Generation: Empowering American Nuclear Energy – 2:00 PM – Host: Committee on Oversight and Accountability

- Hearing: The Myth of the New Cuban Entrepreneurs: An Analysis of the Biden Administrations Cuba Policy – 2:00 PM – Host: Committee on Foreign Affairs

### Cabinet Members

- **Secretary of Education Cardona** will give remarks at the 92nd US Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting at 10:20 AM.

### Visitors

- No events scheduled.

### General Events

- Brookings Institution: A new maritime partnership for the Atlantic – Thursday, January 18, 2024. Location: Online Event, 10:00 AM. Announced in 2022 and launched this year, the new Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation is intended to fill a major gap in governance for the Atlantic basin. While instability and uncertainty drives attention to the Western Pacific and the Middle East’s critical chokepoints, the Atlantic is the world’s most heavily traveled ocean, and a critical conduit for prosperity. It has become one of the world’s principal energy reservoirs, and pan-Atlantic commercial flows rival – and in such areas as services, investment, and digital commerce exceed – those of the Pacific. The Atlantic data seaway, already the busiest in the world, is building out fast, and its waters lap the shores of both the major nations of the West and key players of the global South. Identifying shared interests in cross-cutting approaches to the Atlantic – from trade to maritime domain awareness to climate change to countering illegal fishing – is a key goal of the Partnership. On January 18, Brookings will host an online discussion on what is at stake and what to expect for the Atlantic partnership moving forward.
- Brookings Institution: Key takeaways from the 2024 Iowa caucuses – Thursday, January 18, 2024. Location: Online Event, 2:00 PM. Historically, the Iowa caucuses have had major political implications for presidential hopefuls. As the first state contest, it is a chance for candidates to make their initial impression on the electorate by demonstrating their ability to build support or floundering in their first major campaign test. In 2024, the Iowa caucuses will help Republicans determine which candidate has the best chance of challenging Donald Trump for the party’s nomination. On January 18, join the Governance Studies program at Brookings for a discussion moderated by Senior Fellows Elaine Kamarck and E.J. Dionne, Jr. along with a panel of experts who will discuss the results of the 2024 Iowa Republican caucuses and determine their likely impact on the race.
- CSIS: The U.S. Arms Control Agenda: A Discussion with NSC Senior Director Pranay Vaddi – Thursday, January 18, 2024. Location: CSIS, 10:00 AM. Please join the Project on Nuclear Issues (PONI) for a discussion from 10:00–11:00am ET on January 18th, 2024, for an Armchair Discussion with Pranay Vaddi, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Arms Control, Disarmament, and Nonproliferation at the National Security Council on the administration’s arms control agenda, including updates on U.S.-Russia and U.S-China engagement. The event will be moderated by CSIS PONI Director Dr. Heather Williams. The event will be in person and livestreamed. To register to attend, please click the "Register" button below.
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: The Dissident: Book Talk With Alexey Navalny Biographer David M. Herszenhorn – Thursday, January 18, 2024. Location: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 5:00 PM. Vladimir Putin may refuse to utter his name, but Alexey Navalny remains the defiant face of Russia’s embattled political opposition. Having bravely returned to Russia in the wake of a botched assassination attempt in summer 2020, Navalny is now imprisoned in brutal conditions in a remote prison above the Arctic Circle. Few are better equipped to tell his harrowing story than veteran Russia-watcher David M. Herszenhorn of the Washington Post. Herszenhorn’s new book, *The Dissident: Alexey Navalny: Profile of a Political Prisoner*, offers a gripping account of Navalny’s life, from his childhood in the Soviet Union to his anti-corruption activism and the Kremlin’s heavy-handed attempts to silence him—for good. Please join Herszenhorn and CNN’s Kaitlan Collins for a discussion of this important new book. A book signing and reception will follow the event. Copies will be available for purchase.

- Center for American Progress: Building a Comprehensive State Child Care Agenda – Thursday, January 18, 2024. Location: Online Event, 2:30 PM. Absent federal legislation to increase investments in the child care system, states have an opportunity and an imperative to take action on behalf of children and families. A Center for American Progress toolkit, in conjunction with the updated state and national data featured in CAP's new interactive data dashboard, will help educate policymakers and stakeholders about the most pressing needs for young children in their state and help inform actions they may take to support young children, their families, and the child care workforce. As many states embark on their 2024 legislative sessions, this event will explore both products, showcase how they can be used in conjunction, and provide state policymakers and advocates with the resources to make an effective case for increasing investments in child care and early learning programs in their states.
- AEI: Intellectual Property and Biopharmaceuticals: Implications of Changes in US Protections for Clinical Data and Technology – Thursday, January 18, 2024. Location: AEI, 12:30 PM. The Biden administration and members of Congress have proposed reducing protections on intellectual property to lower drug prices. However, these policies could affect academic institutions and investment in US innovation without meaningfully reducing drug prices. Specifically, proposals to relax patent protections further risk discouraging public and private partnerships and industry investment. Join AEI's Kirsten Axelsen and a panel of legal experts to discuss policy proposals to change intellectual-property protections and their implications. This panel will discuss the various proposals, including the use of march-in rights and Section 1498 waivers, and will consider the intent of legally established intellectual-property protections and what it would mean to public and private institutions if these protections were eroded.
- Atlantic Council: Global Foresight 2024: What will the next decade bring? – Thursday, January 18, 2024. Location: Atlantic Council, 1:00 PM. Join the Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security for a discussion moderated by Felicia Schwartz of the Financial Times on Thursday, January 18, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. ET, on what more than 250 experts see as the factors, trends, and uncertainties that will shape the decade to come. From war in Europe to the Middle East, the world faces a variety of challenges including a rise in authoritarianism, a changing climate, and how to grapple with a variety of emerging technologies. In an effort to better understand how the world may change, this fall, the Scowcroft Center conducted its second annual survey of geostrategists and foresight experts from across the globe to gain insight on the biggest drivers of change over the next ten years.
- RAND Corporation: What Americans Think About Veterans—and Why It Matters – Thursday, January 18, 2024. Location: RAND Corporation, 4:00 PM. When the general public thinks about veterans, a variety of characteristics may come to mind—both positive and negative. How Americans perceive veterans could have implications not only for their support for policies that benefit veterans but also for their views on military service and the U.S. military as an institution. Results from a nationally representative RAND survey shed light on why policymakers, veteran-serving organizations, and the research community should care about how Americans view veterans and what that could mean for military recruitment and spending decisions. Join the RAND Epstein Family Veterans Policy Research Institute as experts discuss the role of public perceptions in policies to support veterans and promote national security.
- RAND Corporation: Harnessing Quantum Technology for the Benefit of Society – Thursday, January 18, 2024. Location: RAND Corporation, 10:00 AM. The development of quantum science and technology is one of the most highly anticipated technology advances taking place today. Quantum science describes the strange way that microscopic particles behave, but researchers are now finding ways to harness it to create powerful new computers, secure communication systems, and sensors that could soon directly impact our lives. The possible applications are endless: designing new medicines, improving banking security, mapping underground oil reserves, and much more. The RAND Corporation is hosting a free and public conference to explore questions such as: How might these technologies change our everyday lives? Which applications are American and Japanese researchers focusing on, and are there potential areas of cooperation? How are both nations' universities and private sectors advancing quantum science? What lessons can each side learn from the other's experiences? This conference will be held in person at the RAND Corporation's headquarters in Santa Monica as well as livestreamed. RAND will provide lunch and refreshments. The event is aimed at a general audience and will not assume any previous knowledge of quantum science; we believe that audience members of all backgrounds will learn new things about this exciting technology.

- [Wilson Center: Mexico's Election: Issues and Polls](#) – Thursday, January 18, 2024. Location: Online Event, 1:00 PM. The 2024 presidential elections will mark a milestone in Mexico's history and will test the nation's democratic system. Millions of Mexican citizens will go to the polls on June 2 to elect a new president, all members of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the Republic, as well as eight governors, Mexico City's Head of Government, 31 local congresses, and other representatives around the country. These elections will be the largest in Mexico's history and for the first time, a woman could be selected to lead the country for the next six years. To kick off the Mexico Institute's event series on topics relevant to the upcoming presidential election, Director of the Mexico Institute, Andrew Rudman will moderate a panel discussion between pollsters Jorge Buendía, and Alejandro Moreno, and political analysts Verónica Ortiz-Ortega and Carlos Bravo Regidor. The conversation will explore topics such as the size of the voting bases of the two front-running coalitions, how many voters remain undecided, and the issue areas that could sway them one way or the other. It is likely that the results of the election will hinge on the decision of undecided or swing voters. Panelists will discuss current polling data and examine the prevailing sentiments of Mexicans as they choose who could become the first female president in history.

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