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Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] - FBI Public Affairs News Briefing Wednesday, May 26, 2021

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To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] - FBI Public Affairs News Briefing Wednesday, May 26, 2021

Good morning –

New York To Convene Special Grand Jury Over Investigation Into Former President Trump.

[ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 3, 1:15, Muir, 6.58M) reported that that the Manhattan District Attorney's Office is "convening a special grand jury to decide whether to bring criminal charges" against former President Trump and his business associates. The investigation "has been going on for more than two years now," and the latest update "is a clear sign tonight it's entering a new stage."

[NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 6, 0:45, Holt, 5.16M) reported that while the announcement "is the next step that prosecutors would take in pursuing possible criminal charges," it "doesn't mean charges will be filed." [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 5, 0:25, O'Donnell, 3.84M) reported that, according to sources, the investigation "centers on whether the Trump Organization manipulated its real estate portfolio to defraud banks or obtain illegal tax benefits."

The [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) reports, "Manhattan's district attorney has convened the grand jury that is expected to decide whether to indict former president Donald Trump, other executives at his company or the business itself, should prosecutors present the panel with criminal charges, according to two people familiar with the development," and "the move indicates that District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr.'s investigation of the former president and his business has reached an advanced stage after more than two years. It suggests, too, that Vance thinks he has found evidence of a crime – if not by Trump, by someone potentially close to him or by his company." The Post adds, "Vance's investigation is expansive, according to people familiar with the probe and public disclosures made during related litigation."

Judge Dismisses Fraud Case Against Bannon.

The [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) reports US District Judge Analisa Torres on Monday "formally dismissed the fraud case against Stephen K. Bannon, the conservative provocateur and ex-adviser to President Donald Trump, ending months of litigation over how the court system should handle his pardon while related criminal cases remain unresolved." The Post says that in "citing examples of other cases being dismissed following a presidential reprieve," Torres "granted Bannon's application — saying in a seven-page ruling that Trump's pardon was valid and that 'dismissal of the Indictment is the proper course.'" According to [Bloomberg](#) (5/25, Voris, 3.57M), "Bannon and three others were charged last year with defrauding donors to a foundation that was privately funding construction of a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border."

Former Wisconsin Financial Adviser Sentenced For Fraud Scheme.

The [AP](#) (5/25) reports from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, "A former financial adviser has been sentenced in Milwaukee to more than five years in federal prison for scamming \$2.6 million from 27 victims, including his own parents." The AP adds, "According to court records, Edward Matthes, 51, persuaded family, friends and community members in Oconomowoc to invest in fictitious Mutual of Omaha accounts. Matthes put the funds into his own bank account from 2013 to 2019 and used the money for home improvements, vacations, child support and other things, prosecutors said. Matthes pleaded guilty to three counts of wire fraud in November 2020, the Journal Sentinel reported. The U.S. Department of Justice recently announced that Matthes was sentenced to 63 months in prison. FBI Special Agent in Charge Robert Hughes said Matthes took advantage of vulnerable people. 'Most of his victims were elderly, and he spent years gaining their trust, only to wipe out a lifetime of their savings,' Hughes said."

Connecticut Lawmaker Pleads Guilty To Campaign Fraud.

The [AP](#) (5/25, Eaton-Robb) reports, "A Connecticut state senator and his former campaign treasurer pleaded not guilty Tuesday to federal fraud charges alleging they lied to obtain public money to run a 2018 state legislative campaign." The AP adds, "Bridgeport Democratic Sen. Dennis Bradley and former school board Chairperson Jessica Martinez pleaded not guilty to wire fraud and conspiracy charges Tuesday afternoon. Bond was set at \$300,000 for Bradley and \$250,000 for Martinez. Prosecutors allege that in order to qualify for the state's public campaign financing system, the pair lied about a March 2018 campaign event and the amount of campaign contributions they had received, according to a federal indictment. They improperly received \$84,140 from the Connecticut Citizen's Election Fund for the 2018 Democratic primary and improperly sought to obtain another \$95,710 for the general election, prosecutors said."

Thanks,

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FCS/SMAPA

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From: Bulletin Intelligence <██████████>

Sent: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 6:27 AM

To: ██████████

Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] - FBI Public Affairs News Briefing Wednesday, May 26, 2021

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

 FBI News Briefing

TO: THE DIRECTOR AND SENIOR STAFF

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 26, 2021 6:30 AM EDT

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LEADING THE NEWS

Biden, Harris Meet With Floyd Family As Deadline For Police Reform Bill Passes.

[CNN](#) (5/25, Sullivan, 89.21M) reports on its website that President Biden and Vice President Harris "met on Tuesday with the family of George Floyd exactly one year after he was killed by a Minneapolis police officer, sparking nationwide protests against racism and police brutality." Floyd's brother, Philonise Floyd, "told reporters the family had a 'great' meeting with the President and vice president and said: 'He's a genuine guy. They always speak from the heart.'" He continued, "We're just thankful for what's going on and we just want the George Floyd Policing Act to be passed." The [New York Times](#) (5/25, Karni, 20.6M) reports that after the meeting, Floyd's family "said the president was still committed to passing a police reform bill, even as he missed his own self-imposed deadline of getting it signed on the one-year anniversary of Mr. Floyd's death."

The [AP](#) (5/25, Jaffe, Fram) reports that according to Floyd's nephew Brandon Williams, the President told them he "wants the bill to be meaningful and that it holds George's legacy intact." Williams also "said Biden showed 'genuine concern' for how the family is doing." In addition, according to the AP, "Biden took time during the meeting to play with George Floyd's young daughter Gianna, who enjoyed some ice cream and Cheetos, the president said, after she told him she was hungry."

The [Washington Post](#) (5/25, Alemany, 10.52M) says that the President "joked to reporters that his wife, first lady Jill Biden, is not going to be pleased [that] he gave snacks to George Floyd's 7-year-old daughter, Gianna, during her visit to the White House." [ABC World News Tonight](#) (5/25, story 10, 0:10, Muir, 6.58M) reported Biden "revealing first thing she did when she ran in is 'she threw her arms gave up and gave me a big hug.' Like his own grandchildren. He said, 'She was hungry, we gave her ice cream.'"

Meanwhile, [Politico](#) (5/25, Niedzwiadek, 6.73M) says Biden "told the family that 'he doesn't want to sign a bill that doesn't have substance and meaning,' according to their attorney Ben Crump, who added the President "is going to be patient to make sure it's the right bill, not a rushed bill." The [Los Angeles Times](#) (5/25, Stokols, 3.37M) reports that Biden "issued a statement promising to keep pushing for legislation, saying, 'We face an inflection point,'" and [Reuters](#) (5/25) reports the President "said...he is hopeful an agreement will be reached on the George Floyd police reform legislation after the May 31 Memorial Day holiday."

On [MSNBC's Morning Joe](#) (5/25, 937K), Susan Rice, the Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council, said that while the legislation is "not a cure-all," it is "a very important step. And the House passed version was robust, obviously in the Senate there needs to be bipartisan compromise. We need 60 votes which is why we're encouraged to see" Sens. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Tim Scott (R-SC) and Rep. Karen Bass (D-CA) "and others negotiating seriously and in good faith to see if we could get a meaningful reform bill out of the Senate that will move the ball forward as far as we possibly can."

[Bloomberg](#) (5/25, Litvan, Parker, 3.57M) reports Biden "dispatched administration officials including Rice, senior adviser Cedric Richmond and director of legislative affairs Louisa Terrell to stay in regular contact with lawmakers, according to an official familiar with the situation," and White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said the President "is still very much hopeful that he will be able to sign the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act into law, and we are of course very closely engaged with the negotiators while also leaving them room to work."

On [CBS This Morning](#) (5/25, 2.2M), Booker said, "We want to get this deal right and not quick. I'm very encouraged there's been hours and hours every day of talks. And I'm really hopeful that we can get something done in the weeks ahead, not months." [Axios](#) (5/25, Knutson, 1.26M) reports the legislation is "stalled in the Senate due to Republican opposition to certain provisions, including curbing qualified immunity for police officers," which [Reuters](#) (5/25, Mason) reports Scott on Tuesday identified as "a main point of contention" while speaking with reporters. Scott added that compromise on the legislation faces "a long way to go still, but it's starting to take form."

On the [CBS Evening News](#) (5/25, story 2, 1:40, O'Donnell, 3.84M), Weijia Jiang reported Bass "said she wants the final bill to address" qualified immunity. Bass: "We want the killings, we want the brutality to end. And so the only way that happens is through accountability." On [ABC World News Tonight](#) (5/25, story 2, 2:30, Muir, 6.58M), Senior White House Correspondent Mary Bruce said there are "real hurdles, though, like that question of protections for officers, but one thing that both sides definitely do agree on, this legislation will be named in George Floyd's honor."

However, the [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) reports Floyd's younger sister Bridgett did not join her family in DC and instead attended "a memorial event in downtown Minneapolis, expressing her frustration over the lack of progress." Bridgett decided not to visit the White House, "she said, because Biden had not reached his goal of signing the legislation by the anniversary of her brother's death." She stated, "I think Biden needs to make it right." She continued that the President "broke his promise, but I'm going to give him a couple more weeks to see what he comes up with. It don't take that long to hold these police accountable for what they do. There's been a lot of names added to the list after my brother's death. And still nothing is being done." According to the Post, "The different approaches within the family reflect the broader public feelings of optimism that systemic change is possible, and dimming hopes, given it hasn't come a full year after the uprising spurred by Floyd's death."

The [New York Times](#) (5/25, Shear, Fandos, 20.6M) states that despite optimism that a deal "may still be possible in the weeks ahead, the stalemate is a reminder for Mr. Biden of the limits of

presidential power, and of the deepening lack of any real bipartisanship in the nation's capital, even in the face of the largest racial justice protests in generations."

Despite Police Reform At State Level, More Than 1K People Died During Police Encounters Since Floyd. On [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (5/25, lead story, 4:50, Muir, 6.58M), Alex Perez said that "memorials" on Tuesday "stretching from coast to coast honor[ed] the life and legacy of George Floyd, one year after his death. From Los Angeles, to right here in Minneapolis, Americans marking the somber day, remembering the 46-year-old father killed one year ago today while in Minneapolis police custody."

Likewise, Gabe Gutierrez reported on [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (5/25, lead story, 1:40, Holt, 5.16M) that on Tuesday, "across the country, moments of silence commemorating the agonizing nine minutes and 29 seconds a police officer knelt on George Floyd's neck." Gutierrez added on [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 2, 1:40, Holt, 5.16M) that states have enacted police reforms, with "at least 3,000 policing-related bills have been introduced in legislatures." According to Gutierrez, "More than 30 states have enacted new police oversight and reform laws. But more than 1,000 people in the US have died following police encounters since Floyd's death." Gutierrez also "sat down with three women who now share an unwanted bond" of losing loved ones to police.

On the [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (5/25, lead story, 4:05, O'Donnell, 3.84M), Jeff Pegues reported Minneapolis "paused to remember the man that friends and family call a 'gentle giant,'" but "amid the debate about police reform, crime in Minneapolis is rising. Today, just feet away from the square dedicated to George Floyd, about 30 gunshots rang out. A barrage of gunfire was captured on camera during a reporter's live shot. The shooting was apparently unrelated to the Floyd events. Police say one person was injured."

On [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 14, 1:50, Holt, 5.16M), Lester Holt said Floyd's death "is still jarring and shaping this country. What happened one year ago was shocking in its brazenness: the knee, the seeming indifference both to George Floyd's suffering and the cameras and citizens who bore witness. In that roughly ten minutes of video, we saw a legacy of abuse suffered by Blacks at the hands of police officers. A shock to some who saw it. A reality to others. Hardly no one could be unaffected, and it demanded change. And we've seen it in some of those police reform and accountability bills and laws passed since then." However, Holt added, "The roots of behavioral change, how we see and treat each other, are not so easily legislated. The ignorance that has fueled a wave of anti-Asian violence and anti-Semitic attacks in the months after George Floyd's murder show just how far we must travel to act better, to be better. We've also seen more violent encounters between police and Black individuals"

Politico Analysis: Garland Targeting More Police Departments Than Anticipated. [Politico](#) (5/25, Booker, Gerstein, 6.73M) reports that Attorney General Garland is "overseeing the vexing task of providing federal oversight of law enforcement agencies with troubled policing practices at a time when many Americans feel an urgent need for dramatic change." According to Politico, "In effect, the Biden administration [is] revoking a moratorium put in place by the Donald Trump-era DOJ that all but eliminated the use of consent decrees, a court-binding agreement that lays out an action plan to implement specific reforms. It's the department's main tool to help root out racist or unlawful practices within law enforcement agencies, and Trump's attorneys general had throttled back the practice, arguing they were bad for officer morale and led to spikes in crime." Politico adds, "Taken in its totality, the tempo of Garland's actions is eye-popping, even for those who expected the DOJ to return to its pre-Trump assertiveness on policing issues."

WPost: Police Reform Remains Urgent. A [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) editorial says that when it comes to the fatal shooting of Ronald Greene, the AP revealed "there is far more – horrifyingly more – to the story of how this 49-year-old Black man died. And once again, troubling questions are raised about the conduct, character and credibility of police that underscore the need for reform." The Post concludes, "The system is broken, and it is time to fix it so that the people who need protection get it."

DOJ Fights To Keep Secret Memo Clearing Trump In Russia Probe.

The [New York Times](#) (5/25, Savage, 20.6M) reports the Administration is fighting "a legal battle to keep secret most of a Trump-era Justice Department memo related to Attorney General William P. Barr's much-disputed declaration in 2019 that cleared President Donald J. Trump of illegally obstructing justice in the Russia investigation." In a filing Monday, the Justice Department "appealed part of a scathing district court ruling that ordered it to make public the entire memo." The Times says while "the decision to keep hiding that analysis from public scrutiny puts the Biden administration in the politically awkward position of trying to cover up a record that would shed new light on an act by Mr. Barr that Democrats consider notorious," it "also enables the department to defend two institutional interests: its ability to keep internal legal analysis secret and the actions of career officials whom a judge accused of misleading the court."

Judge: Barr's DOJ Got "A Jump On Public Relations" On Release Of Mueller Report. [CNN](#) (5/25, Polantz, 89.21M) reports on its website that in a "scathing analysis" revealed Tuesday, federal Judge Amy Berman Jackson "slammed the Department of Justice for 'getting a jump on public relations' when its leaders in 2019 discussed a public rollout that would blunt the Mueller investigation's damaging findings about then-President Donald Trump, according to a newly released opinion from the judge." Jackson's analysis was included "in a newly unsealed portion of a court opinion she wrote about an internal memo to former Attorney General Bill Barr at the close of the Mueller investigation, and her rejection of the department's efforts to keep almost all of the memo secret."

WSJournal Lauds Garland For Appealing Decision Faulting Predecessor's Handling Of Mueller Report. In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (5/25, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) credits Garland for the Justice Department decision to appeal Berman Jackson's order to release an internal memo critical of his predecessor's handling of the release of Mueller's investigation. The Journal concludes Garland's response shows Jackson's order as partisan judicial overreach.

In Wake Of Cease-Fire, Blinken Looks To Restore Relations With Palestinian Authority, Rebuild Gaza.

[NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 8, 1:45, Holt, 5.16M) reported, "In the Middle East, Secretary of State Blinken met with Israeli and Palestinian leaders, trying to make sure an Egyptian brokered cease-fire holds." NBC (Mitchell) added, that Blinken is "pledging \$112 million in emergency aid to rebuild Gaza and meeting with Palestinian authority President Mahmoud Abbas, sidelined by the Trump Administration." The [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 9, 1:45, O'Donnell, 3.84M) reported Blinken is "hoping to solidify the peace after the deadliest fighting in years left Gaza in ruins. CBS' Holly Williams is there." CBS (Holly Williams) added, "The US wants to make the cease-fire stick." Blinken was shown saying, "Palestinians and Israelis equally deserve to live safely and securely to enjoy equal measures of freedom, opportunity, and democracy, to be treated with dignity."

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (5/25, Wilkinson, 3.37M) reports that after "receiving praise for helping broker" the cease-fire, the Biden Administration "is now looking to build toward the next phase: a deeper and more complex resolution to decades of conflict." However, Blinken "has a more modest goal: making sure the cease-fire holds and humanitarian aid can be delivered to the battered Gaza Strip." [Reuters](#) (5/25) reports Blinken "said the [US] would provide an additional \$75 million in...aid to the Palestinians...\$5.5 million in immediate disaster relief for Gaza and \$32 million to the U.N. Palestinian aid agency based there." However, according to Reuters, Blinken "reiterated that Washington intended to ensure that Hamas, which it regards as a terrorist organisation, did not benefit...a potentially difficult task in an enclave over which it has a strong grip."

The [AP](#) (5/25) reports that Blinken "announced Tuesday that the U.S. would reopen its consulate in Jerusalem — a move that restores ties with Palestinians that had been downgraded by the Trump administration." The consulate "long served as an autonomous office in charge of diplomatic relations with the Palestinians," but former President Trump "downgraded its operations," placing it under the aegis of his ambassador to Israel when he moved the embassy to Jerusalem, which "infuriated the Palestinians."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (5/25, Lieber, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that Blinken said alongside Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, "We know that to prevent a return to violence, we have to use the space created to address a larger set of underlying issues and challenges" and "that begins with tackling the great humanitarian situation in Gaza." However, the [New York Times](#) (5/25, Jakes, 20.6M) reports that Netanyahu warned that his nation will launch a "very powerful" response if Hamas launches new attacks, while "thanking the United States for bolstering his country's air defenses." The Times says that "in brief but blunt comments after" meeting with Blinken, Netanyahu "said he and Mr. Blinken had discussed how to curb Hamas...and how to help rebuild and otherwise improve the lives of the two million Palestinians who live there." The Times adds, "For his part, Mr. Blinken sought to keep the conversation focused on reducing tensions and meeting what he described as 'urgent, humanitarian reconstruction assistance for Gaza.'"

Meanwhile, Charles Lane writes in the [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M), "Israeli wrongdoing" in the conflict with Hamas, "if any, occurred in the context of a generally professional military operation that was carried out in response to Hamas's rocket attacks. Hamas's campaign against Israel and its civilian population, by contrast, consisted of nothing but war crimes, from beginning to end."

Sanders Drops Efforts To Block Weapons Sales To Israel. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (5/25, Collins, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that according to an aide, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) said that the senator will no longer attempt to force a vote aimed at stopping a \$735 million sale of weapons to Israel. The aide said Sanders found out last Friday that the State Department had already approved the sale, and it was not clear that it could be blocked.

Friedman: Biden Needs To Make Push For Two-State Solution. Thomas Friedman writes in his column for the [New York Times](#) (5/25, 20.6M) that the fighting between Israel and Hamas "made something crystal clear to me: Unless we preserve at least the potential of a two-state solution, the one-state reality that would emerge in its place won't just blow up Israel, the West Bank and Gaza; it could very well blow up the Democratic Party and every Jewish organization and synagogue in America." It is "vital," Friedman writes, that Biden "urgently take steps to re-energize the possibility of a two-state solution and give it at least some concrete diplomatic manifestation on the ground."

Pro-Palestinian Activists Building "Broad Progressive Coalition" In US. The [Los Angeles Times](#) (5/25, Parvini, 3.37M) reports a shared purpose "and political perspective has revealed itself in larger and more diverse pro-Palestinian demonstrations across the country, mounting pressure from progressive politicians on the Biden administration, and a shift in American political discourse about Israel in Washington, the U.S. media and other institutions." As pro-Palestinian posts have "spread across social media in recent days, Black, Armenian, liberal Jewish and other social justice organizers have helped Palestinians push their message both online and in the streets." That merger of groups "and causes has reached a critical mass, its supporters say, in a way that differs from past episodes in the long-running Mideast conflict."

Israel's Iron Dome Accidentally Downed Friendly Drone. [Insider](#) (5/25, Pickrell, 2.74M) reports Israel's Iron Dome accidentally "shot down an Israeli military drone during recent fighting with Hamas in the Gaza Strip, the Israel Defense Forces told local media." An IDF spokesperson told Haaretz, "As part of the round of fighting in Gaza and as part of the defense of the country's skies, an IDF Skylark drone was hit by Iron Dome." Haaretz also "reported that the IDF is 'worried' about the friendly-fire incident because it calls into question whether the IDF is able 'to conduct a long period of fighting without harming its own forces.'"

CAPITOL VIOLENCE NEWS

Pennsylvania Couple Charged In Capitol Siege Probe Seek Plea Deal.

The [New Castle \(PA\) News](#) (5/25, Sirianni, 11K) reports, "A New Castle couple charged with criminal acts during the U.S. Capitol insurrection on Jan. 6. are seeking an exclusion from the Speedy Trial Act in hopes of reaching a plea deal without a jury trial." Federal prosecutors "charged and Debra J. Maimone on March 12 with theft of property (\$1,000 or less); knowingly

entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority; and violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds. On Monday, the government and attorneys for both Vogel and Maimone jointly asked for a 90-day continuance, until Aug. 24, 'to be able to continue plea negotiations,' according to U.S. District Court documents." The FBI "identified the duo after finding a video posted to Maimone's Parler social media account that showed them inside the Capitol."

Texas Man Charged In Capitol Siege Probe.

The [Houston Chronicle](#) (5/25, Dellinger, 982K) reports that a Katy, Texas man "was arrested Tuesday for his alleged role in the U.S. Capitol riot, according to the FBI." Adam Weibling "was taken into custody by FBI Bryan agents. He was charged with violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds as well as knowingly entering or remaining in restricted grounds without lawful authority. He is the seventh Houston-area resident to be arrested in connection to the Capitol insurrection on Jan. 6."

Filing: Man Charged With Bringing Bombs To Capitol Had Called Cruz Office About Election Fraud.

[CNN](#) (5/25, Polantz, 89.21M) reports, "A Vietnam veteran who allegedly brought Mason jar bombs to Capitol Hill on January 6 had scoped out the Capitol Building in December by driving around it, and had called Texas Sen. Ted Cruz's office and tried to visit the Republican at home, a court filing revealed on Monday." The filing "provides new details about a right-wing follower's response to the election fraud myth in one of the most serious Capitol riot criminal cases." Lonnie Leroy Coffman of Alabama "had also participated in a paramilitary patrol on the southern border seven years ago, and on January 6, carried information about border enforcement paramilitary groups, the court filing said."

Senate Seeks Compromise On Jan. 6 Commission Bill.

The [AP](#) (5/25, Jalonick) reports Senators "labored Tuesday to find a path forward for legislation creating a commission on the Jan. 6 insurrection, debating potential changes in a long-shot attempt to overcome growing GOP opposition." Sources told the AP that Sens. Susan Collins (R-ME) and Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) "are leading the informal talks," which "are, for now, focused on two issues that Republican senators have cited for their opposition to the House-passed legislation to create the commission - ensuring that the panel's staff is evenly split between the parties and making sure the commission's work does not spill over into the midterm election year."

Meanwhile, [Reuters](#) (5/25) reports Manchin and Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ) "called on Republicans to work with them to reach agreement on a bill to investigate the events leading up to and on Jan. 6, when President Donald Trump's supporters stormed the building while Congress was certifying Democrat Joe Biden's November election victory, leaving five dead," but [CNN](#) (5/25, Raju, Barrett, 89.21M) reports on its website that Manchin "bluntly said he wouldn't support any effort to gut the filibuster if Republicans succeed in blocking the measure."

Although [The Hill](#) (5/25, Bolton, 5.69M) reports Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) on Tuesday followed Sen. Mitt Romney (R-UT) to become "the second Senate Republican to say she will support a House-passed bill to establish a bipartisan commission on the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, which could come to the floor for a vote this week," [Bloomberg](#) (5/25, Dennis, 3.57M) reports Senate Minority Leader McConnell on Tuesday "dismissed bipartisan efforts to set up an independent commission to investigate the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection, setting up a showdown with Democrats that could reverberate in the 2022 campaigns for Congress." Bloomberg adds McConnell "accused Democrats of trying to drag out a debate about former President Donald Trump's role in the siege staged by his supporters as they try to hold control of the House and Senate in next year's election."

However, the [New York Times](#) (5/25, Feuer, Fandos, 20.6M) reports McConnell is arguing the commission is "redundant, noting that the Justice Department and congressional committees are already looking into the assault," but he "failed to mention...that the criminal investigation into the

riot, despite being one of the largest in American history, was narrowly bounded by federal law and would not – indeed could not – seek the answers to several crucial questions about Jan. 6. The same can be said about the major congressional effort to investigate the assault, a tightly focused inquiry into the broad government response to the violence that day.”

Trump Denies Responsibility For Capitol Riot. [Bloomberg](#) (5/25, Yaffe-Bellany, 3.57M) reports Trump in a court filing on Monday “asked a judge in Washington to throw out a lawsuit that accuses him of inciting the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol, arguing that he can’t be held legally liable for a speech he gave to supporters shortly before they stormed the building.” Bloomberg says Trump argued Rep. Eric Swalwell’s (D-CA) lawsuit “unfairly seeks to hold him responsible ‘for the unlawful acts of others,’” and he “argued his comments to the crowd that day constituted a type of official act for which presidents are immune from civil litigation, based on established legal precedent.” [CNN](#) (5/25, Polantz, 89.21M) reports on its website that the argument marks “the first time Trump has formally defended his actions in court since the insurrection, and reflects his continued push to his supporters that he did nothing wrong and was robbed of a second term in office.”

PROTESTS

North Carolina Woman Charged After Allegedly Driving Into Protestors.

The [AP](#) (5/25, Finley) reports, “A white woman has been charged with striking two Black women protesters with her car during a march against last month’s police shooting of an unarmed Black man in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, authorities said Tuesday.” Lisa O’Quinn, 41, of Greenville, North Carolina “faces two counts of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill by the use of a motor vehicle and related charges, the Elizabeth City Police Department said in a statement. Investigators said they’re also looking into the possibility of deeming O’Quinn’s actions a hate crime.” The AP adds, “The women who were struck, both 42, were treated at a hospital and released, police said. They were part of a small march on Monday evening that was against the April 21 shooting by sheriff’s deputies of Andrew Brown Jr., while he was in his car.”

The [Daily Beast](#) (5/25, Boryga, 933K) reports, “Valerie Lindsey was protesting with a small crowd in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, on Monday evening when a white sedan rolled up to an intersection partly blocked by activists enraged by the police killing of a local Black man. Lindsey, who is Black, told The Daily Beast that the driver of that vehicle, 41-year-old Lisa Michelle O’Quinn, rolled down her window and said that if members of the Elizabeth City Police Department, who were guarding the procession, were not present, the protesters ‘would not be safe.’ Lindsey added that, when she and two other protesters came closer to O’Quinn’s car to confront her, O’Quinn, who is white, uttered racial slurs, including the n-word. Two other witnesses to the incident confirmed that slurs were uttered.” Police say O’Quinn “drove her car into protesters, sending two of them – including Lindsey – to the hospital.”

COUNTER-TERRORISM

FBI Probing Suspicious Package Sent To Sen Paul’s Kentucky Home.

[CBS News](#) (5/25, Siese, 5.39M) reports, “The FBI is investigating a suspicious package delivered to Senator Rand Paul’s Bowling Green, Kentucky home, reports CBS Louisville affiliate WLKY. A large envelope containing what appeared to be a white powder arrived Monday. Authorities are attempting to determine whether the envelope’s contents are hazardous.”

The [AP](#) (5/25, Schreiner) reports, “A suspicious package sent to the Kentucky home of Republican U.S. Sen. Rand Paul appears to contain a non-toxic substance, the local sheriff’s office said.” The FBI “is providing forensic and technical assistance in working with the Warren County Sheriff’s Office and Capitol Police, Tim Beam, a spokesman for the FBI’s Louisville office, said Tuesday. The Warren County Sheriff’s Office said in a social media post that it was contacted by Capitol Police on Monday regarding a suspicious package delivered to Paul’s home in Bowling

Green. The package was taken to the Bowling Green Fire Department and a preliminary analysis identified the substance as non-toxic, the sheriff's office said. It did not identify the substance."

[The Hill](#) (5/25, Schnell, 5.69M) reports, "Preliminary analysis, according to a Facebook post from the Warren County Sheriff's Office, identified the substance as nontoxic. Additional analysis, however, will be conducted on the substance and package, the sheriff's office said. The U.S. Capitol Police (USCP) confirmed these developments in a statement to The Hill, writing that an initial test determined that the powdery substance in the package was not dangerous. The contents were taken to an FBI lab for further testing 'as a precaution,' according to USCP."

Attorneys For Three Men Charged In Whitmer Kidnap Plot Plan Entrapment Defense.

[WDIV-TV](#) Detroit (5/25, Ley, Clarke, 568K) reports, "Attorneys for the three men charged in the alleged plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer laid out how they plan to present their defense." WDIV-TV adds, "Three members of the Wolverine Watchmen were back in court on Tuesday for a video hearing. Pete Musico, Joseph Morrison and Paul Bellar are all charged with supporting the plot. The defense is going to argue that the FBI entrapped the men, led the training and pushed the plot. 'We will file an entrapment motion,' Nicholas Somberg, the attorney for Joseph Morrison, said."

Probe Of Wyoming Bomb-Making Scheme Continues.

[KTWO-AM](#) Casper, WY (5/25) reports, "An investigation into a bomb-making scheme in Rock Springs is continuing. Rock Springs Police made the announcement on Tuesday." Police said "investigators have found a total of four confirmed pipe bombs in connection to the investigation. All have been disarmed by the Sweetwater County Bomb Squad. Two suspects, Spencer Cottrell and Bryan Foster, were arrested for felony possession, manufacture and sale of explosives with intent to unlawfully endanger. An additional defendant, Gage Mercer, was indicted earlier this month. 'FBI Denver is grateful for the opportunity to have assisted the Rock Springs Police Department in investigating this serious threat,' FBI Denver Special Agent Michael Schneider said."

COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE

US Prosecutors Obtained Data On Former Ukrainian Officials During Giuliani Probe.

[Reuters](#) (5/25) reports US prosecutors "investigating Rudolph Giuliani's ties to Ukraine have seized materials from that country's former chief prosecutor, who was involved in efforts to uncover dirt about current U.S. President Joe Biden, according to a Tuesday court filing," which the [AP](#) (5/25, Neumeister) reports was "accidentally revealed." According to the AP, the filing "said federal prosecutors in New York had informed defense lawyers that the seized communications included an email account believed to belong to the former prosecutor general of Ukraine, Yuriy Lutsenko," and "said prosecutors accessed Lutsenko's account around the same time that investigators also got access to Giuliani's Apple iCloud account." The AP describes Lutsenko as "a key figure in Giuliani's efforts to press Ukraine for an investigation into then-presidential candidate Joe Biden and his son, Hunter."

NCSC Head To Speak To "CNBC Evolve."

[CNBC](#) (5/25, 7.34M) reports on May 26, the "CNBC Evolve: Innovations in Cybersecurity will dissect efforts to protect our nation's cyber infrastructure and identify threats, with actionable advice on ways the government and private enterprise can work together to anticipate threats before they happen in conversations led by CNBC's Eamon Javers." Featured speakers include: "John Demers, Department of Justice's National Security Division Assistant Attorney General, Michael Orlando, National Counterintelligence and Security Center Acting Director, Elena Kvochko, SAP Chief Trust Officer and Suresh Venkatarayalu, Honeywell Chief Technology Officer."

Psaki: ODNI "Actively Working" On Unidentified Aircraft Report.

The [Washington Examiner](#) (5/25, Doyle, 888K) reports ODNI is "actively working" on a report "about UFOs, an effort backed by President Joe Biden, the White House said Tuesday." White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters, "We take reports of incursions into our air base by any aircraft, identified or unidentified, very seriously," adding, "Certainly the president supports ODNI putting together a report." Asked whether the "White House would commit to disclosing the report's findings in full, Psaki pointed to the intelligence department leading the investigation." Psaki said, "In terms of disclosure, that would be up to them."

Podesta Urges Biden To Create Dedicated UFO Office In OSTP. [Politico Playbook](#) (5/25, Thompson, Meyer, 6.75M) reports former White House Chief of Staff John Podesta "has been pushing the federal government to be more transparent on all things UFO...for over two decades." Podesta thinks President Biden should create "a dedicated UFO office inside the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP)." Podesta said, "They're more used to dealing in an open-source environment, used to dealing with scientific information disclosed to the public, and having a conversation with the scientific community than, you know, black programs at the Pentagon." Politico says, "Biden's director of national intelligence is mandated to produce a public report to Congress documenting 'unidentified aerial phenomena' or 'anomalous aerial vehicles,' per legislation signed during the Trump administration." White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki "told reporters [Tuesday] that the White House was 'aware of the report requirement and our team at the office of the director of national intelligence (ODNI) is of course actively working on that report.'"

US Intelligence Agencies Still Looking Into Wuhan Lab Rumors.

[Reuters](#) (5/25, Hosenball) reports, US intelligence agencies are "examining reports that researchers at a Chinese virology laboratory were seriously ill in 2019 a month before the first cases of COVID-19 were reported, according to US government sources who cautioned that there is still no proof the disease originated at the lab." A "still-classified U.S. intelligence report circulated during former President Donald Trump's administration alleged that three Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) researchers became so ill in November 2019 that they sought hospital care, sources familiar with U.S. intelligence reporting and analysis said, speaking on condition of anonymity." The State Department published a fact sheet on "COVID-19 and the Wuhan lab on Jan. 15, 2021, five days before Trump left office, based in part on information in the classified report, sources said." The CIA, NSA, and "defense intelligence components contributed to both the public fact sheet and classified report, the sources said." Both were assembled by ODNI, and the "classified report is regarded as valid by current U.S. government agencies, experts investigating the origins of COVID-19 and by officials in President Joe Biden's administration."

Biden Administration Concerned About Quality Of State Department Wuhan Investigation. [CNN](#) (5/25, Atwood, 89.21M) reports the Biden Administration "shut down a closely-held State Department effort launched late in the Trump administration to prove the coronavirus originated in a Chinese lab over concerns about the quality of its work, according to three sources familiar with the decision." The existence of the "State Department inquiry and its termination this spring by the Biden administration – neither of which has been previously reported – comes to light amid renewed interest in whether the virus could have leaked out of a Wuhan lab with links to the Chinese military." However, Biden officials "remain skeptical of Beijing's role in limiting investigators from accessing information that may be pertinent to the origins of the virus." US intelligence agencies continue "to examine the question of whether the virus emerged naturally from human contact with infected animals or if it could have been the result of a laboratory accident."

Fauci Defends "Modest Collaboration" With Wuhan Institute Of Virology During House Panel Meeting. [Fox News](#) (5/25, Olson, 23.99M) reports NIAID Director Anthony Fauci "on Tuesday defended 'modest' collaboration with scientists in Wuhan, China on studying bat coronaviruses while asserting that the agency did not allocate the money to do 'gain of function' research." These "comments came during a House Appropriations Committee subcommittee hearing on the National Institutes of Health (NIH) fiscal year 2022 budget request. Fauci was

pressed by Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Wis., on a \$600,000 grant from NIAID that went to a group called EcoHealth Alliance, which then paid the Wuhan Institute of Virology to study the risk that bat coronaviruses could infect humans." NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins "said earlier in the hearing that the American taxpayer money that went to the Wuhan Institute of Virology was not approved to conduct gain of function research, which is research that involves modifying a virus to make it more infectious among humans."

The [Washington Examiner](#) (5/25, Dunleavy, 888K) reports Fauci told lawmakers "it would have been 'almost a dereliction of our duty' if the National Institutes of Health had not worked with China to study coronaviruses as he defended NIH money going to fund 'collaboration' with 'very respectable Chinese scientists.'" For his part, Collins said, "They were not approved by NIH for doing gain of function research. ... We do not – and that's the official governmental identification of that term, by the way. We are, of course, not aware of other sources of funds or other activities they might've undertaken outside of what our approved grant allowed."

Secretary Becerra Calls On WHO To Investigate COVID's Origins. The [Washington Post](#) (5/25, A1, Abutaleb, Harris, Guarino, 10.52M) reports Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra "called Tuesday for a swift follow-up investigation into the coronavirus's origins amid renewed questions about whether the virus jumped from an animal host into humans in a naturally occurring event or escaped from a lab in Wuhan, China." He made the comments during the annual WHO ministerial meeting, and he said that experts "should be given 'the independence to fully assess the source of the virus and the early days of the outbreak.'"

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (5/25, Hinshaw, McKay, Page, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that during the WHO meeting, Chinese representatives challenged the new international push to investigate COVID's origins in China. The representatives said that China has already provided investigators with all relevant information, and it urged the international community to begin investigating other theories.

Wolf: New Lab-Leak Focus Reflects Increased Concern About Future Pandemics. In a piece for [CNN](#) (5/25, Wolf, 89.21M), Zachary Wolf examines the growing international focus on the COVID lab-leak theory, which originated during the Trump administration. While the scientific community originally dismissed the theory, there "[is] ample evidence the Chinese government tried to cover the existence of the virus up." Furthermore, the lack of transparency from China provides a space for conspiracy theorists to create new narratives.

Senate, House Intelligence Committees "Also Probing COVID-19 Origins."

[Reuters](#) (5/25, Hosenball) reports the Senate and House intelligence committees are "conducting their own investigations into the origins of the COVID-19 virus and how the U.S. government responded to the crisis, two Congressional officials said." A Congressional official "told Reuters on Tuesday the Senate Intelligence Committee, led by Democrat Mark Warner, has asked the spy agencies about various issues related to the pandemic, including whether it could have been started in a laboratory accident or originated with animals." The official "said that the committee would be looking into the accuracy of the still-classified reports that researchers at the Wuhan Institute of Virology became so ill they sought hospital care in November 2019." Three government sources "cautioned that U.S. spy agencies had not yet reached any conclusion as to the origins of the virus, which first appeared in Wuhan and then spread worldwide."

Democrats And Republicans Unite Behind Senate Bill Targeting China.

[CNBC](#) (5/25, Franck, 7.34M) says on its website that "these days, it can feel like there are very few issues Democrats and Republicans agree on. That is, of course, unless someone's proposing a bill aimed at challenging Beijing's growing global influence." According to CNBC, the United States Innovation and Competition Act of 2021, "a wide-ranging piece of legislation expected to cost about \$200 billion, seeks to do just that." CNBC adds, "Assembled by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., the bill has united senators on both sides of the political aisle behind a bundle of provisions to boost American research and technology manufacturing deemed critical to U.S. economic and national security interests." CNBC says "the scope of the bill, the end result of

input from at least six Senate committees, reflects...the urgency of a global semiconductor shortage."

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Judge Approves Deal To Allow Epstein's Jail Guards Avoid Prison.

[Reuters](#) (5/25, Stempel) reports US District Judge Analisa Torres on Tuesday approved a deferred prosecution agreement for "two jail guards who admitted to falsifying records on the night Jeffrey Epstein killed himself on their watch." The deal ends the criminal case against Tova Noel and Michael Thomas and lets them avoid prison. According to Reuters, they instead "will serve six months of supervised release and complete 100 hours of community service, preferably related to criminal justice," and "cooperate with a probe by the U.S. Department of Justice's inspector general, including the circumstances surrounding Epstein's death."

Roof Appeals Death Sentence In Charleston Church Mass Shooting.

The [Washington Post](#) (5/24, 10.52M) reports Dylann Roof "asked an appeals court Tuesday to overturn his conviction and death sentence for the massacre he carried out at a historic African American church in Charleston, S.C., in 2015." The Post says Roof is "the first person sentenced to death for a federal hate crime for killing nine Black parishioners as they prayed during Bible study at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church." However, the Post adds that "at least two of the three judges on the panel expressed skepticism of Roof's argument Tuesday that the trial judge ignored evidence of Roof's delusions about white nationalists and was wrong to find him competent to stand trial."

Police Investigator Accused Officers Of Underplaying Risk Of Breonna Taylor Search.

The [Louisville \(KY\) Courier-Journal](#) (5/25, Duvall, Costello, 554K) reports, "The police sergeant investigating the officers in the fatal shooting of Breonna Taylor questioned whether they purposely downgraded the risk of searching her home so they could exclude SWAT." The Courier-Journal adds, "Interviewing the officers who broke down Taylor's door in a raid that ended in her death, Sgt. Andrew Meyer of the Professional Standards Unit pressed them on 'obvious and seemingly blatant omissions' on the risk assessment form they filled out before the raid. 'The exclusions of these certain pieces of information made the document appear deceptive,' Meyer told one of the officers."

Two Louisiana State Police Officers Reportedly Face Dismissal In Greene Case.

[Reuters](#) (5/25) reports, "Two Louisiana State Police officers involved in a violent May 2019 arrest of a Black man who died as he was removed from the scene in an ambulance will be fired from the force, CNN reported on Tuesday." CNN "cited two unnamed sources close to the investigation and said that the officers would be terminated 'soon.' Ronald Greene, 49, died on his way to a hospital shortly after midnight on May 10, 2019. His death further fueled a national debate over police brutality, especially against Black men, after the Associated Press obtained and released police bodycam video of officers punching and dragging him. One officer shocked him with a stun gun." On Friday, "state law enforcement officials released additional footage of the incident that shows Greene leading police on a high-speed chase, then crashing his car."

Eight Charged In Multistate Burglary Ring That Allegedly Targeted Asian-Americans.

The [New York Times](#) (5/25, Tully, 20.6M) reports, "Eight men targeted Asian homeowners for theft as part of an intricate multistate burglary ring that preyed mainly on restaurant owners in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Delaware, federal prosecutors said on Tuesday." The Times adds, "The defendants were accused of rifling through cars parked at family-owned Asian restaurants to identify addresses and affixing tracking devices in order to follow victims home, according to a complaint filed in United States District Court in Newark. At other times, they

targeted homes in heavily populated Asian communities." According to the Times, "More than 50 residences in at least four states were ransacked, and jewelry, weapons and thousands of dollars in currency from the United States and Asian countries were stolen between late 2016 and the spring of 2019. George M. Crouch Jr., the special agent in charge of the F.B.I. office in Newark, called it a 'brazen conspiracy based on stereotype and opportunity.'"

The [New Jersey Star-Ledger](#) (5/25, Atmonavage, 1.47M) reports, "The crew made off with hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash, valuable coins and jewelry, firearms and other items as they ransacked homes in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York and Delaware from 2016 to 2019, authorities said. A co-conspirator told law enforcement that the crew targeted Asian individuals 'because it was believed that the victims kept large sums of currency and jewelry in their residences,' according to the criminal complaint." The Star-Ledger adds, "Rabine Armour, of Easton, Pennsylvania, Kevin Burton, of Newark, Kevin Jackson, of Rahway, Thomas Rodgers, of Newark, James Hurt, of Tobyhanna, Pennsylvania, Sherman Glasco of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Randi Barr, of Irvington and Terrance Black, of Irvington, were all charged with conspiracy to commit interstate transportation of stolen property."

US Charges Two Los Angeles Airport Cargo Handlers With Stealing Gold Bars.

The [AP](#) (5/25) reports from Los Angeles, "Two cargo handlers were charged Tuesday with stealing gold bars from a shipment at Los Angeles International Airport." Marlon Moody, 38, and Brian Benson, 35, both of Los Angeles, "were arrested by FBI agents and have been charged with conspiracy and theft of interstate and foreign shipment, according to a statement from the U.S. attorney's office. A federal grand jury indictment alleges the men worked for a contractor providing ground handling services at the airport in April of last year when they stole four gold bars from a shipment of 2,000 bars that was being sent from Australia to New York by a Canadian bank."

The [Orange County \(CA\) Register](#) (5/25, 594K) reports, "A two-count indictment charges Moody and Benson with conspiracy and theft of interstate and foreign shipment. The indictment alleges that both men worked for Alliance Ground International, a company that provided ground handling services at LAX. On the evening of April 22, a shipment of gold bars arrived at LAX on Singapore Airlines. A total of 2,000 gold bars, each weighing 2.2 pounds and valued at \$56,000, were being shipped at the direction of a Canadian bank. During a stopover at LAX, the gold was offloaded and secured, but an inventory that evening showed one box containing 25 gold bars was missing, federal prosecutors said."

Former Montana Police Chief Charged With Distributing Child Pornography.

The [AP](#) (5/25, Zwememan) reports from Missoula, Montana, "The former police chief in East Helena made an initial appearance in federal court Tuesday on a complaint alleging he distributed child pornography via Facebook Messenger." William Daly Harrington, 42, "was arrested Tuesday. He did not enter a plea during his appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge Kathleen L. DeSoto in Missoula. Harrington was detained pending a detention hearing Wednesday. He is expected to enter a plea June 3. According to the criminal complaint, an FBI agent received a tip from Facebook in September 2020 that an account that was later determined to belong to Harrington shared a sexually explicit image involving a girl who was about 10 years old. Further investigation found Harrington shared several images of pornography with another Facebook account, determined to belong to Harrington's girlfriend, between November 2019 and August 2020."

[KTVQ-TV](#) Billings, MT (5/25, Ambarian) reports, "Harrington voluntarily surrendered Tuesday morning and was taken into custody by the FBI. It says it came after an joint investigation by the FBI and the Lewis and Clark County Sheriff's Office as part of the FBI's Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force. According to an affidavit filed in federal court, the investigation began in September 2020, after tip to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Court documents claim that investigation led to a Facebook account that used a fictitious name but was created by Harrington, and that Harrington sent images of child pornography to another individual on multiple occasions."

The [Ravalli \(MT\) Republic](#) (5/25, Lister, 14K) reports, "When Harrington was told by the investigator that some of the images transmitted were of underage girls, Harrington stated that the person he was corresponding with was 'sexually free' and that the two regularly looked at 'a lot of porn together,' the complaint states." Harrington "spent about 12 years with the East Helena Police Department and was promoted to chief in April 2019. City leaders said they placed Harrington on paid administrative leave Feb. 3, after learning about an allegation of sexual assault against him. Harrington resigned from the department March 5 in a one-sentence email to East Helena Mayor James Schell."

FBI Assisting Ohio Bomb Squad In Raid.

[WYTV-TV](#) Youngstown, OH (5/25) reports from Salem, Ohio, "The FBI was helping local law enforcement with a raid in Salem Tuesday morning. It happened just after 8 a.m. in the 500 block of E. 3rd Street, just off of Lincoln Avenue and State Street. The road was blocked off in the area." WYTV-TV adds, "According to the Columbiana County Drug Task force, the raid was the result of a month-long investigation. The Columbiana County sheriff said they were serving a drug-related warrant and suspected methamphetamine was inside the house, which led to them calling Youngstown Police's bomb squad."

FBI Leads Law Enforcement Operation In Arkansas.

The [Arkansas Democrat Gazette](#) (5/25, 309K) reports, "The Federal Bureau of Investigation is at multiple locations in western Arkansas conducting a large-scale, court-authorized law enforcement operation with several of its federal, state and local partners. Connor Hagan, public affairs officer for the FBI's Little Rock office, said these locations include residences off Arkansas 255 in Central City, as well as Vintage Vibes, a guitar store at 8819 Rogers Ave. in Fort Smith. 'There's no threat to public safety at all,' Hagan said." Hagan "said Tuesday morning the FBI and other agencies involved in this operation, including the U.S. Marshals Service, the Fort Smith Police Department and the Sebastian and Crawford county sheriff's offices, likely would be working at these multiple locations 'for the next several hours.'" The [Fort Smith \(AR\) Times Record](#) (5/25, 104K) also reports.

FINANCIAL CRIME & CORPORATE SCANDALS

New York To Convene Special Grand Jury Over Investigation Into Former President Trump.

[ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 3, 1:15, Muir, 6.58M) reported that that the Manhattan District Attorney's Office is "convening a special grand jury to decide whether to bring criminal charges" against former President Trump and his business associates. The investigation "has been going on for more than two years now," and the latest update "is a clear sign tonight it's entering a new stage."

[NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 6, 0:45, Holt, 5.16M) reported that while the announcement "is the next step that prosecutors would take in pursuing possible criminal charges," it "doesn't mean charges will be filed." [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 5, 0:25, O'Donnell, 3.84M) reported that, according to sources, the investigation "centers on whether the Trump Organization manipulated its real estate portfolio to defraud banks or obtain illegal tax benefits."

The [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) reports, "Manhattan's district attorney has convened the grand jury that is expected to decide whether to indict former president Donald Trump, other executives at his company or the business itself, should prosecutors present the panel with criminal charges, according to two people familiar with the development," and "the move indicates that District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr.'s investigation of the former president and his business has reached an advanced stage after more than two years. It suggests, too, that Vance thinks he has found evidence of a crime – if not by Trump, by someone potentially close to him or by his

company." The Post adds, "Vance's investigation is expansive, according to people familiar with the probe and public disclosures made during related litigation."

Judge Dismisses Fraud Case Against Bannon.

The [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) reports US District Judge Analisa Torres on Monday "formally dismissed the fraud case against Stephen K. Bannon, the conservative provocateur and ex-adviser to President Donald Trump, ending months of litigation over how the court system should handle his pardon while related criminal cases remain unresolved." The Post says that in "citing examples of other cases being dismissed following a presidential reprieve," Torres "granted Bannon's application — saying in a seven-page ruling that Trump's pardon was valid and that 'dismissal of the Indictment is the proper course.'" According to [Bloomberg](#) (5/25, Voris, 3.57M), "Bannon and three others were charged last year with defrauding donors to a foundation that was privately funding construction of a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border."

Former Wisconsin Financial Adviser Sentenced For Fraud Scheme.

The [AP](#) (5/25) reports from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, "A former financial adviser has been sentenced in Milwaukee to more than five years in federal prison for scamming \$2.6 million from 27 victims, including his own parents." The AP adds, "According to court records, Edward Matthes, 51, persuaded family, friends and community members in Oconomowoc to invest in fictitious Mutual of Omaha accounts. Matthes put the funds into his own bank account from 2013 to 2019 and used the money for home improvements, vacations, child support and other things, prosecutors said. Matthes pleaded guilty to three counts of wire fraud in November 2020, the Journal Sentinel reported. The U.S. Department of Justice recently announced that Matthes was sentenced to 63 months in prison. FBI Special Agent in Charge Robert Hughes said Matthes took advantage of vulnerable people. 'Most of his victims were elderly, and he spent years gaining their trust, only to wipe out a lifetime of their savings,' Hughes said."

Connecticut Lawmaker Pleads Guilty To Campaign Fraud.

The [AP](#) (5/25, Eaton-Robb) reports, "A Connecticut state senator and his former campaign treasurer pleaded not guilty Tuesday to federal fraud charges alleging they lied to obtain public money to run a 2018 state legislative campaign." The AP adds, "Bridgeport Democratic Sen. Dennis Bradley and former school board Chairperson Jessica Martinez pleaded not guilty to wire fraud and conspiracy charges Tuesday afternoon. Bond was set at \$300,000 for Bradley and \$250,000 for Martinez. Prosecutors allege that in order to qualify for the state's public campaign financing system, the pair lied about a March 2018 campaign event and the amount of campaign contributions they had received, according to a federal indictment. They improperly received \$84,140 from the Connecticut Citizen's Election Fund for the 2018 Democratic primary and improperly sought to obtain another \$95,710 for the general election, prosecutors said."

CYBER DIVISION

TSA Set To Release New Pipeline Cybersecurity Rules.

The [Washington Post](#) (5/25, Nakashima, Atarani, 10.52M) reports that the Department of Homeland Security is "moving to regulate cybersecurity in the pipeline industry for the first time in an effort to prevent a repeat of a major computer attack that crippled nearly half the East Coast's fuel supply this month." The Transportation Security Administration "will issue a security directive this week requiring pipeline companies to report cyber incidents to federal authorities," and "will follow up in coming weeks with a more robust set of mandatory rules for how pipeline companies must safeguard their systems against cyberattacks and the steps they should take if they are hacked." According to the Post, TSA "has offered only voluntary guidelines in the past."

[Bloomberg](#) (5/25, Natter, 3.57M) reports that an unnamed source said that under the new rules, "pipeline operators would be required for the first time to report certain cyberattacks to the Department of Homeland Security under a forthcoming security directive being issued by the

Transportation Security Administration. The directive, which is expected to require companies to establish a point of contact for cyber issues, is seen as a precursor to broader mandates for the pipeline sector which has resisted cyber security regulations in favor of a voluntary system they say is more nimble." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (5/25, Smith, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports senior officials with the Department of Homeland Security say the TSA's rules will also require pipeline companies to designate a point person for cyber security.

The [AP](#) (5/25, Fox), [Reuters](#) (5/25), and [The Hill](#) (5/25, Miller, 5.69M) also report.

CISA Official: Cryptocurrency Regulation Will Not Halt Ransomware Attacks.

[NextGov](#) (5/25, Baksh) reports the scourge of ransomware "will proceed with or without closer regulation of the ecosystem that facilitates victims paying anonymous criminals to unlock or return data they steal and hold hostage, a senior Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency official said." CISA Deputy Director Nitin Natarajan said, "Criminals have always found an innovative way to continue the attack [through] some mechanism so, you know, if we were to magically flip a switch and make Bitcoin for instance completely transparent, they're going to find another way to do it." Natarajan was part of a "panel discussion the U.S. Chamber of Commerce hosted on ransomware as a service Tuesday. Other participants included the United Kingdom's National Cyber Security Centre Technical Director Harry W, McAfee Chief Scientist Raj Samani and Global Cyber Alliance Executive Director Megan Stifel."

Irish Health System "Struggling" Ten Days After Ransomware Attack.

[ABC News](#) (5/25, Chambers, Reevell, 2.44M) reports on the aftermath of a "massive ransomware attack that crippled Ireland's health service's IT systems and that has left most of the country's hospitals without computers for over a week." The outage has "wreaked chaos, forcing the mass cancellation of routine appointments, blocking access to patients' records, hobbling testing and some key treatment services, including for cancer patients." It will likely be "weeks before the systems are fully recovered, and each day it continues, more of a backlog is created, which puts pressure on medical workers. Meanwhile, the criminal gang behind the attack is threatening to release patient data it stolen during it."

Bose Suffered Ransomware Attack In March.

[TechRadar](#) (5/25, Sharma, 438K) reports Bose suffered a ransomware attack "earlier this year in March, according to an incident notification letter sent to New Hampshire's Office of the Attorney General, by a counsel on behalf of the company." In the letter, "accessed and shared by BleepingComputer, the counsel notes that during investigation of the cyber-incident, the company discovered that data related to" six former employees was "accessed and potentially exfiltrated."

LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

ATF Nominee To Face Congressional Grilling Over Gun Control Lobbying.

[Reuters](#) (5/25) reports, "Gun control advocate and federal law enforcement veteran David Chipman is no stranger on Capitol Hill, where he has previously urged the U.S. Congress to ban assault rifles and fought against efforts to deregulate firearm silencers." Reuters adds, "On Wednesday, he will seek its support for his nomination by President Joe Biden to serve as director of the Justice Department's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, a job that is so politically fraught that the Senate has confirmed just one nominee in the last 15 years." Chipman "has served in a variety of roles at the ATF he has now been nominated to lead, but currently works as a policy advisor for Giffords, a gun control advocacy group founded by former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and her husband Senator Mark Kelly after a gunman shot her in 2011. That role in particular has inflamed objections to Chipman by Republicans."

Biden To Mark 100th Anniversary Of Tulsa Race Massacre In Oklahoma.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (5/25, Collins, Siddiqui, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports the White House on Tuesday announced the President will visit Tulsa, Oklahoma on June 1 to mark the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre.

Jewish Groups Urge Biden To Name Special Envoy To Address Anti-Semitism.

[Bloomberg](#) (5/25, Jacobs, 3.57M) reports Jewish groups "are pressuring the White House to appoint a special envoy to monitor anti-Semitism in the U.S., after recent violence between Israel and Hamas sparked a wave of attacks on American Jews." According to Bloomberg, "Biden administration officials met on Monday with Jewish community leaders, who have discussed possible candidates to serve as special envoy." Bloomberg adds possible candidates include "Deborah Lipstadt, a professor of Holocaust studies at Emory University; former Anti-Defamation League leader Abraham Foxman; and Nancy Kaufman, former chief executive officer of the National Council of Jewish Women, people familiar with the matter said."

Texas Lawmakers Remove Handgun Restrictions.

[NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 11, 1:25, Holt, 5.16M) reported, "Texas is about to become the latest state to let people carry a handgun pretty much without restrictions." NBC (Chesky) added, "Tonight in Texas, getting hands on a handgun about to become even easier. Lawmakers in Austin passing House Bill 1927, allowing anyone 21 and up who is legally allowed to buy a handgun. No license needed." According to NBC, "Nationwide, similar handgun measures already exist in 20 states. In Texas, the law eliminates not only the license but also the written test, training, and state background checks." The [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 7, 0:20, O'Donnell, 3.84M) reported, "The bill passed despite opposition from law enforcement groups" and "takes effect in September."

Data Shows Suicides Dropped At Height Of Pandemic.

[USA Today](#) (5/25, Weise, 12.7M) reports, "Deaths by suicide fell 9% at the height of the pandemic shutdown compared with previous years, a surprise given increases in reported levels of stress, anxiety and depression. There were more than 2,400 fewer deaths by suicide between March and August 2020 than normally would have been expected, said Dr. Jeremy Samuel Faust, an emergency physician in the Division of Health Policy and Public Health at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and an instructor at Harvard Medical School." Another expert, Thomas Joiner, who is a professor of psychology at Florida State University, "believes the expanded availability of mental health services via telehealth, such as counseling calls by phone or computer, may" explain the trend.

Surge In Opioid Deaths Reportedly Not Getting Enough Attention During Pandemic.

Morgan Radford reported on [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 13, 2:20, 5.16M) that a "surge in opioid-related deaths" has not "gotten enough attention amid the pandemic." Radford reported, "Nearly 200 Americans are dying every single day from opioid overdoses, an increase of 34% during the pandemic, leading to the highest one-year death toll from overdoses ever recorded."

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

DEA, FBI Involved With Operation That Led To Arrest Of Fugitive Wanted In Italy.

The [AP](#) (5/25) reports the DEA and the FBI were involved in an operation that led to the arrest of Rocco Morabito, "one of Italy's most-wanted fugitives." Morabito, who was arrested by authorities in Brazil, is allegedly "a drug boss inside the Calabrian 'ndrangheta organized crime network." Another suspected drug trafficker, "Vincenzo Pasquino, was arrested along with" Morabito.

The [New York Post](#) (5/25, O'Neill, 7.45M) and [BBC World News \(UK\)](#) (5/25, 6.59M) publish similar articles.

OTHER FBI NEWS

Senate Confirms Kristen Clarke As Head Of DOJ Civil Rights Division.

The [New York Times](#) (5/25, Benner, 20.6M) reports that in 51-48 vote on Tuesday, the Senate approved the nomination of Kristen Clarke "to lead the Justice Department's civil rights division, making her the first woman of color to be confirmed by the Senate to do so." [Roll Call](#) (5/25, Ruger, Tully-McManus, 130K) says Clarke "is expected to take an aggressive stance on issues such as discriminatory voting rights laws and policing."

Milbank: Republican Opposition To Clarke Shows Racism Is "The Factor" Within GOP Politics. Dana Milbank writes in the [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) that Republicans "observ[ed] the anniversary of George Floyd's murder" by trying to vote down Kristen Clarke, "a highly qualified Black woman who had been nominated to run the Justice Department's civil rights division." Senate Majority Leader Schumer's office "said the timing of Tuesday's vote was a coincidence. (He had been trying to get a confirmation vote for nominee Kristen Clarke since she cleared the Judiciary Committee two weeks ago, but faced a Republican filibuster.) Still, Democrats were happy to point out the convergence." Milbank argues, "Racism isn't just a factor in Republican politics. It is the factor. But rarely has it been on display in all its ugly facets as it was on Tuesday."

OTHER WASHINGTON NEWS

Moderna Announces COVID Vaccine Is Effective For Teenagers.

The [New York Times](#) (5/25, Anthes, 20.6M) reports that Moderna "said on Tuesday that its coronavirus vaccine, authorized only for use in adults, was powerfully effective in 12- to 17-year-olds." The successful clinical trial means that Moderna "plans to apply to the Food and Drug Administration in June for authorization to use the vaccine in adolescents." American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Infectious Diseases Chair Dr. Yvonne Maldonado said of the announcement, "We were pretty excited to see the data, and we're excited to see that the numbers look very good." She added, "People are going to be more comfortable being able to go back to school. They're going to be able to do more activities socially. I do think it's going to make a big difference in opening our society back up." The [AP](#) (5/25, Neergaard) reports that Pfizer and Moderna "have begun testing in even younger children, from age 11 down to 6-month-old babies."

[Reuters](#) (5/25, Steenhuisen) reports that FDA regulators "took about a month to review a similar study from Pfizer/BioNtech, which was authorized for ages 12-15 on May 10." The current prediction is that Moderna's approval "would come in early July." [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 5, 0:50, Holt, 5.16M) reported that Moderna "says not a single one who got both doses ended up sick, making it 100% effective." The [New York Times](#) (5/25, Anthes, 20.6M) reports that Moderna's results "are based on a clinical trial that enrolled 3,732 people ages 12 to 17, two-thirds of whom received two vaccine doses." The company "reported that a single dose of its vaccine had 93 percent efficacy against symptomatic disease." [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 4, 2:10, O'Donnell, 3.84M) provides additional coverage of the announcement.

Meanwhile, Leana Wen writes in the [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) that while "the foreboding we've lived with throughout the pandemic has finally been replaced by optimism," COVID "remains a real concern for many – including families with young children." Children "constitute a higher proportion of new diagnoses. Pediatric infections represent 14 percent of the total since the beginning of the pandemic, but are now up to 24 percent of new weekly cases, with nearly 49,000 infections reported in the week before May 13." Wen argues we "can and must do a lot more to prioritize our children, including to consider the continuing risk that covid-19 poses to them and to others without immune protection. This Memorial Day promises to be a much better one than the last – but the pandemic isn't over."

CDC: 50% Of Adults In The US Have Been Fully Vaccinated.

[CNBC](#) (5/25, Breuninger, 7.34M) reports on its website that according to the CDC, "half of the adults in the United States are now fully vaccinated against the coronavirus." CNBC adds, "Earlier this month, President Joe Biden set the goal of getting 70% of adults to receive at least their first dose of a Covid vaccine by the Fourth of July," and "with nearly six weeks left until Biden's self-imposed deadline, at least nine states have already hit that 70% threshold." According to CNBC, "The CDC's vaccine tracker showed Tuesday afternoon that 50% of the U.S. population ages 18 or older have been fully vaccinated as of Monday, and 61.6% of that group have had at least one dose." [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 4, 2:40, Muir, 6.58M) reported that the CDC data shows 164 million Americans "have had at least one shot, that's more than 58% of everyone 12 years and older now." The US is on track to "reach the President's goal by July fourth, at least one dose for 70% of all adults."

[Reuters](#) (5/25) reports CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky also "said on Tuesday the seven-day average case count in the United States is now below 23,000 per day, down about 25% from the prior week." She said of the data, "I remain cautious but hopeful they will continue to trend downward."

US School Districts Planning New Campaign To Encourage Teenage Vaccinations.

The [AP](#) (5/25, Watson) reports that US school district administrators "are using mascots, food trucks and prize giveaways to create a pep-rally atmosphere aimed at encouraging students to get vaccinated against the coronavirus before summer vacation." Some districts "are offering free prom tickets and deploying mobile vaccination teams to schools to inoculate students 12 and up so everyone can return to classrooms in the fall," and they "are also enlisting students who have gotten shots to press their friends to do the same."

Indian American Community Looks To Harris For Leadership As India Becomes COVID Epicenter.

The [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) reports, "As India has taken on the dubious title of worldwide coronavirus epicenter," Vice President Harris, "the highest-ranking U.S. official of Indian descent in history, is navigating an issue simultaneously personal and political. And the verdict from the Indian American community is mixed." The "widespread catastrophe inflicted by the coronavirus has united the community in anguish, and many are looking for leadership from a vice president who shares their origins and anxieties." Harris' critics "say she could have used her platform to bring greater attention to India's pain." But some supporters "said any politician who is cultivating a broad national base could suffer from a reputation as a vocal advocate for one particular group."

Far Rockaway Neighborhood In Queens Has Low COVID-19 Vaccination Rate Despite High Number Of Deaths.

The [AP](#) (5/25, Lajka) reports in the Far Rockaway neighborhood in Queens, almost 460 people have died from COVID-19. Yet despite this, "no other place in the city has a lower percentage of vaccinated people." So far "only 29% of people living Far Rockaway's ZIP code, 11691, had received even one vaccine dose, according to data from the New York City Health Department," compared to 49% in the city overall.

Trump Backers Continue Push For 2020 Election Audits.

The [AP](#) (5/25, Brumback, Riccardi) reports "conspiracy theorists and backers of former President Donald Trump are continuing their push for repeated examinations of ballots and finding limited successes." While "the efforts are unlikely to yield any new revelations about President Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 election," the "lingering debate and legal wrangling have propelled suspicions and advanced debunked theories. And their sometimes misleading conclusions have been amplified by Trump, whose false allegations of election fraud sparked the push." The AP adds, "The audits are serving a clear political purpose in firing up the Republican Party's base."

Arizona Secretary Of State Blasts "Highly Partisan" 2020 Election Audit. [The Hill](#) (5/25, Wilson, 5.69M) reports, "Arizona Secretary of State Katie Hobbs (D) is raising new concerns about the way auditors hired by the Republican-controlled state Senate have handled more than

2.1 million ballots from the 2020 election that sat for more than a week in hot and humid trailers waiting to be counted." Hobbs said Monday, "Where the ballots were being stored, it was not a facility that was suitable for storage, because everything was exposed to heat and also humidity because of the method of cooling in the building. ... They're not following best practices. In fact they're doing a lot of things that make no sense if you're trying to get a valid result." Hobbs continued, "There's really nothing going on here that gives any confidence that they're going to produce a report that is valid. ... These are folks with a highly partisan agenda who aren't based in reality."

Michigan Secretary of State, Dominion Warn Against Outside Audits. The [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) reports Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson and Dominion Voting Systems, "the company whose voting equipment has been the subject of baseless claims of fraud are cautioning local governments in the state that outside audits of the 2020 election results like the one underway in Maricopa County, Ariz., would be illegal and would void the machines' security warranties." In letters sent to the Cheboygan and Antrim county clerks last week, Benson's office "said the county boards have 'no authority' to order audits – and instructed election clerks not to provide access to unaccredited outside parties to conduct them. ... In a separate letter to all Michigan counties that use its equipment, Dominion warned that transferring machines to unaccredited auditors could void licensing agreements and render the equipment 'unqualified for official use.'"

Company Decides Not To Renew Its Arizona Vote Recount Contract. The [Arizona Republic](#) (5/25, Fitfield, Oxford, 1.05M) reports the Pennsylvania-based WAKE Technology Services Inc. decided not to renew its contract to run a vote recount in Maricopa County, Arizona. Randy Pullen, a spokesperson for the audit that includes the Maricopa County vote recount, said WAKE's original contract ended on May 14 and the company "didn't want to come back." Pullen said WAKE's vote recount procedures are now being followed by the Arizona-based company StratTech Solutions. It is "unclear whether" StratTech, which works on cybersecurity and other tech-related matters, "has any election or auditing experience." Pullen, however, said StratTech has been involved with the Maricopa County vote recount since it began.

The [AP](#) (5/25) reports, "Ken Bennett, who is serving as a liaison for Senate Republicans overseeing the audit" in Arizona, said StratTech is "very familiar with the processes that were under WAKE's direction, and so most of the WAKE contract employees will move underneath StratTech's supervision and we will continue right on forward." The Maricopa County vote recount "is just one part of an audit that also includes a review of voting machines and election data."

Brooks-LaSure Confirmed As CMS Administrator.

The [New York Times](#) (5/25, Weiland, Sanger-Katz, 20.6M) reports that on Tuesday, the Senate confirmed Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, "a former Obama administration health official," to administrate the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, "one of the most powerful posts at the Department of Health and Human Services. The vote was 55 to 44, with five Republicans joining Democrats to support her confirmation." According to the Times, "As the official charged with overseeing providing services to poor and older Americans in Medicare and Medicaid, Ms. Brooks-LaSure will manage roughly \$1 trillion of the federal budget in addition to the Affordable Care Act's health insurance marketplaces and regulations."

AP: Tom Nides Is Biden's Pick For Ambassador To Israel.

The [AP](#) (5/25, Madhani) reports that according to an unnamed source, President Biden will choose Tom Nides, a "former senior State Department official," to serve as ambassador to Israel. The AP adds, "Getting an ambassador in place in Israel has become a high priority for the administration after this month's 11-day war between Israel and Hamas that killed more than 250 people...and displaced tens of thousands from the Gaza Strip."

White House Asks Four Trump Appointees To Resign From Arts Commission.

[CNN](#) (5/25, Stark, 89.21M) reports that on Monday, the White House instructed four Trump-appointed members to resign from the seven-member Commission of Fine Arts – “an independent federal agency tasked with advising the President, Congress and government agencies on ‘matters of design’ in the nation’s capital.” According to the [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M), the Administration “sent letters to architect Steven Spandle, landscape architect Perry Guillot, sculptor Chas Fagan and commission chairman Justin Shubow asking that they resign...or face termination.” The Post adds all four have refused to resign.

[The Hill](#) (5/25, 5.69M) says that President Biden is planning to replace the four Trump appointees with Peter Cook, a principal at HGA Architects whose “work includes the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of African American History and Culture,” Bill Tsein, a partner at Tod Williams Billie Architects, Justin Garrett Moore, “who is the Inaugural Program Officer for the Humanities in Place Program at the Andrew Mellon Foundation,” and Hazel Ruth Edwards, who chairs the Department of Architecture at Howard University’s College of Engineering and Architecture.

WSJournal: Biden’s Purge Of Arts Commission Is Elitist, Partisan. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (5/25, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) editorializes that Biden’s decision to remove four Trump appointees from the Commission on Fine Arts contradict the image of the President as an everyman and suggest a preoccupation with elite interests. The Journal also says the purge is a partisan move that raises legal questions.

Republicans Promise Infrastructure Counteroffer By Thursday.

The [New York Times](#) (5/25, Cochrane, Tankersley, 20.6M) reports “Senate Republicans who have been negotiating” an infrastructure package “with the White House said on Tuesday that they would produce a counterproposal to [President] Biden’s latest \$1.7 trillion offer, promising a plan by Thursday that could amount to \$1 trillion in public works spending over eight years. But it is unclear whether the two sides can reach common ground, and a group of centrist senators in both parties were quietly discussing a backup option should the talks stall.” The [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) reports the GOP offer “is expected to jettison some of President Biden’s proposals that have struggled to attract Republican support, including his plan to couple infrastructure investments with new federal aid targeting elder care and low-income families. Gone, too, are likely to be the president’s proposed funds for electric vehicles, [Sen. Mitt] Romney [R-UT] said.” The Post adds, “For these lawmakers, any attempt to unwind the 2017 GOP tax cuts is still off the table.” [Bloomberg](#) (5/25, Wasson, Jacobs, 3.57M) and the [Wall Street Journal](#) (5/25, Duehren, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) provide similar coverage of the GOP counteroffer.

The [AP](#) (5/25, Mascaro, Lemire) says “the administration and the GOP senators remain far apart over the size and scope of the investment needed to reboot the nation’s roads, bridges and broadband – but also, as Biden sees it, the child care centers and green energy investments needed for a 21st-century economy. They also can’t agree on how to pay for it.” [Politico](#) (5/25, LeVine, 6.73M) reports that although “neither the White House nor the GOP negotiators are giving up yet, members of both parties privately acknowledge that they’re at a stalemate and that the most likely outcome at this point is Democrats will ultimately go it alone on infrastructure.”

Asked on [CNNVi](#) (5/25, 627K) about the status of talks over how to pay for President Biden’s infrastructure package, White House Director of Public Engagement Cedric Richmond said, “We think that the corporations in America that benefit from the infrastructure investments we’re going to make, we think the top third of the top one percent also should pay their fair share. Because what we can’t do is put this on the backs of the middle class that has been working and struggling and breaking their backs to keep this country afloat all these years. ... We’re eagerly awaiting a response from the Republicans with a new proposal ... And what the President has said is that his only bottom line is he won’t raise taxes on people who make less than \$400,000 a year and inaction is not an option on infrastructure because it is crucial to making sure we can compete in the future and that we can win the future.”

[USA Today](#) (5/25, Garrison, Behrmann, Jansen, 12.7M) reports Democrats are “growing restless” over the stalled talks and “questioning how much longer President Joe Biden’s bipartisan

negotiations should continue." The GOP counteroffer "could mark the final stab at a bipartisanship deal on infrastructure before Biden's self-imposed Memorial Day deadline for progress." Some Democrats "say the time is nearing for Biden to try to pass an infrastructure package without Republican support through a legislative maneuver called reconciliation."

[The Hill](#) (5/25, Bolton, 5.69M) reports Senate Majority Leader Schumer "said Tuesday that his plan is for the upper chamber to move a major infrastructure spending bill through the Senate in July, whether the legislation is bipartisan or not." Asked at what point he is willing to move forward with reconciliation, Schumer told reporters, "The bottom line is very simple, that it has always been our plan regardless of the vehicle to work on an infrastructure bill in July. And that's our plan, to move forward in July."

Psaki "Adamant" That Biden Is Directing Infrastructure Talks. [The Hill](#) (5/25, Samuels, 5.69M) reports the White House "put up a united front as Republican senators suggested President Biden's staff was becoming an impediment toward reaching a deal on infrastructure spending." White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki "was adamant that Biden had personally directed, reviewed and signed off on the administration's \$1.7 trillion counterproposal to Republicans last week. ... Republican senators have suggested in the days since that talks went south after meeting with Biden's staff rather than the president himself." Psaki said, "The counterproposal that our team put forward on Friday was approved by the president, was signed off by the president. Every single detail of that was directed by the president of the United States. ... He was in the Senate for 36 years, I can promise you he does not take a hands off approach to legislating, negotiating and determining what kinds of counterproposals we should put forward."

Marc Thiessen writes in the [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) that his prediction that President Biden "would reach a 'compromise' with Republicans on a hard infrastructure package of roughly \$800 billion, hold a bipartisan signing ceremony at the White House, and then pass the other \$1.5 trillion in his plan using the budget reconciliation process" was wrong. Thiessen says Biden "doesn't care about getting credit for bipartisanship. He just doesn't want the blame for killing it. That's the clear message of the president's 'counteroffer' to Republicans." Biden, Thiessen writes, "won the White House by promising to pursue bipartisanship. But now he is breaking that promise in an effort to jam through as much socialist spending as he can on party-line votes."

D.C. Files Antitrust Suit Against Amazon.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (5/25, Tracy, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports the District of Columbia filed an antitrust suit against Amazon.com in D.C. Superior Court Tuesday, claiming the company prevents sellers on its market place from offering lower prices in other places in order to hinder competition.

Roberts Tells Georgetown Law Graduates They Will Serve "Higher Purpose" As Attorneys.

[Bloomberg](#) (5/25, Stohr, 3.57M) reports Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts in a Georgetown University Law Center commencement speech "hailed the law as a means of 'limiting power through reason' as he made a rare public appearance in recorded remarks," where he also told the graduates "they will be serving a 'higher purpose' through their work as attorneys." Bloomberg adds that the speech was "Roberts's first public comments outside of a court proceeding since he spoke at his son's high school graduation a year ago."

CBP To Build "Central Processing" Facility In El Paso To House Migrant Families, Children.

The [El Paso \(TX\) Times](#) (5/25, Villagran, 168K) reports Customs and Border Protection "is seeking to build a second, centralized facility in El Paso to process migrants arriving at the border." The Times says the proposed "Central Processing Center" marks "the Department of Homeland Security's latest approach to temporarily detaining and processing migrants who cross the U.S.-Mexico border without permission."

Administration Curbs ICE Enforcement Actions.

The [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) says that at "the detention centers and county jails that the Trump administration once filled with immigrants facing deportation, thousands of beds are now empty," and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers "that President Donald Trump lavished with praise have far less to do on the streets of U.S. cities these days." The Post highlights that under Biden Administration rules "curtailing immigration enforcement, ICE carried out fewer than 3,000 deportations last month, the lowest level on record." According to the Post, "ICE under President Biden is an agency on probation. The new administration has rejected calls from some Democrats to eliminate the agency entirely, but Biden has placed ICE deportation officers on a leash so tight that some say their work is being functionally abolished."

However, immigrant rights lawyer Amy Gottlieb, an Associate Regional Director with American Friends Service Committee, writes at the [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) that her husband, Ravi Ragbir, "a well-known and respected activist," was targeted by the Trump Administration "for 'removal' from this country," but they were surprised that "under the Biden administration, ICE would continue to seek to deport him." Gottlieb adds DHS Secretary Mayorkas "has rightly emphasized that the Trump administration 'gutted' the immigration system," but "time is a luxury my family does not have. ICE is not waiting. Even as President Biden has issued new priorities for immigration enforcement, detentions and deportations continue, especially for people who have past criminal convictions, regardless of when that conviction happened and how they have lived their lives since."

DHS Proposes Changes To USCIS Meant To Ease Citizenship Process.

The [AP](#) (5/25, Spagat, Tareen) reports that "less than a year after being on the verge of furloughing about 70% of employees to plug a funding shortfall," US Citizenship and Immigration Services, which "grants citizenship, green cards and temporary visas, wants to improve service without a detailed plan to pay for it, including granting waivers for those who can't afford to pay fees, according to a proposal." The AP says the Department of Homeland Security "sent its 14-page plan to enhance procedures for becoming a naturalized citizen to the White House for approval on April 21." According to the AP, "The plan describes short- and long-term changes that reflect 'a realistic assessment of our aspirations and limitations,' including more video instead of in-person interviews with applicants, authorizing employees to administer citizenship oaths instead of having to rely on federal judges, and promoting online filing to reduce processing times."

GOP Leaders Condemn Greene's Comparison Of Mask Requirements To Treatment Of Jews During Holocaust.

The [AP](#) (5/25, Slodysko) reports Republicans leaders on Tuesday "forcefully condemned" Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA), "calling her comments comparing COVID-19 safety measures like mask-wearing to the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany 'appalling.'" House Minority Leader McCarthy said in a statement, "Marjorie is wrong, and her intentional decision to compare the horrors of the Holocaust with wearing masks is appalling. ... The fact that this needs to be stated today is deeply troubling." Nikole Killion said on the [CBS Evening News](#) (5/25, story 6, 1:45, O'Donnell, 3.84M) that "congressional condemnation" came from "GOP leaders across the board." Senate Minority Leader McConnell: "This is one of the frequent outbursts that are absolutely outrageous."

The [New York Times](#) (5/25, Edmondson, 20.6M) says the condemnation "broke nearly a week of silence" about Greene's comments. The "slow response...reflected the reluctance of top Republicans to take on the first-term congresswoman, who had previously endorsed violent and racist conspiracy theories and whose combative style has made her a favorite of former President Donald J. Trump and his far-right supporters." The [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) reports GOP Leaders' comments came after Greene "compared a supermarket's face-mask policy to the Nazi practice of labeling Jews with Star of David badges." Greene tweeted Tuesday morning, "Vaccinated employees get a vaccination logo just like the Nazi's forced Jewish people to wear a

gold star,” and included a link “to a news story on a Tennessee supermarket chain’s decision to include a special logo on the name badges of vaccinated employees.”

[Politico](#) (5/25, Zanona, 6.73M) says GOP leaders “stopped short of calling for any disciplinary action.” In a separate story, [Politico](#) (5/25, Leonard, 6.73M) reports that Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-IL) has “called for...Greene to be booted from the House Republican conference.” Kinzinger said: “What we can do as a party is take a stand and say you don’t belong in our conference. That’s what I think we should do. I think we should kick her out of the conference, prevent her from coming to conference meetings, benefiting from conference materials.” [CNBC](#) (5/25, Breuninger, 7.34M) reports on its website that “in a defiant statement Tuesday, Greene defended her remarks and doubled down on her assertion that attempts to ‘shame’ people who refuse to follow Covid rules are ‘reminiscent of the great tyrants of history who did the same to those who would not comply.’”

Coons Prioritizes Efforts To Help Administration Secure Bipartisanship.

The [New York Times](#) (5/25, Broadwater, 20.6M) states that to follow Sen. Chris Coons (D-DE) “is to witness how he operates as an extra pair of eyes and ears for the Biden administration in Congress, a kind of consigliere trusted by both the president and the senators – many of them Republicans – whom” President Biden “needs to succeed.” According to the Times, “It is a far less prestigious job than the one that Mr. Coons – who interned for Mr. Biden three decades ago, became his mentee on the New Castle County Council, campaigned for him in Iowa and now holds the seat that once belonged to him – initially sought in the Biden administration, where he had hoped to serve as secretary of state. But it can demand the same kind of shuttle diplomacy and high-stakes negotiation.”

In another article, a [New York Times](#) (5/25, Russonello, 20.6M) profile compares Coons to Biden when he was still in the Senate. The Times adds that like Biden, “Coons is a relative moderate with a proclivity for bipartisan deal-making, and as the administration navigates the politics of an evenly divided Senate, he has been working with both Democrats and Republicans to advance the White House’s agenda.”

Senate Democrats Push For DC Statehood Despite Lack Of Votes.

[Roll Call](#) (5/25, Cioffi, 130K) reports Senate Democrats “used the chamber floor Tuesday afternoon to argue for statehood for the District of Columbia, giving advocates a boost even as the effort faces a lack of votes and an uncertain future.” According to Roll Call, Sen. Thomas Carper (D-DE), the “lead sponsor of legislation to make D.C. the 51st state,” was joined by Sens. Cory Booker (D-NJ), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Benjamin Cardin (D-MD), and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD). Roll Call adds Carper “said the effort was another step in an awareness campaign that could one day lead to the nation’s capital becoming a state,” and “said he hopes to further bring attention to D.C. statehood at an upcoming hearing at the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, of which he is a senior member.”

Military Investigators Investigating Fighter Jet Crash.

The [AP](#) (5/25, Ritter) reports that military and federal authorities “said Tuesday they were probing the cause of a fighter jet crash that killed a civilian pilot but did not injure anyone on the ground in a residential area near Nellis Air Force Base.” The F-1 jet “was owned and operated by Florida-based Draken US, a military contractor providing ‘adversary air support’ during aerial war games flown from Nellis into restricted air space over central Nevada.”

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Pan American Health Organization Announces Deaths Have Topped 1M For Latin America, Caribbean.

The [Washington Post](#) (5/25, Tharoor, 10.52M) reports that the UN Pan American Health Organization announced that Latin America and the Caribbean region passed one million COVID

deaths on Tuesday. 90 percent of the deaths “took place in five major countries in the region — Brazil (around 44 percent), Mexico (22 percent), Colombia (8 percent), Argentina (7 percent) and Peru (nearly 7 percent).” Organization director Carissa Etienne said of the death toll, “The progress we’re seeing in the U.S. is a testament to the power of safe and effective COVID vaccines, but it underscores the vital importance of accelerating access to vaccines throughout our region, so that other countries can fully immunize their populations.”

Canada To Airlift Critical COVID Patients Out Of Manitoba.

[Reuters](#) (5/25, Nickel) reports that the Canadian province of Manitoba “said on Tuesday it was planning to fly additional critically ill patients to other provinces as infections multiply, even as Quebec and British Columbia announced plans to ease restrictions.” Chief Provincial Health Officer Dr. Brent Roussin said in a briefing, “Our hospitals are being stretched to the limits right now.” The province’s latest surge has “pushed up its rate of daily cases to 233 people per 100,000 during the past week, the highest in Canada and triple the national average, mainly due to spread in the city of Winnipeg.”

IOC Refuses To Suspend Japan Olympics Following Travel Advisory.

[NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 4, 0:20, Holt, 5.16M) reported that the IOC announced its plans to continue hosting the Summer Olympics after the US published a new travel advisory calling for Americans to limit travel to Japan.

Bacon: Biden Should Accept That Progressives Are “Right” On Foreign Policy.

Perry Bacon Jr. writes in the [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) that Democrats should accept “that the party’s progressives are right on foreign policy, too.” Bacon argues that “reality is showing how our foreign policy needs to change. America cannot lead the world in embracing multiracial democracy and rejecting authoritarianism, as the Biden administration wants, while also condoning the actions of Netanyahu and the Saudis and launching military strikes wherever it wants.” President Biden “and his team have been willing to discard old norms on race and economics. I commend them. They have a similar opportunity on foreign policy. They should take it.”

Maoist Terrorists Kill 16, Including Children, Ahead Of Peruvian Presidential Election.

[Reuters](#) (5/24) reports that “Maoist rebel group” Shining Path “killed at least 16 people, including two children, in a remote region of Peru known for coca production.” Reuters adds that “pamphlets encouraging Peruvians to refrain from voting in the June 6 presidential election were found at the site of Sunday’s massacre, the joint command of Peru’s armed forces said in a statement.” According to Reuters, “The incident took place in a region called Valle de los Rios Apurimac, Ene y Mantaro (VRAEM), which produces 75% of the South American nation’s cocaine.”

With Terrorism Designation, Administration Signals Break With Obama Policy On Cuba.

On Tuesday, [Reuters](#) (5/25) reports, Cuba “charged” that the Biden Administration “has continued the policies of former U.S. President Donald Trump against Havana with a decision to maintain a Trump-era determination that it is not fully cooperating in the fight against terrorism.” In a note signed on May 14 but released Tuesday, Secretary of State Blinken wrote, “I hereby determine and certify to the Congress that the following countries are not cooperating fully with United States antiterrorism efforts,” listing Cuba along with Iran, North Korea, Syria and Venezuela. Reuters adds that “numerous experts said it was one more signal that Biden was not Obama when it comes to Cuba.”

NYTimes Analysis: US Troops Will Leave Afghanistan Ahead Of Deadline, But Security Issues Remain.

The [New York Times](#) (5/25, Gibbons-Neff, Schmitt, Cooper, 20.6M) reports that while US troops "intend to be out of Afghanistan by early to mid-July, well ahead of President Biden's Sept. 11 withdrawal deadline," their impending departure "leaves the United States grappling with huge unresolved issues that officials had thought they would have more time" to resolve. "The Pentagon still has not determined how it will combat terrorist threats like Al Qaeda. ... Nor have top Defense Department officials secured agreement from allies about repositioning American troops in other nearby countries. And administration officials are still grappling with the thorny question of whether American warplanes...will provide air support to Afghan forces." The Times quotes Michèle A. Flournoy, a former DOD undersecretary during the Obama Administration, as saying "'Withdrawing forces is actually a really delicate kind of operation that has risks associated with it.' ... 'There's a lot they have to work through before the last person steps on the plane.'"

Burma Poets Face Arrest, Death For Opposing Junta.

The [New York Times](#) (5/25, Beech, 20.6M) reports "more than 30 poets have been imprisoned since the military seized power in Myanmar, a country where politics and poetry are intimately connected." The Times says that although at least four of the detained poets have been killed, "poetry remains alive in Myanmar, where unconventional weapons are being used to fight a military that has killed more than 800 people since it staged a coup on Feb. 1 and ousted an elected government."

WPost: West Must Do More To Save Burma. The [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) editorializes that the "unmitigated brutality" of the military junta that seized power in Burma through a coup in February "has provoked a relatively strong international response. ... But Western governments are still holding back from measures that could cripple the regime and possibly force it to retreat. They have not sought an arms embargo from the U.N. Security Council, and they have not tried to cut off the hundreds of millions of dollars flowing into Myanmar state accounts from oil and gas exports." The Post continues that at the next G7 summit, President Biden should press his fellow leaders to cut off the junta's "supplies of arms and dollars."

Actor Apologizes For Referring To Taiwan As A Country.

Sonny Bunch writes in the [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) that while doing press for the film "F9" in Taiwan, John Cena "referred to Taiwan as a nation" and "put hundreds of millions of dollars at risk and incurred the wrath of Chinese nationals on that nation's social media platforms." Cena "quickly apologized for the 'gaffe,' but that apparently wasn't enough: Chinese fans called for a more formal apology that explicitly repudiated Taiwan's status as a free nation and declared the island under the control of China." Bunch calls "Cena's backtracking...disheartening but not surprising: China, through its commercial power, is able to demand extraordinary concessions like this all the time." Bunch adds, "Perhaps now is a good time for the Biden administration to make more explicit its aim of supporting Taiwan in the face of Chinese aggression."

White House Setting Expectations Low Ahead Of Meeting With Putin Next Month.

[ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 6, 0:20, Muir, 6.58M) reported, "We learned today that President Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin will meet next month. The two have met a number of times before, but this will, of course, be their first meeting during Biden's presidency. They'll meet in Geneva on June 16, alongside meetings with leaders of the G7 and the European Union. The White House saying a full range of pressing issues will be on the table." The [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 3, 0:30, O'Donnell, 3.84M) reported, "Their agenda will be packed, including everything from Russia's aggression in Ukraine to its nuclear capability to cyber security."

[NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 7, 1:15, Holt, 5.16M) reported that "high tension" is likely at the meeting. NBC (Welker) adds, "Tonight we pressed the White House. Why not wait until they've shown some good faith on some of these issues before setting up a summit?" White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki replied, "We proposed the summit because we feel that it is an opportunity to move forward our national interests and our agenda."

The [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) says Biden is "expected to raise concerns about Russian troops massing at the Ukrainian border, as well as" Belarus. According to the Post, "U.S. officials are not expecting the meeting to produce major breakthroughs, nor do they consider it a reset in relations between the two countries in the same way that President Barack Obama had hoped early in his administration to usher in a new era of cooperation between the longtime adversaries. Instead, it is viewed as an occasion for Biden and Putin to improve their relationship and gain a better understanding of each other's interests and concerns."

The [AP](#) (5/25, Madhani) also says that the White House is "setting low expectations for the meeting," which "isn't expected to lead to any major breakthroughs – let alone the sort of reset of U.S.-Russian relations pursued by...Obama, or the curious bonhomie of the Donald Trump-Putin relationship." [Reuters](#) (5/25) reports that "both countries have lowered expectations for breakthroughs at the summit, with neither in a mood to make concessions on their many disagreements." Likewise, [Politico](#) (5/24, Toosi, 6.73M) says "no significant agreements are expected from the Geneva summit." According to Politico, "The gathering is more of a chance for the two world leaders to be able to directly air grievances and see what common ground they may have going forward." Politico adds, "Of high importance on the agenda will be talks on nuclear arms control."

The [New York Times](#) (5/25, Sanger, Troianovski, Crowley, 20.6M) reports that Russia, "despite its aggressive language toward the West, has shown optimism about the talks. For Mr. Putin, a high-profile presidential summit can help deliver what he has long sought: respect for Russia on the world stage. And he is sure to repeat his message that the United States must respect Russian interests."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (5/25, Siddiqui, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that some Republicans criticized the President over the planned meeting. For example, Sen. Ben Sasse (R-NE) said in a statement, "Instead of treating Putin like a gangster who fears his own people, we're giving him his treasured Nord Stream 2 pipeline and legitimizing his actions with a summit. This is weak." Psaki "rejected that characterization," saying, "We don't meet with people only when we agree."

[CNBC](#) (5/25, Macias, 7.34M) reports on its website that the summit's confirmation came "less than a week after Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov held cautious face-to-face talks in Iceland. That meeting was the highest-level in-person talks yet between Washington and Moscow under the Biden administration." [Axios](#) (5/25, Basu, 1.26M) reports that "ahead of meeting Putin, Biden will travel to the U.K. on June 11-13 for the G7 summit, followed by a trip to Brussels on June 14 for the NATO summit."

In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (5/25, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) criticizes the announcement of the meeting just days after the Ryanair incident in Belarus, saying that it suggests that the Administration is more interested in negotiations than in holding foreign governments responsible for misbehavior.

Biden: Nord Stream 2 Sanctions Would Have Been Counter-Productive. [Reuters](#) (5/26) reports that President Biden said on Tuesday that he opted to waive sanctions against the firm behind Nord Stream 2 because it was nearly finished and such a move would have been "counter-productive." Asked why he was letting the project move toward completion, Biden said, "Because it's almost completely finished, number one ... and it's not like I can allow Germany to do something or not ... To go ahead and impose sanctions now would, I think, be counter-productive in terms of our European relations." However, Biden did say that the Germans were aware of his concerns. The President said, "They know how strongly I feel and I hope we can work on how they handle it from this point on."

Biden: New Sanctions On Belarus "In Play."

As international leaders continued to express outrage over Belarus' diversion of a Ryanair flight and the subsequent seizure of an anti-government journalist, [Reuters](#) (5/25) reports that President Biden on Tuesday said that US sanctions were possible against Belarus, but "declined to offer more details." Speaking briefly as he departed the White House en route to Delaware, the

President was asked if sanctions were under consideration, and said, "Well, that's in play. I don't want to speculate until we get it done."

According to the [AP](#) (5/25, Karmanau, Casert), "Belarus' isolation deepened Tuesday as commercial planes avoided its airspace, the European Union worked up new sanctions, and a U.N. official said he was concerned for the welfare of an opposition journalist arrested in Minsk after being pulled off a plane that was diverted there in what the West called a state-sponsored hijacking." The AP adds, "The dramatic arrest has put a spotlight on Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's iron-fisted rule and suppression of dissent – but it was not clear what effect ore sanctions or other measures would have." The AP reports that journalist Raman Pratasevich was "seen in a brief video clip shown on Belarusian state television late Monday, speaking rapidly to say that he was confessing to some of the charges authorities have leveled against him."

The [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) reports that "the detained journalist's demeanor in the video alarmed his father, Dzmitry, who told Reuters that his son's nose appeared to have been broken, 'because the shape of it is changed,' and that his remarks were out of character." The Post adds that "in the video, Protasevich's face appears to be marked with abrasions and bruises, suggesting that authorities subjected him to 'torture or other ill-treatment' before recording the supposed confession," according to Amnesty International.

[Reuters](#) (5/25) reports that German Chancellor Angela Merkel "said the video was 'concerning' and described the forced landing for the passenger jet as 'an unprecedented and unacceptable act.' Her foreign minister, Heiko Maas, said...Lukasahenko must pay a 'bitter price' for detaining Protasevich." At the same time, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg "called the incident 'state hijacking,' and France and Ireland have described it as piracy." The European air traffic control agency, Eurocontrol, "recommended that EU and British carriers that fly over Belarus should re-route via the Baltic states." [Bloomberg](#) (5/24, Seputyte, Nardelli, Kudrytski, 3.57M) reports that President Biden "welcomed the EU response to what he called 'a direct affront to international norms' and asked advisers for options hold the people responsible accountable."

Meanwhile, [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (5/25, story 5, 2:15, Muir, 6.58M) reported, "For the first time tonight, we hear the air traffic controllers telling the pilots to land because of a security threat. The pilots then asking, where is this coming from?" ABC (Raddatz) adds, "The plane landed, but it was clear there was no bomb. The opposition journalist Roman Pratasevich was quickly taken away. His mother today desperately pleading for her son's life." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (5/25, Simmons, Katz, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports a pilot aboard the jet "repeatedly questioned air-traffic controllers about their request to reroute the plane to Minsk amid a purported bomb threat, according to a partial transcript released Tuesday by Belarus' government aviation agency." The transcript has not been independently verified.

In a separate story, the [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) reports that "like other prominent activists, opposition journalist Protasevich had been living in exile in Lithuania, considered a haven from Lukashenko." The [New York Times](#) (5/25, Higgins, Kramer, 20.6M) has a profile of Protasevich.

According to the [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M), "Belarus is viewed by the Kremlin as a strategically important buffer bordering the European Union and NATO." The Post says the Russian government under Putin "proved time and time again that it would go far to keep Belarus in its sphere of influence," and Putin "was instrumental in backing embattled Lukashenko last year when the Belarusian strongman, who has been in power since 1994, cracked down on protests after elections he won. Opposition groups and others claimed that the voting was rigged."

Ignatius: "Skyjacking" May Embolden Belarus' Opposition. David Ignatius writes in the [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M), "The skyjacking of a dissident journalist over Belarus on Sunday was a brutal action with a simple message to opponents of dictatorial President Alexander Lukashenko: We can get you anywhere." But, "even against such outrageous intimidation, the barrier of fear is breaking in Belarus. The thugs are getting desperate. The opposition persists – and after Sunday's crude assault, it may grow."

Iran Nuclear Talks Resume In Vienna.

The [AP](#) (5/25, Rising, Jenne) reports that on Tuesday, "World powers opened a fifth round of talks with Iran aimed at bringing the United States back into the landmark 2015 nuclear deal meant to prevent the Islamic Republic from obtaining an atomic bomb, with both sides expressing hope Tuesday that it might be the final series of negotiations." [Reuters](#) (5/25) reports that on Tuesday, Iranian government spokesman Ali Rabiei "said...he was optimistic over Tehran reaching an agreement soon...although Iran's top negotiator cautioned that serious issues remained." However, "Iran's top negotiator, Abbas Araqchi struck a more cautious stance in comments to state TV. 'There are still serious and important issues that need to be resolved,' he said."

The [New York Times](#) (5/25, Crowley, 20.6M) reports that during Secretary of State Blinken's trip to the Middle East on Tuesday, Israeli Prime Minister said that he hoped that the US would not rejoin the deal, "because we believe that that deal paves the way for Iran to have an arsenal of nuclear weapons with international legitimacy." The Times says that the "prospect of a U.S. return to the nuclear deal threatens to generate new strains between Washington and Jerusalem on a subject that poisoned relations between President Barack Obama and Mr. Netanyahu."

Moderate Candidates Barred From Iranian Presidential Election. The [Washington Post](#) (5/25, 10.52M) reports that on Tuesday, the government of Iran "announced a list of mostly conservative or hard-line candidates for next month's presidential election, after several moderate politicians were barred from running." Iran's Guardian Council "narrowed the field to seven candidates from hundreds who had registered and disqualified prominent figures associated with centrist or reform-minded political factions." President Hassan Rouhani, "a centrist...is prevented by term limits from running again." According to the Post, "The council's selections, which reflect the preferences of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, virtually guarantee the election of a hard-line government," and Ebrahim Raisi, "a conservative cleric who heads Iran's judiciary, is widely viewed as the front-runner and the consensus choice of Iran's hard-line factions." Similarly, the [AP](#) (5/25, Gambrell) says that the announcement puts Raisi, "who is linked to mass executions in 1988, in the dominant position for the upcoming vote."

US Envoy For Yemen In Saudi Arabia For Talks.

[Reuters](#) (5/25) reports US Special Envoy for Yemen Tim Lenderking traveled to Saudi Arabia and Oman on Tuesday "for talks with senior government officials aimed at reaching a ceasefire in Yemen." According to Reuters, "The Iran-aligned Houthis have been battling a Saudi Arabian-led military coalition for more than six years," and the Houthis have "kept up cross-border attacks on Saudi Arabia and [their] offensive in Yemen's gas-rich Marib after Riyadh in March proposed a nationwide ceasefire deal that includes reopening air and sea links to Houthi-held areas." Reuters reports that the State Department "cited the 'devastating consequences' of the Houthi offensive on Marib, and said Lenderking will continue to press for the unimpeded flow of goods through all ports and will work on an international consensus to halt the offensive."

UAE Apparently Building Air Base Off Yemen. The [AP](#) (5/25, Gambrell) reports that a "mysterious" air base under construction on Mayun Island off the coast of Yemen "sits in one of the world's crucial maritime chokepoints for both energy shipments and commercial cargo." Officials "in Yemen's internationally recognized government" say that the United Arab Emirates are behind the construction, "even though the UAE announced in 2019 it was withdrawing its troops from a Saudi-led military campaign battling Yemen's Houthi rebels."

Increased Chinese Ties Imperil US Arms Sales To UAE.

In a front-page story, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (5/25, Strobel, Youssef, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that while the Biden Administration announced last month that it would move ahead with the sale of F-35s and other weapons to the UAE, signs of growing ties between that country and the Chinese government have raised new concerns. Now, US officials say that they are seeking guarantees regarding the weapons, including that the Emirates won't allow others to access the US technology.

Top Qatari Diplomat Meets With Egypt's Foreign Minister In Cairo.

The [AP](#) (5/25, Magdy) reports that "Egypt's top diplomat met Tuesday with his Qatari counterpart as ties between the two nations gradually improve since Egypt and three Gulf nations ended their dispute with the energy-rich country earlier this year." Foreign Minister Sameh Shukry and Qatari Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani "met in Cairo and discussed 'the positive development' in ties between the two countries, according to a statement by Egypt's Foreign Ministry." According to the AP, "A January declaration put an end to a diplomatic crisis that began in 2017 with a rift between Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain on one side and Qatar on the other."

Coup Leader Again Takes Control Of Mali.

The [AP](#) (5/25, Ahmed, Larson) reports that Col. Assimi Goita, who ousted Mali's president last year, "regained control of the West African country Tuesday by deposing the president and prime minister of the transitional government, a move France decried as another coup d'état." While Goita "pledged to go ahead with holding new elections in 2022 as previously promised, his display of force casts doubt on whether the vote will go ahead without significant interference by the junta that overthrew the last democratically elected president last August."

Somali Leader Say Deal Reached On Elections.

[Reuters](#) (5/25) reports that Somalia's "political leaders have reached an agreement that will pave way for elections, its foreign affairs minister said on Tuesday, ending months of deadlock that at times turned violent." Abdirizak Mohamed said during a U.N. meeting on Somalia, "We have now reached an agreement that will lead Somalia to free and fair elections. Going forward Somalia needs to have a predictable transition based on elections that is inclusive, credible, free and fair."

THE BIG PICTURE

Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[F-35 Sale To UAE Imperiled Over US Concerns About Ties To China](#)

[Exxon Vs. Activists: Battle Over Future Of Oil And Gas Reaches Showdown](#)

[Amazon Policy Punishes Consumers, DC Suit Claims](#)

[On The Anniversary Of George Floyd's Killing, Debate About Race Reaches Across American Life](#)

[Bill And Barney, Two Old College Pals, Help Save The World From Covid-19](#)

[If You Thought Working From Home Was Messy, Here Comes Hybrid Work](#)

New York Times:

[Pentagon Accelerates Withdrawal From Afghanistan](#)

['On the Ashes of Tragedy': Mixed Emotions on Anniversary of George Floyd's Death](#)

[A New Crop in Pennsylvania: Warehouses](#)

[Andrew Yang Believes in New York and Himself. Is That Enough?](#)

[Roman Protasevich: A Belarus Activist Who 'Refused To Live In Fear'](#)

[Seeking To Restore Palestinian Links, Blinken Risks New Frictions With Israel](#)

Washington Post:

[Biden's Typical Day Is Full Of Routines And Little Escapes](#)

[In A Mixed Israeli Town, Ties That May Never Be Repaired](#)

[US Calls For Probe Of Virus's Origins](#)

[Prosecutor In Trump Probe Seats Grand Jury](#)

[Floyd's Family Remembers](#)

Financial Times:

[Mali's President And PM Arrested By Soldiers In Second Coup In Under A Year](#)
[Putin And Biden To Hold Summit In Geneva In June](#)
[Asia's Curious Struggle To Vaccinate Its Citizens](#)
[Goldman Wins Approval For Wealth Management Deal In China](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:

ABC: George Floyd Memorials; Biden-Police Reform; Trump Investigation; COVID Update; Belarus-Hijacking; Biden-Putin Meeting; Unruly Airline Passengers; Severe Weather; Super Flower Blood Moon; Biden-George Floyd's Daughter.

CBS: George Floyd Memorials; Biden-Police Reform; Biden-Putin Meeting; COVID Update; Trump Investigation; GOP-Marjorie Taylor Greene; Texas-Handguns; Idaho-Couple Indicted; Israel/Gaza; Severe Weather; Texas-Woman Fired For Sneaking Into Zoo Enclosure; Student Athletes.

NBC: Biden-Police Reform; Interview With Families of Victims of Police Shootings; Unruly Airline Passengers; CDC-Japan Travel Advisory; Kids Vaccine Trials; Trump Investigation; Biden-Putin Meeting; Israel/Gaza; Road Rage; Idaho-Couple Indicted; Texas-Handguns; Ticks Warning; Opioid Epidemic; George Floyd-Commentary.

Network TV At A Glance:

Biden-Police Reform – 5 minutes, 50 seconds

Trump Investigation – 2 minutes, 25 seconds

Biden-Putin Meeting – 2 minutes, 5 seconds

WASHINGTON'S SCHEDULE

Today's Events In Washington.

White House:

- President Biden — receives the President's Daily Brief.
- Vice President Harris — will meet with Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle to discuss the critical importance of investing in broadband infrastructure.

US Senate:

- House Committee on Veterans' Affairs virtual 'Member Day Hearing', with testimony from Members of Congress

Location: Virtual Event; 9:30 AM

- Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Business Meeting – Business Meeting, to consider the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act of 2021, 10 General Services Administration resolutions; and the nominations of Shannon Aneal Estenoz to be Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Radhika Fox to be Environmental Protection Agency Assistant Administrator for Water, and Dr Michal Ilana Freedhoff to be EPA Assistant Administrator for Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention

Location: Rm 301, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 9:45 AM

- NIH leadership testify to Senate Appropriations subcommittee on FY'22 budget – Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee hearing on 'National Institutes of Health's FY22 Budget and the State of Medical Research', with testimony from National Institutes of Health Director Dr Francis Collins, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Dr Anthony Fauci, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Director Dr Diana Bianchi, National Cancer Institute Director Dr Ned Sharpless, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Director Dr Gary Gibbons, National Institute on Minority Health & Health Disparities Director Dr Eliseo Perez-Stable, and National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering Director Dr Bruce Tromberg

Location: Rm 562, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 10:00 AM

- [Senate Natural Resources subcommittee hearing on national parks](#) – National Parks Subcommittee hearing on 'The State of the National Park System', with testimony from National Park Service Deputy Director of Operations Shawn Bengé; filmmaker Ken Burns; Friends of Acadia President and CEO David MacDonald; and National Park Hospitality Association Chairman Scott Socha

Location: Rm 366, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 10:00 AM

- [U.S. Forest Service chief testifies to Senate Appropriations subcommittee](#) – Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee hearing on 'Rethinking Resiliency: Budgeting for the Future of Forest Management', with testimony from U.S. Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen

Location: Rm 138, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 10:00 AM

- [Senate Judiciary Committee nominations hearing](#) – Nominations hearing considers Tiffany Cunningham to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Federal Circuit; Margaret Irene Strickland to be U.S. District Judge for the District of New Mexico; David Chipman to be Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives Director; Ur Mendoza Jaddou to be U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Director; Anne Milgram, to be Drug Enforcement Administration Administrator; and Kenneth Allen Polite Jr. to be Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division

Location: Rm G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 10:00 AM

- [Economic Opportunity Subcommittee virtual hearing on 'Veteran Employment Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic'](#)

Location: Virtual Event; 1:00 PM

- [SBA Administrator Guzman testifies to Senate committee on pandemic response](#) – Hearing on 'The Pandemic Response and the Small Business Economy: An Update from the U.S. Small Business Administration', with testimony from SBA Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman

Location: Rm 215, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 1:30 PM

- [Closed Briefing: Intelligence Matters](#)

Location: Rm 219, Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 2:00 PM

- [Senate Indian Affairs Committee Business Meeting, oversight hearing, and legislative hearing](#) – Business Meeting to consider 'S. 1471, Safeguard Tribal Objects of Patrimony Act of 2021', oversight hearing on 'Examining the COVID-19 Response in Native Communities: Native Languages One Year Later', and legislative hearing on 'S. 989, the Native American Language Resource Center Act of 2021' and 'S. 1402, the Durbin Feeling Native American Languages Act of 2021', with testimony from Administration for Native Americans Acting Commissioner Michelle Sauve; Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr.; National Coalition of Native American Language Schools and Programs President Leslie Harper; Aha Punana Leo CEO Ka'iulani Laeha; and Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council Chair Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle

Location: Rm 628, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 2:30 PM

- [USAID administrator testifies to Senate Appropriations subcommittee on FY'22 budget](#) – State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Subcommittee hearing on 'Review of the Fiscal Year 2022 U.S. Agency for International Development Budget Request', with testimony from USAID Administrator Samantha Power

Location: Rm 192, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 2:30 PM

- [Executive Session to consider the Clean Energy for America Act](#)

Location: Rm 216, Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 2:30 PM

- [Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Business Meeting](#) – Business Meeting, to consider the nominations of Donald Remy to be Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Matthew Quinn to be Under Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Memorial Affairs, Maryanne Donaghy to be Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Accountability and Whistleblower Protection, and Patricia Ross to be Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Congressional

and Legislative Affairs; and 'S. XXX, The COST of War Act of 2021', committee print of 'S. 89, Ensuring Survivor Benefits During COVID-19 Act of 2021', committee print of 'S. 189, Veterans' Disability Compensation COLA Act of 2021', committee print of 'S. 894, Hire Veteran Health Heroes Act of 2021', 'S. 1031, A bill to require the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on disparities associated with race and ethnicity with respect to certain benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes', and 'S. 1095, Colonel John M. McHugh Tuition Fairness for Survivors Act of 2021'

Location: Rm 301, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 3:00 PM

- Senate Armed Services subcommittee hearing on military space operations, policy and programs – Strategic Forces Subcommittee hearing on 'Space force, military space operations, policy and programs', with testimony from U.S. Space Force Vice Chief of Space Operations Gen. David Thompson; Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy John Hill; and Acting Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics Darlene Costello

Location: Rm 232A, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 4:30 PM

US House:

- CDC director testifies to House Appropriations subcommittee on budget – Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee hearing on 'FY 2022 Budget Request for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention', with testimony from CDC Director Dr Rochelle Walensky, and Principal Deputy Director Dr Anne Schuchat; 10:00 AM
- SBA Administrator Guzman testifies to House Small Business subcommittee on COVID-19 programs (virtual) – Remote hearing on 'An Examination of the SBA's Covid-19 Programs', held via Zoom, with testimony from Small Business Administration Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman

Location: Virtual Event; 10:00 AM

- House Natural Resources Committee markup hearing – Remote markup hearing on 'H.R. 164, To authorize the Seminole Tribe of Florida to lease or transfer certain land, and for other purposes', 'H.R. 438, To amend the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children Act to extend the deadline for a report by the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children, and for other purposes', 'H.R. 1146, Community Reclamation Partnerships Act', 'H.R. 1619, Catawba Indian Nation Lands Act', 'H.R. 1733, RECLAIM Act of 2021', 'H.R. 1734, Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act Amendments of 2021', 'H.R. 2415, Orphaned Well Clean-up and Jobs Act of 2021', 'H.R. 2641, Pacific Northwest Pumped Storage Hydropower Development Act of 2021', held via Cisco Webex

Location: Virtual Event; 11:00 AM

- Nick Offerman testifies to House Commerce subcommittee on building confidence in COVID-19 vaccines (virtual) – Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee virtual hearing on 'A Shot at Normalcy: Building COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence', held via Cisco Webex, with testimony from actor and woodworker Nick Offerman; Yale Institute for Global Health Director Saad Omer; Trust for America's Health Executive Vice President and COO J. Nadine Garcia; Vaccinate Your Family Executive Director Amy Pisani; and Virginia Department of Health Mount Rogers Health District Director Karen Shelton

Location: Virtual Event; 11:00 AM

- House Agriculture subcommittee hearing on 'the future of SNAP' – Nutrition, Oversight, and Department Operations Subcommittee virtual hearing on 'The Future of SNAP: Moving Past the Pandemic'

Location: Virtual Event; 12:00 PM

- House Financial Services subcommittee hearing on consumer credit reporting (virtual) – Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee virtual hearing on 'Consumer Credit

Reporting: Assessing Accuracy and Compliance', with testimony from Equifax President of Global Consumer Solutions Beverly Anderson; Experian Credit Services Senior Vice President for Strategy and Operations Sandy Anderson; Consumer Interactive at TransUnion Executive Vice President John Danaher; Hudson Cook partner Rebecca Kuehn; and National Consumer Law Center Staff Attorney Chi Chi Wu

Location: Virtual Event; 12:00 PM

- House Labor Committee markup hearing – Virtual markup hearing on 'H.R. 3110, Providing Urgent Maternal Protections for Nursing Mothers Act' and 'H.R. 2062, Protecting Older Workers Against Discrimination Act', held via Zoom

Location: Virtual Event; 12:00 PM

- House Appropriations subcommittee hearing on defense environmental restoration – Defense Subcommittee hearing on 'Defense Environmental Restoration', with testimony from Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health Amy Borman; Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Environment, Safety and Infrastructure Mark Correll; Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Environment and Energy Resilience Richard Kidd; and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Environment Karnig Ohannessian; *1:00 PM*
- SEC chair testifies to House Appropriations subcommittee hearing – Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee 'Securities and Exchange Commission Oversight Hearing', with testimony from SEC Chair Gary Gensler; *2:00 PM*
- House Oversight subcommittee latest hearing on white supremacy – Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Subcommittee remote hearing on 'Confronting Violent White Supremacy (Part V): Examining the Rise of Militia Extremism', with testimony from New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir Grewal; Georgetown University Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection Legal Director Mary McCord; Chapman University Associate Professor of Sociology Peter Simi; and Heritage Foundation Senior Fellow Mike Gonzalez

Location: Virtual Event; 2:00 PM

- House of Representatives Committee Work Day

Cabinet Officers:

- Financial Literacy and Education Commission public meeting (virtual) – Financial Literacy and Education Commission public meeting, held virtually and chaired by Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen. Speakers/participants include Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Acting Director Dave Uejio, National Credit Union Chairman Administration Todd Harper, Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Wally Adeyemo, Operation Hope's John Hope Bryant, National Urban League's Marc Morial, NeighborWorks America's Marietta Rodriguez, Ariel Investments' John Rogers Jr., and Neighborhood Trust Financial Partners' Justine Zinkin

Location: Virtual Event; 9:00 AM

- DNI Haines and CIA and NSA directors testify to Senate Appropriations subcommittee – Defense Subcommittee closed hearing on 'Intelligence Community', with testimony from Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines; CIA Director William Burns; and National Security Agency Director Gen. Paul Nakasone

Location: SVC-217, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC; 10:00 AM

- DHS Secretary Mayorkas testifies to House Appropriations subcommittee – Homeland Security Subcommittee hearing on 'Department of Homeland Security Resource Management and Operational Priorities', with testimony from Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas; *10:00 AM*
- DHS Secretary Mayorkas testifies to Senate Appropriations subcommittee hearing on FY'22 budget – Homeland Security Subcommittee hearing on 'A Review of the President's Fiscal Year 2022 Funding Request for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security', with testimony from Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas

Location: Rm 138, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 2:00 PM

- Secretary of State Blinken continues Israel / Palestinian Authority / Egypt / Jordan trip, taken at President Biden's request – Secretary of State Antony Blinken continues travel to Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Egypt, and Jordan, at the request of U.S. President Joe Biden, with agenda, respectively, including meeting Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi, and other senior officials in Jerusalem; meeting Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh, and other senior officials in Ramallah; meeting President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi and Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry in Cairo; and meeting Jordan's King Abdullah II and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi in Amman. He discusses follow-up efforts to consolidate the recent cease-fire between Israel and the Palestinian Authority after hostilities in Gaza * Under Secretary for Political Affairs Toria Nuland accompanies him on the trip

Visitors:

- No visitors scheduled.

General Events:

- GMF discussion on Taiwan's participation in international organizations – 'Ways Forward for Taiwan's Participation in International Organizations' German Marshall Fund of the U.S., with European Economic and Trade Office in Taiwan Head Filip Grzegorzewski, Taiwanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Secretary-General Lily Hsu, and U.S. Mission to the United Nations Senior Policy Advisor Jennifer Hendrixson White

Location: Virtual Event; 8:30 AM

- Dem Rep. Mikie Sherrill discusses post-election Germany – 'Choices for Germany after Merkel: Views from Outside Germany' German Marshall Fund of the U.S., with Democratic Rep. Mikie Sherrill and Member of the European Parliament Radoslaw Sikorski discussing Germany's role in Europe and the transatlantic relationship

Location: Virtual Event; 9:00 AM

- OAS Permanent Council meeting – Organization of American States Permanent Council virtual special meeting, to bid farewell to Permanent Representative of Paraguay and Permanent Council Chair Amb. Elisa Ruiz Diaz Barreiro

Location: Virtual Event; 10:00 AM

- SID-W Annual Conference begins – Society for International Development Washington, DC Chapter Annual Conference begins, with day one speakers including USAID Principle Advisor to the Administrator Mark Feierstein

Location: Virtual Event; 10:00 AM

- WTO secretary-general delivers SAIS commencement ceremony keynote – SAIS 2021 commencement ceremony, including virtual keynote from World Trade Organization Secretary-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

Location: Virtual Event; 10:00 AM

- CAP discussion on the U.S.-South Korea alliance – 'A New Era for Cooperation? The U.S.-ROK Alliance After the Moon-Biden Summit' Center for American Progress discussion, to evaluate the outcome of last week's meeting between President Joe Biden and South Korean President Moon Jae-in and discuss its implications for strengthening bilateral cooperation as South Korea heads into its presidential election campaign. Panelists include former U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Mark Lippert, The Diplomat Korea Columnist Jenna Gibson, and Ajou University China Policy Institute Director Heung-kyu Kim

Location: Virtual Event; 10:00 AM

- NewDEAL Ideas Summit – NewDEAL Ideas Summit, focusing on ideas for state and local leaders to deal with simultaneous crises around public health, economic opportunity, racial justice, and climate change, including their role in maximizing the impact of the American Rescue Plan to build a more equitable economy. Speakers include Democrats Sen. Chris Coons and Rep. Marilyn Strickland; Pennsylvania House

Democratic Whip Jordan Harris; California state Sen. Ben Allen; Montgomery, AL, Mayor Steven Reed; Vermont Lieutenant Governor Molly Gray; Kentucky state Rep. Nima Kulkarni; New Castle, DE, County Executive Matt Meyer; San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg; Boise, ID, Mayor Lauren McLean; Alabama state Rep. Jeremy Gray; St. Louis, MO, Mayor Tishaura Jones; Columbia, SC, Mayor Steve Benjamin; Georgia state Sen. Elena Parent; and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Education for Policy and Programs Ian Rosenblum

Location: Virtual Event; 11:00 AM

- [Dem Sen. Chris Murphy discusses U.S. engagement with Arab states](#) – ‘Re-balancing U.S. Security Engagement with Arab States’ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace online discussion, marking the release of a new edited compilation ‘From Hardware to Holism: Re-balancing America’s Security Engagement with Arab States’. Keynote from Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy

Location: Virtual Event; 12:00 PM

- [USDA Food Loss and Waste Innovation Fair](#) – U.S. Department of Agriculture hosts first-ever Food Loss and Waste Innovation Fair, to showcase USDA investments and business leadership in reducing food loss and waste throughout the food system. Event presents businesses and research teams that have received USDA funding to research or commercialize food loss and waste solutions, including En Solucion, ReGrained, and Sodexo, while USDA agencies discuss their food loss and waste activities in research, measurement, education, funding, and outreach

Location: Virtual Event; 12:00 PM

- [Press Briefing by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre; 12:30 PM](#)
- [BakerHostetler legislative seminar with Dem Rep. Jim Clyburn \(virtual\)](#) – BakerHostetler 32nd Annual Legislative Seminar Series begins with House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn * 31st annual Legislative Seminar was canceled last year due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, while 2021 Seminar has been replaced by a series of virtual discussions with Members of Congress

Location: Virtual Event; 2:30 PM

- [Fed vice chair speaks on Brookings event \(virtual\)](#) – Brookings Institution hosts ‘The economic outlook’ virtual conversation with Federal Reserve Board Vice Chair Randal Quarles

Location: Virtual Event; 3:00 PM

- [Hoover Capital Conversation with Dem Sen. Jack Reed](#) – ‘Making Congress Work’ Hoover Capital Conversation, with Democratic Sen. Jack Reed in conversation with Hoover Institution Distinguished Visiting Fellow Kevin Hassett

Location: Virtual Event; 4:00 PM

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