

From: The Washington Post <email@washingtonpost.com>

To: [REDACTED] (WF) (FBI)" [REDACTED]

Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] - [MARKETING] The Daily 202: Charles Koch congratulates Biden and says he wants to work together on 'as many issues as possible'

Date: Fri, 13 Nov 2020 17:44:41 +0000

Importance: Normal



[Sign up for this newsletter](#)

[Read online](#)



The Washington Post



The Daily 202

Intelligence for leaders.

Presented by **Partnership for America's Health Care Future**



By **James Hohmann**
with Mariana Alfaro
[Email](#)

Charles Koch congratulates Biden and says he wants to work together on 'as many issues as possible'

Billionaire industrialist Charles Koch expressed hope that President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will roll back President Trump's tariffs, restore protections for "Dreamers" and enact policing reform that addresses systemic racism.

"We certainly want to congratulate Biden and Harris for this historic win," Koch said in a Zoom interview on Wednesday, even as most Republican lawmakers have yet to publicly acknowledge the electoral reality and the White House blocks the transition from moving ahead. "We're going to be

looking for common ground and things that we can work together on for as many issues as possible.”

 Charles Koch speaks during a previous interview with The Washington Post. (Patrick T. Fallon for The Washington Post)

Charles Koch speaks during a previous interview with The Washington Post. (Patrick T. Fallon for The Washington Post)

One of Koch’s favorite quotes comes from abolitionist Frederick Douglass, who said he would unite with anyone to do right and no one to do wrong. This is an animating theme at the heart of Koch’s new book, “[Believe in People: Bottom-up Solutions for a Top-Down World](#),” which goes on sale next Tuesday. The 320-page book makes a case for empowering individuals and social entrepreneurs to solve society’s biggest problems, highlighting the role that institutions like schools, businesses and charities – in addition to government – can play.

Speaking from his bookshelf-filled office at Koch Industries in Wichita, the 85-year-old said there is too much hate in the country and lamented how emboldened extremists have become.

ADVERTISEMENT

Content from [Partnership for America’s Health Care Future](#)

Let’s build on what’s working, not start over



During this critical time, let’s build on and improve what’s working to provide every American with access to the affordable, high-quality health coverage and care they deserve.

“Politics is important because we’ve got to have good policies that permit all the other institutions to function in a way that empowers people,” Koch said at the end of our 51-minute conversation. “We’ve got people so hyped on politics now that it seems like they think that’s all there is. You know, ‘If the other side wins, it’ll ruin the country and destroy us forever.’ Both sides

are saying that, and feel that, and think this is the most important thing. Well, it is important, but it isn't going to make any difference unless we all learn to work together and help each other and move toward a society of equal rights and mutual benefit.”

Koch expressed hope that America can begin to lower the temperature, turn down the volume of bitterness and elevate a public discourse that he feels has become overly coarse. He sees this as vital to prevent society from taking a turn for the worse.

“Let's get together and make that happen so we can start helping each other, rather than hurting each other,” Koch said. “This is crazy! Are we going to have a civil war? I mean, this is madness. We see the results of that: We see that in countries where that's going on, where people are killing each other. I mean, this is crazy, and we've got elements of that from both sides. So let's get away from that!”

Koch declined to talk specifically about Trump. Just like in 2016, his advocacy groups – such as Americans for Prosperity – did not support the president's reelection in 2020. But unlike four years ago, when Koch spoke out vocally against Trump, he has kept an intentionally low profile.

“I've tried to stay away,” Koch said Wednesday when asked about the president. “I was kind of goaded into that. I let myself be sucked into that. But I try to stay out of the ad hominem stuff. So I just don't have any comments.”



While he remains a boogeyman to many on the left, the man from Kansas has also been an occasional punching bag of Trump's. The president has attacked him on Twitter from time to time, which has turned him into a lightning rod inside the Republican Party. Koch, who has always been more of a libertarian than a conservative, feels like he and his views have been

largely misunderstood, which is one of the reasons he started writing this book.

“We’re not trying to get rid of government,” he said. “We’re trying to have government fulfill its role to keep people secure and allow people to be empowered through the other institutions in society. That’s the main thing. Everybody thinks that our main thing is politics. Politics is less than 10 percent of what we do.”

Forbes Magazine [estimates](#) Koch’s net worth as \$44.9 billion, making him the 15th richest person in America.

Over the past four years, groups funded by Koch and hundreds of like-minded megadonors have celebrated tax cuts, deregulation and judicial confirmations, including three Supreme Court justices. Koch officials worked closely with the administration and Congress to enact the First Step Act, a criminal justice overhaul in 2018. But they also opposed Trump’s trade wars and nativist immigration policies.

The Seminar Network, as Koch’s groups were previously known, rebranded last year under the name Stand Together, which describes itself as a philanthropic community. Brian Hooks, who chairs Stand Together and oversees Koch’s philanthropic and political operations on a day-to-day basis, helped write the new book and joined the interview.

“We think there’s a lot of potential to make progress on issues that are really going to matter to the country going forward with the new administration,” said Hooks. “As I see it, this is the second [presidential] election in a row where it looks like more people will have voted against somebody than voted for somebody. People are frustrated, and it makes perfect sense. An increasing number of people feel like the key institutions in society are failing them. And they are right, to a large extent.”

 Brian Hooks and Charles Koch take a walk this month at Koch's estate in Kansas. (Stand Together)

Brian Hooks and Charles Koch take a walk this month at Koch's estate in Kansas. (Stand Together)

Through its affiliates, to be clear, Stand Together still plans to spend heavily in Georgia ahead of the Jan. 5 runoffs to help Republicans retain control of the Senate next year and ensure divided government. Even while staying out of the presidential race, Hooks said that Koch-backed groups actually supported more candidates for public office in 2020 than ever before – wading into more than 200 races. Hooks said they have become more discerning about who to help and how, and he said that is paying dividends: While some races still haven't been called, he said over 80 percent of the candidates they invested money to help won their races last week. One of the beneficiaries of Koch support was Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-Tex.), who fended off a primary challenge from his left.

But Koch has a bitter aftertaste from the way he approached politics in the years following President Barack Obama's election. His groups poured hundreds of millions of dollars into attack ads against Democratic candidates. This spending played a pivotal role in the GOP takeover of the Senate in 2014. But when Republicans had unified control, for instance, they never repealed the Affordable Care Act.

Koch said the experience of the last few years validated what he said had been his previous hesitation to become overtly partisan. He described his frustrations at watching politicians he had helped elect not follow through on their campaign promises. “I took to heart George Washington's farewell address, where he said, ‘Beware of political parties,’” Koch said. “They say they're there to help you, but they're really there to gain power and keep it.”

Looking back, Koch thinks he made a mistake by hiring “ex-Republican operatives” to oversee these efforts because they had a different vision for what exactly they were trying to accomplish: Electing GOP candidates

seemed to be a higher priority than advancing an ideological agenda. “And that’s my fault, because I didn’t do anything to stop it,” he said.

On the pandemic, Koch believes that relying on “a top-down approach” to develop tests for the novel coronavirus put the country two months behind. He wants government to encourage telemedicine by relaxing rules about physicians being able to treat patients across state lines. More generally, he advocates for “believing in people” to do the right thing. He quoted the 19th-century French economist Claude-Frédéric Bastiat, who said: “For a law to be respected, it must be respectable.”

“Well, what he meant by that is that if people don’t believe it’s going to help them, that it’s destructive, then they’re not going to follow them, and we see that in these covid regulations,” Koch said.

I asked Koch what role government should play, if any, in making sure inaccurate tests and faulty vaccines do not get on the market. “The government needs to set the basic rules, but it needs to be based on equal rights and mutual benefit,” he replied. “Obviously, we don’t want a lawless society. ... The winners ought to be those who have contributed, who made other people’s lives better because we want them to be rewarded so they do more of it, encourage everybody to do more rather than say, ‘Okay, the way to get ahead is to jiggle the rules.’”

Koch said he has been personally careful about the contagion because his age puts him at higher risk. He has conferred with friends and other longtime supporters of his network over Zoom calls, but they did not have their annual gathering this summer at the Broadmoor in Colorado Springs. Through an initiative called #GiveTogetherNow, Stand Together said it raised more than \$120 million since March to provide over 200,000 families with immediate direct cash assistance.

Subsidiaries of Koch Industries are also involved with the industrial response: Molex manufactures parts for ventilators. Phillips-Medisize makes molecular covid-19 tests. An Invista factory that usually produces material for airbags and seatbelts made from nylon has been repurposed to make personal protective gear for front-line health-care workers. John Zink Hamworthy Combustion began using its 3-D printing capabilities to produce head bands for face shields after an employee suggested the idea. “I am so pumped up every day when I hear these stories,” said Koch.

 Charles Koch and Brian Hooks speak over Zoom on Wednesday. (James Hohmann/The Washington Post)

Charles Koch and Brian Hooks speak over Zoom on Wednesday. (James Hohmann/The Washington Post)

Koch said he believes climate change is real, but he disagrees with Biden about how to address it.

“I believe that the science shows that temperatures have been rising for over a century now and that human activity is contributing to it. But what we believe, and what we've seen, is that these top-down approaches, mandates and subsidies ... are counterproductive,” Koch said. “What we need any administration to do, and we need all of us to do, is focus on finding a better way, developing technologies that will make energy use more efficient and finding forms of energy that are inexpensive, reliable and reduce emissions. And that's the only way the world's going to adopt them. I mean, we see all these mandates, and overall emissions keep rising, and these top-down proposals make people's lives worse.”

Koch said his company has invested \$30 billion over the last six years in technology-related companies, making him less reliant on energy production than ever. “Our production of fossil fuels, let's say a decade or so, was like half of our business,” he said. “Now it's a fraction.”

In the future, Koch would like the federal government to scale back restrictions on building modular nuclear reactors, which he said have

become safer and more economical, but he acknowledged that in order to become “socially acceptable,” industry needs to convince people of this. “That would be huge,” said Koch, referring to ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Koch said his company has spent money to improve automated leak detection systems and invested in electric carts for distribution centers. “We’re working on applying carbon capture to some of our plants, where we can do that economically, and so on,” Koch said. “So we’re transforming ourselves and making big progress. And the U.S. has reduced emissions. Most of the countries that talk about it are increasing their emissions. The U.S. has decreased its mainly by the innovation that allowed natural gas to replace coal.”

He insisted that enough incentives already exist for corporations to reduce emissions and pollution without any new restrictions being imposed by the government. “There are so many people concerned about it, and they’ll reward them,” Koch said. “You can see, with the companies that come up with something, their stock price goes through the roof. So we don’t need the government to pick winners and losers.”

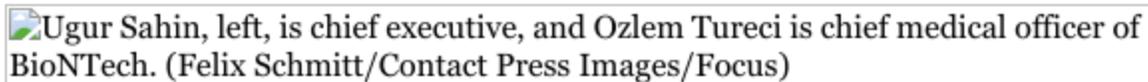
Share The Daily 202



Listen to the podcast



The coronavirus

Ugur Sahin, left, is chief executive, and Ozlem Tureci is chief medical officer of BioNTech. (Felix Schmitt/Contact Press Images/Focus)

Ugur Sahin, left, is chief executive, and Ozlem Tureci is chief medical officer of BioNTech. (Felix Schmitt/Contact Press Images/Focus)

The German Turkish couple behind a covid-19 vaccine doesn’t own a car. Now they’re billionaires.

“At 8 p.m. Sunday evening, the phone rang with the call Ugur Sahin, chief executive of the German medical start-up BioNTech, had been anxiously

awaiting. ‘Are you sitting down?’ Pfizer chief Albert Bourla asked him. The news that followed was better than Sahin had hoped: Preliminary analysis from Phase 3 trials of his company’s coronavirus vaccine showed 90 percent protection,” [Loveday Morris reports](#) from Berlin. “‘I was more than excited,’ said Sahin, speaking to The Post on a video call from his home in the western German city of Mainz. The interim results put the 55-year-old and his co-founder wife, Ozlem Tureci, in the front of the pack racing for a safe and effective vaccine. Global markets rallied, and stock soared for - BioNTech — a small-by-pharma-industry-standards company that has yet to see a vaccine using its technology brought to market. ... Sahin and Tureci celebrated with cups of Turkish tea at home. ...

“The husband-and-wife team behind one of the world’s top coronavirus vaccine candidates are the sort of people who don’t own a car and who took the morning off for their wedding day in 2002 before returning to the lab. Half a day was ‘sufficient,’ Tureci explained. Sahin and Tureci, both children of Turkish immigrants to Germany, met while working on an oncology ward in the southwestern city of Homburg. They found they shared an interest in getting the body’s immune system to fight cancer. ... [BioNTech] didn’t have the resources to conduct large-scale clinical trials or the production and distribution that would be necessary. ... In April, Pfizer invested an initial \$185 million toward the vaccine development and said it would release up to \$563 million more based on milestones in the development ... Amid the whirlwind of publicity, tweets from Trump have brought some bemusement. ‘Complete nonsense’ is how Sahin describes the accusation that the companies sat on the results until after the election. And as for Trump’s claims of credit: ‘I’m not sure where the U.S. government would have had input in this,’ Tureci said.”

Democrats say the GOP refusal to accept the election imperils the coronavirus response.

“Republicans dismissed the attacks and Trump didn’t weigh in at all, with his only public comments coming through a series of Twitter posts that

included false claims of electoral success. As Washington has become paralyzed over the past 10 days, 1 million new people have tested positive for the virus as death numbers are climbing rapidly,” [Erica Werner reports](#). “Biden joined congressional Democratic leaders on Thursday and demanded a new economic relief package to address the dramatically worsening coronavirus pandemic before the end of the year. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) flatly rejected such a proposal, while Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) implored both sides to begin negotiating as the virus appeared to be sending a new shudder through the U.S. economy.

“There have been more than 100,000 new cases each day for the past nine days, including more than 150,000 on Thursday. The crush is leading a number of state and local leaders to pause or reverse reopening plans. Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot issued a stay-at-home advisory for the nation’s third-largest city Thursday and asked residents to cancel Thanksgiving plans. Maryland has recently issued its own new restrictions, and other jurisdictions have signaled they could invoke similar moves. ... After rallying earlier in the week amid optimism about a new vaccine, the Dow Jones industrial average fell 317 points, or 1 percent, amid new worries. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome H. Powell on Thursday said Congress could need to provide more economic relief to help sustain growth ... And Trump’s refusal to acknowledge Biden’s presidential win and participate in a normal transition process seemed likely to stall the federal response even more, depriving Biden and his team of some of the resources they could use to put a quick response in place. ...

“Behind the scenes, no negotiations are happening whatsoever, according to aides in both parties. That means it’s highly unlikely that an economic relief deal will come together during the lame duck session, and it would become the first order of business for Biden once he takes office on Jan. 20 ... Congress is [also] confronting a Dec. 11 deadline when

government funding will expire, and lawmakers are at work on a spending package to forestall a government shutdown.”

- Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska), the dean of the House, tested positive. ([Colby Itkowitz](#))
- Trump campaign adviser Corey Lewandowski and Republican National Committee chief of staff Richard Walters also tested positive, bringing this latest outbreak among Trump’s inner circle to 14 people. ([NYT](#))

Covid’s long, dark winter has already arrived in the Upper Midwest.

“The situation is particularly acute now in the Upper Midwest and Plains states, with North and South Dakota leading the nation in new cases and deaths per capita over the past week,” [Annie Gowen and Holly Bailey report](#). “Experts say that cases are surging in the region as the weather has turned colder and more people are forced inside — into more poorly ventilated indoor spaces where transmission thrives — with the virus arriving even in remote areas in largely conservative states where Republican leaders have resisted mask mandates or business closures ... Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds in Iowa, long an opponent of closures and mask-wearing as ‘feel-good’ options, this week moved to prohibit maskless indoor gatherings of 25 or more and require those attending larger outdoor events to wear a mask. In Minnesota, Gov. Tim Walz (D) has warned of more ‘nightmare’ numbers to come, even as the state has instituted new restrictions on bars, restaurants and social gatherings in an attempt to stop the spread.”

“Although improvements in care have pushed the mortality rate below 1 percent in the United States, 1,549 people died of the virus Wednesday, the highest toll since April,” [Marisa Iati reports](#). “The rapid rise in hospitalizations could foreshadow a long period of rising deaths, said Scott Gottlieb, former director of the Food and Drug Administration. ... Individual decisions also make a difference, Gottlieb

said, especially as people prepare to travel and visit people outside their household for Thanksgiving. ... 'If people on the whole just go to the store one less time a week, you could substantially reduce spread,' Gottlieb said."

At dinner parties and game nights, casual American life fuels the surge.

"Many earlier coronavirus clusters were linked to nursing homes and crowded nightclubs. But public health officials nationwide say case investigations are increasingly leading them to small, private social gatherings. This behind-doors transmission trend reflects pandemic fatigue and widening social bubbles," [Karin Brulliard reports](#). "This week, New York Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo (D) announced a 10-person limit on gatherings in private homes, calling them a 'great spreader.' Similar restrictions have been imposed in states including Ohio; Utah; Connecticut; Colorado, where one recent cluster involved seven people infected while playing the dice game bunco; and Rhode Island, whose governor has pledged to fine violators. ... In Maine, as in other states, case investigators are seeing a new and related pattern: People who are infected list more close contacts than they did earlier, making the work of contact tracers more time-consuming and complicated."

- The Ivy League canceled its winter sports seasons, becoming the first Division I college athletics conference to do so. ([Des Bieler](#))
- A rural Maine wedding became a deadly superspreader event because guests refused to wear masks and later showed up to work despite feeling sick, according to a CDC analysis. The Aug. 7 gathering has been linked to seven deaths, all among people who did not attend the wedding. At least 177 cases have been linked to the indoor reception, which only 55 guests attended. ([Antonia Farzan](#))
- Billionaire Elon Musk said he's experiencing coronavirus-like symptoms but that four rapid covid-19 tests have produced two positives and two negatives, an experience that's left him questioning the testing process. Experts have long warned that such quickie tests

are not as reliable as PCR tests, which must be processed in a laboratory. ([Tim Elfrink](#))

- Screening passengers for covid-19 symptoms at U.S. airports has proved to be woefully ineffective. So far, the system has identified only nine cases among more than 766,000 travelers, according to another new CDC report. The study is the latest to demonstrate that conducting temperature checks and quizzing people about whether they've experienced symptoms does little to stop the spread. ([Farzan](#))
- Multiple people tested positive aboard a cruise ship near Barbados during the first voyage in the Caribbean since the pandemic shut down the industry. ([BuzzFeed](#))
- European nations are warning it's too soon to make travel plans for Christmas, given the distinct likelihood travel bans and lockdown restrictions will still be in place by then. ([Farzan](#))

Justice Samuel Alito says the pandemic resulted in “unimaginable” restrictions on liberty.

“We have never before seen restrictions as severe, extensive and prolonged as those experienced for most of 2020,’ Alito said in a speech webcast to the [Federalist Society’s] national lawyers convention, which was virtual this year,” [Robert Barnes reports](#). “Alito said he was not criticizing officials for their policy decisions — ‘I’m a judge, not a policymaker’ — and said before launching into the speech that he hoped his remarks would not be ‘twisted or misunderstood.’ [Alito] said it would be hard to imagine before the pandemic that speeches and concerts would be off-limits and that churches would be empty on Easter and synagogues vacant on sacred holidays. ... And while he said he wasn’t being critical, he said the restrictions on public gatherings and worship services highlighted ‘trends that were already present before the virus struck,’ which he identified as a ‘dominance of lawmaking by executive fiat’ rather than by legislators.”

The transition



The president-elect's team is taking shape.

“Biden began seeing more support, if indirectly, from Republicans on Thursday as senior GOP lawmakers [called](#) for him to receive classified briefings even as the Trump administration continued to bar a formal transition,” [Seung Min Kim, Josh Dawsey, Matt Viser and Jon Swaine report](#). “At [Trump] campaign headquarters, many staffers were expected to be laid off in the coming days, two officials said ... Privately, White House senior adviser Jared Kushner, the president’s son-in-law, continued to tell allies that Trump is ‘realistic’ about his chances but wants to continue the fight.”

Biden was projected overnight as the winner in Arizona, becoming the first Democratic nominee to win the state since 1996. It's the fourth state Biden flipped, and Georgia remains too close to call. "Biden also spoke with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) in their first substantive conversation since Biden was declared president-elect ... **Biden held another notable conversation on Thursday with Pope Francis ...** Biden, who will become only the second Catholic to assume the U.S. presidency, expressed a desire to work together on issues including poverty, climate change and immigration. The president-elect on Thursday also traveled to Rehoboth Beach, Del., where he has a vacation home and where he is expected to stay through part of the weekend. ...

“One intriguing name being discussed privately is former Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations ... The thinking behind the move was that it would be a way for Biden to highlight the importance of that position in his administration and that placing her there would raise the prestige of the U.N. itself at a time when global cooperation, and the U.S. role on the world stage, has ebbed. Another name emerging as a potential Cabinet pick is Rep. Cheri Bustos (D-Ill.), the chairwoman of the House

Democrats' campaign arm who oversaw the party's loss of House seats in the 2020 elections. She has signaled interest in leading the Agriculture Department."

- China finally congratulated Biden for his win. ([Eva Dou](#))
- Other leaders, including Russia's Vladimir Putin and North Korea's Kim Jong Un, still have not done so. ([Rick Noack](#))
- The lawyer for Kenosha shooter Kyle Rittenhouse, a teenager charged with killing two Black Lives Matters protesters, urged supporters on Twitter to "dust off those Second Amendment rights" and not let China "steal" the election from Trump. ([Daily Beast](#))
- Biden tapped Shawn Skelly, a transgender veteran, to be part of his transition team at the Defense Department. Skelly's appointment follows the Trump administration's bans on transgender people serving in the military under their self-identified gender. The ban is still being battled in court, but Biden has said he plans to overturn the executive order. ([Stars and Stripes](#))
- The Biden team is reaching out to people who worked for former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis about helping him with the transition and possibly serving in the new administration. ([Politico](#))
- Donald Trump Jr. and Eric Trump are gung-ho about their dad fighting to the bitter end while Ivanka Trump "has emerged as someone looking for a way for the President to save face," [CNN reports](#).
- The Las Vegas Review-Journal, owned by Republican megadonor Sheldon Adelson, endorsed Trump twice. Now, its editorial page is advising him to admit he lost. ([Elahe Izadi](#))
- Ted Olson, the Republican lawyer who argued *Bush v. Gore*, told a Federalist Society panel that Biden is the president-elect and the election is over. ([Law.com](#))
- A Pennsylvania appellate court sided with Trump in a fight over ID deadlines for voters, tossing out a small number of votes that have not been included in the state's election tallies. ([Philadelphia Inquirer](#))
- Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger (R) said the state's voter fraud probes won't change Biden's projected victory. Raffensperger acknowledged election officials have "multiple

investigations" ongoing, but he said they do not "rise to the level of 14,000." ([CBS](#))

- Raffensperger will voluntarily self-isolate after his wife Tricia tested positive for covid-19 on Thursday. ([WSB](#))
- Stacey Abrams (D) plans to run for governor again in Georgia in 2022. ([Daily Beast](#))
- Obama said Trump's baseless claims put democracy on a "dangerous path." He told [CBS's Scott Pelley](#): "I'm more troubled by the fact that other Republican officials who clearly know better are going along with this, are humoring him in this fashion. It is one more step in delegitimizing not just the incoming Biden administration, but democracy generally."
- House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) falsely claimed during a news conference that Rep.-elect Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) has "denounced" her past support for the QAnon conspiracy theory. In fact, Greene describes her election as "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to take this global cabal of Satan-worshiping pedophiles out." ([Derek Hawkins](#))
- Far-right protesters – including media personalities, white nationalists and conspiracy theorists – plan pro-Trump rallies in D.C. on Saturday. Counter-protests are also expected. ([Marissa Lang and Peter Hermann](#))
- Mark Zuckerberg told an all-staff meeting former Trump chief strategist Steve Bannon did not violate enough of the company's policies to justify his suspension when he urged the beheading of two senior U.S. officials, including Tony Fauci and Chris Wray. ([Reuters](#))

Quote of the day

"That would be a question more for the White House," Kayleigh McEnany said on Fox News when asked if Biden will receive access to the presidential daily brief. She is the White House press secretary. ([CNN](#))

The Trump agenda

 A Marine stands guard outside the West Wing, signifying the president is in the Oval Office. (Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post)

A Marine stands guard outside the West Wing, signifying the president is in the Oval Office. (Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post)

Trump has checked out.

“On Thursday, six American service members were [killed](#) in a helicopter crash during a peacekeeping mission in Egypt. Tropical Storm Eta made landfall in North Florida, [contributing](#) to severe flooding,” [David Nakamura reports](#). “At the White House, Trump spent the day as he has most others this week — sequestered from public view, tweeting grievances, falsehoods and misinformation about the election results and about Fox News’s coverage of him. Neither he nor his aides briefed reporters on the news of the day ... **He is leveraging the power of his office in a long-shot bid to stay in the job while ignoring many of the public duties that come with it. ...**

“White House aides disputed the notion that Trump was reneging on his responsibilities as president, releasing a list of executive actions he has taken since the election. The list included an order Thursday [banning](#) U.S. investment in Chinese military companies, an emergency declaration for Florida over the storm damage and several presidential proclamations, including celebrating the 245th anniversary of the U.S. Marine Corps. ... The president met privately with Vice President Pence for lunch and with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin in the afternoon. ... It was Biden who offered the first public condolences to the families of the service members who died in Egypt ... By that time, Trump had issued nearly four dozen critical tweets and retweets about the election results and Fox News.”

Two senior DHS officials are forced out, as the firing spree continues.

“Valerie Boyd, the top official for international affairs at DHS, was asked for her resignation, as well as Bryan Ware, a senior policy aide at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. The requests came from the White House’s Presidential Personnel Office, whose 30-year-old director, John McEntee, has recently intensified efforts to purge appointees who have failed to demonstrate sufficient fealty to the president,” [Nick Miroff and Ellen Nakashima report](#). **“The latest removals came as DHS’s top cybersecurity official, Christopher Krebs, told colleagues he, too, expected to be fired by the White House at any moment.** ... His agency joined state and local election officials in releasing a statement Thursday refuting claims by the president and his supporters that voting systems and equipment were compromised during the election. “The November 3 election was the most secure in American history,’ the statement read.”

Meanwhile, DHS acting secretary Chad Wolf plans a trip to Latin America amid the pandemic. “The trip is tentatively scheduled for the week of Dec. 7, and it could include stops in El Salvador, Panama, Colombia, Brazil and Ecuador,” [Miroff reports](#). “Latin American nations have been especially hard-hit, and Brazil and Colombia have mortality rates from the disease that exceed the U.S. mark ... There are no major conferences for Wolf to attend in the region that week, and at least one person familiar with the outlines of the plan referred to the trip as ‘a boondoggle.’”

Retiring diplomat Jim Jeffrey, the outgoing U.S. envoy in Syria who signed a “Never Trump” letter four years ago, acknowledged that his team routinely misled Trump loyalists about troop levels in Syria. “We were always playing shell games to not make clear to our leadership how many troops we had there,” Jeffrey [told Defense One's](#) Katie Bo Williams. The actual number of troops in northeast Syria is “a lot more than” the 200 Trump agreed to leave there last year.

The Justice Department’s internal disciplinary arm concluded that then-U.S. Attorney Alexander Acosta exhibited “poor judgement” but not “professional misconduct” when he approved a generous deal for Jeffrey Epstein to resolve allegations that he molested dozens of girls years ago. The investigation’s summary chastised Acosta, who went on to serve as Trump’s labor secretary before [resigning](#) amid [uproar](#) over his involvement in the Epstein case, and acknowledged that Epstein’s victims were treated poorly, but it said investigators did not find evidence that his decision to sign off on the puzzlingly lenient deal was “based on corruption.” ([Matt Zapotosky and Beth Reinhard](#))

The Senate is poised to confirm a controversial figure to the Federal Reserve.

Judy Shelton is being considered for “a seat on the central bank’s board of governors,” [Rachel Siegel reports](#). “McConnell (R-Ky.) took procedural steps Thursday to set up a vote on Shelton’s long-pending nomination for as early as next week. Also on Thursday, Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) — a key moderate whose support had not been assured — said she would back Shelton’s nomination. ... Some of Shelton’s critics had previously wondered whether Trump, if reelected, would try to elevate Shelton to Fed chair. Yet those prospects have all but evaporated with an incoming Biden administration. ... Shelton’s confirmation also appeared in jeopardy earlier in the summer when Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Mitt Romney (R-Utah) said they would vote against her nomination.”

Social media speed read

The president's love affair with Fox is over, and allies assume these attacks are motivated by a desire to get involved with a competitor next year:



The skies above the White House were tinted purple:



Obama harshly attacked George W. Bush during the 2008 campaign, but the outgoing president made sure there was a good transition because he understood that it was in the national interests. As Trump's quixotic blockade continues, here's an illustration of a less petulant time:



Videos of the day

Stephen Colbert is excited to see Ron Klain and other experts back in the White House:



And Trevor Noah took a look at Trump's new leadership PAC:



And if you think you're having an unlucky Friday the 13th, at least you're not getting rancid pieces of dead whale rained upon you like an unfortunate group of Oregon residents did [50 years ago](#):



We think you'll like this newsletter



Check out **Coronavirus Updates** for news to help you stay safe and informed during the pandemic. Access to all stories in the newsletter is free. [Sign up »](#)

 The Washington Post

[Manage my email newsletters and alerts](#) | [Unsubscribe from The Daily 202](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Help](#)

You received this email because you signed up for The Daily 202 or because it is included in your subscription.

©2020 The Washington Post | 1301 K St NW, Washington DC 20071

