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Event Calendar

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Date	Event	Location/Time	Other Information
9-13 Apr 2018	LEIU/IALEIA Training Event	Marriott Hotel, 700 West Convention Way Anaheim, CA 92801 (714) 750-8000	http://www.ialeia.org/2018_conference.php

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**indicates new event/new information added during reporting week

Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	01/29 Homeless crisis pushes 911 beyond limits
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/puget-sounds-homeless-crisis-pushes-911-beyond-its-design/
GIST	<p>Gillian Murphy was driving to work on a chilly day last winter when bright red underwear caught her eye: a man lying face down, head downhill, pants down, in a homeless camp near the Interstate 90 and Interstate 5 interchange.</p> <p>“I’ll never forget that image,” she said.</p> <p>She called 911. The dispatcher, Murphy said, was clearly very annoyed. Murphy didn’t have an address, and it was hard for her to tell what street the encampment was on.</p> <p>“Why do we keep getting these?” the dispatcher said, according to Murphy.</p> <p>Even as the homeless crisis has reshaped politics of the city and region, 911 — the front door for emergency medical services — has not evolved to cope with the scale of the problem, city leaders say. That leaves callers like Murphy confused about where to turn when they see someone in need of help, especially if it involves a mental-health or substance-abuse crisis.</p> <p>“You see people all the time — especially working in downtown Seattle — in behavioral-health crisis and nobody knows what to do,” said Jim Vollendroff, who oversees King County’s substance-abuse treatment and mental-health services. “So they just walk right on by them, typically.”</p> <p>The consequences of inaction can be bleak, especially in the winter. People without homes are eight times more likely to die of hypothermia than those with homes in King County, according to Dr. Richard Harruff, the medical examiner. Harruff identified 144 people who died in homelessness last year; one third of them died of an overdose of alcohol or drugs. That number is probably low.</p> <p>These are a small sliver of the homeless population — less than a quarter of homeless people in King County are chronically homeless, and 45 percent say they don’t use drugs or alcohol — but they’re also very vulnerable.</p> <p>Some cities have hotlines to keep people alive in extreme weather: Washington, D.C., which requires shelter for everyone when the temperature falls below 32 degrees, has a shelter hotline that dispatches vans to pick up people in danger.</p> <p>In King County, which spends nearly \$200 million a year on homeless services, there’s something similar: Calling 211 in Washington connects callers to experts who can direct them to the myriad agencies that provide help.</p> <p>But that line is not for emergencies. Tristia Bauman, a senior attorney with the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty who monitors local policies, said she doesn’t know of a city with an adequate alternative to 911.</p> <p>Now, Seattle City Councilmember Sally Bagshaw is meeting with city and county agencies to patch homeless resources through to the 911 line.</p> <p>In the last few decades, there’s been a change in the way people think about 911, Seattle Fire Chief Harold Scoggins says. While 911 was designed for emergencies, that has become calling 911 for “anything you may need.”</p> <p>“The system has been built for police emergencies and fire and medical emergencies — but it’s evolved</p>

into so much more,” Scoggins said.

The number of fire and medical responses in Seattle exploded in the past six years, from around 77,000 in 2011 to around 97,000 last year. And that’s just how many times crews were dispatched; for every response there are typically multiple phone calls.

But the 911 dispatch for fire and medical has struggled to change with the changing ways people use it, Scoggins said. “We have not evolved to have a Rolodex with a variety of resources to get people the help they need based on what the person on the phone is saying.”

Here’s how it should work: A call to 911 goes to Seattle police. If the caller describes a person sprawled out in the street, the call typically is sent to the Fire Department, according to Kellie Randall, director of public affairs at the department.

If an ambulance isn’t required, but the person does need medical help, the Fire Department will send a truck or an “aid car” staffed with firefighter EMTs to the scene. If the person is intoxicated but doesn’t require emergency medical assistance, medics can call yet another agency: King County’s Emergency Services Patrol, also called the “sober van.”

That van takes people to where they can sleep it off: The Dutch Shisler Sobering Center. There, if they want to stick around until the case manager comes in at 6 a.m., they can get set up with detox or counseling. But this service, too, is voluntary: They can simply walk out the door.

Because the calls have to go through a few hoops before they get to the sober van, sometimes the van will show up and no one will be there. Sometimes they show up and the person who wanted to go to sobering has changed their mind. The sober van won’t take people against their will, so staff tries persistent persuasion, according to Dan Floyd, who oversees the sober-van staff.

“It might take three or four times to realize being drunk at Fifth and Pike is not the best solution right now,” he said. “Sometimes if you poke somebody enough they say, ‘All right, leave me alone, I’ll come with you.’”

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HEADLINE	01/29 Hundreds in Houston hotels after Harvey
SOURCE	https://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/national-international/Hundreds-of-Families-Still-in-Galveston-Hotels-After-Harvey-471640493.html
GIST	<p>Federal emergency management officials say nearly 800 families in Galveston County remain in hotels five months after Hurricane Harvey either destroyed or damaged their homes.</p> <p>The Galveston County Daily News reports that January is normally a slow month for hotel bookings in the county but many say they're at capacity.</p> <p>The Federal Emergency Management Agency offers transitional housing for people displaced by natural disasters, and hotels choose whether to accept FEMA vouchers that pay about \$100 a night in the Texas coastal region.</p> <p>It wasn't immediately clear how many people displaced by Harvey in other nearby counties were staying in hotels.</p> <p>Harvey made landfall Aug. 25 northeast of Corpus Christi, bringing with it days of heavy rain across a broad area of Texas.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 FEMA: Puerto Rico food, water aid ends
SOURCE	https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/01/29/581511023/fema-to-end-food-and-water-aid-for-puerto-rico
GIST	<p>In the days after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, residents of some of the hardest hit rural areas found themselves stranded — cut off from more populated areas by mudslides, crumbled roads and bridges, and toppled trees and power lines. In those early days, the only food and water many of these communities received arrived by helicopter, sent by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.</p> <p>Eventually, towns and villages dug themselves out, but lacking electricity and in many cases running water, their need for emergency food and water persisted. So FEMA has continued providing it, dispensing enormous quantities to the island's 78 mayors, whose staffs have in turn set up local distributions or gone door to door to deliver the aid.</p> <p>On Wednesday, however, that aid will come to an end.</p> <p>In a sign that FEMA believes the immediate humanitarian emergency has subsided, on Jan. 31 it will, in its own words, "officially shut off" the mission it says has provided more than 30 million gallons of potable water and nearly 60 million meals across the island in the four months since the hurricane. The agency will turn its remaining food and water supplies over to the Puerto Rican government to finish distributing.</p> <p>Some on the island believe it's too soon to end these deliveries given that a third of residents still lack electricity and, in some places, running water, but FEMA says its internal analytics suggest only about 1 percent of islanders still need emergency food and water. The agency believes that is a small enough number for the Puerto Rican government and nonprofit groups to handle.</p> <p>"The reality is that we just need to look around. Supermarkets are open, and things are going back to normal," said Alejandro De La Campa, FEMA's director in Puerto Rico.</p> <p>The decision to end the delivery of aid is part of the agency's broader plan to transition away from the emergency response phase of its work on the island. In the weeks and months to come, the focus will be longer-term recovery. De La Campa said that includes finding ways to jumpstart the island's troubled economy.</p> <p>"If we're giving free water and food, that means that families are not going to supermarkets to buy," De La Campa said. "It is affecting the economy of Puerto Rico. So we need to create a balance. With the financial assistance we're providing to families and the municipalities, they're able to go back to the normal economy."</p> <p>To date, FEMA has approved more than \$500 million in Maria-related public assistance, though it's unclear how much of that is slated for local government and nonprofit groups versus direct aid for individuals. The agency has also disbursed an additional \$3.2 million in unemployment aid to people whose jobs were affected by the storm.</p> <p>'Ours is not so lucky'</p> <p>But some say Puerto Ricans are not all ready to resume with their normal, pre-hurricane lives.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/30 Amazon 'spheres' open in Seattle
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/278830a7ceda46ee83aa4a6649b6b51f/Striking-Amazon-'Spheres'-landmark-opens-in-downtown-Seattle
GIST	SEATTLE (AP) — From the fourth floor of a striking rainforest-like conservatory built of glass and white steel in downtown Seattle, Amazon.com boss Jeff Bezos turned toward the top of his newest headquarters building to summon his favorite assistant.

In a proud little show on Monday for the media and dignitaries — which also doubled as product placement for Amazon’s voice assistant — the world’s richest man ordered out loud, symbolically: “Alexa, open The Spheres.”

The domed structure is only steps away from the executive office tower where Bezos leads the online retail behemoth. It’s part of the company’s urban campus near downtown Seattle that is largely made up of unmarked office buildings where more than 40,000 people report to work.

The four-story Spheres structure from the outside looks like three connected glass orbs planted into the ground in a caterpillar shape. Lighting mimics a position near the equator, with 12 hours of shade and sun. During the day, the interior is maintained at 72 degrees with 60 percent humidity, to emulate a cloud forest ecosystem.

Amazon’s Amazonesque rainforest-like conservatory is now home to more than 40,000 plants from 50 countries on five continents. Its centerpiece is a 50-foot (15.2-meter) fig tree. Most plants will flower and some can yield fruit, though visitors must keep their hands off all plant life. About 90 percent of the plants were grown and tended to in a suburban greenhouse for years in anticipation for their permanent home in The Spheres.

Though masked by nature, the sleek and minimalist “alternative work space” is also designed to make you forget you’re at work, in a startup environment that is rumored to be aggressively demanding.

“The idea is that we connect them with nature. We get them away from their normal desk environment so you don’t see any desks or cubicles around,” said Ron Gagliardo, Amazon’s leading horticulturist.

The corporate office space, however selfie-worthy, is already such a hit that the company had to create a reservation system to contain the flow of traffic for the time being. Employees will have to snag a reservation to get in but it’s currently already booked out until April. The building has capacity for about 1,000 people but is more comfortable with about 800 at a time.

Once inside, workers can use nooks with tables and chairs that can serve as a casual meeting space. Coffee breaks can be taken in a cafe and “picnic” area offering an interior reprieve from Seattle’s unrelenting rainy season.

Critics have called the Spheres a vanity project, illustrating Seattle’s sometimes strained relationship with its largest employer. The company’s presence has changed the local economy and raised its cost of living — but none of that was on show at the unveiling of the Spheres.

Instead, Bezos received glowing praise from the governor, mayor and county officials for his recent commitments to the city’s homelessness crisis plus a personal donation of \$33 million to a scholarship foundation that helps immigrant youth in the country illegally.

Bezos was coy when asked by The Associated Press whether the company’s much-anticipated second headquarters to be built in an undetermined U.S. city will have another statement building space like the Spheres, saying: “We’ll see.”

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HEADLINE	01/29 CIA: Russia will interfere w/elections
SOURCE	http://time.com/5124313/cia-mike-pompeo-russia-midterm-elections/?xid=homepage
GIST	CIA director Mike Pompeo warned that Russia will likely target the U.S. midterm elections later this year in an interview with the BBC. Speaking with the BBC’s Gordon Corera at the CIA’s headquarters in Langley, Virginia, Pompeo said he

has “every expectation” that Russia will attempt to disrupt the U.S. midterms in November. He said that Russian intelligence agencies have continued in their attempts at subversion in Europe and the U.S., according to the BBC.

“The Russians have been at this a long time, and I fully expect they’ll continue to be at it,” said Pompeo, referring to Russian disinformation campaigns. But Pompeo added that he was “confident” that the midterm would not be compromised by Russian interference, and would be “free and fair.”

“We will push back in a way that is sufficiently robust, that the impact they have on our election won’t be great,” he said. A former congressman from Kansas, Pompeo was sworn in as President Donald Trump’s CIA director last January.

Concern over Russia’s role in the 2016 presidential election, believed to have extended to voter database hacking, has triggered investigations by special counsel Robert Mueller and various congressional committees that have hung over the first year of Trump’s presidency.

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HEADLINE	01/29 Cash is king, and dangerous, w/pot firms
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/jan/29/marijuana-businesses-carry-bank-problems-security-/
GIST	<p>A large U.S. bank unexpectedly closed Andy Williams’ business account on April 14, 2014, one day before his federal taxes were due.</p> <p>He had hundreds of thousands of dollars in the account, and it would remain in limbo for two weeks while the bank went through its termination process. Mr. Williams, meanwhile, scrambled to cancel his check to the IRS and figure out how he would pay taxes without a bank account.</p> <p>It was not the first time a bank had suddenly closed one of his accounts. From 2011 to 2015, six of his business accounts were terminated — and none lasted more than nine months.</p> <p>“This happened regularly until we had no more banks left to go to,” Mr. Williams said. “For a long time, we didn’t have a bank. We were paying contractors \$100,000 in cash. And every two weeks our employees were paid in cash.”</p> <p>Mr. Williams runs Medicine Man Denver, a state-licensed marijuana dispensary in Colorado, where pot is legal. He launched the business in 2009 to capitalize on the demand for medical marijuana, and he expanded it after voters in 2012 legalized weed’s use as a recreational drug.</p> <p>But most banks and credit unions, which are subject to federal regulatory agencies, refuse to host accounts for marijuana-related businesses — including growers and dispensaries — even in states where it is legal. The drug remains outlawed at the federal level, so accepting deposits from such businesses comes with risks and requirements that most banks are reluctant to undertake.</p> <p>Mr. Williams told banks he was in the retail industry without specifying what he sold.</p> <p>“We never lied on a bank application, but we would never tell them we sold marijuana,” he said. “We just said, ‘retail,’ and they never asked any further questions.”</p> <p>Flush with cash</p> <p>But the high number of cash transactions caught the attention of bank investigators, who soon discovered he was in the marijuana industry and decided they didn’t want the potential hassle his business might bring.</p>

Without a banking account, some cannabis businesses have to fund everything from payroll to taxes in cash. Those companies also cannot accept debit or credit card payments, apply for mortgages or even get small-business loans — all matters that are regulated by the federal government.

It also leaves the businesses with stacks of cash piling up in their offices — and criminals have taken notice.

Last spring, police in Phoenix estimated that six area medical marijuana dispensaries were robbed in a two-month span, according to local media reports. The year before, June was a particularly brutal month with several robberies or attempted robberies in Denver, Los Angeles, Detroit and San Diego.

The violence culminated with the death of an Aurora, Colorado, dispensary security guard, who was shot during a robbery on June 18, 2016. In Riverside, California, the next week, two dispensary workers were wounded in separate holdups less than 48 hours apart.

“I have felt threatened, but I’ve never had anything bad happen because we move the cash in armored cars with armed guards,” Mr. Williams said. “It costs a fortune, but we don’t want to put our employees at risk by having them move cash.”

States are also having to adjust to the cash-rich business.

When Oregon began collecting marijuana taxes in 2016, it spent over \$2 million to construct a facility secure enough to handle a large volume of cash transactions. The facility, which opened in November, required eight workers to count the money, along with large adding machines, safes, security cameras and two retired Oregon State Police officers to patrol the building.

Of the nearly \$37 million in Oregon taxes that were paid in cash last year, \$34 million came from the marijuana industry.

‘Useless paper’ that smells

Even those not in the cannabis industry struggle with the difficulties of having clients without bank accounts because most marijuana businesses pay their insurers, landlords, accountants and attorneys in cash.

Ken Berke, president of PayQwick, a California company that works with banks to process payments for marijuana businesses, said one of his clients, a landlord for a cannabis business, was asked by a bank to stop bringing the \$30,000 in cash he collected every month to a local branch.

Among the bank’s complaints, Mr. Berke said, was that the money smelled like weed and they needed to spray it with an odor eliminator and designate a teller to count it in another room.

“He bought a safe, but he calls the cash ‘useless paper’ because it just sits there,” Mr. Berke said.

Only about 400 of the 10,000 banks and credit unions across the country offer services for marijuana businesses, according to the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, or FinCEN, a Treasury Department unit. But the number might be slightly higher because some account holders have not disclosed that they are in the marijuana business.

A 2013 Obama administration memo is among the guidelines that banks use to do business with marijuana companies.

The document, known as the Cole Memo, required banks to keep close tabs on marijuana account holders for suspicious activities such as selling to minors or transporting the drug illegally across state lines. If a customer is found to have committed a crime, then the bank could face liability depending on the extent a bank account was used.

The Cole Memo said banks that do their due diligence need not fear becoming the targets of federal investigation.

No other industry requires the same level of due diligence, but most banks feared the increased liability and compliance costs and opted to stay away.

“For the bigger banks, there is not a large enough dollar value to justify the risk,” Ryan Lowther, who heads the cannabis practice at San Francisco law firm Farella Braun + Martel. “The increased burden of doing due diligence on your customers is just not cost-effective.”

Without the Cole Memo

Banks’ concerns have increased since Attorney General Jeff Sessions rescinded the Cole Memo this month, industry analysts said. Financial institutions now fear that the Cole Memo’s protections could be dissolved.

By rescinding the Cole Memo, federal prosecutors in states where marijuana is legal now have the freedom to decide whether and how aggressively to enforce the federal law that classifies marijuana as illegal for all purposes.

Marijuana use for at least some medical purposes is legal in 29 states and the District of Columbia.

Nevada, Washington, Colorado, Oregon, Alaska and the District of Columbia had been allowing recreational use. Maine and Massachusetts are expected to implement legalization later this year. California began allowing recreational use on Jan. 1.

“Sessions’ actions will have a chilling effect on banks that were looking to get into the weed industry and slow down banks that were already banking cannabis’ businesses,” said Ken Berke, president of PayQwick, a Calabasas, California, company that works with banks to process payments for marijuana businesses. “Their legal counsels were probably already on the fence and will now want to step back and not do it.”

Mr. Williams, who has had accounts at two small community banks since 2015, said he has already been affected by the Cole Memo’s rescission. Within days of the Justice Department’s announcement, a bank canceled a business loan scheduled to close this month. Mr. Williams now will turn to the private equity market, where he said he could pay an interest rate of roughly 14 percent instead of the 6 percent rate the bank had promised him.

“Any time the federal government shakes up the industry like this, it scares investors away and makes capital more expensive, which is their intention,” he said. “This will cost me growth and Colorado jobs.”

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HEADLINE	01/29 State: no additional sanctions on Russia
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/white-house-wont-impose-additional-sanctions-on-russia/article/740332/
GIST	<p>Although Congress voted overwhelmingly last summer to impose harsh sanctions on Russia for interfering in the 2016 U.S. presidential election and other transgressions, the White House announced late Monday that it wouldn't follow through with the punishment - even though the president had, however grudgingly, signed the sanction bill into law - ostensibly because the sanctions are working.</p> <p>"Given the long time frames generally associated with major defense deals, the results of this effort are only beginning to become apparent," Politico quoted a State Department spokesperson as saying. "From that perspective, if the law is working, sanctions on specific entities or individuals will not need to be</p>

imposed because the legislation is, in fact, serving as a deterrent."

A veto-proof majority in Congress passed Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act last July mandating the sanctions on Russia and eliminating the president's ability to lift them unless lawmakers give their approval.

President Barack Obama already had closed Russia's diplomatic properties in Maryland and New York and sent staff packing in 2016 as part of an initial, wide-ranging response to the nation-state's meddling in the election in an effort to exert influence.

Trump in June was considering returning Russia's diplomatic properties but taking away diplomatic immunity on the properties if the properties are returned. Negotiations to give back the properties previously had been tied to Russia abandoning a freeze on the building of a U.S. consulate in St. Petersburg, but that contingency apparently was dropped, reports said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin countered the sanctions bill by booting 755 members of the U.S. diplomatic staff.

The Trump administration was supposed to enforce the legislation and impose sanctions by Monday.

The Trump administration was also slated to give Congress a list of oligarchs connected to Putin today but the White House didn't confirm. Instead the State Department spokesperson said, "Further details are contained in a classified report we have submitted to Congress."

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HEADLINE	01/29 Gov. rejects oil by rail terminal permit
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/883876/inslee-rejects-permit-for-oil-by-rail-terminal-in-washington/
GIST	<p>SEATTLE (AP) — Washington Gov. Jay Inslee on Monday rejected a permit for what would have been the nation’s largest oil-by-rail terminal, saying the record shows the risks and impacts outweighed the need for and potential benefits of the project. Inslee agreed with the recommendation of a state energy panel, which unanimously voted in November to recommend that the Vancouver Energy project in southwest Washington be denied.</p> <p>The joint venture of Savage Companies and Andeavor, formerly known as Tesoro Corp., proposed to receive about 360,000 barrels of North American crude oil a day by trains at the port of Vancouver along the Columbia River. Oil would be loaded onto tankers and ships bound for West Coast refineries.</p> <p>The decision represents a victory for environmental and local groups, tribes and cities that opposed the project, saying it posed too great a risk to communities and the environment.</p> <p>Inslee told the state Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council in a letter Monday that he found “ample support in the record” for the panel’s decision.</p> <p>The governor, who is a Democrat, highlighted several issues that led him to his decision, including seismic risks at the site, the potential for an oil spill and the risk that a fire or explosion at the facility would harm workers and the community.</p> <p>“The Council has thoroughly examined these and other issues and determined that it is not possible to adequately mitigate the risks, or eliminate or minimize the adverse impacts of the facility, to an acceptable level,” Inslee wrote.</p> <p>The state energy panel concluded in its report that developers didn’t meet the burden to show that the project proposed at the port of Vancouver site would produce a net benefit in balancing the need for energy and the impact to the public.</p>

A spokesman with Vancouver Energy said he expected to release a statement on Monday.

Vancouver Energy said in November that it was extremely disappointed with the panel's decision and noted that the board "set an impossible standard for new energy facilities based on the risk of incidents that the Final Environmental Impact Statement characterizes as extremely unlikely."

Developers have said the terminal is needed to bring crude oil from North Dakota and other areas to a western U.S. port to meet growing fuel demands and future energy needs. They've argued that it could be built safely and would secure a reliable supply of energy for the state.

Project developers have 30 days to appeal the governor's decision in state court.

The decision "showed that the health of the Columbia River and the safety of its citizens matters most," the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission said in a statement.

"It's a real victory for the community of Vancouver and the people of Washington," Michael Lang, conservation director with Friends of the Columbia Gorge, said Monday. "It shows that when projects are proposed that pose a significant threat to health and public safety that we can say 'no'."

An environmental study released last year found that the project poses a potential risk of oil spills, train accidents and longer emergency response times due to road traffic.

Many of the risks could be decreased with certain mitigation measures, but the study outlined four areas where it said the impacts are significant and cannot be avoided. It identified those risks as train accidents, emergency response delays, negative impacts on low-income communities and the possibility that an earthquake would damage the facility's dock and cause an oil spill.

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HEADLINE	01/29 Inquest lawyers shooting victim families
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/884239/families-of-those-killed-by-police-to-get-attorneys/
GIST	<p>SEATTLE (AP) — The Metropolitan King County Council has unanimously adopted legislation to provide publicly funded legal representation during inquest proceedings to families of those killed as the result of police use of deadly force.</p> <p>The Seattle Times reports the council's action Monday comes as a special committee appointed by King County Executive Dow Constantine has been asked to consider whether broader changes are needed in the county's inquest system.</p> <p>The committee's report is due in March.</p> <p>The ordinance calls for the county's Department of Public Defense to provide attorneys to families participating in inquests no matter their financial status. Families could opt not to be represented.</p> <p>The county won't pay for outside attorneys, which could be used if families choose that option.</p> <p>The Department of Public Defense has informed the county it can do the work with existing staff.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Amtrak Bellingham to B.C. suspended
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/884241/amtrak-service-suspended-from-bellingham-to-vancouver-bc/
GIST	BELLINGHAM, Wash. (AP) — Amtrak says service between Bellingham and Vancouver, British

	<p>Columbia, has been suspended until Wednesday afternoon because of a mudslide on the track.</p> <p>Amtrak says that BNSF Railway on Monday closed a track on a route used by Amtrak Cascades trains. The tracks are scheduled to reopen at 12:45 p.m. Wednesday.</p> <p>Charter buses are being provided in place of Amtrak trains between those stations.</p> <p>Amtrak says service from Bellingham south to Seattle and other points is unaffected.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 King Co. homeowners tax increase spike
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/883802/king-county-tax-bill/
GIST	<p>King County homeowners should expect to see higher property taxes by an average of nearly 17 percent when bills are sent next month.</p> <p>King County Assessor John Wilson tells The Seattle Times that the state's new school-funding plan is the main reason. The owners of a median-valued county home should expect to see a bump of \$700.</p> <p>He says some areas within the county will see larger jumps than others.</p> <p>In Seattle, the increase will be 16.9 percent. For a median-valued home at \$597,000, an owner should expect to pay about \$825 more than last year.</p> <p>In Bellevue, the increase will be 21.6 percent.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 DNR pulls prediction for ridge landslide
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/884359/experts-pull-prediction-for-looming-rattlesnake-ridge-slide/
GIST	<p>SEATTLE (AP) — The Department of Natural Resources says it's no longer predicting when a landslide event at Rattlesnake Ridge could occur.</p> <p>KING-TV reported Monday that geologists previously thought the slide would happen between January and early March, but have pulled that prediction.</p> <p>A massive crack along Rattlesnake Ridge near Union Gap in Yakima County emerged in October.</p> <p>Yakima County, the city Union Gap, and the city of Yakima have all declared disaster in response to the slide.</p> <p>Department spokesman Joe Smiley says the slide slowed back down to a rate of 1.6 feet per week after previously speeding up by about a tenth of a foot per week.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 'Extreme rainstorms' increase in Seattle
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/883942/seattle-infrastructure-heavy-rain/
GIST	<p>A sharp rise in severe rainstorms has officials scrambling to prepare Seattle infrastructure for a much wetter future as climate change progresses.</p> <p>"Over the past 15 years, a certain type of rainfall event has become more common," said James Rufo-Hill, a climate adaption specialist with Seattle Public Utilities. "That type of rainfall event is one we are seeing</p>

right now — it's called an atmospheric river. Basically, it's the long duration, multi-day storm."

A study commissioned by Seattle Public Utilities finds that the region has experienced a 30 percent increase in "extreme rainstorms" over the past 15 years. More recently, Seattle experienced the wettest four-year period on record. The study states:

"Rainfall patterns across the city show that these extreme weather events have grown 30 percent stronger over the past 15 years, an expected impact of climate change. The new SPU study draws from data collected by 17 SPU-owned rain gauges and from regional observations taken by the National Weather Service (NWS).

SPU has monitored weather patterns for about 40 years. The last report on extreme rainfall patterns stated that 4 inches of rain in 24 hours qualified as an extreme event. Now, it's 5.5 inches in that same time.

"So the extreme events are becoming more extreme," Rufo-Hill said. "Downpours and other types of events haven't changed, but these big storms that last anywhere from six hours to three days have grown even bigger and stronger."

The study echoes the National Climate Assessment — that a rise in extreme precipitation is expected in all regions of the U.S. as climate change continues. It also is in line with what local climatologist Cliff Mass has predicted. Mass warns that climate change will alter conditions around the Northwest over the next 100 years — including more rain. But he has also come under fire for correcting how severe the signs of climate change have been.

Whether it's national studies, the City of Seattle, or a local climate expert, all signs point to a much wetter and rainier Northwest in the years to come.

"Cities don't have the luxury of climate denial and cannot wait for federal leaders to embrace science," Mayor Jenny Durkan said. "The effect of inaction is already at our doorstep. Our city is preparing for our new reality while we work to cut emissions and prevent the catastrophic impacts of climate change."

Local officials are pointing to the new study as an argument to accelerate Seattle infrastructure projects, such as the city's move toward electric car facilities.

"Seattle will continue to lead on climate action and fostering our green energy economy," Durkan said. "We are electrifying our fleet, implementing strong building efficiency standards, and partnering for improved resilience planning. But there is still more to do."

Another important aspect of Seattle infrastructure is how the city handles rain. When Seattle designed its stormwater system more than 100 years ago, it combined its street drainage with sewage from buildings. That means toilets, showers, and street drains all feed the same pipes. During heavy rain, those pipes are often overwhelmed and overflow into the area's bodies of water.

This is what happens during modern rain storms around Seattle. Lake Washington, Lake Union, and Elliott Bay are where sewage overflows when pipes can't handle the increased load. It happens so much that Seattle and King County have paid fines for how much they dump into the water.

Seattle has already started to address the issue by boring a massive tunnel underneath Ballard, Fremont and Wallingford. Those spaces will be used to divert overflow. But Seattle and King County — especially their wastewater treatment facilities — still face challenges as more people move to the area and heavy rains increase.

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HEADLINE

01/29 France: worst rain in 50yrs

SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/floodwaters-hit-peak-paris-now-threaten-normandy-52676825?
GIST	<p>Floodwaters reached a peak in Paris on Monday and were threatening towns downstream along the rain-engorged Seine River as it winds through Normandy toward the English Channel.</p> <p>Rivers swollen by France's heaviest rains in 50 years have engulfed romantic quays in Paris, swallowed up gardens and roads, halted riverboat cruises — and raised concerns about climate change.</p> <p>The national weather service Meteo France said Monday that January has seen nearly double normal rainfall nationwide, and that the rains in the past two months are the highest measured for the period in 50 years.</p> <p>And the waters are expected to stay unusually high for days or weeks.</p> <p>That's bad news for tourists hoping to cruise past Paris sites on the famed "bateaux mouches" riverboats, or visit the bottom floor of the Louvre Museum, closed since last week as a precaution. Riverside train stations along the line that serves Versailles are also closed, and will remain that way for several more days.</p> <p>Water laps the underside of historic bridges, and treetops and lampposts poke out of the brown, swirling Seine.</p> <p>The floods have caused damage in 242 towns along the river and tributaries already and more warnings are in place as the high waters move downstream.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Iran cites changes US Navy behavior
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-usa-gulf/iran-cites-change-in-u-s-navy-behavior-in-gulf-idUSKBN1FI1UP
GIST	<p>LONDON (Reuters) - An Iranian Revolutionary Guards commander said on Monday that U.S. vessels patrolling the Gulf had changed behavior and now abided by international regulations.</p> <p>Rear Admiral Ali Ozmaei's remarks cited by Tasnim news agency followed last week's comments by U.S. military officials that the Iranian military had halted routine "harassment" of U.S. naval vessels in the Gulf.</p> <p>Each state accuses the other of having flouted international regulations in the sea area, which is a major trade route for oil.</p> <p>In recent years, there have been periodic confrontations between the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and U.S. military in the Gulf.</p> <p>"We see that Americans behavior has changed. They pay more attention to international regulations and avoid approaching Iran's territorial waters," Ozmaei, the Guards' fifth naval district commander, said.</p> <p>In the first such confrontation since President Donald Trump took office, a U.S. Navy ship fired warning shots when an Iranian vessel approached to within 450 feet (140 meters) last July.</p> <p>The following month an unarmed Iranian drone came within 100 feet (30 meters) of a U.S. Navy warplane as it prepared to land on an aircraft carrier in the Gulf.</p> <p>During the presidential campaign last September, Trump said any Iranian vessel that harassed the U.S. Navy in the Gulf would be "shot out of the water".</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 China aircraft trespass SKorea airspace
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2018/01/29/Chinese-aircraft-trespases-South-Korea-Japan-airspace/3221517236134/?utm_source=fp&utm_campaign=ts tn int&utm_medium=4
GIST	<p>Jan. 29 (UPI) -- South Korea scrambled fighter jets after a Chinese military aircraft trespassed into the Korean Air Defense Identification Zone, or KADIZ, according to Seoul.</p> <p>South Korea's joint chiefs of staff said one Chinese aircraft entered territorial airspace, local newspaper Asia Business reported Monday.</p> <p>"Today at 9:30 a.m. we detected a military aircraft of Chinese origin entering the KADIZ from the southwest side, near Jeodo Island," the joint chiefs stated, according to Yonhap.</p> <p>"We immediately deployed our air force fighters."</p> <p>Jeodo Island, or Socotra Rock, is a submerged rock in the Yellow Sea that is also claimed by China.</p> <p>The joint chiefs added the Chinese plane left KADIZ at 9:55 a.m., then cruised through Japan's Air Defense Identification Zone, or JADIZ.</p> <p>The Chinese aircraft left both airspaces by 2:05 p.m., Seoul said.</p> <p>South Korea stated they are still investigating the incursion, but the Chinese plane is either a Shaanxi Y-8, a medium-size transport aircraft, or an electronic warfare plane.</p> <p>"We are still confirming the exact model," Seoul said.</p> <p>The joint chiefs of staff also said South Korean fighter jets were deployed until the "final departure" of the Chinese plane and conducted surveillance flights and "regular tactical measures."</p> <p>The incident marks the first Chinese military incursion into South Korean airspace in 40 days.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Virus looks/feels like flu, but it's not
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/virus-looks-flu-acts-flu-it-s-not-influenza-n840651
GIST	<p>It looks like flu. It feels like flu. It even puts patients into the hospital like flu can.</p> <p>There's another virus out there that could be adding to the seasonal misery, but it's not being identified.</p> <p>The virus is called adenovirus, and it can cause very severe flu-like symptoms. It's so risky that the U.S. military vaccinates recruits against two major strains.</p> <p>But most people are not vaccinated against adenovirus, and doctor's offices don't test for it. Adriana Kajon, Ph.D, wants that to change.</p> <p>"Unless you look for it or you suspect it's circulating or you are using diagnostic testing capabilities that can tell it apart, you are going to miss it, especially during flu season," said Kajon, an infectious disease specialist at the Lovelace Respiratory Research Institute in Albuquerque.</p> <p>"We are seeing severe adult infections," Kajon told NBC News.</p> <p>"That's a big deal, especially for a disease that by all means is vaccine preventable. But this vaccine is not</p>

licensed to be used in civilians.”

Adenovirus infections often look like the common cold, or influenza. They cause fever, headache, body aches and sometimes but not always cough, stomach distress and breathing problems. Some strains cause eye infections. There are 52 different strains.

Kajon and colleagues collected details of adenovirus infections between 2011 and 2015 at colleges, in nursing homes and elsewhere.

“On the basis of the severity of the clinical presentation of some cases in this study, the (adenovirus) vaccine currently licensed for military use should be considered a potentially valuable resource to prevent disease in susceptible populations living in closed communities, such as college settings, summer camps, and long-term care facilities,” they wrote in a report published this week in the journal *Emerging Infectious Diseases*.

An outbreak of adenovirus killed 10 people in 2007. Kajon’s team tested college students at one campus during the severe 2014-2015 influenza epidemic and found 13 out of 168 students who came in for flu treatment had adenovirus infections.

Most patients may not suffer much, but the virus can cause very severe complications. Kajon and colleagues described the case of a 43-year-old Rochester, New York woman, previously healthy, who became infected in 2012 and quickly developed pneumonia and respiratory failure. During her hospital stay she suffered brain swelling and bleeding and stayed on a ventilator for more than a month.

A year later, she was still out of breath if she exerted herself.

There was also the case of a 26-year-old Connecticut man infected in 2011 who had nausea, vomiting and chills. He spent days in the hospital with adenovirus infection.

There have been outbreaks in long-term care facilities, also. But most clinics don’t test for adenovirus unless people are hospitalized with severe illness that isn’t helped by immediate treatment, Kajon said.

“These reports are probably the tip of the iceberg. We need more surveillance,” she said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention keeps a log of reported cases of adenovirus.

“Outbreaks are more common in late winter, spring, and early summer but can occur throughout the year,” the CDC said.

There were so many outbreaks among new military recruits that the Department of Defense vaccinates personnel against two of the more serious strains with an oral vaccine. Vaccination was stopped for a few years in 1999 and outbreaks soared again, but there haven’t been many since the vaccine was re-introduced in 2011, the CDC said.

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HEADLINE	01/29 Water crisis hits Cape Town
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/water-crisis-hits-cape-town-south-africa-day-zero-looms-n841881
GIST	<p>CAPE TOWN, South Africa — Buckets of gray water are scattered around Sitaara Stodel’s apartment: in the kitchen, in the bathroom, in the hallways and in her laundry room.</p> <p>She uses water collected from her morning shower and the washing machine to flush the toilet and keep potted plants alive. To cut her water usage even further, Stodel has stopped shaving her legs and uses only a tiny amount to brush her teeth.</p>

Her water-saving measures are becoming the norm in South Africa's second-largest city, which is in the midst of a years-long drought. Authorities warn Cape Town is less than three months away from the situation becoming so dire that it must shut off its taps, an eventuality known as "Day Zero."

Based on current projections, "Day Zero" is forecast for April 12, according to officials. That would make Cape Town the world's first major city to run dry.

The prospect that large sections of South Africa's showcase city, which features a seafront and is famously perched not far from where the Atlantic and Indian Oceans meet, might have to cope without running water has induced anxiety as well as resolve among Cape Town's nearly 4 million residents.

"I'm constantly thinking about running out of water and worrying about 'Day Zero,'" the 26-year-old Stodel said. "I'm even having nightmares about wasting water. The other day I had a dream that I took a long shower by mistake!"

From Feb. 1, Cape Town has told residents they can use no more than 13.2 gallons of drinking water a day in an effort to avoid "Day Zero." To put that in perspective, the average American uses an estimated 80 and 100 gallons of water daily, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

If "Day Zero" does arrive, many people would have to go to collection points guarded by security forces for a daily ration of 6.6 gallons.

Taps would continue to run in hospitals and provisions would be made for schools, some of which can pump water from boreholes.

Communal taps in poor areas known as informal settlements — or shanty towns — likely would continue to run to avoid the threat of disease.

Some downtown areas could also be exempt and not cut off for the sake of tourism and business.

"I'm really scared now. It's dry, dry, dry," said housekeeper Petronella van Schalkwyk, who prides herself on coming up with inventive ways to save water.

She now baths in a plastic bucket and has moved her bathtub outside where it can catch water should it rain. To clean, van Schalkwyk uses two spray bottles, one with soap and one with water so she doesn't have to fill a bucket.

"Many people tell me they think I'm crazy for doing all these things to save water at home. They just don't see the reality of this problem," she said from her employer's house in Cape Town's southern suburbs.

But even with "Day Zero" looming, officials say 60 percent of Cape Town residents are still not complying with current restrictions.

"I think that there may be an apathy that's setting in and a savings fatigue, but we need to urge residents that further savings are still crucial," said Xanthea Limberg, a member of the mayoral committee for water oversight. "Our survival and livelihood depends on it."

The city is also monitoring households' water use and issuing fines to those that use too much.

No one knows how long the restrictions could remain in place if "Day Zero" comes. The WWF has warned residents to be prepared to live with little water for between three and six months, depending on rainfall in the areas that feed the city's dams.

The organization has put out fact sheets to help residents understand what "Day Zero" could look like and how to cope with it. It's encouraged residents to look after each other, and the elderly in particular.

It's also said that pit latrines and "alternate dry sanitation systems at home" may be necessary.

The water crisis is propelling Cape Town into the unknown, but the causes have been brewing for a while. Since around the end of white minority rule in 1994, the population has soared by about 80 percent, straining municipal infrastructure.

Efforts to secure alternate sources of water have yet to be completed. Of the seven projects listed on the city's water dashboard, six are running behind schedule, and not one is more than 60 percent finished.

Both Stodel and van Schalkwyk are among those frustrated by what they see as a lack of concern among many residents.

"People are still watering their lawns, filling their pools and bathing. They seem happy to just pay the fines. It's so upsetting," Stodel said. "I think 'Day Zero' is inevitable, we're at the point of no return. Cape Town will just have to deal with the consequences that day when it arrives."

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HEADLINE	01/29 Canada discourages illegal crossings
SOURCE	http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-canadian-envoy-tps-20180129-story.html
GIST	<p>In a private dining room at Zov's restaurant in Tustin, a Canadian envoy made his pitch to about a dozen immigration attorneys and immigrant rights leaders.</p> <p>Pablo Rodriguez, a member of Parliament, leaned over from his seat in the middle of the table and asked everyone to spread the word: Please do not cross into Canada illegally.</p> <p>"Get the facts and make a decision based on the right facts, before leaving your jobs and taking your children out of school and going up there hoping to stay there forever," Rodriguez said. "Because if you don't qualify ... you will be returned and in this case not to the United States. You will have lost your status and would be returned to your country of origin."</p> <p>Worried that anti-immigrant rhetoric and decisions from the Trump administration could drive more people across its border, the Canadian government is trying to nip that in the bud.</p> <p>Prime Minister Justin Trudeau dispatched Rodriguez to California.</p> <p>The whip for the majority Liberal Party in Parliament, Rodriguez arrived in the U.S. a few days after President Trump announced his decision to end temporary protected status of an estimated 200,000 Salvadorans in the country.</p> <p>His message was not that different from immigration hardliners in the U.S. But it was delivered with a nicer Canadian soft sell.</p> <p>Rodriguez was a young boy when he arrived in Canada as a political refugee from Argentina. He said he can empathize with those looking north.</p> <p>He said that Canada is "an open country" and a nation of immigrants. But, he stressed, immigrating to the country needs to be done legally.</p> <p>"You can't just come to Canada and cross the border and stay there the rest of your life," he said. "We want to avoid a humanitarian crisis along the border."</p> <p>The Canadian government, Rodriguez said, wants to avoid a repeat of what happened last summer when thousands of Haitians crossed Canada's southern border "irregularly" after losing temporary protected</p>

	<p>status in the U.S.</p> <p>The influx created a massive backlog of refugee claimants.</p> <p>Last week was Rodriguez's fourth outreach visit to the U.S. since the fall.</p> <p>Rodriguez is one of several lawmakers and dignitaries Canada has sent in recent months to combat misinformation about gaining asylum in Canada. Recently, Canadian representatives traveled to Haitian communities in Miami and a Somalian enclave in Minneapolis.</p> <p>During the meeting in Orange County, Rodriquez wore an infectious smile and an easygoing demeanor as he engaged in what he called a "friendly conversation" with immigration attorneys and immigrant community leaders.</p> <p>It's unclear how effective he was.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Russia: US meddling in election
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/29/europe/russia-accuses-us-of-election-meddling-intl/index.html
GIST	<p>Moscow (CNN)Russia said a US Treasury report that could extend sanctions against Moscow for meddling in the 2016 US presidential elections is "a direct and obvious attempt" to interfere in its own upcoming presidential vote.</p> <p>By the end of Monday, the Treasury must send Congress a list of rich Russian business figures and detail their ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin.</p> <p>US President Donald Trump reluctantly signed the legislation last August that ordered the report, even though US investigators believe he was the main beneficiary of Russian meddling.</p> <p>"We do think that this is a direct and obvious attempt to time some sort of action to coincide with our elections in order to influence them," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists on a telephone conference call Monday. "We disagree with this, and we are sure this will have no influence."</p> <p>He said publication of the report "will be analyzed in Moscow, so that our interests and the interests of our companies are guaranteed."</p> <p>Russia is to hold presidential elections on March 18, a contest that seems certain to result in a win for Russian President Vladimir Putin because of tight constraints against political opponents.</p> <p>Opposition leader Alexei Navalny was briefly arrested Sunday during anti-Kremlin demonstrations in Moscow and across Russia and will have to attend a court hearing he wrote on Twitter.</p> <p>The arrest followed CNN's exclusive interview with Navalny broadcast before the protests in which he accused Putin of widespread corruption.</p> <p>Peskov said he did not think Navalny was a threat to Putin's power. "Putin's popularity reaches far beyond Russian borders and I don't think anyone can doubt the fact that Putin is an absolute leader in the way he is perceived by the public and an absolute leader of the political Olympus," he said.</p> <p>"It's unlikely that at this stage there is someone who is serious competition. Putin proved his undeniable leadership on multiple occasions and continues to do that," Peskov added.</p> <p>Navalny, the best-known opposition figure in Russia, has been barred from running by Russia's electoral commission as he has a conviction for embezzlement, a charge that critics say is politically motivated.</p>

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HEADLINE	01/29 Flu season death toll climbs
SOURCE	http://komonews.com/news/local/flu-season-death-toll-climbs-to-109-in-wash-state-with-weeks-to-go
GIST	<p>The entire nation is now dealing with the peak of the flu season at the same time - and state health experts say we've got a few more weeks to go before the threat recedes.</p> <p>Dr. Vivian Hawkins, an influenza coordinator at the state Department of Health, says the flu so far has been blamed for 109 deaths in Washington state this season. That's on a par with last flu season, when 110 deaths had been reported by the same date.</p> <p>What's unusual this year is the strength of other viruses are going around. Teachers are reporting half their classes are out, and just about every workplace is being hit hard it - including the doctors' offices, which makes it harder for patients to get in and find out how sick they are.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Recall: VTech baby rattles
SOURCE	http://www.kiro7.com/news/trending-now/vtech-recalls-280000-baby-rattles-due-to-choking-hazard-1/691046645
GIST	<p>Federal officials announced a recall Thursday of thousands of baby rattles sold nationwide due to a choking hazard.</p> <p>The Consumer Product Safety Commission announced that VTech is recalling its Shake and Sing Elephant Rattles after receiving reports that the ears on the rattle can break, posing a choking hazard.</p> <p>The rattles, model No. 80-184800, are about 7 inches long, with a purple elephant body, ears in yellow and blue and a black and white teething ring. The number 1848 is printed on the back of affected rattles, next to the battery door. When switched on, the rattles sing, according to VTech officials.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Kentucky: Medicaid recipients to work
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2018/01/29/kentucky-becomes-1st-state-in-nation-to-require-medicaid-recipients-to-work.html
GIST	<p>Shortly after the waiver was announced that allows the state of Kentucky to implement a work requirement for Medicaid benefits, House Minority leader Nancy Pelosi said: "The elderly, disabled, pregnant women will suffer from today's draconian decree."</p> <p>However, she was not accurate.</p> <p>The work requirement will apply to people like Tara Bassett, who is educated and worked full time until she was sidelined with severe depression. She already puts in 15 hours a week and picks up side jobs. As you watch her work, she appears able bodied.</p> <p>"I am able bodied except for this little problem up here," Tara gestures to her head, "called mental illness."</p> <p>She says without Medicaid, her prescriptions would cost her \$900 per month, and she can't make it without some help.</p> <p>The work requirement is 80 hours per month. So, Tara, who is already picking up jobs on the side, is close to the minimum. She will need to document the hours and pay a premium between \$1 and \$15 per month.</p>

Pregnant women, children, primary care providers and those deemed too frail to work are exempted from the work requirement.

Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin says the work requirement, coupled with the premium, is intended to give recipients some "skin in the game," some ownership of their own Medical benefits and a pathway back to contributing to public funds instead of drawing from them.

"An assimilation back into working society, into being part of the fabric of the community," Bevin said. "The intent is not to give people pain but to provide opportunity, to give people a chance to do for themselves and the dignity that is associated with that."

As predicted, opponents filed suit. Three organizations; the national health program, the Kentucky Equal Justice Center and the Southern Poverty Law Center filed suit claiming that the work requirement threatens irreparable harm to the health and welfare of the poorest and most vulnerable.

A substantial portion of Medicaid recipients in Kentucky are drug addicts. Johnny Pittman was one of them. Without being compelled by the state, he made a decision to combat his addiction to drugs and public money.

Pittman got clean and took advantage of programs for occupational therapy as well as vocational rehab. He now has a prominent job at the Oxmoor motor group in Kentucky and his health care is private sector.

"I'm setting an example for my children," Pittman said. "I am capable to work and I'm working."

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HEADLINE	01/29 Colombia suspends talks w/rebels
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/28/americas/colombia-police-station-bombing-second/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos suspended peace talks on Monday with a leftist militant group after two bomb attacks on police over the weekend.</p> <p>A bombing targeted a police outpost in northern Colombia on Sunday, a police official said. Several people were injured from the blast in Soledad, a suburb of the coastal city of Barranquilla, a local police officer, who asked not to be identified, told CNN en Espanol.</p> <p>The Metropolitan Police of Barranquilla tweeted a photo of the outpost with a caption vowing the department would not lower its guard in the face of the dawn attack.</p> <p>The attack came a day after another blast targeted a police station in Barranquilla, about 7 miles north of Soledad.</p> <p>At least five Colombian police officers were killed and 42 others injured Saturday morning after a bomb was hurled at the station house, police said. The National Liberation Army, or ELN by its Spanish initials, on Sunday claimed responsibility for the bombing. The leftist militant group made its claim in a statement harshly criticizing the government and condemning "brutal repression of legitimate citizen protests."</p> <p>The attacker, riding on a motorcycle, threw an explosive device at the station in the San Jose neighborhood as officers were preparing to start the workday, according to Colombian police.</p> <p>The attorney general's office identified the attacker as Cristian Camilo Bellon Galindo, 31.</p> <p>He is charged with five counts of aggravated homicide and 42 counts of attempted homicide. Terrorism-and explosives-related charges will be filed as well, authorities said.</p>

	"My patience and the patience of the Colombian people have their limits," Santos said on Monday. A fifth round of talks between the Colombian government and representatives of the ELN had been scheduled to take place in upcoming days in Ecuador.
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HEADLINE	01/30 CIA chief: NKorea nuke threat to US
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/cia-mike-pompeo-north-korea-nuclear-missile-threat-united-states-russia/
GIST	<p>LONDON -- CIA Director Mike Pompeo warned Monday that North Korea could have a nuclear weapon capable of striking the United States within "a handful of months." But Pompeo lauded his boss President Donald Trump's "language" in confronting the threat and said Kim Jong Un "understands the message" coming from Washington as he never has before.</p> <p>"It is also our judgment that our partners who are also at risk from North Korea have now come to understand that it is Kim Jong Un that is presenting this risk," Pompeo told CBS News partner network BBC News in an interview aired Monday evening. "I think that America has done an excellent job -- all of our senior leaders -- of communicating to the world the seriousness with which this threat needs to be undertaken."</p> <p>In the wide-ranging interview, the CIA chief said the Trump administration's stance on North Korea had yielded, "a seriousness and a progress" in dealing with the threat from Pyongyang "that has never been achieved before."</p> <p>Pompeo's remarks come just weeks before the Winter Olympics kick off in South Korea -- an Olympic games that have become almost as much about diplomacy as they are about sports. After a year of soaring rhetoric and threats hurled between North Korea and the U.S., South Korea's most vital security partner, the peninsular neighbors have struck up a direct dialogue and agreed to cooperate in some aspects of the Olympics in the southern city of Pyeongchang.</p> <p>While South Korea's government has lauded the diplomatic detente on the Olympics as an opportunity to foster trust, which could potentially be converted into a dialogue on more difficult topics including the North's nuclear arsenal, many observers fear Kim Jong Un's regime may simply be playing for time, or trying to drive a wedge between Seoul and Washington.</p> <p>Pompeo's warning of a possible North Korean intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capable of delivering a nuclear warhead to the United States within a "handful" of months was a reiteration of remarks he made to "CBS This Morning" co-host Norah O'Donnell last week.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Schools in 12 states close for flu
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/schools-in-at-least-12-states-close-to-fight-against-the-flu/
GIST	<p>DALLAS -- Schools across the country are fighting the flu, classroom by classroom. On Monday, Bishop Lynch High School resumed classes after it closed last week to let work crews disinfect the entire school property.</p> <p>School nurse Patty Barton saw more kids in the clinic than in the classroom.</p> <p>"This year it really is unprecedented," she said. "I probably saw about 30 kids here on Monday and sent 10 home."</p> <p>The flu is widespread throughout the country and there are 39 states the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says have especially high activity. With so many students and teachers getting sick,</p>

	<p>schools in at least 12 states have cancelled classes for a few days for cleanup and recovery.</p> <p>The flu shut down classes Monday for the 815 students at Saint Thomas Aquinas in Dallas. More than 10 percent of the student body got sick.</p> <p>"Even if we miss anything, the kids will have a chance to go home, get healthy and hopefully not bring that virus back to school," said Matthew Vereecke, the school's superintendent.</p> <p>"It has been a tough influenza season so far this year," said Dr. Daniel Jernigan of the CDC.</p> <p>He says the H3N2 strain of the flu is hitting patients over 65 very hard, but other strains of the flu are taking a toll on younger patients.</p> <p>"Since the winter holidays, we've seen kids are really making up the predominant amount of influenza," said Jernigan. "They're taking that back to school, getting transmitted there. I think that's really what's driving a lot these visits to the outpatient clinic."</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Report: 50,000 bridges falling apart
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/more-50-000-american-bridges-are-falling-apart-n842356
GIST	<p>More than 50,000 bridges across the U.S. are falling apart and endangering drivers, according to a new report.</p> <p>NBC News found cases from Florida, Georgia, Michigan and other states where pieces of crumbling bridges broke off and fell to the roadway, sometimes hitting vehicles.</p> <p>In Utah, driver Mike Peterson escaped serious injury when a chunk of a bridge smashed through his windshield as he drove underneath.</p> <p>"Another six to eight inches, you might not be talking to me today," said Peterson.</p> <p>Using government data, the American Road & Transportation Builders Association compiled a report showing that 54,259 American bridges are "structurally deficient."</p> <p>So many bridges are in need of repair, says the report, that if placed end-to-end they'd stretch nearly from New York City to Miami. And experts say that at the current rate of repair or replacement it would take 37 years to fix all the bridges.</p> <p>"It really comes down a failure of leadership in Congress to address some of these issues and provide additional funding," said Dr. Alison Black, author of the ARTBA report.</p> <p>President Trump is expected to address the country's aging infrastructure during his State of the Union address Tuesday night.</p> <p>Late Monday, an official from the Federal Highway Administration told NBC News in a statement, "ARTBA's report, which relies on data from FHWA, underscores the need for investment in our nation's infrastructure. It also highlights the importance of streamlining the permitting process, so that the projects that are funded can move forward without undue delay. The Department of Transportation looks forward to continuing our work with state and local interests to revitalize the nation's roads and highways, offering improved safety, new jobs, and a better quality of life for the American people."</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Significant ash falls Philippine volcano
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SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/significant-ash-falls-erupting-philippine-volcano-52696325?cid=clicksource_79_2_hero_headlines_bsq_hed
GIST	<p>A significant amount of ash has fallen on towns near the Philippines' most active volcano after energetic eruptions of lava from the crater.</p> <p>Mount Mayon in northeastern Albay province has been erupting more than two weeks, and 84,000 people who fled the danger zone are staying in schools and other crowded shelters.</p> <p>The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said one large lava eruption lasted more than an hour and a half late Monday. The ash plume reached 1.5 kilometers (.9 miles) above the crater and caused significant ashfall in the towns of Camalig and Guinobatan.</p> <p>Mayon has been belching red-hot lava fountains, huge columns of ash and molten rocks into the sky and plunging communities into darkness with falling ash since Jan. 14. It has remained at alert level four on a scale of five, indicating a more violent eruption could be imminent.</p> <p>Scientists have warned that despite the repeated eruptions of lava, Mayon is still swollen with magma below the surface and could erupt explosively.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/30 Desperate Venezuelans 'loot to eat'
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/venezuelans-loot-eat-amid-economic-tailspin-52697367
GIST	<p>The cab of Carlos Del Pino's big rig gave him a nerve-rattling front-row seat to a surge in mob attacks on Venezuela's neighborhood markets, cattle ranches and food delivery trucks like his.</p> <p>Shortly after pulling away from the docks at Puerto Cabello, the country's biggest port, he witnessed 20 people swarm a truck ahead of him and in a frenzy fill up their sacks with the corn it was carrying to a food-processing plant. The driver was held at gunpoint.</p> <p>"It fills you with terror," Del Pino said.</p> <p>He has hauled cargo for 14 years, and on a good month earns the equivalent of about \$100, enough to support his wife and two daughters. Yet, despite his fears, he sympathizes with his impoverished countrymen, who are becoming desperate amid Venezuela's widespread food shortages and sky-high inflation.</p> <p>"They have to loot to eat," he said.</p> <p>Sporadic looting, food riots and protests driven by the hungry poor have surged in Venezuela, a country that's no stranger to unrest. But the uprisings playing out recently have a different face than the mostly middle-class protesters who took to the streets for months last year in political demonstrations trying to oust President Nicolas Maduro.</p> <p>"These protests are coming from people of the lower classes who simply cannot get enough to eat," said David Smilde, a senior fellow at the Washington Office on Latin America, who has spent decades researching Venezuela. "They want relief, not necessarily to force Maduro from power."</p> <p>Venezuela holds the world's largest oil reserves and was once among Latin America's wealthiest nations. But after nearly two decades of socialist rule and mismanagement of the state-run oil company, it is being battered by the worst economic crisis in its history.</p> <p>The surge in violent food protests began in poor neighborhoods across the country around Christmas, when Maduro had promised that holiday hams were coming in government food baskets distributed to his</p>

	<p>supporters.</p> <p>But many didn't arrive, sparking protests with small groups burning garbage in the street and looting. Opposition pundits called it the "pork revolution." Trying to bring calm, Maduro ordered hundreds of supermarkets to slash prices to the previous month's level — a tall order in a country where prices have been doubling every few weeks.</p> <p>Repeating a common refrain, the government blamed the absence of hams on sabotage by its foreign critics, in this case Portugal, which it said was taking orders from the U.S.</p> <p>"Why didn't the ham arrive? Because of the blockade against us," socialist party leader Diosdado Cabello said on state TV, blaming the "gringos" but providing no evidence.</p> <p>The unrest has cooled some, but many Venezuelans fear it will be a temporary lull as the economy spins further out of control. The International Monetary Fund estimates inflation will reach five digits this year, while the economy, in its fifth straight year of recession, will shrink 15 percent.</p> <p>Barely solvent businesses say they are reluctant to import more goods, fearing another government-ordered fire sale. As the currency crashes on the flourishing black market, the monthly minimum wage is now worth the equivalent of just \$3.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/30 Seoul: NKorea cancels pre-Olympic event
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/seoul-north-korea-cancels-pre-olympic-joint-cultural-52694878?
GIST	<p>South Korea on Tuesday expressed regret over North Korea's cancellation of one of the joint cooperation projects planned for next month's Winter Olympics, a development highlighting the delicate nature of ties between the rivals split for seven decades.</p> <p>In a message sent over a cross-border communication channel, South Korea demanded the North to fulfill mutual agreements over a set of conciliatory gestures to mark the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, Seoul's Unification Ministry said.</p> <p>North Korea on Monday night sent a message saying it won't hold a joint cultural event at the North's Diamond Mountain on Feb. 4, which was one of two pre-Olympic events in North Korea the countries had agreed to. Ministry officials said they expect a joint training session between the countries' non-Olympic skiers at a North Korean ski resort to go on as planned this week.</p> <p>The ministry cited North Korea as saying it has no other option but to cancel the cultural event because of South Korean media reports that it says defamed its "sincere" measures for the Olympics. The North also accused South Korean media of picking a fight over an unspecified domestic festival in North Korea, according to the ministry statement.</p> <p>The North didn't say which media reports were at issue. But some reports had criticized the North's plan to stage a major event to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of its military on Feb. 8, just one day before the Olympics' opening ceremony. South Korean officials have said the North plans a massive military parade on the anniversary.</p> <p>North Korea has a history of last-minute cancellations and unexplained reversals, and some experts say it might have sought to gain concessions from the South. The visit earlier this month of a prominent band leader to inspect artistic venues in the South was delayed by North Korea but eventually took place.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/30 US: Russia jet flew 5ft. of Navy plane
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/russian-fighter-flies-feet-us-plane-black-sea/story?id=52689804&cid=clicksource_76_2_hero_headlines_headlines_hed
GIST	<p>A Russian fighter jet came within 5 feet of a U.S. Navy surveillance aircraft on Monday as it flew in international airspace above the Black Sea. The Navy labeled the encounter "unsafe" and said the American plane had done nothing to provoke the Russian action.</p> <p>"On Jan. 29, 2018, a U.S. EP-3 Aries aircraft flying in international airspace over the Black Sea was intercepted by a Russian SU-27," said a statement from U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa.</p> <p>"This interaction was determined to be unsafe due to the SU-27 closing to within five feet and crossing directly through the EP-3's flight path, causing the EP-3 to fly through the SU-27's jet wash," said the statement.</p> <p>The intercept lasted two hours and 40 minutes and the Navy said the American aircraft was operating in accordance with international law "and did not provoke the Russian activity."</p> <p>"The Russian military is within its right to operate within international airspace, but they must behave within international standards set to ensure safety and prevent incidents," said the statement. "Unsafe actions increase the risk of miscalculation and midair collisions."</p> <p>But the Russian Defense Ministry denied that its fighter's actions were unsafe.</p> <p>"The whole flight of the Russian Su-27 was strictly in accordance with international airspace rules, there were no abnormal situations," said a statement from Russia's Ministry of Defense.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Midwest, Northeast brace for snow, cold
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/storm-bring-snow-bitter-cold-parts-northeast/story?
GIST	<p>A coastal system is bringing rain showers to parts of the Mid-Atlantic today as a clipper system ushers in snow to parts of the Midwest and Northeast.</p> <p>A few of inches of snow is expected from Cleveland to Buffalo to Rochester, as well as the Appalachian Mountains and the Cape Cod area.</p> <p>The heaviest snow today is expected north of Detroit, which could see up to 10 inches.</p> <p>The snow will begin to move into Cleveland and western New York tonight, and then reach Buffalo, Rochester, central Pennsylvania and parts of Virginia by Tuesday morning.</p> <p>On Tuesday morning, wind chills are expected to fall to 24 degrees in New York City, 15 degrees in Boston and even 18 degrees in Nashville and Atlanta.</p> <p>Wind chills will reach minus 9 degrees in Minneapolis, where Super Bowl preparations are underway.</p> <p>Temperatures will be even lower on Wednesday morning, when wind chills are forecast to reach 15 degrees in New York, 9 degrees in Boston, 24 degrees in Charleston and Charlotte and 1 degree in Buffalo.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Refugee resettlement resumes
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/refugee-resettlement-resumes-conditions/story?

<p>GIST</p>	<p>The Trump administration announced Monday that it is resuming all refugee admissions, while at the same time implementing new security vetting procedures for 11 "high-risk" countries. The new measures stem from President Donald Trump's original so-called travel ban, which ordered a 120-day ban of all refugees entering the U.S.</p> <p>"We will be rolling out new security measures from high-risk countries which will seek to prevent the program from being exploited by terrorists, criminals and fraudsters," said Department of Homeland Security Secretary (DHS) Kirstjen Nielsen during public remarks today.</p> <p>In October, Trump issued an executive order that resumed refugee processing for most countries. However, at the time, an additional 90-day review was ordered to assess the security risk from the 11 countries, while only admitting nationals from those countries on a case-by-case basis. Individuals from those countries also had to prove that it was in the "national interest" to resettle in the U.S.</p> <p>At the time, DHS announced that it was enhancing security measures for all refugees entering the U.S.</p> <p>As a result of the 90-day review, which was done in conjunction with State Department and intelligence community, Nielsen determined that additional screening and vetting are required for nationals of the designated high-risk countries. For example, Nielsen directed U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to conduct "even more in-depth interviews" of refugee applicants.</p> <p>"It will not only help improve security, but more importantly, they will help us better assist legitimate refugees fleeing persecution," said Nielsen about the changes to the program.</p> <p>Administration officials would not share additional specifics on the type of security enhancements that are being implemented, citing law enforcement sensitivities.</p> <p>Officials acknowledged that the implementation of the new security enhancements could have an impact on the speed at which refugees from these countries are processed.</p> <p>According to senior administration officials, the entire refugee program also needs to be administered in more of a "risk-based manner" when considering overall refugee admissions, regional allocations, and the groups of applicants considered for resettlement.</p> <p>Lastly, DHS determined that the group of 11 countries, which has not been updated since 2015, needs to be reviewed and selection criteria for additional specialized screening need to be updated.</p> <p>Though officials won't publicly confirm that list, ABC News has reported the countries that require extra screening are Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Mali, North Korea, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen -- a group that together made up 43.48 percent of all refugees admitted to the U.S. in fiscal year 2017.</p>
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Cyber Awareness

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<p>HEADLINE</p>	<p>01/29 Hackers steal \$150K in phishing scam</p>
<p>SOURCE</p>	<p>https://www.hackread.com/phishing-scam-hackers-steal-ethereum-in-experty-hack/</p>
<p>GIST</p>	<p>Just a week after the biggest hack in the history of cryptocurrency business in which Japan-based Coincheck exchange was hacked to steal \$534 million the much-awaited token sale called Initial Coin Offering or ICO by Experty has landed in no man's land after a hacker tricked the ICO participants with a fake pre-ICO sale announcement and luring those who signed up for the notifications into sending Ethereum funds to wrong wallet address. Through this targeted attack, the hacker(s) manages to steal around \$150,000 in Ethereum before ICO event was held.</p> <p>ICO is quite similar to a conventional Initial Public Offering or IPO but what makes it different is that</p>

	<p>buyers receive a token from an online platform instead of getting stocks in a firm. Users are allowed to keep the token until the company that issues them is ready to repurchase them. They may even sell the tokens to others who use Ethereum.</p> <p>Through ICO, Experty was looking to raise funds for a VoIP calling system that could facilitate voice and video conversations like Skype as well as allow secure cryptocurrency based payments via Blockchain. Experty had high hopes in this sale since Inc.com ranked this ICO as one of the top ten ICOs due to be held this year.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Phishing pages hide in site directories
SOURCE	http://www.securityweek.com/phishing-pages-hidden-well-known-directory
GIST	<p>UK-based cybercrime disruption services provider Netcraft has spotted thousands of phishing pages placed by cybercriminals in special directories that are present on millions of websites.</p> <p>In the past month, the company spotted more than 400 new phishing websites hosted in a folder named /.well-known/. This directory serves as a Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) path prefix that allows users and automated processes to obtain policy and other information about the host.</p> <p>The /.well-known/ directory is commonly used to demonstrate ownership of a domain. The administrators of HTTPS-protected websites that use Automatic Certificate Management Environment (ACME) to manage SSL certificates place a unique token inside the /.well-known/acme-challenge/ or /.well-known/pki-validation/ folders to show the certificate issuer that they control the domain.</p> <p>“Consequently, most of the phishing attacks that make use of the /.well-known/ directory have been deployed on sites that support HTTPS, using certificates issued by ACME-driven certificate authorities like Let's Encrypt and cPanel,” Netcraft’s Paul Mutton explained.</p> <p>The /.well-known/ location can be a great place to hide a phishing page due to the fact that while the folder is present on millions of websites – mainly due to the success of ACME and Let’s Encrypt – many administrators are not aware of its presence.</p> <p>Netcraft said it was not clear how malicious actors had hijacked the websites found to be hosting these phishing pages.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Google’s DoubleClick network exploited
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/youtube-ads-silently-serving-coinhive-cryptominers/article/740248/
GIST	<p>A malvertising campaign was observed exploiting Google's DoubleClick network to deliver silent cryptominers on high-traffic sites.</p> <p>Trend Micro researchers detected an almost 285% increase in the number of Coinhive miners on January 24 and started seeing an increase in traffic to five malicious domains on January 18, according to a Jan. 26 blog post.</p> <p>Researchers spotted two different web miner scripts embedded in the pages along with a script that displays the advertisement from DoubleClick. Victims will see a legitimate advertisement while two silent cryptominers run in the background.</p> <p>“We speculate that the attackers' use of these advertisements on legitimate websites is a ploy to target a larger number of users, in comparison to only that of compromised devices,” researchers said in the post.</p>

	The advertisement contains a JavaScript code that generates a random number between 1 and 101 and if the generated number is above 10, the script will call out coinhive.min.js to mine 80% of the CPU power, which is what happens nine out of ten times, researchers added.
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HEADLINE	01/29 Keylogger on WordPress websites
SOURCE	https://thehackernews.com/2018/01/wordpress-keylogger.html
GIST	<p>More than 2,000 WordPress websites have once again been found infected with a piece of crypto-mining malware that not only steals the resources of visitors' computers to mine digital currencies but also logs visitors' every keystroke.</p> <p>Security researchers at Sucuri discovered a malicious campaign that infects WordPress websites with a malicious script that delivers an in-browser cryptocurrency miner from CoinHive and a keylogger.</p> <p>Coinhive is a popular browser-based service that offers website owners to embed a JavaScript to utilise CPUs power of their website visitors in an effort to mine the Monero cryptocurrency.</p> <p>Sucuri researchers said the threat actors behind this new campaign is the same one who infected more than 5,400 Wordpress websites last month since both campaigns used keylogger/cryptocurrency malware called cloudflare[.]solutions.</p> <p>Spotted in April last year, Cloudflare[.]solutions is cryptocurrency mining malware and is not at all related to network management and cybersecurity firm Cloudflare. Since the malware used the cloudflare[.]solutions domain to initially spread the malware, it has been given this name.</p> <p>The malware was updated in November to include a keylogger. The keylogger behaves the same way as in previous campaigns and can steal both the site's administrator login page and the website's public facing frontend.</p> <p>If the infected WordPress site is an e-commerce platform, hackers can steal much more valuable data, including payment card data. If hackers manage to steal the admin credentials, they can just log into the site without relying upon a flaw to break into the site.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Scam: fake porn movie of yourself
SOURCE	https://blog.knowbe4.com/cyberheistnews-vol-8-5-scam-of-the-week-hey-did-you-see-that-fake-ai-porn-movie-of-yourself
GIST	<p>Scam Of The Week: "Hey Did You See That Fake AI Porn Movie Of Yourself?"</p> <p>Heads-up. I am sorry to have to bring up a very distasteful topic, but in the very near future your users will get emails with something close to the ultimate click-bait, luring them to see an AI-generated porn video starring... themselves.</p> <p>Forget about fake news. Its been all over Reddit the last month, we are now in the age of fake porn.</p> <p>It's possible to near-seamlessly stitch anybody's face onto existing porn videos like Emma Watson's face on an actress's nude body. Motherboard has a NSFW post covering this.</p> <p>Now, Photoshop has been around for years, and the idea is not new, but AI has brought it technically to a whole new level, and ethically lower than ever before.</p> <p>Since December, production of AI-assisted fake porn has "exploded," Motherboard reports. Thousands of</p>

people are doing it, and the results are ever more difficult to spot as fakes.

You don't need expertise with sophisticated AI anymore. A redditor called deepfakeapp created code named FakeApp he built to be used by those without computer science training.

The Porn AI Genie is out of the bottle

So here is how the bad guys are going to use this. Raise dedicated high-powered graphics servers using AI code to mass-generate fake short clips, using pictures from social media, hosted on sites with Exploit Kits, and send spear phishing attacks to high-risk targets like people in HR, Accounting and C-levels.

The spear phishing attacks are going to have a highly suggestive or embarrassing picture of the target, and the "only thing" they need to do to see it is click on the Play Icon.

A good number are going to initially fall for this social engineering tactic. The combo of both the shock value and trying to prevent a negative consequence can be close to overwhelming, exactly the effect the bad guys are trying to create and manipulate someone into a click.

And in yet another case where tech is ahead of the law and humanities, these videos are actually not even illegal, despite the humiliation it can bring.

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HEADLINE 01/26 Fake ad agencies delivered malware

SOURCE <https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/crooks-created-28-fake-ad-agencies-to-disguise-massive-malvertising-campaign/>

GIST A group of cyber-criminals created 28 fake ad agencies and bought over 1 billion ad views in 2017, which they used to deliver malicious ads that redirected unsuspecting users to tech support scams or sneaky pages peddling malware-laden software updates or software installers.

The entire operation —codenamed Zirconium— appears to have started in February 2017, when the group started creating the fake ad agencies which later bought ad views from larger ad platforms.

These fake ad agencies each had individual websites and even LinkedIn profiles for their fake CEOs. Their sole purpose was to interface with larger advertising platforms, appearing as legitimate businesses.

The entire operation flew under the radar for most of the time but became harder to ignore as it grew and researchers started to detect more and more aggressive user fingerprinting scripts.

Dangu says the group exclusively targeted desktop browsers, ignoring mobile traffic. The user's operating system did not count, the group going after Windows, Linux, Mac, or ChromeOS users alike.

The Confiant CTO also says Zirconium used only 20 of its 28 fake ad agency identities for this operation, and eight remained dormant earlier this week when Confiant published its Zirconium exposé.

Malvertising crews using fake ad companies may be a new concept for the casual infosec-passionate reader, but conversations this Bleeping Computer reporter had with industry experts last year revealed that most experts knew this was happening, but they hadn't managed to get all the details together to expose this growing trend.

Besides blowing the lid on this new tactic, Dangu also pointed out another interesting fact; that this malvertising campaign was nothing like previous operations, which mostly sent traffic to exploit kits.

Dangu believes that improved browser security features now make most exploit kits ineffective. In addition, the decision from most browser makers to change Flash into a disabled state or click-to-run

	policy have also contributed to the demise of classic malvertising+exploit kit campaigns.
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HEADLINE	01/29 Hate speech supporters online platforms
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/groups-accused-supporting-hate-speech-find-platforms-online/story?id=52639855
GIST	<p>Tom Kawczynski was voted out of his job as a town manager of a small community in Maine because of what many viewed as racist ideas promoted by a group he started.</p> <p>And then he got shunned from crowdfunding sites too.</p> <p>"After my firing without cause from the position as town manager in Jackman, I have gone out to seek help to sustain myself and my wife," Kawczynski told ABC News.</p> <p>"The challenge that we've run in to is that many fundraising sites, because of the inaccurate characterization of my views, have deemed that what I'm trying to promote is a violation of my terms of service," he said.</p> <p>His group, called New Albion, focuses on "defending the people and culture of New England," according to their site, and he told the Portland Press Herald that he opposes Islam because it is "not compatible with Western culture."</p> <p>Though he denies being a racist or bigot, a spokesperson for the Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks hate groups, told ABC News that his opinions qualify as "white nationalist views."</p> <p>Kawczynski told ABC he launched a GoFundMe page following his dismissal but "the same day I posted it up it was taken down."</p> <p>While not directly addressing Kawczynski and his fundraiser, GoFundMe spokesperson Bobby Whithorne told ABC News in a statement that "White nationalists and neo-Nazis cannot use GoFundMe to promote hatred, racism, or intolerance, and if a campaign violates GoFundMe's terms of service, we'll remove it from the platform."</p> <p>In Kawczynski's case, he turned to a different site called FreeStartr, which bills itself as "Free speech crowdfunding."</p> <p>The site, which did not respond to ABC News' requests for comment, is run by CEO Charles C. Johnson, a controversial figure who describes himself as an "investigative journalist" who touts his ban from Twitter.</p> <p>In Freestartr's community guidelines, in a section labeled "Hate Speech" it reads: "Do not hate on individuals or groups, including on account of their sex, height, race, religion, lack of religion, sexual preferences or—wait, of course we're kidding. There is no such thing as prohibited hate speech. It's a term that censorship advocates have invented to justify their censorship."</p> <p>Gene Policinski, the president of the Newseum Institute which includes the First Amendment Center, concurred that "hate speech is not a particular legal term."</p> <p>"One person's hate speech is another person's patriotic language," Policinski told ABC News.</p> <p>"The First Amendment does not protect us against the ramifications of our speech. It protects us against the government censoring or punishing us for our speech. It doesn't protect us from the consequence of our speech with regards to our neighbors or ... our employer," he said.</p> <p>Another site that has turned into a meeting ground for those who aren't allowed elsewhere is Gab, a</p>

microblogging site structurally similar to Twitter but different in that it has not been allowed to distribute its apps through either the Apple App Store or the Android store.

"Users are able to essentially connect with people around the world with a guaranteed right of free speech," Gab COO Utsav Sanduja told ABC News. An Apple spokesperson told ABC News that they have guidelines in place to prevent content that allows for hate speech to appear in the app store.

Sanduja said that they were rejected from the App store "on the basis [of] Gab being quote unquote 'a hate speech, mean-spirited site' which we found ludicrous."

The characterization did not sound ludicrous to Oren Segal, the director of the Anti-Defamation League's Center on Extremism.

"A platform can be defined by what it allows just as much as by what it disallows. Gab allows for unrestricted hateful rhetoric without consequences. That is attracting users who hold extremist views. Indeed, extremists know Gab is a safe space for them and are telling others to find them there when they are booted off of other platforms," Segal told ABC News.

Twitter, by contrast, states in their rules and policies that "we do not tolerate behavior that harasses, intimidates, or uses fear to silence another person's voice," and goes on to state that users "may not promote violence against or directly attack or threaten other people on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religious affiliation, age, disability, or disease. We also do not allow accounts whose primary purpose is inciting harm towards others on the basis of these categories."

Such stipulations are well within the company's rights, Policinski said, noting that "private enterprises are not bound by the First Amendment."

The stipulations that ban hate speech and allow users to be booted from platforms as a result has repercussions online, and in person.

"If you tell people that you've very clearly defined that they can't have a seat at the table, they will find their own places to congregate," Kawczynski said, referencing the online forums that are more permitting of certain speech.

"I think that actually encourages radicalism and extremism because they have no means of expression save through those venues," he said.

Segal believes that could lead to repercussions off line as well.

"When white supremacist or other extremists are able to easily find like-minded sympathizers that glorify vile hatred without any consequences, it can have an empowering effect on them," Segal told ABC News.

"It is not unreasonable for people to be concerned about online spaces that cater to the type of hatred we have seen lead to violence," he said.

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HEADLINE	01/29 Secret Service warns: ATM 'jackpotting'
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/secret-service-warns-banks-coming-wave-atm-jackpotting/story?
GIST	<p>The U.S. Secret Service is warning banks across the country about a new means of robbing ATMs, previously seen in Europe and Mexico, but now hitting the U.S for the first time in a coordinated way.</p> <p>It's called "jackpotting." It works just like it sounds, an ATM machine is compromised to spit out cash to a fraudster at a furious rate of 40 bills every 23 seconds.</p>

"That's where you get the term jackpotting from because it is basically like a slot machine that you hit the jackpot — you are basically taking all of the money out of the ATM," supervisory special agent Matt O'Neill told ABC News.

The Secret Service says they've seen about a dozen cases across the country from the mid-Atlantic region through New England, the Pacific Northwest and Louisiana. "What we're finding is the attacks really started in a coordinated effort in December and well north of a million dollars has been taken," O'Neill said.

How does it work?

Fraudsters pose as ATM technicians, even wearing uniforms and access the teller machine. They open it using a generic key that the Secret Service says is readily available for purchase on the internet.

Once inside, they use a technical means — installing a laptop computer and a cellphone into the machine — to be able to remotely take over the machine and force it to discharge money. But to avoid detection, the bogus technician does not typically take the cash, that's left to a second co-conspirator.

The second co-conspirator, a "money mule," then goes to the compromised machine and calls the phony technician who initiates a withdrawal sequence remotely.

"It runs until it is empty or the person standing at the ATM alerts the controller of the ATM to stop the withdrawal sequence because either law enforcement is nearby or for whatever reason they get spooked and want to leave the scene," O'Neill told ABC News.

The technician often returns to the empty machine to retrieve the the laptop and cellphone, putting the ATM machine back like he was never there.

"We've seen these 21st Century robberies take place in plain sight, middle of the day, in malls, just because they are obviously getting themselves a jacket that says technician on it."

After investigating a report of a jackpotting attack in recent days, the Secret Service quickly determined a more coordinated set of attacks was about to be launched in the next seven to 10 days. An alert was sent out Friday to inform the banking community of the potential attack and how they might protect themselves from being victimized.

O'Neill says it's transnational organized crime using a mixture of international criminals and people who are already in the United States.

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Terror Conditions

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HEADLINE	01/30 ISIS video calls for action against West
SOURCE	http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/slit-their-throats-watch-them-die-isis-releases-new-video-calling-action-against-west-1657195
GIST	<p>The Islamic State (Isis) has released a new propaganda video urging supporters across the world to plot attacks against Western countries. The terror group's official Al-Hayat Media Centre released footage on 26 January calling on jihadists to destroy the kuffar (nonbelievers) in "Europe, America, Russia, Australia and elsewhere".</p> <p>An English-language nasheed (hymn) from the video promises paradise in afterlife for those who take up the cause.</p>

	<p>"Go answer the call, don't spare none, kill them all, it is now time to rise, slit their throats, watch them die," the song states, according to PJ Media. "The Islamic State stands, and it stands and demands, that you worship the one, whom besides there is none.</p> <p>"We're the grandsons of men, who gave all that they can, to rule all of the lands, with the law of Islam," it continues. "Holding up the flag high, and seeking paradise, o my brothers stay strong, victory won't be long."</p> <p>"Together we will stand up, once filled with iman (faith), men who answered the call, terrorising the world.</p> <p>"Through our blood comes success, and we'll give it our best, to destroy the kuffar [disbelievers], we will slaughter them all," the nasheed adds. "So my brothers erupt, let the world know we're up, by the will of Allah, we will conquer the world."</p> <p>The video also features a short clip from the mass shooting at a country music festival in Las Vegas in October 2017. The Isis has insisted that it was responsible for the attack, but investigators claim the shooter Stephen Paddock showed no indication that he was associated with the terror outfit.</p> <p>The footage was shared on various social media platforms including YouTube and on file-sharing sites.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Convicted man seeks to overturn case
SOURCE	http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/crime/article196971114.html
GIST	<p>Hamid Hayat, a cherry picker from Lodi, was packed off to federal prison 12 years ago after being convicted in one of the Sacramento region's first international terror cases following the 9/11 attacks.</p> <p>Today, Hayat is 35 and has served half of his 24-year sentence. But his attorneys maintain that he is innocent.</p> <p>Hayat's case returns to federal court in Sacramento on Monday for another review of whether he was railroaded by the government prosecutors who also convicted his father, an ice cream vendor.</p> <p>Hayat was convicted in 2006 of lying to FBI agents and providing support to terrorists. His attorneys argue that much of the evidence used against him was faulty, including prosecution claims that Hayat attended a terror training camp in Balakot, Pakistan, in 2003 and 2004 – a facility they say had been shut down before Hayat even got to Pakistan.</p> <p>They also note that his attorney at the time was so inexperienced she had never before handled a criminal case.</p> <p>"Hamid was innocent of the charges: he never attended a militant training camp in Balakot or anywhere else," San Francisco attorney Dennis Riordan argued in court papers asking for the evidentiary hearing that begins Monday before U.S. Magistrate Judge Deborah Barnes.</p> <p>Federal prosecutors have fought the reopening of the case, arguing that Hayat confessed to the FBI. They have noted that appeals of the conviction have been consistently rejected.</p> <p>"Hayat repeatedly admitted that he attended a jihadi camp in 2003-2004," prosecutors wrote in documents last year opposing a new hearing on the conviction. "Hayat told six agents at least six separate times that the camp he attended was in the vicinity of Balakot, in the Northwest Frontier Province."</p> <p>Barnes rejected the government's position and in June ordered an evidentiary hearing into the defense claims, something prosecutors were still arguing about during a December motion hearing until she shut</p>

them down.

“I understand very clearly that the government objects to an evidentiary hearing. I get that,” Barnes told them. “I disagree with that position. That ship has sailed.”

Now, the two sides are set to square off over a case that has been controversial since it first broke into public view in June 2005, when officials described breaking up an al-Qaeda terror cell in Lodi.

Federal prosecutors accused Hayat, then 22, of explosives and weapons training that included using photos of President George W. Bush as targets.

Hayat, who was born in San Joaquin County in 1982, was charged along with his father, Umer Hayat, a Lodi ice cream truck driver who was accused of lying to the FBI.

Umer Hayat’s jury could not reach a verdict in the case and he later pleaded guilty to a lesser charge and was sentenced to time served.

Defense witnesses are expected to include Hayat family members and others who will say Hamid Hayat was never away from them long enough to have gone to a terrorist training camp.

Some of that testimony is expected to take place in unusual nighttime court sessions via live videoconferencing with four witnesses in Pakistan. Other defense witnesses will include a false confessions expert who is expected to be on the stand while portions of Hamid Hayat’s taped confessions to FBI agents are played.

Umer Hayat told The Bee in 2006 after his plea bargain that neither he nor his son was ever involved in terrorism and that their confessions, taped by the FBI, resulted from exhaustion and leading questions.

“I lost my name, my business, my community and my home for nothing,” he said then. “Don’t talk to the FBI, never, ever. They screwed us very bad. They was telling me, ‘You are helping your son,’ so I was cooperating with them.”

Hamid Hayat has been fighting his sentence since his conviction, asking for a new trial and appealing unsuccessfully to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals

The case began when the FBI sent an undercover operative, Pakistani American Naseem Khan, to Lodi, where Khan claimed he’d seen four of the world’s most wanted terrorists, including Ayman al-Zawahiri, then al-Qaeda’s second in command. Those claims proved to be false. Khan then befriended Hamid Hayat and encouraged him to go to a terrorist training camp while Hayat was in Pakistan for his wedding.

According to court testimony, the Hayats were interviewed twice by the FBI. The first time, they both denied they knew anything about terrorism. But during a second interview at Sacramento FBI headquarters, after many hours of grilling without a lawyer, Hamid Hayat changed his story and confessed he attended a terrorist training camp for about three months. The jury asked for a read-back of FBI Special Agent Harry Sweeney’s trial testimony.

Sweeney testified that Hamid Hayat admitted to going to the camp after Sweeney asked him, “Would there be any reason why we would have a satellite image of you at a camp in 2003?”

Under cross-examination, Sweeney acknowledged there was no such photo.

Monday’s court session marks the beginning of an evidentiary hearing that the defense lawyers hope will result in Barnes forwarding a recommendation to the trial judge, U.S. District Judge Garland E. Burrell Jr., to vacate the conviction and order a new trial.

The likelihood of that seems remote. Burrell issued an order in November 2016 rejecting a defense motion

asking that the conviction be vacated because of claims that Hayat did not receive an adequate defense.

Despite that, Hayat's lawyers hope to show that the government withheld evidence that could have exonerated their clients, and that his trial attorney, Wazhma Mojaddidi, was so inexperienced that she failed to hire an investigator for Hayat.

Riordan, who says Mojaddidi has since become "an experienced and well-respected attorney specializing in immigrations and family," argues that at the time of trial she never applied for a security clearance that could have allowed her to fight the government's refusal to turn over some classified information.

He also has blamed her for essentially turning over the defense to the control of Johnny Griffin III, a former federal prosecutor and seasoned defense attorney who "was opposed to conducting any investigation or filing any motions that might interfere with his strategy of forcing the government to trial as quickly as possible."

Griffin declined to comment last week, but is listed as a possible government witness to be called to discuss his dealings with Mojaddidi.

Court filings say Griffin has previously refused to answer questions in the case, citing attorney-client privilege that Umer Hayat refused to waive. If Griffin is called and won't answer questions, he is expected to "invoke the attorney-client privilege on the record and refuse to testify," prosecution filings say.

Mojaddidi, who has become a leader in Sacramento's Muslim community and served as president of the Sacramento chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, is expected to testify later this week as a defense witness. She said in an interview Thursday that she still strongly believes that Hamid Hayat is innocent, but denies she was to blame for the guilty verdict.

"Most of the trial was done jointly with Johnny Griffin," Mojaddidi said. "I was in this case primarily because of my Muslim background and language skills and ability to analyze evidence.

"There was an understanding that Johnny would work with me regarding my lack of criminal experience. I relied on Griffin's criminal expertise and he relied on my cultural knowledge. The client, the community and Johnny Griffin knew about my inexperience and decided to include me anyway.

"I am confident I competently represented him," she added. "At the end of the day I think I did the best that I could under the circumstances."

Riordan said he hopes the new hearing will lead eventually to Hayat being released from prison.

"Our goal is to establish what really went on at trial, and to establish the truth of the fact that he never went to a camp," Riordan said.

The case continues to reverberate in Lodi's Pakistani Muslim community, said Taj Khan, a local activist who has followed the case every step of the way.

"An innocent person is languishing in prison for no reason or fault of his own and justice has to prevail somewhere or sometime," Khan said. "I hope this leads to some kind of justice for Hamid Hayat."

Hayat's parents and brother and sister visit him "as much as they can," Khan said. "We know the family has suffered tremendously. His mother has some serious medical issues. We hope some good news comes out of this process."

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SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/kabul-attack-terrorists-could-use-ambulances-in-future-deadly-attacks/
GIST	<p>LONDON -- The Taliban has claimed responsibility for an attack in Kabul Saturday. More than 100 people were killed and twice as many were injured when an attacker drove an ambulance packed with explosives into the heart of the city.</p> <p>It's not hard to buy a used ambulance. CBS News posed as buyers and found one on eBay. But according to security experts like Chris Phillips, the resale of emergency vehicles is handing terrorists a lethal weapon.</p> <p>"The terrorist threat is wider, it's more diverse," said Phillips. "One of those attacks will almost certainly be a vehicle bomb."</p> <p>It's a threat that British security services flagged a decade ago when they were being used in Iraq. They're called Trojan vehicles, seemingly ordinary ambulances that are instead packed with explosives</p> <p>"You're not going to know that the ambulance coming towards you is a real one or a fake one," Phillips said.</p> <p>He also said the fear is that tactic will be imported here as terror attacks by Islamic militants grow.</p> <p>"There needs to be some kind of legislation to stop the use of these vehicles or we're going to have a major problem with this."</p> <p>We found plenty of examples on eBay. A police car with original equipment in the truck, an ambulance with full emergency markings -- most run for just a few thousand dollars.</p> <p>"Anyone can turn up, they can pay cash for the vehicles and within hours those vehicles can be in the hands of a terrorist cell," said Lord Carlile of Berriew, who led calls to outlaw the resale of emergency vehicles.</p> <p>But there are still no clear regulations governing the resale of ambulances. Lord Carlile pointed out last year's Ariana Grande concert where 60 ambulances raced to the scene, is exactly the scenario where a Trojan vehicle could exploit the chaos.</p> <p>"That is the sort of place where the risk of one of these vehicles entering the cordoned off zone in the minutes immediately after the explosion takes place is a very high risk," he said.</p> <p>We contacted the home office, Britain's counter-terrorism authority repeatedly, and we were told they're looking into it. EBay said fully operational emergency vehicles are not allowed on their website, and they're reviewing the ads we pointed out.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/30 Taliban responds to Trump comments
SOURCE	http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-taliban-haley-united-nations-afghanistan-negotiations-talks-a8184451.html
GIST	<p>The media office of the Taliban has told Donald Trump to let it know when he's ready to discuss the US's exit from Afghanistan after the US President said his administration would no longer engage in talks with the terrorist group.</p> <p>"Let us know when you're ready to talk to discuss your exit," says a tweet from the account of the media office. "Soon is better before it becomes very ugly for you in Afghanistan. You know how to reach us through our office in Doha".</p>

	<p>During a meeting with members of the UN Security Council, Mr Trump railed against a string of recent attacks in Afghanistan. The Taliban has claimed responsibility for a car bombing in Kabul on Saturday that killed roughly 100 people and injured many others.</p> <p>“Innocent people are being killed left and right. Bombing, in the middle of children, in the middle of families, bombing, killing all over Afghanistan,” Mr Trump said. “So we don’t want to talk with the Taliban. There may be a time but it’s going to be a long time.”</p> <p>The Trump administration is currently seeking to end a stalemate in the US’s longest war.</p> <p>Multiple attempts to hold peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban have failed.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/30 Yemen prime minister to flee country?
SOURCE	http://time.com/5124508/yemen-separatists-storm-government/?xid=homepage
GIST	<p>(SANAA, Yemen) — Yemen’s prime minister was preparing to flee the country on Tuesday for Saudi Arabia after separatists seized the area around the presidential palace in the southern port city of Aden in fierce battles overnight, security officials said.</p> <p>According to the officials, fighters loyal to the so-called Southern Transitional Council fought all way to the gates of the Palace of Maashiq in the district of Crater in Aden, forcing President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi’s troops to abandon their positions. The officials said Hadi’s prime minister and several Cabinet members would leave imminently to Riyadh.</p> <p>The palace is the seat of Yemen’s internationally backed government. The separatist forces did not enter the palace itself and were stopped by Saudi Arabian troops who have been guarding the palace for the past months.</p> <p>However, a senior government official told The Associated Press that Prime Minister Ahmed Obaid Bin Daghar and several ministers remain inside and that the separatists have not seized the palace itself.</p> <p>The official declined to say whether the prime minister was to leave Aden. The security officials and the government official spoke on condition of anonymity under regulations.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Trump: there is no talking w/Taliban
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/jan/29/trump-us-wont-talk-taliban-attacks-afghanistan/
GIST	<p>President Trump said recent terrorist attacks in Afghanistan have only steeled his resolve against negotiating with the Taliban.</p> <p>“There’s no talking with the Taliban,” Mr. Trump said as he hosted members of the U.N. Security Council for lunch at the White House. “We’ll finish what we have to finish” in Afghanistan.</p> <p>A suicide attack killed at least 11 Afghan troops Monday at Afghanistan’s premier military academy. Last weekend, an ambulance packed with explosives detonated on a street in Kabul, killing about 100 and injuring dozens more.</p> <p>“Innocent people are being killed left and right,” Mr. Trump said. “We don’t want to talk to the Taliban. The atrocities they’re committing ... it’s horrible.”</p> <p>The president said he and the Security Council would be discussing “what more we can do to defeat the</p>

	Taliban.” “It’s a whole different fight over there,” Mr. Trump said. “We’re all out, and that’s taking place right now, and it’s a whole new front. And it’s a whole new set of principles that we’re being governed by.”
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HEADLINE	01/29 DHS: terrorists attempt daily entry
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/jan/29/7-potential-terrorists-day-try-enter-us-dhs-chief/
GIST	<p>Homeland Security will demand more information from applicants from high-risk countries before accepting them as refugees, Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen announced Monday as she defended President Trump’s steps on immigration and visitor screening.</p> <p>Ms. Nielsen also highlighted a recent report that found the government weeds out an average of seven travelers each day — 50 a week — who are on the terrorist watch-list yet still try to enter the U.S.</p> <p>Speaking at the Wilson Center, the new secretary also asked for support for Mr. Trump’s border wall and his broader immigration plans, as part of ongoing discussions on Capitol Hill on a deal to legalize illegal immigrant “Dreamers.”</p> <p>“We cannot let this moment slip away. Now is the time,” she said. “We cannot afford to kick the can down the road any farther.”</p> <p>Ms. Nielsen said past administrations had not been as strenuous in attempting to weed out would-be terrorists as the current one, and pointed to a string of attacks dating back five years — to the heart of the Obama administration.</p> <p>And she again cited a controversial administration report that found of more than 500 people convicted of terrorism-related crimes in U.S. courts since 2001, three-quarters were foreign-born.</p> <p>She said that was a reason to stiffen controls on who’s admitted.</p> <p>In terms of refugees, she said applicants will face more screening if they come from “high-risk” countries. She didn’t describe the changes, but said they will be beneficial.</p> <p>“These changes will not only improve security but importantly they will help us better assist refugees fleeing persecution,” she said.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Yemen: Aden fighting amounts to coup
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/yemen-news-agency-12-killed-132-wounded-aden-52676822?
GIST	<p>Yemen’s embattled President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi said Monday that a “coup” is underway in his government’s seat of power in the southern city of Aden, where separatists allied with the United Arab Emirates were battling his forces for a second day.</p> <p>The violence has killed at least 12 people and wounded over 130. It has also exposed deep cracks within the Saudi-led coalition, which has been fighting Yemen’s Houthi rebels on behalf of Hadi’s government since March 2015. The UAE is a key member of the coalition, but relations with the president have been tense for months.</p> <p>In the Aden district of Khor Maksar, the two sides deployed tanks and exchanged heavy gunfire as shops</p>

	<p>and schools remained closed for a second day. Snipers were seen on rooftops and fighting spread to the nearby Crater district. The clashes left the two districts bitterly divided.</p> <p>Violence first erupted on Sunday when a deadline issued by the separatists for the government to resign expired.</p> <p>Yemen's Prime Minister Ahmed Obaid Bin Daghar described the separatists' move as a coup while others pointed to the UAE's role in unleashing forces trained and armed by the Gulf Arab state to attack government offices, forces and allies.</p> <p>Hadi renewed his call for a cease-fire, saying "rebellion and weapons won't achieve peace or build a state."</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Group: Syria airstrikes destroy hospital
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/idlib-syria-airstrike-bashar-assad-russia-hospital-saraqeb-activists-say/
GIST	<p>BEIRUT -- Syria activists and rescue workers say at least 11 people have been killed and a hospital badly damaged and rendered unusable in regime airstrikes on the opposition-held northern province of Idlib.</p> <p>The local White Helmets rescuer group said the airstrikes on Monday hit Idlib's largest vegetable market in the town of Saraqeb, where 11 people were killed.</p> <p>The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights confirmed the attack and said a local hospital was also hit by the Syrian regime strikes, putting it out of service. The activist Idlib Media center posted photographs of the exterior of the damaged building.</p> <p>The violence has overshadowed a peace conference hosted by Russia between the Syrian government and the opposition, which is scheduled to open on Monday.</p> <p>A day earlier, at least 17 civilians were killed in airstrikes in Idlib.</p> <p>Syrian dictator Bashar Assad's forces have a history of targeting hospitals and field clinics in rebel-held territory, and allied Russian aircraft have been accused of doing the same. Both Syria and Russia deny deliberately targeting civilians.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Military defeat of ISIS 'weeks away'
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/01/29/military-defeat-isis-can-be-measured-in-weeks-top-us-general-says.html
GIST	<p>The military defeat of ISIS could be just 'weeks' away, a top U.S. military official said Monday -- a stunning development given the terror group once boasted the infrastructure to control an expanse of territory in Syria and Iraq where 10 million people lived.</p> <p>U.S. Central Command General Joseph Votel made the comment during a speech to Jordan's National Defense School on Monday, according to a tweet posted by Defense One.</p> <p>"The timeline for the military defeat of ISIS can now be measured in weeks," Votel said, though he cautioned there is still "very tough fighting" going on in the Middle Euphrates River Valley.</p> <p>As Fox News reported, the terrorist group has lost 98 percent of the land it once held -- with half of ISIS' so-called "caliphate" having been recaptured since President Trump took office.</p>

	<p>The gains that led to Votel's rosy assessment came after changes in the rules of engagement, instituted over the last year.</p> <p>“The rules of engagement under the Obama administration were onerous. I mean what are we doing having individual target determination being conducted in the White House, which in some cases adds weeks and weeks,” retired Air Force Lt. Gen. David Deptula, the former head of U.S. Air Force intelligence, told Fox News. “The limitations that were put on actually resulted in greater civilian casualties.”</p> <p>What comes after ISIS has been wiped out is another story, and whether a wide-ranging Syria peace deal can happen soon in Geneva is no sure thing. Votel noted some of the country’s woes predate ISIS’s reign of terror.</p> <p>“I think we are probably a ways away from this,” Votel said at the event in Jordan. “As we defeat ISIS, many of the underlying tensions that have always existed in Syria are coming back to the forefront...makes pursuit of political solution not impossible but...complicated.”</p> <p>Although ISIS has been mostly defeated in Iraq and Syria, it continues to harness the power of social media to call on followers around the world to conduct terror attacks in its name against U.S. and Western targets.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 ISIS, Taliban ravage Afghanistan
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/28/asia/afghanistan-military-base-attack-intl/index.html
GIST	<p>Kabul, Afghanistan (CNN)Five militants targeted a military base in Kabul on Monday, killing 11 and capping a week of violence that has shaken a country ravaged by years of conflict.</p> <p>More than 130 people have been killed in four attacks over the past nine days, starting with a deadly hotel siege in Kabul which left at least 22 people dead.</p> <p>The Taliban have claimed two attacks while ISIS says it is behind the others, including Monday's military base assault, raising the possibility of a deadly competition between the two terrorist groups.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the fact a military base in the center of Kabul was vulnerable to attack raises questions over the Afghan government's ability to protect itself.</p> <p>"This is all about the deterioration of security inside what was supposed to be known as the 'ring of steel,' the Afghan capital of Kabul ... (ISIS) appears to be in a race for the low ground of extremist brutality with the Taliban," CNN's Nick Paton Walsh said.</p> <p>Monday's assault started before daybreak when an attacker detonated his suicide vest at the entrance of the military base, near the Marshal Fahim Military Academy in the west of Kabul, Dawlat Waziri, spokesman for the Ministry of Defense told CNN.</p> <p>The assault dragged on for five hours during which another suicide bomber detonated his explosive vest. Another two were killed by the Afghan National Army and one was captured, Waziri said.</p> <p>Eleven Afghan army personnel were killed and 16 were wounded in the attack, he said.</p> <p>Although ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack through its media arm, the Amaq News Agency, it didn't provide any evidence to support the claim. The site reported "an immersive attack by the Islamic State fighters targeted the Military Academy in Kabul city."</p> <p>The Marshal Fahim National Defense University shares the site with two other military facilities,</p>

including a NATO base that houses instructors for the academy, according to spokesman Shah Hussain Murtazawi.

The military complex, which is located in the 5th police district of Kabul, is near the site of a suicide bombing in October 2017.

The attack comes just two days after an attacker driving an ambulance packed with explosives killed more than 100 in the Afghan capital.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the bombing, which took place on Saturday when an explosion-packed ambulance drove through a checkpoint. More than 200 people were left injured, including 30 police officers, according to Kabul police chief Basir Mojahid said.

The devastating attack took place exactly a week after militants stormed a Kabul hotel in a 12-hour standoff.

In that incident, which was claimed by the Taliban, Afghan authorities say the attackers killed at least 18 people, including 12 foreigners, before security forces broke through. At least four assailants also were killed.

Some Afghan authorities blamed the Pakistan-based Haqqani network for the attack, who are aligned with the Taliban.

Just days after the hotel siege ended, ISIS militants attacked the offices of British aid agency Save the Children in the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad on Wednesday, killing at least four people and injuring dozens in a 10-hour battle, according to local authorities. All five attackers were killed.

The repeated attacks and growing atmosphere of insecurity highlights the problems faced by the United States military presence in Afghanistan, reinforced with thousands of new troops by the Trump administration.

Despite the US presence in the country since 2001, the Taliban have only grown more powerful in recent years, now controlling to 40% of the country according to an official US assessment.

Afghanistan's national government appears weak and divided in the face of the assault, which has cost the lives of at least 7,000 Afghan soldiers in the past year.

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HEADLINE	01/30 Afghanistan: Taliban crossed 'red line'
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-blast-trump/afghanistan-says-taliban-will-have-to-be-defeated-after-trump-rejects-talks-idUSKBN1FJ0WV
GIST	<p>KABUL/PESHAWAR, Pakistan (Reuters) - Afghanistan said on Tuesday the Taliban would have to be defeated on the battlefield after U.S. President Donald Trump rejected the idea of talks with the militants following a series of deadly attacks.</p> <p>The Taliban reacted to Trump's announcement by saying they never wanted to talk to the United States anyway, but one senior member of the group said he suspected efforts would still be made to get negotiations going.</p> <p>Talking to reporters at the White House on Monday, Trump condemned the militant group for recent carnage in Kabul and said the United States was not prepared to talk now. He pledged to "finish what we have to finish".</p> <p>His comments suggested he sees a military victory over the Taliban, an outcome that U.S. military and</p>

diplomatic officials say cannot be achieved with the resources and manpower he has authorized.

A spokesman for Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said while the government had encouraged the Taliban to talk, the attacks in Kabul, including a suicide bomb attack on Saturday that killed more than 100 people, was a “red line”.

“The Taliban have crossed a red line and lost the chance for peace,” said the spokesman, Shah Hussain Murtazawi.

“We have to look for peace on the battlefield. They have to be marginalized.”

He declined to comment directly on Trump’s announcement.

A spokesman for the Taliban, who are fighting to oust foreign forces, defeat the U.S.-backed government and impose their version of Islamic rule, said they never wanted to hold peace talks with the United States anyway.

“Their main strategy is to continue war and occupation,” the spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said in a statement.

He said Taliban fighters would respond in kind if the Americans wanted to focus on war: “If you emphasize war then our mujahideen will not welcome you with flowers.”

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HEADLINE	01/29 Pentagon censors SIGAR input
SOURCE	https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-01-30/pentagon-muzzles-afghanistan-watchdog-as-situation-deteriorates
GIST	<p>The Pentagon has barred an official watchdog from providing unclassified guideposts in his reports on the war, amid increasing violence in Kabul and signs that Afghan forces aren’t gaining ground against the Taliban despite President Donald Trump’s pledge to send more U.S. troops.</p> <p>For the first time since 2009, the Defense Department didn’t let the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction release his assessments of Afghan force strength or of territory that’s held by the government, lost to the Taliban or contested, John Sopko said in his latest quarterly report.</p> <p>“Historically, the number of districts controlled or influenced by the government has been falling,” Sopko wrote. “The number controlled or influenced by the insurgents has been rising — a fact that should cause even more concern about its disappearance from public disclosure and discussion.”</p> <p>Trump condemned a Taliban suicide attack in downtown Kabul on Saturday that killed 95 people and wounded 158 others as “despicable” and called on the world to act against the Islamic fundamentalist group. While U.S. policy has long been to use military pressure to force the Taliban to the negotiating table with the Afghan government, Trump said on Monday that “innocent people are being killed left and right” so “we don’t want to talk with the Taliban. There may be a time, but it’s going to be a long time.”</p> <p>In August, Trump agreed to a Pentagon request to send 4,000 additional U.S. troops, including special forces, to be deployed in Afghanistan. He also gave commanders in the field more authority to strike the Taliban as well as Islamic State and al-Qaeda terrorists.</p> <p>The U.S. Air Force dropped 653 bombs and missiles in October, a threefold increase from a year earlier and a record high since 2012, according to the inspector general’s report. But he said those actions have yet to increase the Afghan government’s control over its population.</p> <p>He noted the “irony” that as recently as December the Pentagon had made public figures comparable to</p>

those he's now been barred from reporting, including in a November briefing for reporters by General John Nicholson, commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

Sopko said the Pentagon has said about 64 percent of Afghanistan's population lives in areas under government control, with 12 percent under insurgent control and the remaining 24 percent in contested areas. Government control has declined since the inspector general's staff began reporting the data in January 2016.

U.S. casualties doubled in the first 11 months of 2017 compared with the same periods in 2015 and 2016, according to military figures cited by Sopko. In 2017 data through Nov. 26, 11 U.S. military personnel were killed in Afghanistan, and 99 were wounded.

The military said civilian casualties rose 13 percent to 4,474 from June 1 through Nov. 26, according to the report, with about a third of those deaths. According to the United Nations, more than 26,500 civilians have been killed and an additional 49,000 have been injured since the conflict began in 2001.

Despite \$8.7 billion spent on counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan, opium production was up 87 percent in the first 11 months of 2017 from the same period a year earlier, an all-time record, the inspector general reported.

Although the Pentagon says airstrikes demolished drug labs, destroying \$80 million of drug money and cutting off \$16 million of direct revenue to the Taliban, the inspector general's report "questions the accuracy of these figures."

"The labs being destroyed are cheap and easy to replace," the report said. "According to some estimates they only take three or four days to replace."

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HEADLINE	01/30 Yemen: ISIS militants kill 12 troops
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SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/latest-islamic-militants-kill-12-troops-south-yemen-52698744?
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GIST	<p>The Latest on the situation in Yemen (all times local):</p> <p>12:10 p.m.</p> <p>Yemeni tribesmen say suspected Islamic militants have attacked a checkpoint in southern Yemen, killing at least 12 soldiers.</p> <p>The tribesmen say Tuesday's attack started with a mortar round fired at the checkpoint, followed by heavy gunfire that killed most of its guards. The checkpoint is near the southern city of Ataq, the provincial capital of Shabwa.</p> <p>They tribesmen spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak to the media.</p> <p>The troops guarding the checkpoint are part of a unit called the Elite Shabwa Force that was trained by the United Arab Emirates and deployed last year to the region. It declared victory over al-Qaida's branch in Yemen, which used Shabwa as a safe haven. The UAE is part of a Saudi-led coalition battling Yemen's Shiite rebels who control the country's north.</p> <p>Meanwhile, UAE-trained forces in the city of Aden — some 400 kilometers, or 250 miles, from Shabwa— have battled Yemeni government forces there and seized control of a district where the presidential palace is located.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/30 Sweden charges truck driver w/terrorism
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/swedes-charge-uzbek-man-terrorism-truck-attack-52698745?
GIST	<p>Swedish prosecutors have charged an Uzbek man who rammed a stolen truck into a crowd in downtown Stockholm in April, killing five and injuring 14, with terrorism and other offenses.</p> <p>Rakhmat Akilov is the only suspect and has already confessed.</p> <p>Akilov was arrested hours after he drove a stolen beer truck into a crowd of shoppers on a busy pedestrian shopping street and crashed it into an upscale department store in Stockholm's city center on April 7.</p> <p>The Uzbek construction worker, who was 39 at the time of the attack, was subject to deportation from Sweden ahead of attack as his asylum application had been rejected.</p>
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Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	01/29 FBI deputy director steps down
SOURCE	http://time.com/5123513/fbi-deputy-director-andrew-mccabe-stepping-down/?xid=homepage
GIST	<p>(WASHINGTON) — FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, a target of frequent and aggressive criticism by President Donald Trump, abruptly stepped down from his position Monday ahead of his planned retirement this spring.</p> <p>A 22-year veteran of the FBI, McCabe has been publicly and repeatedly lambasted over the past year by Trump, who has accused him of bias because of his wife's political connections and an FBI investigation that produced no criminal charges against Hillary Clinton.</p> <p>McCabe, who has held a number of FBI leadership roles and been heavily involved in investigations into major crimes including the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, becomes eligible for retirement in a matter of weeks. FBI staff learned Monday that McCabe was leaving the bureau's No. 2 post effective immediately, according to people who spoke only on condition of anonymity to discuss an internal personnel move. He is expected to retire with full pension benefits.</p> <p>The departure comes as FBI Director Christopher Wray makes changes to his senior leadership team, replacing two other top aides last week. Such changes are not unusual when a new director takes charge, but they are notable amid Trump's public pressure on Wray to get rid of officials who were confidants of James Comey, whom he fired as FBI director last May.</p> <p>In a message Monday to FBI employees, Wray said McCabe would be retiring on March 18 and denied that the move stemmed from political pressure.</p> <p>"I will not be swayed by political or other pressure in my decision-making," Wray wrote.</p> <p>The exit comes amid multiple ongoing investigations, including a Justice Department watchdog probe into the actions of McCabe and other top FBI officials during the Clinton email probe. In addition, special counsel Robert Mueller is investigating whether the Trump campaign improperly coordinated with Russia during the 2016 presidential election and whether Trump sought to obstruct the inquiry by, among other actions, firing Comey.</p> <p>McCabe has been repeatedly assailed by Trump since the fall of 2016, when it was revealed that his wife had accepted campaign contributions from the political action committee of then-Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, a Democrat and close Clinton ally, during a failed state Senate run. That episode is among the</p>

decisions under review by the Justice Department’s inspector general, which is expected to complete its report soon.

The FBI has said McCabe received the necessary ethics approval, and that at the time of the contributions, he was not in a supervisory role on the Clinton email investigation. But that has not stopped Trump and Republicans in Congress from repeatedly asserting that McCabe, and other FBI officials, are partisan law enforcement officials harboring a bias against him.

Responding to December news reports that McCabe would retire, the president wrote: “How can FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, the man in charge, along with leakin’ James Comey, of the Phony Hillary Clinton investigation (including her 33,000 illegally deleted emails) be given \$700,000 for wife’s campaign by Clinton Puppets during investigation?”

Another of the president’s tweets from last year said: “Why didn’t A.G. Sessions replace Acting FBI Director Andrew McCabe, a Comey friend who was in charge of Clinton investigation,” referring to Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

Monday evening, Republicans on the House Intelligence Committee voted to release a classified memo they wrote that alleges that the FBI and the Justice Department improperly used government surveillance during the Russia investigation.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders told reporters Monday that Trump was not part of the decision-making process but that he stood by his criticism of McCabe. Amid the tensions, Wray and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein traveled to the White House Monday to meet with chief of staff John Kelly, according to a senior White House official who was not authorized to discuss the meeting publicly and requested anonymity.

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HEADLINE	01/29 Puget Sound to hit 6M people by 2050
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/883939/central-puget-sound-population/
GIST	<p>The Central Puget Sound region will grow to nearly 6 million people by 2050, according to the Puget Sound Regional Council.</p> <p>The region will add an average of 55,000 more people a year as we increase from approximately 4 million to 5.8 million people.</p> <p>More than 1.2 million jobs coupled with an aging population that is sticking around will contribute to the growth.</p> <p>Though the region’s population will continue its upward trend, the average number of people moving to the area each year is actually slowing. According to the Puget Sound Regional Council, at least 80,000 people moved to Central Puget Sound in 2016 and 2017. The last time the region saw that type of growth was 1990-91.</p> <p>In 2017, King County was the region’s fastest growing county, increasing by 48,600 people over 2016, according to a PSRC report. Snohomish County saw an additional 16,500 people, following by Pierce County with 14,900 and Kitsap County by an additional 1,700 people.</p> <p>Since 2008, King County’s population growth rate has outpaced the region’s other counties, except in 2010.</p> <p>Last year, Seattle continued to be the fastest growing city, trailed by Bellevue, Tacoma, Kirkland, Kent, Burien, Renton, and Auburn.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Untold story of Pentagon Papers
SOURCE	https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-untold-story-of-the-pentagon-papers-co-conspirators
GIST	<p>In June of 1971, Gar Alperovitz, a thirty-five-year-old historian, sped through suburban Boston, looking for an out-of-the-way pay phone to use to call a reporter. Alperovitz had never considered himself much of a risk-taker. The father of two ran a small economic think tank focussed on community-building. He had participated in demonstrations against the Vietnam War and rung doorbells with Martin Luther King, Jr., in Boston, as part of an antiwar campaign. But what he was doing on this day, propelled by his desire to end the conflict, could lead to federal prison.</p> <p>He pulled his old Saab up to a phone booth on the outskirts of Harvard Square, and rang a hotel room nearby. When the reporter picked up, Alperovitz identified himself with the alias he had adopted: “It’s Mr. Boston.” Alperovitz told the journalist to open the door. Waiting in the hallway was a cardboard box, left minutes before by a runner working with Alperovitz. Inside were several hundred pages of the most sought-after documents in the United States—the top-secret Vietnam history known as the Pentagon Papers.</p> <p>The handoff was one of about a dozen clandestine encounters with journalists that Alperovitz orchestrated over the course of a three-week period, when he and a small group of fellow antiwar activists helped Daniel Ellsberg, a former military analyst at the Rand Corporation, elude an F.B.I. manhunt and distribute the Pentagon Papers to nineteen newspapers. Ellsberg, who had smuggled the documents out of Rand’s Santa Monica office two years earlier and copied them with the help of a colleague, has long been the public face of the leak. But Ellsberg was aided by about a half-dozen volunteers whose identities have stayed secret for forty-six years, despite the intense interest of the Nixon Administration, thousands of articles, books, documentaries, plays, and now a major film, “The Post,” starring Meryl Streep and Tom Hanks, about the Pentagon Papers. Ellsberg told me that the hidden role of this group was so critical to the operation that he gave them a code name—The Lavender Hill Mob, the name of a 1951 film about a ragtag group of amateur bank robbers. He has referred obliquely to his co-conspirators over the years. But he held back from identifying them because some in the group still feared repercussions.</p> <p>Now, Alperovitz, who is eighty-one, has agreed to be revealed for the first time. “I’m getting old,” Alperovitz told me, with a laugh. Several other members of the group told me that they still wished to remain anonymous, or declined interview requests. One former Harvard graduate student who also played a major role—she hid the papers in her apartment and organized hideouts for Ellsberg—considered coming forward in this piece, but she ultimately decided not to, after conferring with lawyers. As a green-card holder, she worried that her involvement could lead to her deportation by the Trump Administration. Still, she remains proud of her role. “Those were extraordinary days,” she told me. “It was about questioning the government and being against the government. I was very, very angry about what was happening in Vietnam.”</p> <p>Alperovitz said that the renewed interest in the Pentagon Papers, brought on by “The Post,” pushed him to finally acknowledge his role, but he also alluded to the “very dangerous” climate under President Trump.</p> <p>A historian and political economist, whose writings have focussed on the dangers of nuclear war and economic inequality, Alperovitz said that Trump’s “outrageous and destabilizing” rhetoric on North Korea compelled him to tell his story and “to suggest to people that it’s time to take action.”</p> <p>“We were trying to stop the war,” Alperovitz told me, in an interview in his home near Washington. “I’m not heroic in this, but I just felt it important to act,” he said. “There were lots of people dying unnecessarily. There were lots of people who were taking risks to try to end the war, and I was one of them.”</p> <p>Ellsberg told me that Alperovitz, in particular, was “critical to the way this thing worked out,” organizing</p>

the broader distribution of the papers. Ellsberg had initially turned over the documents only to Neil Sheehan, a reporter at the Times, which published the first front-page article on the Pentagon Papers, on June 13, 1971. (The Nixon Administration quickly secured an injunction to halt the Times from continuing to publish the documents.) But it was Alperovitz who devised the strategy of distributing the papers to as many news organizations as possible, including the Washington Post, an approach that later proved to be crucial from both a legal and public-relations standpoint. And it was Alperovitz who came up with the elaborate techniques for slipping the documents to reporters while evading the authorities. “Gar took care of all the cloak-and-dagger stuff,” Ellsberg said.

The danger to the Lavender Hill Mob could hardly be underestimated. Alperovitz “would’ve been indicted in a heartbeat” if he had been identified, Ellsberg said. Senior officials in the Nixon White House had become obsessed with arresting and discrediting Ellsberg and any of his accomplices. They created a group of Nixon campaign operatives, who became known as “the plumbers,” to break into the office of Ellsberg’s psychiatrist, in what would be a precursor to the Watergate scandal. In a 2010 documentary “The Most Dangerous Man in America: Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers,” Egil Krogh, one of the operatives, says that the Administration was obsessed with identifying who else was involved in the leak.

“Did Daniel Ellsberg work alone? Was he working with some other people? Was he part of a conspiracy?” Krogh, who was imprisoned for his role in the Watergate break-in, says in the film. F.B.I. agents—and Nixon’s plumbers—tracked leads from Los Angeles to Paris. The perpetrators, it turned out, met less than a mile from Harvard Square, the epicenter of the liberal, Ivy League élitism that Nixon so detested.

In early June of 1971, Ellsberg, who had left RAND and was working as a senior research fellow at M.I.T., hosted a small dinner party at his home in Cambridge. Ellsberg, who was then forty, had never met Alperovitz but invited him after a colleague said that they shared an intense opposition to the war. The Harvard graduate student was there as well.

Alperovitz had worked in the U.S. government on foreign affairs from 1961 to 1966—first in Congress, then at the State Department—and it was there, as an insider, that his opposition to the war hardened. As a Senate aide, in 1964, Alperovitz worked unsuccessfully to stop what he still calls the “phony” Gulf of Tonkin resolution, which allowed President Lyndon B. Johnson to escalate America’s military involvement in Vietnam. More than anything, the congressional vote confirmed his view that the war was a fraud perpetrated on the American public.

At the dinner, Alperovitz and Ellsberg, a former Marine and Pentagon analyst, talked about Nixon, liberal activism, nuclear weapons, and, of course, Vietnam. The top-secret papers never came up. But, as the party wrapped up and Alperovitz walked to his car, the Harvard graduate student pulled him aside and made a cryptic comment about some sensitive material on Vietnam and “boxes and boxes of papers,” Alperovitz recalled.

A day or two later, the graduate student arranged to meet Alperovitz at a park, she told me in an interview. She explained to Alperovitz that Ellsberg had entrusted her with thousands of pages of the documents, and that she had stashed them in cupboards in the pantry of her small apartment. Ellsberg had given copies of the papers to a Times reporter several months earlier, but had not heard from him since. She and Ellsberg didn’t know when the newspaper might run the story, or if it even intended to do so, and were eager to distribute more of the papers to other news outlets. “I needed help to do this work,” the woman told me, and Alperovitz seemed like “exactly the right person.”

When she asked Alperovitz if he would help, he immediately agreed. Decades later, Alperovitz said that his eagerness, despite the obvious risks, still puzzles him. “I’m a very cautious person, but I didn’t blink—which I don’t understand,” he told me. “I’m surprised I didn’t just say, ‘Whoops, I’m busy tomorrow.’ It was out of character.”

In a subsequent meeting with Ellsberg, Alperovitz mapped out a strategy. Ellsberg, who had tried to leak the secret papers to members of Congress but had been rebuffed, wanted to get all seven thousand pages of the papers out at once, if not in the Times then in the Washington Post or somewhere else. “My nightmare

was that the F.B.I. would catch me and capture all the papers first,” Ellsberg recalled. He even considered using the Harvard Crimson’s presses to print the documents himself. Alperovitz talked him out of it. “I said to Dan, ‘Look, this is seven thousand pages of material, you’ll get one story, maybe two,’ ” Alperovitz said. “If you really want to get this out to the public, you’ve got to break it up and keep the story going.”

To Ellsberg’s surprise, the Times ran its first story on the papers several days later. The Nixon Administration quickly secured an injunction to halt publication. By then, Alperovitz was already working the pay phones around Cambridge and Somerville to contact a reporter from the Post and get more coverage. Days later, with Alperovitz acting as an intermediary, Ellsberg met with a Post reporter in a local motel room and gave him the entire secret report. After the reporter left, Ellsberg and his wife, who were hiding out in the motel, saw on television that F.B.I. agents had descended on their home to question him. For the next two weeks, the Ellsbergs remained holed up, with the Harvard graduate student taking the lead in finding new places to stash them. “I moved them every few days,” she recalled. “I’d call friends and say, ‘I need your apartment for two days, and I just want you to go somewhere else. Just don’t ask me any questions.’ ” Each time the couple moved, she crammed boxes of the secret history into her small Volkswagen and moved them along with the Ellsbergs.

The one time that Ellsberg knew whose apartment he was using, he said, was during weekend that he spent in Cambridge with a friend, Jeffrey Race, a fellow Vietnam veteran. Race recalled watching a television news report with his fiancée about the F.B.I. searching for Ellsberg. “They can’t find him,” Race told me, “and we joked that, ‘Hey, he’s lying right here in his underwear on the floor taking a nap in front of the TV.’ ”

It was at Race’s apartment that Ellsberg had his closest brush with arrest. At Ellsberg’s request, from a pay phone outside of Race’s apartment, Alperovitz called a friend of Ellsberg’s in Los Angeles to arrange a way for him to speak with his children and let them know that he was all right. As Ellsberg watched from the window, Alperovitz hung up and walked away. Minutes later, police cars converged around the phone booth. Ellsberg guessed that the F.B.I. must have been tapping his Los Angeles friend’s phone, or perhaps the pay phone, in their effort to find him. “We ducked behind the window,” Ellsberg recalled. “I’m thinking, Oh my God!” He and his wife left that same night for a different hiding place.

Alperovitz asked the administrator of the Cambridge Institute, the think tank he ran, to vacate her apartment for the Ellsbergs for several days. “It was a very matter-of-fact thing,” the administrator, Nancy Lyons, who is now retired and living in Concord, Massachusetts, said in an interview. She immediately agreed—she saw it as an opportunity to be involved in something larger than herself. “I might have just been naïve, but I didn’t have any hesitation.” The one concern she had, she told me, was that she had waited a long time to get the rent-controlled apartment, and she didn’t want to lose it if someone found out. (No one did.)

Alperovitz’s primary task was devising how to distribute the papers to as many news organizations as possible. Ellsberg usually told Alperovitz which newspapers to contact—the Boston Globe, the St. Louis Post Dispatch, the Los Angeles Times, the Christian Science Monitor, and the Detroit Free Press, among them—but he left it to Alperovitz to figure out the logistics.

Alperovitz told me that he improvised the elaborate handoffs. “I invented this stuff as I went along,” he said. “I don’t know how.” Getting journalists interested in the papers, then the most sought after documents in the United States, was easy. He would call a newspaper’s city desk from a pay phone, identify himself as Mr. Boston—a code name that got a few references in “The Post”—and then offer to share some of the papers. “They were very happy to take them. Everyone wanted to be in on it,” he said.

The trickier part was handing off hundreds of pages of documents without being detected. Alperovitz and the Harvard graduate student recruited a handful of college students—all ardently opposed to the war—to help not only with mundane tasks, like getting the Ellsbergs’ groceries, but also to act as runners who delivered the papers.

During the frantic three weeks it took to distribute the documents, Alperovitz typically didn't have time to even read all the papers before parcelling them out to reporters. He simply grabbed a few hundred pages, boxed them up, and sent the runners on their way. Alperovitz usually found out what was in each stack only when he read the news stories. The pace was so hectic that he and other participants have trouble remembering the exact sequence today. Alperovitz can't remember, for instance, which reporter he called at the Cambridge hotel with instructions for finding the papers in the hallway. The former Harvard graduate student recalls a nighttime handoff of papers at an acquaintance's home, but the details are hazy.

There were also furtive meetings at Boston's Logan Airport, chosen by Alperovitz because it was a convenient place for out-of-town reporters to blend in. One student helping with the operation was dispatched to Logan to meet a Newsday reporter whom Alperovitz had summoned from Washington.

Posing this time as Sam Adams, Alperovitz had the airport page the reporter over the public-address system; the student then handed the reporter a note with directions to find a green plastic shopping bag on a seat in the terminal. Inside were the last two chapters of the Pentagon Papers. The reporter, Martin Schram, recounted the "covert" and "borderline comical plan" in a story last month.

As Alperovitz dispatched members of the Lavender Hill Mob around the city, he never actually met any of the journalists himself—except for one: the CBS anchor Walter Cronkite. Alperovitz, posing again as Mr. Boston, called Cronkite to offer him a scoop—an on-camera interview with Ellsberg, who was still in hiding. Cronkite, like other journalists, seemed to believe he was talking to Ellsberg himself, Alperovitz said. He did not correct him.

Cronkite and his crew rushed to Boston. Alperovitz arranged for them to get a batch of the papers, and had a volunteer drive the anchorman to a nearby home in Cambridge, which an associate had lent for the day. The member of the Lavender Hill Mob "drove them around and around and back and forth to make sure they hadn't been followed," Alperovitz said. "If anyone smelled Cronkite, that would be trouble." (The driver declined to be interviewed for this article.) With Alperovitz looking on, Ellsberg gave a dramatic interview that aired that night.

On June 28th, after a final burst of stories in newspapers from Long Island to Los Angeles, Ellsberg agreed to surrender to federal authorities in Boston. A mob of journalists and onlookers met him outside the federal courthouse. Alperovitz went, too, watching from a distance. He could not risk being seen with Ellsberg, but he wanted to be there to mark the end of the saga that had begun three weeks earlier, at the dinner in Cambridge. What struck him most about the scene, Alperovitz said, was the huge throng of supporters cheering on Ellsberg. "It was like we weren't alone," he told me.

Ellsberg never did any prison time. Two years later, a judge threw out the charges against him, ruling that the break-in by Nixon's plumbers at Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office had "incurably infected the prosecution."

For years, Ellsberg kept his distance from the people who helped him for fear of endangering them. He and Alperovitz saw each other occasionally at political or academic events, but they rarely spoke of those weeks in Cambridge, both men said. When Ellsberg was writing his 2002 memoir, "Secrets," he went to Alperovitz and asked if he could name him in the book. Ellsberg said that he wanted to finally acknowledge the efforts of him and the others. Alperovitz declined. "I didn't need credit or blame," he said.

Last year, Ellsberg was doing a book-signing event when an older woman in line handed him a note asking him to dedicate her book "to The Lavender Hill Mob." Ellsberg looked up and recognized one of the young students who had helped him. He hadn't seen her in four decades. "After all these years, it was the most amazing thing," he said.

Over the last forty years, a few reporters asked Alperovitz if he was involved, but he always denied it. The closest he came to being identified was a reference to an anonymous intermediary in some news reports recounting the leak.

	<p>Today, he sees those weeks as a risk he had to take at a historic moment for his country. “I was someone who was trying, along with many people, to stop this killing. It was a moral issue of the first order,” he said. If Alperovitz regrets anything, it is only that the revelations in the papers didn’t force a quick end to America’s involvement in the war, as he had hoped. It would be another two years before most American military troops pulled out of Vietnam, and another four before the war came to an end—after the deaths, he noted, of “three million people, fifty-seven thousand Americans, for nothing.”</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 NKorea dials back military exercises
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/north-korea-under-sanctions-strain-dials-back-military-exercises-1517227829
GIST	<p>SEOUL—North Korea’s armed forces have scaled back their annual winter military exercises this year, U.S. officials said, a development they believe reflects growing pressure from international sanctions on the isolated nation’s economy and its military preparedness.</p> <p>The North Korean maneuvers, which typically run from December through March, were slow in getting started and are less extensive than usual, according to American officials familiar with intelligence reports and experts outside the government.</p> <p>One possibility is that restrictions on shipments of oil and refined petroleum products to North Korea imposed by the United Nations have led the country, which has one of the world’s largest standing armies, to conserve fuel by cutting back on ground and air training exercises.</p> <p>“Where this will have an effect is on ground-force readiness,” said Joseph S. Bermudez Jr. , a military analyst for 38 North, a website on North Korean affairs run by Johns Hopkins University’s U.S.-Korea Institute. “Military units have to train to maintain their proficiency.”</p> <p>Still, military analysts inside and outside the government cautioned that the development hasn’t yet led to a dramatic decrease in the North’s military capabilities. There also appear to be no signs that sanctions are limiting North Korea’s push to strengthen its nuclear and missile arsenal.</p> <p>In a New Year address, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called on his generals to “mass-produce nuclear warheads and ballistic missiles.” North Korean officials have insisted that recent talks with Seoul center on Pyongyang’s participation in the Winter Olympics in South Korea, rather than on its nuclear program.</p> <p>The reduction in the North Korean winter exercises comes amid other signs of strain on the country’s military.</p> <p>“We are seeing defections happening in areas where we don’t generally see them, for example crossing the DMZ,” said Gen. Vincent K. Brooks, the top U.S. commander in South Korea, referring to the demilitarized zone that divides the Korean peninsula.</p> <p>“We’re seeing some increase in executions, mostly against political officers who are in military units, for corruption,” the general said. He said the moves “are really about trying to clamp down as much as possible on something that might be deteriorating and keeping it from deteriorating too quickly.”</p>
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HEADLINE	01/30 NKorea restarts joint industrial complex?
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2018/01/30/Report-North-Korea-selling-clothes-made-from-Kaesong-Industrial-Complex/5151517311711/?utm_source=fp&utm_campaign=ts tn int&utm_medium=4

GIST	<p>SEOUL, South Korea, Jan. 30 (UPI) -- North Korea appears to be running clothing factories in Kaesong Industrial Complex, an inter-Korean zone that was supposed to have shut down two years ago.</p> <p>Radio Free Asia quoted Asia Press on Tuesday which claimed clothes produced in the facilities, known locally as "products from the complex" are being sold to wealthy North Koreans.</p> <p>The clothes come without labels or logos and are more expensive than Chinese products due to their higher quality, according to the Asia Press report.</p> <p>The workers at the clothing factories reportedly receive 16,000 North Korean won, or about \$2 a day, in wages while those who iron earn about 10,000 won, or less than a dollar.</p> <p>High-performing employees receive some 500,000 won (under \$70) in monthly bonuses, bringing their wages to about 3.3 million won (around \$450) to 3.6 million won (around \$500) per month, the report said.</p> <p>In February 2016, South Korea decided to freeze operations at Kaesong following the North's nuclear test and long-range rocket launch.</p> <p>A total of 124 South Korean businesses were forced to leave the premises.</p> <p>Last year, there were reports that North Korea may have restarted operations at the joint Korean complex, without the South's consent, running 19 factories to produce clothing for export to China or for domestic consumption.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Travelers to Cuba w/mystery symptoms
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/19-american-citizens-report-symptoms-suffered-by-diplomats-in-cuba/
GIST	<p>The State Department says 19 American travellers who visited Cuba have reported symptoms similar to those suffered by U.S. diplomats, following a travel warning for the country posted in September.</p> <p>"We continue to urge U.S. citizens to reconsider travel to Cuba," a State Department official told CBS News.</p> <p>These cases are separate from the at least 24 American embassy personnel and their family members who have reported a range of symptoms from attacks that began in November 2016, according to U.S. officials.</p> <p>The September 29 travel warning said the victims have suffered "ear complaints, hearing loss, dizziness, headache, fatigue, cognitive issues, and difficulty sleeping."</p> <p>Medical documents reviewed by CBS News show diagnoses of concussions as well.</p> <p>In October, a State Department official said the U.S. had "received a handful of reports from U.S. citizens who report they experienced similar symptoms following stays in Cuba."</p> <p>However, U.S. investigators haven't determined who or what was behind the alleged attacks.</p> <p>"Twenty-four people have had symptoms and findings consistent with what looks like a mild traumatic brain injury," State Department medical director Dr. Charles Rosenfarb told a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee Jan. 9 "The findings suggest that this is not an episode of mass hysteria."</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Labs: Syria stockpile link to sarin attack
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-crisis-chemicalweapons-exclusiv/exclusive-tests-link-syrian-government-stockpile-to-largest-sarin-attack-sources-idUSKBN1FJ0MG
GIST	<p>THE HAGUE (Reuters) - The Syrian government's chemical weapons stockpile has been linked for the first time by laboratory tests to the largest sarin nerve agent attack of the civil war, diplomats and scientists told Reuters, supporting Western claims that government forces under President Bashar al-Assad were behind the atrocity.</p> <p>Laboratories working for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons compared samples taken by a U.N. mission in the Damascus suburb of Ghouta after the Aug. 21, 2013 attack, when hundreds of civilians died of sarin gas poisoning, to chemicals handed over by Damascus for destruction in 2014.</p> <p>The tests found "markers" in samples taken at Ghouta and at the sites of two other nerve agent attacks, in the towns of Khan Sheikhoun in Idlib governorate on April 4, 2017 and Khan al-Assal, Aleppo, in March 2013, two people involved in the process said.</p> <p>"We compared Khan Sheikhoun, Khan al-Assal, Ghouta," said one source who asked not to be named because of the sensitivity of the findings. "There were signatures in all three of them that matched."</p> <p>The same test results were the basis for a report by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in October which said the Syrian government was responsible for the Khan Sheikhoun attack, which killed dozens.</p> <p>The findings on Ghouta, whose details were confirmed to Reuters by two separate diplomatic sources, were not released in the October report to the U.N. Security Council because they were not part of the team's mandate.</p> <p>They will nonetheless bolster claims by the United States, Britain and other Western powers that Assad's government still possesses and uses banned munitions in violation of several Security Council resolutions and the Chemical Weapons Convention.</p> <p>The OPCW declined to comment. Syria has repeatedly denied using chemical weapons in the conflict now in its seventh year and has blamed the chemical attacks in the rebel-held territory of Ghouta on the insurgents themselves.</p> <p>Russia has also denied that Syrian government forces have carried out chemical attacks and has questioned the reliability of the OCPW inquiries. Officials in Moscow have said the rebels staged the attacks to discredit the Assad government and whip up international condemnation.</p> <p>Under a U.S.-Russian deal after the Ghouta attack in 2013, Damascus joined the OPCW and agreed to permanently eliminate its chemical weapons program, including destroying a 1,300-tonne stockpile of industrial precursors that has now been linked to the Ghouta attack.</p> <p>But inspectors have found proof of an ongoing chemical weapons program in Syria, including the systematic use of chlorine barrel bombs and sarin, which they say was ordered at the highest levels of government.</p> <p>The chemical tests were carried out at the request of the U.N.-OPCW inquiry, which was searching for potential links between the stockpile and samples from Khan Sheikhoun. The analysis results raised the possibility that they would provide a link to other sarin attacks, the source said.</p> <p>Two compounds in the Ghouta sample matched those also found in Khan Sheikhoun, one formed from sarin and the stabilizer hexamine and another specific fluorophosphate that appears during sarin production, the tests showed.</p> <p>"Like in all science, it should be repeated a couple of times, but it was serious matching and serious</p>

laboratory work,” the source said.

Independent experts, however, said the findings are the strongest scientific evidence to date that the Syrian government was behind Ghouta, the deadliest chemical weapons attack since the Halabja massacres of 1988 during the Iran-Iraq war.

“A match of samples from the 2013 Ghouta attacks to tests of chemicals in the Syrian stockpile is the equivalent of DNA evidence: definitive proof,” said Amy Smithson, a U.S. nonproliferation expert.

The hexamine finding “is a particularly significant match,” Smithson said, because it is a chemical identified as a unique hallmark of the Syrian military’s process to make sarin.

“This match adds to the mountain of physical evidence that points conclusively, without a shadow of doubt, to the Syrian government,” she said.

Smithson and other sources familiar with the matter said it would have been virtually impossible for the rebels to carry out a coordinated, large-scale strike with poisonous munitions, even if they had been able to steal the chemicals from the government’s stockpile.

“I don’t think there is a cat in hell’s chance that rebels or Islamic State were responsible for the Aug. 21 Ghouta attack,” said Hamish de Bretton-Gordon, an independent specialist in biological and chemical weapons.

The U.N.-OPCW inquiry, which was disbanded in November after being blocked by Syria’s ally Russia at the U.N. Security Council, also found that Islamic State had used the less toxic blistering agent sulfur mustard gas on a small scale in Syria.

The Ghouta attack, by comparison, was textbook chemical warfare, Smithson and de Bretton-Gordon said, perfectly executed by forces trained to handle sarin, a toxin which is more difficult to use because it must be mixed just before delivery.

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HEADLINE	01/30 US, Mexico armed marshals on flights?
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-mexico-security-exclusive/exclusive-u-s-mexico-explore-placing-armed-u-s-air-marshals-on-flights-idUSKBN1FJ04J
GIST	<p>MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Mexico and the United States are looking into whether armed U.S. federal air marshals could be deployed on commercial cross-border flights, according to a document seen by Reuters and a Mexican official, as Mexico deepens security ties with its neighbor.</p> <p>Since Donald Trump took office, U.S and Mexican officials have said that Mexico has tried to improve cooperation with its top trade partner on security, immigration, and foreign policy, hoping to convince the U.S. president to take a softer stance on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).</p> <p>In 2003, in the wake of the 9/11 attacks on the United States, Mexico agreed to place Mexican security agents on certain flights, but said it would never allow U.S. officials on board its commercial airlines, let alone armed.</p> <p>However, in a Jan. 18 meeting in Mexico’s foreign ministry, officials from both countries agreed to “study the convenience of negotiating an agreement for the deployment of Federal Air Marshals on commercial flights,” according to the official Mexican document seen by Reuters.</p> <p>U.S. Federal Air Marshal Service spokesman Thomas Kelly declined to answer questions on the proposed agreement, but said air marshals “are armed Federal Law Enforcement Officers with the mission of in-flight protection of U.S.-flagged aircraft, crewmembers and passengers.”</p>

	<p>In a statement, Mexico’s foreign ministry confirmed that the government is evaluating the plan’s potential operational and security benefits but added that no agreement has yet been reached.</p> <p>A Mexican official with knowledge of the plan said the hardest part of the negotiations would center on allowing U.S. officials to carry arms, given that the use of weapons by foreigners in Mexico is sensitive and tightly regulated.</p> <p>The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) places sharp-shooters on domestic and international commercial flights to and from the United States to prevent militant attacks.</p> <p>The Mexican official said it was still to be decided if the air marshals would fly on just U.S.-bound flights, Mexico-bound flights, or both. There is no set date for when the agreement might be struck, or come into effect, the official said.</p> <p>It was not immediately clear if the marshals would travel solely on U.S.-owned airlines or also on Mexican carriers.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 ‘Romance’ jeopardizes juvenile court case?
SOURCE	http://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/alleged-office-romance-could-put-snohomish-co-case-in-jeopardy/281-512728826
GIST	<p>A juvenile court case in Snohomish County is under scrutiny, and questions are being raised about other cases, too, after an alleged romantic relationship was discovered between a probation officer and a deputy prosecuting attorney.</p> <p>At Denney Juvenile Justice Center in Everett, a defense attorney wants her client's child molestation case thrown out, partly because of what is disclosed in a memo from Snohomish County's Prosecuting Attorney, Mark Roe.</p> <p>The memo states "that since approximately November 2017, there has existed a personal, romantic relationship between the probation counselor assigned to this respondent's case, and the supervising attorney of the juvenile division of the prosecuting attorney's office that is prosecuting the case."</p> <p>The defense attorney has filed a motion to dismiss the case. The attorney notes "it is an impossible task for defense counsel to explain to the 17-year-old respondent the fairness of the justice system and the court process after learning that the probation officer, assigned to give the court information as to what is appropriate punishment in her case, is in a sexual relationship with the person in charge of prosecuting her."</p> <p>The prosecuting attorney's memo states they disclosed the relationship out of an abundance of caution, and “have no information or belief that the two people involved have ever discussed the respondent's case, nor altered any decisions or recommendation either made as a result of communication between them."</p> <p>The deputy prosecutor is being rotated back to the main downtown prosecutors office to "alleviate any future appearance of a potential conflict of interest."</p> <p>That does not satisfy the defense attorney who calls into question if there's been an independent review of all the cases the deputy prosecuting attorney and probation officer shared.</p> <p>There will be a hearing in Snohomish County involving the case Tuesday morning.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/30 Cleric: women watching soccer un-Islamic
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/indian-muslim-cleric-women-watching-soccer-islamic-52698551?
GIST	<p>A senior cleric at an influential Islamic seminary in northern India has issued a religious decree saying that Muslim women should not watch men playing soccer.</p> <p>Mufti Athar Kasmi said that watching men "playing with bare knees" violated the tenets of Islam and was forbidden for women. Kasmi is cleric at Darul Uloom, Asia's largest Sunni Muslim seminary in the northern town of Deoband.</p> <p>The cleric also lashed out at the men who allow their wives to watch football even on television.</p> <p>"Do you have no shame? Do you not fear God? You let her watch these kinds of things," he said in his sermon Friday.</p> <p>Kasmi's decree comes even as the Sunni Muslim kingdom of Saudi Arabia allowed women in to watch matches in soccer stadiums earlier this month.</p> <p>"Why do women need to watch these football matches? What they will gain by looking at footballer's thighs. Their attention will be on that only and they will even miss the scores," Kasmi said.</p> <p>Darul Uloom, located in Uttar Pradesh state, is a more than 150-year-old seminary that teaches Sunni Hanafi jurisprudence. The Islamic seminary's rigid interpretation of Islam is the ideological foundation for many hard-line religious groups including the Taliban movement in Afghanistan.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/30 India: 63M women, girls 'missing'
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/63m-women-girls-missing-due-indias-preference-boys-52698554?
GIST	<p>A deeply felt preference for boys has left more than 63 million women statistically "missing" across India, and more than 21 million girls unwanted by their families, government officials say.</p> <p>The skewed ratio of men to women is largely the result of sex-selective abortions, and better nutrition and medical care for boys, according to the government's annual economic survey, which was released Monday. In addition, the survey found that "families where a son is born are more likely to stop having children than families where a girl is born."</p> <p>Statistics indicate that India has 63 million fewer women than it should have, scientists say, a "missing" population explained by sex-selective abortions and a range of other issues.</p> <p>The birth of a son is often a cause for celebration and family pride, while the birth of a daughter can be a time of embarrassment and even mourning as parents look toward the immense debts they'll need to take on to pay for marriage dowries. Studies have long shown that Indian girls are less educated than boys, have poorer nutrition and get less medical attention. Many women — including educated, wealthy women — say they face intense pressure, most often from mothers-in-law, to have sons.</p> <p>By analyzing birth rates and the gender of last-born children, the report also estimated that more than 21 million Indian girls are not wanted by their families.</p> <p>"The challenge of gender is long-standing, probably going back millennia," wrote the report's author, chief economic adviser Arvind Subramanian, noting that India must "confront the societal preference for boys."</p> <p>The report also noted that increasing wealth does not mean an end to male preferences among families, with some comparatively wealthy areas, including New Delhi, faring worse over the years.</p>

Many of the best scores for women's development, the report noted, were in India's northeast — "a model for the rest of the country" — a cluster of states that hang off the country's edge where most people are ethnically closer to China and Myanmar, and where some people don't even see themselves as Indian.

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HEADLINE	01/29 Murder suspect trained w/hate group?
SOURCE	https://ww2.kqed.org/news/2018/01/29/california-murder-suspect-said-to-have-trained-with-extremist-hate-group/
GIST	<p>The California man accused of killing a 19-year-old University of Pennsylvania student earlier this month is an avowed neo-Nazi and a member of one of the most notorious extremist groups in the country, according to three people with knowledge of the man's recent activities.</p> <p>The man, Samuel Woodward, has been charged in Orange County with murdering Blaze Bernstein, who went missing in early January while visiting his family over winter break. Prosecutors allege that Woodward stabbed Bernstein more than 20 times before burying his body in an Orange County park where it was eventually discovered. The two men had attended high school together.</p> <p>Woodward, 20, is set to be arraigned on Feb. 2 and has not yet entered a plea. Orange County prosecutors say they are examining the possibility that the killing was a hate crime — Bernstein was Jewish and openly gay — and some recent news reports have suggested that the alleged killer might hold far-right or even white supremacist political beliefs.</p> <p>Blaze Bernstein, a student of the University of Pennsylvania, was murdered by a former high school classmate while he was visiting his parents in Orange County on winter break. Prosecutors are still trying to determine a motive for the killing and looking into whether it was a hate crime.</p> <p>Now, three people with detailed knowledge of Woodward's recent past have been able to shed more light on the young man's extremist activities. They said Woodward was a member of the Atomwaffen Division, an armed Fascist group with the ultimate aim of overthrowing the U.S. government through the use of terrorism and guerrilla warfare.</p> <p>The organization, which celebrates Hitler and Charles Manson, has been tied to four other murders and an elaborate bomb plot over the past eight months. Experts who study right-wing extremist movements believe Atomwaffen's commitment to violence has made it one of the more dangerous groups to emerge from the new wave of white supremacists.</p> <p>Two of the three people who described Woodward's affiliations are friends of his; the other is a former member of Atomwaffen Division.</p> <p>ProPublica's revelations about Woodward's background add a new element to a murder case that has attracted considerable local and national news coverage. But they also raise fresh concerns about groups like Atomwaffen Division, shadowy outfits of uncertain size that appear capable of genuine harm.</p> <p>Woodward joined the organization in early 2016 and later traveled to Texas to attend Atomwaffen meetings and a three-day training camp, which involved instruction in firearms, hand-to-hand combat, camping and survival skills, the former member said. ProPublica has obtained photographs of Woodward at an outdoor Atomwaffen meeting in the scrubby Texas countryside. One of the photos depicts Woodward and other members making straight-armed Nazi salutes while wearing skull masks. In other pictures, Woodward is unmasked and easily identifiable.</p> <p>The young man is proficient with both handguns and assault rifles, according to one person who</p>

	<p>participated in the Texas training and watched him shoot. That person also said that Woodward helped organize a number of Atomwaffen members in California.</p> <p>Social media posts and chat logs shared by Woodward’s friends show that he openly described himself as a “National Socialist” or Nazi. He “was as anti-Semitic as you can get,” according to one acquaintance.</p> <p>ProPublica contacted Orange County prosecutors regarding Woodward’s alleged neo-Nazi activities. Michelle Van Der Linden, a spokesperson for the District Attorney’s Office, said she couldn’t comment directly on the case, but said the investigation is ongoing, with detectives exploring all possible leads.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Gulf Drug Cartel leader killed in Reynosa
SOURCE	http://www.kgns.tv/content/news/Gulf-Drug-Cartel-leader-killed-471695824.html
GIST	<p>Reynosa, Mexico - A leader of the Gulf Drug Cartel has been killed along with three of his associates in a clash with Marines in Mexico’s northern border city of Reynosa.</p> <p>They were believed to be members of a faction of the Gulf Cartel who were fighting turf battles with other factions.</p> <p>Authorities had offered a reward of about \$100,000 for Humberto Loza Mendez.</p> <p>He was one of the drug gang leaders accused of causing much of the violence in Reynosa.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/30 Toronto search for serial killer victims
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/72a6ec653d2b419e9cd92b3b4aef4fe0?utm_campaign=SocialFlow&utm_source=Twitter&utm_medium=AP
GIST	<p>TORONTO (AP) — Toronto police said Monday they are hunting through backyard gardens and planters across the city for possible victims of a landscaper accused of killing at least five people and suspected of more slayings.</p> <p>Bruce McArthur was charged Monday with first-degree murder in the deaths of three men, adding to two cases filed earlier.</p> <p>Toronto Det. Sgt. Hank Idsinga said at a news conference that the dismembered remains of at least three victims were found hidden in the bottom of large planters in the backyard of a Toronto home that McArthur, 66, used as storage for his landscaping business. He said the remains have not been identified.</p> <p>Police are searching about 30 properties where McArthur worked, Idsinga said, and he urged the man’s customers to contact police.</p> <p>“We believe there are more remains at some of these properties that we are working to recover,” Idsinga said. “We have seized quite a few planters from around the city and we will continue to do that. There are at least two sites that we do want to excavate where people might be buried.”</p> <p>McArthur was charged earlier this month with first-degree murder in the presumed deaths of Selim Esen and Andrew Kinsman, both reported missing from Toronto’s gay village area at separate times last year.</p> <p>Idsinga said McArthur has now also been charged in the deaths of 58-year-old Majeed Kayhan, 50-year-old Soroush Marmudi and 47-year-old Dean Lisowick.</p> <p>Idsinga said Lisowick was an occupant of the shelter system who had not been reported missing. Police</p>

	<p>believe he was slain between May 2016 and July 2017.</p> <p>“It encompasses more than the gay community. It encompasses the City of Toronto,” Idsinga said.</p> <p>Members of the LGBTQ community were pushing for answers last year in light of the disappearances of 44-year-old Esen and 49-year-old Kinsman. Officers investigated McArthur for months but could not make a definitive link to the disappearances until this month, police said.</p> <p>Idsinga has said McArthur had a sexual relationship with Kinsman.</p> <p>“The city of Toronto has never seen anything like this,” Idsinga said. “It is unprecedented and draining. He’s an alleged serial killer and he’s taken some steps to cover his tracks.”</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Judge: ‘freedom to say goodbye’
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/jan/29/judge-illegals-constitutional-right-say-goodbye/
GIST	<p>Illegal immigrants snared by deportation officers have “the freedom to say goodbye” to their families, a federal judge in New York ruled Monday, ordering the government to release a prominent activist to his family.</p> <p>Judge Katherine B. Forrest, whom President Obama appointed to the bench, said the government was following the law when it picked up Ravidath Lawrence Ragbir, the illegal immigrant. But she said “larger, more fundamental” rights were at stake.</p> <p>“In sum, the court finds that when this country allowed petitioner to become a part of our community fabric, allowed him to build a life with and among us and to enjoy the liberties and freedom that come with that, it committed itself to allowance of an orderly departure when the time came,” she wrote. “By denying petitioner these rights, the government has acted wrongly.”</p> <p>She becomes the latest federal district judge to delve deeply into immigration — an area Congress has said belongs to the separate immigration court system and to appellate judges, not district court judges.</p> <p>Other cases are raging over deportations of Iraqis and Indonesians. Federal judges have taken unprecedented steps to stop deportations and rule on individual cases.</p> <p>Judge Forrest said her ruling doesn’t mean Mr. Ragbir is safe from deportation.</p> <p>An immigration court has ordered him removed, and that ruling stands.</p> <p>Immigrant rights groups said they were still hoping to fight that matter, though they praised Judge Forrest’s ruling.</p> <p>“Ravi and other immigrant rights leaders have been viciously targeted by ICE for speaking out against the injustices of our immigration system. This is a naked attempt to intimidate us into silence, but we will only get louder,” said Steven Choi, executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition.</p> <p>The Justice Department declined to comment.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Dreamers arrested in human smuggling
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/jan/29/dreamers-arrested-charged-smuggling-illegal-immigr/

<p>GIST</p>	<p>Border Patrol agents in San Diego arrested two illegal immigrant “Dreamers” last week over their purported roles in separate smuggling operations, with one 22-year-old admitting to having been part of a number of such smuggling attempts.</p> <p>The arrests are black eyes on the Obama-era DACA program, which is currently the subject of heated debate in Washington.</p> <p>In one incident Thursday, agents had just arrested two illegal immigrants and then spotted two suspicious vehicles in the area. They followed on and eventually conducted a stop at a border checkpoint.</p> <p>The 22-year-old driver admitted to being a scouter for a smuggling crew, and said he’d been informing the other car about Border Patrol operations in the area to help them with their smuggling. The man is currently under DACA protection, the government said.</p> <p>Agents said they determined the man had been part of successful smuggling operations “on multiple occasions.”</p> <p>Customs and Border Protection was shielding his identity.</p> <p>In the other incident a day earlier, agents saw a vehicle stopped on the side of Interstate Highway 5 and decided to take a look. They found three men inside: the driver (a 20-year-old man who’d had DACA status but it had expired) and two illegal immigrants.</p> <p>The driver admitted he was involved in human smuggling, authorities said.</p> <p>Last year Border Patrol agents manning a highway checkpoint in Texas snared two Dreamers in separate smuggling cases.</p> <p>To qualify for the DACA program illegal immigrants must assert they were brought to the U.S. as children and have kept a relatively clean record.</p> <p>Immigrant-smuggling violates the terms of the agreement, as does gang membership or other serious crimes of violence.</p> <p>As of this summer, some 2,139 Dreamers had had their DACA status revoked, out of nearly 800,000 people who’d been approved for the program — an incredibly low rate of about a quarter of 1 percent.</p> <p>Still, the arrests come at a touchy time in negotiations, with Democrats arguing Dreamers should be granted full citizenship rights and President Trump saying that must be coupled with strict border security and other immigration policy changes.</p> <p>None of the identities of the Dreamers were released in any of the cases.</p> <p>Homeland Security said the active Dreamer in the San Diego smuggling incident is being processed for deportation, while the Dreamer with the expired DACA status is “currently being held in federal custody.”</p>
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<p>HEADLINE</p>	<p>01/29 Off-duty cop shoots erratic driver</p>
<p>SOURCE</p>	<p>https://www.cbsnews.com/news/south-philadelphia-off-duty-officer-shoots-erratic-driver-trying-to-run-over-pedestrians/</p>
<p>GIST</p>	<p>PHILADELPHIA -- An off-duty police officer has shot an erratic driver in South Philadelphia, according to CBS Philadelphia. The police said the driver was attempting to run over pedestrians early Monday morning.</p>

	<p>Around 7:30 a.m., the driver struck at least one pedestrian and attempted to mow others down with the vehicle.</p> <p>An off-duty police captain then pulled his service weapon and shot the driver in the head, according to police.</p> <p>Paramedics transported the pedestrian to a hospital. The victim was listed in critical condition.</p> <p>Hospital officials say the driver is said to be in serious condition.</p> <p>The motive for the incident is under investigation.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Peace Corps IG: ongoing sex assaults
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/peace-corps-failing-to-protect-volunteers-from-sexual-assault-government-watchdog/
GIST	<p>A government watchdog says the Peace Corps is failing to do enough to protect volunteers from sexual assault. The percentage of women in the Peace Corps who say they've suffered a sexual assault rose to 38 percent in 2016. That finding came in an anonymous, internal survey.</p> <p>In 2015, a whistleblower spoke to "CBS This Morning" about her belief there was a culture of "victim-blaming" inside the Peace Corps. She said it prevented some sexual assault survivors from getting help. Her complaint launched a lengthy investigation, the results of which only recently became public.</p> <p>Currently, about 7,300 Peace Corps volunteers serve in 65 countries.</p> <p>That Peace Corps Inspector General investigation found cases where the agency did not provide "a compassionate and supportive response" to sexual assault survivors, despite congressionally-mandated reforms that should have fixed these problems, reports CBS News correspondent Kris Van Cleave.</p> <p>In March 2016, Peace Corps volunteer Megan Reithmiller was teaching in Uganda. It was her first day. She says that night the school priest came to her door with a gift.</p> <p>"He asked if we could say a prayer together," she recalled. "As I was finishing up the 'Our Father,' that's when he started touching me, and I completely froze. I think I sat on that floor for half an hour not knowing what to do, not knowing what to say."</p> <p>In a letter this month, the Office of Special Counsel, or OSC, advised President Donald Trump the Peace Corps is not doing enough to protect its volunteers from sexual assault and called for specific reforms.</p> <p>"I feel the Peace Corps failed me every step of the way," said volunteer Danae Smith, who was attacked while walking in a remote Dominican Republic village. She reported it to the Peace Corps in 2015.</p> <p>"They told me that as a volunteer, it was my job to have been more proactive to prevent it from happening," she said. Within a week, the Peace Corps sent her home.</p> <p>To date, CBS News has heard from more than two dozen former volunteers whose stories point to a troubling pattern -- one the OSC wants to change.</p> <p>It's calling for better training for in-country Peace Corps employees, because 16 percent of reported sexual assaults are committed by host family members or co-workers.</p> <p>"There were not appropriate boundaries," said Reithmiller. "The person who attacked me was a fellow teacher. There was no training for him, there was no training for any of my fellow teachers at that school."</p>

	<p>The Peace Corps says that kind of training is not required by law.</p> <p>The OSC also wants stricter employee screening rules, noting often volunteers accused of sexual assault are able to resign, avoiding punishment and any mention of the allegations in their personnel files.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/30 Illegal minors not entitled paid lawyers
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2018/01/30/Undocumented-minors-not-entitled-to-government-funded-attorneys-fed-court-rules/6711517288768/?utm_source=fp&utm_campaign=lh&utm_medium=2
GIST	<p>Jan. 30 (UPI) -- A federal appeals court on Monday ruled that undocumented immigrant minors are not entitled to government-funded defense attorneys for immigration court proceedings.</p> <p>The Ninth U.S. Court of Appeals in California's ruling upheld the deportation of a Honduran minor, referred to in court documents as "C.J.," who illegally immigrated to the U.S. to escape the threat of gangs in his home country.</p> <p>"We are mindful that our decision means that, absent a reprieve offered by the government, C.J. will likely be returned to a country in turmoil," Judge Consuelo Callahan wrote in the court's decision. "We sympathize with his personal plight, as C.J. appears to have displayed courage in the face of serious adversity. But while 'our hearts are with him,' the law does not support his requested relief."</p> <p>"It is a brutal decision," Ahilan Arulanantham, legal director of the ACLU of Southern California, told the Los Angeles Times. "It is brutal for him and also brutal for thousands of other children who have fled three of the most violent countries on Earth -- Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador."</p> <p>C.J. entered the United States with his mother, on June 21, 2014 when he was 13-years-old. Four days later, the Department of Homeland Security served C.J. with a "notice to appear" in immigration court. Over the next two years, Maria appeared in court hearings with her son, but could not afford a private attorney to represent him.</p> <p>According to court documents, the judge gave the mother several opportunities to make her case without an attorney, which she attempted to do, including filing legal paperwork in English, which she did not speak.</p> <p>But after several hearings, including one in which the immigration judge said he found C.J.'s fears of gang violence and forced recruitment to be credible, C.J.'s application for asylum was rejected in 2016.</p> <p>C.J.'s case was eventually taken up by the ACLU of Southern California, which appealed the deportation order and argued that he should have had a court-appointed attorney to help navigate the asylum process.</p> <p>But the court on Monday ruled that the ACLU "failed to show that the additional process he seeks -- government-funded, court-appointed counsel -- is necessary, either in his case or for alien minors as a class."</p> <p>The ACLU has not stated if they plan to appeal the Ninth Circuit's decision.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Saudi corruption purge winds down
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-arrests-corruption/saudi-closes-hotel-detention-center-as-corruption-purge-winds-down-idUSKBN1FJ0NG

GIST	<p>RIYADH (Reuters) - Saudi Arabian authorities have released all remaining detainees from Riyadh's opulent Ritz-Carlton Hotel, which had been used as an interrogation center in a crackdown on corruption, a Saudi official said on Tuesday.</p> <p>The news signaled that the three-month-old purge, in which dozens of top officials and businessmen were detained by investigators who said they aimed to seize some \$100 billion of illicit assets, was drawing to a close.</p> <p>"There are no longer any detainees left at the Ritz-Carlton," the official told Reuters, speaking on condition of anonymity under briefing rules.</p> <p>He did not say how many suspects remained in detention at other locations in Saudi Arabia. Some are believed to have been moved from the Ritz to prison after refusing to admit wrongdoing and reach financial settlements with the authorities.</p> <p>Last week, the attorney general said that countrywide most detainees had agreed to settlements, 90 had been released after charges were dropped, and 95 remained in custody. Some cases will go to trial.</p> <p>Among top businessmen caught up in the purge were Prince Alwaleed, owner of global investor Kingdom Holding 4280.SE, and Waleed al-Ibrahim, who controls influential regional broadcaster MBC.</p> <p>MBC said the investigation found Ibrahim completely innocent of wrongdoing and Prince Alwaleed has insisted he is innocent, although Saudi officials said both men agreed to settlements after admitting unspecified "violations".</p> <p>In an interview with Reuters at his suite in the Ritz-Carlton hours before he was released on Saturday, Prince Alwaleed said he had been well-treated in custody and described his case as the result of a misunderstanding.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/29 Police: mail theft reports rise
SOURCE	http://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/mail-theft-reports-on-the-rise-police-say/281-512725272
GIST	<p>Redmond police are warning people to watch out for mail thieves.</p> <p>The department's Twitter account posted a photo of a mailbox badly damaged by thieves. They recommend checking mail every day, especially with tax information going around.</p> <p>The Seattle Police Dept. also posted a warning about mail theft.</p> <p>Officers arrested a man suspected of stealing mail Saturday morning, according to Detective Mark Jamieson. A man was spotted in the Lakeridge neighborhood stealing mail around 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Officers located the suspect at a nearby bus stop, in possession of mail that included tax documents and checks.</p> <p>Jamieson says 15 different victims in the South Seattle neighborhood were stolen from.</p>
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