



	International	National	Regional and Local
Events, Opportunities Go to articles	02/12 Gunmen attack Kashmir paramilitary camp 02/12 Cyprus: Turkey warships block drilling rig 02/12 Violence fuels fear w/Myanmar Muslims 02/11 Israel boosts air defense 02/11 Drones are changing the world 02/11 Argentina: new US military base 02/11 Crash: parts shortage ground plane 02/11 Russia plane crash kills all onboard 02/11 Quake, wind, fire hit Winter Olympics 02/11 Israel PM: airstrikes dealt 'severe blow' 02/11 India, China keep eye on Maldives' crisis 02/11 Militants attack India army camp Kashmir 02/11 Iran marks anniversary Islamic Revolution 02/10 UN condemns bloody week Syria conflict 02/10 Hezbollah hails Syria: 'new strategic era' 02/10 Israel downs Iran drone; strikes Syria 02/10 Duterte: navy will protect sea wealth 02/10 Italians protest shooting of migrants 02/09 NBC: Winter Olympics statistics 02/09 China's corruption problem in Africa 02/09 Drones in opening ceremonies Olympics	02/12 CBP to inspect 1B Valentine's Day flowers 02/12 Puerto Rico substation explosion, fire 02/12 Average gas prices jump 7-cents 02/11 CDC: flu season breaking records 02/11 Utility: Puerto Rico 75% w/electricity 02/11 Hawaii's cesspools threaten tourism 02/11 US cities may follow Canada approach 02/11 Entire Baltimore Metro to close for month 02/11 Police used drones to deescalate situation 02/10 False alarms in national alert system 02/10 Fla. citrus reeling from disease, Irma 02/10 OxyContin maker stops opioid promotion 02/09 Flu season still getting worse 02/09 Flights canceled; storm slams Midwest 02/09 Dow rebounds; still worst week in 2yrs 02/09 Baltimore PD officers integrity polygraphs 02/09 Claim: US Olympic system 'failed' athletes 02/08 Mass exodus San Francisco Bay Area	02/11 Seattle: homeless collide w/collection bins 02/11 La Nina ending; here comes La Nada 02/11 Snohomish Co. flu deaths lead state 02/10 Surveillance system or public safety tool? 02/10 Officer suspended in Lyles shooting 02/10 Yakima tribal leaders declare crisis 02/10 Seattle school bus strike over 02/09 WA Task Force 1 for local response 02/09 WA does not collect 'road rage' data
Cyber Awareness Go to articles	02/11 Iran: US, Britain hacked country's dailies 02/11 Energy riches fuel bitcoin craze Iceland 02/11 Govt. sites infected w/mining malware 02/11 UAE minister: data is oil of the future 02/10 Olympics: cyberattack opening ceremony 02/09 Scientists arrested in bitcoin mining plot 02/09 Top nation-state hacking groups	02/10 Software upgrade NYC traffic lights glitch 02/10 Equifax breach more widespread 02/09 Digital devices more revealing? 02/09 Google paid \$2.9M for vulnerabilities 02/09 Study: phishing attacks that do work 02/09 Sacramento Bee hit by ransomware attack	
Terror Conditions Go to articles	02/12 HM leader: training Kashmiris for jihad 02/12 Turkey assails US ties w/Kurdish militia 02/11 Egypt strikes Sinai targets; kill militants 02/11 Taliban remains dominant jihadist force 02/11 Greece: terrorist returns from furlough 02/11 Germans shocked by young jihadists 02/11 Nigeria: Boko Haram frees hostages 02/10 Drone strike kills Taliban chief Pakistan	02/12 US: let ISIS fighters face trial at home 02/12 Claim: ISIS leader injured in May strike 02/11 Woman accused of arson tried to join AQ 02/11 Terrorist reveals secret Gitmo perks 02/10 New era of terror money? 02/10 Study: little US foreign fighters threat 02/10 New leads to find remains US hostages 02/09 Treasury sanctions ISIS 'facilitators' 02/09 Coast Guard Waterway Watch Program	
Suspicious, Unusual Go to articles	02/12 Saudi Arabia sends a signal 02/11 Cape Town rejoices brief rainfall 02/10 Poland official: Jews 'ashamed' passivity 02/10 SKorea leader invited to visit North 02/08 Study: viruses, bacteria falling from sky	02/11 Sex offender elected town fire chief 02/11 LAX: man scales fence, runs to plane 02/11 Claim: intel agencies kill damning report 02/10 Military using battlefield acupuncture 02/10 Iran drone American stealth knock-off 02/09 Shadowy Russian bilked US spies \$100M? 02/09 Another asteroid heading close to Earth	02/10 Opioid scourge hits state health workers
Crime, Criminals Go to articles	02/11 Indonesia: church attacker killed 02/11 Beijing mall stabbing: 1 killed, 12 injured 02/11 Germany rising trend anti-Semitic crimes 02/09 Swiss police: thieves \$32M in van heist 02/09 Violence stalks Venezuela lawless roads	02/11 Kentucky 'murder spree': man kills 4, self 02/11 Ohio cops killed in 911 hang up call case 02/11 MLB player's kidnapped mom rescued 02/10 Ex-ICE agent jailed accepting bribes 02/10 Coast Guard probes false mayday calls 02/09 Maine governor orders prison shutdown 02/09 Georgia officer killed serving warrant 02/09 Navy probes widespread drug selling 02/09 Illegal cheers killing 2 Calif. deputies 02/09 Las Vegas shooter's autopsy report	02/11 Seattle: 2 shootings over weekend 02/11 KCSO: man fatally shot in driveway 02/10 Fights, arrests in Seattle 'freedom rally' 02/10 Police: 19yr-old raped dying woman 02/09 King Co. unique crime mediation program

Event Calendar

[Top of page](#)

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
Return to Top	**indicates new event/new information added during reporting week		

Events, Opportunities

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	02/11 Argentina: new US military base
SOURCE	https://www.telesur.tv/english/news/US-Will-Build-New-Military-Base-in-Northern-Argentina-20180211-0016.html
GIST	<p>Argentina is allowing the U.S. to build a new military base at its northern border with Brazil and Paraguay. Officials of the South American country also announced that it will work with Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) at the triple border “to analyze where drugs are coming from.”</p> <p>Argentina’s Minister of Security, Patricia Bullrich announced in Washington that the Mauricio Macri administration is going to allow the U.S. to build a military base in Posadas, Misiones, bordering Brazil and Paraguay.</p> <p>Bullrich says her government is creating “an analysis center with Paraguay and Brasil (and the U.S.) to figure out where, how and with whom narco traffickers operate” at the triple border region.</p> <p>This "task force," as its being called, will operate in conjunction with the DEA, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the U.S. Southern Command, which watches over U.S. operations in Latin America and the Caribbean.</p> <p>This will be the second task force against drug trafficking in Argentina. The first one was installed in Salta province located near the borders with Bolivia and Chile during the Barack Obama administration.</p> <p>Human rights organizations are protesting the increased U.S. military presence in Latin American and the Caribbean.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/12 CBP to inspect 1B Valentine’s Day flowers
SOURCE	http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/customs-will-inspect-1-billion-flowers-imported-for-valentines-day/article/2648774
GIST	<p>Customs and Border Protection officials are expecting to process and inspect more than 1 billion imported stems of flowers in the weeks leading up to Valentine’s Day next Wednesday, a Department of Homeland Security spokesperson confirmed Friday.</p> <p>Although the DHS agency is often associated with apprehending illegal immigrants and narcotics on land and sea, its Miami branch is known as the headquarters for floral importation inspections between Jan. 1 and Feb. 14 every year.</p> <p>“People don’t think of agriculture when they think of Customs and Border Protection — however, CBP agriculture specialists work diligently to protect our country from invasive species that have the potential to damage ecosystems and our economy,” said DHS Deputy Secretary Elaine Duke.</p> <p>Duke traveled to the Florida city this past week to see how the Miami International Airport Agriculture Air</p>

<p>Return to Top</p>	<p>Cargo Branch — tasked with inspecting 91 percent of all imported fresh-cut flowers — are processed.</p> <p>CBP officers at the Miami facility processed more than 954 million stems of flowers in 2017 and intercepted more than 1,000 plant pests. Exotic pests and foreign animal diseases cost an average of \$138 billion in economic and environmental losses every year.</p> <p>"When those flowers make it to your home, we want it to be safe, not only for you but the environment and our country," Duke said. "I was proud to spend the day in Miami to see firsthand the important work they are doing to ensure even the tiniest of pests don't enter our country."</p> <p>CBP in Los Angeles processed the second-highest amount of stems at 40 million; followed by Otay Mesa, Calif., at 25 million; and John F. Kennedy Airport in New York, which saw 19 million stems of flowers.</p> <p>A grand total of 1.063 billion stems of flowers were imported during the 2017 Valentine's Day season. Roses made up a third and mixed bouquets were the second-highest type at 190 million.</p> <p>The largest exporter is Colombia. The South American nation shipped 718 million stems of flowers to the U.S. in the six weeks leading up to last year's holiday. Ecuador followed with 243 million and Mexico took third place with 36 million.</p>
--------------------------------------	---

HEADLINE	02/12 Average gas prices jump 7-cents
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/83bd30dbed564793a23dcdd2e7643c72/Average-US-gas-price-jumps-7-cents-to-\$2.65-for-regular
GIST	<p>CAMARILLO, Calif. (AP) — The average price of a gallon of regular-grade gasoline jumped 7 cents nationally over the past three weeks to \$2.65.</p> <p>Industry analyst Trilby Lundberg of the Lundberg Survey said Sunday that the increase is due to higher crude oil costs.</p> <p>The current gas price is 34 cents above where it was a year ago.</p> <p>Gas in San Francisco was the highest in the contiguous United States at an average of \$3.42 a gallon. The lowest was in Tucson, Arizona, at \$2.26 a gallon.</p> <p>The U.S. average diesel price is \$3.04, up 5 cents from three weeks ago.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/12 Puerto Rico substation explosion, fire
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/4b49c25c3cc94a8aba57acb90c99a685/Blackout-hits-northern-Puerto-Rico-following-fire,-explosion
GIST	<p>SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — An explosion and fire at an electric substation threw much of northern Puerto Rico into darkness late Sunday in a setback for the U.S. territory's efforts to fully restore power more than five months after Hurricane Maria started the longest blackout in U.S. history.</p> <p>The island's Electric Power Authority said several municipalities were without power, including parts of the capital, San Juan, but they were optimistic it could be restored within a day as they worked to repair a substation that controls voltage.</p> <p>The blast illustrated the challenges of restoring a power grid that was already crumbling before it was devastated by the Category 4 hurricane.</p>

	<p>In many cases, power workers are repairing equipment that should have long been replaced but remained online due to the power authority's yearslong financial crisis. PREPA is worth roughly \$4 billion, carries \$9 billion in debt and has long been criticized for political patronage and inefficiency. It also struggled with frequent blackouts, including an island-wide outage in September 2016.</p> <p>It was not immediately known what caused Sunday's fire, which was quickly extinguished. Officials said the explosion knocked two other substations offline and caused a total loss of 400 megawatts worth of generation.</p> <p>"We are trying to restore that as quickly as possible," the company said.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/11 Entire Baltimore Metro to close for month
SOURCE	<p>https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/trafficandcommuting/entire-baltimore-metro-system-to-close-for-a-month-for-emergency-repairs/2018/02/11/26301ce0-0f72-11e8-8ea1-c1d91fcec3fe_story.html?hpid=hp_hp-cards_hp-card-local%3Ahomepage%2Fcard&utm_term=.65dd5fb9c3c7</p>
GIST	<p>Baltimore's entire Metro SubwayLink system will remain closed for a month, the Maryland Transit Administration said Sunday, after safety inspections showed sections of track needed emergency repairs that couldn't wait until this summer.</p> <p>Gov. Larry Hogan (R) has devoted \$2.2 million in emergency funding to run free coach buses for passengers along the subway's route, in addition to the normal MTA bus routes, the MTA said Sunday.</p> <p>The MTA shut down the system Friday for a safety evaluation after discovering an urgent need for repairs on sections of the aboveground, northwest leg of the system between the Owings Mills and West Cold Spring stations. Sunday's decision expanded the closure to the entire system.</p> <p>"While I understand the inconvenience, safety will always be our top priority," MTA chief executive Kevin Quinn said in a phone interview Sunday. "We don't take any risks with our riders."</p> <p>The track needed to be replaced sooner than the scheduled replacement this summer, Quinn said.</p> <p>The free shuttle buses, or "bus bridge" as the MTA calls it, will begin at 5 a.m. Monday and run until midnight on weekdays, and from 6 a.m. until midnight on weekends.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/11 Police used drones to deescalate situation
SOURCE	<p>https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/she-pointed-a-gun-at-police-and-asked-to-be-shot-they-used-drones-to-intercede-instead/2018/02/11/419587c2-0acc-11e8-8890-372e2047c935_story.html?hpid=hp_hp-cards_hp-card-local%3Ahomepage%2Fcard&utm_term=.57b84f43e42b</p>
GIST	<p>Burdened by mounting health, job and family troubles, a Florida woman took to the road and headed north from her Cocoa Beach home, police say.</p> <p>By the time she hit Stafford County on Interstate 95 in Virginia, she was down to her last \$14 and had reached her limit: Soon she would pick up a handgun and plead to die at the hands of officers.</p> <p>The 57-year-old pulled her Kia sedan into a Walmart parking lot just before dawn Dec. 8, triggering a four-hour standoff as she repeatedly waved a silver revolver, cursing Stafford County sheriff's deputies as she demanded that they shoot her.</p>

“She kept talking to herself, yelling profanities and enticing us to shoot her, over and over and over again,” said Capt. Ben Worcester, a member of the Stafford County Sheriff’s Office.

Rather than rush into a situation where they might have to fire, Stafford officials turned to technology: Police pilots flew two drones to monitor the woman from a safe distance and avoid putting officers in a direct confrontation. The airborne cameras gave authorities a close-up view of her and what she had in her car as she flitted between pacing outside and ducking back into the vehicle.

Worcester could see the label on the vodka bottle she lifted to wash down pills. He could tell SWAT officers when she had her finger on the trigger of her gun. And he could watch as her agitation ebbed and flowed.

The use of the drones to de-escalate an incident represents a creative deployment of a tool that police agencies across the country have been adding to their arsenals.

The largest police departments in the District and inside the Capital Beltway do not have drone programs, officials said. FAA airspace restrictions in the city prevent D.C. police from considering such a program, said department spokesman Dustin Sternbeck. Police departments in Montgomery and Fairfax counties also do not use them.

In Stafford, the sheriff’s office has five drones and 12 FAA-certified officers.

Sheriff David P. Decatur decided to launch the drone program there in early 2016, using more than \$50,000 in money seized in drug cases and with the aim of using the craft to find people missing in extreme heat or cold. Stafford County officers now use drones as they execute search warrants, take crime scene photographs and even monitor traffic during events such as Fourth of July fireworks displays.

“I think it’s progressive. We are open. Anything we can use it for to help others, we are all about trying to take advantage of that,” Decatur said. “We are always racing against time.”

Those time pressures played out Dec. 8 when predawn 911 calls came in to the Stafford County Sheriff’s Office saying shots were being fired in the lot of the Walmart on Garrisonville Road. The information was scant: a white woman with long, dirty-blond hair, driving a car with Florida license plates and brandishing a pistol.

What officers did know as they launched was that the woman was armed and continued to shout a command to authorities: “Just kill me! Just kill me!”

Adding to the danger, she had parked directly in front of an 18-wheeler in the lot, trapping the rig driver who had pulled in to catch some sleep, investigators said.

Deputies evacuated the area around the car and truck as a SWAT team stood at the ready. Police idled an armored vehicle — called a BearCat — that can withstand .50-caliber rounds.

Early on, police decided to try to negotiate with the woman over a loudspeaker and started to sketch out plans to rescue the trucker.

The woman kept yelling profanities but did not respond otherwise.

Decatur said the drones acted “like a military scout team” to help officers find cover and places to stay out of view as they braced for a drawn-out confrontation.

The sheriff’s department flew the two drones at an elevation of 70 to 80 feet, relaying real-time video to the on-scene command post with an intimacy that would be nearly impossible for any officer to match on the ground without facing substantial risk.

“She was talking so much to herself, I initially thought she was on the phone, but she was talking with the gun to her head,” Worcester said.

Officers saw her swallowing liquor and pills, and “we knew what we were up against. It was going to get worse,” Worcester said.

About two hours in, SWAT officers quietly approached the tractor-trailer to try to rescue the driver. Aided by the drones, Worcester was able to warn officers that the woman in the car had pointed her gun toward the back of her car in the direction of the hemmed-in truck, apparently thinking police were going to move in on her.

Police paused the trucker rescue until they were told she had turned away. They got the trucker safely out.

The woman’s demands for officers to shoot her did not stop. “Kill me! Kill me!” and “Just shoot me,” she shouted again and again, Decatur and Worcester said.

“She just wasn’t going to do any talking,” Worcester said. “It was hours of this.”

Three hours into the standoff, the woman was highly agitated and alternating between threatening to shoot herself in the head and begging the police to fire on her, Worcester said.

A drone camera zoomed in on her face, showing someone near rock bottom, he said.

It also showed her moving away from her car, and police, fearing she might run and shoot at a nearby convenience store, fired beanbag rounds at her.

Stunned, she retreated to her car. The drone zoomed in to show officers her condition and what she was doing inside the Kia. She looked calmer, was mumbling, and had her eyes closed, Worcester recalled.

The drones stayed up.

At 9:15 a.m., police in the armored vehicle rolled over to the car and fired pepper spray into the Kia’s open window before four officers rushed the car and pulled the woman out and handcuffed her.

Stafford authorities charged Donna Lynn Barnes with reckless handling of a firearm and brandishing a firearm, both misdemeanors, authorities said.

Online court documents show that a hearing in her case is scheduled for Feb. 22. An attorney for the public defender’s office, which court documents show is representing Barnes, declined to comment.

“This lady is from Florida. She said she was just driving. In her world, she had all these things going on, and she was trying to get us to use deadly force,” Decatur said. “Luckily, with our training and the technology, we didn’t have to do that.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/11 US cities may follow Canada approach
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/at-the-heart-of-canadas-fentanyl-crisis-extreme-efforts-that-us-cities-may-follow/2018/02/11/5e7dd59e-0624-11e8-b48c-b07fea957bd5_story.html?hpid=hp_hp-more-top-stories_canadaheroin-205am%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm_term=.5b72a26d0743
GIST	VANCOUVER, B.C. — Beneath a blue tarp that blocks out a gray sky, Jordanna Coleman inhales the smoke from a heated mixture of heroin and methamphetamine, sucking the addictive vapor deep into her lungs.

The drugs and pipe, acquired elsewhere, are hers. But the shelter, the equipment she uses to prepare her fix and the volunteers standing by to respond if she overdoses are provided by a small nonprofit. Funding and supplies come from the city of Vancouver and the province of British Columbia.

“I was outside. It’s warmer in here,” says Coleman, 22, although the tent is open to the damp and chill of a western Canadian winter. “It’s just safer.”

In barely a year, five sites like this one have opened within a few blocks of one another to contend with a surge of fentanyl on Vancouver’s streets. In December, the organization that runs this location, the Overdose Prevention Society, took over a vacant building next door, giving users a clean indoor place to inject drugs. There are 29 similar sites in British Columbia, the epicenter of Canada’s drug crisis, and more across the country.

“To save lives, you need a table, chairs and some volunteers,” said Sarah Blyth, the manager here. “We literally popped it up in one day. And then you have people saving lives. Immediately.”

As fentanyl rampages across North America, several U.S. cities have announced that they will open the first supervised drug-consumption sites like those in Canada. Their plans illustrate the gulf between the two nations: While Justin Trudeau’s government is doubling down on its “harm reduction” approach, any U.S. organization that tries to follow suit would be violating federal law and risking a confrontation with the Justice Department.

U.S. researchers say that at least one underground site is operating on American soil, and they predict that a public operation will open despite the potential consequences.

“That’s the way that drug policy issues have moved forward in this country [over the] last 25 years,” said Alex Kral, an epidemiologist at the think tank RTI International who has studied supervised drug consumption. Cities enduring the deaths, disease, crime and cost of drug epidemics have taken the lead in handing out free needles and distributing the overdose antidote naloxone — sometimes after legal battles.

San Francisco plans to add supervised injection services to an existing community health facility. Those could start as soon as July 1.

“We just have to do what’s best for the client, and we hope the federal government will understand,” said Barbara Garcia, director of health for the city and county of San Francisco. “I’m not looking to change federal law. I’m looking to save lives.”

Canada’s plans do not stop at supervised injection. Some sites now test users’ drugs for fentanyl, and some are aiming to provide prescription opioids from vending machines.

The most far-reaching intervention is just two blocks from the pop-up site, where the Providence Crosstown Clinic provides 130 of the city’s hardest-core drug users with pharmaceutical-grade heroin and other narcotics. Users come to inject themselves as often as three times a day, and some also swallow a morphine tablet to carry them through the night.

Freed of the need to steal, beg and trade sex for drug money, some now have apartments and jobs. The clinic, run by a medical center, hopes to add 50 more clients soon.

“The ability to say, ‘I’m receiving treatment; I’m not a dirty user,’ does so much for their self-esteem,” said Jennifer Mackenzie, the clinical nurse leader. “It opens so many doors for them. They’re getting medical treatment, and they look at themselves differently.”

Research shows that the approach, like supervised drug consumption, saves lives, cuts criminal justice and health-care costs, limits the spread of diseases such as HIV and helps reduce used needles and other debris in the immediate neighborhood. A similar facility recently opened in Ottawa, and Canada has loosened requirements to encourage others.

But British Columbia's programs have not blunted its opioid crisis. Overdose deaths have skyrocketed from fewer than 400 in 2014, when fentanyl became widely available on the street, to more than 1,400 in 2017. Eighty-one percent of last year's deaths involved fentanyl.

Critics said that statistic speaks to the futility of harm reduction. "To say the best we can do is to revive people who are victims and are going to be victims again . . . is reprehensible," said John P. Walters, drug czar under President George W. Bush and now chief operating officer of the Hudson Institute, a conservative think tank in Washington.

Walters favors a dramatic expansion of drug treatment in the United States, which recorded 42,000 opioid deaths in 2016, coupled with a much more concerted effort to keep drugs such as fentanyl out of the country. He questions the rigor of the academic studies that support harm reduction. And he believes that normalization and tolerance of drug use are reasons that addicts crowd the streets of this city's small Downtown Eastside district.

"Look at Vancouver, it's tried every bad policy you can try," Walters said. "This is another step in that whole policy that has made Vancouver a nightmare."

"This is my flail," Coleman said between hits on her pipe, scattering the contents of her backpack on a table. A coloring journal, cellphone, some clean socks. "It's what I do when I'm high."

She does not yet have the battered look of the legions of longtime drug users who are everywhere in this neighborhood. Yet her story is typical: She fled an abusive mother, got into hard drugs at 17 and soon was pimped out by her supplier. She has an 18-month-old son in foster care, lives with friends and is trying, again, to find her way out through treatment.

"It looks like I'm enjoying it because I'm high," she said. "I don't have anything in my life that really means anything. All the drugs that I have [are] not going to fill the emotional void that I have."

Drug smokers like Coleman are restricted to the Overdose Prevention Society's outdoor tents because the new building, a former grocery, has no ventilation system. It is home mostly to injection drug users. A long, narrow main room is nearly bare except for 13 stainless-steel tables and some posters on the walls. Red partitions divide the rest of the floor, making space for a couple of desks, a cot where workers can calm down after resuscitating overdose victims, and supplies piled high in boxes.

The most critical are oxygen and naloxone, the antidote that has saved countless lives. In the 30 years that supervised sites have been open in Europe, and the 15 years that they have existed in Canada, no site has suffered an overdose death, Kral said.

Users enter here through a guarded door off a back alley that used to be the scene of widespread drug use, dealing and prostitution. A small street shrine to a dead woman sits just outside the entrance.

From a small table of supplies they pick up what they need: syringes, matches, elastic strips to tie off veins, water to dilute drugs, small squares of foil, tiny tins for cooking heroin. Also available are condoms and lube.

Some of the volunteers who greet them are current or former users themselves. They usher clients to the tables. On a clipboard, one staff member logs names (usually aliases), gender, the drugs being used and the time a person comes in. Between the indoor and outdoor sections, 300 to 700 people show up daily. The largest crowds are on days when welfare payments arrive.

The pop-up was born of necessity in late 2016, when fentanyl was overwhelming the neighborhood and a 15-year-old supervised-use program. Overdoses on the street would send panicked bystanders to a nearby

open-air market to find naloxone or call an ambulance.

“If there was an overdose, they would come running to the market, and we would have Narcan ready,” Blyth said, using the antidote’s brand name. “Then it became so frequent that it was happening all the time. We had no choice really.” A GoFundMe campaign started the tent facility. Aid from the government followed.

The organizers acknowledge that their main goal is just to keep people alive, though they have seen a few clients get into treatment and off drugs.

“If these services didn’t exist, trust me, it would have been a catastrophe, especially in the past year and a half, when the fentanyl crisis spiked,” said Ronnie Grigg, a large, soft-spoken man with a chest-length beard who helps manage the site. In the past three years, Grigg said, 100 people he knew died of overdoses.

At the Providence Crosstown Clinic a short walk down West Hastings Street, the atmosphere is different. Some users here measure their addictions in decades, and it shows.

With an ample supply of diacetyl morphine — the heroin equivalent — and other narcotics on the premises, the clinic is a cross between a medical facility and a bank. Users must first step into a small vestibule. Only when the outside door locks behind them will the inside door open. The drugs are kept in a vault, doled out to users in pre-measured syringes through a thick glass window with a slot at the bottom.

There is a waiting room, an exam table, desks and a big room, where users shuffle in to inject themselves. The doctor and nurses speak of “treatment.” They are prohibited from administering injections themselves.

Nothing else has worked for these men and women, who clinically are in the grip of “severe opioid disorder.” Methadone has proven ineffective, as have therapeutic approaches such as 12-step programs. Most of them no longer feel any pleasure from the drugs; they take them simply to function and prevent severe withdrawal symptoms.

Here, users are sure their drugs contain no fentanyl. And paradoxically, by providing them with the substances they need, the clinic does more than just keep them alive.

“It makes me feel normal,” said a 52-year-old woman named Lori, who did not want her last name used.

Other than more than a decade on drugs, Lori leads a fairly unremarkable life. She has two grown children who don’t know about her twice-a-day clinic visits. She is married and holds a part-time job in a call center, taking customer service complaints. She is clearheaded and contemplative.

Over time, the cost of her habit reached \$200 a day. In 2011, she heard about a research study at the clinic and began getting her drugs there.

“Thank God, because I would be on the street,” she said. “Everything would be finished. My marriage would be over. I don’t think I’d be here.”

The medical staff counsels clients on vein care, HIV, hepatitis C and treatment options. The price of the services is high: about \$25,000 (Canadian) annually per client. But the cost of not having them is much higher, said Scott MacDonald, the clinic’s physician lead.

Remove the stigma attached to narcotics, he says, and the clinic’s model is not much different from therapy for high blood pressure or diabetes.

“One hundred thirty people [here] are able to access injectable treatment,” he said. “And we see that their

	lives are transformed.”
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/09 NBC: Winter Olympics statistics
SOURCE	http://money.cnn.com/2018/02/09/media/nbc-winter-olympics-numbers/index.html
GIST	<p>The Olympic Games are one of the most-watched telecasts in the world, thanks in part to the massive production efforts that go into broadcasting the event far and wide.</p> <p>That's no different for this year's Winter Games, which opened on Friday in Pyeongchang, South Korea. The event is an undertaking that costs billions of dollars and includes an NBC telecast that stretches across several weeks and time zones.</p> <p>Some of the staggering numbers behind this year's games tells the story of an event that is constantly trying to outdo itself. NBC is pulling out all the stops and sending the most-ever number of commentators to provide insight and commentary for a record 2,400 hours of coverage.</p> <p>The Games February 9th, 2018 -- Date of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics opening ceremony. February 25th, 2018 -- Date of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics closing ceremony. \$10 billion -- The estimated cost of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. The amount is roughly the GDP of Madagascar. That's five times less than the 2014 Sochi Olympics, which was estimated to be the costliest ever. 2,925 -- Number of athletes who will compete in the games. The US is sending 244 athletes, the largest athlete delegation in Olympic Winter Games history. 39 -- The age of the oldest US winter Olympian: Hockey player, Brian Gionta. Last year, he played his 1000th game in the NHL. 50 - Miles the city of Pyeongchang is from the demilitarized zone that separates the south from North Korea. The DMZ is a border that splits the country in two, it's heavily fortified and is roughly 160 miles long.</p> <p>The Telecast 5 -- NBCUniversal networks that will broadcast the games (NBC, NBC Sports Network, CNBC, USA and the Olympic Channel). \$900+ Million -- Money generated in national ad sales for Pyeongchang, which is a Winter Games record. NBC Universal said that it expected its Super Bowl LII coverage to generate \$500 million in ad revenue. 2,000 -- Number of NBC employees working in Pyeongchang for the games. 2,400+ -- Hours of game coverage. This is the most ever for a Winter Olympics, according to NBC. The last Winter Games to hold this record was the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics. 127 -- Miles of cable that will be used by NBC for the games. That's roughly the distance between Los Angeles and San Diego. For the exceptionally athletic, you'd have to run the length of Manhattan roughly nine times to hit 127 miles. 126+ -- NBCUniversal's coverage hours, per day. The network said that's nearly triple the entire coverage of the 1976 Innsbruck Winter Olympics on ABC (43.5 hours). 89 -- Number of NBC Olympics commentators. The most-ever for a Winter Olympics, according to NBC. That includes Mike Tirico in his first go as Olympics host, former Olympians like skier Bode Miller, figure skaters Tara Lipinski and Johnny Weir, and Katie Couric, who makes her return to NBC to co-host the opening ceremony with Tirico. 54 -- Years since NBC's first Olympic broadcast, which was the 1964 Tokyo Games. NBC's Olympics contract runs through 2032. 17 -- Studios and control rooms used for NBC Olympics' coverage in both Pyeongchang and NBC Sports' home base in Stamford, Connecticut. 99 -- Shipping containers full of NBC gear that traveled to Pyeongchang. The containers are full of sets, cameras and other supplies. 2 -- Helicopters that will provide aerial footage. NBC plans to use the helicopters for shots of</p>

	<p>Pyeongchang and other outdoor events. 100 -- Roughly the number of NBC staffers who went straight from the Super Bowl to the games.</p> <p>The Quirky 85 -- Number of robots reportedly placed in venues to provide information on schedules, transportation and tourist attractions during the Olympics. 110,000 -- The amount of condoms reportedly distributed for the athletes at the games. That's roughly 37 condoms per person.</p> <p>The Future 895 -- Number of days until the next Summer Olympics in Tokyo, Japan (July 24, 2020). 1455 -- Number of days until the next Winter Olympics in Beijing, China (February 4, 2022).</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/11 CDC: flu season breaking records
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/flu-season-breaking-records-cdc-says-n846341
GIST	<p>The flu season is still a bad one and it's broken a few recent records, federal health officials said Friday.</p> <p>It's not time to panic about a new pandemic — it is simply a relatively severe flu season, one that's hitting the whole country at once instead of in waves, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says.</p> <p>“Influenza activity is still on the rise overall,” CDC’s acting director, Dr. Anne Schuchat, told reporters.</p> <p>Ten more children have been reported to have died from flu, bringing the total for the season so far to 63.</p> <p>Last season, 110 children died from flu in the U.S.</p> <p>Every year, influenza kills between 12,000 and 49,000 people and can send more than 700,000 people to the hospital, the CDC says. It affects so many people that adult cases and deaths can only be estimated.</p> <p>“This is a difficult season and we can’t predict how much longer the intense flu activity will last,” Schuchat said.</p> <p>“This season, we are on track to break some recent records.”</p> <p>For one, hospitalizations are the highest they’ve been since the CDC started a new way of measuring them in 2010. And while flu usually hits people over 65 the hardest, the CDC says it’s seeing more people aged 50 to 64 being hospitalized.</p> <p>And more people are showing up with flu-like symptoms — 7.7 percent of all doctor visits, which hasn’t been seen since 2003-2004, with the exception of the H1N1 “swine flu” pandemic in 2009.</p> <p>With that many hospitalizations there are sure to be deaths, Schuchat said.</p> <p>“We usually see the increases in influenza-like illness and hospitalizations a couple of weeks before we see what's going on with influenza deaths,” she said.</p> <p>“People may have lengthy hospitalizations before they finally die of flu,” she added.</p> <p>“Almost everything we are looking at is bad news.”</p> <p>Most of the sickness is due to H3N2 influenza, which is notorious for causing more severe disease. Schuchat said there is no indication that the strain has mutated in some way to make it worse than usual, but scientists are looking to make sure there isn’t something unusual about it.</p>

“This season, we are on track to break some recent records.” And now, some states in the west are seeing a second wave of illness caused by influenza B, she said.

At any given time, several different strains of flu will be circulating and this year the four major strains that are include H3N2, H1N1 and two different strains of influenza B. Vaccines protect against three or four strains and Schuchat said it is still not too late to get a vaccine.

People who have had flu once can get sick again from a second strain, and people who have already had flu might protect themselves from catching it again if they get vaccinated, she said.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/11 La Nina ending; here comes La Nada
-----------------	---

SOURCE	http://www.king5.com/article/news/local/la-nina-ending-here-comes-la-nada/281-517464056
---------------	---

GIST	<p>Climate troublemaker La Niña, which is partly responsible for the extreme drought now scorching the southwestern U.S. and California, is expected to fade away over the next few months, scientists said.</p> <p>In its place will be the "neutral phase" of the Pacific Ocean climate pattern officially known as ENSO (El Niño-Southern Oscillation).</p> <p>The climate pattern, marked by either unusually warm or cool seawater in the central Pacific Ocean, can affect weather in the U.S. and around the world.</p> <p>The Pacific Northwest may have had a La Niña winter, but not La Niña weather.</p> <p>The La Niña phase is defined by colder-than-average ocean temperatures in the Pacific. It's the opposite of El Niño.</p> <p>ENSO-neutral, colloquially known as "La Nada," is the midpoint between El Niño and La Niña, and occurs when temperatures are near average in the Pacific Ocean.</p> <p>Although La Niña is on the way out, it will "continue affecting temperature and precipitation across the United States during the next few months," the Climate Prediction Center said Thursday.</p> <p>"La Niña will decay and return to ENSO-neutral during the Northern Hemisphere spring 2018," the prediction center said. "The forecast consensus also favors a transition during the spring with a continuation of ENSO-neutral conditions thereafter."</p> <p>The "in between" ocean state of ENSO can be frustrating for long-range forecasters. "It's like driving without a decent road map — it makes forecasting difficult," said climatologist Bill Patzert of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.</p> <p>The ENSO cycle primarily affects U.S. weather in the fall, winter and spring, and less so in the summer. It can impact the Atlantic hurricane season, however, with El Niño favoring fewer storms and La Niña favoring more.</p> <p>As for what all of this means for our spring weather here in the U.S., the outlook from the prediction center generally favors dry, warm weather across the southern tier of the nation, and cooler, wetter weather across the northern tier.</p> <p>This jibes with AccuWeather's spring forecast released this week, which said that much of the northern U.S. will endure rounds of cold and snow into March and April before springlike air creeps in.</p> <p>It also said the southern half of the country will heat up, with California and parts of the Southeast heading</p>
-------------	--

	toward drought conditions.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/10 Fla. citrus reeling from disease, Irma
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/hurricane-irma/one-two-punch-disease-irma-has-left-florida-citrus-reeling-n839996
GIST	<p>WINTER HAVEN, Fla. — In the hours after Hurricane Irma raked up Florida's spine, warm sunshine revealed thousands upon thousands of pieces of citrus fruit bobbing in muddied, stagnant water.</p> <p>Millions of dollars worth of oranges, grapefruits, and tangerines were ripped from their branches by fierce winds, never to reach their intended destination of breakfast plates and juice glasses.</p> <p>It was the nightmare many sleepless farmers prayed they wouldn't see.</p> <p>"I remember ... heading out to the fields as soon as it was safe to get out on the roads and being taken back at how much fruit was blown on the ground ... and how many trees had just been blown over," said one citrus farmer, William Roe III, 35, known as Gee.</p> <p>"We were literally blown away by the severity of the damage," said Roe's uncle, Quentin Roe, 59, the chief executive of Wm. G. Roe & Sons, a longtime grower and distributor.</p> <p>Irma knocked 50 to 90 percent of Florida's citrus fruit to the ground in some areas, according to the state commissioner of agriculture, Adam Putnam, causing \$760 million in damage in the worst year for Florida oranges since 1945.</p> <p>But more was damaged than just a year's crop.</p> <p>Citrus accounts for approximately 45,000 full- and part-time jobs in the state. Hurricane Irma is credited with wiping out nearly 56,000 jobs directly and indirectly tied to Florida's agricultural sector and dealing a \$2.39 billion blow to labor income.</p> <p>The storm also signaled the end of a way of life for many farmers who lost their harvest. Those who had no one to pick what remained have since given up and sold their land.</p> <p>Many were already reeling before the winds and rain hit, thanks to a crippling disease known as citrus greening, which has ravaged crops here for years. Greening was responsible for a 31 percent decline in employment in the industry from 2012 to 2015.</p> <p>Last year was eagerly anticipated to be a comeback year for an industry that produces 60 percent of the citrus fruits consumed in the United States. Instead of a revival, they got Hurricane Irma.</p> <p>For consumers, that is likely to mean paying higher prices for juice. For Florida's farmers, and the industry that became synonymous with the state, the future is far less certain.</p> <p>Citrus greening, also known as yellow dragon disease, is spread by a kind of louse called the Asian citrus psyllid, the size of a grain of rice. Psyllids are whipped across the state by wind, making them effective carriers for disease during hurricanes.</p> <p>Citrus greening is harmless to humans and animals, but the disease causes fruit to be misshapen and overly bitter. Most citrus trees in Florida are believed to be infected with it.</p> <p>Tree diseases have already affected the taste, quality and quantity of Florida's citrus fruit.</p> <p>"For anyone who wants to advertise 100 percent Florida orange juice, it's virtually a thing of the past," Bill</p>

	<p>Roe said, adding that imports are making up the difference. It's also not as good as it was 10 years ago, he said.</p> <p>Since Hurricane Irma rolled through Florida, an additional bacteria, known as canker, has begun to infect trees</p> <p>"It functions differently than greening does," Gee Roe, the packing operations manager, said. "It affects the outside of the fruit, primarily just the fruit and the leaves."</p> <p>Because the Roe family sells fresh fruit, meant to be consumed and not turned into another product like juice, aesthetics are almost as important as taste.</p> <p>This seemingly ceaseless list of gut-punches to Florida's citrus industry has caused the cost of production per acre to skyrocket for growers.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/12 Violence fuels fear w/Myanmar Muslims
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/feel-trapped-violence-fuels-fear-myanmar-muslims-53011020
GIST	<p>For four straight days last month, Rahim Muddinn watched, amazed, as Myanmar's state-run newspapers published special supplements showing Rohingya Muslims accused of being terrorists — nearly 250 photos each day.</p> <p>For the 41-year-old Rohingya man, it was a surreal moment. He was born and raised in Yangon, Myanmar's biggest city and far from the western state of Rakhine, where bloody military operations that followed Rohingya militant attacks in August have driven nearly 700,000 Rohingya into refugee camps in Bangladesh.</p> <p>"When we first saw those pictures, we started laughing. We wondered: When will it be our turn to have our pictures in the paper?" Muddinn, a teacher, said in an interview in his Yangon home.</p> <p>Behind the laughter, though, there is genuine fear.</p> <p>The pictures are the latest in a series of chilling realizations for the Rohingya minority here. Though Yangon's tree-lined boulevards and weathered colonial architecture seem a world away from the rice paddies and isolated villages of Rakhine — let alone the tarp-walled huts of the teeming refugee camps — the government is increasingly linking Rohingya across the country with what it calls a terrorist threat, Muddinn and others say.</p> <p>Rohingya in Yangon describe a sense of rising persecution and hatred, of vanishing freedoms and opportunities, of Buddhist neighbors and friends suddenly more willing to publicly express sympathies with the military's destruction of Rohingya villages in Rakhine.</p> <p>"One day it really could be my picture in the paper," said Muddinn. Like most of the other Rohingya who spoke with The Associated Press, he used his Rohingya name because of safety worries. "I do have anxiety. The government can detain anyone it says is a supporter of terrorism or anyone viewed as a threat to the state."</p> <p>Though Rohingya have always been persecuted in the country, it got much worse after 2012, when violence in Rakhine killed hundreds and drove about 140,000 people, most of them Rohingya, from their homes to camps. Violence flared again in 2016 and, most dramatically, following the August attacks, when refugees report widespread killing and rape by Myanmar forces. The AP last month confirmed, through extensive interviews with survivors and time-stamped video, a massacre and at least five mass graves, all previously unreported, in the Rakhine village of Gu Dar Pyin.</p>

	<p>Many Rohingya have been in Myanmar for generations, but, increasingly, the government and media have played up their claim that they're not citizens but "illegal Bengali interlopers" who entered Myanmar from Bangladesh with the help of corrupt immigration officers.</p> <p>There are non-Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, and they often report rising discrimination, especially those in Rakhine. But generally their situation is less precarious than the Rohingya.</p> <p>Myanmar's government denies discriminating against Rohingya and other Muslims.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/12 Cyprus: Turkey warships block drilling rig
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/cyprus-turkish-warships-continue-block-drilling-rig-53012126?
GIST	<p>Cyprus' government spokesman says Turkish warships continue to impede a rig from reaching a location off the east Mediterranean island where Italian energy company Eni is scheduled to drill for gas.</p> <p>Nicos Christodoulides told state broadcaster RIK Monday the rig remains stopped some 30 miles (50 kilometers) from the drilling target off the island's southeastern coast.</p> <p>Christodoulides said Turkish warships prevented other merchant vessels from approaching the area, citing military maneuvers.</p> <p>He said a Turkish notice binding the area for such maneuvers expires Feb. 22, but Cyprus says it violates international law.</p> <p>Turkey opposes what it says is a "unilateral" Cypriot government hydrocarbons search because it disregards the rights of breakaway Turkish Cypriots to the ethnically split island's natural resources.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/12 Gunmen attack paramilitary camp Kashmir
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/police-day-gunbattle-ends-indian-army-camp-kashmir-53011128
GIST	<p>At least one paramilitary soldier was killed when two gunmen opened fire near a camp in the main city in Indian-controlled Kashmir, officials said Monday.</p> <p>The attack came hours after government troops ended a two-day gunbattle with three gunmen at an army camp in another part of the disputed region. Five soldiers and one civilian were killed in that clash.</p> <p>Rajesh Yadav, a spokesman for the Central Reserve Police Force, said the building near the camp in Srinagar where Monday's attack occurred has been cleared of all civilians.</p> <p>Police chief S.P. Vaid said the area has been cordoned off and troops are exchanging fire with the gunmen.</p> <p>Late Sunday, government troops ended a gunbattle with militants inside an army camp in the region's Jammu area.</p> <p>Three militants were killed by late Sunday night, ending the attack that began at dawn on Saturday when the militants stormed the Sunjuwan army base on the outskirts of the city of Jammu.</p> <p>The Himalayan region of Kashmir is divided between India and archrival Pakistan. Both claim the region in its entirety.</p>

Anti-India sentiment runs deep among Kashmir's mostly Muslim population.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE 02/11 India, China keep eye on Maldives' crisis

SOURCE http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/india-china-vie-influence-crisis-unfolds-maldives-52993084?cid=clicksource_76_2_hero_headlines_headlines_hed

GIST As a political crisis plays out in the Maldives, a quiet tug of war is taking place around it, with heavyweights China and India vying for strategic dominance in the picturesque Indian Ocean nation.

At first glance, Beijing and New Delhi want no part in the turmoil that erupted Feb. 1 when the Maldives' Supreme Court overturned the convictions of several opposition politicians, including the president's main rival. Chinese and Indian officials spoke in usual diplomatic tones, saying they have no interest in interfering in the archipelago's internal affairs. But in reality, both have strategic regional interests to safeguard and are jostling for the upper hand.

President Yameen Abdul Gayoom has sent envoys to "friendly nations" China, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to explain his government's position since he rejected the court ruling, imposed a state of emergency last week and arrested two of the Supreme Court judges. His actions fueled suspicion that he has no intention of easing up on eliminating his rivals and tightening his hold on power ahead of this year's elections.

His most powerful opponent, exiled former President Mohammed Nasheed, appealed to India to send troops to end the crisis.

"On behalf of Maldivian people we humbly request: 1. India to send envoy, backed by its military, to release judges & pol. Detainees ... We request a physical presence," Nasheed tweeted last week.

Traditionally, the archipelago of 1,200 islands and a population of 390,000 Sunni Muslims has been firmly in New Delhi's sphere of influence, with India even intervening in 1988 when a group of mercenaries tried to seize power. Its support helped keep former strongman Maumoon Abdul Gayoom in power for three decades and later aided Nasheed, the country's first democratically elected leader, who became famous when he used his low-lying island nation to highlight the risk of rising sea levels and climate change.

But the Maldives began tilting toward Beijing after Yameen, the half brother of Gayoom, came to power in 2013 by defeating Nasheed.

Yameen has rolled back many of Nasheed's democratic gains, with all of his potential political opponents either jailed or in exile. His government curbed freedom of speech and assembly, with heavy fines imposed on journalists and social media users found guilty of defamation. In 2015, in a trial widely criticized by rights groups, Nasheed was sentenced to 13 years in prison. He later received asylum in Britain.

China saw the developments as an opening.

"Until 2011, China didn't even have an embassy in the Maldives. Coming to 2018, it's seen as a big player in this whole Indian Ocean region," said Mahalakshmi Ganapathy, an India-China expert at Singapore's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies.

When Yameen visited Beijing in December, the two countries signed a free trade agreement that eliminates most tariffs on Maldivian exports, primarily fish, and opens the island nation to Chinese goods and services, including in finance, health care and tourism.

China is already the Maldives' primary source of tourists, whose spending largely drives the economy, and Beijing is investing hundreds of millions of dollars in an airport expansion, housing development and

<p>Return to Top</p>	<p>other projects.</p> <p>China now sees the Maldives as a crucial part of its "One Belt One Road" project along ancient trade routes through the Indian Ocean and Central Asia. The initiative envisages building ports, railways and roads to expand trade — and China's influence — in a swath across Asia, Africa and Europe.</p> <p>China's massive lending to poor nations for such projects has raised concerns about their ability to repay. Already, Beijing has taken over ports it developed in Sri Lanka and Pakistan on long-term leases.</p> <p>Nasheed says China is "buying up the Maldives" under Yameen, accusing the president of opening up the floodgates to Chinese investments with little or no oversight and transparency. China has dismissed those allegations.</p> <p>Beijing is watching the Maldives very carefully. If the political situation turns in Nasheed's favor, that may shift the balance of influence back toward New Delhi.</p> <p>India is clearly uneasy with China's growing presence in its backyard. What's less clear is how it will respond to the current upheaval in the Maldives.</p> <p>So far, India hasn't responded publicly to Nasheed's demand that it deploy soldiers to end the crisis, and it's held off formally meeting with Yameen's envoy.</p> <p>But on Friday, India's Ministry of External Affairs issued a carefully worded statement aimed at China.</p> <p>"We note that China has said that Maldives Government has the ability to protect the security of Chinese personnel and institutions in Maldives. We hope that all countries can play a constructive role in Maldives, instead of doing the opposite," the statement said.</p>
--------------------------------------	--

HEADLINE	02/11 Utility: Puerto Rico 75% w/electricity
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/electricity-restored-75-percent-customers-puerto-rico-utility/story?id=53005459&cid=clicksource_81_2_hero_headlines_headlines_hed
GIST	<p>Nearly six months after Hurricane Maria decimated Puerto Rico, the island's electricity has been restored to 75 percent capacity, according to its utility company.</p> <p>The Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority said Sunday that 75.35 percent of customers now have electricity. It added that 90.8 percent of the electrical grid, already anemic even before the Sept. 20 storm barrelled through the island, is generating power again.</p> <p>Thousands of power restoration personnel made up of the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), industry workers from the mainland, and the Army Corps of Engineers have made marked progress in recent weeks.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/11 Drones are changing the world
SOURCE	https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/306599
GIST	<p>Those who dream of getting an Amazon package, a prescription drug, or even a beer delivered to their doorsteps via drone might have their wishes fulfilled sooner than expected.</p> <p>The Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Integration Pilot Program has jump-started the development of the drone industry in the United States, aiming to “enhance the safety of the American public, increase the efficiency and productivity of American industry and create tens of thousands of new American jobs.”</p>

Aerial enterprises such as drone delivery and aerial imagery are poised to take off. The potential economic benefit of integrated unmanned airborne systems will generate an estimated \$82 billion and create up to 100,000 jobs by 2025, while aerial imaging is expected to generate \$3.3 billion by 2023.

Driving that growth are new and expanding application areas. Aerial technology is transforming industries of all types by optimizing processes, cutting costs, and reaching both figurative and literal places that were once unattainable. Here are five industries that are being disrupted by this new, lifesaving technology.

Disaster relief and humanitarian aid.

Just days after Hurricane Harvey, location content companies captured the devastation left by the natural disaster to aid in emergency response and rescue, flood management, and FEMA fund allocation. In times of emergency, image captures can be used to navigate first responders and 911 emergency services as well as analyze road conditions. FEMA and disaster relief agencies can also allocate money based on examinations of the extent of devastation in an area.

Earlier this year, Otherlab, an engineering research and development lab based in San Francisco, created the APSARA glider, an advanced, biodegradable cardboard airplane capable of carrying more than two pounds of supplies like blood and vaccines to those in need.

The biodegradable drone can support canisters, medically sensitive liquids, batteries and other life-saving items and disperse them to an area the size of California. Now medical supplies can be delivered to rural areas without roads or regions rendered inaccessible by natural disasters or war.

High-resolution aerial imagery, like these before and after images of Hurricane Irma, are being used to aid in emergency response and rescue, FEMA fund allocation and flood management.

Public transit.

Local transportation agencies such as Orange County Transportation Authority and the District Department of Transportation in Washington, DC, are using aerial imagery as a base map -- a collection of GIS data and imagery that form the background setting and orientation of the map.

Aerial photographs integrated with third-party programs like Autodesk and Esri products help in project management oversight, planning and site analysis, and validating construction updates (lane, roadway and sidewalk updates).

Ocean mapping.

Realizing that the ocean is critical to human existence -- the source of 97 percent of the planet's water and producer of more than half of the oxygen in the atmosphere -- it may come as a surprise that 85 percent of the ocean's surface remains unmapped and unexplored.

Aerial imagery has played a part in bridging that gap. High-resolution photos from aircraft camera systems can capture and retrieve surface current data and measure Doppler shift in waves. This method is cost-effective, timely and scalable; it can cover large surface areas.

This process has implications for the oil and gas industry. Using the data extracted from the aerial captures, oil companies can plan and execute offshore exploration, conduct deep-water drilling operations, reinforce oil spill response and mitigation, and assist in search-and-rescue missions.

Machine learning and AI.

The combination of machine learning and AI is changing the way the insurance and real estate markets answer questions at scale. Now, with extremely high-resolution imagery, insurers can easily gather the most accurate, inspection-level property data, allowing assessors to easily identify characteristics and potential risks of a property such as swimming pools and the distance between trees and buildings.

Cape Analytics, for example, has developed a cloud-based platform that provides an on-demand data

stream of high-value property features and risks for real estate portfolios across the United States.

Precision agriculture.

Precision agriculture is a farming management concept based on the use of technology to increase crop yields and profitability while reducing a number of traditional components necessary for growing crops such as water, fertilizer, herbicides, and insecticides. Drone aerial imagery is key. Aerial pictures help farmers work smarter in tasks such as surveying entire farm properties, conducting soil and irrigation sampling, scheduling pesticide applications, and finding mechanical errors in equipment.

Large companies such as Monsanto, John Deere, Bayer, Dow and DuPont are investing in precision farming technologies like software, sensors and aerial-based data.

City water districts use aerial imagery to monitor crop production and water supplies and analyze aspects of the water budget. GIS and aerial imagery were used to create models and tools for the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership for examining and assessing the Coachella Valley Aquifer. These maps were used to estimate infiltration as well as change in land cover classifications and water depth surfaces, all visualized in 2D and 3D to find possible trends.

As the aerial technology industry matures, it will only become more ubiquitous. The sky covers everything, from emergency response to public transit, oceanic discovery to large-scale farming and property assets. Sure, you'll still get your package delivered, but the sky is opening up a world of other possibilities.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/10 False alarms in national alert system
SOURCE	https://www.stripes.com/news/us/false-alarms-highlight-weaknesses-in-national-alert-system-1.511041
GIST	<p>Weather junkie John Grosso knew it was highly unlikely a monster wave was barreling toward the Connecticut coast. Still, when a tsunami warning appeared out of the blue on his phone Tuesday, he felt a twinge of fear. His co-workers, who got the same alert, asked whether they should evacuate.</p> <p>It turned out to be a false alarm, a computer glitch. The damage? An erosion of trust.</p> <p>"Now I have to check every single time, God forbid, there's a tornado warning, a tsunami alert, pick your poison," said Grosso, 25, a social media manager from Stamford. "I have to look at it and go, 'Is it a test? Was it sent in error?' And I could be wasting precious time in case it was real."</p> <p>Last month's bogus ballistic missile warning in Hawaii and this week's tsunami alert snafu have highlighted trouble spots and prompted calls for change in the nation's increasingly complex system for alerting Americans about dangerous weather, active shooters, kidnapped children, plant explosions and other emergencies.</p> <p>Both incidents have prompted calls for reform, including better training for emergency workers in charge of sending alerts.</p> <p>More than 1,000 federal, state and local government agencies have the ability to issue emergency alerts through an array of federally managed communications networks. It is a patchwork system that usually works as intended but can wreak havoc when it doesn't.</p> <p>In the Senate, legislation introduced this week in response to the false missile alert would establish standards for state and local agencies' participation in the national alert system, require federal certification of their incident management systems, and recommend steps for avoiding false alarms.</p> <p>Additionally, the Federal Communications Commission has ordered wireless providers to do a better job</p>

of targeting emergency alerts to only those in the affected area, with a geographic "overreach" of no more than one-tenth of a mile.

Aside from the false alarms, emergency agencies have been criticized for sending alerts to too many people or too few. In Alaska, for instance, a tsunami warning triggered by an undersea earthquake in January reached residents of Anchorage even though the city wasn't in danger. In Northern California wine country, where wildfires killed dozens of people in October, some residents complained that authorities failed to send an emergency alert to their phones.

"The emergency alerting system is really a whole collection of systems, and there are various places where it can break down," said Dan Gonzales, a scientist at RAND Corp. who studies emergency alert systems. "With so many organizations involved, it's difficult to make it foolproof."

The risk of too many false alarms, Gonzales said, is that "people will ignore warnings if they believe they're not accurate or not relevant."

That was on vivid display Tuesday when AccuWeather, the private forecasting service, took what was intended to be a routine, monthly National Weather Service test message and sent it as a real warning to subscribers up and down the East Coast, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean.

Katia Del Negro, 33, was at home in New York City when she got the alert, her surprise quickly turning to skepticism.

"I definitely got a bit concerned when I saw that many people along the East Coast received the alert," she said. "But at the same time it seemed so weird, so I thought something was off, thinking back about what happened in Hawaii not long ago."

AccuWeather, based in State College, Pennsylvania, blamed the weather service, saying the government agency miscoded the test message. That caused the company's computers to interpret it as real and push it to subscribers' cellphones, according to AccuWeather.

The weather service insisted its message was coded properly.

Daryl Herzmann, a systems analyst in the agronomy department at Iowa State University, said the message contained a "T" flag, indicating test. But the weather service also recycled a tracking number it used in a previous tsunami warning, probably confusing AccuWeather's computers, he said.

The weather service has been recycling tracking numbers for years, said Herzmann, who runs an environmental data project that compiles information from the weather service.

Weather service spokeswoman Susan Buchanan had no comment on Herzmann's observation. She pointed to an earlier statement that said the agency is "working with private sector companies to determine why some systems did not recognize the coding."

It was human error, not a computer problem, that caused last month's panic in Hawaii. A state worker mistook a drill for a missile attack and sent an emergency alert to cellphones and broadcast stations. It took nearly 40 minutes for the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to figure out a way to retract the alert.

The worker was fired and the agency chief resigned.

"This cry of wolf damaged the credibility of alert messaging, which can be dangerous when a real emergency occurs," Lisa Fowlkes, an FCC official, said Tuesday during a House committee hearing on the nation's emergency messaging system.

Jeremy DaRos, of Portland, Maine, who lives near the water and got the erroneous tsunami alert, said he is concerned that people won't take seriously the emergency alerts they get in an actual crisis.

	"People need to trust the alerts they're pushing out," he said. "This is important stuff, and to have two incidents in the span of a month is just unacceptable."
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/10 OxyContin maker stops opioid promotion
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/americas-heroin-epidemic/oxycontin-maker-purdue-stop-promoting-opioids-light-epidemic-n846726
GIST	<p>Purdue Pharma, the company best known for selling the prescription painkiller OxyContin, announced on Saturday that they would stop marketing opioid drugs to doctors. The move comes amid a series of state and municipal lawsuits that blame the company for contributing to the opioid epidemic.</p> <p>Purdue has faced criticism for more than a decade that it has aggressively and irresponsibly pushed the sale of its drug OxyContin. The company said Saturday that it would cut its sales force by more than 50 percent, with approximately 200 people remaining in the department.</p> <p>"We have restructured and significantly reduced our commercial operation and will no longer be promoting opioids to prescribers," Purdue said in a statement.</p> <p>The company plans to run all questions about its highly profitable drug Oxycontin — which the American Addiction Centers said has a strong “potential for addiction and subsequent withdrawal symptoms” — through its medical affairs department.</p> <p>Dr. Andrew Kolodny, the co-director of Opioid Policy Research at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management, said he wished that the company had decided to stop marketing the drug years ago and that other opioid manufacturers would agree to do the same.</p> <p>"The problem we have is doctors over-prescribing opioids, and it's difficult to promote more cautious prescribing if manufacturers are sending drug reps into doctor's offices and advertising in medical journals and investing millions to get them to prescribe more," Kolodny said.</p> <p>"Overall, the impact will be small because the genie is out of the bottle," he said of the opioid manufacturer's decision. "But if other opioid manufacturers would do the same, it would have a bigger effect."</p> <p>Purdue generated \$1.94 billion in Oxycontin sales in 2017, according to Symphony Health Solutions. That is approximately \$1 billion less than its all-time high in 2013.</p> <p>Because of Oxycontin's rising cost, many people who developed an addiction to the opioid subsequently turned to heroin, contributing to the ongoing drug epidemic.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/11 Iran marks anniversary Islamic Revolution
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/iran-marks-anniversary-islamic-revolution-protests-52996962?cid=clicksource_76_4_article%20roll_articleroll_hed
GIST	<p>Hundreds of thousands of Iranians rallied on the streets Sunday to mark the 39th anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, just weeks after anti-government protests rocked cities across the country.</p> <p>Demonstrators burned American and Israeli flags, as well as images of President Donald Trump, whose refusal to re-certify the nuclear deal with world powers has riled Iranians. A few burned a white sheet reading "BARJAM," the Farsi acronym for the 2015 nuclear accord that Tehran signed with world powers.</p>

Such activities commonly mark the anniversary, which commemorates the overthrow of U.S.-backed Iranian Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. That began a period of hostilities between Iran and the West, including an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and the subsequent hostage crisis.

However, President Hassan Rouhani made a point to call for unity among Iran's people across its political spectrum, from hard-liners backing the theocratic government to reformists demanding change.

"When the Revolution took place, we pushed some off the revolutionary train that we should have not," Rouhani told a massive crowd at Tehran's central Azadi Square. "Today, we have to let them board the train again."

Rouhani didn't specifically name those pushed aside, though the Islamic Revolution and its aftermath saw the Islamists surrounding Ruhollah Khomeini purge liberals, communists and others. More recently, Iran has put leaders of its 2009 Green Movement under house arrest, where they remain even today despite Rouhani's pledges to free them.

The comments appeared aimed as being a salve following a New Year marred by anti-government protests. The demonstrations initially focused on Iran's poor economy despite the nuclear deal, but quickly spiraled into chants directly challenging Iran's theocratic government.

In his speech, Rouhani promised more job opportunities and better economic condition in the near future. Meanwhile, dozens of hard-liners chanted: "Death to liars, death to the seditious!"

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/11 Crash: parts shortage grounded plane 2yrs
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/latest-parts-shortage-grounded-crashed-jet-years-53001264
GIST	<p>The Latest on a Russian plane crash Sunday near Moscow (all times local):</p> <p>4:25 p.m.</p> <p>Russia's state news agency Tass says the passenger airliner that crashed outside Moscow on Sunday had been flying since 2010, with a two-year break because of a shortage of parts.</p> <p>The plane, an Antonov An-148 jet, was ordered by Rossiya Airlines, a subsidiary of Aeroflot, but was put into storage during 2015-2017 because of a lack of parts. Tass reports it re-entered service for Saratov Airlines in February 2017.</p> <p>The jet was developed by Ukraine's Antonov company in the early 2000s, and was manufactured in both Ukraine and Russia.</p> <hr/> <p>3:50 p.m.</p> <p>A Russian passenger plane believed to be carrying 71 people has crashed near Moscow, shortly after takeoff from one of the city's airports. No survivors have been reported.</p> <p>The An-148 regional jet disappeared from radar screens Sunday afternoon a few minutes after departing from Domodedovo Airport en route to the city of Orsk, some 1,500 kilometers (1,000 miles) southeast of Moscow. The plane reportedly belonged to Saratov Airlines, a Russian commercial carrier.</p> <p>Plane fragments were found in the Ramenskoye area 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the airport. Footage on Russian state television showed them strewn across a snowy field with no buildings nearby.</p>

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/09 Baltimore PD officers 'integrity polygraphs'
SOURCE	http://baltimore.cbslocal.com/2018/02/09/polygraph-testing-baltimore-police/
GIST	<p>BALTIMORE (WJZ) — In his first press conference, new Baltimore police commissioner Darryl De Sousa said he is rearranging the department and one of his first moves will be to crack down on officer misconduct. In a somewhat confusing address to reporters, he explained what the department will look like under his leadership, already changing his mind on one of two deputy commissioner spots to be filled.</p> <p>He's in. He's out. He's maybe in again. The confusing back-and-forth at Friday morning's press conference leaves one of the two top spots in the department empty after just 24 hours earlier a chart was distributed to media outlets listing Thomas Cassella as the next Deputy Commissioner of Operations.</p> <p>"During a subsequent background check, I discovered something that made me slow down that process and reconsider," explained De Sousa. "Currently at this point, we're not going to move forward."</p> <p>In his first round with reporters as the newly-appointed commissioner, De Sousa said he's pulling back on Cassella's appointment on the heels of a memo reportedly leaked to media outlets detailing past complaints against the 23-year veteran and now-retired officer. Then, police spokesperson TJ Smith said the leak is still under investigation and Cassella was not out of the running.</p> <p>"The commissioner has not made a decision, so that's the answer," said Smith.</p> <p>As they look into the legitimacy of the leaked document, the commissioner said they will also be watching their own.</p> <p>"I cannot minimize is the fact that there are corrupt cops. GTTF is awful. It sickens me to my stomach to see what occurred," he said.</p> <p>The once-elite gun task force consumed by corruption that was prosecuted federally is now the inspiration for a new "integrity division" which will police the police. It will include random integrity tests, along with random polygraph tests and the launching of an overtime abuse unit.</p> <p>DeSousa emphasized his priorities now are eliminating police corruption while boosting the safety of the city.</p>
Return to	
Top	

HEADLINE	02/11 Hawaii's cesspools threaten tourism
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/hawaiis-cesspools-threaten-drinking-water-tourism-1518357620
GIST	<p>HONOLULU—Paradise has a sewage problem.</p> <p>Cesspools—holes in the ground where untreated human waste is deposited—have become a crisis in Hawaii, threatening the state's drinking water, its coral reefs and the famous beaches that are the lifeblood of its tourist economy.</p> <p>Sewage from cesspools is seeping into some of Hawaii's ocean waters, where it has been blamed for infections suffered by surfers and snorkelers. It is also entering the drinking water in part of the state, pushing nitrate levels close to the legal limit.</p> <p>Hawaii has 88,000 cesspools across its eight major islands, more than any other state. Collectively, they deposit 53 million gallons of raw sewage into the ground every day, according to the state health department. More than 90% of the state's drinking water comes from groundwater wells.</p>

State lawmakers, who outlawed new cesspools in 2016, are scrambling to find a solution to the thousands that exist.

Replacing all of the state's cesspools with alternate sewage systems would cost at least \$1.75 billion, according to the health department.

The problem is concentrated in suburbs and rural areas outside Honolulu, where cesspools have long been the primary method for storing sewage from homes.

Most beaches remain safe for swimming, and public water remains safe to drink for now, state officials said. The tourism industry continues to grow each year, despite instances of contamination at beaches.

But the problem is growing worse, officials said, as the state's population has continued to grow.

In Upcountry Maui, a rural area in the central part of the island where drinking-water wells are most threatened by cesspools, officials are monitoring water quality closely.

At one groundwater well, nitrate levels are already at 8.7 milligrams a liter; the legal limit is 10, and the Department of Health estimated that some parts of the aquifer are already over that limit.

Environmentalists say they are worried about the potential effect of the water on infants, who can be killed by high levels on nitrates, which are chemicals found in fertilizer and sewage.

State Sen. J. Kalani English, who represents Upcountry Maui, said it can cost as much as \$100,000 to replace each cesspool, a prohibitive figure for most property owners. There are about 8,000 cesspools in Upcountry Maui alone.

Replacing the cesspools is "a huge financial burden," he said.

Hawaii's cesspool problem is a remnant of its agricultural past, when many parts of the state were off the electrical grid. Mr. English said, growing up on Maui, he remembered digging holes for outhouses, and then after a few years filling them with lye and digging new ones.

Outside of Honolulu, the state remains largely rural, and the mountainous terrain makes laying sewer lines to connect to sewage treatment plants expensive and, in many areas, not feasible.

Many bathrooms in homes outside Honolulu still pump sewage into nearby holes in the ground.

Before they were outlawed, the state received about 500 requests to put in new cesspools each year. Last year, the state passed a law requiring all cesspools to be replaced by 2050.

Yet, some residents resist plans to replace cesspools, worried about expense. In January, Upcountry Maui residents overwhelmed a Department of Public Health meeting, complaining about potential costs.

"You may want a clean environment, but you can't afford to pay for it," said Keith Kawaoka, deputy director for environmental health at the state agency. "It's a real dilemma."

Lawmakers are still searching for solutions. They recently called on engineers to bring them new ideas, adding that simply converting to septic systems—in which solids and liquids of waste are separated and the solids are later pumped out—wouldn't solve the contamination problems in some areas, because nitrates would still seep into the groundwater.

Health officials said the 740 cesspools around Kahaluu, on the east coast of Oahu, contributed to high bacteria counts in the bay.

"Skin infections consistent with sewage-contaminated surface waters have been documented in this area,"

	<p>the department's report said.</p> <p>Officials said it is difficult to definitively prove that any specific infection resulted from sewage contamination.</p> <p>In Puako, a popular snorkeling destination on the Big Island, residents fear that sewage from the area's 150 cesspools has already harmed the coral reef, which is its signature tourist attraction.</p> <p>Peter Hackstedde, president of Puako Community Association, said he now avoids the water if he has a cut; he has gotten infected before.</p> <p>He said the community had already spent more than \$2.5 million of its own money studying the problem.</p> <p>"We found that sewage is leaking into the ocean, and we swim in it," Mr. Hackstedde said.</p> <p>They now hope to install a small-scale sewage-treatment plant, which would avoid having to dig and install pipes to the nearest town, about 50 miles away.</p> <p>A treatment plant would cost about \$15 million, Mr. Hackstedde said, and residents don't want to put up that money on their own. He said his association is hoping for a public-private partnership.</p> <p>"Everyone who lives down here is pretty much for cleaning up the ocean," Mr. Hackstedde said. "We just need the money."</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/10 Hezbollah hails Syria; 'new strategic era'
SOURCE	https://www.timesofisrael.com/hezbollah-downing-of-israeli-f-16-the-start-of-a-new-strategic-era/
GIST	<p>Hezbollah hailed Syria's air defenses after they reportedly downed an Israeli fighter jet on Saturday, saying it marked the start of a "new strategic era."</p> <p>"This is the beginning of a new strategic era which puts an end to the violation of Syrian airspace and territory," the Lebanese terror group said in a statement published by Lebanon's ANI news agency.</p> <p>Hezbollah, an Iranian proxy backing Syrian President Bashar Assad in his country's civil war, praised the "vigilance of the Syrian army," and said it had "bravely blocked Israeli warplanes and downed an F-16."</p> <p>It also said the Syrian response marked "a decisive end to old arrangements."</p> <p>Hezbollah supporters were celebrating the incident on Saturday across from the Israeli city of Metulla, according to Israeli TV reports.</p> <p>The statement from Hezbollah came after its allies Iran and Syria denied that an unmanned drone Israel said it shot down violated the Jewish state's airspace, calling Israeli allegations "lies," and saying the drone was on a regular mission gathering intelligence on the Islamic State.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/11 Israel boosts air defense
SOURCE	http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Preparing-for-war-in-the-north-Israel-boosts-air-defense-542284
GIST	<p>Israel has boosted its air defense in the North following a significant confrontation between the Jewish State, Syria and Iran which led to the loss of an F-16 fighter jet.</p>

While the army refused to comment on the reports, witnesses reported seeing a convoy of missile-defense batteries heading north near the Israeli-Arab city of Baka al-Gharbiya. Other witnesses posted photos of several trucks carrying the batteries on central highways in northern Israel.

Israel's air defenses currently include the Iron Dome, designed to shoot down short-range rockets; the Arrow system, which intercepts ballistic missiles outside of the Earth's atmosphere and the David's Sling missile-defense system, which is designed to intercept tactical ballistic missiles, medium- to long-range rockets and cruise missiles fired from ranges of between 40 km. to 300 km.

Israel also has Patriot missile batteries stationed in the North and has used them to intercept drones infiltrating into Israeli airspace from Syria. In September, an Iranian-built unmanned aerial vehicle breached the "Bravo line" that marks the Syrian demilitarized zone, and was intercepted by an Israeli Patriot anti-ballistic missile launched from a station near the northern city of Safed.

The Arrow system was first used in April when it was launched to intercept three surface-to-air missiles fired toward IAF jets by Syrian-regime air defense.

On Saturday, an Iranian drone, which took off from Syria's T4 airbase in northern Homs province, flew through Jordanian territory before it infiltrated into Israel. It flew for about a minute and a half in the northern Jordan Valley before it was shot down by a helicopter flown by Lt.-Col. "L.", commander of the 113 Squadron.

"The squadron was sent to protect the country's skies," L. said. "We identified the aircraft as an Iranian drone, and when it crossed the border, we shot it down into Israeli territory. The squadron is ready and prepared for any task it is given."

IAF chief-of-air-staff Brig.-Gen. Tomer Bar, who is second in command of Israel's air force, said the drone was an advanced model with a low signature that Israel had never intercepted before. It is currently being examined by the IDF.

In retaliation for the incursion, eight jets took off to strike the drone's launch site. During the operation, Syrian regime forces fired around 20 anti-aircraft missiles at the jets. The pilot and navigator of one of the planes ejected themselves when they recognized that one of the missiles had locked onto their jet.

According to the IDF, Iran and the Quds Force of the Revolutionary Guards have been operating at the T4 base "for a long time, backed by Syrian-army forces and with the approval of the Syrian regime."

"Iran has been using the base in recent months for the purpose of transferring weaponry to be used against Israel," said the IDF Spokesperson's Unit. "These actions by Iran at the base are ostensibly carried out under the guise of supporting the fighting against the global Islamic jihad forces, but the actions carried out in the past 24 hours prove that its real concern is direct, violent action against Israel."

"In the Iranian action, all the Israeli warnings against Iranian consolidation in Syria were realized," it continued. "The attack was initiated and Israel was forced to respond first to the threat in its territory and then to the hostile elements operating from the Syrian territory opposite it."

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/11 Quake, wind, fire hit Winter Olympics
SOURCE	https://www.yahoo.com/news/earthquake-wind-fire-extreme-conditions-hit-olympics-073136245--oly.html
GIST	Pyeongchang (South Korea) (AFP) - An earthquake triggered an alert and high winds disrupted competition at the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics Sunday, as officials warned of a severe freeze and urged fans to wrap up warm.

After a bitterly cold first night of competition, a shallow 4.6-magnitude earthquake jolted the eastern portion of South Korea overnight, prompting warnings on mobile phones.

Early on Sunday, ski officials were forced to postpone the showpiece men's downhill until Thursday as buffeting winds made the high-speed slope too dangerous for competition.

Later, the women's slopestyle snowboarding also fell victim to the wind, as the qualifying session was scrapped with riders going straight into the final on Monday.

It comes after the first ski jumping final finished more than an hour behind schedule, past midnight on Saturday, as competitors were held up by swirling winds.

As if to complete the set of extreme conditions, an alert warning of a high risk of fire -- given the dry, windy weather -- also flashed up on mobile phones on Sunday.

Organisers gave assurances that the Games were at no risk from earthquakes, with venues built to withstand even strong tremors. Sunday's quake was measured at magnitude-4.7 by the US Geological Survey and was about 260 kilometres (160 miles) away.

"All the facilities in the Games area are built so they can withstand strong earthquakes over 7.0... so I assure you there was no issue regarding these facilities," said Sung Baik-you, spokesman for the Games organisers.

Of more concern for the sparse crowds at the outdoor events will be the biting cold, which has already made Pyeongchang one of the chilliest Olympics on record -- and which is set to dramatically worsen.

Temperatures are forecast to plunge to -14 degrees Celsius (6.8 Fahrenheit) on Monday, will feel like a shivering -25C in the strong, mountainside wind.

"People are advised to dress warmly and wear hats and gloves to keep themselves warm," warned Sung.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/10 Italians protest shooting of migrants
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/10/europe/italy-migrants-protest/index.html
GIST	<p>Rome (CNN) — The shooting of African migrants allegedly by a suspect aligned with Italy's far-right, neo-fascist parties has sparked serious political debate about how the country is reconciling its fascist past.</p> <p>Luca Traini is accused of going on a shooting rampage February 3 in the central Italian town of Macerata and performing the fascist salute upon his arrest. Six African migrants were injured. The migrants are part of the wave of more than 600,000 people who have arrived by sea from North Africa since 2013 when Italy last went to the polls.</p> <p>On Saturday, thousands of centrist and leftist supporters gathered under heavy police guard in Macerata to demonstrate against the rise of Italy's neo-fascist parties. Organizers say 15,000 people attended.</p> <p>The march was held inside a fenced-off perimeter, and police banned fascist groups from participating. Supporters waved Communist Party and Antifa (anti-fascist) flags. Some held banners with "anti-fascism" and "anti-racism," while others displayed signs with fascist and Nazi symbols crossed out.</p> <p>Few migrants joined the march, according to Sammy Kunoun, head of the Nigerian Community of Macerata. Police had strongly discouraged migrant groups from protesting.</p> <p>Anti-fascist demonstrations were held in other Italian cities, including Piacenza, where the far-right, neo-fascist fringe group CasaPound engaged in violent clashes with police, according to Italian news reports.</p>

On Wednesday, a group of supporters of the Forza Nuova neo-fascist party, which openly supports the recent shooting spree and has offered to pay the suspect's legal bills, clashed with police in Macerata, which has a high concentration of African migrants and those seeking political asylum.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/11 Russia plane crash kills all onboard
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/11/europe/russia-plane-crash/index.html
GIST	<p>Moscow (CNN) — All 71 people aboard a Saratov Airlines plane died when the plane crashed southeast of Moscow on Sunday, Russian state news agency Tass reported.</p> <p>Those on board included 65 passengers and six crew members, the Russian news agency Interfax said.</p> <p>The Antonov-148 aircraft disappeared from the radar shortly after takeoff from Moscow's Domodedovo Airport and crashed soon afterward, Tass reported.</p> <p>The plane went down in Ramenskoye District, in the Moscow region, the Russian emergency ministry told CNN.</p> <p>"The snow is very dense ... the Moscow region has had some of its heaviest snowfall in decades," CNN's Matthew Chance reported from Moscow. "It's not clear at this stage whether weather was factor in this crash."</p>
Return to	
Top	

HEADLINE	02/11 Israel PM: airstrikes dealt 'severe blows'
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/10/middleeast/israel-military-jet-crash/index.html
GIST	<p>CNN) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his nation dealt "severe blows" to Iranian and Syrian forces following the weekend downing of an Israeli fighter jet over northern Israel.</p> <p>The Prime Minister said Israel would do so again if necessary.</p> <p>"We made it unequivocally clear to everyone that our rules of action have not changed one bit; we will continue to strike at every attempt to strike at us. This has been our policy and it will remain our policy."</p> <p>An Israeli F-16 fighter jet was hit and went down Saturday in northern Israel after coming under "massive anti-aircraft fire" from Syrian forces, according to the Israeli army.</p> <p>The incident came after an Israeli combat helicopter successfully intercepted an Iranian unmanned aerial drone that had been launched from Syria, the Israel Defense Forces said.</p> <p>Both pilots aboard the Israeli jet ejected, the Israeli army said. One pilot was severely injured during the ejection, while the second was lightly wounded.</p> <p>In retaliation for the downed jet, Israeli forces attacked 12 targets in Syria, including three aerial defense batteries and four targets described as Iranian, the IDF said.</p> <p>An IDF statement described the four Iranian targets as "part of Iran's military establishment in Syria."</p> <p>Netanyahu defended Israel's actions.</p> <p>"Our policy is absolutely clear: Israel will defend itself from every attack and from every attempt to harm our sovereignty," Netanyahu said. "Iran made such an attempt today. They violated our sovereignty, they</p>

	<p>infiltrated a drone into Israel's territory from Syrian territory."</p> <p>The US firmly backs Israel, with White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders issuing a statement saying, "Israel is a staunch ally of the United States, and we support its right to defend itself from the Iranian-backed Syrian and militia forces in southern Syria."</p> <p>US State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said in a statement Saturday that the US was "deeply concerned about today's escalation of violence over Israel's border."</p> <p>"Iran's calculated escalation of threat, and its ambition to project its power and dominance, places all of the people of the region -- from Yemen to Lebanon -- at risk," Nauert said. "The US continues to push back on the totality of Iran's malign activities in the region and calls for an end to Iranian behavior that threatens peace and stability."</p> <p>Meanwhile, Russia's Foreign Ministry was much more even-handed in its statement, saying that "the latest developments and attacks on Syria were viewed with serious concern" and that the losses to Syria and damage resulting from them were being examined.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/10 UN condemns bloody week in Syria
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/10/middleeast/syria-violence-untied-nations-intl/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN) — Waves of deadly airstrikes against rebel-held areas in Syria have made this week "one of the bloodiest periods of the entire conflict," the UN human rights chief said Saturday.</p> <p>Opposition-controlled areas in Syria's northwestern province of Idlib and Eastern Ghouta, outside the capital, Damascus, have suffered intensified bombardment by what observers say are Russian-backed Syrian government forces.</p> <p>UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein called for urgent international action to halt the bloodshed after reports of 277 civilian deaths between Sunday and Friday. More than 800 civilians also were reported injured, the UN human rights office said.</p> <p>"The past week has been one of the bloodiest periods of the entire conflict, with wave after wave of deadly airstrikes leading to civilian casualties in areas of Eastern Ghouta and Idlib," Zeid said in a strongly worded statement.</p> <p>"The no-holds-barred nature of this assault is evidenced by reports that at least nine medical facilities, six of them in Idlib and three in Eastern Ghouta, were hit by airstrikes. Even by Syria's atrocious standards, these are exceptionally deplorable developments."</p> <p>Paramedics and volunteers were also killed and injured in a number of places "after second, third or fourth rounds of airstrikes apparently deliberately targeted places that had already been hit earlier in the day," the statement said.</p> <p>More than 200 of those killed were in Eastern Ghouta -- more than a quarter of them were children.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/10 Surveillance system or public safety tool?
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/surveillance-system-or-public-safety-tool-seattle-dismantles-controversial-wireless-mesh-network/
GIST	Seattle's wireless mesh network, a node of controversy about police surveillance and the role of federal funding in city policing, is coming down.

Megan Erb, spokeswoman for Seattle Information Technology, said the city has budgeted \$150,000 for contractor Prime Electric and city employees to remove dozens of surveillance cameras and 158 “wireless access points” — little, off-white boxes with antennae mounted on utility poles around the city.

When the mesh network was bought and installed in 2013, with \$3.6 million from the Department of Homeland Security, the Seattle Police Department (SPD) said it would be a valuable public-safety device for port security and first-responder communication during emergencies. Critics from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Washington argued it was an apparatus for state surveillance hiding behind a public-safety smile.

Either way, it took the Seattle City Council by surprise.

The mesh network, according to the ACLU, news reports and anti-surveillance activists from Seattle Privacy Coalition, had the potential to track and log every wireless device that moved through its system: people attending protests, people getting cups of coffee, people going to a hotel in the middle of the workday.

In November 2013, shortly after the news stories about it came out, SPD spokesman Sean Whitcomb announced: “The wireless mesh network will be deactivated until city council approves a draft (privacy) policy and until there’s an opportunity for vigorous public debate.”

That policy never materialized. Now crews are tearing its hardware down and repurposing the usable parts for other city agencies, including Seattle Department of Transportation traffic cameras.

Erb said the city had hoped to remove the hardware earlier, but couldn’t because of work-schedule delays. “Seattle City Light is eager for us to remove old equipment from their poles,” she added, “so others, including possibly commercial cellular carriers, can upgrade their equipment.”

SPD declined several times to discuss the removal of the network.

“This is one good, granular victory,” said Shankar Narayan, Washington state’s technology and liberty director of the ACLU. “It’s an issue we’d advocated around for a very long time. We have a longstanding principle that suspicionless surveillance of general populations is not useful and chills people’s constitutionally protected rights.”

When the mesh-network debate first erupted in 2013, SPD spokesman Jonah Spangenthal-Lee wrote on the department’s blotter that the system “can and will be used a number of ways by a variety of different agencies.”

That versatility turned out to be a public-relations bug, instead of a feature.

Digital networks with surveillance potential, Narayan said, have a cost: “Not just in terms of public dollars, but community trust, willingness to attend a protest — we know that people who know they’re being watched will act differently. We’re glad to see the mesh network taken away.”

This isn’t the first time SPD has been pressured to abandon a Homeland Security-funded tool. In 2013, it gave up its drones. Like the mesh network, they were quietly bought with federal money and became a flashpoint for public outcry.

“We live in a brave new world where data and algorithms can be used against you without transparency,” Narayan said. “We don’t know who collected data, sold it to a data packager, then sold it, for example, to an HMO that will raise your health-insurance premium based on your reckless driving.”

The life cycles of the drones and the mesh network, Seattle City Council President Bruce Harrell said, have been a learning experience for Seattle.

SPD “needed to respect the public process, explain the technology to the public in a transparent manner, listen to the public’s concerns and obtain council approval via ordinance prior to installation.”

In 2013, the city council passed a surveillance ordinance giving it more oversight in the acquisition of devices with surveillance capabilities.

Last year, that ordinance was amended and bulked up, requiring city departments to report their surveillance-enabled technologies already in use and present them for review by the council.

To date, city departments have identified 28 technologies — from Seattle Department of Transportation’s license-plate readers to SPD tools like iBase, a “crime analysis tool allows for configuring, capturing, controlling, analyzing and displaying complex information and relationships in link and entity data.”

So what, exactly, does that do?

“That’s the point,” Narayan said with a chuckle. “All we have now are vague descriptions — it could be anything from a simple graphic representation of a spreadsheet to a complex analytic tool that establishes relationships to show that somebody might be a gang member.”

The council’s scrutiny of the city’s surveillance tools, Narayan said, will probably begin in March.

In the aftermath of the drones and mesh-network controversies, he added, the ACLU has had productive conversations with SPD: “They have a better understanding that if they want to roll out these technologies, they will have to be ready to answer tough questions.”

Removal of the mesh network is “a clear win for privacy,” said Phil Mocek, co-founder of Seattle Privacy Coalition. “Hopefully, this move is indication that city leaders have learned their lesson and that we will continue to see increased sanctuary from unwarranted surveillance in Seattle.”

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/11 Snohomish Co. flu deaths lead state
SOURCE	http://www.heraldnet.com/news/county-leads-state-in-flu-deaths-now-at-27/
GIST	<p>EVERETT — Influenza’s spread seems to have ebbed slightly, but that doesn’t mean the influenza season is over.</p> <p>Four more people have died in Snohomish County due to complications from the flu. That brings the season’s death toll to 27, the most of any county in Washington. King County was second highest, with 23 flu-related deaths.</p> <p>Statewide, 151 people have died from influenza, according to state Department of Health data.</p> <p>The most recent deaths in Snohomish County were two women from Marysville, one in her mid-60s and another in her late 60s; a woman in her mid-80s from Edmonds; and a woman in her mid-80s from Everett. All had health conditions that made them more vulnerable to the flu.</p> <p>Other measures of local flu activity include 256 hospitalizations for flu-related illnesses and four long-term care facilities reporting flu outbreaks, said Heather Thomas, a Snohomish Health District spokeswoman.</p> <p>“We expect the flu season to be here for several more weeks,” Thomas said. “It does go through spring on occasion. Last year we had flu deaths through May.”</p> <p>Although flu activity remains high in Snohomish County, Washington seems to have gotten a bit of a</p>

	break from influenza compared to much of the rest of the nation. While flu activity remains high here, it is not continuing to rise.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/10 Officer suspended in Lyles shooting
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/896697/officer-who-shot-lyles-suspended-for-2-days-for-no-taser/
GIST	<p>SEATTLE (AP) — A Seattle police officer who didn't have his Taser with him during the fatal shooting of Charleena Lyles has been suspended for two days without pay for violating department policy.</p> <p>The Seattle Times reports Interim Police Chief Carmen Best imposed the discipline Friday on Officer Jason Anderson.</p> <p>He and another officer shot Lyles when police say she pulled at least one knife on them during a June 18 confrontation at her Northeast Seattle apartment.</p> <p>Best noted the disciplinary case didn't reach a conclusion on whether the outcome would have been different if Anderson was carrying a Taser. A department Force Review Board report determined that a Taser wasn't a feasible alternative.</p> <p>Lyles, a 30-year-old African-American mother of four, was shot seven times by the officers, who are white, after she called 911 to report a burglary.</p> <p>The shooting unleashed a storm of public protest.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/10 Yakima tribal leaders declare crisis
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/896829/yakima-tribal-leaders-declare-crisis-after-crime-spike/
GIST	<p>TOPPENISH, Wash. (AP) — Yakima tribal leaders have declared a public safety crisis on the southern Washington reservation and are imposing stricter penalties following a recent spike in crime.</p> <p>The Yakima Herald-Republic reports tribal leaders approved a resolution earlier this week, allowing officials to take away treaty fishing and hunting rights and remove non-tribal members from the reservation for certain crimes.</p> <p>The resolution also criticized the Washington State Patrol for not actively patrolling the reservation, and it called on the federal government to help address the crisis.</p> <p>State Patrol spokesman Kyle Moore says routine patrols ended on the reservation after their authority was relinquished to tribal police under the retrocession process. He says the state agency does assist other agencies on the reservation like the Yakima County Sheriff's Office.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/10 Seattle school bus strike over
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/896894/seattle-school-bus-strike-ends/
GIST	<p>The Seattle school bus driver strike came to an end Saturday after nine days of picketing. Students can expect yellow school bus service to start back up Monday morning.</p> <p>“This is life-changing,” said driver Olivia Moore, a member of the Teamsters Local 174. “This is what we have been fighting for. I can go to the doctor. I can retire someday. I can't even tell you how much that</p>

	<p>means.”</p> <p>The union’s website notes that Moore has been “struggling to receive treatment for cancer despite having no health insurance.” Health care was among the two main points of disagreement between employer First Student and the union. The union also fought for a better retirement package. The Teamsters report that they achieved both in negotiations that wrapped up late last week — with the help of a federal negotiator.</p> <p>The union voted 97 percent in favor of accepting the contract Saturday morning. The vote put an end to the strike that began on Feb. 1 with about 400 drivers in Seattle. It is estimated that about 12,000 students had to find alternate transportation to school last week.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/11 Seattle: homeless collide w/donation bins
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/895908/seattle-homeless-donation-bins/
GIST	<p>It’s a case of compassion versus compassion as Seattle’s homeless crisis collides with charity donation bins.</p> <p>“The homeless have been a real challenge for us because they do get into these boxes, steal clothing, dump them over, and do activity around the boxes which gives us a bad reputation for trying to do good,” said a representative with Northwest Center.</p> <p>Donation boxes are often hosted on private property, where people can drop off used clothing for charities. But they have become targets for thieves and those experiencing homelessness, prompting neighbor complaints, and damaging charity operations.</p> <p>“They get in there, crawl in there, sleep in there, use it as a restroom, do drugs in there,” the representative said. “And then we might catch them in there. A driver will go to service it and someone is sleeping in there.”</p> <p>The representative with Seattle’s Northwest Center did not want to be named in this article, but would discuss how the charity is dealing with the homeless crisis. The charity collects used clothes in donations bins around town, then sells the clothes to Value Village. The revenue goes to programs supporting children and adults with disabilities in the region.</p> <p>“I have complete compassion,” the representative said. “We work with people who have a huge barrier to employment and opportunities in their communities already. With the homeless, you want to be compassionate. But it doesn’t seem to work. It doesn’t seem they want to get out. It’s like a lifestyle – an off-the-grid lifestyle. They don’t want to deal with the pain; they have this lifestyle.”</p> <p>The bin issue is now so severe that it is cutting into revenue for the charity. They regularly receive complaints about the bins from neighbors. One Seattle citizen group has had the issue go viral on Facebook.</p> <p>Northwest Center says that complaints about the donation bins are so common they often have to remove them and find another place to locate the boxes. Northwest Center has two employees dedicated to doing this – scheduling a bin removal in response to complaints, then finding a new home for it.</p> <p>“We lose an average of 10 (bins) a month, but we are constantly trying to find new places – it’s a game,” the Northwest Center rep said.</p> <p>While donations at Northwest Center are up for other methods (drop offs at the center, scheduling home pick-ups), donations at the bins are down. The representative estimated it was about a 10 percent drop over 2017 and attributes the decline to the homeless problem. The charity is now exploring new bins that are harder to get into.</p>

"I don't know if it will really help," the representative said. "If they want to get in, they will get in ... They cut the locks, break the locks."

Other charities with donation bins in Seattle would not go on the record. One charity said they have moved its bins indoors or to more secure locations. Another organization removed their bins out of the city altogether more than a year ago.

Northwest Center has dealt with donation theft for years. But over the past four years, it has gotten dramatically worse. It has halted its former home pickup program. Drivers used to take a route to get donations from porches, but people would find out their route, drive ahead and steal the donations. It now requires a scheduled home pickup.

The trucks at Northwest Center have also been broken into.

"We've had homeless cut off a fire extinguisher inside our van," the representative said. "It costs us."

"I have personally called (police) out to our headquarters with a theft in progress ..." they said. "After hours. I happened to be there working late at the office. They did eventually come, but I wasn't hopeful that it was going to result in anything."

That's because Northwest Center employees have often called the police about thefts and the donation bin issue in the past. The representative received a message from Seattle police officers that is commonly reported by other residents: there's nothing police can do — that it's not a high priority for officers. The representative said they have seen officers catch people breaking into cars near the headquarters, and then just send them along down the road.

The charity is therefore left to do business as usual — which has become the "game" of moving around the bins after each complaint, and taking a financial hit.

"The homeless situation in Seattle has gotten so bad it's affecting the way you do business," the representative said. "It affects how we get our revenue. It's costing us, it's costing other businesses, society, my tax dollars that have to pay to clean up the camps."

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/09 WA does not collect 'road rage' data
SOURCE	http://www.kiro7.com/news/local/washington-state-does-not-collect-road-rage-data/697427782
GIST	<p>BOTHELL, Wash. - Bridget Johns and her brothers own the Defensive Driving School based in Kirkland. So she spends her days teaching others how to drive. But even she couldn't avoid a speeding, aggressive driver.</p> <p>"There was a car behind me, a sports car, that was on my tail," she said. "Really, really pressing me to go faster. But there really wasn't any place for me to go."</p> <p>Then along came a second speeding car.</p> <p>"The flashing lights (were) going," she said. "He was a trooper in an unmarked car; pulled over the first one."</p> <p>And perhaps that trooper spared another from what happened to Abel Loreda.</p> <p>"I want to make this noticeable," said Loreda. "So I'll put this here."</p> <p>Loreda removed his prosthetic leg in a Pierce County Courtroom today. He wanted to show it to the man</p>

who sheared off his left foot in a fit of rage on I-5 in 2016.

Then just last night, a Pierce County man was shot dead by a motorcycle rider following a road-rage incident near Milton in what may be a case of self-defense.

The state has been trying to cut off road rage for decades. A video was produced by the Washington Traffic Safety Commission in the late 1990s. Officers described the aggressive driving they were seeing on the highway.

"Oh, she's following that car too close," one officer said.

"There we go," said another officer, as he watched a vehicle swerve into another lane. "That's what I was waiting for right there."

Nationwide, nearly 80 percent admit to raging on the road. KIRO 7 wanted to find out how many incidents of road rage happen here in Washington state. We called Washington State Patrol, WASH DOT, and the Washington Traffic Safety Commission.

And we found out something startling: Nobody tracks road rage incidents in this state.

"One of the things that we teach our students to do starting from the first driving lesson, is to notice what's going on around them," said Bridget Johns.

She says she teaches her students to leave enough space to avoid tangling with another driver.

"Have a space cushion," she said. "And so there's one in front of me. There's one in back of me. I can't really control what's going on in back of me. I can a little bit. But if someone cuts in front of me, I don't care because I have space."

So why doesn't the state collect data on road rage? Those to whom KIRO 7 spoke say they don't have a code or box to check for road rage when these incidents happen.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE 02/09 WA Task Force 1 for local response

SOURCE <http://www.king5.com/article/news/local/wa-task-force-1-approved-for-local-response/281-516947927>

GIST Next week, Pierce County and Washington State Emergency Management will sign an agreement to enable Washington State Task Force 1 (WA-TF1), one of 28 national Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) urban search and rescue teams, to respond to state and local emergencies in Washington.

WA-TF1 has responded to several federal disasters including Hurricane Harvey in Houston, Texas.

But leaders say because they are a federal resource it's been harder to mobilize this team to respond to a disaster at home. During OSO, Pierce County had to make a special agreement with Snohomish county just to jump in and help.

"It didn't delay the response for Oso it just created an extra layer of bureaucracy," said Scott Heinze, Deputy Director of Pierce County Emergency Management. "It's nice to know that if the call comes next week we have this agreement in place we won't have to go through the process and we'll hit the ground to save people."

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/09 Claim: US Olympic system 'failed' athletes
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-gymnastics-usa-nassar-michigan-state/u-s-olympic-system-failed-abused-gymnasts-usoc-idUSKBN1FT32B
GIST	<p>PYEONGCHANG, South Korea (Reuters) - The U.S. Olympic system "failed" the hundreds of young female athletes sexually abused by former USA Gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar, United States Olympic Committee (USOC) Board of Directors Chairman Larry Probst said on Friday.</p> <p>"The Olympic system in the United States failed these athletes and we are part of the Olympic system in the United States," said Probst, speaking ahead of the opening ceremony of the Pyeongchang Winter Games.</p> <p>He also said the USOC had not taken steps quickly enough to contact gymnasts abused by Nassar and that it had erred by failing to attend earlier sentencing hearings.</p> <p>"That was simply a mistake," he said. "We should have been there."</p> <p>Former sports doctor Nassar last year pleaded guilty to molesting female athletes under the guise of medical treatment for nearly 20 years, and has been given two prison sentences in Michigan of 40 to 125 years and 40 to 175 years.</p> <p>He is also serving a 60-year federal term for child pornography convictions.</p> <p>UltraViolet Action, a women's advocacy group in the United States, on Friday called for USOC Chief Executive Scott Blackmun to resign for failing to adequately respond to reports of Nassar's abuse before he was criminally charged.</p> <p>A letter by the women's group signed by sexual abuse survivors says, "It's unconscionable and unacceptable that no one has been held accountable at the USOC."</p> <p>Dozens of the victims have accused officials at the USOC, USA Gymnastics and Michigan State University of failing to investigate complaints stretching back decades.</p> <p>The board of directors of USA Gymnastics stepped down after U.S. Olympic officials threatened to decertify the governing body.</p> <p>The USOC has announced an independent investigation into its own conduct that would help them understand "who knew what about Nassar's abuse, when and what they did with that information".</p>
	<p>Return to</p> <p>Top</p>

HEADLINE	02/10 Duterte: navy will protect sea wealth
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/02/10/duterte-warns-hell-order-navy-to-fire-if-sea-wealth-taken.html
GIST	<p>MANILA, Philippines – The Philippine president says he has no intention of going into war over territorial feuds but will order the navy to fire if other countries extract resources from waters within his country's exclusive economic zone.</p> <p>President Rodrigo Duterte told a news conference late Friday that the Philippines could not fight more powerful nations like the United States and China but warned that "if you get something there from the economic zone, I will order the navy to fire."</p> <p>Duterte was referring to the country's 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone, a stretch of sea where coastal states have been granted exclusive rights to exploit natural resources under a 1982 U.N. treaty.</p> <p>Duterte recently stopped all foreign scientific research missions in Benham Rise to stress Philippine</p>

	sovereign rights over the off-shore region.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/08 Mass exodus San Francisco Bay Area
SOURCE	http://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2018/02/08/san-francisco-bay-area-mass-exodus-residents/
GIST	<p>SAN JOSE (KPIX 5) – The number of people packing up and moving out of the Bay Area just hit its highest level in more than a decade.</p> <p>Carole Dabak spent 40 years living in San Jose and now she’s part of the mass exodus that is showing no signs of slowing down.</p> <p>The retired engineer’s packing up and calling it quits about to move to the state of Tennessee.</p> <p>“I loved it here when I first got here. I really loved it here. But it’s just not the same,” Dabak said.</p> <p>Of course people come and go from the Bay Area all the time, but for the first time in a long time, more people are leaving the Bay Area than are coming in. And the number one place in the country for out-migration is now, right here.</p> <p>Russell Hancock with Joint Venture Silicon Valley said, “Silicon Valley has been this place that is growing. And it was mostly growing because...people relocating here and relocating from other parts of the world. That’s changing.”</p> <p>Joint Venture Silicon Valley’s own study of the out-migration says workers are moving to Sacramento, Austin, and Portland due to a number of factors. But topping the list is the high cost of housing.</p> <p>“You can’t even contemplate getting into the housing market here,” Hancock said. “And I don’t mean just service workers, I mean highly skilled professionals. The tech elite are having a hard time affording reasonable housing in Silicon Valley. So this is difficult, this makes it very difficult for employers trying to recruit.”</p> <p>Operators of a San Jose U-Haul business say one of their biggest problems is getting its rental moving vans back because so many are on a one-way ticket out of town.</p> <p>Dabak cites crowding, crime and politics as the reasons for her own exodus.</p> <p>“We don’t like it here anymore. You know, we don’t like this sanctuary state status and just the politics here,” she said.</p> <p>She plans to sell her home for about \$1 million, buy a much larger place near Nashville for less than half that and retire closer to family and friends.</p> <p>Nationwide, the cities with the highest inflows, according to Redfin are Phoenix, Las Vegas, Atlanta, and Nashville.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/09 Flu season still getting worse
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/da19ce2ea2354b5db3cc1cf78220fc/Flu-season-still-getting-worse;-now-as-bad-as-2009-swine-flu
GIST	NEW YORK (AP) — The flu has further tightened its grip on the U.S. This season is now as bad as the swine flu epidemic nine years ago.

A government report out Friday shows 1 of every 13 visits to the doctor last week was for fever, cough and other symptoms of the flu. That ties the highest level seen in the U.S. during swine flu in 2009.

And it surpasses every winter flu season since 2003, when the government changed the way it measures flu.

“I wish that there were better news this week, but almost everything we’re looking at is bad news,” said Dr. Anne Schuchat, acting director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Flu season usually takes off in late December and peaks around February. This season started early and was widespread in many states by December. Early last month, it hit what seemed like peak levels — but then continued to surge.

The season has been driven by a nasty type of flu that tends to put more people in the hospital and cause more deaths than other more common flu bugs. Still, its long-lasting intensity has surprised experts, who are still sorting out why it’s been so bad. One possibility is that the vaccine is doing an unusually poor job; U.S. data on effectiveness is expected next week.

Some doctors say this is the worst flu season they’ve seen in decades. Some patients are saying that, too.

Last week, 43 states had high patient traffic for the flu, up from 42, the CDC reported. Flu remained widespread in every state except Hawaii and Oregon and hospitalizations continued to climb.

But reports of deaths — some in otherwise healthy children and young adults — have caused growing fear and concern, health officials acknowledge.

The CDC said the amount of suspected flu cases at doctor’s offices and hospital emergency rooms last week matched that seen in 2009, when a new swine flu pandemic swept the world. Swine flu, also called pandemic H1N1, was a new strain that hadn’t been seen before. It first hit that spring, at the tail end of the winter season, but doctor visits hit their height in late October during a second wave.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/09 Dow rebounds; still worst week in 2yrs
SOURCE	https://www.cnbc.com/2018/02/09/us-stock-futures-dow-data-earnings-market-sell-off-and-politics.html
GIST	<p>The Dow Jones industrial average rebounded more than 300 points Friday, paring deep losses for investors in what still amounted to the worst week in two years.</p> <p>The Dow ended the day up 330.44 points, or 1.38 percent, closing at 24,190.90. The S&P 500 rallied 1.49 percent to finish at 2,619.55, while the Nasdaq composite added 1.44 percent to close at 6,874.49. The index swung more than 1,000 points in volatile trading Friday.</p> <p>The Dow and the S&P 500 both lost 5.2 percent on the week, while the Nasdaq shed 5.1 percent as rising interest rates spooked investors. The Dow average experienced two drops of more than 1,000 points and two gains of more than 300 points during this volatile week. At their lows this week, all three major indexes were in correction territory from the record highs reached in January.</p> <p>"What's happened here is an understanding that inflation is returning and that the central bank quantitative easing that we've grown accustomed to is coming to an end," said Jim Bianco, head of the Chicago-based advisory firm Bianco Research. "Since the financial crisis, this is the first 10 percent correction in stocks that has not been accompanied by a significant fall in rates."</p> <p>The Dow dropped 1,032 points Thursday and the average posted its worst point drop in history on Monday, closing 1,175 points lower. Monday's decline of 4.62 percent was also its worst daily percentage drop</p>

since Aug. 10, 2011, when it also fell 4.62 percent.

The recent turmoil in equities began last Friday, when the Dow fell 666 points after a better-than-expected jobs report ignited inflation fears. That fall was exacerbated Monday after the yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note hit a 4-year high, sending the Dow tumbling another 1,175 points as investors grew more nervous about an overheating economy.

Trouble with securities called exchange-traded notes that decline in value when volatility increases likely helped create more turmoil in the markets this week. The Cboe Volatility index (VIX) — the market's best fear gauge — shot above 40 again Friday after jumping as high as 50 earlier in the week. At the end of January, the VIX was below 14.

Yields backed off their multi-year highs on Tuesday, giving the Dow a 560-point bounce and relative stability on Wednesday. But between another round of strong economic news, hawkish comments from the Bank of England and an expensive government funding bill, yields rallied again, sparking Thursday's sell-off.

The 10-year Treasury ticked up to 2.85 percent Friday. The note yield flirted with 2.885 percent Thursday, a 4-year high that sparked major equity sell-offs earlier in the week.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/09 China's corruption problem in Africa
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/09/world/patrick-ho-corruption-china-africa/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)It sounds like a Hollywood movie. A respected Hong Kong financial magnate allegedly plans a clandestine meeting with the president of Chad in the middle of the dusty Sahara Desert, and offers him a \$2 million gift to secure oil rights for a Chinese conglomerate.</p> <p>In another scheme, Chi Ping Patrick Ho, according to United States prosecutors, sends the now foreign minister of Uganda, who was then the president of the UN General Assembly, a \$500,000 bribe for business advantages, through the New York banking system.</p> <p>All this was allegedly planned under the noses of the world's top diplomats in the corridors of the United Nations in New York, where Ho ran an energy NGO.</p> <p>In November 2017, Ho and Cheikh Gadio -- the Senegalese failed presidential candidate and former foreign minister, who allegedly arranged the deals -- were arrested in New York on multiple bribery and money laundering charges. This week, the trial date was set for November 5, 2018. Aged 68 years old and in ailing health, Ho risks spending his remaining years behind bars. He has pleaded not guilty.</p> <p>This case, however, is about more than one man's spectacular fall from grace. It offers a rare window into Chinese corruption in Africa -- something academics, politicians and business people have long suspected existed but found difficult to prove.</p> <p>What's more, with the mountain of evidence seemingly against the defendant, legal experts are wondering whether Ho might be asked to expose other corrupt parties to reduce his sentence.</p> <p>Western companies in Africa have "long spoken of the competitive advantage Chinese companies have on the continent," says Andrew Spalding, a professor at the University of Richmond and expert in anti-corruption law. "And the dramatic increase in China's commercial presence tends to confirm it."</p> <p>China's goods trade alone with Africa totaled \$188 billion in 2015, compared with \$53 billion for the US. As China has become the continent's biggest economic partner, Chinese companies have found themselves operating in countries with high corruption ratings without domestic legislation to answer to. Thirteen Sub-Saharan African nations ranked in the bottom 30 of the 2016 Corruption Perceptions Index.</p>

"If I am an American company and I want to do a deal, particularly in Africa and less developed areas, and I am approaching African officials but losing out because Chinese companies are bribing those officials, I am going to be irked," says Rob Precht, president of New York-based legal think tank Justice Labs.

American and British companies have been living with the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) and the UK Bribery Act for years. Although China formally adopted a foreign bribery law to comply with the UN Convention Against Corruption in 2011, it has done "next to nothing to enforce it," says Spalding. He adds: "The hope is that if Western companies continue to pressure overseas governments to change, that competitive advantage will eventually disappear."

Chinese president Xi Jinping's high-profile corruption crackdown at home virtually ignores foreign bribery, according to some observers. "For centuries, bribery has not even been considered a bad thing in China," says Precht. "But as China becomes a partner in the world community, these issues are going to become more important."

In November 2017, the US Department of Justice formalized a new anti-corruption policy prioritizing bringing cases against individuals rather than corporations. Heavy fines against companies, it said, only penalized shareholders.

US Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein cited the conviction of one of the richest men in China, real estate magnate Ng Lap Seng, of bribing UN officials, as an early example of this strategy's success. He thanked the governments of the United Kingdom, Brazil, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Singapore, and Turkey for helping the US to enforce this approach during a two-year trial period.

China was notably absent from that list.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/09 Flights canceled; storm slams Midwest
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/09/us/winter-weather/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)More than 1,500 US flights have been canceled Friday as a winter storm slammed the Midwest with at least 1 inch of snow per hour.</p> <p>Heavy snow and strong winds already pounded Chicago and Detroit, where public school systems opted not to open Friday, CNN meteorologist Haley Brink said.</p> <p>"We are getting more snow today, tomorrow and Sunday than we have normally gotten in the last two winters in any one period of time," Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel said in a Friday morning news conference, adding that the city's top priority is the safety of residents.</p> <p>"Whether that's young kids, homeless, elderly, sick, commuters -- in every capacity we are responding and ensuring that people are able to handle this weather."</p> <p>About 23 million Americans are under winter weather alerts as an arctic front pushes from Montana through the Midwest, CNN meteorologists said.</p> <p>Chicago could get around a foot of snow -- 8 to 14 inches -- by late Friday, and between 2 to 4 inches through the weekend, forecasters said. Much of northern Illinois had seen between 8 and 12 inches of snow by Friday afternoon, CNN meteorologist Taylor Ward said.</p> <p>The bulk of flight cancellations affected Chicago's O'Hare and Midway airports and Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport, according to the tracking site FlightAware.com.</p> <p>Kieran Sheridan, chief operating officer for the Chicago Department of Aviation, said in a Friday press</p>

	<p>conference that the city's airports were "well-prepared."</p> <p>About 280 heavy snow equipment operators were working on the airfields at Midway and O'Hare, said Sheridan, who warned travelers to give themselves extra time when heading to the airport.</p> <p>Four major US airlines -- Delta, United, Frontier and Southwest -- issued weather waivers for passengers, allowing travelers to change their reservations without incurring fees.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/11 Militants attack India army Kashmir camp
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/dead-militant-attack-indian-army-base-kashmir-52998290?cid=clicksource_76_4_article%20roll_articleroll_hed
GIST	<p>Shooting between soldiers and militants holed up inside an army camp in Indian-controlled Kashmir has left at least five soldiers and one civilian dead, officials said Sunday, the second day of the battle.</p> <p>The fighting, which began at dawn Saturday when the militants stormed the Sunjuwan army base on the outskirts of the city of Jammu, continued into Sunday afternoon, said the region's top police official, S.P. Vaid. At least 11 people were injured.</p> <p>Security forces were sweeping through the camp slowly, since soldiers and their families live there, Vaid said. It was unclear how many militants were involved in the attack.</p> <p>The Himalayan region of Kashmir is divided between India and archrival and neighbor Pakistan. Both claim the region in its entirety.</p> <p>Anti-India sentiment runs deep among Kashmir's mostly Muslim population.</p> <p>Several militant groups have been fighting for Kashmir's independence from India or its merger with Pakistan since 1989. Around 70,000 people have been killed in the uprising and the ensuing Indian military crackdown.</p> <p>India accuses Pakistan of arming and training the militants, a charge Islamabad denies.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/09 Drones in opening ceremony Olympics
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/thousands-drones-light-show-olympics-opening-ceremony/story?id=52941985&cid=clicksource_76_2_hero_headlines_headlines_hed
GIST	<p>Thousands of drones were used to put on a pre-recorded light show during the opening ceremony for the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, Friday morning for the first time, according to Intel, which is overseeing the event.</p> <p>A total of 1,218 drones outfitted with LED lights were used to paint "colorful illustration in the sky," setting a new Guinness World Record on the number of drones flown at the same time, according to an Intel spokeswoman. Intel holds the current record after 500 drones were flown simultaneously for a light show in Krailling, Germany, on Oct. 7., the spokeswoman said.</p> <p>The drones are controlled through an automated software program, though they do have one pilot for backup, Intel said.</p> <p>In addition to the opening ceremony, the drones will be used throughout the games, creating light-filled formations every night from Feb. 10 to Feb. 24 during the nightly victory ceremonies.</p>

	"It's something that we wanted to integrate that experience into the Olympics on a daily occasion, because not everyone is going to be at the opening ceremony, and we want to give everyone in Korea a chance to see these shows," said Natalie Cheung, the general manager for Intel's drone light shows.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/10 Israel downs Iran drone; strikes Syria
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/israel-downs-iranian-drone-strikes-syria-16-crashes-52978982?cid=clicksource_76_2_hero_headlines_bsq_hed
GIST	<p>The Israeli military shot down an Iranian drone that infiltrated the country early Saturday before launching "large-scale attack" on at least a dozen Iranian targets in Syria. Israel called it a "severe and irregular violation of Israeli sovereignty."</p> <p>The military said its planes faced massive anti-aircraft fire from Syria that forced two pilots to abandon an F-16 jet that crashed in northern Israel. One pilot was seriously wounded and the other lightly.</p> <p>The military called the drone infiltration a "severe and irregular violation of Israeli sovereignty" and said Iran would be held responsible for its outcome, marking a dramatic escalation in tensions along its northern border.</p> <p>"This is a serious Iranian attack on Israeli territory. Iran is dragging the region into an adventure in which it doesn't know how it will end," Israel's chief military spokesman, Brig. Gen. Ronen Manelis, said in a special statement. "Whoever is responsible for this incident is the one who will pay the price."</p> <p>The Israeli military then carried out what it called a "large scale attack" against Iranian and Syrian targets in Syria.</p> <p>The military said it struck 12 targets including three aerial defense batteries and four Iranian targets that are part of Iran's military establishment in Syria. During the attack, anti-aircraft missiles were fired toward Israel jets triggering sirens that were sounded across northern Israel.</p> <p>Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman was convening the top brass at military headquarters in Tel Aviv to discuss a further response.</p> <p>Israeli military spokesman Jonathan Conricus said Iran was "responsible for this severe violation of Israeli sovereignty" and that the military was "fully prepared for further action."</p> <p>Syrian state TV quoted a military official saying Syrian air defenses hit more than one Israeli plane. The official said the Israeli raids hit a base in the country's central area, and called it a "new aggression."</p> <p>Later, Syria state TV said its air defenses responded to new Israeli raids near the capital Damascus.</p>
Return to Top	

Cyber Awareness

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	02/09 Study: phishing attacks that do work
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/study-shows-most-clicked-phishing-attempts/article/743513/
GIST	<p>People are very predictable when it comes to designing phishing attacks that appeal to a potential victims with people most likely to click on messages concerning money.</p> <p>A recent KnowBe4 study sent phishing test emails to roughly 6 million and found users were most likely to click on the mock phishing emails when they promised money or threatened the loss of money. People were also likely to fall for phishing attacks appealing to their appetite offering free food or drinks, emails</p>

that evoked the fear of missing out on non-monetary opportunities and attacks that appealed to basic curiosity such as new contact requests or photo tags.

Researchers also saw an increased click rate with certain email subjects as well with missed deliveries and false security notifications gaining the most clicks. The top subject lines of included “A Delivery Attempt Was Made” with an 18 percent click rate, “UPS Label Delivery 1ZBE312TNY00015011” with a 16 percent click rate, “Change of Password Required Immediately” with a 15 percent click rate, “Unusual sign-in activity” with a 9 percent click rate, and “Happy Holidays! Have a drink on us.” With an 8 percent click rate.

“Email is an effective way to phish users when disguised as legitimate email,” the report said. “These methods allow attackers to craft and distribute enticing material for both random (general phishing) and targeted (spear-phishing) means, leveraging multiple psychological triggers and engaging in what amounts to a continuous maturity cycle.”

Researchers were more convincing when targeting users via social media themed email phishing attacks. LinkedIn notifications were by far the most convincing with requests to add people, join networks, reset passwords, and new messages convincing 53 percent of test subjects to click.

The study also found that login Alerts, 19 percent, tagged photos, 12 percent, free pizza and new voice message respectively gained clicks from 18 percent of test subjects.

“The most effective templates or phishes are those that cause a knee-jerk reaction in the user,” Stu Sjouwerman, CEO, KnowBe4 said. “They make him/her react without thinking due to the alarming or urgent nature of the subject.”

Sjouwerman added that cybercriminals already know this and that these kind of subject lines will consistently work with the softest of targets and serve as an effective vector into a company. Some of the attacks may have benefited from the seasons with the package delivery phishing attacks making an uptick in Q4 near the holiday season when people are more likely to be expecting things in the mail.

“Seasonal differences really show up as Q4 was very concentrated on package delivery, no surprises there,” Sjouwerman said. “Q3 saw a larger amount of data breach or password related clicks, most likely due to the Equifax breach.”

He went on to say that initially the users were easy to trick however, the researchers quickly found that they couldn't use the same email template on the same people or subjects would wise up to the tricks so researchers had to continue to switch the templates. Regardless, researchers found that the same tactics ultimately can be used on organizational employees and still work with success before they are worn out.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/09 Sacramento Bee hit by ransomware
SOURCE	http://www.darkreading.com/attacks-breaches/sacramento-bee-databases-hit-with-ransomware-attack/d/d-id/1331023
GIST	<p>The Sacramento Bee reported that two of its databases, both on a third-party server, were hit with a ransomware attack in January 2017. A Bee employee discovered the attack last week following a tip from a reporter with a different organization, the publication reports.</p> <p>One affected database contained California voter registration data from the California Secretary of State and was obtained for reporting purposes. Another, a subscriber database, contained contact data for 53,000 current and former Bee subscribers who activated digital accounts before 2017. The Bee is informing those whose names, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers were compromised.</p> <p>Publisher Gary Wortel reports neither database contained credit card numbers, bank account data, or</p>

Social Security numbers. The voter registration data had been previously exposed online, and the same database had been shared with organizations that had been subject to attack.

An anonymous attacker demanded a Bitcoin ransom in exchange for the data. The Bee chose not to pay and has deleted both databases to prevent further attacks.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/09 Top nation-state hacking groups
SOURCE	http://www.darkreading.com/attacks-breaches/8-nation-state-hacking-groups-to-watch-in-2018/d/d-id/1331009
GIST	<p>The nation-state threat landscape is constantly shifting. Threat actors alter strategies, switch targets, change tools - and for organizations who need to defend against these groups, keeping track of the players can seem impossible.</p> <p>Some hotbed regions are getting hotter, and some big-name actors are getting bigger. A perfect example is Fancy Bear (also known as APT28 and Sofacy), one of many groups believed to act out of Russia and Eastern Europe. The group is thought to be an arm of the Russian military intelligence agency GRU.</p> <p>"[Fancy Bear] is probably the most famous group right now," says John Hultquist, FireEye director of intel analysis, who expects Fancy Bear will become even more brazen over the course of this year. Security experts point to Fancy Bear as the predominant threat group to watch in 2018 as it widens its bullseye to include more corporate targets.</p> <p>North Korea is another hotbed for cyberattacks. The North Korean regime has invested significant resources in its cyber capabilities and groups from the area have been linked to a variety of activity, from the infamous Sony breach, to WannaCry and cryptocurrency mining.</p> <p>Here are the nation-state threat groups security researchers are watching most closely - and the aliases, geographies, behaviors, past attacks, and changing strategies related to each one.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Fancy Bear Also known as: Fancy Bear, APT28, Sofacy, Strontium, Sednit</p> <p>Believed to operate out of: Russia</p> <p>Usual targets: Fancy Bear's targets are primarily based in Europe and tend to include government ministries, though past attacks have targeted global embassies and the United States. The group has been known to target based on policies and it's interested in anything related to NATO, says Brian Bartholomew, principal security researcher at Kaspersky Lab. These days, he says Fancy Bear has its eyes on the Olympics.</p> <p>Behavior: Its strength is spearphishing, says Bartholomew, adding that this is the main tactic for most threat groups. Fancy Bear has splintered into different subgroups, each of which is responsible for a different part of the attack. One subset focuses on phishing as many targets as possible. Once they're on a system, the next subset uses toolsets to maintain persistence.</p> <p>Fancy Bear has also been known to leverage social media in its attacks, and spread disinformation campaigns, Bartholomew says. For example, it's believed to have hacked the anti-doping administration and tried to feed altered data to journalists, says Bartholomew. Some don't attribute this to Sofacy, he notes, but "we're pretty certain it is them." The group's toolkit is constantly evolving, but it does use a core backdoor called XAgent, says Alexis Dorais-Joncas, security intelligence team lead at ESET.</p> <p>Tied to: Attacks on the Democratic National Committee, International Association of Athletics</p>

Federations, and German Parliament; influencing the 2016 US presidential election.

"I think what's so surprising about their activity is, despite continued accusations and exposures, they had not let up," says Hultquist, who expects increased activity during the Olympics and elections.

"They've shown disregard for global norms and willingness to cross lines we never thought we'd see crossed."

Lazarus Group

Also known as: [DarkSeoul](#), [Hermit](#)

Believed to operate out of: North Korea

Usual targets: South Korea, United States, financial organizations for monetary gain.

Worth noting: "We believe there is more than one North Korean group," says Hultquist. It's difficult to break down groups in the region because of the way they operate. There aren't many Internet streams coming from North Korea so oftentimes activity from different groups gets muddled together.

Behavior: Groups in the region are strong at social media attacks, says Bartholomew. Attackers typically target victims on Facebook Messenger, LinkedIn, Twitter, and other platforms. "They'll spend a lot of efforts doing social campaigns figuring out who to target, then go after them slowly," he explains. "We're not seeing an end to financially motivated activities," says Hultquist. "It's global and it is multi-million -- we're talking hundreds of millions of dollars at stake." Most nation-state threat groups limit their activities to espionage or destruction; the additional practice of financial cybercrime seems to be unique to North Korea, researchers say. Lazarus Group was behind the [massive Sony data-destruction and doxing attack](#), and one of its subgroups has been tied to attacks on cryptocurrency exchanges and the SWIFT banking network.

Bluenoroff (subgroup of Lazarus Group)

Believed to operate out of: North Korea

Usual targets: Financial institutions

Behavior: "Basically, they're the financiers of the cyber world," says Bartholomew of Bluenoroff, a branch of Lazarus Group specifically focused on financial businesses. Its goal is to gain cryptocurrency to finance their attack efforts.

Tied to: High-profile crypto hacks involving large sums of money from specific exchanges, including the attacks on the SWIFT network. Security researchers expect this activity to continue - especially as sanctions on the North Korean government and economy continue. "Sanctions are going to be tightened more, and these guys are going to get more active so they can continue to finance things," Bartholomew explains.

Turla

Also known as: [Snake](#), [Venomous Bear](#), [Waterbug](#)

Believed to operate out of: Eastern Europe

Usual targets: Typically, former Soviet republics (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan), as well as embassies in Moscow. Campaigns have also targeted diplomats in Eastern Europe, global consulates and embassies, and ministries of foreign affairs of European countries, says Dorais-Joncas. It has also targeted the US Department of State.

Behavior: The group has been known to leverage social engineering to trick targets into installing malware. Attackers often use watering hole attacks, which Bartholomew predicts will continue as it doesn't often change tactics - only a few times each year, and not much in 2017, he says.

"We've seen distribution of [fake, infected Flash updater on an Adobe subdomain](#) pointing to one of their legitimate CDN IP addresses," Dorais-Joncas says, adding that Adobe has confirmed it hadn't been compromised or distributed the malicious files. Turla combined one of its backdoors with a legitimate Adobe Flash installer and downloaded the malware from real Adobe URLs and IP addresses, then got

infected machines to return sensitive data to legitimate Adobe URLs. Turla has been around for a while but began to increase activity in 2017 after a period of quiet. This past summer, it began using an undocumented [backdoor](#) to spy on embassies and consulates. A separate campaign, dubbed WhiteBear, is believed to be phase two of Turla project White Atlas. Like this campaign and others by Turla, its C&C infrastructure is made up of hijacked websites and satellite connections. Later that summer, researchers noticed Turla [targeting](#) G20 participants and interested parties (policymakers, nations, journalists) with KopiLuwak, a backdoor it has been known to use.

Sandworm

Also known as: [BlackEnergy](#), [Electrum](#), [Iridium](#)

Believed to operate out of: Eastern Europe

Usual targets: Ukraine

Behavior: Sandworm has been known to appear then disappear in waves with its attacks, which primarily target Ukraine, and experts agree we'll see more of these attacks in 2018. The group frequently uses spearphishing and has recently begun targeting the supply chain, a move likely to increase its target base, says Hultquist. While Ukraine is its primary target for ICS/SCADA attacks, there's always a chance Sandworm will broaden its reach. It previously researched a potential attack on US utility systems. "Given that this activity doesn't appear to be declining or shrinking, the danger of them shifting and targeting outside Ukraine continues to increase," says Hultquist. "That could have serious repercussions for corporations operating all around the world."

Tied to: Ukraine power grid attacks of [December 2015](#) and [December 2016](#). Hultquist and other security researchers have also linked the group to last summer's NotPetya attack, a destructive campaign which also primarily targeted Ukraine.

Scarcraft

Also known as: [Reaper](#), [Group 123](#)

Believed to operate out of: North Korea

Usual targets: South Korean government, military, and defense industrial base

Behavior: Scarcraft, or Reaper (not to be confused with the IoT botnet named Reaper) has so far been less prolific, but is starting to cause concern, according to researchers. Up until now, the group hadn't demonstrated strong sophistication or focus outside the Korean peninsula. Now the group has been [linked to latest Adobe Flash zero-day](#), a sign that it is growing in strength. Hultquist says Scarcraft has been seen doing strategic Web compromises, specifically on websites related to North Korean interests like unification or defectors.

APT29

Also known as: [Cozy Bear](#), [CozyDuke](#), [The Dukes](#)

Believed to operate out of: Eastern Europe/Russia

Usual targets: Western European governments, foreign policy groups, similar organizations. APT29 has also targeted think tanks and NGOs.

Behavior: APT29 usually hides activity on victims' networks by disguising infrequent communication to resemble legitimate traffic, and by using legitimate popular Web services and taking advantage of encrypted SSL connections. It only uses compromised servers for C&C communication and deploys its own backdoors to fix bugs and add new features, [report](#) researchers at FireEye.

APT29 has also used social media platforms like Twitter and GitHub, and cloud storage services, to relay commands and take data from compromised networks. Spearphishing campaigns in recent years have targeted the US government.

Tied to: Attacks related to US election, post-US election [spearphishing](#) attacks, Democratic National Committee [hack](#).

APT35

	<p>Also known as: Newscaster, Charming Kitten</p> <p>Believed to operate out of: Middle East - specifically Iran</p> <p>Usual targets: Global range but recent focus is on Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia and Israel</p> <p>Behavior: "They've been carrying out global incidents," says Hultquist. "We've seen some overlap between them and destructive incidents and haven't been able to completely connect the two."</p> <p>APT35 focuses on social engineering through social networks. Attackers create fake personae in social networks and use them to infiltrate organizations by sending links to employees. Unlike email, which typically has built-in defenses, social media is less monitored and businesses don't have as much control. While the group's targets have shifted as relations between the US and Iran have improved, Hultquist anticipates we'll see more of them going forward.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/09 Google paid \$2.9M for vulnerabilities
SOURCE	http://www.darkreading.com/vulnerabilities---threats/google-paid-\$29m-for-vulnerabilities-in-2017/d/d-id/1331027
GIST	<p>Google issued a total of \$2.9 million in 2017 as part of its Google Vulnerability Reward Program, which has so far paid out \$12 million since it was first created in November 2010.</p> <p>More than \$1 million was given for vulnerabilities discovered and reported in Google products, and \$1.1 million was given for Android bugs. Google reports it gave out 1,230 individual rewards and 274 paid researchers were involved in the program last year.</p> <p>The Vulnerability Research Grants program awarded \$125,000 to more than 50 security researchers around the world. This initiative, a complement to the Vulnerability Reward Program, pays researchers and invited experts to investigate the security of Google products and services, even in situations where no vulnerabilities are discovered.</p> <p>Its Patch Rewards Program, an experimental program founded in 2013 which rewards proactive security improvements to open-source projects, paid \$50,000 to participants in 2017.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/11 Energy riches fuel bitcoin craze in Iceland
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/gold-rush-energy-demands-soar-iceland-bitcoins-52997828?
GIST	<p>Iceland is expected to use more energy "mining" bitcoins and other virtual currencies this year than it uses to power its homes.</p> <p>With massive amounts of electricity needed to run the computers that create bitcoins, large virtual currency companies have established a base in the North Atlantic island nation blessed with an abundance of renewable energy.</p> <p>The new industry's relatively sudden growth prompted lawmaker Smari McCarthy of Iceland's Pirate Party to suggest taxing the profits of bitcoin mines. The initiative is likely to be well received by Icelanders, who are skeptical of speculative financial ventures after the country's catastrophic 2008 banking crash.</p> <p>"Under normal circumstances, companies that are creating value in Iceland pay a certain amount of tax to the government," McCarthy told The Associated Press. "These companies are not doing that, and we might want to ask ourselves whether they should."</p> <p>The energy demand has developed because of the soaring cost of producing and collecting virtual currencies. Computers are used to make the complex calculations that verify a running ledger of all the</p>

transactions in virtual currencies around the world.

In return, the miners claim a fraction of a coin not yet in circulation. In the case of bitcoin, a total of 21 million can be mined, leaving about 4.2 million left to create. As more bitcoin enter circulation, more powerful computers are needed to keep up with the calculations — and that means more energy.

The serene coastal town of Keflavik on Iceland's desolate southern peninsula has over the past months boomed as an international hub for mining bitcoins and other virtual currencies.

Local fishermen, chatting over steaming cups of coffee at the harbor gas station, are puzzled by the phenomenon, which has spawned oversize construction sites on the outskirts of town.

Among the main attractions of setting up bitcoin mines at the edge of the Arctic Circle is the natural cooling for computer servers and the competitive prices for Iceland's abundance of renewable energy from geothermal and hydroelectric power plants.

Johann Snorri Sigurbergsson, a business development manager at the energy company Hitaveita Sudurnesja, said he expected Iceland's virtual currency mining to double its energy consumption to about 100 megawatts this year. That is more than households use on the island nation of 340,000, according to Iceland's National Energy Authority.

"Four months ago, I could not have predicted this trend — but then bitcoin skyrocketed and we got a lot more emails," he said at the Svartsengi geothermal energy plant, which powers the southwestern peninsula where the mining takes place.

"Just today, I came from a meeting with a mining company seeking to buy 18 megawatts," he said.

At the largest of three bitcoin "farms" currently operating within Keflavik — called "Mjollnir" after the hammer of Thor, the Norse god of thunder — high metal fences surround 50 meter-long (164 foot) warehouse buildings stacked with computer rigs.

The data centers here are specially designed to utilize the constant wind on the bare peninsula. Walls are only partial on each side, allowing a draft of cold air to cool down the equipment.

"What we are doing here is like gold mining," said Helmut Rauth, who manages operations for Genesis Mining, a major bitcoin mining company. "We are mining on a large scale and getting the gold out to the people."

In the capital, Reykjavik, some are more skeptical about bitcoin.

The last time Iceland was an international hub for finance, the venture ended with a giant bank crash, making the country one of the symbols of the 2008 global financial crisis.

The political turmoil following the crash swept the upstart Pirate Party into Iceland's parliament, where it currently holds 10 percent of seats.

Pirate Party legislator McCarthy has questioned the value of bitcoin mining for Icelandic society, saying residents should consider regulating and taxing the emerging industry.

"We are spending tens or maybe hundreds of megawatts on producing something that has no tangible existence and no real use for humans outside the realm of financial speculation," he said. "That can't be good."

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/iranian-officials-hacks-dailies-us-britain-53003103?
GIST	<p>Iranian telecommunication officials are saying that hackers who accessed the websites of some of the country's dailies are from the United States and Britain.</p> <p>A Sunday statement carried by the official IRNA news agency quotes the officials as saying the hackers targeted 30 websites on Saturday, including some belonging to Iranian newspapers.</p> <p>It added, however, that the websites were poorly secured.</p> <p>Late on Saturday hackers accessed the dailies' websites and changed their Farsi top stories to a contrived report about the death of the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.</p> <p>No one has claimed responsibility for the cyberattacks.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/10 UAE minister: data is oil of the future
SOURCE	http://www.arabnews.com/node/1243956/business-economy
GIST	<p>DUBAI: Data is the “oil of the future,” Mohammad Al-Gergawi, UAE minister for cabinet affairs and the future, told the opening session of the World Government Summit in Dubai.</p> <p>A packed audience heard the minister set out the agenda for the three-day event, which has attracted 4,000 leaders from the worlds of business and economic and public policy. Digital communications giants such as Google and Facebook would soon know more about individuals than governments do, Al-Gergawi said.</p> <p>“By 2045, we will be able to transfer and upload the contents of the human mind to a data center. Governments must be prepared for these coming changes. The aim of this summit is to find answers and set priorities to meet these challenges and opportunities.”</p> <p>The theme of the summit is “shaping future governments,” and Al-Gergawi detailed the challenges policymakers will face in health, artificial intelligence, crypto currencies and their impact on global finance, climate change and the issues of digital connectivity.</p> <p>Klaus Schwab, founder and chairman of the World Economic Forum, who also spoke at the opening session, harked back 10 years to the onset of the global financial crisis, which he said threatened a series of other crises in economies, in societies and between generations.</p> <p>“We avoided a complete breakdown of the financial system, but there was a cost. The world’s debts now add up to 200 per cent of global GDP,” he said.</p> <p>Schwab said most experts, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the International Monetary Fund, were forecasting two years of “sound, comprehensive growth,” but he said financial markets were still addicted to low interest rates and cheap capital.</p> <p>There were still risks of a social crisis, he said, with levels of inequality and an unfair system of wealth distribution, as well as a generational crisis. “The world’s education systems do not satisfy the requirements of the 21st century.”</p> <p>He highlighted global risks such as geopolitical issues, inequality, cybersecurity, gender parity and failures of leadership.</p> <p>The pace of technological change was increasing all the time and adding to the pressures on policymakers, Schwab said. “Never before has the speed of change been so fast as in 2018. But also, never again will the speed of change be so slow as it is in 2018.”</p>
Return to	

HEADLINE	02/11 Govt. sites infected w/mining malware
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bitcoin-cyber/u-s-uk-government-websites-infected-with-crypto-mining-malware-report-idUSKBN1FV0VO
GIST	<p>(Reuters) - Thousands of websites, including ones run by U.S. and UK government agencies, were infected for several hours on Sunday with code that causes web browsers to secretly mine digital currencies, technology news site The Register reported.</p> <p>More than 4,200 sites were infected with a malicious version of a widely used tool known as Browsealoud from British software maker Texthelp, which reads out webpages for people with vision problems, according to The Register.</p> <p>The news comes amid a surge in cyber attacks using software that forces infected computers to mine crypto currencies on behalf of hackers. The prevalence of these schemes has increased in recent months as the volume of trading in bitcoin and other crypto currencies has surged.</p> <p>The tainted version of Browsealoud caused inserted software for mining the digital currency Monero to run on computers that visited infected sites, generating money for the hackers behind the attack, The Register said.</p> <p>Representatives of the U.S. and British law enforcement agencies and Texthelp could not immediately be reached for comment.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/10 Equifax breach more widespread
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2018/02/10/More-Equifax-info-exposed-than-originally-disclosed-after-breach/2771518282337/?utm_source=fp&utm_campaign=lh&utm_medium=3
GIST	<p>Feb. 10 (UPI) -- Equifax's reported hacking of consumers' personal information was more widespread than originally disclosed, according to new documents submitted to a U.S. Senate committee.</p> <p>The credit reporting agency said cyberthieves accessed tax identification numbers, email addresses and driver's license information of 145.5 million customers -- stretching beyond the scope the company originally revealed, according to documents received by the Senate Banking Committee.</p> <p>The Wall Street Journal and CNN reviewed the documents sent to the Senate.</p> <p>In September, Equifax said it had been breached, compromising personal information belonging to 145.5 million consumers, including names, Social Security numbers, dates of birth and addresses, from May through July 2017</p> <p>Now, documents show that the license state and issue date might have also accessed. Equifax said an insignificant number of email addresses were affected and they are commonly searchable in public domains.</p> <p>Equifax spokesperson Meredith Griffanti told CNN Money the original disclosure wasn't meant to represent the full list of potentiality exposed information.</p> <p>"As your company continues to issue incomplete, confusing and contradictory statements and hide information from Congress and the public, it is clear that five months after the breach was publicly announced, Equifax has yet to answer this simple question in full: what was the precise extent of the breach?" Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., wrote in a letter to interim CEO Paulino do Rego Barros Jr.</p>

	<p>Barros replaced Richard Smith, who announced after the breach he would retire.</p> <p>With the data, criminals can open bank accounts and lines of credit, including a credit card or mortgage.</p> <p>"The more information scammers have about you, the easier it is for them to impersonate you," said Lauren Saunders, associate director at the National Consumer Law Center. "And the easier it is for them to get by the protocols that banks and others use to make sure they are dealing with the right individual."</p> <p>Equifax, TransUnion and Experian are the top three credit reporting agencies. They gather information on individuals from banks, credit card companies, retailers and public records. to create credit reports, which are used by lenders to determine the risk of a potential borrower.</p> <p>Equifax has sent mail notices to consumers affected by the breach.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/09 Digital devices more revealing?
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/mach/science/our-digital-devices-may-be-revealing-more-about-us-we-ncna845966
GIST	<p>The digital footprints we leave behind as we go about our Internet-browsing, cellphone-calling, app-using lives may be revealing more about us than we realize — and opening us up to some surprising risks.</p> <p>The potential pitfalls were highlighted recently when an Australian college student discovered that maps released by the fitness-tracking app Strava could be used to identify U.S. military bases.</p> <p>The company had used anonymized GPS data from its users' jogging and cycling routes to create a global "heat map" of activity. But because the app is popular with military personnel, the maps revealed the locations of bases as well as sensitive details about their layouts and even service members' routines.</p> <p>It was even possible to identify individual military personnel by uploading routes to Strava's website to see who had the fastest times at these locations.</p> <p>"It really demonstrates our inability to comprehend the consequences of what we're sharing," says Dr. Mani Srivastava, a UCLA professor with a special interest in security and privacy issues arising from the use of mobile devices.</p> <p>Military personnel aren't the only ones at risk. Unless you opt out of publicly sharing your location data, other Strava users who exercise in the same area can pull up your profile details and see when and where you're working out. That opens up the possibility that someone could find you during a workout — and that burglars might be able to tell when you're away from home.</p> <p>Even if you don't use a fitness tracker, you may be unwittingly revealing your location to others.</p> <p>Twitter lets users stamp tweets with a location, and researchers at MIT and Oxford University showed in 2016 that even non-experts could use a day's worth of tweets to identify someone's home with 65 percent accuracy.</p> <p>Facebook also allows users to "check-in" to locations, and SnapChat's SnapMap function broadcasts your location each time you open the app. Both reveal the information only to your friend list, but security researchers showed in 2011 that one-fifth of Facebook users accepted friend requests from strangers.</p> <p>In a 2011 survey of 50 convicted burglars in the U.K., four fifths said thieves use social media to case their targets. Three burglars robbed at least 18 homes in New Hampshire in 2010 after checking Facebook for people announcing they weren't home.</p>

Even when our data isn't public, we may be sharing more than we realize. Location data tracked by smartphone apps can reveal our shopping habits and how and where we drive, as well as which place of worship we visit, says Srivastava, while motion sensors in fitness-tracking wristbands can show everything from sleep patterns to hand movements that suggest we're smoking or eating.

In his own house, Srivastava has an internet-connected thermostat that tracks people from room to room to help optimize the settings. "Maybe they could tell I'm a late-night eater because I spent some time in the kitchen at 1 a.m.," he says.

Personal data is valuable to advertisers, and some tech companies' business models rely on harvesting it. "Many services are only available with your data as your currency," says Srivastava.

Digital assistants like Amazon Echo and Google Home, which record voice data when users speak to them, could prove particularly intrusive. Dr. Joseph Turow, a University of Pennsylvania professor who specializes in marketing and privacy, says Amazon's privacy policy gives it wide latitude in determining how it will use user data.

"How they build that into their model of who you are I don't know," he says, "but I don't think most people who have Echoes understand it's certainly a possibility."

These profiles can be turned against consumers. In 2012, online travel agency Orbitz acknowledged that it showed Apple Mac users different, often more expensive, options compared to Microsoft Windows users — because data showed Mac users were bigger spenders.

A 2012 Wall Street Journal investigation found that online retailers adjusted prices based on users' browsing history and location. Displayed prices were higher in areas with little competition from brick-and-mortar stores, which often overlapped with rural and poor areas.

British car insurer Admiral even announced plans in 2016 to assess customer's personalities by analyzing their Facebook posts, though Facebook forced them to scrap the scheme. It would have denied discounts to motorists whose posts suggested they might be comparatively reckless behind the wheel.

Emerging "social credit scores" in China may be a harbinger of where this kind of profiling might lead, says Turow.

Sesame Credit combines credit history, shopping habits, and social media data to assign consumers a "trustworthiness" score that governs their access to loans and fast-track visas as well as VIP treatment at hotels. A government-run system scheduled to go online by 2020 would go further, giving users with low scores slower internet speeds, restricted travel, reduced employment opportunities, and limited access to insurance and loans.

"That may seem absurd to us," says Turow. "But the distance between social credit scores and behavioral activity tracking that today's marketers use is not necessarily all that large."

Want to do more to limit your digital footprint and plug as many data leaks as possible? Slate's Futurography project has useful tips. Both Apple iOS and Android version 6.0 allow you to switch off apps' access to data streams like location (check the privacy settings). Privacy-protecting apps like Signal can also help by encrypting text and voice calls. And DuckDuckGo is one search engine that doesn't collect user data.

Experts say you should also delete apps you don't use.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

SOURCE	http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2018/02/10/nyc-traffic-light-glitch/
GIST	<p>NEW YORK (CBSNewYork) — Drivers and pedestrians alike were urged to tread carefully after a glitch during a routine software upgrade caused problems with traffic lights across multiple intersections in New York City Saturday morning.</p> <p>The city’s Department of Transportation said the problems appeared after a software upgrade, done regularly on weekend nights, experienced an interruption around 5 a.m.</p> <p>Approximately 600 intersections — about 5 percent of the city’s traffic lights — were affected at one point, according to authorities. Some became flashing red lights, others went completely dark.</p> <p>Officials said the problem did not cause any accidents.</p> <p>City Councilman Justin Brannan (D-43) said it’s a good thing it didn’t happen during the work week.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/10 Olympics: cyberattack opening ceremony
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-olympics-2018-cyber/games-organizers-confirm-cyber-attack-wont-reveal-source-idUSKBN1FV036?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=Social
GIST	<p>PYEONGCHANG, South Korea (Reuters) - Pyeongchang Winter Olympics organizers confirmed on Sunday that the Games had fallen victim to a cyber attack during Friday’s opening ceremony, but they refused to reveal the source.</p> <p>The Games’ systems, including the internet and television services, were affected by the hack two days ago but organizers said it had not compromised any critical part of their operations.</p> <p>“Maintaining secure operations is our purpose,” said International Olympic Committee (IOC) spokesman Mark Adams.</p> <p>“We are not going to comment on the issue. It is one we are dealing with. We are making sure our systems are secure and they are secure.”</p> <p>Asked if organizers knew who was behind the attack, Adams said: “I certainly don’t know. But best international practice says that you don’t talk about an attack.”</p> <p>The Winter Games are being staged only 80km (50 miles) from the border with North Korea, which is technically still at war with the South since their 1950-1953 war ended in a truce rather than a peace treaty.</p> <p>Russia, which has been banned from the Games for doping, said days before the opening ceremony that any allegations linking Russian hackers to attacks on the infrastructure connected to the Pyeongchang Olympic Games were unfounded.</p> <p>“We know that Western media are planning pseudo-investigations on the theme of ‘Russian fingerprints’ in hacking attacks on information resources related to the hosting of the Winter Olympic Games in the Republic of Korea,” Russia’s foreign ministry said.</p> <p>“Of course, no evidence will be presented to the world.”</p> <p>Cyber security researchers said in January they had found early indications that Russia-based hackers may be planning attacks against anti-doping and Olympic organizations in retaliation for Russia’s exclusion from the Pyeongchang Games.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/09 Scientists arrested in bitcoin mining plot
SOURCE	http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43003740
GIST	<p>Russian security officers have arrested several scientists working at a top-secret Russian nuclear warhead facility for allegedly mining crypto-currencies.</p> <p>The suspects had tried to use one of Russia's most powerful supercomputers to mine Bitcoins, media reports say.</p> <p>The Federal Nuclear Centre in Sarov, western Russia, is a restricted area.</p> <p>The centre's press service said: "There has been an unsanctioned attempt to use computer facilities for private purposes including so-called mining."</p> <p>The supercomputer was not supposed to be connected to the internet - to prevent intrusion - and once the scientists attempted to do so, the nuclear centre's security department was alerted. They were handed over to the Federal Security Service (FSB), the Russian news service Mash says.</p> <p>"As far as we are aware, a criminal case has been launched against them," the press service told Interfax news agency.</p> <p>Crypto-currencies like Bitcoin do not rely on centralised computer servers. People who provide computer processing power to the crypto-currency system, to enable transactions to take place, can get rewards in Bitcoins.</p>
Return to	
Top	

Terror Conditions

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	02/12 US: let ISIS fighters face trial at home
SOURCE	http://www.newsweek.com/let-isis-fighters-go-home-us-says-802860
GIST	<p>The United States is lobbying its partners to let their fighters from the Islamic State militant group (ISIS) return home from Syria to face justice there.</p> <p>Top U.S. officials are calling on coalition allies to repatriate the foreign fighters who have been captured by the Syrian Kurds.</p> <p>"We're working with the coalition on foreign fighter detainees, and generally expect these detainees to return to their country of origin for disposition," said Kathryn Wheelbarger, the principal deputy assistant defense secretary for international security affairs, the Associated Press reported.</p> <p>"Defense ministers have the obligation and the opportunity to really explain to their other ministers or their other Cabinet officials just the importance to the mission, to the campaign, to make sure that there's an answer to this problem."</p> <p>European security services have long feared the return of thousands of foreign ISIS fighters to their home countries. But those who are returned as captives also pose problems for governments about what they should do with them.</p> <p>Last week, two British nationals believed to have been members of the infamous ISIS cell known as The Beatles because of their British accents were detained in Syria. The British government has appeared reluctant to accept the return of El Shafee Elsheikh and Alexanda Amon Kotey to face justice.</p> <p>Any trial of a returnee would require evidence, and when these militants are captured in the field, there is not always sufficient evidence to prosecute them at home, meaning they could be released into society.</p>

	The fear is that they will seek to carry out extremist attacks on home soil.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/11 Taliban remains dominant jihadist force
SOURCE	http://www.businessinsider.com/isis-taliban-afghanistan-terrorism-2018-2
GIST	<p>A number of high-profile attacks in Afghanistan towards the end of January were claimed by competing terrorist groups ISIS and the Taliban — putting the spotlight back on a country that has been at war for over a decade.</p> <p>An attack on the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul on January 20 that killed at least 40 people and an ambulance bombing in Kabul on January 27 that killed 103 were claimed by the Taliban.</p> <p>An attack on Save the Children's Jalalabad office on January 24 that killed six people and an attack on Kabul's military academy on January 29 that killed at least 11 Afghan soldiers were claimed by ISIS' Afghan branch — known as Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant — Khorasan Province (ISIS-K).</p> <p>Since its creation in 2015, ISIS has pushed to have a bigger presence in Afghanistan. The recent attacks, and the fact that ISIS-K has proven to be stubbornly resilient, have made some in the West more worried about the group.</p> <p>Seth G. Jones, an expert on Afghanistan and a senior adviser to the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, told Business Insider that the Taliban and ISIS have been "at each others throats" since day one — but there is no question who the more threatening group is.</p> <p>"The Taliban is a much larger organization, controls roughly 10-12% of the population of Afghanistan, has conducted a lot more attacks, and has some support among Afghanistan's conservative rural population," Jones said.</p> <p>"ISIS-K, on the other hand, is shrinking in size, controls virtually no territory, has conducted far fewer attacks, and has virtually no support among Afghanistan's population."</p> <p>ISIS first came to South Asia in 2014, using the group's substantial funds and weak local governments to co-opt high-ranking members of the Pakistani Taliban and disaffected members of the Afghan Taliban.</p> <p>But almost as soon as it was founded, ISIS-K began suffering losses, as they found themselves fighting the Pakistani and Afghani governments, the NATO Coalition, and the Taliban all at the same time.</p> <p>Angry that ISIS had taken some of their members in southern Afghanistan, the Taliban hit back and essentially wiped out ISIS-K in Helmand and Farah provinces.</p> <p>ISIS has also suffered major losses in its fight against the Afghan government in NATO. All three of its top leaders (called "emirs") have been killed since the group was founded, and, according to Jones, their numbers have almost been halved since their founding.</p> <p>ISIS-K is now more of a deadly nuisance than a strategic threat to Afghanistan.</p> <p>"ISIS-K controls virtually nothing other than a small segment of territory. They're not competing in any meaningful way," Jones said. "Its in a bad situation. It has got everybody against it."</p> <p>Jones said ISIS-K has been so surprisingly resilient because it mostly operates in parts of Nangarhar Province, particularly the Achin District, where neither the Taliban or the Afghan government have much control. Instead the region is mostly controlled by local tribes and clans.</p> <p>Jones believes, however that ISIS-K will eventually become a transnational movement — forced to move</p>

into Pakistan or Bangladesh as operations against them continue.

"They're down in numbers, it looks like they are down in recruitment, they've stuck around but it looks like under most accounts they are probably weakening," he said.

All of this is in stark contrast to the Taliban, where "there is absolutely no comparison," according to Jones.

Recent reports suggest that the Taliban has tripled in size since 2014 to up to 60,000. This is compared to ISIS-K's 1,000-2,000.

The Taliban have complete control of some areas in Afghanistan's countryside, have their own court systems and governmental structures in place, a military structure based in Pakistan, and, according to a recent BBC report, threaten 70% of the country.

They also, as Jones points out, have support from state actors; most notably Pakistan and possibly even Russia.

ISIS-K and the Taliban are likely to continue attacks like the ones that plagued Afghanistan in January. Those high-profile attacks are important because even though neither ISIS or the Taliban control any urban territory, they gain international media attention and put them in the spotlight.

Jones said the attacks "may give an impression that groups like the Taliban are omnipresent," even though they are not. "That's really a psychological impact."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/11 Woman accused of arson tried to join AQ
SOURCE	http://kstp.com/news/us-attorneys-office-memo-in-support-of-detention-of-tnuza-jamal-hassan-facing-federal-terrorism-charge-st-kates-arson/4783815/
GIST	<p>A woman accused of starting nine fires in multiple buildings on the campus of St. Catherine University and now facing federal charges of arson and terrorism had twice attempted to leave the country to join al-Qaida, according to a court document filed on Friday.</p> <p>In the document filed ahead of an arraignment and detention hearing for 19-year-old Tnuza Jamal Hassan, the United States Attorney's Office in Minneapolis argues Hassan "presents an extraordinary danger to the community and a significant risk of flight and therefore should remain in custody pending trial."</p> <p>The attorney's office announced a three-count indictment last week against Hassan that includes charges of attempting to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, making a false statement, and arson.</p> <p>Hassan, of Minneapolis, was arrested by FBI agents Thursday at Ramsey County jail, where she had been detained since she allegedly set the fires on campus Jan. 17, including in one building that housed a day care center in which 33 kids and eight adults were present, according to the memorandum.</p> <p>The document points to evidence that Hassan tried to travel to Kabul, Afghanistan, on Sept. 19 of last year to join al-Qaida and the "'Islamic Resistance,' which she defined as (al-Qaida) and the Taliban."</p> <p>The memo says Hassan reached Dubai in that effort, but was prevented from traveling further because she lacked a visa.</p> <p>Prior to that, the document alleges, she attempted to recruit two female classmates to join al-Qaida or other organizations. She initially denied, but later admitted, to authoring a recruitment letter in March 2017.</p>

Hassan was an English major, but is not currently enrolled at St. Kate's or employed.

The document says she again tried to leave the country on Dec. 29, 2017, on a ticket to Ethiopia with her mother, though authorities prevented her from boarding the flight and her mother chose not to go.

Josh Johnson, an attorney representing Hassan, did not immediately return a phone call seeking comment.

After she was arrested in connection to the St. Kate's fires, Hassan admitted to authorities she set the fires in an act of jihad "in retaliation for the alleged misconduct of U.S. military forces in Muslim lands," according to the document. She admitted she hoped her actions would kill innocent people, the document says.

In arguing for her detention ahead of Monday's hearing, the U.S. attorney's office also cited her admission that if released from custody but not allowed to leave the country, she would have the "right" to wage violent jihad here in America."

The attorney's office says it also plans to offer additional evidence to support their argument for keeping Hassan in custody, including statements with multiple references to "violent jihad, including those evidencing a desire to kill innocent Americans," as well as a copy of the alleged recruitment letter written by Hassan in March 2017.

It also plans to argue Hassan's family has been unable to control or account for her behavior, citing three missing persons reports the family filed after each of Hassan's alleged attempts to leave the country.

Hassan, a former St. Catherine student, was charged with first-degree arson in Ramsey County last month in connection to the fires on campus.

The criminal complaint in connection to that incident includes a statement from Hassan that alleges she said she started the fires because "this was the same thing that happened in 'Muslim land' and nobody cares if they got hurt." Attorneys stated she's "become dangerously radicalized."

[Return to](#)
[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/11 Germans shocked by young jihadists
SOURCE	https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/german-shocked-by-young-jihadists/4241601.html
GIST	<p>"Put on a thick jacket," the 18-year-old son of Albanian immigrants told the 12-year-old German-Iraqi boy over the Internet.</p> <p>The young man was explaining how to bomb a Christmas market last year in the Rhineland town of Ludwigshafen. He told the boy to hide, light the explosive device and run.</p> <p>Luckily, the bomb failed to explode. Police arrested the 12-year-old in December 2017. They say it was the second time he tried to carry out a bomb attack.</p> <p>The step-by-step guidance by the 18-year-old was described in court papers last month. He communicated online with the boy from his home in Austria.</p> <p>Now, a top German official is calling for cancellation of laws restricting security surveillance of children under the age of 14. Hans-Georg Maassen is the head of the country's domestic intelligence agency. He argues that Germany is facing serious risks from what the media calls "kindergarten jihadists."</p> <p>The intelligence chief told a reporter that the Islamic State (IS) group and its followers target children in Germany. He added that IS agents search the internet for children who can be reached and try to persuade them to carry out terrorist attacks.</p>

Maassen said he was worried about the risks from women and children who once lived in areas controlled by the militant group. He described the children of jihadist parents as “ticking... bombs.”

“We see that children who grew up with Islamic State were brainwashed in the schools and the kindergartens of the Islamic State,” Maassen said. He noted that some boys and girls heard IS teachings at an early age, learned to fight, and may have abused or even killed prisoners.

Only a few of the 290 children who left Germany with jihadist parents — or who were born in Syria or Iraq — have returned to Germany. Some rights activists have warned that Germany should not quickly change civil rights protections, questioning whether the danger is being overstated.

The threat from children exposed to militancy has become a major political issue in Germany. Three out of five Islamist attacks in the country in 2016 were carried out by youngsters.

This is the second time Maassen has publicly expressed his concerns about children working for militants. He also said it in October when he told Germans to “take a serious look at the threat” and to call the police if they saw anything.

Last year, experts warned that Western governments were not giving enough thought about what to do with the children raised under IS rule or of Syrian and Iraqi children enlisted by militants.

IS leaders were clear about their plan to teach children to be “the generation that will conquer Baghdad, Jerusalem, Mecca and Rome.” As the group’s territory shrank, the militants released videos explaining what would happen to their enemies in the future.

German officials aren't the only ones worried about the children of IS foreign fighters or the continuing efforts by the group to get new members.

Last week, the head of London police’s anti-terrorism command, Dean Haydon, warned of children taught by Islamic State coming back to Britain to carry out attacks.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/12 HM leader: training Kashmiris for jihad
SOURCE	https://www.kashmirmonitor.in/Details/142889/were-still-training-kashmiris-for-jihad
GIST	<p>The supreme commander of Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), Syed Salahuddin – a Pakistan-based Kashmiri militant who was declared a global terrorist by US authorities last year – appears quite determined to take the Kashmir struggle forward to its “logical conclusion,” come what may.</p> <p>While Pakistan is under pressure from the Trump administration to clean up its act, Salahuddin remains as defiant as ever.</p> <p>The US move against Salahuddin and his Kashmiri militant organization looks to have had zero impact. Salahuddin, labeled a ‘Specially Designated Global Terrorist’ (SDGT), simply laughs the designation off.</p> <p>“Pakistan has just ignored the Trump administration’s wrong-headed decision of terming a ‘freedom fighter’ a ‘terrorist,’” which violates United Nations resolutions and the US Constitution,” he tells Asia Times in an exclusive interview. “Pakistan knows very well that a ‘mujahid’ cannot be a ‘terrorist,’ [and therefore] continues to provide ‘moral’ and ‘diplomatic’ support to the forces fighting for the right of self-determination in Kashmir.”</p> <p>His assertion reinforces India’s claims that Pakistani authorities have been lending support to militant outfits in the region.</p> <p>Pakistan issued a fatwa known as ‘Paigham-e-Pakistan’ (“Pakistan’s message”) on January 16 this year. It</p>

empowers only Pakistan's federal government, rather than militant groups, to announce holy wars (jihad). Terming the decree a "blessing," Salahuddin's response is to suggest that the government use it to declare a holy war in Kashmir.

"Pakistan is pursuing a weak Kashmir policy in the face of deepening political chaos," Salahuddin says. Mounting international pressure to end support for the "Kashmir resistance struggle" and other Islamist movements against US intervention in the region has diverted the focus of Pakistan's policymakers, he contends.

Government sources told Asia Times that Pakistan has asked such militants to keep a low profile.

Salahuddin denies, however, that the government has laid any restrictions on his movements or barred the HM from participating in public activity. "I participated in the public meetings held on October 27 last year and again addressed the Kashmir Martyrs Day rally on November 27," he claims.

Despite minimal activity in most of Pakistan, HM leaders are certainly active on the Muzaffarabad side of Pakistan-held Kashmir. They enjoy high-level security cover there – provided by the country's premier agencies. Salahuddin insists that "the HM struggle for Kashmir 'liberation' has gained momentum after the India-US nexus conspired to crush Kashmiris."

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/11 Terrorist reveals secret Gitmo perks
SOURCE	https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/admitted-terrorist-testifies-about-his-secret-guantanamo-perks/ar-BBJ05WL?li=BBnbfcL&ocid=HPCDHP
GIST	<p>GUANTANAMO BAY NAVAL BASE, Cuba — A tortured al-Qaida terrorist turned prosecution witness is being rewarded with a comfortable cabin-style lockup where he can garden, paint, exercise, learn English, cook meals for his interrogators and attorneys and watch American television.</p> <p>In sworn testimony Saturday, Ahmed al Darbi, 42, described changing from a lying, feces-flinging prisoner with a bad behavior record in the maximum-security Camp Five prison to a cooperating witness now cloistered in Camp Echo, an annex of the prison compound across the street.</p> <p>Darbi has his own kitchen with a freezer stocked with meat and spices, and other never-before-disclosed perks to pass his time preparing to testify as a witness for the war court prosecutor in two cases, one that seeks the death penalty.</p> <p>The prison provides him with lamb, rabbit, chicken, shrimp and other halal meat, he said as defense attorney Air Force Maj. Yolanda Miller read from what sounded like a shopping list.</p> <p>"Goat," the Saudi volunteered with a grin, adding, "I love chicken, and I don't see any issue with that. I still have it in my freezer until now."</p> <p>Darbi is scheduled to go home to a Saudi rehabilitation program Feb. 20 under a plea agreement if diplomats can close the deal and Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis approves the release. Four years ago he pleaded guilty to being an accomplice in a 2002 al-Qaida attack on a French oil tanker, the Limburg, in Yemeni waters.</p> <p>The attack did not achieve its goal of upsetting global oil prices or shipping, but a Bulgarian crew member died in the attack, which occurred after Darbi was already a U.S. prisoner. Last year he recorded testimony, a deposition, to be used as possible evidence against the alleged mastermind of the attack, Abd al Rahim al Nashiri.</p> <p>He also separately testified about his life as a jihadist in al-Qaida, pointed to an Iraqi captive in court and identified him as a former al-Qaida commander named Abd al Hadi al Iraqi, to counter the Iraqi's claim</p>

that his true name is Nashwan al Tamir.

This weekend, Hadi's attorneys questioned Darbi on the truthfulness of his statements and memory for what could be used as time-capsule testimony if the Trump administration releases him. And the image he portrayed of his life in Guantanamo prison offered a stark contrast to a glimpse a weekend earlier of medium-security communal prison life — prepared food in plastic-foam containers, up to four hours in a new recreation cell block, a now hidden art program for the indefinite detainees known as "forever prisoners."

Across the street, Darbi has a plethora of quality-of-life accommodations provided by the prison, interrogators or the prosecution. Cilantro, cumin and cloves to cook with using a hot plate, blender and microwave oven in his kitchen; treats like Strawberries n' Creme Oreos, baklava, Turkish delight and a pecan pie; a garden where he said he was growing what sounded like the ingredients for ratatouille — eggplant, tomatoes, zucchini and green pepper. Papaya too, he noted.

Cooperation also earned him monthly phone calls with his Yemeni wife and children, now living in Saudi Arabia.

Deposition questioning Sunday delved into what Darbi called "the torture times" — his 2002-03 interrogations in Bagram, Afghanistan, and Guantanamo.

Defense attorney Adam Thurschwell, in an apparent bid to discredit Darbi's identification of the Iraqi Hadi, led Darbi through a lurid description of his first year or more in U.S. custody, drawn from sworn court documents. The Saudi was beaten, sleep deprived, hung by the wrists, threatened with rape in interrogation, and then sent to unwanted rectal exams by U.S. military doctors, kept nude and forced to empty other detainees' feces buckets with his fingers.

He said a focus of the interrogations was: Where was Osama bin Laden?

In one notorious episode, Darbi described how, after he cried out for God while he was being beaten and questioned at Bagram, a U.S. soldier serving as an interrogator pulled out his own penis, put it "very close to my face" and declared, "This is your God."

The Saudi said he was kept shackled to the door of a cage there, his toes unable to touch the ground and in plain sight of what Darbi called the guards' "torture tools" — baseball bats, chains, shackles and hoods.

Darbi got to Guantanamo 14 months after it opened. He testified Sunday that he was kept in solitary confinement, deprived of sleep and subjected to midnight-to-dawn, no-bathroom-break questioning in an interrogation room stinking of urine and vomit. Threats included rape, sending him to Israel or Camp X-Ray, which supposedly closed a year earlier. Interrogators had photocopies of pages of the Koran, Darbi testified, and would throw them on the ground with sex photos and pictures of mutilated bodies.

Darbi has a battery-powered toothbrush, with replacement heads, a Magic Bullet blender, free weights and a spin bike for exercising, and Under Armour T-shirts and athletic socks to wear when he works out in his compound. "Yes, Nike also," he told Miller. "Don't forget that."

Miller, Hadi's defense attorney, framed the stuff as incentive items to show that life gets good for captives turned prosecution witnesses at Guantanamo. Darbi confirmed under questioning that he would set a table and cook for his interrogators during some visits, and that he had the makings for Arabic and Turkish coffee.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE 02/09 Coast Guard waterway watch program

SOURCE <https://www.hstoday.us/briefings/daily-news-analysis/coast-guard-launches-waterway-watch->

	program/
GIST	<p>The Coast Guard developed the Waterway Watch Program to encourage the reporting of suspicious activity around America's Waterways.</p> <p>The program, which has a similar basis to the well-known Neighborhood Watch program, aims to keep waterways as safe as possible and preempt activities that could be a threat to national security.</p> <p>USCG is calling for anyone involved with, or in the proximity of, waterways, from marina operators to those who live or work nearby, to sign up for the initiative. Participants are not formally joining an organization and do not become members of the Coast Guard or any other law enforcement agency – the Waterway Watch Program just provides an arena for safely reporting suspicious activity.</p> <p>Anyone who spends time on or near water, whether that's ports, docks, beaches or waterfront communities, will know what is normal and what is not, and will be in the best position to identify potential threats to homeland security. The initiative asks participants to be particularly vigilant about suspicious activity near industrial facilities, military bases or places with a high volume of passengers such as ferry terminals.</p> <p>The program has a hotline and detailed instructions about reporting suspicious activity – first, call the National Response Center at 877-24WATCH. For immediate danger to life or property, call 911, or call the U. S. Coast Guard on Marine Channel 16. USCG is quick to stress, though, that members of the public should not approach anyone about to commit a crime; instead, observe, take notes or even photos, but keep a safe distance.</p>
Return to Top	<i>USCG is looking for organizations to become partners of the initiative and spread the word. To become an America's Waterway Watch partner, sign up here</i>

HEADLINE	02/12 Turkey assails US ties w/Kurdish militia
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/02/12/turkey-assails-us-over-ties-with-syrian-kurdish-militia.html
GIST	<p>ANKARA, Turkey – Turkey's foreign minister is assailing the United States, claiming American forces in Syria are intentionally stalling the fight against Islamic State militants as an excuse not to cut ties with Syrian Kurdish fighters as Ankara has demanded.</p> <p>Mevlut Cavusoglu says U.S. forces are leaving "pockets" with IS militants intact to justify continued cooperation with the Kurdish militia.</p> <p>Cavusoglu says ties with the U.S. are "at a critical stage" and that Washington needs to take "concrete steps" to regain Turkey's trust.</p> <p>Ankara is riled over Washington's support for the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG — the top U.S. ally in the anti-IS fight. Turkey considers the YPG a "terrorist" group linked to Kurdish insurgents within Turkey.</p> <p>U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is due in Ankara later this week.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/12 Claim: ISIS leader injured in May strike
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/12/middleeast/isis-leader-abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-wounded-intl/index.html
GIST	(CNN)ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was wounded in an airstrike in May last year and had to relinquish control of the terror group for up to five months because of his injuries, according to several US officials who spoke exclusively to CNN.

US intelligence agencies have assessed with a high degree of confidence that the world's most wanted man was near Raqqa, Syria in May when the missile struck, the US officials said.

Their assessment is based on reports from ISIS detainees and refugees in Northern Syria that emerged months after the airstrike, the officials added.

Baghdadi's injuries were not considered life-threatening but they did mean he couldn't continue to command the daily operations of the group.

At the time, ISIS was about to lose control of the Iraqi city of Mosul and its so-called capital Raqqa had been nearly encircled by US-backed forces.

It is unclear whether Baghdadi was hit in a targeted attack or if he was "collateral damage." It's also unclear who fired the missile. US officials do not know the exact date of the strike so are unsure if a Coalition aircraft was involved, or whether Baghdadi's injury was the result of a Russian missile.

"There have been isolated strikes by Russians in Raqqa, but as there's no timeline to it, we don't know if it's ours," a US official said.

It's believed the airstrike occurred close to the date offered by the Russian military in June when they claimed to have killed or injured the ISIS leader.

At the time, Russia's Defense Ministry said it was investigating reports Baghdadi had been killed in an airstrike on May 28, on the outskirts of Raqqa, the group's primary stronghold, which US-backed forces took back in October.

Analysts warned at the time reports of Baghdadi's death should be treated with skepticism given the high number of previous false reports.

One US official said the Russian claim was a case of Moscow "making stuff up."

Another US official, asked if the injuries meant Baghdadi had been able to return to his leadership role, albeit of a diminished organization, said: "Yes. I do not know how much Baghdadi is day-to-day running the shop."

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/10 Study: little US foreign fighters threat
SOURCE	https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/us-foreign-fighters/4244746.html
GIST	<p>United States citizens who joined extremist groups fighting in Syria and Iraq appear to present little immediate threat to Americans or U.S. territory.</p> <p>A new study found that the same is true of non-citizens who left their American homes to fight in Syria and Iraq.</p> <p>In fact, only a handful of the fighters have returned to the U.S. from the battlefield, the study notes.</p> <p>The findings are from a project of the Program on Extremism at The George Washington University in Washington, D.C. It identified 64 individuals who fought or assisted Islamic State, al-Qaida and other groups in Syria and Iraq.</p> <p>Of the 64 travelers, only 12 are known to have returned to U.S. territory, the study found. Nine of them have been arrested and charged with crimes relating to terrorism.</p> <p>The study noted that none have successfully carried out an attack in the United States.</p>

“The risk of returned travelers being engaged in terrorist attacks has, to date, been limited,” said a report on the study.

The writers of the report noted, “There is currently no publicly available evidence to suggest that American travelers have slipped into the country without the knowledge of authorities.” They said that “homegrown” extremists currently appear to be more likely to carry out jihadist attacks than returning travelers.

Compared to European countries, the U.S. faces a smaller risk from returning travelers. That is partly because of the greater distance and difficulty in reaching the Middle East from the United States.

U.S. intelligence officials estimated that more than 40,000 foreign fighters have traveled to Syria and Iraq. Of these, only 5,000 to 6,000 were said to come from Western countries.

The exact number who successfully left from the United States is unclear. Officials have said that about 250 to 300 U.S.-based people left or tried to leave to join groups fighting in Syria. Not all of them made it.

The study found at least 50 were arrested before leaving the United States. That represents about one-third of all U.S. residents who have been charged with crimes related to the Islamic State group.

Of the 64 travelers identified in the study who did leave the U.S., 22 are thought to have died in Syria or Iraq. Officials are unsure of the condition and whereabouts of the others.

The study identified a single returning traveler who sought to carry out an attack in the United States. That was 23-year-old Abdirahman Sheik Mohamud, a naturalized citizen from Somalia.

Mohamud left his home in Ohio to join Jabhat al-Nusra, a group allied with al-Qaida, in April 2014. While in Syria, he was trained in explosives and hand-to-hand fighting. He was sent back to the United States in June to carry out an attack.

But in February 2015, while still plotting the attack, Mohamud was arrested. He admitted guilt to the charges and was sentenced to 22 years in prison.

Other than Mohamud, only one other traveler sought to carry out a terror attack. But that attack, a suicide bombing, happened only upon returning to Syria after avoiding prosecution in the United States.

In any case, the study’s authors say the findings suggest fears once voiced by U.S. officials of a “terrorist diaspora” seem to be overstated.

Yet the George Washington University study did find some reasons for concern.

Study co-author Seamus Hughes says the average prison sentence for those who went overseas to take part in the fight in Syria and Iraq is only 10 years. He noted that that sentence is shorter than the average prison term for a would-be U.S.-based jihadist arrested at the airport.

Part of that might be linked to the difficulty in making a criminal case based on terrorist activity in another country.

Hughes said another issue could be that the returnees may have been able to share information with investigators and anti-terrorism officials in exchange for lighter sentences.

But just like with the would-be jihadists, these travelers will eventually get out of prison. And Hughes and others believe the United States should be doing more to help these individuals. They note the lack of U.S. programs for former prisoners returning to society could lead to problems in the future.

HEADLINE	02/10 New era of terror money?
SOURCE	http://nationalinterest.org/feature/new-era-terror-money-24452
GIST	<p>Bitcoin, along with other cryptocurrencies, has attracted considerable scrutiny in the past few months due to a consider run up in prices. While the press devotes a great deal of attention towards the crypto nouveau riche or the usual proclamations that the entire phenomenon is a bubble comparable to the tulip mania policymakers and regulatory authorities are preoccupied with a different set of concerns: the potential for terrorist and criminal organizations to make use of these financial instruments.</p> <p>These fears are warranted. Bitcoin originally attained infamy as a medium to acquire drugs and other illegal narcotics off of darknet markets such as the Silk Road. To this day, Bitcoin is still used at times when transacting on the Silk Road’s shady successors. In the realm of terrorism, jihadis have gradually developed an understanding of how cryptocurrencies can aid them in their endeavors. In 2014, an article entitled “Bitcoin wa Sadaqat al-Jihad” appeared on an online blog and put forward various reasons for jihadist to embrace Bitcoin, explaining that the existing global banking system has “eliminated [charity] for jihad on a large scale” and presenting Bitcoin is a way to circumvent this system. More recent research has revealed that the Islamic State and other extremist outfits are relying on Bitcoin as a new fundraising mechanism in order to stay afloat.</p> <p>Today Bitcoin is no longer the cryptocurrency of choice when conducting illicit transactions or attempting to move money undetected. The currency is not completely anonymous; rather, it is pseudonymous. Users are sending Bitcoin from their “address” to another address, with all of this information being recorded on a public ledger. Researchers from Qatar University and Hamad Bin Khalifa University have demonstrated that it is possible to exploit this model, writing that “historical pieces of information could be used to identify a certain user.” If one can tie a user’s Bitcoin address to some identifying piece of information (for example, a user’s Bitcoin address on his/her account on a fiat-to-cryptocurrency exchange), then a user’s identity can be revealed.</p> <p>Those trying to hide their tracks have migrated to what are known as “privacy coins”: cryptocurrencies that are designed to grant users privacy in their financial dealings, often by obscuring the specific details of cryptocurrency transactions. The most well-known of these is Monero, which encrypts the user’s address and creates fake addresses to hide the original sender. The exact quantity of Monero being transacted is also hidden. The cryptocurrency is so secure that when authorities seized the holdings of Alphabay, a darknet market, they were unable to determine the exact quantity of Monero that it’s operator possessed.</p> <p>Mercifully, the danger of ISIS and other organizations employing privacy coins is overstated at this time. As explained by a report from the Center for New American Security,</p> <p><i>[terrorists] seek to move money from places outside the locations where they operate to the areas in which they plan and from which they launch attacks. Often they use many layers of intermediaries so that donors and ultimate recipients may not be known to one other. [...] terrorists use the funds to buy things they need to sustain the group or to conduct attacks. And because they do so from the general economy, they often would need to reconvert the [cryptocurrencies] they receive into fiat currency. This final step introduces both an unnecessary layer of complexity and an increased vulnerability to the disruption of their operations by adding additional actors and entities into the fundraising matrix. [...] But the final—and most important—reason that terrorist groups have not adopted [cryptocurrencies] at scale is that these groups, and individual terrorist operatives, have not yet perceived the need to do so. They still find it possible to circumvent global rules governing terrorist financing with sufficient ease and frequency that using [cryptocurrencies] is unnecessary. They exploit incomplete implementation of regulatory requirements and global standards at banks, use unlicensed and undersupervised money services businesses (MSBs), or simply cart around cash. As long as these value transfer methods are readily available, there is no great need to invest in new, complicated techniques to transfer value.</i></p> <p>Likewise, a report from the Commission to the European Parliament from last year finds that “the</p>

technology is quite recent and in any case requires some knowledge and technical expertise which has a dissuasive effect on terrorist groups. The reliance on [cryptocurrencies] to fund terrorist activities has some costs and is not necessary attractive.”

As such, terrorists still prefer to make use of traditional fiat currency. Jennifer Fowler, the deputy assistant secretary for terrorist financing and financial crimes at the Treasury Department, stated that “although [cryptocurrencies] are used for illicit transactions, the volume is small compared to the volume of illegal activity through traditional financial services.” A recent study by the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and the cryptocurrency analysis firm Elliptic found that “the total percentage of identified ‘dirty bitcoins’ going into conversion services is relatively small. Only 0.61 percent of the money entering conversion services during the four years analyzed were verifiably from illicit sources, with the highest proportion (1.07 percent) seen in 2013.”

Nonetheless, regulators and counterterrorism authorities have begun to plan ahead in anticipation of cryptocurrencies one day gaining traction with terrorists. Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos last month, U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin called for other nations to join the United States in pursuing more extensive regulation of cryptocurrencies. He explained that his “number-one focus [is] on cryptocurrencies, whether that be digital currencies or bitcoin or other things, is that we want to make sure that they’re not used for illicit activities.” Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Sigal Mandelker has urged financial institutions and regulators in Asia to do more in preventing illicit activity fueled by cryptocurrencies.

Policymakers are also keeping an eye on cryptocurrencies and are taking some proactive steps. The most notable action thus far is the introduction of a new bill by Republican Rep. Ted Budd titled the “Financial Technology Innovation and Defense Act.” Budd’s bill seeks to “establish an Independent Financial Technology Task Force” dedicated to “conduct[ing] independent research on terrorist and illicit use of new financial technologies, including digital currencies; and ... develop[ing] legislative and regulatory proposals to improve counter-terrorist and counter-illicit financing efforts.” The report to the European Parliament concluded that “the most important element of vulnerability for [cryptocurrencies] is the fact that there are not regulated in the EU.” Both France and Germany intend to make joint proposals on regulating Bitcoin at the next summit of the G20 group.

Regulating cryptocurrencies will be a complicated affair; cryptocurrencies alone represent a new sort of financial asset class which regulators are still developing rules for. However, a few ideas have emerged. Both the reports from the Center for New American Security and the Foundation for Defense of Democracies/Elliptic provide suggestions, such as increased Know Your Customer and Anti-Money Laundering enforcement on businesses that transmit cryptocurrencies (particularly those that are unlicensed), a specialized commission or task force (like the one proposed by Budd), the creation of common compliance architecture, and so forth.

While these efforts may certainly help though, they will likely be unable to prevent every illicit transaction. The market will grow increasingly competitive as newer, more secure privacy coins and services such as decentralized exchanges (exchanges where a third party does not hold a client’s funds, instead facilitating peer-to-peer transactions) are introduced. In the coming years, expect more stories concerning the battles between financial regulators and counterterrorism experts versus terrorists and others that use privacy coins for nefarious purposes.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/11 Nigeria: Boko Haram frees hostages
SOURCE	https://www.nst.com.my/world/2018/02/334316/boko-haram-militants-hand-over-13-hostages-nigerian-government
GIST	MAIDUGURI: Boko Haram freed 13 hostages, Nigeria’s presidency said on Saturday, after authorities negotiated their release with the Islamist militants.

	<p>The kidnappings were part of a campaign of attacks last year by the jihadist group whose bid to create an Islamic state in the northeast has killed at least 20,000 people and forced some 2.7 million to flee their homes since 2009.</p> <p>Three of the hostages were lecturers from the University of Maiduguri who were abducted while on an oil exploration trip in Magumeri, in the northeastern Borno state, in July 2017. The other 10 were women police officers kidnapped in a raid on a convoy the previous month.</p> <p>“Their release followed a series of negotiations as directed by President (Muhammadu) Buhari and was facilitated by the International Committee of the Red Cross, ICRC,” a presidency spokesman said in an emailed statement.</p> <p>The ICRC said it had acted as a neutral intermediary in the hostage release.</p> <p>“The ICRC was not involved in any negotiations that led to the handover of the 13 people. The armed opposition handed the 13 people over to ICRC representatives who transported them to Nigerian authorities,” it said in a statement.</p> <p>The ICRC also acted as an intermediary in the release in October 2016 and May 2017 of some of the more than 200 girls kidnapped by Boko Haram from the northeastern town of Chibok in 2014. --REUTERS</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/10 Drone strike kills Taliban chief Pakistan
SOURCE	https://www.arabtimesonline.com/news/us-drone-strikes-kill-taleban-chief-pakistan-7-militants-get-death/
GIST	<p>PESHAWAR/DERA ISMAIL KHAN, Pakistan, Feb 10, (Agencies): A pair of suspected US missile strikes killed a senior Pakistani Taleban deputy and other militants in the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan, officials said on Friday.</p> <p>Four Pakistani intelligence officials and three Taleban commanders told Reuters on Friday that two separate US missile strikes on Wednesday killed the fighters. One of the strikes, they said, killed a Pakistani Taleban commander, Khan Said, alias Sajna, and three more people, when missiles struck his pick-up truck in Margha village of Birmal district in Paktika province of Afghanistan.</p> <p>The NATO-led Operation Resolute Support in Afghanistan said it had no information about the strike. The officials sought anonymity because they weren't authorized to disclose the information. They are based in Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and have informants on the ground on both sides of the border. They said on Friday they have also been picking up militants' chatter through phone intercepts in which they were talking about Sajna's killing.</p> <p>Three Pakistani Taleban commanders confirmed their account. Sajna has been an important militant commander of the Pakistani Taleban and had close links with the Afghan Taleban, the officials said. Two of the officials said they were trying to confirm reports of another suspected US drone strike in North Waziristan on Pakistani side of the border.</p> <p>The second strike hit a compound in Gurwek town of North Waziristan, killing seven militants, the three Taleban commanders said. North Waziristan and Paktika province in Afghanistan are adjacent to the border, and the officials and the militant commanders may have been reporting the same strike as two separate ones. The border region has long been home to local and al-Qaeda linked foreign militants. It is off limits to journalists and verifying any information independently is difficult.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/11 Greece: terrorist returns from furlough
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/convicted-terrorist-greece-returns-jail-furlough-52997937?cid=clicksource_76_4_article%20roll_articleroll_hed
GIST	<p>Dimitris Koufodinas, a convicted terrorist and member of Greece's most notorious terrorist group, 17 November, has returned to prison after a 48-hour furlough, his second overall.</p> <p>Koufodinas, 60, arrived at Athens' Korydallos prison about 30 minutes before the 48 hours expired, accompanied by his wife and son. He greeted the waiting media but made no statement.</p> <p>Koufodinas, who was arrested in 2002, is serving 11 life terms plus 25 years for his role in assassinations of prominent people, including U.S., British and Turkish diplomats and military personnel. He has acknowledged his crimes and never repented.</p> <p>As with his first furlough in November, his temporary release prompted protests. U.S. State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said "convicted terrorists do not deserve a vacation from prison."</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/11 Egypt strikes Sinai targets; kill militants
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/egypt-reports-successes-sinai-operation-militants-52997897?cid=clicksource_76_4_article%20roll_articleroll_hed
GIST	<p>Egypt's military has destroyed dozens of targets, killed 16 militants and detained over 30 suspects as part of its latest operation against Islamic militants in the restive northern Sinai Peninsula, the army said on Sunday.</p> <p>Spokesman Col. Tamer el-Rifai said that airstrikes hit vehicles, weapons caches, communications centers and illegal opium fields in the sweep, which began on Friday and comes as a response to a pickup in extremist violence in Egypt.</p> <p>"The air force targeted and destroyed 66 targets used by terrorist elements to hide from air and artillery attacks," for shelter during raids by security forces, he said in a statement. With North Sinai closed off for non-residents and journalists, the army's casualty figures could not be independently confirmed. Telephone connections to the area, both mobile and landlines, are often shut down as well.</p> <p>The operation, which targets "terrorist and criminal elements and organizations," involves land, naval and air forces from the army and police, and covers north and central Sinai, the Nile Delta and the Western Desert along the porous border with Libya.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/10 New leads to find remains US hostages
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/08/politics/isis-captures-fighters-jihadi-john/index.html
GIST	<p>Washington (CNN) — A team of military and law enforcement forensic experts has been formed to explore a site near Raqqa Syria where remains of US hostages may be located, a US official tells CNN. The team is working to see what remains may be there, how they can be removed and shipped to a laboratory for potential identification. It is not clear if the remains would be shipped directly back to the United States. The exact location of the team and the work they are doing is not being disclosed by the Pentagon.</p> <p>Information about the possible location of the remains of US hostages killed by ISIS in Syria has been provided in recent days by two ISIS fighters captured in eastern Syria in early January, according to multiple US officials.</p> <p>The two men have given Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces details about potential burial locations of</p>

several US and Western hostages killed by Mohammed Emwazi, the British ISIS operative known as Jihadi John responsible for the beheading of several American hostages, the officials said.

The ISIS fighters have been identified by US intelligence as Alexandra Kotey and El Shafee Elsheikh, known associates of Jihadi John.

The New York Times was the first to report the capture of the two men.

Emwazi was killed in a US airstrike in Syria in 2015.

It has long been believed the hostages he beheaded in a series of violent videos were killed outside Raqqa. US intelligence has long suspected a general location, but had not been able to send US personnel on a search without more specific details and because there has been fighting in the area until recently.

US personnel will have to recover the remains and then confirm any potential identities through DNA testing.

The US is informing the families of Americans and others held and killed in Syria there are new leads on the possible whereabouts of the remains of their loved ones.

But the officials have cautioned it is very early in the process. The remains still have to be fully recovered and undergo an identification process the officials say.

Kurdish forces, mainly SDF are holding 'hundreds' of detainees, many of whom are foreign fighters says one official. The current interrogations of those with the most valuable information are also yielding fresh intelligence about the state of ISIS capabilities and planning. The US is working on a list of identities of all of those being held. Many gave false names when captured the official said. Learning their identities has helped guide interrogations and yielded to fresh information about potential ISIS attacks. It was after they were able to identify the two detainees associated with Jihadi John that interrogators were able to get information on the remains of the hostages.

One US assessment is that thousands of ISIS operatives have escaped Syria in recent months and are potentially back in Europe, potentially plotting new attacks, one US official with direct knowledge of the latest information tells CNN.

The assessment includes growing concerns these one-time foreign fighters are now able to plan fresh attacks in the West officials say.

In particular, there is concern that the Turkish Syrian border has again become porous in recent weeks since Turkish forces began conducting their incursion into northern Syria.

There is also intelligence that shows a significant number of fighters are crossing back into Turkey and then moving into Libya and Egypt.

Fighters have been caught with sophisticated forged documents made by ISIS, contributing to a continuing concern that the terrorist group remains far from down and out, one official said.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/09 Treasury sanctions ISIS 'facilitators'
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2018/02/09/US-sanctions-Islamic-State-facilitators-in-Middle-East-Africa/9111518191087/?utm_source=fp&utm_campaign=lh&utm_medium=10
GIST	Feb. 9 (UPI) -- The U.S. Treasury announced sanctions Friday against three Islamic State facilitators in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

The Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control said it designated Abdulpatta Escalon Abubakar, Yunus Emre Sakarya and Mohamed Mire Ali Yusuf and three entities as "Specially Designated Global Terrorists."

The move is part of an effort to identify and expose individuals who provide support to the Islamic State, which also is known by the acronym ISIS.

All three men are now prohibited from making transactions with Americans and their U.S. assets have been blocked.

"The [Trump] administration is committed to defeating ISIS wherever it operates, denigrating its illicit revenue streams, and pursuing all financial conduits," Sigal Mandelker, Treasury Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, said in a statement.

"Each individual and entity targeted has contributed to the spread of ISIS's terror reach in their respective corner of the world. Treasury will continue to relentlessly target ISIS support networks, and ensure that the U.S. and international financial systems are not being exploited by terror operatives."

The men were sanctioned for assisting in, sponsoring or providing financial, material or technological support for the terror network.

For the last two years, Abubakar is known to have served as a key facilitator for the militant group's Philippine network -- helping transfer about \$50,000.

Sakarya was found to have been involved in transactions for equipment worth over \$500,000 for the Islamic State in early-to-mid-2016.

Liibaan Trading and the Al-Mutafaq Commercial Company were designated for being owned or controlled by Mire Ali, an Islamic State financial operative.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

Suspicious, Unusual

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	02/11 Claim: intel agencies kill damning report
SOURCE	https://www.thedailybeast.com/us-intelligence-shut-downs-damning-report-on-whistleblower-retaliation?ref=home
GIST	<p>The nation's top intelligence watchdog put the brakes on a report last year that uncovered whistleblower reprisal issues within America's spy agencies, The Daily Beast has learned. The move concealed a finding that the agencies—including the CIA and the NSA—were failing to protect intelligence workers who report waste, fraud, abuse, or criminality up the chain of command.</p> <p>The investigators looked into 190 cases of alleged reprisal in six agencies, and uncovered a shocking pattern. In only one case out of the 190 did the agencies find in favor of the whistleblower—and that case took 742 days to complete. Other cases remained open longer. One complaint from 2010 was still waiting for a ruling. But the framework was remarkably consistent: Over and over and over again, intelligence inspectors ruled that the agency was in the right, and the whistleblowers were almost always wrong.</p> <p>The report was near completion following a six-month-long inspection run out of the Intelligence Community Inspector General office. It was aborted in April by the new acting head of the office, Wayne Stone, following the discovery that one of the inspectors was himself a whistleblower in the middle of a federal lawsuit against the CIA, according to former IC IG officials.</p> <p>Stone also sequestered the mountain of documents and data produced in the inspection, the product of three staff-years of work. The incident was never publicly disclosed by the office, and escaped mention in</p>

the unclassified version of the IC IG's semiannual report to Congress.

The IC IG's office declined to comment for this story.

The affair casts serious doubt on the intelligence agencies' fundamental pact with the rank and file: that workers who properly report perceived wrongdoing through approved channels won't lose their job or, worse, their security clearance, as a result. It also adds another layer of controversy to the Intelligence Community Inspector General office, already under fire for cuts to its whistleblower protection program and the unexpected sacking of the program's executive director in December. In a confirmation hearing last month, Trump's pick to head the watchdog agency acknowledged the apparent chaos in the office, citing a detailed expose by Foreign Policy magazine. "My first objective as Inspector General, if confirmed, will be to make sure the IC IG's house is in order," said former Justice Department prosecutor Michael Atkinson.

Stone shut down the whistleblowing inspection just days after taking over for Charles McCullough III, who'd served as the intelligence community inspector general from the day the office was founded in 2010 until his retirement in March of last year.

None of this was supposed to happen. In 2012, then-President Barack Obama signed a policy directive called PPD-19, which prohibits intelligence agencies from punishing workers who report abuses through approved government channels. The directive has been left in place under President Trump.

Among other things, PPD-19 requires the Office of Inspector General (OIG) at each agency to carry out an investigation when a worker complains he or she suffered retaliation for lawful whistleblowing. If, after investigating, the OIG finds no evidence of reprisal, the whistleblower can appeal up to the Intelligence Community Inspector General, who can choose to impanel a three-person appellate board, comprised of IGs from other agencies, to review the case and either affirm or disagree with the OIG's decision.

The investigators found that basically never happened. "Absent a review process which adheres to mandated legal standards for reprisal investigations, the protections remain weak with minimal chance for a complainant to have a reprisal complaint substantiated," read one of the conclusions in the suppressed inspection. "From the data it appears PPD-19 has had no impact on Agency reprisal investigations and/or protections for complainants making protected disclosures."

Rob Johnson, the former deputy IC IG under McCullough, broadly confirmed the findings in an interview with The Daily Beast, attributing some of the problems to the expected growing pains in implementing a new policy.

"We saw a couple of cases from some offices that showed that they didn't speak to witnesses that they should have, or that the cases had languished," says Johnson. "And we saw cases where they took no action... Whether it was systemic or not, well, that's why we were doing the inspection."

The IC IG probe was billed as the first independent check-up on how seriously the intelligence inspector generals were taking the presidential directive, and a possible first step in setting a formal peer review process in the future. Six experienced inspectors had been chosen for the probe: three permanent members of the IC IG staff, and three more who were on extended loan from other agencies, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the FBI, and the CIA.

Of the six, the CIA officer—we're calling him James Pars, the alias the CIA assigned him for his lawsuit—was likely the least accustomed to working in the comfortable climes of the IC IG's air-conditioned office. Cuban-American and now in his early fifties, Pars was part of the CIA's controversial Directorate of Operations, the small group responsible for carrying out covert actions abroad. A mosaic of interviews with colleagues, court filings and details in other documents seen by The Daily Beast paint a picture of a man who has seen a lot of nasty stuff over the years, serving in war zones in Iraq and Afghanistan, South American jungles, and cities like Bagdad and at least one other Middle East capital.

A sanitized autobiography Pars prepared in connection with his court action is riddled with staccato bursts of trauma: "... sleep deprived, and having to constantly relay threat information to appropriate entities..."; "... the direct line of fire for one rocket which must have missed my exact location by meters as it tore through our living quarter..."; "... helicopters which had to take evasive maneuvers and discharge flares because of a perceived threat..." "... a leaking casket by my feet and two decomposing dead bodies in body bags not far from me..." The anecdotes, shorn of locations and dates, don't lend themselves to easy verification, but a former intelligence colleague confirms the gist of it. "He understands what happens in the field. He's been in the mud and blood."

There are notes of regret in Pars' subjective career rundown—particularly over the long stints away from his wife and young daughter—but few traces of resentment or personal grievance. That is, until he recounts, with agonizing precision, two occasions when he clashed with a superior, and felt mistreated by the CIA's bureaucracy afterward. The first incident in 2009 ended with him being sent home from a long-term assignment in South America. The second, and the one that ultimately led to his lawsuit, began in December 2014 when he was made the CIA's deputy chief of base at a U.S. military site that Pars doesn't name, but which matches the sprawling Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan.

At Bagram, Pars had issues with his new boss, the chief of base, who he believed was running her command "like a college dormitory," as Pars later wrote in a court filing. She allegedly adopted favorites within her staff, and placed "her personal needs of cooking, baking, socializing, entertainment, exercise and shopping above the needs of the mission, often going days and sometimes more than a week without meeting with key personnel."

Pars' most serious complaint charged that the base chief frequently led her personnel on unnecessary errands—"food, shopping or to the gym"—that took them through parts of the base hit frequently by Taliban rocket fire; one such excursion allegedly crossed a flight ramp that was hit by a rocket just 10 minutes later.

Without more information it's hard to weigh the merits of Pars' complaint, and his version of events contains obvious echoes of longstanding gender stereotypes. But under PPD-19 the relevant question isn't whether Pars' concerns were well founded, completely imagined or something in between. Only whether he faced retaliation for reporting them.

Following procedure, Pars sent his concern up the chain of command. Word of his complaint got back down to the base chief, who allegedly retaliated on a scale that ranged from the petty—assigning him to duty as the compound "noise monitor"—to the serious, writing a critical performance review of Pars faulting him for poor communication skills and lack of leadership. Soon after, the CIA's station chief in Afghanistan issued a "short-of-tour" cable reporting that Pars no longer had the confidence of the chief of base. The cable cut short Pars' one-year detail after four months, and sent him home to Virginia with a reduction in take-home pay.

Upon his return, Pars spent months applying for new CIA assignments that would fit his experience and qualifications, according to his lawsuit, but with the poor performance review and short-of-tour cable on his record, he was rejected again and again. His finances went to ruin, as did his family life; his wife left the country, taking their daughter with her. Pars appealed to the Equal Employment Opportunity office for aid, and worked through the CIA bureaucracy to try and clear his name. He finally lodged a whistleblower reprisal complaint in April 2015.

While waiting for the reprisal investigation to run its course, he applied to a detail that would take him outside the CIA for a while. In September 2015, Pars reported for work at a Reston, Virginia, office park that houses the office of the Intelligence Community Inspector General.

Pars worked as an inspector at the office for nearly a year before he was recruited onto the team that would examine whistleblower retaliation issues. It was a delicate inspection from day one. The intelligence OIGs had recently lost enthusiasm for the PPD-19 whistleblower protection regime, after the very first reprisal case to reach an appeal panel was decided by an independent review board.

In that case, the whistleblower claimed that the NSA's own inspector general, George Ellard, had retaliated against him for reporting wasteful spending on a conference. The Defense Department's OIG ruled against the whistleblower, but the decision was reversed on appeal. In the aftermath, an incensed NSA director Mike Rogers fired Ellard.

"That really did tarnish the IGs perception of PPD-19," says Irvin McCullough, an investigator at the nonprofit Government Accountability Project (and the son of the former IC IG). "They thought the first case would be a manager, and instead it was an IG. They didn't like that."

At a setup meeting for the whistleblower inspection on Sept. 1, 2016, Jeanette McMillian, the IG's general counsel, suggested the inspection should focus on the five largest intelligence agencies—CIA, NSA, NRO, NGA, and DIA—as well as the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, according to an official memorandum memorializing the meeting seen by The Daily Beast. She added that PPD-19 might go away after the next president was sworn in, and, in a departure from protocol, urged the inspectors to conduct a quick evaluation that would end by Inauguration Day and reach a positive conclusion. "Conducting a review and affirming that PPD-19 is working would help to continue these protections with a new presidential administration," reads the memo, paraphrasing McMillian.

Continuing in that vein, McMillian noted that a positive finding would also provide a nice send-off for departing Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, according to the memo. Clapper's term had largely been defined by the Edward Snowden revelations, and he was a staunch supporter of PPD-19, hoping that clear, protected avenues would encourage American spies to keep their complaints in the intelligence family instead of in the press. (Contractors like Snowden aren't covered by PPD-19, but a measure renewed by Congress last month offers contractors similar protections.) McMillian expressed the view that "an evaluation that affirms that PPD-19 is working would be a 'feather in the cap' for DNI Clapper, and a good way to send DNI Clapper on his retirement," according to the memo.

The IG officially kicked off the inspection in early October 2016, and the six inspectors, including Pars, began conducting interviews inside the agencies (the three inspectors on joint detail were recused from the interviews inside their home agency), gathered the procedures, forms, and manuals used in reprisal cases, and collected and crunched the internal numbers.

Two months later, Pars quietly filed his retaliation lawsuit against the CIA.

Getting into court is a complicated process for an undercover CIA officer. Pars first had to receive his agency-assigned alias, and hire a lawyer who had, or could get, a security clearance—in this case, Washington, D.C., employment law attorney Susan Kruger. "I sent the complaint to be reviewed by the CIA first, because I didn't want to file something that contained information that was secret," said Kruger. "So you might say they were on notice."

When the lawsuit finally hit the docket in December 2016, some 630 days had elapsed since Pars lodged his reprisal complaint—two-and-a-half times the 240-day limit endorsed by PPD-19. And still there was no decision. Without an OIG ruling one way or the other, Pars couldn't appeal to the IC IG (where he worked) for an external review board, for the simple reason that there was no ruling to appeal. It's PPD-19's Catch-22. "We just wanted them to take the first step and complete their investigation," Kruger said.

For whatever reason, though, Pars didn't tell his superiors that he was suing the CIA for whistleblower retaliation at the exact same time that he was serving on a large-scale inspection of the same.

By February, it was clear that the results of that inspection would be a feather in nobody's cap. The data alone was troubling. The inspectors general at the six agencies had received 190 allegations of reprisal from 2010 through 2016, according to unclassified memoranda from the inspection seen by The Daily Beast. Less than half, 61 complaints, had been investigated, and of those 57 were ruled unsubstantiated.

The NSA had received 56 of the retaliation complaints and investigated 12; the CIA got 62, investigated

13 and shunted 21 to other offices, primarily Equal Employment Opportunity. The Defense Intelligence Agency, or DIA, received 50 complaints, and investigated 19. In the entire batch of 190 cases, only once did an OIG find in favor of the whistleblower. That was in a DIA case that took 742 days to complete. Other cases remained open longer. One complaint from 2010 was still waiting for a ruling.

Beyond the numbers, the inspectors found endless obstacles to effective whistleblower protection in the spy agencies, according to documents from the probe. There was no clear standard for conducting reprisal investigations; even the standard of proof—probable cause? preponderance of the evidence?—was murky to the OIGs. The investigation manuals at most agencies gave retaliation probes only cursory attention. There were mixed incentives in play: The primary metric for weighing an OIGs effectiveness was how much money the office saved taxpayers through its waste and fraud investigations, and a successful whistleblower claim could cost the government money in the form of back wages or attorneys fees. Some inspectors complained that reprisal cases were too difficult and time consuming compared to other OIG tasks, and even the most dedicated investigator might struggle to definitively prove a connection between an intelligence worker's subpar performance review, reduced security clearance or missed promotion to their prior whistleblowing.

In March the inspection moved into the final stage and the team was preparing the official report, earmarked for Donald Trump's newly confirmed director of national intelligence, Daniel Coats. Copies would have gone to all the intelligence IGs, as well, according to Johnson, and probably to Congress. A public release was also on the table.

Instead, it went nowhere.

In early April, rumors of Pars' lawsuit reached the IG IC's office. Under questioning, Pars acknowledged he was the pseudonymous plaintiff in the case. Stone immediately removed Pars from the inspection and sent him back to the CIA.

Pars wasn't a zealot, and his work was always diligent and thorough, say former colleagues. But removing him from the project was largely uncontroversial. "We have a standard in the IG to not only avoid a conflict of interest, but to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest," Johnson says, and Pars wouldn't have been permitted to work on the inspection if they'd known he had a whistleblower retaliation complaint pending at CIA.

But Stone's next action was more puzzling. The following day he ordered the entire inspection halted, according to sources from the agency. Data, files, memos, charts, and graphs were locked down and work on the final report stopped on a dime. The official explanation was that the inspection had been tainted by Pars' involvement. But even now questions loom over the decision.

Johnson says there's virtually nothing a single inspector could do to contaminate a report that relies heavily on verifiable numbers. "Everything has to be backed up with data... There's not a lot of opinion on those reports." Some former IC IG officials believe that Stone used the Pars affair as an pretext to kill an inspection that was producing inconvenient results. "Pars was told to cease and desist and they walked him out the door and buried the program," says one former IC IG official who worked with Pars. "They pulled the carpet out from under him because they wanted an excuse to quash the report."

Though the whistleblower report never appeared, last October the nonprofit Project on Government Oversight got ahold of a leaked copy of one of the inspection memos. They quoted from it in an article. "A complainant alleging reprisal for making a protected disclosure has a minimal chance to have a complaint processed and adjudicated in a timely and complete manner."

Calling the language "stark," Dianne Feinstein brought up the memo the next day in a tense exchange at the Senate confirmation hearing for Christopher Sharpley, the acting CIA inspector general and Trump's pick for the permanent position.

"I would ask that you provide a copy of that document to our office, the Intelligence Committee's office,"

	<p>she told Sharpley.</p> <p>“Senator, I am unfamiliar with that document,” said Sharpley, seemingly taken aback. “I am not aware of its contents... The IC IG did not make me aware of it as acting IG at CIA. This is the first I’m hearing of this particular program.”</p> <p>One source familiar with the abortive whistleblower inspection says this particular memo was written by Pars.</p> <p>Pars’ lawsuit is still pending, but the Justice Department has asked the court to dismiss the claim, pointing to language in PPD-19 that more or less says the directive can’t be used as the basis for a lawsuit. After the drama in the IC IG, Pars’ future in the CIA is even dimmer. Two sources with knowledge of the matter say the agency recently referred Pars to an executive review board as the first step to possibly terminating his service to the CIA. Attorney Kruger said she couldn’t comment on anything beyond the lawsuit, but after a pause added, “In general we believe that the CIA is taking further actions in retaliation against him.”</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/11 Sex offender elected town fire chief
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/us/2018/02/11/outrage-as-convicted-sex-offender-is-re-elected-pennsylvania-towns-fire-chief.html
GIST	<p>A registered sex offender from a small town in Pennsylvania was reelected as the town’s fire chief, prompting widespread outrage.</p> <p>Roger Gilbert Jr., of Spartansburg, was convicted in 2001 of “involuntary deviate sexual intercourse” after forcing a 4-year-old girl to perform oral sex on him, The Corry Journal reported Saturday.</p> <p>Court records show Gilbert, 43, is a felon who completed a five- to 10-year prison sentence, and he’s listed in the state’s Megan’s Law database.</p> <p>The convicted sex offender joined the town’s fire department in 2010 as an unpaid volunteer, and said his conviction is now in the past.</p> <p>“That was 20 years ago,” Gilbert told the paper. “You know, the story you are telling kids is once you make mistake, you will be punished for the rest of your life. I’ve changed my life for the better. Every day I get up and try to do good.”</p> <p>Spartansburg Mayor Ann Louise Wagner — who said she and the department have known about Gilbert’s status — said she doesn’t understand why the victim’s mother “won’t drop this.”</p> <p>Pennsylvania State Police said it is up to each individual community to decide whether to allow sex offenders who have completed their sentences to serve in an office at the local level.</p> <p>About 300 people live in Spartansburg, which is about 40 miles southeast of Erie, Pennsylvania.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/12 Saudi Arabia sends a signal
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-attacks-belgium-saudi-insight/giving-up-control-of-brussels-mosque-saudi-arabia-sends-a-signal-idUSKBN1FW0R3
GIST	<p>BRUSSELS/RIYADH (Reuters) - Saudi Arabia has agreed to give up control of Belgium’s largest mosque in a sign that it is trying to shed its reputation as a global exporter of an ultra-conservative brand of Islam.</p> <p>Belgium leased the Grand Mosque to Riyadh in 1969, giving Saudi-backed imams access to a growing</p>

Muslim immigrant community in return for cheaper oil for its industry.

But it now wants to cut Riyadh's links with the mosque, near the European Union's headquarters in Brussels, over concerns that what it preaches breeds radicalism.

The mosque's leaders deny it espouses violence, but European governments have grown more wary since Islamist attacks that were planned in Brussels killed 130 people in Paris in 2015 and 32 in the Belgian capital in 2016.

Belgium's willingness to put its demands to oil-producing Saudi Arabia, a major investor and arms client, breaks with what EU diplomats describe as the reluctance of governments across Europe to risk disrupting commercial and security ties.

Riyadh's quick acceptance indicates a new readiness by the kingdom to promote a more moderate form of Islam - one of the more ambitious promises made by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman under plans to transform Saudi Arabia and reduce its reliance on oil.

The agreement last month coincides with a new Saudi initiative, not publicly announced but described to Reuters by Western officials, to end support for mosques and religious schools abroad blamed for spreading radical ideas.

The move towards religious moderation - and away from the extreme interpretation of Islam's Salafi branch that is espoused by modern jihadist groups - risks provoking a backlash at home and could leave a void that fundamentalists try to fill.

But Saudi Arabia's recent moves on religion are seen by Belgian diplomat Dirk Achten, who headed a government delegation to Riyadh in November, as a "window of opportunity".

"The Saudis are disposed to dialogue without taboos," he told Belgium's parliament last month after the mission was hastily put together after the assembly urged the government to break Saudi Arabia's 99-year, rent-free lease of the mosque.

But he also cautioned: "Some do not, or barely, admit that this form of Salafism leads to jihadism."

Details of the mosque's handover are still being negotiated but will be announced this month, Belgian Interior Minister Jan Jambon told Reuters.

The diplomatic contacts, led by the countries' foreign ministers, were intended by Belgium to prevent what Jambon called an "exaggerated response" from Saudi Arabia -- indicating the Belgian government had sought to ensure there was no diplomatic backlash.

This, he said, was "under control" following a visit to Belgium last month by Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir.

Before Saudi Arabia took control in the late 1960s, the Grand Mosque was a disused relic of the Great Exhibition of 1880 - an Oriental Pavilion.

Saudi money converted it to cater to migrants from Morocco invited to work in the country's coal mines and factories. It is run by the Mecca-based Muslim World League (MWL), a missionary society mainly funded by Saudi Arabia.

Concerns about the mosque grew as militant groups such as Islamic State started recruiting among the grandchildren of those migrants, many of whom say they still feel they do not belong in Belgian society, opinion polls show.

Belgium has sent more foreign fighters to Syria per capita than any other European country. Belgian

officials now suggest the Muslim Executive of Belgium, a group seen as close to Moroccan officialdom, should run the Grand Mosque.

Although the Saudi government has denied any role in the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks against the United States which killed more than 3,000 people, 15 of the 19 airplane hijackers who carried them out were from Saudi Arabia and linked to late Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, the plot's Saudi-born mastermind.

Bin Laden was a follower of Wahhabism, the original strain of Salafism which has often been criticized as the ideology of radical Islamists worldwide. Yet many of Islamic State's positions are far more radical than Wahhabism, the ultra-conservative branch of Islam dominant in Saudi Arabia and founded by 18th century cleric Mohammed ibn Abd al-Wahhab.

A classified report by Belgian security agency OCAD/OCAM in 2016 said the Wahhabi branch of Islam promoted at the mosque led Muslim youth to more radical ideas, sources with access to the report said.

"The mosque has influence to spread this hateful 'software'," a senior Belgian security source said. "Nobody paid attention for decades."

Belgium's parliament said what it preached was "a gateway or even a predisposition to a more combative Islam that is violent", calling in October for an end to the Saudi lease.

The same month, immigration minister Theo Francken tried to expel the Grand Mosque's Egyptian imam of 13 years, calling him "dangerous", but a judge reversed that decision.

But Belgian security sources say there is no proof imams at the Grand Mosque preached violence or have had links to attacks.

Some who went to fight in Syria had studied there but men are more prey to recruiters for militant groups online and on the streets of underprivileged boroughs such as Molenbeek, in Brussels, where some of the Paris attackers lived, they say.

Tamer Abou El Saod, who was appointed director of the Grand Mosque in May, says there are problems over the way it is perceived but denies it espouses a fundamentalist version of Islam. He says he is ready to work with Belgian officials.

"There are changes happening already and there are even more changes coming in the very near future," he told Reuters.

Belgian leaders say they want the mosque to preach a "European Islam" better aligned with their values - a familiar refrain across Europe following the Islamic State attacks of the last few years.

But it is unclear who will operate the sprawling mosque complex, which receives about 5 million euros (\$6 million) a year through the MWL which has for decades promoted a hardline interpretation of Islam at dozens of institutions worldwide

The MWL has recently adopted a more conciliatory tone. In just over a year since being appointed, its secretary-general, Mohammad bin Abdul Karim al-Issa, has met with Pope Francis and taken a public stance against Holocaust denial. Issa told Reuters in November the organization's new mission was to annihilate extremism.

For Saudi Arabia, the mosque is a chance to prove it is turning over a new leaf after years of accusations it turned a blind eye to - if not actively endorsed - extremist ideology.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

SOURCE	https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2018/02/09/battlefield-acupuncture-yes-it-exists-and-the-military-is-using-it-to-fight-troops-pain/
GIST	<p>The U.S. military has added the ancient holistic therapy of acupuncture to its arsenal for fighting opioid abuse in the ranks.</p> <p>The practice, which first originated in China about 8,000 years ago, provides immediate relief for acute and chronic pain, and, without the risk of addiction, can be used without any restrictions.</p> <p>One of the most popular forms used in the military has been dubbed ‘battlefield acupuncture,’ or BFA, because it’s simple to administer and easily transportable, according to Dr. Richard Niemtow, who developed BFA in 2001. With BFA, service members can continue to participate, unimpaired, in work and life.</p> <p>“They don’t have to wait hours for medications to take maximal effect or endure side effects, like drowsiness or allergic reactions, of common pain medications,” said Air Force Col. Lynda Vu, who recently administered BFA while deployed in Qatar. “This allows personnel to go back to the fight with minimal impact to continuing mission operations.”</p> <p>Service members who use BFA can still fly aircraft, unlike those who use opiates, according to Vu. The one challenge she faces is a lack of BFA-trained physicians on deployment.</p> <p>“This requires either training prior to deployment or having a trained instructor administer the provider BFA course in the deployed location,” Vu said. But once learned, the technique is easy to use.</p> <p>BFA, which involves a small needle inserted into the ear, has a “central effect” on the nervous system and the cingulate gyrus, an area of the brain that processes pain, according to Niemtow, who is the director of the U.S. Air Force Acupuncture and Integrative Medicine Center at the Malcolm Grow Medical Clinics and Surgery Center on Joint Base Andrews, Maryland.</p> <p>Most patients who seek BFA are those who have tried traditional Western treatments and have not responded well, according to Niemtow. But with BFA, many patients can immediately begin to feel relief.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/10 Iran drone American stealth knock-off
SOURCE	https://www.timesofisrael.com/iranian-uav-that-entered-israeli-airspace-seems-to-be-american-stealth-knock-off/
GIST	<p>The Iranian drone shot down by the Israeli Air Force early Saturday morning appears to have been a relatively new stealth model whose design was stolen from an American unmanned aerial vehicle that was captured by Iran in 2011, according to aviation analysts.</p> <p>On Saturday night, the Israel Defense Forces released photographs of the destroyed Iranian drone, which further enforced the view that the Iranian drone was a stealth model known as a — Thunderbolt, in English. These images joined video footage distributed by the army of the moments before the drone was shot down.</p> <p>Michael Cruickshank, working with the air-force-focused Aviationist website, identified the Iranian drone as a Saeqeh that was first debuted by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps in 2016, based on the video footage.</p> <p>Tal Inbar, an Israeli aviation expert for the Fisher Institute, agreed with the assessment, but noted that it was not clear from the video or the pictures which specific version of the drone was used.</p> <p>The design for the Saeqeh, which looks something like a miniaturized B-2 bomber, is largely based on an</p>

	<p>American RQ-170 Sentinel spy drone, one of which Iran claimed to have shot down in December 2011, when it broadcast footage of the recovered aircraft.</p> <p>Iranian media reported in October 2016 that the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps had built a new attack drone similar to the RQ-170 Sentinel.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/11 Cape Town rejoices for brief rainfall
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/11/africa/cape-town-rain-day-zero-intl/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN) — When it finally came, restaurant diners rushed outside mid-meal to see the deluge for themselves. Others grabbed buckets to collect precious water from gutters to be used for washing clothes.</p> <p>The rain that fell on Cape Town Friday evening was cause for celebration in a drought-stricken city headed for "Day Zero" -- the day when taps are expected to run dry.</p> <p>Though whether the brief downpour was enough to delay "Day Zero" -- set now for May 11 -- remains to be seen.</p> <p>South Africa's second-largest city and its surrounding areas received between 2 millimeters and 10 millimeters of rainfall Friday night, according to the Cape Town Weather Office. The city can expect 2 millimeters to 8 millimeters of rainfall Monday evening and into Tuesday morning -- less than an inch -- with no further rain expected later in the week.</p> <p>Despite the paucity, the precipitation was a welcome sight for residents who haven't seen rain since January 22, and they collected water in buckets and tanks, with plans to use it for everything from washing clothes and dishes to flushing toilets.</p> <p>But it is unlikely to make a significant impact on the city's largest reservoir, Theewaterskloof Dam, which satellite images show is at dangerously low levels.</p> <p>Since February 1, residents have seen their water usage downsized from 87 to 50 liters a day -- or a little over 13 gallons.</p> <p>The city is also rushing to upgrade its water systems and is building desalination, aquifer and water-recycling projects to help stretch the current supply.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/11 LAX: man scales fence, runs to plane
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/11/us/los-angeles-man-on-runway/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN) — A man apparently scaled a fence at Los Angeles International Airport Saturday, running up to a plane and causing a temporary shut down, according to police.</p> <p>It was believed the man may have been under the influence of narcotics when he ran onto the 24-left runway at LAX -- the most northern of the airport's four -- LAX police officer Rob Pedregon told CNN.</p> <p>A pilot spotted the man and the passengers on his plane had to be transferred to another aircraft, Pedregon said.</p> <p>"We had a temporary shutdown for the 24-left and right runways; and it was a minor shutdown," he said.</p> <p>The man is expected to face charges including trespassing, he said.</p>

	According to the FAA, LAX is the United States' second-busiest airport in terms of passenger numbers. More than 80.9 million passengers passed through the transport hub in 2016.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/10 Opioid scourge hits state health workers
SOURCE	http://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/article199418169.html
GIST	<p>Spokane — A Spokesman-Review analysis of Washington death records, health care provider licenses and Department of Health disciplinary records found at least 33 medical professionals in the state have died from opioid overdoses from 2010 to 2015, the most recent year that overdose death data is available.</p> <p>Most of the deceased are not physicians. They're nurses, pharmacy technicians and, in some cases, chemical dependency counselors.</p> <p>None were disciplined by the Department of Health for suspected drug or alcohol abuse or diversion before their deaths, records show, though a Cowlitz County nurse died in 2014 before a pending investigation into his drug use could be completed. His death certificate listed nine drugs, more than any other professional on the list.</p> <p>Two others were reported, but both had their cases closed. A Port Townsend nurse practitioner had a complaint of drug and alcohol abuse, falsifying records and mental disorder dismissed in 2010 due to insufficient evidence. She fatally overdosed in 2015 with fentanyl, morphine and hydrocodone found in her system.</p> <p>A Longview chemical dependency counselor accused of drug or alcohol abuse in 2011 also had his case closed with no recorded discipline. He died of a heroin overdose in September 2013.</p> <p>Some of the deaths made headlines. A Tacoma doctor, Nick Uruga, had been charged with kidnapping and harassing his ex-wife shortly before he was found dead in his Gig Harbor home of what was described at the time as an apparent suicide. The medical examiner later ruled it an accidental drug poisoning with oxycodone, according to his death certificate.</p> <p>The deceased include a Wenatchee-area hospital pharmacist who died at 58 with six prescription drugs, including methadone and hydromorphone, in her system. A Mukilteo pharmacy technician, devoted Irish-Catholic and diabetes advocate, died at 34 from a hydrocodone overdose.</p> <p>Almost none used heroin or other illegal drugs, a marked contrast to the 4,020 Washingtonians who died of opioid overdoses during the same time period.</p> <p>Heroin is by far the most common drug on death certificates, and methamphetamine is in the top five statewide. But medical professionals tend to use prescription painkillers. Oxycodone, hydrocodone and fentanyl top the list.</p> <p>Without exception, the obituaries do not mention a cause of death. They speak only of people who "passed away suddenly," often leaving behind surviving parents, siblings, spouses and children.</p> <p>The medical profession has long struggled with how best to handle providers struggling with drug addiction.</p> <p>Though doctors, nurses and pharmacists are among the people best-equipped to see the consequences of drug addiction, they're also susceptible to drug abuse thanks to an intersection of factors: high-stress jobs, odd hours and a belief that they know how to stay in control of the drugs they prescribe or administer routinely.</p> <p>Doctors with an addiction problem tend to abuse alcohol most frequently, said Chris Bundy, the director of</p>

the Washington Physician's Health Program, which helps doctors get treatment for addiction and mental illness.

Nurses are far more likely to abuse opioids or other prescription drugs. Most seeking treatment in Washington through the Department of Health have either an opioid addiction or an addiction to multiple substances, including opioids.

"A lot of that is because they have direct hands-on access to those medications," said John Furman, director of Washington Health Professional Services, a group within the Department of Health that treats nurses for drug addiction.

State law requires medical providers – anyone with a Department of Health license – and health care employers to report license holders who are unable to work "with reasonable skill and safety due to a mental or physical condition," including drug or alcohol addiction. Providers are also supposed to self-report.

A total of 558 health care providers were sanctioned by the health department from 2010 to 2016 for drug or alcohol violations, and the department took 1,023 reports of suspected drug and alcohol violations involving 843 individual providers during the same period, according to data obtained through a public records request.

Washington Health Professional Services takes a carrot and stick approach to suspected substance abuse among nurses, including nurse practitioners.

WHPS, a part of the Department of Health, handles referrals from family, colleagues and nurses themselves who may be struggling with drug addiction.

If the program finds a nurse is abusing drugs, they'll be put on a monitoring agreement and be expected to comply with a treatment program. If they comply with counseling, group therapy and pass drug tests, they'll be able to keep their license and continue practicing once it's deemed safe.

"If they're successful in the program, the nursing commission will never know that they participated and that's an incentive," Furman said.

That's the carrot. The stick? Screw up, and the program can report nurses to the nursing commission for non-compliance, and they could lose their licenses and jobs.

A similar program exists for doctors: the Washington Physician's Health Program. Unlike WHPS, it's completely independent from the Department of Health, and deals with any issue making it difficult for a doctor to practice safely, including mental or cognitive illnesses.

"We want to encourage early intervention and treatment without creating a safe harbor for people who are potentially putting patients at risk," Bundy, the program director, said.

The physician's program has a higher success rate than the nurse's, but providers in both fare better than the general public in addiction treatment.

During the 30 years the doctors' program has existed, 81 percent of graduates have stayed clean after five years, based on random drug tests, Bundy said.

Among nurses who graduate, an average of 79 percent were employed in 2017, according to the program's annual report. Fewer than 1 percent of nurses who graduate return to monitoring later for new violations.

Typically, 40 to 60 percent of people treated for drug addiction will relapse, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the federal government's main funder of addiction research. They define relapse as "recurrence of symptoms that requires additional medical care."

Still, many health care providers already fear reporting colleagues out of concern that they're "tattling" or going to get someone in trouble.

And reaching out for help remains difficult, even when nurses and other professionals are aware of resources.

Anne Mason, director of Washington State University's doctoral program in nursing, said nurses are aware of WHPS and are taught that anyone, from any background, can become addicted to narcotics.

But that's not always enough to make people willing to seek help.

"There's so much stigma around addiction whether you're a health care professional or any other professional," Mason said. "There's oftentimes a message that addiction is about people making a choice, a bad choice, and people could choose not to be addicted if they wanted to but they don't want to."

Most reports of drug abuse to both the physicians' health program and the Department of Health don't result in discipline or monitoring.

"We often hear after the fact that there were others who knew that individual, often several others, who knew that individual and had a concern and failed to act," Bundy said.

In 2016, Bundy said they had 216 people referred to them and had 70 end up in monitoring agreements. In 2017, they had 189 referrals and 80 monitoring agreements. Most doctors are able to return to work.

WPHS, the program for nurses, had 371 nurses participating in the program for some part of 2017, and 83 new nurses sign monitoring agreements.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/09 Another asteroid heading close to Earth
-----------------	--

SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/another-asteroid-heading-close-to-earth/
---------------	---

GIST	CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. -- Another asteroid is headed our way -- the second this week -- but there's no need to worry. The newly discovered space rock will pass within 39,000 miles (64,000 kilometers) of Earth on Friday afternoon. That's less than one-fifth the distance to the moon.
-------------	--

Designated 2018 CB, the asteroid is an estimated 50 feet to 130 feet (15 meters to 40 meters) in size, possibly bigger than the one that exploded over Russia five years ago this month.

The manager of NASA's Center for Near-Earth Object Studies, Paul Chodas, said asteroids this size usually don't come this close - just once or twice a year.

While Friday's close approach isn't a huge deal, Chodas said in an email, "it is a reminder that asteroids can pass very close to our planet and it's important that we find these objects when they do get close."

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/09 Shadowy Russian bilked US spies \$100K
-----------------	---

SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/09/us/politics/us-cyberweapons-russia-trump.html
---------------	---

GIST	BERLIN — After months of secret negotiations, a shadowy Russian bilked American spies out of \$100,000 last year, promising to deliver stolen National Security Agency cyberweapons in a deal that he insisted would also include compromising material on President Trump, according to American and European intelligence officials.
-------------	--

The cash, delivered in a suitcase to a Berlin hotel room in September, was intended as the first installment of a \$1 million payout, according to American officials, the Russian and communications reviewed by The New York Times. The theft of the secret hacking tools had been devastating to the N.S.A., and the agency was struggling to get a full inventory of what was missing.

Several American intelligence officials said they made clear that they did not want the Trump material from the Russian, who was suspected of having murky ties to Russian intelligence and to Eastern European cybercriminals. He claimed the information would link the president and his associates to Russia. Instead of providing the hacking tools, the Russian produced unverified and possibly fabricated information involving Mr. Trump and others, including bank records, emails and purported Russian intelligence data.

The United States intelligence officials said they cut off the deal because they were wary of being entangled in a Russian operation to create discord inside the American government. They were also fearful of political fallout in Washington if they were seen to be buying scurrilous information on the president.

The Central Intelligence Agency declined to comment on the negotiations with the Russian seller. The N.S.A., which produced the bulk of the hacking tools that the Americans sought to recover, said only that “all N.S.A. employees have a lifetime obligation to protect classified information.”

The negotiations in Europe last year were described by American and European intelligence officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a clandestine operation, and the Russian. The United States officials worked through an intermediary — an American businessman based in Germany — to preserve deniability. There were meetings in provincial German towns where John le Carré set his early spy novels, and data handoffs in five-star Berlin hotels. American intelligence agencies spent months tracking the Russian’s flights to Berlin, his rendezvous with a mistress in Vienna and his trips home to St. Petersburg, the officials said.

The N.S.A. even used its official Twitter account to send coded messages to the Russian nearly a dozen times.

The episode ended this year with American spies chasing the Russian out of Western Europe, warning him not to return if he valued his freedom, the American businessman said. The Trump material was left with the American, who has secured it in Europe.

The Russian claimed to have access to a staggering collection of secrets that included everything from the computer code for the cyberweapons stolen from the N.S.A. and C.I.A. to what he said was a video of Mr. Trump consorting with prostitutes in a Moscow hotel room in 2013, according to American and European officials and the Russian, who agreed to be interviewed in Germany on the condition of anonymity. There remains no evidence that such a video exists.

The Russian was known to American and European officials for his ties to Russian intelligence and cybercriminals — two groups suspected in the theft of the N.S.A. and C.I.A. hacking tools.

But his apparent eagerness to sell the Trump “kompromat” — a Russian term for information used to gain leverage over someone — to American spies raised suspicions among officials that he was part of an operation to feed the information to United States intelligence agencies and pit them against Mr. Trump. Early in the negotiations, for instance, he dropped his asking price from about \$10 million to just over \$1 million. Then, a few months later, he showed the American businessman a 15-second clip of a video showing a man in a room talking to two women.

No audio could be heard on the video, and there was no way to verify if the man was Mr. Trump, as the Russian claimed. But the choice of venue for showing the clip heightened American suspicions of a Russian operation: The viewing took place at the Russian Embassy in Berlin, the businessman said.

There were other questions about the Russian’s reliability. He had a history of money laundering and a

thin legitimate cover business — a nearly bankrupt company that sold portable grills for streetside sausage salesmen, according to British incorporation papers.

“The distinction between an organized criminal and a Russian intelligence officer and a Russian who knows some Russian intel guys — it all blurs together,” said Steven L. Hall, the former chief of Russia operations at the C.I.A. “This is the difficulty of trying to understand how Russia and Russians operate from the Western viewpoint.”

American intelligence officials were also wary of the purported kompromat the Russian wanted to sell. They saw the information, especially the video, as the stuff of tabloid gossip pages, not intelligence collection, American officials said.

But the Americans desperately wanted the hacking tools. The cyberweapons had been built to break into the computer networks of Russia, China and other rival powers. Instead, they ended up in the hands of a mysterious group calling itself the Shadow Brokers, which has since provided hackers with tools that infected millions of computers around the world, crippling hospitals, factories and businesses.

No officials wanted to refuse information they thought might help determine what had happened.

“That’s one of the bedeviling things about counterintelligence and the wilderness that it is — nobody wants to be caught in a position of saying we wrote that off and then five years later saying, ‘Holy cow, it was actually a real guy,’” Mr. Hall said.

American intelligence agencies believe that Russia’s spy services see the deep political divisions in the United States as a fresh opportunity to inflame partisan tensions. Russian hackers are targeting American voting databases ahead of the midterm election this year, they said, and using bot armies to promote partisan causes on social media. The Russians are also particularly eager to cast doubt on the federal and congressional investigations into the Russian meddling, American intelligence officials said.

Part of that effort, the officials said, appears to be trying to spread information that hews closely to unsubstantiated reports about Mr. Trump’s dealings in Russia, including the purported video, whose existence Mr. Trump has repeatedly dismissed.

Rumors that Russian intelligence possesses the video surfaced more than a year ago in an explosive and unverified dossier compiled by a former British spy and paid for by Democrats. Since then, at least four Russians with espionage and underworld connections have appeared in Central and Eastern Europe, offering to sell kompromat to American political operatives, private investigators and spies that would corroborate the dossier, American and European intelligence officials said.

American officials suspect that at least some of the sellers are working for Russia’s spy services.

The Times obtained four of the documents that the Russian in Germany tried to pass to American intelligence (The Times did not pay for the material). All are purported to be Russian intelligence reports, and each focuses on associates of Mr. Trump. Carter Page, the former campaign adviser who has been the focus of F.B.I. investigators, features in one; Robert and Rebekah Mercer, the billionaire Republican donors, in another.

Yet all four appear to be drawn almost entirely from news reports, not secret intelligence. They all also contain stylistic and grammatical usages not typically seen in Russian intelligence reports, said Yuri Shvets, a former K.G.B. officer who spent years as a spy in Washington before immigrating to the United States after the end of the Cold War.

American spies are not the only ones who have dealt with Russians claiming to have secrets to sell. Cody Shearer, an American political operative with ties to the Democratic Party, has been crisscrossing Eastern Europe for more than six months to secure the purported kompromat from a different Russian, said people familiar with the efforts, speaking on the condition of anonymity to avoid damaging their relationship with

him.

Reached by phone late last year, Mr. Shearer would say only that his work was “a big deal — you know what it is, and you shouldn’t be asking about it.” He then hung up.

Mr. Shearer’s efforts grew out of work he first began during the 2016 campaign, when he compiled a pair of reports that, like the dossier, also included talk of a video and Russian payoffs to Trump associates. It is not clear what, if anything, Mr. Shearer has been able to purchase.

Before the Americans were negotiating with the Russian, they were dealing with a hacker in Vienna known only to American intelligence officials as Carlo. In early 2017, he offered to provide them with a full set of hacking tools that were in the hands of the Shadow Brokers and the names of other people in his network, American officials said. In exchange, he wanted immunity from prosecution in the United States.

But the immunity deal fell apart, so intelligence officials decided to do what spies do best: They offered to buy the data. That is when the Russian in Germany emerged, telling the Americans he would handle the sale.

Like Carlo, he had previously dealt with American intelligence operatives, American and European officials said. He served as a fixer, of sorts, brokering deals for Russia’s Federal Security Service, or F.S.B., which is the successor to the Soviet K.G.B. American intelligence officials said that he had a direct link to Nikolai Patrushev, a former F.S.B. director, and that they knew of previous work he had done helping move illicit shipments of semiprecious metals for a Russian oligarch.

By last April it appeared that a deal was imminent. Several C.I.A. officers even traveled from the agency’s headquarters to help the agency’s Berlin station handle the operation.

At a small bar in the former heart of West Berlin, the Russian handed the American intermediary a thumb drive with a small cache of data that was intended to provide a sample of what was to come, American officials said.

Within days, though, the deal turned sour. American intelligence agencies determined that the data was genuinely from the Shadow Brokers, but was material the group had already made public. As a result, the C.I.A. said it would not pay for it, American officials said.

The Russian was furious. But negotiations limped on until September, when the two sides agreed to try again.

Late that month, the American businessman delivered the \$100,000 payment. Some officials said it was United States government money but routed through an indirect channel.

A few weeks later, the Russian began handing over data. But in multiple deliveries in October and December, almost all of what he delivered was related to the 2016 election and alleged ties between Mr. Trump’s associates and Russia, not the N.S.A. or C.I.A. hacking tools.

In December, the Russian said he told the American intermediary that he was providing the Trump material and holding out on the hacking tools at the orders of senior Russian intelligence officials.

Early this year, the Americans gave him one last chance. The Russian once again showed up with nothing more than excuses.

So the Americans offered him a choice: Start working for them and provide the names of everyone in his network — or go back to Russia and do not return.

The Russian did not give it much thought. He took a sip of the cranberry juice he was nursing, picked up his bag and said, “Thank you.” Then he walked out the door

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/08 Study: viruses, bacteria falling from sky
SOURCE	https://www.studyfinds.org/viruses-bacteria-fall-from-sky/
GIST	<p>VANCOUVER — This study will make you think twice about stepping outside for a breath of fresh air. A team of scientists from around the world confirmed millions of viruses rising into the atmosphere, traveling — sometimes for thousands of miles — and falling back down to the surface.</p> <p>The study, carried out by researchers from the U.S., Canada, and Spain, is the first of its kind to confirm viruses are being swept up into the free toposphere — the layer of atmosphere between the area where Earth’s weather systems develop — and below the stratosphere, where airplanes fly.</p> <p>“Fresh air” may not be so fresh after all. A new study finds that millions of viruses and bacteria are swept into the atmosphere and travel long distances before eventually falling back down to earth.</p> <p>The numbers are “astonishing” the researchers say, but remember, a virus is a tiny particle, little more than a strand of DNA and a mechanism for attaching to organic matter.</p> <p>“Every day, more than 800 million viruses are deposited per square metre above the planetary boundary layer — that’s 25 viruses for each person in Canada,” says University of British Columbia virologist Curtis Suttle, lead author of the study, in a media release.</p> <p>Scientists have been finding genetically similar viruses in disparate parts of the planet.</p> <p>“Roughly 20 years ago we began finding genetically similar viruses occurring in very different environments around the globe,” says Suttle. “This preponderance of long-residence viruses travelling the atmosphere likely explains why—it’s quite conceivable to have a virus swept up into the atmosphere on one continent and deposited on another.”</p> <p>Suttle and his team found that viruses and bacteria are often swept up into the atmosphere by attaching themselves to particles in soil dust and sea spray. The researchers used platforms in Spain’s Sierra Nevada Mountains to detect how many viruses and bacteria were settling there every day. They found billions of viruses and tens of millions of bacteria being deposited there per square meter every day.</p> <p>“Bacteria and viruses are typically deposited back to Earth via rain events and Saharan dust intrusions. However, the rain was less efficient removing viruses from the atmosphere,” adds study author Isabel Reche, a microbial ecologist from the University of Granada.</p> <p>The full study was published in <i>International Society for Microbial Ecology Journal</i>.</p>
Return to	
Top	

HEADLINE	02/10 SKorea leader invited to visit North
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/korean-president-hosts-lunch-kim-jong-uns-sister-52975329?
GIST	<p>A rare invitation to Pyongyang for the South Korean president marked Day Two of the North Korean Kim dynasty's southern road tour Saturday, part of an accelerated diplomatic warming that included more handshakes, some Korean liquor over lunch and the potential shared joy of watching a "unified" Korea team play hockey at the Olympics.</p> <p>Nothing has been settled on any trip north by South Korean President Moon Jae-in. But the verbal message to come at a "convenient time" from dictator Kim Jong Un, delivered by his visiting little sister, Kim Yo Jong, is part of a sudden rush of improving feelings between the rivals during the Pyeongchang</p>

	<p>Olympics. The result: a heady, sometimes surreal, state of affairs in a South Korea that has seen far more threat than charm out of the North.</p> <p>Still, it wouldn't be South Korea if people weren't asking the perennial question when it comes to North Korea changing gears and showering its rival with apparent affection: What's in it for Pyongyang?</p> <p>Past "charm offensives" have been interpreted as North Korea trying to recoup from crippling sanctions on their nuclear program, or trying to drive a wedge between Seoul and its U.S. ally.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/10 Poland official: Jews 'ashamed' of passivity
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/polish-official-accuses-jews-passivity-holocaust-52980343?
GIST	<p>An adviser to Poland's president has said that Israel's reaction to a law criminalizing some statements about Poland's actions during World War stems from a "feeling of shame at the passivity of the Jews during the Holocaust."</p> <p>Andrzej Zybertowicz made the remark in an interview published Friday in the Polska-The Times newspaper. Zybertowicz tweeted a link to the article on Friday.</p> <p>Polish President Andrzej Duda signed legislation Tuesday that imposes prison terms of up to three years for falsely and intentionally attributing Nazi crimes to German-occupied Poland.</p> <p>The law has sparked anger in Israel, where Holocaust survivors and others with roots in Poland fear it will allow the government to whitewash the role some Poles had in killing Jews during World War II.</p>
Return to Top	

Crime, Criminals

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	02/11 Germany rising trend anti-Semitic crimes
SOURCE	http://www.dw.com/en/germany-averaged-four-anti-semitic-crimes-per-day-in-2017-report-says/a-42538545
GIST	<p>The rising trend of anti-Semitic crimes in Germany shows no signs of abating, according to a newspaper report on last year's crime statistics that was published on Sunday.</p> <p>In 2017, German police registered a total of 1,453 crimes that targeted Jews or Jewish institutions, reported German newspaper Tagesspiegel, citing figures from the German government. The data was compiled in response to an inquiry from Bundestag vice president and Left party lawmaker Petra Pau.</p> <p>Last year's crimes included 32 acts of violence, 160 instances of property damage, and 898 cases of incitement.</p> <p>The German government expects the figures to rise even further since the data provided by the states is not yet final, the paper said.</p> <p>In 1,377 of the cases — 95 percent of the total — police determined that a right-wing motive had driven the crimes.</p> <p>Police attributed 33 of the offenses to foreign-born anti-Semites, not including Islamists.</p> <p>Another 25 of the cases were "religiously motivated," including those involving either foreign-born or</p>

	<p>German Muslims with extremist beliefs, according to the Tagesspiegel report.</p> <p>Read more: Germany pays too little attention to current anti-Semitism, report says</p> <p>In 17 of the cases, authorities were unable to determine a political motive behind the crime. Police determined a left-wing motive in one case of incitement.</p> <p>Pau, who initiated the anti-Semitic crime inquiry, said she was deeply concerned about last year's figures. Speaking with Tagesspiegel, Pau noted that "the number of unreported cases could be considerably higher" since many of those affected are reluctant to report the crime.</p> <p>Last month, German lawmakers passed a bill to implement tougher laws to tackle anti-Semitism, including the creation of a commissioner post to develop and carry out a strategy for rooting out anti-Semitic sentiment and crime.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/11 KCSO: man fatally shot in driveway
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/897466/man-found-shot-to-death-in-skyway-shooting/
GIST	<p>SEATTLE (AP) — The King County Sheriff's Office is investigating after a man was found shot to death in a driveway in the Skyway area south of Seattle.</p> <p>The Seattle Times reports that the victim was a 45-year-old man who lives in the area.</p> <p>Sheriff's Sgt. Cindi West says a homeowner heard gunshots about 4:30 a.m. Sunday and went outside to find the man shot dead in her driveway. The homeowner reported that she knew the man, but she did not expect him at her home.</p> <p>No firearm was found at the scene.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/11 Seattle: 2 shootings over weekend
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/897658/two-shootings-seattle/
GIST	<p>Police are investigating two shootings in Seattle. The latest happened at First Avenue and Cherry Street near Pioneer Square.</p> <p>One man was taken to Harborview Medical Center with life-threatening injuries after the shooting on Sunday evening.</p> <p>Police have not released a description of a suspect.</p> <p>This is the second shooting reported in Seattle over the weekend.</p> <p>Earlier on Sunday, a 27-year-old man was shot to death inside a nightclub south of downtown.</p> <p>Around 1 a.m., police responded to the 100 block of South Horton Street and said they tried to save the man's life until Fire Department medics took over and brought him to Harborview Medical Center, where he died.</p> <p>No further details were immediately released.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/11 MLB player's kidnapped mom rescued
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/pittsburgh-pirates-catcher-elias-diaz-mother-ana-soto-rescued-kidnapping-venezuela/
GIST	<p>PITTSBURGH -- The mother of Pirates catcher Elias Diaz has been rescued after being kidnapped last week, CBS Pittsburgh reports. Multiple reports out of Venezuela say at least six people were detained Saturday after confessing that they were involved in the kidnapping. Five of those detained were reportedly police officers, including an officer who lived next door to Diaz.</p> <p>The governor of the Venezuelan state of Zulia tweeted Sunday that Diaz's mother, Ana Soto, was rescued by security forces.</p> <p>The Pirates have not yet released a statement confirming these reports.</p> <p>Venezuelan media reported the kidnapping Thursday.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/11 Beijing mall stabbing: 1 killed, 12 injured
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/beijing-xidan-mall-stabbing-knife-attack-leaves/
GIST	<p>BEIJING -- Police say a 35-year-old man with a personal grievance attacked 13 people with a knife in a busy shopping mall in Beijing on Sunday, killing one. A woman died from her injuries after being sent to a hospital, the city's Public Security Bureau said in a brief statement.</p> <p>The 12 other victims in the attack suffered injuries that were not life-threatening, it said.</p> <p>Police provided only the alleged assailant's surname, Zhu, and said he confessed to the authorities that he carried out the attack at Joy City, a mall in Beijing's Xidan district, to "vent his personal discontent."</p> <p>Because Chinese law tightly restricts the sale and possession of firearms, mass attacks are generally carried out with knives or homemade explosives.</p> <p>Perpetrators of similar attacks in the past have been described as mentally ill or bearing grudges against society.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/10 Coast Guard probes false mayday calls
SOURCE	https://www.stripes.com/news/us/coast-guard-looking-for-man-suspected-of-making-8-false-maydays-in-california-1.511037
GIST	<p>The U.S. Coast Guard has spent the last month looking for the aquatic version of the boy who cried wolf.</p> <p>Since Jan. 3, an unknown man is suspected of making eight mayday radio calls to the Coast Guard's Los Angeles command center, a felony that could land the caller in prison for up to six years.</p> <p>Such fake maydays, officials say, wastes resources and can put rescuers in danger.</p> <p>"Coast Guard operations are inherently dangerous and our servicemembers face risks every time we launch for a search-and-rescue mission," said Capt. Charlene Downey, the Los Angeles-Long Beach commander. "Limited resources should not be diverted away from legitimate emergencies."</p> <p>In one of the recordings, released this week by the Coast Guard as it seeks the public's help in finding the suspect, a male's voice spits out the universal distress signal rapid-fire: "Mayday, mayday, mayday. ... Mayday, mayday, mayday."</p>

	<p>The accent of his voice appears to change between bursts.</p> <p>Other recordings from the past two weeks are undergoing forensic voice analysis, the Coast Guard said in a statement.</p> <p>The man made the calls to Channel 16, the international channel for communicating distress signals to the Coast Guard, law enforcement and other mariners, Petty Officer DeVante Marrow said. The Coast Guard monitors that channel 24 hours a day.</p> <p>It is unknown if the man made the calls from the sea or from land.</p> <p>“The calls were only one to three seconds long, so they couldn’t get a bearing on it,” Marrow said about why officials couldn’t track the calls. “When you have the search-and-rescue calls, they try to get out as much information as possible. In this case, he just said, ‘mayday.’”</p> <p>The Coast Guard typically sends out crews anytime a mayday call comes in – and they will keep looking until they determine a call is fake. The released call did not cite a location.</p> <p>How the Coast Guard determined these calls were fake is unclear, but Marrow said the commanders have criteria they follow to determine a call’s legitimacy.</p> <p>Besides a prison sentence, someone convicted of making a false distress call could face a \$250,000 fine and a \$10,000 civil penalty and have to repay agency costs.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/10 Ex-ICE agent jailed accepting bribes
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2018/02/10/Former-Homeland-Security-agent-prisoned-for-accepting-bribes-from-drug-lord/5371518305044/?utm_source=fp&utm_campaign=ts tn us&utm_medium=3
GIST	<p>Feb. 10 (UPI) -- A former U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement-Homeland Security Investigations special agent was sentenced to 36 months in prison Friday for accepting bribes from a fugitive narcotics kingpin, according to admissions in his plea agreement.</p> <p>Christopher Ciccione II, 52, of Phoenixville, Pa., accepted cash and other valuables while using his official position to dismiss an indictment against Colombian national Jose Bayron Piedrahita Ceballos, according to a Department of Justice statement.</p> <p>The former special agent admitted to accepting \$20,000, dinner, drinks and prostitutes in exchange for records to be altered in Ceballos' case, saying the he was a former suspect rather than a current one and that the narcotics kingpin was "never positively identified" so his case should be dismissed.</p> <p>"Christopher Ciccione abused his law enforcement authority for personal profit," said John Cronan, acting assistant attorney general. "His actions not only comprised an ongoing investigation and nearly allowed a dangerous drug kingpin to escape justice, but they also betrayed the public trust placed in him to carry out his sworn duties with integrity. Today's sentence demonstrates the hard work of our federal law enforcement partners to bring criminals to justice-no matter who they are."</p> <p>Ciccione was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Robert N. Scola Jr. of the Southern District of Florida. Ceballos is currently jailed in the Republic of Colombia.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	02/11 Indonesia: church attacker killed
-----------------	--

SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/02/11/police-shoot-man-during-sword-attack-on-indonesian-church.html
GIST	<p>SLEMAN, Indonesia – Police in Indonesia shot a sword-wielding man who attacked a church congregation during Sunday Mass, injuring four people, including a German priest.</p> <p>The reason for the attack Sunday morning in Sleman district in Yogyakarta province was not immediately clear. The 22-year-old attacker decapitated statues of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary during the incident, photos showed.</p> <p>Churches are a common target for Islamic militants in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation.</p> <p>Local police detective Fendi Timur said counterterrorism police would be involved in the investigation.</p> <p>Video shows people in the church throwing books at the man as he lunged toward them with his sword. Witnesses and police said the injured included a police officer who tried to subdue the attacker and the 81-year-old priest Karl Edmund Prier, a longtime resident of Indonesia.</p> <p>They suffered back, neck and head wounds and are in stable condition.</p> <p>The suspect, identified only as Sulyono, was hospitalized.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/11 Kentucky 'murder spree': man kills 4, self
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/11/us/kentucky-four-people-killed/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN) — Five people died in a "murder spree" in eastern Kentucky Saturday, the Johnson County sheriff said.</p> <p>"This has been a horrific murder spree. The lives of four innocent victims were taken. The perpetrator then took his own life," Sheriff Dwayne Price said.</p> <p>Authorities responding to reports of a shooting found the bodies of two victims at a home in Johnson County, the sheriff's office said in a statement.</p> <p>While deputies were searching for a suspect, they found two more victims and the suspected shooter dead at an apartment in Paintsville -- about 10 miles away from where the first victims were found.</p> <p>Price said he was not releasing names of any of the victims until their families were notified.</p> <p>"There are no words to describe the heartbreak in seeing four lives taken due to the actions of one man. I have worked in law enforcement for 34 years. This is one of the most disturbing acts of violence I have ever seen," he added.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/09 Maine governor orders prison shutdown
SOURCE	http://wgme.com/news/local/gov-lepage-orders-prison-shut-down
GIST	<p>AUGUSTA (WGME) -- Before dawn, Governor Paul LePage emptied a minimum security prison of all the inmates and locked the workers out.</p> <p>Staff of the Downeast Correctional Facility say they were given no warning of the governor's order to transfer all 63 inmates. State Police pulled up to the gate at 4:30 Friday morning to load inmates on buses, while employees were given layoff notices and placed on administrative leave.</p>

State Senator Joyce Maker says the facility was fully funded through June and says there was bipartisan support to continue that funding. She says Governor LePage was determined to close Downeast, regardless of who it hurt.

"There's no reason why he has to do it to these people at this time," Maker said. "It's devastating to Washington County."

Governor LePage says he closed Downeast because it was outdated, inefficient and too costly to run.

"I have a jail that costs more to operate than the maximum security prison in the State of Maine," LePage said.

Governor LePage says Downeast was bound to close at some point.

"I saw today as an ability to save the state a little bit more money," LePage said.

The state employees' union says all 63 inmates were taken to Mountain View Correctional Facility. A union rep. says staff at the Charleston facility have concerns about taking those inmates.

Downeast was established by a state law. The Attorney General's Office says the governor cannot unilaterally amend that law and close Downeast without violating the Constitution, but even critics say the governor does have the power to remove all the inmates.

"Unless we find a loophole here, I don't know that there's any hope," Maker said.

Washington County lawmakers and the state employees' union both say they're exploring their options to challenge Governor LePage and try and keep the Downeast Correctional Facility open, but both say it will do little good if the governor refuses to house inmates there.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	02/11 Ohio cops killed in 911 hang up call
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/10/us/ohio-police-officers-killed/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN) — Two police officers died Saturday after being shot while responding to a 911 call that ended in a hang-up in Ohio, authorities said.</p> <p>The officers were shot as they entered an apartment in Westerville, Division of Police Chief Joe Morbitzer told reporters. Officers responded to what was a potential domestic situation, he said, but didn't go into detail about the incident.</p> <p>One officer died on the scene and one died at the hospital, the chief said.</p> <p>They were identified as Eric Joering, 39, who had been with the department for 17 years, and Anthony Morelli, 54, who had served 30 years.</p> <p>"Both officers gave their lives in the protection of others," Morbitzer said through tears. "Those are true American heroes."</p> <p>A male suspect was wounded and hospitalized, police spokeswoman Christa Dickey said.</p>
Return to	
Top	

HEADLINE	02/10 Police: 19yr-old raped dying woman
-----------------	---

SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/896725/police-washington-man-raped-dying-woman-texted-photos/
GIST	<p>EVERETT, Wash. (AP) — A 19-year-old Washington state man, who police say raped a high school student as she died from a drug overdose and texted semi-nude photos of her, has been charged with manslaughter.</p> <p>Brian Roberto Varela of Lynnwood was also charged Friday in Snohomish County Superior Court with second-degree rape and controlled substance homicide in the death of 18-year-old Alyssa Mae Noceda.</p> <p>According to court documents, Varela told detectives that Noceda snorted Percocet and also ingested liquid marijuana before collapsing in his room the previous weekend.</p> <p>Authorities say Varela never sought help for Noceda, instead sending semi-nude photos of her to friends and texting “LOL, I think she od’d, still breathing.”</p> <p>Authorities say his co-worker contacted police Tuesday after Varela said he didn’t know if Noceda was still alive when he was having sex with her. Court records say he told a friend that “she died having sex with me.”</p> <p>Police arrested Varela later that day after executing a search warrant and finding Noceda’s body in a plastic crate at the suspect’s home.</p> <p>Varela told investigators he planned to bury Noceda with onions to minimize the odor, police said. He also told detectives that after Noceda died, he used her thumb to unlock her phone Feb. 4 and send messages to make it appear she had run away.</p>
	<p>Return to</p> <p>Top</p>

HEADLINE	02/10 Fights, arrests Seattle ‘freedom rally’
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/896900/uw-republicans-patriot-prayer/
GIST	<p>Several fights broke out at a “freedom rally” Saturday at the University of Washington, hosted by the College Republicans group. The rally was met by a large group of protesters.</p> <p>Five people were arrested.</p> <p>The University of Washington was blocked from charging the school’s Republicans group a \$17,000 security fee ahead of a “freedom rally” Saturday, a federal judge ruled Friday.</p> <p>Officials with the University of Washington said Friday in a statement that they were “taking precautions to ensure the Patriot Prayer event unfolds as peacefully as possible.”</p>
	<p>Return to</p> <p>Top</p>

HEADLINE	02/09 King Co. unique crime mediation program
SOURCE	http://www.kiro7.com/news/local/king-county-teens-hold-peers-accountable-through-unique-crime-mediation-program/697239285
GIST	<p>SEATTLE - While some teenage criminals are sent to jail, there's a King County program that aims to keep them out.</p> <p>These young offenders must face the people they've harmed, and a teenage mediator helps break through decides their fate.</p> <p>Jerell Colman is a 16-year-old who now spends a lot of time at the Federal Way Boys and Girls Club, mostly volunteering with Charissa Eggleston and the Helping Youth Perform Excellence, or HYPE, program.</p>

He's now a youth leader, but was headed down a much different path.

"He could've been walking around with a criminal record doing time" Eggleston said. "He could have been incarcerated."

In late 2016, Colman was arrested with other teenagers for breaking into DBM Contractors in Federal Way.

Combined, the teens did \$50,000 worth of damage. Colman said he had started hanging out with some kids at his apartment complex who were known troublemakers.

"I really had a weak mindset at that time," he said.

Dustin Pulley, Colman's stepfather, got the call at work of the arrest.

"I was pretty disappointed," Pulley said, "because we try to steer him in the right direction."

While he was trying to figure out the legal situation, Pulley was told that the prosecutor considered Colman a candidate for the Alternative Dispute Resolution program.

He was told it was a mediation that could reduce Colman's charges if he faced the people he'd harmed.

And they agreed to do it.

"I had no idea that a program like that existed," Pulley said.

Colman told KIRO 7 about the moment he first saw the people from the construction company.

"When I walked in the room, my stomach completely dropped," he said.

What makes the program even more unique is the presence of a youth mediator in the room.

Cheyenne Brashear was the teenage volunteer assigned to Colman's case.

"That kid reminded me of my brother," she said. "Just another multiracial, black kid growing up in the wrong neighborhood making the wrong friends."

Brashear is one of about a dozen teenage leaders in King County trained to be part of the restorative mediations.

Polly Davis, a longtime mediator with King County, came up with the first-of-its-kind program three years ago. She worked with prosecutors, defense attorneys and youth probation officers to determine how it would work.

"Having the youth in the room is an incredibly powerful dynamic changer," Davis said. "For one thing, they are a subject matter expert."

The victim or a victim's advocate has to agree to be in the room in order for the teen to get a chance to go through the mediation. The victim comes up with the action plan or punishment for the teen.

The youth mediation program averages one case per month.

It started with minor crimes such as petty theft but the seriousness of the crimes they cover has increased.

Recently, the program successfully diverted a weapons charge and a charge of an assault on an officer.

It's ultimately up to a judge to sign off on the action plan.

Davis said the youth mediator has made a big difference.

"That's who the youth look at," she said.

During Colman's mediation, he heard the victims detail the impact of his actions.

While he was only part of one break-in, there had been three consecutive nights of break-ins.

Workers at DBM were afraid to come to work and had no idea it was just some teens causing mischief.

In the mediation, Colman gave a soft-voiced apology, but the victims weren't feeling it. The breakthrough came when Brashear talked one-on-one with Colman and asked how he wanted to be heard.

"He was just, like, 'I'm really sorry, I just don't know how to say it,'" she said. "And I was, like, 'Well, you just need to go in there and say it and mean it, you know?'"

Colman said that moment gave him the confidence to go in and give a more heart-felt apology.

Davis said, at that point, the victims' attitude toward Colman changed.

They asked Colman about his interests. He told them how he to play basketball. So they used his love of basketball to determine his action plan. He had to do community service hours running the scoreboard at the Boys and Girls Club in Federal Way.

And he had to join Eggleston's HYPE program.

"He met that and he's surpassed that," Eggleston said. "I'm just super impressed with Jerell. As soon as he completed his hours, he was, like, 'Does this mean I can't come anymore?' I was, like, 'No, you've got to keep coming as long as you want.' So, he's been coming consistently for a year. He often volunteers."

KIRO 7 anchor John Knicely asked Davis how she'd respond to someone saying Colman is getting off easy.

"I think it's incredibly brave for youth to be in the room with the people they did something to," she said. "And it takes guts to do that."

Colman did just that.

And now, instead of being locked up with other youth criminals, Colman is spending his time helping other kids make better choices.

His stepfather says he's become a leader.

"He doesn't have a record," Pulley said. "It's been expunged. He's just a regular kid going about his business now."

The teen mediation program is one example of how King County is shifting Juvenile Justice under the direction of Public Health.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/us/2018/02/09/illegal-immigrant-cheers-after-being-found-guilty-killing-two-california-deputies-threatens-to-kill-more-cops.html
GIST	<p>An illegal immigrant charged with killing two California deputies in 2014 cheered after being found guilty of murder and threatened “to kill more cops soon” as he was taken away.</p> <p>The defendant, Luis Enrique Monroy Bracamontes, 37, was found guilty of the Oct. 24, 2014, shootings that killed Sacramento County Sheriff’s Deputy Danny Oliver and Placer County Sheriff’s Detective Michael Davis Jr. He now faces a potential death penalty.</p> <p>Bracamontes smiled and softly said, “Yay,” after the first verdict was read. Later, as he was being taken out of the courtroom, he said, “I’m going to kill more cops soon.”</p> <p>Bracamontes has had other outburst since his trial began on Jan. 16. He interrupted the court with a profanity-laced rant, calling one of the slain officers a “coward.”</p> <p>"I wish I had killed more of the mother-----s," Bracamontes told the court. He continued: "I will break out soon and I will kill more, kill whoever gets in front of me. ... There's no need for a f---ing trial."</p> <p>Defense attorneys argued that Bracamontes was mentally ill and high on methamphetamine during the shootings and should be spared. But a judge found him competent to stand trial.</p> <p>Prosecutors will seek the death penalty for Bracamontes when the sentencing phase of his trial begins March 5.</p> <p>Bracamontes, a Mexican citizen who repeatedly entered the United States illegally, has shouted in court that he is guilty and asked to be put to death. He has also threatened to kill his defense attorneys.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/09 Violence stalks Venezuela lawless roads
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-economy-trucks-widerimage/mad-max-violence-stalks-venezuelas-lawless-roads-idUSKBNIFT1G9?il=0
GIST	<p>LA GRITA, Venezuela (Reuters) - It’s midnight on one of the most dangerous roads in Latin America and Venezuelan trucker Humberto Aguilar hurtles through the darkness with 20 tons of vegetables freshly harvested from the Andes for sale in the capital Caracas.</p> <p>When he set off at sunset from the town of La Grita in western Venezuela on his 900-km (560-mile) journey, Aguilar knew he was taking his life in his hands.</p> <p>With hunger widespread amid a fifth year of painful economic implosion under President Nicolas Maduro, Venezuela has seen a frightening surge in attacks on increasingly lawless roads.</p> <p>Just a few days earlier, Aguilar said he sat terrified when hundreds of looters swarmed a stationary convoy, overwhelming drivers by sheer numbers. They carted off milk, rice and sugar from other trucks but left his less-prized vegetables alone.</p> <p>“Every time I say goodbye to my family, I entrust myself to God and the Virgin,” said the 36-year-old trucker.</p> <p>While truck heists have long been common in Latin America’s major economies from Mexico to Brazil, looting of cargoes on roads has soared in Venezuela in recent times and appears to be not just a result of common crime but directly linked to growing hunger and desperation among the population of 30 million.</p> <p>Across Venezuela, there were some 162 lootings in January, including 42 robberies of trucks, according to the consultancy Oswaldo Ramirez Consultores (ORC), which tracks road safety for companies. That</p>

compared to eight lootings, including one truck robbery, in the same month of last year.

“The hunger and despair are far worse than people realize, what we are seeing on the roads is just another manifestation of that. We’ve also been seeing people stealing and butchering animals in fields, attacking shops and blocking roads to protest their lack of food. It’s become extremely serious,” said ORC director Oswaldo Ramirez.

Eight people have died in the lootings in January of this year, according to a Reuters tally.

The dystopian attacks in a country with one of the world’s highest murder rates are pushing up transport and food costs in an already hyperinflationary environment, as well as stifling movement of goods in the crisis-hit OPEC nation.

They have complicated the perilous life of truckers who already face harassment from bribe-seeking soldiers, spiraling prices for parts and hours-long lines for fuel.

Government officials and representatives of the security forces did not respond to requests for comment for this story.

Barred by law from carrying guns, the Andean truckers form convoys to protect themselves, text each other about trouble spots - and keep moving as fast as possible.

Even once Andean truckers reach cities, there is no respite.

Armed gangs often charge them for safe passage and permission to set up markets.

“The government gives us no security. It’s madness. People have got used to the easy life of robbing,” said Javier Escalante, who owns two trucks that take vegetables from La Grita to the town of Guatire outside Caracas every week.

“But if we stop, how do we earn a living for our families? How do Venezuelans eat? And how do the peasant farmers sell their produce? We have no choice but to keep going.”

The looters use a variety of techniques, depending on the terrain and the target, according to truckers, inhabitants of towns on highways, and videos of incidents.

Sometimes gunmen on motorbikes surround a truck, slowing it down before pouncing like lions stalking prey. In other instances, attackers wait for a vehicle to slow down – at a pothole for example – before jumping on, cutting through the tarpaulin and hurling goods onto the ground for waiting companions.

The looters use tree trunks and rocks to stop vehicles, and are particularly fond of “miguelitos” - pieces of metal with long spikes - to burst tires and halt vehicles.

Though events on Venezuela’s roads may seem like something out of the Mad Max movie, truckers say they are often more akin to Robin Hood as assailants are careful not to harm the drivers or their vehicles provided they do not resist.

“The best protection is to be submissive, hand things over,” said Roberto Maldonado, who handles paperwork for truckers in La Grita. “When people are hungry, they are dangerous.”

However, all the truckers interviewed by Reuters said they knew of someone murdered on the roads - mainly during targeted robberies rather than spontaneous lootings.

With new tires now going for about 70 million bolivars - about \$300 on the black market or more than two decades of work at the official minimum wage - looters often swipe them along with food.

HEADLINE	02/09 Navy probes widespread drug selling
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-navy-probes-suspected-drug-selling-use-among-sailors-in-japan-1518210550
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON—The U.S. Navy is investigating at least a dozen U.S. sailors based in Japan, some serving aboard the USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier, for suspicion of buying, selling, and using LSD, ecstasy and other drugs, U.S. Navy officials said Friday.</p> <p>The Navy also is probing whether U.S. sailors were using the internet to buy or sell drugs or were distributing them to local Japanese residents.</p> <p>The Navy first learned about allegations of widespread drug sales on Feb. 6, when it received a tip about a petty officer third class using drugs, the officials said. He was subsequently detained and released, they said.</p> <p>That sailor pointed investigators to others aboard the ship who the sailor said were distributing or using drugs, a U.S. military official said. The official said that others could be detained or charged in the continuing probe.</p> <p>The Naval Criminal Investigative Service confirmed it was conducting an investigation. Among questions are whether the drug use and distribution reached other parts of Seventh Fleet, which operates in the Pacific, the officials said.</p> <p>“The Navy has zero tolerance for drug abuse and takes all allegations involving misconduct of our sailors, Navy civilians and family members very seriously,” NCIS said in a statement. “These allegations are still under investigation and it would be inappropriate to comment further.”</p> <p>Japanese authorities also have been brought into the investigation, two Navy officials said, because of suspicions that drugs were sold to Japanese residents. In addition, a suspicious package related to one of the sailors was intercepted by a local postal service, a Navy official said.</p> <p>The USS Reagan currently is stationed at its home port, in Yokosuka, Japan, headquarters of the Navy’s Seventh Fleet. Seventh Fleet officials said they couldn’t immediately comment.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/09 Las Vegas shooter’s autopsy report
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/09/us/stephen-paddock-autopsy-las-vegas/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)An autopsy report on Las Vegas shooter Stephen Paddock said he had anti-anxiety medication in his system at the time of death, according to the Las Vegas Review-Journal.</p> <p>The autopsy report from the Clark County Coroner's Office also indicated that Paddock died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head, the Review-Journal said.</p> <p>According to the report, Paddock's brain remains in a research lab in Stanford University School of Medicine.</p> <p>Paddock, 64, opened fire on 22,000 concertgoers from the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino on October 1, killing 58 people and injuring almost 500.</p> <p>Police broke down the door to Paddock's room and found numerous firearms and thousands of rounds of ammunition.</p>

	Authorities have not provided a motive in the massacre. Paddock was known as a high-stakes gambler who often visited Las Vegas casinos.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/09 Swiss police: thieves \$32M in van heist
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/thieves-carry-elaborate-van-heist-steal-millions-cash/story?
GIST	<p>Millions of dollars in cash were stolen during a van heist along the French-Swiss border on Thursday night, according to reports.</p> <p>The armored vehicle transporting the cash was driving on a highway toward Lausanne, Switzerland, around 7:45 a.m. Thursday when it was robbed, local Swiss police said in a statement. The driver was forced to leave the highway and pull into a parking lot before the van was robbed by armed men wearing hoods near the village of Chavornay, police said.</p> <p>Thieves held up the drivers and emptied the van of the cash before fleeing in a dark-colored Porsche SUV, according to police.</p> <p>An estimated \$32 million in cash was reportedly stolen in the heist.</p> <p>The daughter of one of the drivers was taken hostage during the robbery, authorities said, and she was later found on a road on the outskirts of Lyon uninjured after she was released.</p> <p>"We are closely working with French investigators in order to identify and find the persons who are behind this act, this robbery and this hostage taking," a spokesman for the Swiss canton of Vaud told Reuters. "But, we can say that we are dealing with extremely organized people, who had prepared and planned the attack, and investigators are taking this into account."</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	02/09 Georgia officer killed serving warrant
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/georgia-officer-killed-serve-arrest-warrant/story?
GIST	<p>A police officer is dead and two sheriff's deputies are injured after they were shot while attempting to serve an arrest in Henry County, Georgia, Friday.</p> <p>The two Henry County sheriff's deputies arrived at the home on St. Francis Court in Locust Grove early this morning to serve the arrest warrant and soon realized they would need backup, so they radioed for help, Henry County Sheriff Keith McBrayer said in a press conference. A Locust Grove officer then arrived on the scene to assist.</p> <p>But while trying to serve the warrant, an altercation broke out, according to the sheriff, and all three officers were shot.</p> <p>The Georgia Bureau of Investigation has identified the officer who died as Chase Maddox of the Locust Grove Police Department. GBI also identified the two wounded deputies as Michael D. Corley and Ralph Sidwell "Sid" Callaway.</p>
Return to Top	

Information From Online Communities and Unclassified Sources/InFOCUS is a situational awareness report published daily by the Washington State Fusion Center.

If you no longer wish to receive this report, please submit an email to intake@wsfc.wa.gov and enter UNSUBSCRIBE InFOCUS in the Subject line.

DISCLAIMER - the articles highlighted within InFOCUS is for informational purposes only and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Washington State Fusion Center, the City of Seattle, the Seattle Police Department or the Washington State Patrol and have been included only for ease of reference and academic purposes.

FAIR USE Notice - All rights to these copyrighted items are reserved. Articles and graphics have been placed within for educational and discussion purposes only, in compliance with 'Fair Use' criteria established in Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976. The principle of 'Fair Use' was established as law by Section 107 of The Copyright Act of 1976. 'Fair Use' legally eliminates the need to obtain permission or pay royalties for the use of previously copyrighted materials if the purposes of display include 'criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research.' Section 107 establishes four criteria for determining whether the use of a work in any particular case qualifies as a 'fair use'. A work used does not necessarily have to satisfy all four criteria to qualify as an instance of 'fair use'. Rather, 'fair use' is determined by the overall extent to which the cited work does or does not substantially satisfy the criteria in their totality. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use,' you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

For more information go to: <<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml>>

THIS DOCUMENT MAY CONTAIN COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL. COPYING AND DISSEMINATION IS PROHIBITED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNERS.

Source: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml>

[Return to Top](#)