



	International	National	Regional and Local
Events, Opportunities Go to articles	03/07 Report: 43,000 Rohingya parents missing 03/07 Fukushima 'ice wall' partially effective 03/06 Seoul: Korea to hold summit talks April 03/06 US, SKorea still plan massive military drill 03/06 SKorea: too early to ease North sanctions 03/06 Pakistan: shot down India drone Kashmir 03/06 Sweden cracks down immigration, gangs 03/06 UN: 1,000+ children killed, injured Syria 03/06 More quakes shake Papua New Guinea 03/06 China space station to crash to Earth 03/06 Sweden plans to build more bunkers 03/06 Volcano strongest eruption in years 03/06 US sanctions NKorea for VX killing 03/06 NKorea pledge to halt missile tests	03/07 Puerto Ricans still stranded in hotels 03/07 Northeast bracing for another nor'easter 03/06 DOJ sues California over sanctuary laws 03/06 Trump: will counteract election meddling 03/06 DIA: NKorea will keep testing missiles 03/06 Report: opioid overdoses spike 30% 03/06 Exodus from Puerto Rico grows 03/06 Gas prices rise nationwide 03/05 Air Force: pilots, logistics crises	03/06 Tribes sue drug firms over opioid crisis 03/06 Spokane regulates reality cop TV shows 03/06 Homeless deaths soar in King County 03/06 Students rally in Olympia for gun bills 03/06 Seattle's plan to show police reform 03/06 Schools struggle to evaluate threats 03/06 Median home prices hit new highs 03/06 Washington Voting Rights Act 03/06 Washington bans bump stocks
Cyber Awareness Go to articles	03/06 Connected cars new security challenges 03/06 Hacker returns \$17M stolen Ethereum 03/06 Gozi Trojan turns to Dark Cloud botnet 03/06 UK police employ DDoS-style attacks 03/06 'ComboJack' steals digital payments 03/06 Board game aids police in cyber fight 03/06 Hospitality sector key battleground 03/06 Dangerous sources of cybercrime 03/05 Crypto-mining attacks jump 50%	03/06 Leaked NSA dump: tools to track hackers 03/06 Legal crypto-mining has power concerns 03/06 Cyberattacks targeting healthcare sector 03/06 DHS: routers on networks susceptible 03/06 Reddit: Russian trolls got into website 03/06 Ransomware hits Colorado DOT again 03/06 Judge: virtual currencies commodities 03/06 Atomwaffen loses services, platforms 03/06 Phishing via social media up 100% 03/06 Hate groups use ISIS online tactics 03/06 Applebee's hit by POS breach	
Terror Conditions Go to articles	03/07 Syrian rebels defiant: will defend Ghouta 03/07 Turkey detains suspects plotting attack 03/06 Burkina Faso: 8 arrests after attacks 03/06 Russian cargo plane crashes in Syria 03/06 UN: Russia, US strikes killed civilians 03/06 German eco-terrorists in acid attack?	03/07 TSA adjusts to 'lone wolf' tactics 03/07 Turkey: US must halt Kurds into Syria 03/06 Man on 'jihad' admits NJ killing; 3 others 03/06 Pulse nightclub shooter eyed Disney? 03/06 Pakistan: US should end Afghan war 03/06 Canadian pleads guilty terror charge 03/06 Utah: arrest in school bomb threat 03/06 March terror threat snapshot	03/06 Suspect on 'jihad' admits killing 3 in WA
Suspicious, Unusual Go to articles	03/06 Suspicious Russian deaths in UK 03/06 Report: endangered animal trade 03/06 Duterte scoffs at ICC jurisdiction 03/06 Hindu nationalists rewrite India history 03/06 Britain warns Russia on mystery illness 03/06 China spends more on domestic security	03/06 Data: visa waivers rarely granted 03/06 Arctic's warmest winter on record 03/06 FBI paid Geek Squad as informants 03/05 Alarming: digital media manipulation	03/06 Arrested students can return to schools 03/06 Yakima school bans backpacks, purses
Crime, Criminals Go to articles	03/07 Anti-Muslim riots flare in Sri Lanka 03/06 Machete attack in Paris restaurant 03/06 Baja California Sur hit by violence 03/06 Mexico investigates ferry explosion 03/06 Greece: arrests in neo-Nazi crackdown 03/06 Top-50 most violent cities in world 2017	03/07 Missouri: cop killed, 2 shot; suspect dead 03/06 Massive Baton Rouge drug prosecution 03/06 Ghost Face gangsters charged in Ga. 03/06 Nashville mayor resigns; pleads guilty 03/06 'Diabolical genius' \$179M fraud jailed 03/06 Extremist group linked to 5 murders	03/06 Elderly woman shot in home invasion 03/06 Tacoma: 5 exchange gunfire downtown 03/06 Judge dismisses red light camera case

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Event Calendar

[Top of page](#)

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

Events, Opportunities

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Exodus from Puerto Rico grows
SOURCE	https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/exodus-from-puerto-rico-grows-as-island-struggles-to-rebound-from-hurricane-maria/ar-BBJX9PE?li=BBnbcA1&ocid=HPCDHP
GIST	<p>Even before Maria strafed the region, a record number of Puerto Ricans were realizing that the declining island might be where their heart is but cannot be where their feet stay. Nearly 500,000 people left Puerto Rico for the mainland during the past decade, according to the Pew Research Center, pushing the stateside Puerto Rican population past the number living on the island last year — an estimated 3.3 million.</p> <p>The government of Puerto Rico’s guess is that by the end of 2018, 200,000 more residents will have left the U.S. territory for good, moving to places such as Florida, New York, Texas, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New England. It would mean another drop of more than 5 percent in the island’s population.</p> <p>Experts say the storm and its widespread devastation undoubtedly have sped up the pace of migration as residents have dealt with extended power outages, communication lapses, infrastructure failures and, in some cases, isolation. What already was the largest exodus in the island’s history now includes people fleeing in droves simply to achieve some sense of normalcy.</p> <p>Just this week, a power outage put nearly 900,000 residents in and around the capital city of San Juan in the dark and without water — again. Tens of thousands in Puerto Rico have had no electricity since the hurricane struck five months ago, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimates that 1 in 10 customers still won’t have it as of the end of March. The island’s bankrupt public utility has struggled to restore power amid contracting scandals, materiel shortages and intermittent blackouts, and the biggest restoration contractor, Fluor Corp., confirmed that it is pulling out of Puerto Rico in the next several weeks after reaching the funding limit of its \$746 million contract.</p> <p>The governor announced plans last month to privatize the electric utility, sparking standoffs with unionized workers and arousing suspicions from residents. Some municipalities such as San Sebastian, a town in the island’s northwest corner, didn’t wait and formed their own volunteer brigades to string up power lines and return electricity to thousands of residents.</p> <p>Nearly 58,000 homes here have roofs made of blue tarps while they await federal assistance; more than 437,000 residents — about 2 of every 5 who applied so far — have received money from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for home repairs.</p> <p>For many, the future feels ominous.</p> <p>Puerto Ricans have moved back and forth between the island and the mainland for more than a century, after they received U.S. citizenship in 1917. The circular migration is a fundamental part of the Puerto Rican experience, immortalized in the island’s art and music, because moving from the territory is as easy as moving between states.</p> <p>The difference between the past decade’s migration and that of previous generations is the character, size and speed with which it threatens to change Puerto Rico’s economic and social future.</p> <p>Migrants are looking for the things they can’t find on the island: jobs and stability. Puerto Rico’s teens and young adults don’t know what kinds of opportunities will be available to them as the economic depression deepens.</p> <p>The administration of Gov. Ricardo Rosselló (PNP of Puerto Rico) published projections that put the island’s population well below 3 million within a decade, a possible 10 percent decline in line with what</p>

researchers expect to see in war zones or what happened during the Irish potato famine in the mid-1800s.

“What we are observing is a major depopulation event that is not extremely common in modern history,” said Lyman Stone, an independent migration researcher and economist at the Agriculture Department who provided models to Puerto Rico. “People kind of treated me like a crazy person when I put it out there.”

Demographers and economists say Stone’s projections appear to be on the high end, but they caution that the Puerto Rican exodus will cut deeply. The Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College in New York estimates that between 114,000 and 213,000 people will leave the island in 2018, with the vast majority headed for Florida.

A more accurate migration head count won’t be available for months from the Census Bureau, and even then it probably won’t capture the entire picture of Puerto Rico’s population fluctuations since the storm.

“Even before Maria, our ability to measure net migration in Puerto Rico wasn’t very good,” said Mario Marazzi, director of the Puerto Rico Institute of Statistics, an independent agency.

Economic predictions depend on good population statistics, said Puerto Rican economist José Joaquín Villamil.

The island’s economy had all but sputtered to a halt before the Category 5 hurricane hit, and there already was severe turmoil and job losses. The central government had tried to borrow its way out of strife to the point of bankruptcy. Bondholders demanded payment, and Congress appointed a fiscal oversight board in 2016 that imposed austerity measures.

Nearly half of the island’s population lives in poverty, and household income is about \$18,000 a year, less than half that of Mississippi, the country’s poorest state. The scarcity of jobs, along with low wages and a rising cost of living, has caused young, working-age Puerto Ricans to head for the mainland, Villamil said. He estimates that nearly half of migrants are younger than 24. Falling birthrates led to a deeper population decline, and Puerto Rico has been left with a rapidly aging populace.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/07 Report: 43,000 Rohingya parents missing
SOURCE	http://time.com/5187292/rohingya-crisis-missing-parents-refugees-bangladesh/?xid=homepage
GIST	<p>More than 43,000 Rohingya parents have been reported lost, presumed dead in the six months since Myanmar’s military unleashed a crackdown last August, according to a new report. These figures provide the latest indication that even by conservative estimates the number of Muslim Rohingya killed in the crisis far exceeds the Myanmar government’s official count of 400.</p> <p>Based on surveys of refugees who fled Myanmar for neighboring Bangladesh, 28,300 Rohingya children have lost at least one parent, while an additional 7,700 children reported having lost both parents, according to the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR), citing data from the Bangladeshi government. That puts the number of “lost” parents at 43,700.</p> <p>“These numbers cover Rohingya children whose parents are currently not with them because they were killed, or presumably killed and their whereabouts are unknown,” Oren Samet, a research and advocacy director at APHR, tells TIME.</p> <p>While there are no reliable totals for how many people have been killed in what the U.N. has labelled an “ethnic cleansing” campaign, Doctors Without Borders estimated 6,700 Rohingya deaths in the first month of violence alone.</p> <p>Matthew Smith of Fortify Rights says the number of “lost” parents begins to reveal the scale of the ongoing atrocities.</p>

“Given what we’ve documented from eyewitnesses and survivors from areas targeted by the army and other state security forces, it’s likely that a significant portion of lost parents were killed,” Smith says. “There were massacres and mass killings in all three affected townships since August, and in 2016 as well.”

“The Myanmar government’s estimate of 400 deaths is a bad joke, and continues their practice of using their own ‘investigations’ as cover-ups ... to rebut the need for more independent investigations into the atrocities,” says Phil Robertson, Deputy Asia Director for Human Rights Watch.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Sweden cracks down immigration, gangs
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SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/mar/6/trump-right-immigration-gang-violence-sweden-finds/
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GIST	<p>Sweden’s prime minister, who criticized President Trump last year for blaming Swedish violence on Muslim refugees, said Tuesday that he’s cracking down on immigration and gang violence to make Sweden great again.</p> <p>At a White House news conference with Mr. Trump at his side, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven spoke of his own Trump-like agenda of implementing tougher laws on immigration and crime, and of spending more money on law enforcement.</p> <p>“We have our share of domestic challenges, no doubt about that,” Mr. Lofven said. “We are dealing with it every day, allocating more resources to the police, more resources to the security police, tougher laws on crime, tougher laws on terrorism.”</p> <p>Not only that, he said Sweden’s crackdown on immigration and gangs is working.</p> <p>“We can see some results now in our three major cities, decrease in shootings because we’re attacking the organized crime very tough,” the prime minister said. “And we’ll keep on doing that. There is no space in Sweden for organized crime. They decrease freedom for ordinary people.”</p> <p>It sounded very much like Mr. Trump’s rhetoric against the MS-13 gang members that he seeks to deport in larger numbers, and his policies to limit migration from certain Muslim-majority countries until better screening is in place to weed out potential terrorists.</p> <p>The president, who enjoys being right as much as anyone, told the audience in the East Room that he had been correct about Sweden all along.</p> <p>“Certainly you have a problem with immigration, it’s caused problems in Sweden,” Mr. Trump told a Swedish journalist. “I was one of the first ones to say it. I took a little heat, but that was OK. I proved to be right. But you do have a problem. I know the problem will slowly disappear, hopefully rapidly disappear.”</p> <p>A year ago, soon after Mr. Trump took office, he was roundly criticized in the U.S. media and in Europe for blaming a rise in crime in Sweden on an influx of Muslim refugees.</p> <p>“You look at what’s happening last night in Sweden,” the president said back then at a rally in Florida. “Sweden. Who would believe this? Sweden. They took in large numbers. They’re having problems like they never thought possible.”</p> <p>At the time, Swedish officials said they didn’t know what Mr. Trump was talking about. Some people accused Mr. Trump of responding to an erroneous news report.</p> <p>A year ago, Mr. Lofven chided Mr. Trump publicly, saying “We must all take responsibility for using facts</p>
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correctly and for verifying anything we spread.”

But on Tuesday at the White House, the prime minister had changed his tune. He noted that Sweden had received 163,000 refugees in 2015, with most arriving in a span of a few months.

“We inherited a legislation that was not sustainable, legislation on migration,” Mr. Lofven said. “We changed the legislation, so now we have decreased the number of refugees, and we’re also putting pressure on the other European Union countries to take their share of the responsibility.”

The New York Times reported last weekend that Sweden has experienced a rise in clan-like violence, including gangs using hand grenades, that accompanied an influx of immigrants from certain parts of Europe and the Middle East. There have been more than 100 incidents involving military-grade explosives in the Stockholm metro area, which police have attributed to an “arms race” among immigrant gangs, the paper reported.

The story said there were few such incidents in Sweden until 2014, but since then, the number of explosions and seizures of grenades has risen.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Washington Voting Rights Act
SOURCE	https://crosscut.com/2018/03/washington-voting-rights-act-legislature-discrimination-law-jay-inslee
GIST	<p>About five years ago, the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington sued Yakima, arguing a new system of voting was needed if the sizeable number of Latinos in the city was ever going to have a shot at electing leaders who represented their interests. After years of costly litigation, a U.S. district judge's order led Yakima to switch to district-based voting in 2015.</p> <p>Now, Washington state is following Yakima’s lead.</p> <p>Last week, the Washington Legislature approved its own Voting Rights Act intended to “promote equal voting opportunity.”</p> <p>“The Legislature finds that electoral systems that deny race, color, or language minority groups an equal opportunity to elect candidates of their choice are inconsistent with the right to free and equal elections,” reads the final version of the bill.</p> <p>The measure awaits a signature from Democratic Gov. Jay Inslee, a supporter of the proposal. Once it’s signed into law, Washington will officially become the second state in the country to enact a Voting Rights Act. California approved similar legislation in 2002, which served as a model for Washington's bill.</p> <p>It’s a big win for advocates of the bill, such as the sponsor of the measure, Sen. Rebecca Saldaña, D-Seattle. Supporters tried to pass the legislation for five consecutive years but were able to get the state Senate to approve it only after Democrats took control of the governorships and state Legislature last fall.</p> <p>Proponents of the Voting Rights Act argue that the biggest winners will be the people and communities where elected officials better represent the entire area's interests. They say a history of racially polarized voting — where minority voters are voting one way, and non-minority voters are voting another — means certain municipalities are in violation of Section 2 of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, which “prohibits voting practices or procedures that discriminate on the basis of race, color, or membership in one of the language minority groups.”</p> <p>When candidates compete under an at-large election system (such as in citywide or countywide elections), racially polarized voting — especially if it's heavily polarized — make it almost impossible for minority leaders, such as Latinos, to break through in certain jurisdictions.</p>

Take Yakima as an example. Despite Yakima's sizeable Latino population — more than 40 percent — not one Latino had been elected to the city council prior to 2015. But after the new, district-based system was implemented, three Latinos were elected to the council. Experts foresee rapidly changing communities like Wenatchee and Tukwila taking advantage of the new, statewide legislation.

The communities with the biggest gaps between Latino population and representation tend to be in central or eastern parts of the state, but Skagit County in the north Puget Sound area also has a significant gap.

The 10 counties with the highest Latino populations and their Latino representation

The new legislation would allow individuals in various municipalities to issue a complaint and request a switch to district-based voting. Municipalities in violation of the Voting Rights Act would then have 180 days to resolve the matter. The legislation also calls for the public to be notified of the proposed election change. If a resolution isn't reached within the 180-day time frame, then the matter heads to state court.

Experts say early cases are likely to be challenged. The goal, however, is to help Washington cities save money by ensuring they do not follow Yakima's example, which, in the end, spent nearly \$3 million fighting a district-based system.

"This is an opportunity to create a less onerous, less expensive process," said Rich Stolz, executive director of the immigrant advocacy organization One America. "We know this kind of policy can have a significant impact on ensuring a more diverse electorate."

"There's real potential to make our democracy stronger and more representative through the Voting Rights Act."

Seattle attorney David Perez, who says he feels personally invested in the issue because his parents are political refugees from Cuba, first drafted the legislation in 2011 when he was fresh out of law school. "It's been a long fight ... but boy, oh boy, things are looking up," Perez said.

Perez says it's important that minority groups throughout the state have leadership that reflect their interests in order to avoid disparities in basic services such as trash removal, street lights and bus lines. School boards, for example, should reflect their community, Perez said. If a school board in a heavily Latino area can't get a Latino elected, then those schools might miss the opportunity to hire a Latino principal or mentor and retain Latino teachers, who would, in turn, be able to better connect with the students.

Overall elected officials in the 10 counties with the highest proportion of Latino residents

When asked what race stands out as an egregious example of a minority candidate losing due to racially polarized voting, Perez pointed to a state Supreme Court race in 2012, when Justice Steven González faced a little-known challenger, Bruce Danielson. Despite González boasting a stellar resume with 10 years on the King County Superior Court, he had a tough race against a less-accomplished lawyer, who had hardly raised any money or campaigned. The vote in most counties actually went against González, who was saved by a big vote in some of the state's most populous counties.

"This should have been game over," Perez said. "That González race changed the narrative. It proved to [people] this might not be as crazy as they thought."

"Nobody really believed us. Nobody really thought this was going on, that Latinos were being excluded because of their last names," Perez continued.

"It just became a matter of either you deny math or you don't," Perez said. "Unfortunately, the political reality took a lot longer to catch up."

Matthew Barreto, a UCLA professor who has served as an expert witness in about a dozen Voting Rights

<p>Return to Top</p>	<p>Act cases, says racially polarized voting tends to be more of an issue in small cities, where district-based voting is often lacking.</p> <p>“All you have to do is look at your representation. If it doesn’t approximate the population, you probably have a problem,” Barreto said. “The interesting thing about this is it’s all data-based, it’s not advocacy. It’s a very sort of cut and dry formula.”</p> <p>“Usually in places like central Washington, it’s extremely cut and dry.”</p> <p>Barreto also argues that an added benefit from the Voting Rights Act is increased voter turnout because “they start to think government reflects their interests.” And it's not just race that is at play here, Barreto says.</p> <p>With district-based voting, farmers, renters and other groups of people are more likely to have their interests represented. When Seattle, for example, opted to elect most City Council members by district in 2015, neighborhood activists and issues suddenly became more important.</p> <p>The bottom line, Barreto said, is districts are “supposed to represent geographically compact communities of interest.”</p>
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HEADLINE	03/06 Spokane regulates reality cop TV shows
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/918382/spokane-places-regulations-on-reality-police-tv-shows/
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — The Spokane City Council is placing new regulations on police reality television shows.</p> <p>The City Council voted 5-1 on Monday to pass a new law requiring live police reality shows to obtain a business license, \$1 million of liability insurance and written consent from people who are captured on video interacting with police.</p> <p>The Spokesman-Review says the new regulations also give the Spokane Police Department authority to review footage prior to airing and imposes fines on crews that broadcast pictures of people without their permission.</p> <p>City leaders say the rules will level the playing field between producers and participants.</p> <p>The city hopes to protect individuals from public scrutiny when appearing in shows without their permission as well as preventing the “over-representation” of violent crime and minorities as perpetrators of crime.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	03/06 Tribes sue drug firms over opioid crisis
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/919013/tribes-sue-drug-companies-over-opioid-crisis/
GIST	<p>TACOMA, Wash. (AP) — The Port Gamble S’Klallam, Suquamish and the Jamestown S’Klallam tribes have a lawsuit against pharmaceutical companies and drug distributors claiming the companies flooded their reservations with deadly opioids.</p> <p>The Kitsap Sun reports the lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Tacoma Monday names Purdue Pharma, Teva Pharmaceuticals, Johnson & Johnson and others for misleading health care providers and consumers about the dangers of opioids.</p> <p>It also names distributors such as Cardinal Health, McKesson Corporation and others for failing to account for and control opioids in tribal areas.</p>

	<p>The tribes are suing with the intent of joining a series of cases filed by dozens of states, tribes, counties and municipalities which have been consolidated in a federal lawsuit in Ohio.</p> <p>The drug companies have disputed the allegations.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Homeless deaths soar in King Co.
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/917955/homeless-deaths-meth-use/
GIST	<p>King County has seen a 115 percent increase in deaths within the homeless population since 2012. That includes a 23 percent jump last year, according to new report by the medical examiner’s office.</p> <p>The rise in deaths — from 132 in 2016 to 169 last year — coupled with the sharp uptick in methamphetamine showing up in the post-death toxicology reports, has local health officials combing the data for answers.</p> <p>“I think the biggest surprise was the drastic number of people with methamphetamine in their systems,” said Brad Finegood, the county’s chief health integration strategist. “We know that more people are using multiple drugs.”</p> <p>Health officials said the rise in the number of homeless deaths likely is linked, at least in part, to the overall increase in the homeless population. While the percentage of drug-caused deaths linked to opiates has held steady between 70 and 80 percent, the increase in the number of deceased with methamphetamine in their systems has jumped to 63 percent, up from 18 percent six years prior.</p> <p>“It’s not just people dying solely of opiates,” Finegood said.</p> <p>The report showed that the leading cause of death changes based on the age of the deceased. While homeless people 65 years and older mostly (61 percent) die from what the medical examiner’s office calls “natural causes,” younger deaths skew more toward suicide (30 percent), homicide (19 percent) and lethal amounts of drugs (15 percent).</p> <p>Finegood said while the problem’s root causes might not always be clear, he believes the solutions are: Get homeless people into housing then into treatment.</p> <p>“Housing is health care,” he said. “We know that works. People who are housed are going to do better.”</p> <p>Over the past six years, 30 percent of all homeless deaths are due to drug overdoses, the data showed. Health officials hope to curb the opiate portion of that with the wider distribution of Naloxone. Beyond that, Finegood said, the county must find better ways to reach the most vulnerable homeless.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Washington bans bump stocks
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/918459/gov-inslee-ban-bump-stocks/
GIST	<p>In a big win for gun control advocates, Governor Jay Inslee has signed a bill to ban bump stocks.</p> <p>“The bill I signed today to ban bump stock devices is just one modest step to help prevent gun violence,” Gov. Inslee tweeted. “Proud to have Washington join other states to ban these devices that have already taken too many lives.”</p> <p>The new law makes it illegal to manufacture or sell bump stocks beginning in July.</p> <p>How Seattle is using ERPO laws to remove guns from at-risk people</p>

Then, next July, it becomes illegal to own or possess them. Bump stocks will be deemed contraband, allowing police to seize them.

That was a big issue for several Republicans, including Senator Doug Ericksen during a debate.

“What you are doing is you’re creating the ability for law enforcement to come into your home — law-abiding citizens — to search for things you may or may not have, which is a terrible thing. And you will not prevent any type of activity like what happened in Las Vegas,” he said.

The law includes a buy-back program, where people forced to surrender their bump stocks will get \$150 when they turn them in.

The ban was approved by the state Legislature in February.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 China space station to crash to Earth
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/science/2018/mar/06/chinas-tiangong-1-space-station-will-crash-to-earth-within-weeks
GIST	<p>China’s first space station is expected to come crashing down to Earth within weeks, but scientists have not been able to predict where the 8.5-tonne module will hit.</p> <p>The US-funded Aerospace Corporation estimates Tiangong-1 will re-enter the atmosphere during the first week of April, give or take a week. The European Space Agency says the module will come down between 24 March and 19 April.</p> <p>In 2016 China admitted it had lost control of Tiangong-1 and would be unable to perform a controlled re-entry.</p> <p>The statement from Aerospace said there was “a chance that a small amount of debris” from the module will survive re-entry and hit the Earth.</p> <p>“If this should happen, any surviving debris would fall within a region that is a few hundred kilometres in size,” said Aerospace, a research organisation that advises government and private enterprise on space flight.</p> <p>Aerospace warned that the space station might be carrying a highly toxic and corrosive fuel called hydrazine on board.</p> <p>The report includes a map showing the module is expected to re-enter somewhere between 43° north and 43° south latitudes. The chances of re-entry are slightly higher in northern China, the Middle East, central Italy, northern Spain and the northern states of the US, New Zealand, Tasmania, parts of South America and southern Africa.</p> <p>However, Aerospace insisted the chance of debris hitting anyone living in these nations was tiny. “When considering the worst-case location ... the probability that a specific person (ie, you) will be struck by Tiangong-1 debris is about one million times smaller than the odds of winning the Powerball jackpot.</p> <p>“In the history of spaceflight no known person has ever been harmed by reentering space debris. Only one person has ever been recorded as being hit by a piece of space debris and, fortunately, she was not injured.”</p> <p>Jonathan McDowell, an astrophysicist from Harvard University and space industry enthusiast, also sounded a note of caution. He said fragments from a similar-sized rocket re-entered the atmosphere and</p>

	landed in Peru in January. "Every couple of years something like this happens, but Tiangong-1 is big and dense so we need to keep an eye on it," he told the Guardian.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 NKorea pledge to halt missile tests
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/06/asia/north-korea-missile-tests-2017-intl/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)North Korea's pledge to freeze missile launches during talks with South Korea is a marked departure from last year's barrage of missile and nuclear weapons tests.</p> <p>In 2017, the country launched 23 missiles, including its first intercontinental missiles that it said had a long enough range to reach the United States mainland.</p> <p>At the same time, Pyongyang boasted that it was perfecting the technology to top a long-range missile with a nuclear warhead, increasing the threat to the US as a potential target.</p> <p>The first missile Kim fired in 2017 flew over Japan as the new US President Donald Trump met with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida.</p> <p>It was the first North Korean missile of the Trump administration and set the scene for a series of launches that sent missiles higher, further, and with enough power to put most of the world in range.</p> <p>Barely a month went by without a missile launch.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Schools struggle to evaluate threats
SOURCE	http://www.king5.com/article/news/education/some-wa-districts-not-equipped-to-evaluate-school-threats-well-experts-say/281-526028415
GIST	<p>TACOMA — A corrections officer shuffled the 12-year-old Truman Middle School defendant out of the juvenile courtroom before his older sister had time to wipe her tears.</p> <p>They had to make way for the next case on the docket, a 15-year-old Lincoln High School student who would face felony harassment charges for making school shooting threats on social media, too.</p> <p>Five minutes later, another boy arrived with his hands behind his back. He was a 17-year-old Spanaway Lake High School student accused of making threats on the bus to "shoot up" his school.</p> <p>The circumstances in that courtroom on Feb. 27 seemed to be unique — three unrelated hearings in a span of fewer than 15 minutes for three students, all charged with making threats against their Pierce County schools. But in the wake of the mass school shooting in Parkland, Florida, sorting through an influx of empty threats and acting on concerning ones is a reality Washington school officials are now faced with daily.</p> <p>"Ninety percent of what we're seeing in schools is the people who are trolling and (making threats) for inappropriate attention," said Brian Van Brunt, executive director of the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association. "The problem is, though, it's the needle in the haystack. If there are 10 kids at school writing that they are planning a bomb threat, you don't want to miss the one that really means it."</p> <p>The issue, school safety experts say, is that the "needle in the haystack" could go unnoticed because not all 295 Washington school districts are equipped with the resources to evaluate student school threats in a meaningful way.</p> <p>"Informally, we know that our districts are somewhat all over the board a little bit," said Larry Francois,</p>

superintendent of the Northwest Educational Service District (ESD), which offers support to 35 school districts in Snohomish, Whatcom, Skagit and San Juan counties. "There are districts that probably have nothing (formal) in place to districts that have fairly well-developed threat assessment plans in place."

The state does not require teachers, administrators and school resource officers to receive threat assessment training, and there's no state review of a district's plans to identify threats and respond to concerning behavior.

"My impression is — where schools all over the country know how to do a lockdown drill, active shooter training and emergency response, very few seem to have a threat assessment processes in place," said Peter Langman, a psychologist and one of the country's foremost experts on school shooters. "The schools have focused on the response piece — the reactive piece."

State Doesn't Track School Plans

Threat assessment doesn't refer to lock down procedures or the physical structures in school buildings that keep students safe. It's a violence prevention process, where trained professionals determine the credibility and seriousness of a threat. In the best case scenario, it activates professionals to intervene in a student's life — long before violence has the potential to happen.

"Teachers need training to be able to pick up on the warning signs and be involved in prevention at a much lower level than when we have someone who says, 'I'm going to shoot up the school on this day,'" said Amy Klinger, founder of the Educator's School Safety Network. "The shooter in Parkland was a slam dunk because there were millions and millions of warning signs. But at some point in his life, he was a low-level threat. We could have intervened."

The state's Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) recommends a nationally-recognized threat assessment process, where a diverse group of people— from school staff to law enforcement to mental health professionals — investigate each school threat as a team. They dig into a student's background to identify the root of the problem, and then they decide on the best ways to intervene in his or her life.

But Washington school districts aren't required to follow that process. At a minimum, districts have to adopt a plan for recognizing, screening and responding to emotional or behavioral stress in students, including signs of violence. No one at the state level keeps tabs on what each of those plans looks like — or if they even exist.

That's because Washington is a "local control" state, which means school districts govern themselves and handle day-to-day operations without a lot of influence by the state.

Experts say inconsistency in how schools respond to threats is a problem because a poor process for screening and evaluating threats could jeopardize students' lives. For instance, it's possible that a district could appoint just one staff member to make the final judgment call about whether or not a student poses a risk to a school — and that educator's bias or lack of training could get in the way.

"A principal might say, 'I know the family. I know the parents. It's a good family. This kid is not a danger,'" Langman said.

Threat Assessment Teams Dig Deeper

School safety experts recommend schools designate a group of people with different academic backgrounds to make sure students don't fall through the cracks.

"They may pick up on clues that someone else doesn't recognize as being significant," Langman said. "Someone in law enforcement is going to see things differently than I do as a psychologist."

It's the same process that's preferred among federal law enforcement entities, like the U.S. Secret Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI).

"There is no profile of a school shooter, and all threats are not created equal. That's what makes threat assessment as difficult as it is," said Mary Ellen O'Toole, a former FBI profiler. "We are not able to predict violence, but we are able to prevent it."

Most teams include a school resource officer, a school administrator, and a guidance counselor — each of whom is trained to assess threats and potentially threatening behavior. Parents, teachers, coaches and others who know a student often take part in the investigation, too. They answer questions about a student's background, including whether or not he has access to weapons.

"They get down to the reason why Johnny is drawing the gun. What is going on in Johnny's life that he is drawing the gun? What can be done to stop the threats of violence?," said Peggy Sandberg, who oversees threat assessment coordination for the state's Vancouver-based Educational Service District 112.

Some Washington Schools Use Oregon Model

A lot of Washington schools have a two-tiered threat assessment team, modeled after a program that started in Salem, Oregon in the Salem-Keizer Public School District nearly 20 years ago. When a student makes a threat in that school district, the team first investigates the problem at the building level.

"They will develop management plans. In many cases, it's a matter of solidifying support systems and working with the student," said David Okada, a lieutenant at the Salem Police Department. "Typically, the student is not on the pathway towards targeted violence."

But if the threat is more severe, the building-level threat assessment team calls in a community-based team to provide resources they can't offer within the school system. That team often includes police officers, mental health professionals, representatives from the juvenile justice system and other agencies as needed.

"Threat assessment is kind of like crime prevention. You can't measure what didn't happen," said Okada, who's also the vice president of the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals. "But we believe our system works."

Several of the nine Educational Service Districts (ESDs) in Washington offer threat assessment training to school districts for a fee. And a few ESDs have threat assessment coordinators on staff to help districts manage threats.

School districts in Clark County, for example, pay the local ESD to handle their community-based threat assessment needs. Last school year, the county's school districts conducted 261 building-level threat assessments and 110 community-based assessments, according to the threat assessment supervisor at the Vancouver-based ESD 112.

But experts say the demand for threat assessment training and support is now greater than some ESDs have the resources to provide.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Students rally in Olympia for gun bills
SOURCE	http://q13fox.com/2018/03/06/students-from-across-western-washington-rally-in-olympia-asking-for-gun-legislation/
GIST	OLYMPIA, Wash. – While lawmakers in Washington's capitol scrambled to put finishing touches on a myriad of gun legislation, students stormed the legislative building in Olympia demanding their voices be heard.

The youths rallying on Tuesday didn't just talk about gun legislation, they also described how they feel school is different today and shared what it was like to drill and practice for a mass shooting.

"We're here for Marysville-Pilchuck, we're here for Mukilteo," said high school senior Jonna Munson, "And we're here for Sandy Hook and the 300 school shootings that have happened since then."

"We really need to speak up," said high school senior Aurora Strauss-Reeves. "Students need to speak up and we need to do something because Congress won't do something by itself, obviously, as we've seen in the past."

Holding signs and wearing orange in solidarity, the students, parents and educators took their message straight to lawmakers. They're demanding Olympia hear what it's like for the next generation to live in fear at school.

"We, the students right now, have a new and really sobering reason to want to graduate in 2018 and just as soon as possible," said Munson. "Because we attend school in the era of mass shootings."

"When I had to start doing active-shooter drills, and I actually had to mentally prepare for it, it made it seem real," said Strauss-Reeves.

"A peer of mine stood next to the door with a pencil, a sharpened pencil, to protect against a school shooting," said high school senior Oliver Mortel, describing a classmate during a lockdown drill. "As if a wooden stick can defend against any type of gun."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Median home prices hit new highs
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/business/real-estate/new-home-price-records-777000-in-seattle-950000-on-the-eastside/
GIST	<p>Both Seattle and the Eastside again have smashed home-price records as the region's housing market continues to be brutal for homebuyers even before the peak spring season kicks off.</p> <p>New monthly home-sales data released Tuesday showed Seattle's median single-family-home price hit \$777,000 in February, \$20,000 more than the previous all-time high set just a month prior.</p> <p>On the Eastside, the median cost of a house was \$950,000, or \$12,000 more than the peak price from two months ago.</p> <p>And yet there is little escape for people priced out of the region's most expensive markets.</p> <p>Home prices grew at least 15 percent in every county in the Puget Sound region, according to the Northwest Multiple Listing Service.</p> <p>Both Snohomish and Pierce counties set a record high for home values, even though prices historically have lagged in the winter.</p> <p>"The hyper job market in the Pacific Northwest continues to outpace almost every metro area in the nation, and thus our housing market is booming; for now, there is no end in sight," Mike Grady, president and COO at Coldwell Banker Bain, said in a statement.</p> <p>And it's not just houses: Condo prices surged 22 percent from a year ago in King County.</p> <p>For the first time, the median cost of a condo in Seattle surpassed half a million dollars. The typical Seattle condo now costs \$535,000, up \$60,000 from a year ago.</p>

While incomes locally have begun to rise significantly, home prices are still increasing much faster, as they have for the last half decade. The cost of a home locally has roughly doubled in the last six years and is up 50 percent over the bubble-era high in 2007, making it much more difficult for even financially responsible, middle-class people to buy their first home.

A quarterly survey from real-estate company ValueInsured, released Tuesday, found just 25 percent of millennial renters in Seattle were confident they could afford a down payment on their first home.

It's easy to see why: Compared with a year ago, the typical house costs about \$100,000 more in Seattle and an extra \$118,000 on the Eastside. With a 20 percent down payment, home shoppers would need to have saved up at least \$20,000 in the last year just to avoid falling further behind.

Looking across the metro area, the region's home prices have grown faster than anywhere else in the country for the last 16 months in a row. And price increases statewide continue to exceed any other state.

In Snohomish County, home values jumped 17.6 percent to a record median price of \$485,000, more than the old high mark of \$455,000 from last fall.

In Pierce County, prices increased 16.1 percent to \$325,000, beating the record of about \$320,000, set two months ago.

In Kitsap County, costs surged 17.5 percent, to \$329,000 (behind the all-time high of \$335,000 set last year).

Home prices jumped the most in the Kirkland-Bridle Trails area — up 40 percent in a year. They also increased more than 30 percent in both Juanita-Woodinville and Sodo-Beacon Hill.

On the other end, prices dipped a bit in West Bellevue — the region's priciest market — and in Renton — Highlands/Kennydale.

As has been the case for years, the number of homes for sale continues to decline, making the real-estate market even more competitive and helping to drive up prices.

Total listings on the market in King County dropped 5.1 percent from a year ago. That decline was actually the smallest in years — it's become common for inventory to drop 20 percent or more, year-over-year.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 SKorea: too early ease North sanctions
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-missiles/south-koreas-moon-says-sanctions-on-north-to-stay-too-early-to-be-optimistic-idUSKCN1GJ0G1
GIST	<p>SEOUL/WASHINGTON (Reuters) - South Korean President Moon Jae-in said on Wednesday sanctions on North Korea will not be eased for the sake of a summit between the two sides as Chinese state media repeated Beijing's line that talks are the only way to end the nuclear standoff.</p> <p>South Korean officials met North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Monday in the first such encounter of its kind and said he had expressed his willingness to denuclearize if his country's security is assured.</p> <p>And U.S. President Donald Trump said North Korea seems "sincere" in its apparent willingness to suspend nuclear tests if it holds denuclearization talks with the United States.</p> <p>North Korea has boasted of its plans to develop a nuclear-tipped missile capable of reaching the mainland United States. But fears of all-out war eased last month, coinciding with North Korea's participation in the Winter Olympics in the South.</p>

“From looking at the news or Twitter, I believe President Trump is positive about the results of the North Korea visit (by South Korean officials),” Moon told political party leaders.

“However, as this is just the beginning, I believe we are not at a situation yet where we can be optimistic.”

Moon added he had no plans for an easing of sanctions.

“Just because there are talks ongoing between North and South Korea doesn’t mean international sanctions can be eased,” said Moon. “There cannot be an arbitrary easing of sanctions; we do not wish to do that and I tell you now it is impossible.”

South Korea’s goal was the denuclearization of North Korea, nothing less, said Moon in comments distributed by the Blue House.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 US, SKorea still plan massive military drill
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/news/north-korea/u-s-south-korea-plan-massive-joint-military-exercise-start-n854071
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — Annual U.S. and South Korean military exercises could begin as early as the end of this month, say three U.S. defense officials.</p> <p>Foal Eagle, a yearly exercise with the South Korean military, is now scheduled to begin on March 31 and run through May. The exercise, which the U.S. military describes as defensive in nature, involves thousands of U.S. troops conducting ground, air, naval, and special operations field exercises.</p> <p>The exercises are usually conducted in March and April, but in December South Korean President Moon Jae-In told NBC News his country was pushing the U.S. to postpone the exercises until after the Winter Olympics and Paralympics in PyeongChang, which end March 18, as an olive branch to North Korea.</p> <p>North Korea has previously condemned the annual exercise and the large-scale mobilization of troops as provocative.</p> <p>This year's Foal Eagle and a concurrent exercise called Key Resolve will overlap with a third round of talks between South Korean envoys and North Korea's Kim Jong Un. The North Korean leader met with South Korean officials on Tuesday for the first time since assuming power in 2011, and after the meeting South Korean officials said the North is willing to talk to the U.S. about giving up its nuclear weapons, and that Kim Jong Un agreed not to conduct ballistic missile or nuclear tests while the historic dialogue continues.</p> <p>During Foal Eagle 2017, about 3,600 U.S. service members joined some of the 28,500 American military members already living and working on the Korean Peninsula for two months of training with nearly 200,000 of their South Korean counterparts.</p> <p>Key Resolve is an annual command and control exercise – a computerized war game – that usually runs about 10 days and occurs at around the same time as Foal Eagle. Key Resolve will be in mid to late April this year, the officials said.</p> <p>Combined, both Key Resolve and Foal Eagle have involved up to 300,000 troops from the U.S. and South Korea in past years.</p> <p>A spokesperson for the Pentagon would not confirm the dates of the exercises. "Additional information will be released after the Paralympics," Pentagon spokesperson Lt. Col. Chris Logan said.</p>
Return to	

HEADLINE	03/06 US sanctions NKorea for VX killing
SOURCE	https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/kim-jong-nam-kim-jong-un-sanctions-state-department/2018/03/06/id/847212/
GIST	<p>The State Department on Tuesday slapped North Korea with new sanctions over the death of Kim Jong Un's brother, Kim Jong Nam.</p> <p>Kim Jong Nam died last February after two women smeared the banned chemical weapon VX nerve in his face at an airport in Malaysia. The nerve agent is banned under the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Welfare Elimination Act of 1991.</p> <p>"This public display of contempt for universal norms against chemical weapons use further demonstrates the reckless nature of North Korea and underscores that we cannot afford to tolerate a North Korean WMD program of any kind," State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said in a statement.</p> <p>The sanctions were assessed the same day President Donald Trump said there was "possible progress being made in talks with North Korea."</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 DOJ sues Calif. over sanctuary laws
SOURCE	https://www.newsmax.com/headline/sessions-california-trump-lawsuit/2018/03/06/id/847209/
GIST	<p>The Trump administration is suing to block California laws that extend protections to people living in the U.S. illegally, the most aggressive move yet in its push to force so-called sanctuary cities and states to cooperate with immigration authorities. California officials remained characteristically defiant, vowing to defend their landmark legislation.</p> <p>Justice Department officials said Tuesday that a trio of state laws that, among other things, bar police from asking people about their citizenship status or participating in federal immigration enforcement activities are unconstitutional and have kept federal agents from doing their jobs. Attorney General Jeff Sessions is expected to announce the lawsuit Wednesday at an annual gathering of law enforcement officers in Sacramento. It names as defendants the state of California, Gov. Jerry Brown and Attorney General Xavier Becerra.</p> <p>"I say, bring it on," said California Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de Leon, a Los Angeles Democrat who wrote the sanctuary state bill.</p> <p>It is the latest salvo in an escalating feud between the Trump administration and California, which has resisted the president on issues like taxes and marijuana policy and defiantly refuses to help federal agents detain and deport undocumented immigrants. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has said it will increase its presence in California, and Sessions wants to cut off funding to jurisdictions that won't cooperate.</p> <p>The lawsuit is being filed as the Justice Department also reviews Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf's decision to warn of an immigration sweep in advance, which ICE said allowed hundreds of immigrants to elude detention.</p> <p>The state laws being challenged were a response to President Donald Trump's hawkish immigration policies and widespread fear in immigrant communities following a campaign in which he promised to sharply ramp up the deportation of people living in the U.S. illegally. The decision to sue California shows Sessions and Trump remain aligned on this priority, even as their relationship has recently deteriorated, with Trump attacking his attorney general and Sessions pushing back.</p> <p>Brown mimicked Trump on Twitter Tuesday night, writing: "At a time of unprecedented political turmoil,</p>

	<p>Jeff Sessions has come to California to further divide and polarize America. Jeff, these political stunts may be the norm in Washington, but they don't work here. SAD!!!"</p> <p>One of California's laws prohibits employers from letting immigration agents enter worksites or view employee files without a subpoena or warrant, an effort to prevent workplace raids. Another stops local governments from contracting with for-profit companies and ICE to hold immigrants. Justice Department officials, speaking to reporters Tuesday, said that violates the Constitution's supremacy clause, which renders invalid state laws that conflict with federal ones.</p> <p>The Supreme Court reinforced the federal government's primacy in enforcing immigration law when it blocked much of Arizona's tough 2010 immigration law on similar grounds. The high court found several key provisions undermined federal immigration law, though it upheld a provision requiring officers, while enforcing other laws, to question the immigration status of people suspected of being in the country illegally.</p> <p>In this case, California "has chosen to purposefully contradict the will and responsibility of Congress to protect our homeland," Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said in a statement.</p> <p>Sessions has blamed sanctuary city policies for crime and gang violence and announced in July that cities and states could only receive certain grants if they cooperate with immigration agents. California is suing to force the administration to release one such grant. The state wants a judge to certify that its laws are in compliance with federal immigration law.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/07 Fukushima 'ice wall' partially effective
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/fukushima-plant-ice-wall-partly-reduces-radioactive-water-53575050?
GIST	<p>A government-commissioned group of experts has concluded that a costly underground ice wall is only partially effective in reducing the ever-growing amount of contaminated water at Japan's destroyed Fukushima nuclear plant, and other measures are needed as well.</p> <p>The plant's operator says the ice wall has helped reduce the radioactive water by half. The plant also pumps out several times as much groundwater before it reaches the tsunami-damaged reactors.</p> <p>The panel agreed Wednesday that the 35 billion yen (\$320 million) ice wall helps, but doesn't completely solve the problem.</p> <p>The 1.5-kilometer (1-mile) coolant-filled underground structure was installed around the wrecked reactor buildings to create a frozen soil barrier to keep groundwater from flowing into the heavily radioactive area.</p> <p>The groundwater mixes with radioactive water leaking from the damaged reactors.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Pakistan: shot down India drone Kashmir
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/pakistani-army-shot-indian-drone-kashmir-53572127?
GIST	<p>Pakistan's military says it shot down an Indian "spy drone" after it entered Pakistani airspace in the disputed region of Kashmir.</p> <p>The military said in a statement late Tuesday that the drone violated Pakistan's airspace and was spying when it was shot down in the village of Chirikot along the Line of Control in Kashmir. It said Pakistani troops retrieved the wreckage.</p>

	<p>The army said it was the fourth Indian drone it shot down in the past year.</p> <p>India had no immediate comment.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Seoul: Koreas summit talks in April
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/seoul-koreas-agree-hold-summit-talks-border-april-53547254?
GIST	<p>President Donald Trump greeted North Korea's reported willingness to negotiate away its atomic weapons with both hope and skepticism Tuesday, insisting a potential diplomatic breakthrough be tested against the North's long history of deception and threats to target U.S. cities with nuclear missiles.</p> <p>"I really believe they are sincere," Trump said at a White House news conference, sounding more optimistic than his intelligence chief, Dan Coats, who told a Senate hearing he has "very, very low confidence" that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un intends to give up his nuclear arms.</p> <p>"Maybe this is a breakthrough. I seriously doubt it," Coats said.</p> <p>A senior South Korean presidential adviser said Tuesday that Kim expressed a willingness to discuss nuclear disarmament and halt nuclear and missile tests during future talks with the United States. The North didn't confirm those concessions, which would amount to a dramatic about-face for a nation that has frequently vowed to preserve its nuclear arsenal at any cost.</p> <p>Chung Eui-yong, the South Korean official who spoke after participating in talks with Kim in Pyongyang, also said the North Korean dictator had agreed to meet with South Korea's president at a border village in late April.</p> <p>North Korea didn't announce what South Korea on Tuesday described as agreements between the rivals. But the North's state media earlier reported Kim had "openhearted" talks with South Korean envoys, expressed his willingness to "vigorously advance" North-South relations and made a "satisfactory" agreement on the inter-Korean summit talks.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/07 Puerto Ricans still stranded in hotels
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/puerto-ricans-stranded-hotels-months-storm-53572599?
GIST	<p>Nearly six months after the storm, almost 10,000 Puerto Ricans scattered across 37 states and the U.S. territory still receive temporary housing assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. That help has been renewed repeatedly, but it's now scheduled to end for everyone March 20.</p> <p>Without financial support, they will have nowhere to go, many storm victims say.</p> <p>Dozens of Puerto Ricans interviewed by The Associated Press expressed similar fears as the deadline loomed. Many are poor, living on fixed incomes or getting by in low-wage jobs. They have no relatives who can help or savings to fall back on, and they did not own their homes.</p> <p>So far, FEMA has provided \$113 million in rental assistance to 129,000 people who were in Maria's path across the island. Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rossello has asked for the deadline to be extended to May 14, and the government says it is reviewing the request.</p> <p>Nonprofit groups, churches and state and local governments have also provided temporary housing help</p>

	and other forms of support to the tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans who fled to the mainland in the aftermath of the Sept. 20 storm.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/07 Northeast bracing for another nor'easter
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/northeast-gearing-noreaster/story?
GIST	<p>The Northeast is bracing for a second nor'easter just days after a deadly storm tore through the East Coast.</p> <p>Thirteen states from Virginia to Maine are under winter storm alerts for the upcoming nor'easter set to hit Wednesday. Sixty million Americans are in the storm zone.</p> <p>As the next nor'easter moves in, rain is expected during the Wednesday morning commute from Virginia, to Washington, D.C., to the New Jersey shore. Coastal flooding is possible.</p> <p>By Wednesday morning snow will start in central Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, northern New Jersey and New York City.</p> <p>On Wednesday evening, it'll be snowing heavily across the interior Northeast, causing a treacherous commute home.</p> <p>Depending on the track of the storm, New York City may have continuous, heavy snow, or rain mixing in throughout the day.</p> <p>Boston will see more rain than snow. The city is under a flood watch and wind advisory.</p> <p>By Thursday morning, the nor'easter will be moving north, with lingering snow showers across northern New England and heavy snow in Maine.</p> <p>The Philadelphia to New York City area is set to get 4 to 8 inches of snow; the areas north and west of the cities may see 8 to 12 inches.</p> <p>Hartford is forecast to get 6 to 12 inches of snow while Boston will likely see 2 to 5 inches.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Seattle's plan to show police reform
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/city-submits-its-plan-for-showing-seattle-police-reforms-are-locked-in-place/
GIST	<p>The city of Seattle is proposing to submit a series of reports beginning in July to show whether federally mandated police reforms are locked in place, with an ultimate goal of terminating a court-ordered agreement by 2020.</p> <p>Having been found in compliance with the main terms of the agreement earlier this year, the city has submitted a detailed plan targeting the second phase of the city's 2012 consent decree with the U.S. Justice Department.</p> <p>It requires the Police Department to demonstrate in the next two years that it is maintaining reforms to address allegations of excessive force and biased policing.</p> <p>In a landmark ruling Jan. 10, U.S. District Judge James Robart found the Police Department in "full and effective compliance" with the consent decree, calling the accomplishment an "enormous milestone" while warning that the city still faced work that, in many ways, represented the most difficult portion of the process to fulfill.</p>

“The ability to sustain the good work that has begun is not a foregone conclusion,” the judge added. “It will require dedication, hard work, creativity, flexibility, vigilance, endurance, and continued development and refinement of policies and procedures in accordance with constitutional principles,” Robart wrote.

If the plan is approved by Robart, the city would take the lead role in the “critical self-analysis,” although the Justice Department and the court’s monitor, Merrick Bobb, would closely scrutinize the progress.

“From the City’s perspective, the most important shift from the first phase of the Consent Decree is that the compliance period will focus on demonstrating that the City is sustaining compliance via assessments derived and directed by the City,” the city’s attorneys say in a newly filed memorandum to the court.

In separate filings, the Justice Department and monitor concurred with the plan, labeling it a joint approach that resulted from extensive discussions.

The city would submit seven quarterly reports to the court beginning in July, with the hope of including a joint motion to terminate the consent decree with its final filing in January 2020.

While the city’s proposal is designed to pinpoint concerns so they can be quickly fixed, the timeline could change if “significant shortcomings” are identified, according to the city’s memorandum.

“The City recognizes that, ultimately, it is more important to get this right than to simply get this done,” the memorandum says.

The first report presumably wouldn’t come until after Mayor Jenny Durkan has announced her appointment of a new police chief. In May, a search committee is to submit a list of candidates to Durkan, who will select from the list by June, according to the mayor’s office.

The mayor’s pick will be subject to City Council confirmation, although there is no timetable for that at this point. Interim Police Chief Carmen Best is seeking the job.

Under the plan submitted to Robart, the Police Department’s Audit, Policy & Research Section would conduct audits, paying particular attention to concerns flagged by the monitor and the court during the first phase.

The reports would be designed not only to sustain compliance, but to “drive reform beyond the requirements of the Decree and after federal oversight has ended,” according to the memorandum.

Among various bench marks, each report will contain statistics on use of force and crisis intervention, as well as summaries of how force is reviewed and the results of internal investigations into alleged misconduct by officers related to consent-decree policies.

The city also would provide updates on protracted contract negotiations with the Seattle Police Officers’ Guild to ensure any agreement with the union, which represents sergeants and officers, “falls within the boundaries” of the consent decree, the memorandum says.

Robart has warned that the city’s progress could be “imperiled” if bargaining results in changes to accountability measures he deems to be inconsistent with the consent decree. The two sides have been engaged in closed-door talks in an attempt to end the stalemate.

Another part of the plan calls for the court’s monitor to re-engage an outside firm to survey community confidence in the Police Department, as Bobb did in the first phase.

“The survey will put particular focus on ‘isolated communities’ ... to assess SPD’s efforts in improving communications and relationships with these groups,” the memorandum says.

In one of his reports, Bobb found that while officers were following policy in stops and detentions, a disparity existed between the percentage of stops of African Americans compared with their percentage in Seattle's population.

Under the plan, the Police Department will look beyond addressing disparate impacts arising from stops and detentions to include use of force and any other practices, according to the memorandum. Already, the department has sought the assistance of the director of Northeastern University's Institute on Race and Justice, the memorandum says.

The department also believes that its early-warning system to identify problem behaviors in officers and prevent misconduct isn't as effective as it could be, the memorandum says.

As a result, the department is participating in a national task force headed by the University of Chicago Crime Lab to rethink approaches to early intervention, according to the memorandum.

Bobb, in his filing on the proposed plan to maintain compliance, said it represents a "sound approach" that should be approved by the court.

U.S. Attorney Annette L. Hayes in Seattle and John Gore, acting assistant attorney of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, wrote in their filing that the plan "should be used as the governing document for this next, important phase of work under the Consent Decree."

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Gas prices rise nationwide
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Energy-News/2018/03/06/Gas-prices-rise-nationwide-after-three-weeks-of-decreases/8111520345723/?utm_source=fp&utm_campaign=ts_eng&utm_medium=22
GIST	<p>March 6 (UPI) -- Gasoline prices climbed last week in the United States after three weeks of decreases at the pump, according to an analysis.</p> <p>The national average of \$2.53 for one gallon of regular gas is one cent more than last Monday with 25 states seeing increases, the motor club AAA reported Monday.</p> <p>About 63 percent of the drivers in the United States are paying \$2.50 per gallon or less.</p> <p>"2018 has seen fluctuating crude oil prices, strong gasoline demand and new U.S. oil production records creating a volatile gas price market from month to month for consumers," said Jeanette Casselano at AAA. "Typically, March brings more expensive pricing as days get longer, weather gets warmer and refineries gear up to switch over to pricier summer blends."</p> <p>Average prices are 22 cents higher than this time last year, but are 8 cents lower than last month.</p> <p>Ohio had the largest weekly increase at 9 cents per gallon followed by Indiana at 8 cents, Georgia at 5 cents and 4 cents each for Alaska, Kansas and Michigan. The largest decrease was New Jersey with a 3 cent drop to \$2.59.</p> <p>In six states in the West Coast region, drivers are paying the highest pump prices in the country. It's led by Hawaii at \$3.50, followed by California at \$3.35, Alaska at \$3.06, Washington at \$3.00, Oregon at \$2.90 and Nevada at \$2.79 -- and prices in all of these states are up.</p> <p>In the region, gasoline inventories dropped for the third consecutive week, decreasing by 1 million barrels. Stocks were lower because of planned maintenance at refineries in the region. But levels are still nearly 3 million barrels higher than last year at the same time.</p> <p>Other high prices are \$2.79 in Pennsylvania, \$2.73 in Washington D.C., \$2.71 in New York and \$2.69 in</p>

	<p>Connecticut.</p> <p>In the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast, six states are in the 10 top list for largest year-over-year gas price change. It's up to 30 cents more for a gallon on average.</p> <p>The largest increases are Massachusetts and Rhode Islands at 31 cents. Vermont and New Jersey were was 1 cent behind, followed by New Jersey at 30 cents, Connecticut at 29 cents and New Hampshire at 28 cents.</p> <p>In the South and Southwest, every state recorded higher prices. The biggest changes are Georgia at 5 cents, South Carolina at 3 cents and Texas at 3 cents. Compared with last year, New Mexico's 11 cent increase is the smallest and Florida's 25 cents tops the region.</p> <p>All five states in the Rockies are paying less at the pump compared with last week -- led by Utah at 3 cents. At \$2.41, Colorado is the least expensive in the region.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	03/06 Trump: will counteract election meddling
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-russia-election/trump-says-u-s-will-counteract-any-meddling-in-2018-election-idUSKCN1GI2VS?il=0
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump said on Tuesday there was interference by Russia and probably by other countries in the 2016 U.S. election, and the United States would counteract any attempt at meddling in the November 2018 elections.</p> <p>“Well the Russians had no impact on our votes whatsoever, but certainly there was meddling and probably there was meddling from other countries and maybe other individuals,” Trump said at a joint news conference with Swedish Prime Minister Stephan Lofven.</p> <p>“We’re doing a very very deep study and we’re coming with some ... very strong suggestions on the ‘18 election ... We’ll counteract whatever they do, we’ll counteract it very strongly.”</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	03/06 More quakes shake Papua New Guinea
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/03/06/another-strong-quake-shakes-remote-papua-new-guinea-region.html
GIST	<p>WELLINGTON, New Zealand – Another strong earthquake has shaken a remote Papua New Guinea region that was badly damaged by a powerful quake last week.</p> <p>The U.S. Geological Survey said Tuesday's earthquake measured magnitude 6.7 and was centered 112 kilometers (70 miles) southwest of Porgera. It was fairly shallow at a depth of 22.9 kilometers (14.3 miles). Shallow earthquakes tend to cause more damage on the Earth's surface.</p> <p>USGS said the quake was followed by two others measuring magnitude 5.0 and 5.1. Strong quakes also hit earlier in the day.</p> <p>The region is remote and sparsely populated, making information about possible damage and injuries hard to confirm.</p> <p>A magnitude 7.5 earthquake on Feb. 26 killed at least 15 people, injured dozens and brought work to a halt at four oil and gas fields. The quake triggered landslides that blocked rivers, which then flooded small villages.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	03/06 Sweden plans to build more bunkers
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/sweden-plans-build-more-bunkers-amid-fears-russian-aggression-n849821
GIST	<p>STOCKHOLM — Burrowed beneath a small park in Stockholm is a forgotten relic of the past that may help in the future.</p> <p>The only clue to its existence is a green metal door, 8 feet high by 5 feet wide, hewn into the rock next to a busy, snow-dusted sidewalk.</p> <p>Heaving it open reveals an airlock that leads to a fully operational nuclear bunker.</p> <p>Facilities like this are a vital part of Sweden's history — and recent threats from Russia mean they could become important again in the years to come.</p> <p>"They are meant to be used if the government decides to announce full alert," says Ove Brunnström, the cheerful spokesman for Sweden's Civil Contingencies Agency who recently gave NBC News a rare tour of the subterranean site. "That would be [triggered] if we are close to war or we are under attack."</p> <p>Few countries do bunkers like Sweden, which never joined NATO and could be considered one of the world's most peaceful nations over the past 200 years.</p> <p>It honeycombed itself with civil defense shelters during the Cold War and today around 65,000 remain on standby, dotted around its sparsely populated territory.</p> <p>In the early 2000s, Sweden slashed defense spending and halted bunker construction. Many were all but forgotten, doubling as parking lots and bicycle storage spaces during a period when global conflict seemed a distant prospect.</p> <p>That thinking changed in 2014 when Russian President Vladimir Putin annexed Crimea, allegedly sent troops into eastern Ukraine, and began violating airspace over the Nordic and Baltic regions.</p> <p>"Ukraine was a wake-up call for the Swedes, and it really renewed the national discussion surrounding defense," says Erik Brattberg, a fellow at the Washington-based Carnegie Endowment for International Peace think tank.</p> <p>This perceived threat has prompted Sweden to order a reboot of its once-proud policy of "total defense" — which calls on the military and civilians to act together to ward off attackers. Bunkers are an integral part of this hunker-down strategy.</p> <p>In December, the country's Defense Commission recommended modernizing existing shelters while planning the construction of the first new ones in more than 15 years.</p> <p>"It's expensive to build shelters, the Cold War was over and we had quite a calm situation in Europe," says Brunnström, explaining his country's change of heart. "But what happened in Ukraine in 2014, I think, shocked the Western world."</p> <p>One nightmare scenario for the West involves Russia invading the Swedish island of Gotland, blocking off NATO supply routes to its vulnerable Baltic allies. Last year, Sweden re-militarized the island but experts say the force is too small to provide any real resistance.</p> <p>"No one thought four years ago that Russia would annex Crimea and invade eastern Ukraine," said Heather A. Conley, a former State Department official under President George W. Bush who is now director of the Europe program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "This means we have to imagine what we would have previously considered unimaginable."</p>

Sweden has developed close ties with NATO in recent years. Its military personnel have served and died during U.S.-led operations in Afghanistan and Kosovo. And several polls last year showed that for the first time more Swedes supported joining the alliance than opposed it.

But full NATO membership still seems a long way off. Before any referendum is held, there would need to be cross-party consensus, and the move is still opposed by the ruling Social Democratic-Green coalition.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 DIA: NKorea will keep testing missiles
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/news/north-korea/north-korea-will-keep-testing-missiles-nukes-says-dia-head-n853936
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — North Korea has three long-range missiles, two of which can hit the U.S., and will likely continue its nuclear and missile testing, says the head of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency in a new worldwide threat assessment.</p> <p>Despite sanctions and international condemnation, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un "shows no interest in voluntarily walking away from his nuclear or missile programs, which he has made central to his security strategy," wrote Lt. Gen. Robert Ashley in an assessment to be delivered to the Senate Armed Services Committee Tuesday.</p> <p>"Additional missile launches — from short range to intercontinental range — are a near certainty," wrote Ashley, "and further nuclear tests are possible as Pyongyang seeks to refine its weapon designs."</p> <p>Ashley's remarks were prepared before Tuesday morning's news that South Korean officials say Kim Jong Un is willing to talk to the U.S. about eliminating his nuclear arsenal and would suspend nuclear and missile testing during those negotiations.</p> <p>Ashley said that North Korea tested two types of intercontinental ballistic missiles in 2017 that could hit the U.S., a Hwasong-14 and Hwasong-15. Pyongyang also tested two Hwasong-12 intermediate-range missiles over Japan last year, the second of which "demonstrated a capability to range more than 3,700 kilometers, which can reach beyond Guam."</p> <p>Ashley's assessment also detailed North Korea's formidable non-nuclear threats.</p> <p>Pyongyang's shorter range ballistic arsenal threatens Seoul more than ever, according to Ashley. North Korea has thousands of long-range artillery and rocket systems along the demilitarized zone and a nearly operational close-range ballistic missile capable of reaching Seoul and major U.S. air and ground bases farther south.</p> <p>"With its large artillery and infantry force forward- deployed, the KPA can mount an attack on South Korean and U.S. forces with little or no warning," he wrote.</p> <p>In addition, North Korea may be sitting on "up to several thousand tons" of chemical agents, such as "nerve, blister, blood, and choking agents."</p>
Return to	
Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Report: opioid overdoses spike 30%
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/opioid-overdoses-increase-across-us/
GIST	A new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention brings more bad news for the nation's continued fight against the opioid epidemic. Data from hospital emergency departments show a big

increase in drug overdoses across the country.

In a press briefing on Tuesday, CDC Acting Director Anne Schuchat, M.D., said the U.S. is seeing the highest drug overdose death rate ever recorded in the country.

According to the study, which examined data from 16 states, emergency department visits for suspected opioid overdoses jumped 30 percent from July 2016 through September 2017.

Opioid overdoses increased for both men and women, across all age groups, and in all regions, though there was some variation by state, with rural and urban differences.

"Long before we receive data from death certificates, emergency department data can point to alarming increases in opioid overdoses," Schuchat said in a statement. "This fast-moving epidemic affects both men and women, and people of every age. It does not respect state or county lines and is still increasing in every region in the United States."

The Midwest saw the biggest jump in opioid overdoses, with a 70 percent increase from July 2016 through September 2017.

Certain areas in the Northeast were also hit particularly hard, with Delaware experiencing a 105 percent increase and Pennsylvania an 81 percent increase in opioid overdoses during that time.

The reasons for these increases are unclear, but officials say it may have to do with changes in the drug supply, including the availability of newer, highly toxic illegal opioids such as fentanyl, which has been spreading rapidly in recent years. Fentanyl, a synthetic drug that's 50 to 100 times stronger than morphine, is often mixed in to make heroin more potent, leading many users to OD.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Volcano strongest eruption in years
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/shinmoedake-japanese-volcano-erupts-dozens-flights-grounded/
GIST	<p>TOKYO -- A volcano in southern Japan that appeared in a James Bond film had its biggest eruption in years Tuesday, shooting smoke and ash thousands of feet into the sky and grounding dozens of flights at a nearby airport, officials said. The Meteorological Agency said the Shinmoedake volcano on Japan's southernmost main island of Kyushu erupted violently several times, and some lava was rising inside a crater.</p> <p>"The mountain has been erupting for a while, but this is the strongest day yet," an official at the Japanese Meteorological Agency told Reuters. "This will go on for a while."</p> <p>Public broadcaster NHK showed gray volcanic smoke billowing into the sky and orange lava rising to the mouth of the crater. The Meteorological Agency said ash and smoke shot up about 7,500 feet into the sky in the volcano's biggest explosion since 2011.</p> <p>In Kirishima city at the foot of the volcano, pedestrians wore surgical masks or covered their noses with hand towels, while others used umbrellas to protect from falling ash. Cars had layers of ash on their roofs.</p> <p>There were no reports of injuries or damage from the eruptions. The agency said the volcanic activity is expected to continue and cautioned residents against the possibility of flying rocks and pyroclastic flows -- superheated gas and volcanic debris that race down the slopes at high speeds, incinerating or vaporizing everything in their path.</p> <p>The volcano, seen in the 1967 James Bond film "You Only Live Twice," has had smaller eruptions since last week.</p>
Return to	

HEADLINE	03/05 Air Force: pilots, logistics crises
SOURCE	https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2018/03/05/fewer-planes-are-ready-to-fly-air-force-mission-capable-rates-decline-amid-pilot-crisis/
GIST	<p>The readiness of the Air Force’s aircraft fleet is continuing its slow, steady deterioration — and this could spell trouble for the service’s effort to hold on to its pilots and its ability to respond to contingencies around the world.</p> <p>According to data provided by the Air Force, about 71.3 percent of the Air Force’s aircraft were flyable, or mission-capable, at any given time in fiscal 2017. That represents a drop from the 72.1 percent mission-capable rate in fiscal 2016, and a continuation of the decline in recent years.</p> <p>Former Air Force pilots and leaders say that this continued trend is a gigantic red flag, and warn it could lead to serious problems down the road.</p> <p>“It scares the heck out of me,” said retired Gen. Hawk Carlisle, former head of Air Combat Command. “It really does.”</p> <p>“We are seeing an Air Force that is back on its heels,” said John Venable, a Heritage Foundation fellow and former F-16 pilot who flew in Iraq and Afghanistan. “They’re all on the backside of the power curve.”</p> <p>Look closer at some of the service’s most crucial air frames, and even more alarming trends emerge.</p> <p>In fiscal 2014, almost three-quarters of the Air Force’s F-22 Raptors were mission capable. But since then, the Raptor’s rates have plunged — by more than 11 percentage points in the last year — and now less than half are mission-capable.</p> <p>The F-35, the Air Force’s most advanced fighter, also saw a nearly 10 percentage-point drop.</p> <p>It’s not just fighters. Mobility aircraft such as the C-5 and C-17, surveillance aircraft such as the E-3 AWACS and E-8 JSTARS, and the B-52 Stratofortress are some of the other critical aircraft that saw mission-capable rates decline.</p> <p>The B-1B Lancer and B-2A Spirit bombers experienced some improvement over 2016 — but even they are still mired in mission-capable rates of about 52 percent or 53 percent.</p> <p>The mission-capable statistics would be even worse without the MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper, which are consistently around 90 percent and are by far the highest in the Air Force.</p> <p>When those two RPAs are removed — and the Predator is to be retired from service March 9 — the overall mission-capable rate drops to 70 percent.</p> <p>Multiple factors over the past few years have led the Air Force to this crisis point. The Air Force has been flying its aircraft exceptionally hard for years, fighting wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, as well as providing deterrence against North Korea, Russia, and China.</p> <p>For example, the F-22 is getting flown more downrange these days — in places like Afghanistan and Syria — than the Air Force originally expected, Carlisle said. That means more breakage, and thus the need for more spare parts.</p> <p>Heavy deployment rates, Carlisle said, also lead to strain on the air frames, requiring more maintenance.</p> <p>But finding maintainers to fix those airplanes is not so easy. The Air Force cut its maintainer ranks during the severe drawdown of 2014 — a serious mistake, Carlisle said, that is coming back to haunt the service.</p>

The Air Force has made some progress, and has now brought the maintainer shortfall from its high of 4,000 down to about 200. But many of those new maintainers are less-experienced, with a skill level of 3, Venable said.

Those 3-levels can do some work, and more-experienced 5-levels can do more advanced repairs, he said. But they need a seasoned 7-level maintainer to sign off on much of that work — and the Air Force remains alarmingly short of 5- and 7-levels, Venable said.

Gen. Carlton Everhart, head of Air Mobility Command, also pointed to the pace of operations and maintenance

“I think the reason why they’re declining is, we are really flying aircraft hard,” Everhart said Feb. 21. “It winds up being a balance. If you fly aircraft hard and don’t give them much of the maintenance time they need, then they will have a tendency to bring those rates down. If you balance those rates and maintenance capability to operations, that gives you a more definitive mission-capability rate.”

Considering how crucial logistics are to keeping the military functioning, Everhart said he’s “absolutely” concerned about any signs of declining readiness.

“It’s kinetics that win the battles, but it’s logistics that win the war,” Everhart said. “Anything that’s taking those airplanes away, where you can’t see the power of the United States Air Force, that does concern me.”

AMC stood down dozens of its C-5s and launched a fleet-wide maintenance assessment after the nose landing gear malfunctioned on two planes at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware last summer.

Spokesman Col. Chris Karns said AMC is looking to partner with the Air Force Reserve to swap out its aircraft and extend their service life and reliability.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE

03/06 UN: 1,000+ children killed, injured Syria

SOURCE

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/06/middleeast/russia-syria-ghouta-safe-passage-intl/index.html>

GIST

Beirut, Lebanon (CNN)More than 1,000 children have been killed or injured this year across Syria, a United Nations Children's Fund official told CNN on Tuesday.

The grim statistic, from UNICEF regional communications chief Juliette Touma, comes as violence rips through the rebel-held enclave of Eastern Ghouta, where about a third of the nearly 400,000 besieged civilians are children, according to the agency.

In all, 342 children were killed and 803 were injured in Syria in the first two months of 2018, Touma said, citing multiple sources.

About 100 people were killed Monday in Eastern Ghouta, a suburb of Damascus, making it the deadliest day there since the United Nations Security Council passed a nationwide ceasefire resolution on February 24, the Syrian American Medical Society said Tuesday in a statement.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

Cyber Awareness

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE

03/06 Phishing via social media up 100%

SOURCE

<https://blog.knowbe4.com/phishing-via-social-media-up-100-percent-now-a-preferred-vector>

GIST

Fabian Libeau at InformationSecurityBuzz wrote:

"The most interesting trend to surface in Q4 of RiskIQ's phishing report was a 100 percent increase in phishing campaigns leveraging social media platforms, accounting for 20 percent of the top 10 most phished brands.

Phishing actors are always innovating and creating new methods to lure victims into gaining access to their financial information, PII, and user accounts. Understanding the latest phishing techniques and threat actor tendencies can help organizations to stay one step ahead of phishing threats targeting them.

For the uninitiated, phishing is a form of fraud where the malicious actor impersonates or compromises the account of a reputable organisation to con unsuspecting users into parting with their login credentials, personal information and in some cases, financial assets. Users can also unwittingly divulge information about their employer that can be used by the attacker to gain access to corporate networks.

RiskIQ processes huge volumes of web-related threat data, including data on phishing incidents. From these various sources, it receives URLs which might be indicative of phishing. The URLs are processed through crawling infrastructure and fed through machine-learning technology to classify each detected phishing page appropriately. Within this group of phishing pages, there are those used for highly targeted phishing attacks, also known as 'spear phishing,' as well as phishing pages used for widespread 'generic' phishing.

Regarding infrastructure, there are two distinctions: self-maintained custom infrastructure and abused or compromised infrastructure belonging to someone else.

This information is summarized by RiskIQ every quarter to create a quarterly phishing roundup, tracking the evolving tactics of phishing campaigns. Looking at activity that took place in Q4 2017 while drawing upon data used in the Q3 Report we can make comparisons and recap trends seen over the entirety of 2017.

Overall 27,285 uniquely blacklisted phishing—domains were observed, down two percent from Q3, targeting a total of 259 unique brands, down seven percent from Q3. A slight decline quarter over quarter isn't unusual as phishing tends to be very cyclical. Looking at the most phished brands by vertical industry there was a 40 percent of phish leveraging the brands of financial institutions, 20 percent impersonating large tech companies and 20 percent impersonating digital transaction providers. All three of those stats are in line with the Q3 findings. However, the most interesting trend to surface in Q4 was a 100 percent increase in phishing campaigns leveraging social media platforms, a trend that accounted for 20 percent of the top-ten most phished brands including the overall most-phished brand.

This new focus on social media by threat actors is significant because it represents a pivot in tactics between Q3 and Q4 towards social media platforms and away from cloud service providers, which represented 10 percent of targets in the previous report. Financial institutions are almost always the target of the highest volume of attacks, but social media is an interesting new addition to the top-target list.

Fake social media profiles have been a problem for some time. Back in November, Facebook admitted that up to 270 million accounts on the social network are illegitimate and in January Twitter disclosed to investors that up to 60 million accounts are not what they seem. But why the rise in fake accounts associated with phishing activity?

There are several potential reasons why social media is drawing more attention from threat actors. For one, the growth in popularity of financial integrations within social media platforms that, for example, give users the ability to send and receive money, can make for an easy payday. There's also the possibility of using sensitive information from posts, messages, and profiles that can be used as lures in social engineering attacks.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Hospitality sector key battleground
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazineuk.com/hospitality-industry-is-key-infosec-battleground/article/748908/
GIST	<p>Although financial criminals have much to gain from successful compromises in the hospitality industry - including credit card details, passport scans and loyalty card information - the vertical has also become a growing target for nation-state adversary groups too. The latter being keen to track persons of interest while they are travelling, or to enable access to these potential victims when they use electronic devices outside the confines of their home or fully protected networks.</p> <p>Mike Sentonas, VP Technology Strategy CrowdStrike, told SC Media UK: “We called it out as one of the sectors most vulnerable to attack, and while it's a broad industry, it is a very attractive target for many reasons. There are pockets of best practice in the hospitality sector, as well as areas you look at and shake your head - just like in any sector. There are a variety of challenges too, from the challenges of running global chains, transient workforces, and a very high level of outsourcing. Wifi is often completely outsourced, for example, it's a very complex environment to secure. Then there's the supply chain too...”</p> <p>In one example documented in CrowdStrike's 2018 Goba! Threat Report, malware activity involving the binary: FILE: C:\Windows\SysWOW64\WinSrv.exe HASH: 69d77ffde43f3591f16cfe509f87dda11be13809e75ac30e09f1315c5a5d955 was spotted on two hospitality networks simultaneously. The malware turned out to be dubbed PoSeidon, designed to scrape the RAM of PoS terminals for credit card track data. The malware was installed following FTP connections to a malicious external server, initiated under a legitimate remote connectivity application using the same user account, which was associated with a third-party vendor.</p> <p>“CrowdStrike determined that the breach occurred through the compromised vendor's access with the malicious actor installing the malware to target parking pay stations operated by the third party. This case highlights the risk of outside vendor access into enterprise networks”, noted the CrowdStrike researchers.</p> <p>“We'll see a lot of evolution in the hospitality industry over the coming months, as brands improve their security stance. We've seen pretty much every global hotel chain impacted in some way by recent events, so it's very much front of mind”, continued Sentonas.</p> <p>The 2018 Global Threat Report headlines two sector-agnostic stats for 2017 - the average attacker dwell time recorded was 86 days (that's time between initial compromise and discovery), while the average breakout time was an average of 1 hour and 58 minutes. Breakout time being the average time for an intruder to begin moving laterally to other systems in the network.</p> <p>Sentonas summaries: “Often the countermeasures of today just aren't delivering on some modern attack vectors - for example, 39 per cent of attacks in 2017 involved no malware at all, and an equal number that did were not detected by endpoint security AV systems. As an industry we've got to get better at requirements such as real-time visibility and risk management. Overall, metrics are increasingly the key to faster detection rates and faster responses to threats of all kinds, and I believe the industry is beginning to move that way. There's definitely more emphasis on more effective and less complex systems and that'll influence the coming years.”</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Cyberattacks targeting healthcare sector
SOURCE	https://www.csoonline.com/article/3260191/security/healthcare-experiences-twice-the-number-of-cyber-attacks-as-other-industries.html
GIST	<p>Healthcare has become the second largest sector of the U.S. economy, accounting for 18% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017, and is rivaled only by U.S. Federal Government's 20% share of GDP in the same year. Not surprisingly, IT spending in healthcare is keeping pace, reaching \$100 billion in 2017.</p> <p>As healthcare sector technology spending grows, so does the sector's cybersecurity attack surface. Healthcare networks not only include clinics and doctor's offices, but things like Internet-based consulting</p>

with remote healthcare providers or patients, multi-cloud IaaS and SaaS environments, and connected medical devices both inside hospitals and deployed with patients. Increasingly, distributed healthcare organizations heavily rely on information sharing across disparate users and departments. Patients and guests demand instant access to medical information and scheduling. And it's not showing any signs of slowing down. An increase in merger and acquisition (M&A) activity and a 26.2% compound annual growth rate for Internet of Medical Things (IoMT) devices exacerbate this problem.

Reasons Why Healthcare Is a Target of Cyber Attacks

All this adds up to an expanding attack surface that is increasingly difficult to address using traditional security devices and strategies. The challenge is that this is happening just as cybercriminals are redoubling their efforts to target the valuable data that healthcare networks contain. FortiGuard Labs recently assessed healthcare threats based on our threat telemetry data, and found healthcare organizations experience more than twice the number of attacks on average as compared to organizations in other vertical market categories. The cybersecurity maladies afflicting healthcare manifest themselves in several ways:

- **M&A Activity Creates Vulnerabilities.** M&A activity in the healthcare sector is speeding up, and is expected to gain further momentum in 2018. IT integration challenges, including different medical technologies, combined with the need to share information between newly merged organizations creates new vulnerabilities. These have not gone unnoticed by cybercriminals seeking to access and exploit the data being shared.
- **Threat Volume.** The proliferation of polymorphic attack vectors is afflicting healthcare at higher rates than other verticals. For example, FortiGuard Labs reports that in 2017 healthcare saw an average of almost 32,000 intrusion attacks per day on average per organization as compared to over 14,300 per organization in other industries. There are a number of factors behind this higher number:
 - Cybersecurity maturity is still at an early state in healthcare
 - Healthcare data tends to be richer in both volume and value than financial services or retail data
 - Medical identity fraud usually takes longer to detect than other types of fraud
 - Cybercriminals are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their attack approaches and use of malware
- **Threat Velocity and Variety.** Rising attack volumes are partially driven by increasing threat velocity. In fact, according to Fortinet's Q4 2017 Global Threat Landscape Report, organizations experienced a staggering 82% increase in attacks. And we are also seeing an increased focus on innovation, with the number of malware families increasing by an alarming 25% in Q4, and unique malware variants growing at 19%. This combination of rapid development combined with the increased propagation of new variants is successfully catching organizations unprepared.
- **New Challenges Arising from IoMT.** FortiGuard Labs also found that almost half of the top 10 threats were triggered by botnets, some of which leveraged compromised IoT devices. IoT exploits now comprise two of the top 10 application vulnerability exploits in healthcare. New attacks span malware families and swarm to target multiple attack vectors simultaneously, making them harder to combat. This trend towards multiple, simultaneous attacks is likely to spread to IoMT devices as well.
- **Encryption and the Need for Inspection.** Healthcare is slightly ahead of the curve on encrypting communications. While this protects sensitive data moving across the network, it also increases the need to inspect encrypted data – both inbound and outbound – Because cybercriminals are using encryption to hide malware and exploits as well as to mask stolen data being exfiltrated from the network. But inspecting encrypted traffic carries a high processing cost, and many firewalls suffer degraded performance as a result.

HEADLINE	03/06 March terror threat snapshot
SOURCE	https://homeland.house.gov/press/mccauley-releases-march-terror-threat-snapshot/
GIST	<p>Washington, D.C. – House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Michael McCaul (R-TX) today released March’s Terror Threat Snapshot, a monthly assessment of the Committee’s continuing effort to highlight the growing threat America, the West, and the world face from ISIS and other Islamist terrorists.</p> <p>Chairman McCaul: “ISIS remains a dynamic and continuing threat to the West and the homeland. The recent State Department terrorist designations of several ISIS-affiliated groups and key leaders from around the world will help degrade ISIS’ global network by denying them the resources to spread hatred and terror. We must redouble our efforts to deny terrorist entry into America by better working with our allies and ensuring our vetting efforts are as streamlined and effective as possible.”</p> <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The U.S. Department of State designated seven ISIS-affiliated groups as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) and two ISIS-affiliated individuals as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGT). The groups are ISIS-West Africa, ISIS-Philippines, ISIS-Bangladesh, ISIS-Somalia, ISIS-Egypt, Jund al-Khilafah-Tunisia, and the Maute Group. The individuals are Mahad Moalim and Abu Musab al-Barnawi. The designation as a SDGT and FTO prohibits U.S. persons from engaging in transactions with them, and their assets subject to U.S. jurisdiction were blocked and seized. Assisting them with any material support is now criminal as well.• In a continuing effort to cut off terrorist financing opportunities, the U.S. Department of the Treasury imposed sanctions on six people and seven entities responsible for funding Hezbollah. Most of them are tied to Adham Tabaj, one of the terrorist group’s top financiers, and his company Al-Inmaa Engineering and Contracting. The firms are located in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Lebanon, and Ghana.• As ISIS loses its geographic presence, fighters continue to return to their home countries. Russia had the highest number of fighters go to Syria and Iraq with an estimated 3,417, and 400 have returned. Saudi Arabia was next with roughly 3,244, of which 760 have returned. Jordan was third with approximately 3,000, of which 250 have returned. Tunisia followed with 2,926, of which 800 have returned. France was fifth with 1,910, of which 271 have returned, according to a report from The Soufan Center.• Alexandra Kotey and El Shafee Elsheikh, the last two of the notorious ISIS group referred to as “The Beatles” were captured by Syrian Kurd forces in eastern Syria. The group was responsible for several high-profile executions, including Alan Henning, James Foley, Steven Sotloff. Mohammed Emwazi, aka Jihadi John, was killed in a U.S. airstrike in Raqqa. The fourth member, Aine Lesley Davis, was arrested in Turkey, and is currently imprisoned.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 DHS: routers on networks susceptible
SOURCE	https://fcw.com/articles/2018/03/06/dhs-bod-cyber-routers.aspx
GIST	<p>A 2016 report from the Department of Homeland Security on network infrastructure security sheds new light on how DHS was dealing with widespread vulnerabilities in a popular router used by federal agencies.</p> <p>The report, issued in conjunction with Binding Operational Directive 16-02 and made public for the first time this week, noted that as security practices for individual computers and devices have hardened, nation-state hackers have adapted by focusing on weaker network infrastructure devices, like routers, that "are often working in the background with little oversight -- until network connectivity is broken or diminished."</p>

An increase in observable attacks on network infrastructure devices led then-DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson to issue the BOD on Sept. 27, 2016, deeming the vulnerabilities "critical." In a letter released along with the report, Johnson warned agencies that "for several years, network infrastructure devices have been the attack-vector of choice" for advanced persistent threat hacking groups to conduct denial of service attacks, data theft and alteration of data moving across federal networks.

He also made it clear that these threats were not hypothetical.

"We have witnessed our adversaries attempting to take advantage of these vulnerabilities to exploit Federal agency networks," Johnson wrote to agencies. "We anticipate that our adversaries will continue to try to take advantage of these vulnerabilities, as well as vulnerabilities we have yet to identify."

In August 2016, the report said unspecified threat actors publicly released exploits for a number of vulnerabilities related to Cisco ASA routers and other devices. That timeframe overlaps with the Shadow Brokers release of hacking tools and exploits pilfered from the National Security Agency. It also coincides with the time period when federal government officials were reporting increased threats from Russian-based hackers targeting the U.S. government and election infrastructure.

Trevor Rudolph, a cybersecurity fellow at New America and former Obama administration cybersecurity official, was involved in clearing the report's initial release to federal agencies and critical infrastructure networks in 2016. Rudolph described the level of panic about the vulnerabilities among federal officials at the time as being on par with their response to the 2015 hacking of the Office of Personnel Management.

"The threat environment is huge as you might imagine. The surface is wide, given the prevalence of these devices," Rudolph said.

According to the report, Cisco began rolling out patches to address the vulnerabilities starting in 2011, but DHS was still worried about unpatched routers throughout the federal government in September 2016, saying attackers may have continued to target unpatched devices "months or even years" after the patches became available.

A spokesperson for Cisco told FCW that the DHS report "references issues found in ASA devices that were publicly disclosed in 2014 and 2016" by Cisco and others and that the company has been working to provide patches and guidance to its customers where necessary since then.

Rudolph said device manufacturers could have addressed many of the security concerns listed in the report by automatically pushing patches and updates to their devices instead of requiring manual input.

"I think progress on security is only going to come when you address the security of the underlying technology and essentially human-proof it," he said.

Officials from DHS did not respond to questions about the timing behind the release, but Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) has been pushing the agency to make more documentation around BOD 16-02 public, telling the National Protection and Programs Directorate in a September 2017 letter that it "includes information that I believe would particularly inform the ongoing debate about cybersecurity."

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Board game aids police in cyber fight
SOURCE	https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/lego-board-game-is-polices-latest-weapon-in-fight-against-cyber-crime-36675677.html
GIST	Police have unveiled the latest weapon in the fight against cyber crime – a Lego board game. The “deliberately low-tech” toy is being used to teach businesses the potentially disastrous consequences of weak computer security measures, such as insecure passwords and out-of-date software.

Officers said there would be a “really, really significant” drop in crimes like online fraud if members of the public and businesses tightened security.

The game has already been used in sessions with companies including Tata Steel and Quintain, as well as Scotland Yard’s management team, including Commissioner Cressida Dick.

Detective Chief Inspector Gary Miles said: “By and large, individuals and organisations have the technology.

“By and large, individuals and organisations know which processes they’ve got to use – the vulnerability is the people.”

The game, developed with academics from the University of Bristol, involves teams acting as the senior management team of a company, and choosing how to spend their cyber security budget.

An expert guides them through each stage, explaining the good or bad consequences of each choice.

Since it was first used in June last year, exercises have been run with 13 companies, eight other police forces and 33 teams within the Met.

The team plan to hold another 18 events in the next two months.

Last week the Home Office warned that millions of people were “vastly underestimating” the threat of being hit by computer hackers, and failing to take even basic steps to protect themselves.

Mr Miles said: “You know what would happen if you left your front door unlocked and went out.

“In the online space, your front door is your router – do you know the result if you leave that unlocked?”

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE

03/06 Reddit: Russian trolls got into website

SOURCE

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/mar/6/reddit-admits-russian-trolls-got-into-website-duri/>

GIST

Reddit, the social media platform that has spawned some of the country’s most outrageous political conspiracy theories, has admitted its websites were penetrated during the 2016 U.S. presidential election by Russia.

According to an investigation by The Daily Beast, Russia’s notorious social media troll farm, the St. Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency (IRA), distorted political debate on Reddit.

Last month, the IRA was depicted as the centerpiece of special counsel Robert Mueller indictment of 13 Russians for interfering in the 2016 election.

The San Francisco-based Reddit, which helped give birth to the unfounded Clinton “Pizzagate” pedophile ring story and stoked suspicions over the death of DNC staffer Seth Rich, does not create any actual news or entertainment content. Instead it is purely a social news aggregator and discussion portal where members register to anonymously submit content.

Earlier this week, the firm’s co-founder Steve Huffman admitted the biggest problem was “indirect propaganda” which he argued was more complex to spot and stop.

The firm has removed “a few hundred” accounts suspected of spreading Russian propaganda, fake news and disinformation around the time of the election, Mr. Huffman wrote Monday in a blog post, adding, “of

	<p>course, every account we find expands our search a little more.”</p> <p>“As it’s an ongoing investigation, we have been relatively quiet on the topic publicly, which I know can be frustrating,” he continued. “While transparency is important, we also want to be careful to not tip our hand too much while we are investigating.”</p> <p>There is growing concern that anonymous online forums, like Reddit, have become drivers of some of the internet’s most politically extreme and racially insensitive views — essentially providing breeding grounds for hate speech, fake news and foreign efforts to sow discord. They say that because such sites have almost no humans overseeing the unfiltered user-generated discussions, anything can take off.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Hacker returns \$17M stolen Ethereum
SOURCE	https://www.hackread.com/hacker-returns-17-million-stolen-ethereum/
GIST	<p>In July of last year, an Israeli cryptocurrency venture called Coindash was preparing for the Initial Currency Offer (ICO), but as soon as the sale began, a hacker intercepted the company’s website and stole about 43,000 worth of Ethereum. At the time, the stolen cryptocurrency equivalent to the US \$ 7.4 million, but today it costs approximately US \$ 35 million.</p> <p>The incident took place when hackers breached the CoinDash’s website and replaced the official Ethereum address to a fraudulent Ethereum address. The users then sent ETH to the fraudulent Ethereum address rather than the CoinDash’s official address.</p> <p>However, it seems the hacker seems to have regretted it and there is a change of heart. Almost a year after the robbery, he returned \$ 17 million of stolen Ethereum. In September last year, about 10,000 Ethereum were returned to Coindash from the attacker’s address. Now, last Friday, he returned another 20 thousand Ethereum.</p> <p>Currently, the hacker still own 13,000 in Ethers stolen of the initial amount, which indicates that they might return more money.</p> <p>In their official blog post published on February 23rd, the company confirmed the return of the cryptocurrencies and claims that it has already informed the authorities including the Counter Cyber Terrorist Unit in Israel. In addition to continuing to track and monitor the hacker’s address in case of any suspicious activity.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Crypto-mining attacks jump 50%
SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/cryptomining-attacks-jump-50/
GIST	<p>Last year saw a 50% increase in crypto-mining malware attacks, with some hacking groups earning millions, according to new research from Kaspersky Lab.</p> <p>The Russian AV firm claimed that 2.7m users were attacked with malicious miners in 2017, up from 1.9m in 2016.</p> <p>The threat is typically spread via potentially unwanted application (PUA) partner programs, or scripts such as Coinhive being executed in the browser. Kaspersky Lab claimed to have blocked the latter 70 million times for customers in 2017.</p> <p>However, the vendor claimed that cyber-criminals are increasingly lifting tactics from the targeted attack playbook, such as process hollowing.</p> <p>“A victim may have just wanted to download a legitimate application, but instead they downloaded a PUA</p>

with a miner installer inside. This miner installer drops the legitimate Windows utility msiexec with a random name, which downloads and executes a malicious module from the remote server,” Kaspersky explained in a blog post.

“In the next step, it installs a malicious scheduler task which drops the miner’s body. This body executes the legitimate system process and uses a process-hollowing technique (legitimate process code is changed to malicious). Also, a special flag, system critical flag, is set to this new process. If a victim tries to kill this process, the Windows system will reboot. So, it is a challenge for security solutions to deal with such malicious behavior and detect the threat properly.”

Some groups are also targeting organizations to tap their greater computing power. Wannamine was spread through internal networks using an EternalBlue exploit, earning 9000 Monero (\$2m) for its authors.

In another attack, hackers apparently infiltrated a corporate network, accessed the domain controller and were then able to use domain policies to execute a malicious PowerShell script on each corporate endpoint.

Crypto-mining botnets have earned cyber-criminals \$7m in the second half of 2017 alone, with one group making \$5m mining Electroneum coins, Kaspersky Lab claimed.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Gozi Trojan turns to Dark Cloud botnet
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SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/gozi-trojan-turns-to-dark-cloud/
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GIST	The well-known and widely distributed Gozi ISFB banking Trojan has a new trick up its sleeve: It has been making use of the elusive Dark Cloud botnet for distribution in a series of recent campaigns.
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According to Cisco Talos intelligence, the campaigns started during the fourth quarter of 2017 and have continued into 2018, with new campaigns being launched every week. They’re relatively low volume and targeted to specific organizations, and some of the mails are even localized.

“They do not appear to send large amounts of spam messages to the organizations being targeted, instead choosing to stay under the radar while putting extra effort into the creation of convincing emails, in an attempt to evade detection while maximizing the likelihood that the victim will open the attached files,” researchers said in a blog.

The emails are crafted to look like part of an existing email thread, likely in an attempt to convince the victim of their legitimacy. To do this, the attackers create additional email subjects and accompanying bodies, included as “replies” with the malicious email. Out of the more than 100 malicious Word documents analyzed from the campaign, the vast majority of them are individualized.

“This is not something that is typically seen in most malicious email campaigns, and shows the level of effort the attackers put into making the emails seem legitimate to maximize the likelihood that the victim would open the attached file,” researchers said.

Interestingly, the use of the Dark Cloud infrastructure lets attackers quickly move to new domains and IP addresses, not only for each campaign but also for individual emails that are part of the same campaign. This prominent use of these so-called fast-flux techniques means that attackers can make use of an extensive network of proxies, continuously changing the address of the IP being used to handle communications to the web servers the attacker controls. Overall, Talos observed that the time-to-live (TTL) value for DNS records associated with domains used in these malware campaigns were typically set to 150, allowing the attackers to issue DNS record updates every three minutes.

In terms of geographic distribution, Talos discovered that the attackers appear to be actively avoiding using proxies and hosts located in Western Europe, Central Europe and North America; the majority of the

	<p>systems analyzed were located in Eastern Europe, Asia and the Middle East.</p> <p>Further, Gozi isn't the only one looking to Dark Cloud for distribution.</p> <p>“We identified a significant amount of malicious activity making use of this same infrastructure, including Gozi ISFB distribution, Nymaim command and control, and a variety of different spam campaigns and scam activity,” the researchers said.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	03/06 UK police employ DDoS-style attacks
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/uk-police-launch-ddos-style-attacks-to-disrupt-the-drug-trade/article/749084/
GIST	<p>U.K. police tried DDoS style attacks to disrupt service on suspected drug dealer's phones in cases where they couldn't prosecute but were looking to interfere with the drug trade.</p> <p>Although the attack works in a different way than actual DDoS attacks, the end result was nevertheless the same as the officers would use telephone companies to target individual phones using their IMEI, a unique number given to each phone, according to a Vice's Motherboard.</p> <p>A senior law enforcement officer will apply for a court order to be given to the user's telephone provider compelling the provider to restrict service to that specific device.</p> <p>“Where prosecution is not possible, the police and the NCA have been clear that closing down the phone lines will seriously disrupt county lines drug dealing and the associated violence and exploitation,” Baroness Williams of Trafford, the minister of state, said during an exchange on drug dealing telecommunication restriction orders in November 2017.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	03/06 Legal crypto-mining power concerns
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/legal-cryptocurrency-mining-operations-power-draw-creates-concern/article/749118/
GIST	<p>Illegal cryptocurrency mining has taken over as the primary money-generating methodology for many cybercriminals, but even companies attempting to mine digital currency legally are running into some problems.</p> <p>The City of Plattsburgh, New York is considering a ban on cryptocurrency mining within its city limits, not due to any illegal activity, but because the power being used to create the money could potentially cause a massive drain on the local electric grid. There is currently only a single cryptocurrency operation in the city, but another has also recently located nearby creating fears additional companies might start cropping up and taxing the power company's ability.</p> <p>Plattsburgh BTC is a bitcoin cloud mining operation that sells mining contracts to interested individuals and then distributes the funds created to those who buy in. Unlike illegal cryptocurrency mining that hijacks the processor power of unsuspecting computers by installing malware, Plattsburgh BTC is a completely legitimate operation, but its mere presence has caused the city to consider banning such operations, according to a report from WCAX.com.</p> <p>“They are not actually concerned about our energy use because we use so little, but these large operations are coming in and using huge amounts of power suddenly. And unfortunately we have been singled out as the culprit for all this because these operations are not from the area and can be hard to get ahold of,” David Bowman, CEO of Plattsburgh BTC told SC Media.</p>

<p>Return to Top</p>	<p>The city will hold a public meeting next month to discuss the potential moratorium.</p> <p>Bowman's firm operates 20 computers mining bitcoin. He and WCAX cited a larger operation in the nearby town of Massena that uses 15 megawatts of power, which is more than Plattsburgh uses, as one of the reasons these operations have popped onto the city's radar.</p> <p>Plattsburgh's mayor has not yet responded to an SC Media request for response.</p> <p>Plattsburgh's city officers are not the only government officials in the world concerned with the amount of power being used by currency miners. In January China moved to ban the practice with provincial officials being told to pressure miners to cease and desist and specifically citing energy use as the reason. China is the world's largest producer of digital currency. South Korea moved in the same direction in February.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/06 Applebee's hit by POS breach
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/applebees-hit-with-pos-breach/article/749139/
GIST	<p>RMH Franchise Holdings, which claims to be the second largest Applebee's franchisee, is warning Applebee's customers that point-of-sale malware affected 167 restaurants in 15 states.</p> <p>Franchises in Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Mississippi, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wyoming were affected in the breach.</p> <p>The company discovered the malware on Feb. 13, 2018, and took action to secure the systems, notify the authorities and contact a third-party cybersecurity firm to investigate the incident, according to a March 2, blog post. The unauthorized software was designed to capture payment card information and may have affected a limited number of purchases made at those locations, the company said.</p> <p>The exact dates of the breach vary by location but officials said customer information including names, payment card information, expiration dates and card verification codes were compromised in the incident.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	03/06 'ComboJack' steals digital payments
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/combojack-malware-steals-digital-payments-cryptocurrency-by-modifying-info-saved-to-clipboards/article/749086/
GIST	<p>Researchers have discovered a new malware that steals cryptocurrency and other electronic funds by surreptitiously modifying wallet or payment information whenever victims copy it to their devices' clipboards.</p> <p>Instead of pasting the same information that they just copied, victims instead unknowingly paste malicious wallet or payment information that was hard-coded into the malware; consequently, they end up sending funds to the cybercriminal instead of the intended party, explains a Mar. 5 blog post from Palo Alto Networks' Unit 42 threat team, whose researchers uncovered the threat late last month in tandem with fellow cybersecurity firm Proofpoint.</p> <p>The concept behind the malware, dubbed ComboJack, is that "wallet addresses are typically long and complex, and to prevent errors, most users will opt to copy an exact string in order to prevent potential errors," state blog post co-authors and researchers Brandon Levene and Josh Grunzweig. Cybercriminals are therefore counting on infected users being inattentive when they paste the modified destination information.</p> <p>According to Palo Alto, ComboJack targets four cryptocurrencies: Bitcoin, Ethereum, Litecoin and Monero. In that sense, it is very reminiscent of CryptoShuffler, another thieving malware that modifies</p>

cryptocurrency wallet information, discovered in 2017 by Kaspersky Lab. However, unlike CryptoShuffler, ComboJack also goes after digital payment systems too -- specifically, Qiwi, WebMoney (transactions in USD or rubles) and Yandex Money.

"By targeting multiple cryptocurrencies and web based wallets, the author of ComboJack appears to be hedging his or her bets on which currency will boom and which will bust," the blog post explains.

While the malware's tactic is clever, its early results don't appear impressive. While it is not possible to track the activity of all of the malicious wallets -- Monero's emphasis on privacy doesn't allow it, for instance -- the ones Palo Alto can observe have no funds in them, as of the writing of this article. "It was a pretty low-volume attack and requires quite a bit of luck on the attacker's side to properly execute, so that's likely why it has more or less been unsuccessful," Grunzweig told SC Media in an email interview.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE 03/06 Leaked NSA dump: tools to track hackers

SOURCE <https://thehackernews.com/2018/03/nsa-hackers-tracking.html>

GIST A year ago when the mysterious hacking group 'The Shadow Brokers' dumped a massive trove of sensitive data stolen from the US intelligence agency NSA, everyone started looking for secret hacking tools and zero-day exploits.

A group of Hungarian security researchers from CrySyS Lab and Ukatemi has now revealed that the NSA dump doesn't just contain zero-day exploits used to take control of targeted systems, but also include a collection of scripts and scanning tools the agency uses to track operations of hackers from other countries.

According to a report published today by the Intercept, NSA's specialized team known as Territorial Dispute (TeDi) developed some scripts and scanning tools that help the agency to detect other nation-state hackers on the targeted machines it infects.

NSA hackers used these tools to scan targeted systems for 'indicators of compromise' (IoC) in order to protect its own operations from getting exposed, as well as to find out what foreign threat actors are stealing and which hacking techniques they are using.

"When the NSA hacks machines in Iran, Russia, China and elsewhere, its operators want to know if foreign spies are in the same machines because these hackers can steal NSA tools or spy on NSA activity in the machines," the publication reports.

"If the other hackers are noisy and reckless, they can also cause the NSA's own operations to get exposed. So based on who else is on a machine, the NSA might decide to withdraw or proceed with extra caution." NSA's Territorial Dispute team maintains a database of digital signatures, like fingerprints for file and snippets from various hacking groups, to track APT operations for attribution.

According to the researchers, when the Shadow Brokers managed to hack the NSA networks and stole a collection of sensitive files in 2013, the agency was tracking at least 45 different state-sponsored APT groups.

It also appears that the NSA hackers were tracking some of the tools from Dark Hotel in 2011—that's about 3 years prior to the wider security community discovered the hacking group.

Dark Hotel is a sophisticated cyber espionage group believed to be from South Korea, well known for targeting hotel Wi-Fi networks to spy on senior-level executives at organisations in manufacturing, defense, investment capital, private equity, automotive and other industries.

The group of researchers has planned to release its findings of the NSA scripts and scanning tools this week at the Kaspersky Security Summit in Cancun, which would help other researchers to dig through the

	data and identify more of the APT groups the NSA is hunting.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Ransomware hits Colorado DOT again
SOURCE	http://www.darkreading.com/attacks-breaches/second-ransomware-round-hits-colorado-dot/d/d-id/1331197
GIST	<p>Getting hit by ransomware is expensive and embarrassing. Getting hit twice in a two-week period makes it much worse. That's the situation in which the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) finds itself after a second wave of SamSam ransomware hit while the department was still in the process of cleaning up from the first attack.</p> <p>In the first attack, over 2,000 computers running Windows and McAfee security software were taken offline after their files were encrypted. Approximately 20% of those systems had been brought back into service when a variation of the original ransomware struck in a second wave of attacks. All affected computers were once again taken offline as employees of the department reverted to pen and paper to complete routine tasks.</p> <p>In an interview with the Denver Post, Brandi Simmons, a spokeswoman for the state's Office of Information Technology said, "The variant of SamSam ransomware just keeps changing. The tools we have in place didn't work. It's ahead of our tools."</p> <p>Dozens of staff members from Colorado's Office of Information Technology, the Colorado National Guard, and the FBI are working to get the systems back online. There is no current timeline for having all systems restored to service.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Connected cars new security challenges
SOURCE	http://www.darkreading.com/endpoint/connected-cars-pose-new-security-challenges/a/d-id/1331166
GIST	<p>Very few objects are as personal to their owners as their cars. But today's cars have grown beyond a form of self-expression and turned into our personal concierges, navigating the best routes, making our dinner reservations, and potentially reserving parking spots ahead of our arrival. But with all the advantages connected vehicles can bring to our lives, they can also potentially expose us to security risks.</p> <p>Security risks for networked computers are nothing new, but connected cars present new challenges precisely because, although cars have long been largely computerized, they weren't networked. Many parts of cars — like the accelerator pedal or the turn signal — are designed to feel mechanical despite being run by tiny microprocessors that are connected through a network within the vehicle. Even so, vehicle software security hasn't really been a concern because cars have always been isolated and self-contained entities. Now that they connect to the Internet, they expose a new attack surface. How can we secure these connected vehicles that are now accessing our networks?</p> <p>It's too early to tell how vehicle connectivity may impact an enterprise and it may seem absurd to think about a car as an enterprise network endpoint, but some luxury vehicle brands already have office productivity tools in-dash. Using the car as a workstation will only increase in popularity as autonomous driving replaces manual driving. In addition to the in-dash email, cars are also providing Wi-Fi hotspots and interfaces like Apple iOS CarPlay and Google Android Auto, which make our cars look and act more like our phones, raising the same kinds of concerns that are present with mobile devices in personal life and for the enterprise.</p> <p>Autonomous driving isn't limited to making knowledge workers' windshield time more productive. Logistics companies, for example, will benefit tremendously from autonomous vehicles, but imagine an attacker compromising and shutting down those vehicles: the results would be disastrous not only to the</p>

logistics company but to all of the businesses that rely on them as a vendor. The same could be true for any business that relies heavily on connected vehicles.

Cautionary Tales

There are already cautionary tales about networked vehicles from other industries. Airlines, for example, were surprised when a security researcher claimed to have used an in-flight entertainment system to access the flight-control computers and modify a plane's behavior. This was possible because there was insufficient segmentation between the networks supporting the critical functions and the networks supporting ancillary services. While accounts differ about the nature and severity of the incident, it's clear that ubiquitous and unrestricted connectivity creates unintended risk.

Of course, conducting such an attack requires the attacker to be on the plane. But that wouldn't necessarily be the case if there was an Internet connection available. To improve vehicle security, we must segment out the subsystems, separating entertainment and concierge services from the systems responsible for vehicle operation. This will ensure that neither is a gateway to the others and they don't interact or affect one another. As intravehicle networks evolve and mature, even more segmentation may become desirable, but minimally it is necessary for two segments: one for systems and communications critical to the function of the vehicle, and one for "everything else."

The telecom industry — with its stringent requirements for uptime and wide variety of services — has done a relatively good job of designing networks that separate critical operations from noncritical ones, as well building in resilience and mechanisms that prevent network abuse. The automotive industry could borrow these segmented network security concepts for use in their own factories in which the cars are built, for example the mission-critical machines and the computers that operate them reside on one protected network, while systems supporting less important front-office functions, such as email and file servers, reside on separate networks.

It's unclear whether the automotive industry acknowledges this as a problem. If one out of 20 million produced cars malfunctions, that is statistically insignificant and may not be enough to drive major change. Ideally, auto companies would take their own initiative, benefiting from models established by organizations like state Bar Associations or The American Medical Association which prescribe requirements and standards of behavior for their membership. They could even create an industry-specific standards framework as the payment card industry did with the PCI Data Security Standard.

Ultimately, auto companies should treat this as a product safety feature in much the way that they do with seatbelts, air bags, and all the mechanical components of their product; they must ensure that they have clearly defined preventative and remedial maintenance procedures for the useful lifespan of their products.

While we are still a way off from hackers redirecting vehicles, or entering an enterprise network through a connected car, the technology is evolving and the infrastructure is forming to make these concerns a reality in the coming years. By taking cues from other industries that have navigated these channels, the auto industry has an opportunity to get ahead of the demand for security that is sure to come with innovation.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Dangerous sources of cybercrime
SOURCE	https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/cybersecurity/pinpointing-dangerous-sources-cybercrime/
GIST	<p>Now that 3 companies and 13 individuals from Russia have been indicted for U.S. election interference, the general American populace has insight into a problem that has been growing for years: Russia has little respect for the law. In fact, based on a recent study on the Economic Impact of Cybercrime CSIS undertook with McAfee, Russia leads the world in cybercrime. This reflects both the skill of its hacker community and its disdain for western law enforcement.</p> <p>The complex and close relationship between the Russian state and organized crime means that Russia</p>

provides a sanctuary for the most advanced cybercriminals, who focus on the financial sector. The best cybercriminals in the world live in Russia, and as long as they do not travel to countries where they could be arrested, they are largely immune from prosecution. For example, one of the cybercriminals who hacked Yahoo at the behest of Russian intelligence services, compromising millions of accounts and transferred the PII to the Russian government, also used the stolen data for spam and credit card fraud for personal benefit.

Yet Russia is hardly the only country specializing in cybercrime; China, North Korea, and Iran are right up there. The combination of massive budgets, access to talent and protection from law enforcement make nation-states the most dangerous source of cybercrime, which our report estimates takes about a \$600 billion toll on the global economy.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Atomwaffen loses services, platforms
SOURCE	http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20180306-atomwaffen-extremist-group-whose-members-have-been-charged-in-five-murders-loses-some-of-its-platforms
GIST	<p>At least four technology companies have taken steps to bar Atomwaffen Division, a violent neo-Nazi organization, from using their online services and platforms to spread its message or fund its operations.</p> <p>The action comes after ProPublica reports detailing the organization’s terrorist ambitions and revealing that the California man charged with murdering Blaze Bernstein, a 19-year-old college student found buried in an Orange County park earlier this year, was an Atomwaffen member.</p> <p>Activists and journalists with other media outlets have criticized the tech firms — among them chat services, web merchants, social media channels and gaming platforms — for enabling the outfit, which has members in 23 states and Canada, records show.</p> <p>Discord Discord was designed to allow video gamers to communicate with one another while immersed in multiplayer online games, but over the past year it has been co-opted by white supremacists who have used it to share bomb-making manuals, plot the violent confrontations in Charlottesville, Virginia, and, in the case of Atomwaffen, revel in the killing of Bernstein.</p> <p>Scattered across the country, Atomwaffen members relied on Discord to disseminate confidential information and make organizational plans.</p> <p>After ProPublica obtained more than 250,000 Discord messages posted by Atomwaffen members and reprinted excerpts of those messages as part of our 23 Feb article, Discord quickly shut down the group’s server.</p> <p>YouTube and Steam Atomwaffen had long posted its propaganda videos, which are full of violent imagery and racist messaging, on YouTube, where the group had its own channel. Then Motherboard, the Daily Beast, and the Anti-Defamation League took on the video-sharing giant.</p> <p>As the Daily Beast noted, Atomwaffen seemed to be in clear violation of YouTube’s policy on hate speech, which bans videos made with “the primary purpose of inciting hatred against individuals or groups based on certain attributes, such as: race or ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender, age, veteran status, sexual orientation/gender identity.”</p> <p>At first, YouTube balked at pulling down the videos, which call for “race war now” and the mass murder of Jews. But on 28 February, the company reversed its position and terminated the Atomwaffen channel.</p> <p>Still, a second channel maintained by the group, SIEGEtv, which promotes Nazi ideology, is online and</p>

active.

Motherboard, an arm of Vice Media, also discovered that there was an Atomwaffen group on the community discussion board of Steam, a gaming platform.

“The group only has 17 members, but their accounts are a disturbing grab bag of Nazi imagery and Atomwaffen-style propaganda,” Motherboard reported. “The group’s description section clearly states its racist worldview. One member has used the screen name ‘PURE ARYAN 100%,’ and uses a photo of South Carolina mass murderer Dylann Roof as his avatar.”

Valve, the parent company of Steam, has deleted the group.

Inktale

Until recently, Atomwaffen used Inktale, an online t-shirt retailer, to fund its operations through the sale of Nazi-themed t-shirts. Shirt designs celebrated figures like Charles Manson and Atomwaffen’s ideological inspiration, longtime Nazi James Mason. (The t-shirt with Mason’s image read “Give hate a chance.”)

On 24 February, Twitter users began confronting the company.

The next day Inktale quit selling the shirts.

The company told ProPublica that “Inktale reserves the right to review, and if necessary remove, any content from the site.”

“In this case, the user in question violated part 3 of the Acceptable Content Policy (<https://inktale.com/content-policy>), thus their profile and products were deleted.”

The on-demand t-shirt printer said it has systems in place to keep organizations like Atomwaffen from using its services, “but we also appreciate anyone reporting inappropriate content to our team from the outside, and we take such claims very seriously.”

Cloudflare

The San Francisco-based company provides anti-hack protection to two Atomwaffen websites: AtomwaffenDivision.org and SiegeCulture.com. As part of that protection, Cloudflare obscures the name of the hosting company providing Atomwaffen with space on the internet.

Cloudflare, which sells services to some 7 million websites, said it has no control over the content on those sites and doesn’t plan to stop doing business with Atomwaffen. From the company’s perspective, it’s up to the web hosts, domain registrars and ISPs to decide if they want to yank Atomwaffen’s sites, said Cloudflare general counsel Doug Kramer.

“We don’t want to be put in the position of being judge and jury on our own,” said Kramer, noting the struggles of much larger outfits like YouTube and Facebook to identify unacceptable content. “We’ve seen that we get some legitimate complaints and we get some that aren’t on the up-and-up — that are people going after other people with whom they disagree.”

However, on at least one occasion, Cloudflare has cut ties with a Nazi site: In August 2017, days after the deadly white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, the company ousted The Daily Stormer, an avowedly racist and anti-Semitic news site.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE 03/06 Judge: virtual currencies commodities

SOURCE <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-cftc-bitcoin/virtual-currencies-are-commodities-u-s-judge-rules-idUSKCN1GI32C>

<p>GIST</p>	<p>NEW YORK (Reuters) - Virtual currencies like bitcoin can be regulated as commodities by the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission, a federal judge ruled Tuesday.</p> <p>U.S. District Judge Jack Weinstein in Brooklyn ruled that the CFTC had standing to bring a fraud lawsuit against New York resident Patrick McDonnell and his company Coin Drop Markets, allowing the case to go forward.</p> <p>Weinstein also entered a preliminary injunction barring McDonnell and Coin Drop Markets from engaging in commodity transactions.</p> <p>McDonnell, who is representing himself, declined to comment on the decision.</p> <p>The CFTC, which is tasked with regulating commodity, futures and derivatives markets, first determined that virtual currencies, also known as cryptocurrencies, are commodities in 2015.</p> <p>Weinstein upheld that determination on Tuesday, saying it was supported by the plain meaning of the word "commodity" and that the CFTC had broad leeway to interpret the federal law regulating commodities.</p> <p>In its lawsuit, announced in January, the CFTC said that since about January 2017, McDonnell and his company fraudulently offered customers virtual currency trading advice.</p> <p>In fact, the agency said, the customers never received the advice they paid for, and that Coin Drop Markets was never registered with the CFTC. It said that McDonnell took down the company's website and stopped responding to customers.</p> <p>Regulation of virtual currencies is still in its early stages. Congress has not passed any laws addressing it directly. Both the CFTC and Securities and Exchange Commission have warned of the need to combat fraud in the virtual currency markets.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

<p>HEADLINE</p>	<p>03/06 Hate groups use ISIS online tactics</p>
<p>SOURCE</p>	<p>http://abcnews.go.com/US/hate-groups-similar-online-recruiting-methods-isis-experts/story?id=53528932&cid=clicksource_81_4_article%20roll_articleroll_hed</p>
<p>GIST</p>	<p>Some alt-right and white supremacist groups are using the same online recruiting tactics pioneered by ISIS, al Qaeda and other foreign-based extremist groups to grow their ranks.</p> <p>John Cohen, an ABC News consultant and former acting Homeland Security undersecretary, notes that many of these groups – both foreign and domestic – appeal to the same type of person in the same type of way.</p> <p>"All of these extremist groups promote an agenda that focuses on fighting those who are victimizing them and that resonates with these individuals who all believe that they have personally been victimized in their own lives," Cohen said in an interview.</p> <p>The most recent possible example is the Parkland, Florida, school rampage. After the deadly Feb. 14 shooting, it was reported that shooter Nikolas Cruz had a swastika on one of the ammunition magazines found at the school, a law enforcement source told ABC News. Cruz's public defender, Howard Finkelstein, later said anti-Semitic postings made by Cruz were discovered by investigators after the shooting, which left 17 students and staff from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School dead.</p> <p>"When you see someone falling off the grid, what happens is they have less and less connection to what you and I know as reality. They become more and more connected to other people who fall off the grid. And that's why it's not a surprise that when you got nothing you end up in some, you know, skinhead</p>

Aryan Nazi hate-Jew group. So it fits the picture that everybody should have seen here," Finkelstein said.

Oren Segal, the director of the Anti-Defamation League's center on extremism, reiterated that the online propaganda for hate groups mirrors the way that ISIS and other extremist groups, who, he says "were sort of early adopters to technology," have been trying to approach Americans for years.

"What we have seen in, I'd say the last two years, is the white supremacists and in particular the alt-right finding new ways to exploit social media platforms [and] recruit adherents to make use of the tools that are pretty much available to anyone," Segal said.

The Internet "has never been the sole domain of ISIS or al Qaeda. White supremacist propaganda has been available the way that ISIS and al Qaeda propaganda has been available online for years," Segal said, noting "there's more accessibility ... than ever before."

Cohen pointed to slickly produced videos, almost like music videos or movie trailers, that ISIS and similar groups create with the "underlying message [of] 'join our cause, you will be a part of our family and your life will have meaning.'" Cohen said that thematically similar videos featuring footage of protesters carrying tiki torches in Charlottesville were "posted throughout the white supremacist social media world" after the August protest.

Ryan Lenz, a spokesperson for hate group watchdog organization the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project, told ABC News "the Internet is a place of both passive and active radicalization."

"ISIS as an organization has a very deliberate and systematic means of reaching out to people online. The alt-right does so in a very different fashion. More often than not, people stumble into an ideology on the far right," Lenz said.

Both Segal and Lenz pointed to Dylann Roof, the Charleston church shooter who killed nine people in 2015, as another example of a young American man who became fascinated with racist ideologies. During a police interview that was later shown in court, Roof said that he was reading about the Trayvon Martin case online and "for some reason I typed in 'black on white crime' and ever since then" he had looked into race issues.

The SPLC released its annual report called "The Year in Hate & Extremism" last month and noted how large online audiences for white supremacist groups had grown. Specifically looking at The Daily Stormer, which the SPLC called "rabidly racist and anti-Semitic," the report stated that the site averaged 140,000 unique page views a month in the summer of 2016 but had reached 750,000 unique monthly views in August of 2017, before the violent rally in Charlottesville.

"When you look at how the white nationalist movement has evolved in the United States in the last, say five years, there is no doubt that the Internet has become a principle grounds for recruit and radicalization," Lenz said.

[Return to Top](#)

Terror Conditions

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Pulse nightclub shooter eyed Disney?
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/06/us/pulse-shooting-mateen-scouted-other-sites/index.html
GIST	(CNN)The Pulse nightclub may not have been Omar Mateen's first choice as a place to carry out a mass shooting, but other sites he drove to the same night -- including Disney properties -- appear to have had tighter security. According to court documents filed in US District Court on Monday, the 29-year-old security guard may have been considering other targets, and the final selection of the Pulse appears to have been made based

on the lack of security -- not because it was a gay club.

These revelations and others in the defense motion outline for the first time some of the government's evidence surrounding the shooting, which it plans to use in the trial of Mateen's widow, Noor Salman. Here's a description of Mateen's actions the night of the attack, culminating in his death:

About 10 p.m. on June 11, 2016, Mateen went to Disney Springs, just outside Orlando. The shopping and dining complex would likely have been busy on that warm Saturday evening, with families and groups of friends walking around or waiting in line to get into some of the more popular spots.

Security camera video and police records show the outdoor venue was well secured, with several uniformed police officers walking around, the court documents said.

About two hours later, according to cell tower data investigators used to determine Mateen's path that night, he drove near Walt Disney World's Epcot. It's another popular tourist attraction for families, and was probably busy on the balmy weekend night.

Then, at 12:22 a.m. on June 12, Mateen searched Google for "downtown Orlando nightclubs." A club called EVE Orlando and the Pulse nightclub showed in the results, and he got directions from Google Maps to EVE, which bills itself as a high-end nightclub and upscale lounge. EVE features DJs and live music, and is located in a busy downtown area, close to several other clubs and restaurants.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/07 TSA adjusts to 'lone wolf' tactics
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/trafficandcommuting/as-terrorists-turn-to-lone-wolf-attacks-tsa-adjusts-its-tactics/2018/03/06/555f74bc-213c-11e8-94da-ebf9d112159c_story.html?utm_term=.efb6e0142cbb
GIST	<p>The face of terrorism has evolved from the coordinated, carefully plotted events of 9/11 to a helter-skelter approach where lone wolves use low-tech means to attack soft targets, according to one of the officials charged with keeping the traveling public safe.</p> <p>“We face ambitious adversaries who are continuously looking for a point of attack and waiting for us to slip up,” Transportation Security Administration chief David Pekoske said in remarks prepared for delivery at George Washington University on Wednesday.</p> <p>Adapting his agency to grapple with solo operators who may claim allegiance to a cause without having genuine connections to a terrorist group has been Pekoske’s focus since taking over as head of the TSA in August.</p> <p>“Today we are confronted by a current of less-sophisticated techniques and tactics, where lone wolves, radicalized on the Internet, are using inexpensive, low-tech methods to target civilians,” Pekoske said, describing his vision of an increasing need to be nimble in response to threats.</p> <p>The emergence of vehicles plowing into crowds in London, Barcelona and Nice, France, in acts of terrorism has underscored the public’s vulnerability. Three U.S. incidents in the past 18 months — on the Ohio State University campus, during a white-nationalist demonstration in Charlottesville and in New York City — have demonstrated that terrorists in the United States have embraced the use of vehicles as weapons.</p> <p>The public face of the 60,000-member TSA is at airport security checkpoints, but the agency’s mandate is to protect all modes of transportation against attacks, monitoring rail stations, transit systems and bus terminals.</p> <p>A January 2017 attack taught the TSA another lesson when an arriving passenger in the airport in Fort</p>

Lauderdale, Fla., picked up a checked bag, loaded a handgun in the adjacent restroom, and emerged to shoot and kill five people and wound six more.

In an attack almost a year earlier in the Brussels Airport, suicide bombers exploded devices in the unsecured check-in lines, killing more than 20 passengers headed for flights.

“We can no longer focus only on preventing the bad guys from getting into the secure area of an airport,” Pecoske said in the prepared remarks. “We must focus on both sides of the checkpoint and in the public areas where airport and surface transportation systems intersect.”

Behind the scenes, the agency also maintains a worldwide intelligence network coordinated with other federal agencies, including the FBI, the CIA and the National Security Agency.

That intelligence capacity was nurtured under two previous TSA administrators — Peter V. Neffenger and former FBI deputy director John S. Pistole — and Pecoske said he would continue to rely on the intelligence apparatus in shaping the TSA’s strategies.

“When our adversaries evolve, they concede that we have been successful today and that they have not given up on attacking us tomorrow,” Pecoske said.

Terrorism expert Brian Michael Jenkins, who advises the Rand Corp. and co-wrote “The Long Shadow of 9/11: America’s Response to Terrorism,” said it is difficult to explain why the United States has not seen the sort of terrorist attacks Europe has experienced.

“The question as to why something hasn’t happened is harder to answer than why something has,” he said in an interview last year. “We’re actually living in comparatively tranquil times [in the United States]. We haven’t seen anything up to the level of Madrid or London or Brussels.”

Jenkins said that the chance of falling victim to terrorism in the United States is slender but that each attack has the effect desired by the terrorist.

“When you look at the odds of being a victim of terrorism, you’re talking about lottery odds,” he said. “You’re put in a situation of apprehension. The message is that nowhere is safe. It has a tremendous psychological effect. That’s what terrorism is all about.”

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/07 Turkey: US must halt Kurds into Syria
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/08c55fcb15a044a89ff9029b1d3e3819/Turkey-calls-on-US-to-halt-Kurdish-redeployment-in-Syria
GIST	<p>ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey is calling on the United States to prevent U.S.-backed Kurdish forces from sending fighters deployed against the Islamic State group to shore up Kurdish forces battling a Turkish offensive in an enclave in northwest Syria.</p> <p>President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s spokesman said Wednesday that Turkey wants the United States to “step in and prevent” the redeployment.</p> <p>A spokesman for Arab militias within the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces said Tuesday that as many as 1,700 fighters would be redeployed.</p> <p>Turkey sent troops into the Afrin enclave on Jan. 20 to drive out Syrian Kurdish fighters it considers to be terrorists.</p> <p>U.S. officials have warned that Turkey’s offensive could undermine the fight against the IS.</p>

	Erdogan's spokesman, Ibrahim Kalin, rejected that, saying the aim was to clear Syria of all terror groups.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Pakistan: US should end Afghan war
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/mar/6/pakistan-official-us-should-end-afghanistan-war-ta/
GIST	<p>ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — The United States must abandon any hope of winning the war in Afghanistan on the battlefield and seek a peace deal with the Taliban, Pakistan's top national security official said Tuesday.</p> <p>“End the suffering of Afghanistan and of its people. Let us seek the closure of the conflict instead of winning it,” Pakistani National Security Adviser Nasser Khan Janjua, a former army general, said during an exclusive roundtable with reporters in the Pakistani capital.</p> <p>President Trump's blueprint released last summer for the Afghanistan conflict, now in its 17th year, called for an escalated American military effort to force the radical Islamist Taliban to the bargaining table, but Mr. Trump questioned the idea of negotiations after a string of deadly Taliban and Islamic State strikes this year.</p> <p>The State Department says the U.S. government backs a peace process proposed by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani Feb. 28 that would allow the Taliban to organize as a political party if it agrees to end its insurgency and joins the political process. The U.S. has consistently rejected the Taliban's demands for direct talks between Washington and the terrorist group and the immediate withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops from Afghanistan.</p> <p>Mr. Janjua called for the U.S. to forgo any hope of military victory amid reports that the U.S.-backed government in Kabul controls less than 60 percent of the war-torn country in the face of a resurgent Taliban.</p> <p>“It is not possible for the U.S. to win back 44 percent of Afghanistan,” he said, speaking at Pakistan's National Security Division headquarters. “Let us resolve [the war] politically. Let us reconcile. How long do we want to continue to fight in Afghanistan?”</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 German eco-terrorists in acid attack?
SOURCE	http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20180306-ecoterrorists-suspected-in-acid-attack-on-german-energy-executive
GIST	<p>German ecoterrorists are the main suspects in an acid attack on a German energy executive, which has left him badly injured.</p> <p>Bernhard Günther, the CFO of energy giant RWE's green subsidiary, Innogy, was struck as he crossed a park in Haan, a well-to-do suburb of Düsseldorf, on Sunday.</p> <p>“We are deeply shocked,” said Innogy chairman Uwe Tiggs. “Our thoughts are with Bernhard and his family and we wish him a speedy recovery.”</p> <p>Der Spiegel reports that two unknown perpetrators were seen pouring acid over the 51-year-old's face before fleeing the scene on foot, witnesses said. A statement Günther made to police confirmed the witnesses' account.</p> <p>Günther managed to make it to his nearby apartment, and called for help. He was rushed to hospital with life-threatening injuries. His doctors say his condition is now stable.</p>

	<p>Düsseldorf police said they were investigating “in every direction.”</p> <p>The mass-circulation newspaper Bild reported that investigators were looking to see whether the attack was part of the ongoing fight between environmentalists and RWE over a stretch of old forest between the western German cities of Cologne and Aachen.</p> <p>Spiegel notes that the Hambach Forest, which is over 12,000 years old, is rich in biodiversity relative to other forests in Germany. More than 90 percent of the forest has already been cut to make room for development. Since 2012, environmentalist groups and RWE have been in conflict over the company’s open-pit lignite mine on the site, which is the largest in Europe.</p> <p>Over the last decade, the fight to save the forest has galvanized German environmentalists, who have staged demonstrations, human chains, and a series of occupations in the forest in efforts to stop mining company vehicles from entering the woods on their way to the lignite mine.</p> <p>This was not the first attack on Günther, according to the authorities. The 51-year-old was also assaulted and beaten up several years ago.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	03/07 Syrian rebels defiant: will defend Ghouta
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ghouta/syrian-rebels-say-will-defend-ghouta-not-negotiating-withdrawal-idUSKCN1GJ0LS?il=0
GIST	<p>BEIRUT (Reuters) - Syrian rebels in eastern Ghouta will defend the territory and there are no negotiations over a withdrawal that has been proposed by Russia, the military spokesman for one of the main eastern Ghouta rebel groups said on Wednesday.</p> <p>“There are no negotiations about this subject. The factions of Ghouta and their fighters and its people are holding onto their land and will defend it,” Hamza Birqdar told Reuters in a text message.</p> <p>Russia, President Bashar al-Assad’s most powerful ally, has offered to give rebel fighters safe passage out of eastern Ghouta, near the capital, Damascus, with their families and personal weapons.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	03/06 Utah: arrest in school bomb threat
SOURCE	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2018/03/06/utah-high-school-bomb-threat-suspect-arrested-linked-vandalism/401934002/
GIST	<p>ST. GEORGE, Utah — A male high school student has been arrested for manufacturing, possessing, and attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction after Pine View High students spotted a "suspicious backpack" on campus.</p> <p>St. George Police Department officers also believe the suspect is connected to vandalizing Hurricane High School last month by replacing the school's American flag with an ISIS flag and painting "ISIS is comi—" on one of its exterior walls with graffiti.</p> <p>According to a Police Department news release, members of the FBI, Washington County Bomb Squad, Washington County Sheriff's Office, Washington County School District, and a bomb-detecting K-9 responded to Pine View at around 12:20 on Monday after a student noticed a backpack in a common area on campus that appeared to be smoking.</p> <p>The student notified a teacher and the school resource officer on duty.</p>

<p>Return to Top</p>	<p>"After examining the device, bomb squad members indicated that if it had detonated, the device had the potential to cause significant injury or death," according to the news release.</p> <p>Pine View was evacuated that afternoon while officials investigated the contents of the backpack and determined it had the potential to cause significant harm, and the device was disarmed.</p> <p>A warrant was eventually executed on the home of the individual in question, who attended classes at Pine View.</p> <p>St. George police discovered materials inside his residence that were consistent with those used to build the device that was placed on Pine View's campus. According to police, it was a failed attempted to detonate a homemade explosive at the school.</p> <p>The search warrant also revealed the student had been researching information about ISIS and promoting the organization online.</p> <p>According to the news release, the Hurricane City Police Department plans to file charges for the suspect's reported involvement in the ISIS-related vandalism on Feb. 15. As of Tuesday afternoon, the juvenile is being held on the sole charge stemming from the Pine View High school incident.</p>
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HEADLINE	03/07 Turkey detains suspects plotting attack
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/turkey-detains-13-militants-suspected-plotting-attack-53573838?
GIST	<p>Turkey's state-run news agency says police in the southern city of Adana have detained 13 Islamic State suspects who were allegedly plotting attacks on a number of buildings in the city, including the U.S. Consulate.</p> <p>Anadolu Agency says police detained the suspects Wednesday in simultaneous dawn raids at homes, using battering rams to break down doors at some locations. Twelve of the suspects are Syrian nationals, the agency said.</p> <p>The raids came days after police in the Turkish Black Sea coastal city of Samsun detained four Iraqi IS suspects while investigating a possible plot against the U.S. Embassy in the capital Ankara, forcing the American facility to close.</p> <p>Turkey suffered a series of deadly terror attacks in 2015 and 2016 carried out by IS or Kurdish rebels.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	03/06 Suspect on 'jihad' admits killing 3 in WA
SOURCE	https://www.seattlepi.com/news/crime/article/Man-accused-of-terrorism-pleads-guilty-to-killing-12731809.php
GIST	<p>NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — A man prosecutors said was on a "jihad" to avenge U.S. policy in the Middle East pleaded guilty Tuesday to killing a college student in New Jersey and admitted killing three more people in Washington state.</p> <p>The Essex County prosecutor's office said Tuesday that Ali Muhammad Brown admitted shooting 19-year-old Brendan Tevlin in late June 2014 as Tevlin sat at a traffic light in West Orange, a few miles from Newark.</p> <p>Brown, a 34-year-old former Seattle resident, pleaded guilty to multiple charges, including murder, robbery and terrorism. He was the first person charged with terrorism connected to a homicide under a</p>

	<p>New Jersey law.</p> <p>Jury selection began last week for Brown's anticipated trial in New Jersey, and opening statements had been expected to begin next week. He notified prosecutors of his decision to plead guilty Tuesday.</p> <p>"It appeared he wanted to make himself something of a martyr," Assistant Essex County Prosecutor Jamel Semper said. "He is not. He is just an invented killer who destroyed lives and hurt families. He was clearly radicalized online and took up arms against the country — his own country that gave him constitutional protections and allowed him to appear in court and throw himself at the mercy of the court."</p> <p>During Tuesday's court hearing, Brown also took responsibility for killing three people in Washington: two young men who were shot in Seattle shortly after they left a gay nightclub in June 2014, and a man killed outside Seattle two months earlier. Brown said he killed the two in Seattle because he believed they were gay.</p> <p>Semper said Brown would have to formally plead guilty in Washington state for those cases to be resolved.</p> <p>The killings "were part of an overarching plan to kill Americans" in retaliation for what Brown contended were "millions of lives" the U.S. had taken in the Middle East, Semper said.</p> <p>In court papers filed in Seattle in 2014, authorities said Brown described himself to detectives after his New Jersey arrest as a strict Muslim who had become angry with the U.S. government's role in Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. He claimed the government's actions led to the deaths of innocent civilians and children.</p> <p>In a subsequent recorded interview in New Jersey, Washington authorities wrote, Brown described his idea of a "just kill," in which the target was men unaccompanied by women, children or elderly people.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	03/06 UN: Russia, US airstrikes killed civilians
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/03/06/russian-us-air-strikes-in-syria-caused-mass-civilian-deaths-un-says.html
GIST	<p>A significant number of civilians in Syria were killed by Russian and U.S.-led coalition air strikes last year, according to a new report from United Nations war crimes investigators.</p> <p>Their latest report, which covers the six months that ended Jan. 15, states that “victims of the Syrian conflict have suffered greatly as violence countrywide re-escalated to new heights.”</p> <p>The U.N. investigators called on Russia and the U.S. to probe their actions, which they claim violated international law.</p> <p>According to the report, an air strike by a “Russian fixed-wing aircraft” last November hit a market and killed at least 84 people just west of Aleppo in a so-called “de-escalation zone” that was declared by Russia, Iran and Turkey.</p> <p>Although the U.N. body found no evidence that the Russian strike had intentionally targeted the market, it said “this attack may amount to the war crime of launching indiscriminate attacks resulting in death and injury to civilians,” which is the first time the U.N. has explicitly implicated Moscow in potential war crimes.</p> <p>The report found that U.S.-led coalition strikes on a school near Raqqa in March 2017 killed 150 residents, or about five times the toll announced by the Pentagon, which claimed that dozens of militants and not civilians had been killed.</p>

	No ISIS members were in the school nor using the school as a base, the report states, refuting U.S.-led coalition claims at that time.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Russian cargo plane crashes in Syria
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/03/06/russian-cargo-plane-crashes-in-syria-killing-39-military-says.html
GIST	<p>A Russian cargo plane crashed in Syria on Tuesday, killing all 39 people onboard, Russia's Defense Ministry said.</p> <p>The An-26 plane crashed while attempting to land at Khmeimim Air Base, located near the Syrian coastal city of Latakia. The plane, carrying 33 passengers and six crew members, was 1,600 feet from the runway. Reports initially said there were 26 passengers on the plane. The people aboard the plane were Russian servicemen.</p> <p>The military said preliminary reports indicated the deadly crash was caused by a technical error.</p> <p>"The plane was not shot down," the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation reported, according to Russia's REN TV.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Man on 'jihad' admits NJ killing; 3 others
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/us/2018/03/06/man-accused-terrorism-pleads-guilty-to-killing-student.html
GIST	<p>NEWARK, N.J. – A man prosecutors said was on a "jihad" to avenge U.S. policy in the Middle East pleaded guilty Tuesday to killing a college student in New Jersey and admitted killing three more people in Washington state.</p> <p>The Essex County prosecutor's office said Tuesday that Ali Muhammad Brown admitted shooting 19-year-old Brendan Tevlin in late June 2014 as Tevlin sat at a traffic light in West Orange, a few miles from Newark.</p> <p>Brown, a 34-year-old former Seattle resident, pleaded guilty to multiple charges, including murder, robbery and terrorism. He was the first person charged with terrorism connected to a homicide under a New Jersey law.</p> <p>Jury selection began last week for Brown's anticipated trial in New Jersey, and opening statements had been expected to begin next week. He notified prosecutors of his decision to plead guilty Tuesday.</p> <p>"It appeared he wanted to make himself something of a martyr," Assistant Essex County Prosecutor Jamel Semper said. "He is not. He is just an invented killer who destroyed lives and hurt families. He was clearly radicalized online and took up arms against the country — his own country that gave him constitutional protections and allowed him to appear in court and throw himself at the mercy of the court."</p> <p>During Tuesday's court hearing, Brown also took responsibility for killing three people in Washington: two young men who were shot in Seattle shortly after they left a gay nightclub in June 2014, and a man killed outside Seattle two months earlier. Brown said he killed the two in Seattle because he believed they were gay.</p> <p>Semper said Brown would have to formally plead guilty in Washington state for those cases to be resolved.</p> <p>The killings "were part of an overarching plan to kill Americans" in retaliation for what Brown contended</p>

	<p>were "millions of lives" the U.S. had taken in the Middle East, Semper said.</p> <p>In court papers filed in Seattle in 2014, authorities said Brown described himself to detectives after his New Jersey arrest as a strict Muslim who had become angry with the U.S. government's role in Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. He claimed the government's actions led to the deaths of innocent civilians and children.</p> <p>In a subsequent recorded interview in New Jersey, Washington authorities wrote, Brown described his idea of a "just kill," in which the target was men unaccompanied by women, children or elderly people.</p> <p>Brown currently is serving a 35-year sentence for an armed robbery committed before the Tevlin murder.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	03/06 Burkina Faso: 8 arrests after attacks
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/burkina-faso-authorities-arrest-jihadist-attacks-53557291?cid=clicksource_76_4_article%20roll_articleroll_hed
GIST	<p>Authorities in Burkina Faso say they have arrested eight Burkinabe nationals in connection with last week's attacks on army headquarters and the French Embassy.</p> <p>Prosecutor Maizan Sereme announced Tuesday that two of the suspects are current soldiers. Another is a former soldier who was kicked out of the military after a 2011 mutiny.</p> <p>Officials have said that eight assailants were killed during the violence Friday in the capital, Ouagadougou, four attackers at each location.</p> <p>Others suspect there was inside help because the jihadists attacked a room where top army officials were to have been at the time. Instead, their meeting location had been changed at the last minute, preventing a more serious loss of lives of top officers.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	03/06 Canadian pleads guilty terror charge
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/canadian-man-pleads-guilty-us-terror-charges-53561792?cid=clicksource_76_4_article%20roll_articleroll_hed
GIST	<p>A Canadian man pleaded guilty Tuesday to U.S. charges that he sent money and provided long-distance support to Tunisian jihadists believed responsible for a 2009 suicide attack in Iraq that killed five American soldiers. The deal could spare him a term of life behind bars.</p> <p>Faruq Khalil Muhammad 'Isa entered the plea in federal court in Brooklyn for a murder conspiracy charge that carried a maximum life sentence. He instead faces a 26-year prison term followed by deportation as part of the deal that a judge still must sign off on.</p> <p>Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter Baldwin told the judge that prosecutors met in person with the families of each of the victims before agreeing to a sentence the government believes "will serve to punish (the defendant) and deter others, while also requiring the defendant to admit his participation in these heinous acts."</p> <p>Defense attorney Mildred Whalen said in a statement: "We are mindful of how difficult this case is for so many, but think that the proposed plea agreement would be an appropriate resolution of the case."</p> <p>Muhammad 'Isa, 50, is a Canadian citizen and Iraqi national who was arrested in 2011 on a U.S. warrant after an investigation by authorities in New York, Canada and Tunisia. He was held in Edmonton, Alberta, until he lost an extradition fight in 2015.</p>

An extradition request cited wiretap evidence and an interview of Muhammad 'Isa that U.S. authorities claim linked him to the terror network that used a suicide bomber to detonate an explosives-laden truck outside the gate of the U.S. base in Mosul, Iraq, on April 10, 2009, killing the soldiers.

During the interview, Muhammad 'Isa admitted he corresponded by email with two of the jihadists while they were in Syria, and that they were on a mission to kill Americans, the paperwork said. The documents allege he corresponded with "facilitators" who were trying to get the attackers into Iraq, and wired one of them \$700.

U.S. authorities alleged that the day after the attack on the U.S. base, Muhammad 'Isa asked in an electronic communication, "Did you hear about the huge incident yesterday? Is it known?" He also identified the bomber as "one of the Tunisian brothers," to which a facilitator responded, "Praise God."

Muhammad 'Isa told investigators in the interview that by "huge incident" he meant an explosion, the papers said.

No sentencing date was set.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

Suspicious, Unusual

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 FBI paid Geek Squad as informants
SOURCE	https://www.cnet.com/news/fbi-paid-geek-squad-staff-to-be-informants-documents-show/
GIST	<p>FBI agents paid employees in Best Buy's Geek Squad unit to act as informants, documents published Tuesday reveal.</p> <p>Agents paid managers in the retailer's device repair unit to pass along information about illegal content discovered on customers' devices, according to documents posted online by the Electronic Frontier Foundation. The digital rights group sued the FBI for the documents last year after the bureau denied a Freedom of Information Act request.</p> <p>The EFF filed the lawsuit to learn the extent to which the agency trains and directs Best Buy Geek Squad employees to conduct warrantless searches of customers' devices during maintenance. The EFF said it was concerned that use of repair technicians to root out evidence of criminal behavior circumvents people's constitutional rights.</p> <p>What the EFF found was that the agency's relationship with Geek Squad employees goes back at least a decade. An FBI memo from 2008 describes a meeting between Best Buy employees and the agency's "Cyber Working Group" at the company's Kentucky repair facility.</p> <p>The memo describes how Best Buy employees gave agents a tour of the facility and went on to say the bureau's Louisville Division "has maintained close liaison with the Geek Squad's management in an effort to glean case initiations and to support the division's Computer Intrusion and Cyber Crime programs."</p> <p>Another document shows the FBI approved a \$500 payment to a "confidential human source" whose name was redacted. The EFF said the payment appears to be one of many connected to the prosecution of Mark Rettenmaier, a Southern California doctor accused of possessing child pornography after he sent in his computer to Best Buy for repairs.</p> <p>The EFF said the documents detail investigation procedures in which Geek Squad employees would contact the FBI after finding what they believed to be child pornography on a customer's device.</p> <p>The EFF said an FBI agent would examine the device to determine whether there was illegal content present, and if so, seize the device and send it to the FBI field office closest to where the customer lived.</p>

	<p>Agents would then investigate further, and in some cases try to obtain a warrant to search the device.</p> <p>Best Buy said last year that three of the four employees who may have received payment from the FBI are no longer employed by the company. The fourth was reprimanded and reassigned.</p> <p>Best Buy didn't immediately respond to a request for comment but told CNET sister site ZDNet that Geek Squad employees inadvertently discover suspected child pornography on customers' computers nearly 100 times a year.</p> <p>"We have a moral and, in more than 20 states, a legal obligation to report these findings to law enforcement," Best Buy said in a statement. "We share this policy with our customers in writing before we begin any repair.</p> <p>"As a company, we have not sought or received training from law enforcement in how to search for child pornography. Our policies prohibit employees from doing anything other than what is necessary to solve the customer's problem. In the wake of these allegations, we have redoubled our efforts to train employees on what to do -- and not do -- in these circumstances."</p> <p>The FBI didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	03/06 Arrested students can return to schools
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/918303/students-return-school-arrests/
GIST	<p>Some students arrested for making threats, or even bringing weapons to school, are often allowed and encouraged by state and federal laws to return to the same school weeks later.</p> <p>Parents and students at Bonney Lake High School reached out to KIRO 7 in February, saying a student returned to class after he was arrested the previous semester for carrying a loaded handgun to school and allegedly making threats to use it. Bonney Lake police confirmed the arrest and the discovery of the loaded pistol.</p> <p>"I know my parents got a safety note from the school the day he was arrested," said "Ronda," a BLHS junior who wished to remain anonymous. "Then, last month, he was right back in school. We were like, why is he back here? Why were our parents not warned?"</p> <p>Frustrated parents turned to a discussion page on Facebook. Among the 200 comments, one wrote, "Am I the only parent who is concerned that BLHS allowed the boy who brought the gun to school back in class? This is crazy!"</p> <p>Rhonda said BLHS teachers, who seemed willing to discuss the arrest the day it happened, told students they were not allowed to talk about the conditions of the student's return. The Sumner School District told KIRO 7 student privacy laws prevented them from sharing specific information, but the situation was "handled." The district did not return phone messages March 5.</p> <p>How do different groups define school shootings?</p> <p>Under the Federal Gun Free Schools Act and a similar state law (RCW 28A.600.420) a student "shall be expelled from school for not less than one year" for firearms violations. But the laws also allow that district superintendent "may modify the expulsion of a student on a case-by-case basis."</p> <p>But according to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), special education students with known disabilities are given more federal rights to continue their education after being disciplined. That means, by law, a student could return to the same school within 45 days, even if they're accused of making threats, or bringing a weapon to school — if the school determines the behavior happened because of the</p>

disability.

A legal expert with OSPI said special exceptions are made for students with an IEP (Individualized Education Program).

According to Washington state law, "Students eligible for special education, in general, may not be removed from her/his educational placement for more than 10 school days in a row or be subjected to a series of removals that total more than 10 school days in a year."

"The exception to the rule, however, is when your student's misbehavior involves 'Special Circumstances' — weapons, illegal drugs, or serious bodily injury. Your student may be removed for up to 45 school days regardless of whether your student's behavior was a manifestation of her/his disability."

School shooting threats have been made in Blaine, Bremerton, Eatonville, Spanaway Lake, Tacoma, Renton and Seattle since the massacre in Florida last month. Some have resulted in student arrests, but privacy laws prevent school districts from revealing specific details about students with an IEP.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Suspicious Russian deaths in UK
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/06/europe/russia-deaths-uk-intl/index.html
GIST	<p>London (CNN)Questions are swirling over how a Russian official turned British spy and his daughter ended up slumped over a shopping center bench in southern England on Sunday after "suspected exposure to an unknown substance," as police say.</p> <p>Seregi Skripal, 66, and his daughter, Yulia Skripal, 33, are in critical condition, and while authorities have given few details of what happened to them, their case is a chilling reminder of a slew of mysterious Russia-linked deaths on British soil over the last decade.</p> <p>Alexander Litvinenko</p> <p>A British inquiry found that two Russian agents poisoned Alexander Litvinenko at a London hotel bar in 2006 by spiking his green tea with the highly radioactive polonium-210.</p> <p>Litvinenko died a slow and painful death over weeks after the poisoning and always insisted that Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Kremlin were responsible for what happened to him.</p> <p>In a statement from his deathbed, he said: "You may succeed in silencing one man, but the howl of protest from around the world will reverberate, Mr. Putin, in your ears for the rest of your life."</p> <p>Officials have always dismissed the accusation as "nonsense," but suspicions linger. The inquiry, led by judge Robert Owen, said that Putin "probably approved" the ex-spy's killing.</p> <p>The Kremlin has always denied the accusation, as did the two agents accused of the poisoning, whom the Russian government refuses to extradite to Britain.</p> <p>Litvinenko had worked for the FSB, Russia's successor agency to the KGB, the former Soviet secret police and intelligence agency. He specialized in tackling organized crime and his last job at the agency was heading up its anti-corruption department, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a position that made him many enemies.</p> <p>After leaving the FSB, Litvinenko blamed the service for orchestrating a series of apartment bombings in Russia in 1999 that left hundreds dead and led to Russia's invasion of Chechnya later that year.</p> <p>He went to the UK in 2000 after turning whistle-blower on the agency. According to his widow, Marina Litvinenko, he then started working for Britain's security services.</p>

Boris Berezovsky

The powerful Russian oligarch Boris Berezovsky was found dead in 2013 on the bathroom floor of his home in Berkshire, on the western outskirts of London. British police said at the time they found no sign of a struggle, suggesting the oligarch had taken his own life.

Berezovsky had his enemies. He blamed the Kremlin for Litvinenko's death and had fallen out with the government, leaving him self-exiled in the UK. But by the time of his death at age 67, the oligarch was reportedly in financial difficulties after he was ordered to pay a massive divorce settlement to his ex-wife, as well as legal costs following the loss of a \$6.5 billion lawsuit against fellow oligarch Roman Abramovich.

He had made a good portion of his money from luxury car sales, but his wealth and political influence skyrocketed when he bought into Russian media.

Within months of Putin's election in 2000, the government began trying to collect on tax claims against oligarchs, including Berezovsky. He fled to Britain and was later granted political asylum there, irking Moscow.

Berezovsky began agitating from Britain against Putin, calling for a coup to oust the Russian President. Berezovsky was convicted of fraud and tax evasion in absentia by a Russian court in 2007. He accused Russia of trying to assassinate him. But, months before his death, Russia confirmed Berezovsky sent a letter to Putin asking permission to return to Russia.

"He admitted that he had made a lot of mistakes, asked forgiveness for the mistakes and asked Putin to let him return home," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said, according to a duty officer with the presidential press service.

It's unknown whether Putin responded to the letter, but Berezovsky did not return.

Alexander Perepilichnyy

Alexander Perepilichnyy was a financier who provided evidence of alleged fraud against Russian tax officials. He died suddenly in 2012 at the age of 44 while jogging back to his home in Surrey, southwest of London.

It first appeared that the whistle-blower had died of natural causes, but evidence has emerged over recent years suggesting he may have been poisoned.

In 2015, plant toxicology experts from the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew told a coroner's court that traces of a rare plant poison, gelsemium, were found in his stomach. In 2017, evidence emerged that he may have had poison slipped in his sorrel soup, a popular Russian dish he had eaten shortly before his death.

Police would say later, that they found no evidence that he was poisoned.

Perepilichnyy was helping in a case to uncover a multimillion dollar Russian money-laundering operation at the time of his death.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Yakima school bans backpacks, purses
SOURCE	http://q13fox.com/2018/03/06/citing-increased-violence-yakima-high-school-bans-students-from-bringing-backpacks-purses/
GIST	YAKIMA, Wash. -- Granger High School announced Tuesday that it will no longer allow students to bring backpacks, purses or other school bags "that can be used to conceal weapons, drugs or alcohol."

	<p>The school administration cited "the increased school violence in the Yakima Valley" for the policy change, which will take effect on Monday, March 12.</p> <p>"We understand this is an inconvenience," the school said on its Facebook page, "but our main concern is that school is a safe place for learning."</p> <p>It said that students can use transparent grocery bags, laundry mesh bags "or other similar transparent items" for PE and sports clothes.</p> <p>The school said that any students who continue to bring backpacks "will have a letter sent home and disciplinary measures will be enforced."</p> <p>Some students say the move doesn't really help solve the problem.</p> <p>"I mean, I'm sure there could be better ones (ideas) than taking our backpack privileges away, because if you really wanted to bring drugs or weapons ... you really would do it," said one student.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	03/05 Alarming: digital media manipulation
SOURCE	http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2018/03/05/digital-media-manipulation/
GIST	<p>NEW YORK (CBSNewYork) — Forget the idea of “seeing is believing.” New technology is making digital media manipulation easier than ever.</p> <p>The result? Phony videos that are popping up across the web.</p> <p>One video making the rounds is of former-President Barack Obama delivering a speech that he never actually made. It’s part of a video trend circulating the internet called Deepfake, which has made it tougher to tell what’s real and what’s not.</p> <p>“It’s very concerning because as people get better with this software we’re able to not just use celebrities, they’re able to use a neighbor in a video and compromise that person,” FITECH Senior Vice President Duarte Pereira said.</p> <p>Pereira says in recent months, the videos started appearing on Reddit. They’re created by a program called Fake App, which superimposes videos of one person’s face on another person’s body.</p> <p>“The way they do it is they identify things in your face like your eyebrows, nose as they break your face down into smaller pieces,” tech expert Ram Jayaraman said.</p> <p>Until recently, the artificial intelligence video technology was only used by major Hollywood productions. Social media apps like Snapchat have made the face-morphing technology all too easy to obtain.</p> <p>Experts are worried it could have serious moral implications, like framing people for crimes or putting celebrities’ faces on pornographic performers.</p> <p>There’s also concern the technology could be used to circulate fake news and smear politicians.</p> <p>Reddit took steps to ban a number of Deepfake groups that had tens of thousands of members, but experts say people are still accessing the tool on the dark web.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	03/06 China spends more on domestic security
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/china-spends-more-on-domestic-security-as-xis-powers-grow-

[1520358522](#)

GIST

BEIJING—China has substantially increased spending on domestic security, official figures show, reflecting mounting concern about threats inside its borders as President Xi Jinping moves to acquire more power and reassert the authority of the Communist Party.

Beijing's budgets for internal and external security have grown faster than the economy as a whole for several years, but domestic security spending has grown far faster—to where it exceeds the national defense budget by roughly 20%.

Across China, domestic security accounted for 6.1% of government spending in 2017, the Ministry of Finance said. That translates into 1.24 trillion yuan (\$196 billion) and compares with 1.02 trillion yuan in central-government funding for the military.

The numbers, revealed in an annual budget report released this week, help illustrate the scale of a recent intensification of security and surveillance across China, particularly in Xinjiang and Tibet, minority-heavy areas on the country's periphery.

The spending numbers are “very consistent with the heavy securitization that's going on,” said Adrian Zenz, a lecturer at the European School of Culture and Theology in Germany who discovered the numbers in Monday's report and whose research into Chinese security spending is due to be published soon by the Jamestown Foundation.

In Xinjiang the government has woven a web of surveillance, with checkpoints, high-definition cameras, facial scanners and street patrols; the region spent \$9.1 billion on domestic security in 2017, a 92% increase from 2016, according to local government budget data.

Spending across the country on domestic security rose 12.4% last year; in 2016, spending increased 17.6%, official data show.

The budget for domestic security covers regular and paramilitary police, courts, prosecutors and prisons. Chinese authorities are experimenting with cutting-edge tracking tools, tapping social-media accounts to punish politically incorrect speech and, in some places, trying to get residents to inform on each other using smartphone apps.

The Finance Ministry stopped including the domestic-security budget in its annual report in 2013, after media reports highlighted its growth. This year, the number appeared only as a percentage of the total budget in a graph and wasn't mentioned in the text. It isn't clear why the ministry decided to publish the number again.

The security escalation is particularly striking in Xinjiang, in China's far west, where the government has armed tens of thousands of police with the latest technology. Cameras and checkpoints blanket the region's cities and villages, and street patrols use hand-held devices to scan ID cards and smartphones.

Authorities have invested in data platforms used to identify “unsafe” members of the region's Uighur population, and in construction of a network of detention centers.

Per capita security spending in Xinjiang and the Tibetan Autonomous Region to the south are comparable to the national average in the U.S., with adjustments for differences in costs for personnel and equipment, said Mr. Zenz. The U.S. spends around \$520 per person on policing and other forms of law enforcement, Mr. Zenz said.

Chinese officials say the increase in surveillance in Xinjiang and Tibet is necessary to snuff out separatist movements among minority groups they say are influenced by hostile forces abroad. Human-rights groups say discriminatory policies in both regions are partly to blame for ethnic strife and that the heavy security exacerbates the tension.

	<p>China’s military is also investing to develop its capabilities and this week unveiled its largest annual increase in outlay in three years—an 8.1% rise, after a 7% bump in 2017.</p> <p>That pales with the ramp-up in policing at home. “Growth in China’s defense budget remains in the single digits, and broadly in line with economic conditions,” said William Choong, an Asian security specialist at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, a global affairs think tank. “A one-percentage-point increase isn’t much to shout about.”</p> <p>In China, as in many other countries, actual spending on internal and external security is likely higher than official budget numbers suggest, according to Mr. Zenz and other analysts.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	03/06 Report: endangered animal trade
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/06/asia/traffic-report-africa-asia-wildlife-trade-intl/index.html
GIST	<p>Hong Kong (CNN)Asia's appetite for exotic animal products extends far beyond ivory and rhino horn.</p> <p>In little over a decade, more than a million live animals and plants, many of them endangered, along with a similar number of animal skins and thousands of tons of meat have been legally exported from Africa to Asia, according to a new report from the wildlife monitoring organization Traffic.</p> <p>The report says that almost 1,000 at risk but legally exportable species have been transported from dozens of African nations to countries in East and Southeast Asia between 2006 to 2015.</p> <p>"Until now the legal wildlife trade between Africa and Asia has been largely overlooked but Traffic's new study aims to fill in some of the blanks in our understanding of this vast, complex and legitimate intercontinental exchange of natural resources," said Willow Outhwaite, co-author of the study.</p> <p>While not illegal, the trade examined by Traffic includes species classed as Appendix I — the most endangered -- and Appendix II, defined as "not necessarily threatened with extinction, but may become so unless trade is closely controlled," by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) -- an international treaty.</p> <p>Traffic spokesman Richard Thomas while says it's crucial to ensure that trade in wild animals and plants is legal, but it's "absolutely critical" that that trade is kept within sustainable limits.</p> <p>"Measures must be in place to be certain species are not being over-harvested. This is the goal that all government departments managing wildlife trade must strive to attain," Thomas said.</p> <p>As many as 41 countries and territories in Africa were involved in the export of live animals, plants and animal products to 17 different countries across Southeast East and East Asia, the report found.</p> <p>Among the 975 species exported were the Ball Python and Leopard Tortoise, both of which are listed by CITES as "not necessarily threatened with extinction, but may become so unless trade is closely controlled."</p> <p>The bulk of these two species were exported to Hong Kong during the period examined by the report.</p> <p>Elsewhere the report, which used CITES trade information to compile its data, Traffic found that more than 50 tons of Hippopotamus teeth were exported from Uganda and Tanzania; Namibia exported the highest number of mammal skins, mostly from Cape Fur Seals; and South Africa was the biggest single exporter of both live birds and mammals, as well as plants.</p> <p>More than 1.3-million live animals and plants, 1.5-million skins and two thousand tonnes of meat were exported from a wide range of African countries, and while species raised in captivity made up an</p>

	increasing proportion of exported specimens.
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Duterte scoffs at ICC jurisdiction
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-drugs-icct/philippines-duterte-says-not-in-a-million-years-does-icc-have-right-to-try-him-idUSKCN1GJ0ER
GIST	<p>MANILA (Reuters) - Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has said there is no chance of him going on trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC), because “not in a million years” would it have jurisdiction to indict him.</p> <p>The fiery-tempered leader is the subject of a Philippine lawyer’s complaint to the ICC accusing him of making killing “best practice” in his ferocious 19-month-old war on drugs.</p> <p>The ICC last month said it had started a preliminary examination to establish whether it had jurisdiction, and if crimes against humanity had been committed.</p> <p>“You cannot acquire jurisdiction over me, not in a million years,” Duterte said in a speech late on Tuesday.</p> <p>“That is why I don’t respond to them. That’s the truth.”</p> <p>He added: “Believe it. They cannot ever, ever hope to acquire jurisdiction over my person.”</p> <p>Duterte has previously called the ICC “useless” and “hypocritical”, the kind of comments that have maintained his appeal among voters drawn by his defiance and maverick style.</p> <p>Though he says he would be open to any investigations by the United Nations and ICC, he last week told security forces they should not cooperate with them.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Data: visa waivers rarely granted
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-travelban-exclusive/exclusive-visa-waivers-rarely-granted-under-trumps-latest-u-s-travel-ban-data-idUSKCN1GI2DW
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON/NEW YORK (Reuters) - In the first weeks after President Donald Trump’s latest travel ban was implemented on Dec. 8, around 100 waivers were granted to thousands of applicants for U.S. visas from the eight countries subject to its restrictions, according to State Department data provided to Reuters.</p> <p>Between Dec. 8 and Jan. 8, more than 8,400 people applied for U.S. visas from Chad, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Syria, Somalia, Yemen and Venezuela, the countries listed in the ban.</p> <p>Of those, 128 applicants qualified for visas because they fell into categories exempted from the ban, according to a letter from the State Department sent last month to U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen, a Democrat. Exemptions to the ban are made for lawful permanent residents of the United States and certain other categories of applicants.</p> <p>The ban contains a provision that those who do not qualify for exceptions can be considered for waivers in special circumstances, such as a need for urgent medical care or to accommodate adoptions. Waivers can also be granted to those previously granted visas who want to return to employment or studies in the United States. Significant business obligations or close U.S. family ties can also be taken into consideration for a waiver.</p>

As of Feb. 15 only two of the initial month's applicants had been approved for the waivers, according to the letter, which was seen by Reuters. Since then, more than 100 additional waivers have been granted, the State Department told Reuters on Tuesday. It was not clear how many of those additional waivers went to applicants from the initial month.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the issue. A State Department official said the policy is being implemented as called for in the president's proclamation.

Six of the eight countries included in the ban are majority Muslim. The Trump administration has said the travel ban is needed to protect U.S. residents from terrorism.

Courts struck down the first two versions of the Republican president's travel ban, and the current one is narrower in scope than its predecessors. The Supreme Court will consider its legality this spring, and a decision is expected in June.

Many visa applications from the eight countries were denied even before the travel ban. And since it took effect, more than 1,700 of the 8,400 visa applications were denied for reasons other than the travel ban, according to the State Department's data.

Exact comparisons with previous years are not possible, because data is not available for all types of visa applications. But for the 2016 federal fiscal year, State Department data shows that applicants from the eight countries were refused tourist and business visas, called B visas, at rates of between 15 percent and 64 percent, depending on the country. North Koreans had the lowest rate of denials, while Somalis had the highest. In the first month after the travel ban took effect, more than 95 percent of U.S. visa applications from the countries were denied.

Attorneys representing applicants abroad who were turned down for visas say consular officials have not clearly explained why their clients did not qualify for waivers.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Arctic's warmest winter on record
SOURCE	https://www.seattlepi.com/news/science/article/Not-so-big-chill-Arctic-finishes-warmest-winter-12732576.php
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (AP) — Winter at the top of the world wimped out this year.</p> <p>The Arctic just finished its warmest winter on record. And sea ice hit record lows for this time of year, with plenty of open water where ocean water normally freezes into thick sheets of ice, new U.S. weather data show.</p> <p>Scientists say what's happening is unprecedented, part of a global warming-driven vicious cycle that likely plays a role in strong, icy storms in Europe and the U.S. Northeast.</p> <p>"It's just crazy, crazy stuff," said Mark Serreze, director of the National Snow and Ice Data Center in Boulder, Colorado, who has been studying the Arctic since 1982. "These heat waves, I've never seen anything like this."</p> <p>It's been so unusually warm that the land weather station closest to the North Pole — at the tip of Greenland — spent more than 60 hours above freezing in February. Before this year, scientists had seen the temperature there rise above freezing in February only twice before, and only ever so briefly. Last month's record-hot temperatures at Cape Morris Jesup have been more like those in May, said Ruth Mottram, a climate scientist at the Danish Meteorological Institute.</p> <p>But it's more than that one place. Across the Arctic Circle in Barrow, Alaska, February was 18 degrees (10 degrees Celsius) warmer than normal and the entire winter averaged 14 degrees (7.8 degrees Celsius)</p>

above normal. Of nearly three dozen different Arctic weather stations, 15 of them were at least 10 degrees (5.6 degrees Celsius) above normal for the winter, according to data from climatologist Brian Brettschneider of the International Arctic Research Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Meteorologists consider December, January and February to be winter, and Arctic weather stations averaged 8.8 degrees (4.9 degrees Celsius) warmer than normal for the season that just ended. The air above the Chukchi and Bering seas near Alaska averaged about 20 degrees (11 degrees Celsius) warmer than normal for February, the data center reported.

"The extended warmth really has kind of staggered all of us," Mottram said.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Hindu nationalists rewrite India history
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/india-modi-culture/
GIST	<p>NEW DELHI - During the first week of January last year, a group of Indian scholars gathered in a white bungalow on a leafy boulevard in central New Delhi. The focus of their discussion: how to rewrite the history of the nation.</p> <p>The government of Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi had quietly appointed the committee of scholars about six months earlier. Details of its existence are reported here for the first time.</p> <p>Minutes of the meeting, reviewed by Reuters, and interviews with committee members set out its aims: to use evidence such as archaeological finds and DNA to prove that today's Hindus are directly descended from the land's first inhabitants many thousands of years ago, and make the case that ancient Hindu scriptures are fact not myth.</p> <p>Interviews with members of the 14-person committee and ministers in Modi's government suggest the ambitions of Hindu nationalists extend beyond holding political power in this nation of 1.3 billion people - a kaleidoscope of religions. They want ultimately to shape the national identity to match their religious views, that India is a nation of and for Hindus.</p> <p>In doing so, they are challenging a more multicultural narrative that has dominated since the time of British rule, that modern-day India is a tapestry born of migrations, invasions and conversions. That view is rooted in demographic fact. While the majority of Indians are Hindus, Muslims and people of other faiths account for some 240 million, or a fifth, of the populace.</p> <p>The committee's chairman, K.N. Dikshit, told Reuters, "I have been asked to present a report that will help the government rewrite certain aspects of ancient history." The committee's creator, Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma, confirmed in an interview that the group's work was part of larger plans to revise India's history.</p> <p>For India's Muslims, who have pointed to incidents of religious violence and discrimination since Modi took office in 2014, the development is ominous. The head of Muslim party All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen, Asaduddin Owaisi, said his people had "never felt so marginalised in the independent history of India."</p> <p>"The government," he said, "wants Muslims to live in India as second-class citizens."</p> <p>Modi did not respond to a request for comment for this article.</p> <p>Helping to drive the debate over Indian history is an ideological, nationalist Hindu group called the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). It helped sweep Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party to power in 2014 and now counts among its members the ministers in charge of agriculture, highways and internal security.</p>

The RSS asserts that ancestors of all people of Indian origin - including 172 million Muslims - were Hindu and that they must accept their common ancestry as part of Bharat Mata, or Mother India. Modi has been a member of the RSS since childhood. An official biography of Culture Minister Sharma says he too has been a “dedicated follower” of the RSS for many years.

Referring to the emblematic colour of the Hindu nationalist movement, RSS spokesman Manmohan Vaidya told Reuters that “the true colour of Indian history is saffron and to bring about cultural changes we have to rewrite history.”

Balmukund Pandey, the head of the historical research wing of the RSS, said he meets regularly with Culture Minister Sharma. “The time is now,” Pandey said, to restore India’s past glory by establishing that ancient Hindu texts are fact not myth.

Sharma told Reuters he expects the conclusions of the committee to find their way into school textbooks and academic research. The panel is referred to in government documents as the committee for “holistic study of origin and evolution of Indian culture since 12,000 years before present and its interface with other cultures of the world.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Britain warns Russia on mystery illness
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-russia/britain-warns-russia-over-double-agents-mysterious-illness-idUSKBN1GH2UX
GIST	<p>SALISBURY, England (Reuters) - Britain warned Russia on Tuesday of a robust response if the Kremlin was behind a mysterious illness that has struck down a former double agent convicted of betraying dozens of spies to British intelligence.</p> <p>Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson named Sergei Skripal, once a colonel in Russia’s GRU military intelligence service, and his daughter Yulia as the two people who were found unconscious on Sunday on a bench outside a shopping center in southern England.</p> <p>Skripal, 66, and his 33-year-old daughter were exposed to what police said was an unknown substance in the city of Salisbury. Both are still critically ill in intensive care, police said.</p> <p>“We don’t know exactly what has taken place in Salisbury, but if it’s as bad as it looks, it is another crime in the litany of crimes that we can lay at Russia’s door,” Johnson told the British parliament.</p> <p>“It is clear that Russia, I’m afraid, is now in many respects a malign and disruptive force, and the UK is in the lead across the world in trying to counteract that activity.”</p> <p>Prime Minister Theresa May was briefed at a meeting of the National Security Council on the investigation into the incident, her spokesman said without elaborating.</p> <p>If Moscow were shown to be behind Skripal’s illness, Johnson said, it would be difficult to see how UK representation could go to the World Cup in Russia in a normal way. A government source said that meant attendance of ministers or dignitaries.</p> <p>Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Johnson’s comments were “wild”.</p>
Return to Top	

Crime, Criminals

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Machete attack in Paris restaurant
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SOURCE	http://en.rfi.fr/france/20180306-machete-attack-paris-restaurant-leaves-man-critically-injured
GIST	<p>A man was fighting for his life in a Paris hospital Tuesday after being attacked with a machete and a sword while having dinner in a restaurant with his wife, investigators said.</p> <p>The attack took place shortly after nightfall in the city's 10th arrondissement, home to a large South Asian community.</p> <p>Diners watched in horror as two assailants stormed the restaurant and struck the 35-year-old man of Sri Lankan origin in the head and arm before fleeing.</p> <p>The man was rushed to hospital in a critical condition and was reportedly "scalped".</p> <p>A source close to the probe said on Tuesday that investigators suspected a settling of scores in the Sri Lankan community.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Ghost Face gangsters charged in Ga.
SOURCE	https://www.ajc.com/news/crime--law/ghost-face-gangsters-indicted-federal-drug-charges/eBGjxOIPSc5QyJFIS1EFDP/new.html
GIST	<p>Some 23 members of the notorious Ghost Face Gangsters have been indicted for their roles in a drug-trafficking scheme, the U.S. Attorney's Office said Tuesday.</p> <p>Federal, state and local investigators discussed the arrests at a news conference at Cobb County police headquarters. The arrests include three leaders of the prison-based gang, which has been in Georgia more than 20 years.</p> <p>According to the Anti-Defamation League, there are at least 100 white supremacist prison gangs operating in the U.S., and Georgia is home to at least three, including the Ghost Face Gangsters. The group originated in California in the 1970s, according to the ADL, but an original founding member started the Georgia group in 1998.</p> <p>The same gang has also been linked to high-profile cases, including the June shooting deaths of two prison guards in Putnam County.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Massive Baton Rouge drug prosecution
SOURCE	http://www.newschannel10.com/story/37660081/us-attorney-41-indicted-in-massive-baton-rouge-area-drug-prosecution
GIST	<p>BATON ROUGE, LA (WAFB) -The U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana announced the largest drug prosecution in the history of his office during a press conference in Baton Rouge Tuesday morning.</p> <p>U.S. Attorney Brandon Fremin along with local law enforcement leaders announced that a grand jury indicted 41 people with over 80 counts of offenses involving drugs and firearms. Authorities say the arrests were made last week.</p> <p>"This is not about filling jails. It is not about filling prisons. It's about assuring our communities and neighborhoods are safe," said Fremin.</p> <p>All but two of the defendants are from the Baton Rouge area. Those two defendants are from Hattiesburg, Mississippi.</p>

According to the indictment, the middle district's organized crime and drug trafficking task force seized heroin, cocaine, crack cocaine, firearms, luxury vehicles, and over a million dollars in drug-related proceeds.

One of the indictments noted during phone conversations and text messages, some of the suspects referred to cocaine by using words like girl, white girl, soft, and sugar bear. Code words used for crack cocaine were hard, boil, and boy. Words like brown, dog food, white, H, and whatcha-ma-call-it were allegedly used to refer to heroin. DEA Assistant Special Agent in Charge Brad Byerley says the dope lead investigators to a big money trail.

“We are talking about a major drug trafficking organization and if you want to call it a gang, you can call it a gang. We look at this as a group of individuals whose purpose is to peddle dope on our streets,” Fremin said during the news conference.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Baja California Sur hit by violence
SOURCE	https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/expanding-mexico-violence-baja-california-sur/
GIST	<p>After years of flying beneath the organized crime radar, the state of Baja California Sur in Mexico has fallen into a spiral of bloodshed during the past 12 months, sparked by a broader underworld upheaval involving two of the country’s most powerful crime groups.</p> <p>Best known to the rest of the world as home to the Los Cabos beach resorts, Baja California Sur has experienced a surge in violence in the last year. As a February report from Justice in Mexico details, the number of murders in the state leapt to 560 in 2017, a nearly 300 percent increase over the 192 registered the prior year.</p> <p>Baja California Sur is Mexico’s second-least populous state, with just over 700,000 inhabitants. But its 2017 murder rate of 78.6 per 100,000 residents was the second-highest figure in the nation — more than triple the national average of 22.5 per 100,000.</p> <p>This represents a sudden acceleration of a long-building trend. For most of the 2000s, Baja California Sur registered somewhere between 25 and 50 murders per year. In 2014, however, the state set a local record with 70 murders. The following year, the figure climbed to 151. Now, the state is one of Mexico’s most deadly on a per capita basis.</p> <p>Much of the violence has been the sort of pseudo-military spectacle typically associated with places like Juárez and Acapulco. In January, for instance, videos of an intense gun battle that lasted half an hour in the state capital La Paz were uploaded to the internet. After the event, five alleged members of a criminal group were detained in possession of an arsenal of high-powered weapons and tactical gear.</p> <p>The killings have been accompanied by surges in other illicit activities associated with organized crime, such as extortion.</p> <p>This wave of violence has tested the social fabric. In October 2017, hundreds of municipal police in La Paz threatened to walk off the job in protest of the termination of 65 officers who failed anti-corruption measures. Local civic organizations have called for the resignation of top security officials, and the state’s attorney general left his post in December. A former governor labeled the worsening situation a “crisis of insecurity” following the murder of a human rights activist in November last year.</p> <p>InSight Crime Analysis</p> <p>According to the Justice in Mexico report, the violence in Baja California Sur is one of the many ripples in the criminal landscape generated by the arrest and extradition of Sinaloa Cartel kingpin Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán.</p>

Two competing factions, one led by Guzmán’s sons and another by an influential lieutenant named Dámaso López, alias “Licenciado,” have fought to take over the organization following El Chapo’s demise, with neither side achieving success. This has fueled violence across the expanse of territory the Sinaloa Cartel has dominated, including Baja California Sur.

López’s clique has persisted even after his arrest in May 2017. It also sought support from the Jalisco Cartel New Generation (Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación – CJNG), which has emerged as one of the largest organizations in the country over the past several years. This has served to aggravate the challenges, as the group’s gunmen have inundated Baja California Sur and its northern neighbor, Baja California.

The bloodshed in Baja California Sur is part of a broader dynamic of rising criminal violence across the nation. The CJNG’s emergence coupled with the Sinaloa Cartel’s deterioration has upended stability in many previously peaceful areas. Baja California Sur is one example. Another is Colima, a tiny Pacific state that was previously an afterthought in the criminal landscape but now has the highest murder rate in the nation. The dramatic spike in killings there has also been linked to the CJNG-Sinaloa Cartel conflict.

What this shows is that the violence in Mexico is metastasizing. Not only is the nation more violent than at any other point in its recent history, but the bloodshed has invaded more of the country. In 2010, in contrast, nearly 20 percent of the total murders occurred in a single state (Chihuahua), the vast majority of them in a single city (Juárez) whose residents accounted for just a bit more than one percent of the nation’s total population.

This made it possible to argue that the security challenges, while dramatic, were largely isolated. This was never a winning argument, but it is far less true today.

It does not appear that the government strategy reflects this evolution. The response in Baja California Sur has been to flood the area with soldiers and marines. The government sent 1,000 troops to the state in April 2017, and military leaders announced plans to build a new barracks in La Paz in February, which will be a permanent deployment of 600 combat troops starting in August.

Such an approach not only has a dubious track record in stemming the tide of violence elsewhere, but it is also less viable the more widely the violence is dispersed. If the whole nation is a hotspot, it is difficult to concentrate resources in a way that produces a significant impact.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Top-50 most violent cities in world 2017
SOURCE	http://www.businessinsider.com/most-violent-cities-in-the-world-2018-3
GIST	<p>In 2017, Latin America retained the ignominious distinction of having the most cities on Mexico's Citizens' Council for Public Security's annual ranking of the world's most violent cities.</p> <p>Of the 50 cities on the list, 42 are in Latin America, including 17 in Brazil, 12 in Mexico, and five in Venezuela. Colombia had three, Honduras had two, and El Salvador, Guatemala, and Jamaica all had one.</p> <p>The region's violence is in large part driven by drug trafficking and organized crime— in Mexico, fragmentation of criminal groups has stoked more bloodshed in recent months. Insecurity is also exacerbated by political instability, poverty, and poor economic conditions. Corruption, abuses by officials, and impunity also facilitate crime.</p> <p>The ranking contains cities with populations of more than 300,000 and does not count deaths in combat zones or cities with unavailable data, so some dangerous cities don't appear on the list</p> <p>The Council also estimates homicide rates for some cities based on incomplete data.</p>

Here's the top 50:

50. Cucuta, Colombia, had 34.78 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Cucuta had a population of 833,743 people and 290 homicides.
49. Vitoria, Brazil, had 36.07 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Vitoria had a population of 1,960,213 people and 707 homicides.
48. Teresina, Brazil, had 37.05 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Teresina had a population of 850,198 people and 315 homicides.
47. Campina Grande, Brazil, had 37.29 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Campina Grande had a population of 410,332 people and 153 homicides.
46. Nelson Mandela Bay, South Africa, had 37.53 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Nelson Mandela Bay had a population of 1,263,051 people and 474 homicides.
45. Campos dos Goytacazes, Brazil, had 37.53 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Campos dos Goytacazes had a population of 490,288 people and 184 homicides.
44. Durban, South Africa, had 38.12 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Durban had a population of 3,661,911 population and 1,396 homicides.
43. Mazatlan, Mexico, had 39.32 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Mazatlan had a population of 488,281 people and 192 homicides.
42. Detroit had 39.69 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Detroit had a population of 672,795 people and 267 homicides.
41. New Orleans had 40.10 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, New Orleans had a population of 391,495 people and 157 homicides.
40. Macapa, Brazil, had 40.24 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Macapa had a population of 474,706 people and 191 homicides.
39. Porto Alegre, Brazil, had 40.96 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Porto Alegre had a population of 4,268,083 people and 1,748 homicides.
38. Reynosa, Mexico, had 41.95 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Reynosa had a population of 701,525 people and 294 homicides.
37. Palmira, Colombia, had 46.65 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Palmira had a population of 308,669 people and 144 homicides.
36. Tepic, Mexico, had 47.09 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Tepic had a population of 503,330 people and 237 homicides.
35. Distrito Central, Honduras, had 48 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Distrito Central had a population of 1,224,897 people and 588 homicides.
34. Manaus, Brazil, had 48.07 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Manaus had a population of 2,130,264 people and 1,024 homicides.
33. Barquisimeto, Venezuela, had 48.23 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Barquisimeto had a population of 1,335,348 people and 644 homicides.

32. San Juan, Puerto Rico, had 48.70 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, San Juan had a population of 347,052 people and 169 homicides.
31. Ciudad Obregón, Mexico, had 48.96 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Ciudad Obregon had a population of 339,000 people and 166 homicides.
30. João Pessoa, Brazil, had 49.17 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, João Pessoa had a population of 1,126,613 people and 554 homicides.
29. Chihuahua, Mexico, had 49.48 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Chihuahua had a population of 929,884 people and 460 homicides.
28. Cali, Colombia, had 49.59 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Cali had a population of 2,542,876 people and 1,261 homicides.
27. Valencia, Venezuela, had 49.74 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Valencia had a population of 1,576,071 people and 784 homicides.
26. San Pedro Sula, Honduras, had 51.18 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, San Pedro Sula had a population of 765,864 people and 392 homicides.
25. Salvador, Brazil, had 51.58 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Salvador had a population of 4,015,205 people and 2,071 homicides.
24. Guatemala City, Guatemala, had 53.49 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Guatemala City had a population of 3,187,293 people and 1,705 homicides.
23. Maturin, Venezuela, had 54.43 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Maturin had a population of 600,722 people and 327 homicides.
22. Recife, Brazil, had 54.96 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Recife had a population of 3,965,699 people and 2,180 homicides.
21. Baltimore had 55.48 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Baltimore had a population of 614,664 people and 341 homicides.
20. Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, had 56.16 homicides per 100,000.
In 2017, Ciudad Juarez had a population of 1,448,859 people and 814 homicides.
19. Feira de Santana, Brazil, had 58.81 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Feira de Santana had a population of 627,477 people and 369 homicides.
18. Aracaju, Brazil, had 58.88 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Aracaju had a population of 951,073 people and 560 homicides.
17. San Salvador, El Salvador, had 59.06 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, San Salvador had a population of 1,789,588 people and 1,057 homicides.
16. Kingston, Jamaica, had 59.71 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Kingston had a population of 1,180,771 people and 705 homicides.
15. Cape Town, South Africa, had 62.25 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Cape Town had a population of 4,004,793 people and 2,493.
14. Maceio, Brazil, had 63.94 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Maceio had a population of 1,029,129 people and 658 homicides.

13. St. Louis had 65.83 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, St. Louis had a population of 311,404 people and 205 homicides.
12. Culiacan, Mexico, had 70.10 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Culiacan had a population of 957,613 people and 671 homicides.
11. Vitoria da Conquista, Brazil, had 70.26 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Vitoria da Conquista had a population of 348,718 people and 245 homicides.
10. Belem, Brazil, had 71.38 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Belem had a population of 2,441,761 people and 1,743 homicides.
9. Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela, had 80.28 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Ciudad Guayana had a population of 906,879 people and 728 homicides.
8. Ciudad Victoria, Mexico, had 83.32 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Ciudad Victoria had a population of 361,078 people and 301 homicides.
7. Fortaleza, Brazil, had 83.48 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Fortaleza had a population of 3,917,279 people and 3,270 homicides.
6. La Paz, Mexico, had 84.79 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, La Paz had a population of 305,455 people and 259 homicides.
5. Tijuana, Mexico, had 100.77 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Tijuana had a population of 1,882,492 people and 1,897 homicides.
4. Natal, Brazil, had 102.56 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Natal had a population of 1,343,573 people and 1,378 homicides.
3. Acapulco, Mexico, had 106.63 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Acapulco had a population of 853,646 people and 910 homicides.
2. Caracas, Venezuela, had 111.19 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Caracas had a population of 3,046,104 people and 3,387 homicides.
1. Los Cabos, Mexico, had 111.33 homicides per 100,000 residents.
In 2017, Los Cabos had a population of 328,245 people and 365 homicides.

[Return to](#)

[Top](#)

HEADLINE	03/06 Judge dismisses red light camera case
SOURCE	http://www.heraldnet.com/news/lynnwood-prevails-in-red-light-camera-court-case/
GIST	<p>LYNNWOOD — A federal judge has dismissed a man's lawsuit that claimed Lynnwood's traffic-enforcement cameras violated his civil rights.</p> <p>Ian Jordan, of Lake Forest Park, did not have legal standing in the case, U.S. District Court Judge Richard Jones wrote in his decision. Jordan did not prove that he had suffered harm nor was he in danger of being harmed, the judge found.</p> <p>Jordan had asked the court to refund thousands of traffic-enforcement tickets issued by Lynnwood in certain years. Federal court was not the appropriate venue for some of Jordan's arguments, because those citations had been resolved in Lynnwood Municipal Court, the judge said. He also was not convinced that the city's ticketing system violated anyone's rights.</p>

	<p>Jones' nine-page decision was issued Jan. 22. In recent weeks, Jordan's attorney and city officials did not respond to requests for comment for this story.</p> <p>In court papers, the city sought the dismissal, calling Jordan's claims "illogical" and "meritless."</p> <p>The lawsuit was prompted by Jordan getting a camera ticket in 2016. He was accused of running a red light at 196th Street SW and 36th Avenue W. He later paid a mitigated \$85 fine.</p> <p>In the lawsuit, he raised questions about whether the city was following a state law that required it to post the citation and crash data for intersections with enforcement cameras. The city since has started doing that, acknowledging Jordan's reminder. The available reports now include 2017 as well.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Tacoma: 5 exchange gunfire downtown
SOURCE	http://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/crime/article203738819.html
GIST	<p>Five people who were shooting at each other near a transit center in downtown Tacoma on Tuesday were detained, police said.</p> <p>Several people called 911 about 10:40 a.m. to report shots fired in the 600 block of Puyallup Avenue.</p> <p>Officers arrived and could not find anyone who had been shot. They did, however, find two women and three men who appeared to be shooting at each other from their vehicles.</p> <p>"They were exchanging gunfire," police spokeswoman Loretta Cool said.</p> <p>No one was hit.</p> <p>Summit Olympus High School was placed on lockdown as a precaution.</p> <p>Investigators said they are unsure what prompted the shots fired.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Elderly woman shot in home invasion
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/919121/71-year-old-woman-shot-during-robbery-attempt/
GIST	<p>A 71-year-old woman was shot during a home invasion robbery in Seattle's Rainier Beach neighborhood Tuesday afternoon.</p> <p>Seattle police say two suspects shot the woman in the shoulder and pistol whipped her at her home in the 10700 block of Renton Ave. South. She was rushed to Harborview Medical Center around 4:30 p.m.</p> <p>With the help of K-9 units and King County Sheriff's deputies, officers are scouring the area for the two suspects last seen running southbound from the house.</p> <p>The first suspect is described as a light-skinned black male in his late teens. He's 6' tall, wearing a white jacket and white pants. He's armed with a black handgun. The second suspect is described as a light-skinned black teen. He's 5'6," is skinny, and has a mustache. He's wearing a blue jacket and dark pants.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Extremist group linked to 5 murders
SOURCE	https://www.npr.org/2018/03/06/590292705/5-killings-3-states-and-1-common-neo-nazi-

[link?utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=npr&utm_term=nprnews&utm_content=20180306](https://www.nprnews.org/story/2018/03/20180306)

GIST

At first glance, five killings in three states since last May appeared to be unrelated, isolated cases.

But a common thread is emerging. Three young men have been charged, and all appear to have links to the same white supremacist group: the Atomwaffen Division.

Atomwaffen is German for "atomic weapons," and the group is extreme. It celebrates Adolf Hitler and Charles Manson, its online images are filled with swastikas, and it promotes violence.

One of the group's videos shows young men wearing scarves over their faces and camouflage firing rifles during military-style training. The video begins with group members shouting in unison, "Race War Now," and concludes with the tag line, "Join Your Local Nazis."

"Atomwaffen no doubt takes some of the white supremacist rhetoric to another level. The views that they articulate are white supremacists on steroids," said Joanna Mendelson, who follows extremist groups for the Anti-Defamation League in Los Angeles.

"And what is the change they want to see? Real-world violence. Real-world apocalyptic violence," she added.

In the public conversation about extremism, radical Islamists get most of the attention. But according to a U.S. government report and private monitoring groups, right-wing extremists have carried out a similar number of killings since 2001.

The First Amendment protects the free speech rights of neo-Nazi groups like Atomwaffen, which was formed in 2015.

Group members hide their identities and may not even know one another beyond their online pseudonyms, although some have gathered for weapons training.

According to various estimates by monitoring groups, Atomwaffen is believed to have fewer than 100 members scattered across the country, with Florida and Texas considered key areas

But it keeps popping up in the news.

In Orange County, Calif., prosecutors say 20-year-old Sam Woodward fatally stabbed 19-year-old Blaze Bernstein on Jan. 2.

They had attended high school together and apparently went to a park on the night of the killing. Bernstein was Jewish and openly gay. He was back home for winter break from the University of Pennsylvania.

"Blaze was a brilliant, colorful and charismatic man who shined light on all of the lives, and people and communities that he touched," Bernstein's father, Gideon, said at a news conference just days after his son's death.

According to the news outlet ProPublica, Woodward was an Atomwaffen member who attended one of its training camps. Group members are supporting him on social media.

Five killings

This was the most recent of three separate attacks, and a total of five deaths, with apparent links to Atomwaffen.

"All these young men, steeped in this propaganda, both online and off, went on to enact violence," said

Keegan Hankes, who studies far-right groups for the Southern Poverty Law Center.

"The fact that so much of it came to light in a short period of time shows how devastatingly potent some of these materials can be," he added.

As far-right groups try to expand, they are operating more openly, he said. One tactic is posting flyers on college campuses. The purpose appears twofold.

Groups believe they'll find some recruits and provoke outrage among others, generating the notoriety they seek.

"That's why you see them trying to drive media attention, because it may get an angry disaffected young man to go to that forum and further go down that rabbit trail," Hankes said.

The group is now on the radar of technology companies; ProPublica reported Tuesday that at least four have taken steps to bar material from Atomwaffen.

In Reston, Va., just outside Washington, D.C., police say a couple was fatally shot in December by their daughter's 17-year-old boyfriend.

The shooting took place after the couple told their daughter to break up with the boy when they learned of his neo-Nazi beliefs — reportedly linked to Atomwaffen.

The accused, who is not being named because he is a minor, shot himself in the head but survived. According to Hankes, he appears to be mostly a sympathizer with Atomwaffen, though at least one report said he was in direct contact with the group.

Atomwaffen first came to public attention in a double-murder case last May in Tampa, Fla.

Devon Arthurs, 19, was charged with killing two roommates. He told police he was an Atomwaffen member — and bizarrely — also a convert to fundamentalist Islam.

He has pleaded not guilty. But during police interrogation, he claimed he acted to prevent attacks that Atomwaffen members were plotting and because his roommates were taunting him for his religious conversion.

"In hindsight, it's very stupid what I've done. And honestly, all of this feels very surreal, like a dream," he told police in a videotaped interrogation that was recently released.

Another roommate, Brandon Russell, 22, was considered a leader of Atomwaffen. In a separate case, he was sentenced in January to five years for possessing explosives.

Atomwaffen was also one of the many white supremacist groups that gathered last year in Charlottesville, Va., for a rally that turned violent.

"I've been doing this work for 17 years, and not to be hyperbolic in any way, but we've never been as busy as we are today," said Mendelson of the ADL. "The white supremacists are much more emboldened."

They're no longer on the fringes, she said. Now they want to be mainstream.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE 03/06 Mexico investigates ferry explosion

SOURCE <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/03/06/mexican-federal-prosecutors-open-probe-ferry-explosion.html>

<p>GIST</p>	<p>MEXICO CITY – Mexican federal prosecutors have formally opened their own investigation into an explosion on a tourist ferry last month that injured 26 people.</p> <p>The Federal Prosecutor's Office says in a Tuesday statement that it is probing the Feb. 21 blast on the Barcos Caribe company's vessel as it was moored in Playa del Carmen with passengers nearby on the dock.</p> <p>The ferry operated on the route between Playa del Carmen and the resort island of Cozumel. Barcos Caribe has been suspended from operating since shortly after the explosion.</p> <p>Last week, what appeared to be undetonated explosives were found attached beneath another vessel belonging to the same company. Authorities said it was anchored 500 yards (meters) off Cozumel at the time and had not been in service for over 10 months.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

<p>HEADLINE</p>	<p>03/06 'Diabolical genius' \$179M fraud jailed</p>
<p>SOURCE</p>	<p>http://www.foxnews.com/us/2018/03/07/diabolical-genius-linked-to-179m-fraud-gets-25-years-after-trying-to-flee-to-ecuador.html</p>
<p>GIST</p>	<p>A Florida businessman who attempted to flee to Ecuador after pleading guilty to a \$179 million fraud scheme was sentenced to 25 years in prison Tuesday.</p> <p>In a Chicago courtroom, U.S. District Judge Charles Kocoras called convicted conman Nikesh Patel, 34, a "diabolical genius" for the scale and brazenness of the fraud he perpetrated.</p> <p>The judge said Patel's scam was the largest fraud case he had overseen in nearly four decades. He was impressed by the boldness of the fraud that involved numerous fake documents, lies and other moving parts that "most mere mortals" could not even think of, the Chicago Tribune reported.</p> <p>"There's a certain diabolical genius to what he did here," Kocoras said Tuesday.</p> <p>The businessman pleaded guilty in 2016 to selling sham loans to a Wisconsin investment firm and consequently financially damaging several Chicago-area school districts and hundreds of small banks.</p> <p>In a bid to reduce the possible amount of prison time, Patel convinced the judge last year to allow him to remain free on bond while he awaits sentencing and cooperate with authorities to recover money for the victims of his crimes.</p> <p>But despite the generosity of the court, Patel used his freedom to plan his escape and even launched new scams that involved him masquerading as a bank executive to con millions of dollars more through shoddy loans.</p> <p>Prosecutors said Patel spent the new tainted money on lavish celebrations, including a \$30,000 party at a luxurious Four Seasons Hotel for his infant daughter's birthday and \$28,000 on a ski trip.</p> <p>Knowing what was coming for him, on the day he was to be sentenced in January, Patel tried to pull off an even greater scam. He was arrested at a Florida airport trying to board a jet to Ecuador, where he planned to seek political asylum and set up a new luxurious life for himself and his family, the Tribune reported.</p> <p>FBI agents, according to court records, found documents after the arrest that detailed Patel's plans to start over in the South American country, including buying luxury vehicles, a \$1 million home in Ecuador, a private chef and an English-language school for his four daughters.</p> <p>Patel speculated in one acquired document that if he fled the U.S. by a private plane, authorities would have no way to stop him. He planned to tell his attorney and federal prosecutors that he was going to</p>

	“rehab or a meditation camp for a week, this way they do not suspect anything by my phone being shut off.”
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/07 Anti-Muslim riots flare in Sri Lanka
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/anti-muslim-riots-flare-anew-sri-lanka-emergency-53575048?
GIST	<p>Residents say anti-Muslim rioting has flared anew in central Sri Lanka despite a state of emergency, with Buddhist mobs burning mosques and Muslim-owned shops in at least two towns.</p> <p>The police ordered a curfew across much of the region Wednesday for a third day, trying to calm the situation.</p> <p>An area resident who requested anonymity, fearing reprisal attacks, said two mosques and some Muslim-owned shops were attacked Wednesday in two towns in the central hills. The extent of the damage could not be verified.</p> <p>Anti-Muslim riots began Monday after a Buddhist Sinhalese man died after reportedly being attacked by a group of Muslim youths.</p> <p>Sri Lanka has long been divided between the majority Sinhalese, who are overwhelmingly Buddhist, and minority Tamils who are Hindu, Muslim and Christian.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/07 Missouri: cop killed, 2 shot; suspect dead
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/cop-killed-shot-missouri-suspect-dead/story?
GIST	<p>A Missouri police officer was killed and two others were injured late Tuesday in a shooting in Clinton, Mo.</p> <p>According to the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the police officers were shot at about 9:30 p.m. when they entered a residence in the small town of Clinton -- about 75 miles southeast of Kansas City.</p> <p>The Missouri State Highway Patrol initially reported the Clinton Police Department, SWAT teams and the Henry County Sheriff's Department were outside the residence where the suspect was barricaded. By 12:30 a.m. local time, officers had entered the residence and found the suspect dead.</p> <p>Police said they received a 911 call from the home about 9:20 p.m. and heard two women screaming in the background. After responding, the officers were fired at from inside the home and chose to go inside to "apprehend the suspect." The officers were stuck by gunfire inside, with one dying on the scene.</p> <p>"We're still piecing everything together," said Sgt. Bill Lowe, from the Missouri State Highway Patrol. "We're way early in the investigation."</p> <p>Lowe said they were still investigating whether the suspect was shot by police or took his own life. No one else was injured.</p>
Return to Top	

HEADLINE	03/06 Nashville mayor resigns; pleads guilty
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/nashville-mayor-megan-barry-pleads-guilty-to-theft-after-admitting-to-affair/

GIST	<p>NASHVILLE -- A month after she admitted to an extramarital affair with her then-bodyguard, Nashville Mayor Megan Barry has pleaded guilty to theft of property and resigned. When Barry first admitted Jan. 31 to having an affair with Sgt. Robert Forrest, she said she planned to stay in office. But on Tuesday she said her time in office has concluded.</p> <p>Barry's guilty plea earlier in the day included an agreement for her to resign. She was also fined and sentenced to three years of probation.</p> <p>The development follows several days of negotiations between Barry's legal team and District Attorney Glenn Funk, CBS affiliate WTVF reported. The negotiations apparently focused on whether Funk would agree not to prosecute Barry in exchange for her resignation.</p> <p>In court, Funk said that had the case gone to trial, witnesses would have testified that between March 2016 and February 2018 Megan Barry caused over \$10,000 and no less than \$60,000 of Metro Nashville city funds to be expended unlawfully.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

HEADLINE	03/06 Greece: arrests in neo-Nazi crackdown
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/greek-anti-terrorism-police-arrest-neo-nazi-crackdown-53552946?cid=clicksource_76_4_article%20roll_articleroll_hed
GIST	<p>Greek authorities say anti-terrorism police have cracked down on an allegedly violent neo-Nazi group, arresting five people allegedly linked to a string of arson attacks on far-left and migrant-related targets.</p> <p>A police statement said eight houses have been searched in the greater Athens area and two provincial towns.</p> <p>The statement says officers confiscated Molotov cocktails, 50 kilograms of explosives, shotguns, knives, cudgels, drugs and far-right banners and paraphernalia.</p> <p>The five Greeks arrested on Tuesday are accused of belonging to a criminal organization, carrying out bombings and arson attacks, breaches of weapons laws and explosives possession.</p> <p>The suspects are thought to be members of the Greek branch of the neo-Nazi Combat 18 group. Police say more residential searches are underway.</p>
<p>Return to Top</p>	

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[Return to Top](#)