

Washington State Fusion Center
INFOCUS

THURSDAY – 19 APR 2018



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Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	04/18 Sawant blasts 'RIP Barbara Bush' tweet
SOURCE	http://q13fox.com/2018/04/18/kshawma-sawant-blasts-rip-barbara-bush-tweet-drawing-intense-criticism-on-social-medi/
GIST	<p>SEATTLE – Seattle City councilmember Kshawma Sawant found herself in the middle of a controversy yet again Wednesday, this time following a tweet about the late Barbara Bush.</p> <p>Responding to a tweet from Women’s March organizers that said “Rest in peace and power, Barbara Bush,” Sawant teed off on the organization.</p> <p>“This is terrible,” wrote Sawant, who is a member of the Socialist party. “@womensmarch organizers have helped lead historic protests since Trump's election but this tweet shows how, without a political compass, even well-meaning progressives can end up giving cover to ruling class & ultimately undermining struggles against oppression.”</p> <p>Response to the tweet was overwhelmingly negative. Bush died Tuesday at the age of 92.</p> <p>Sawant’s rhetoric has brought her trouble in the past. Two Seattle police officers sued her for defamation after she called them murderers for shooting and killing a black man named Che Taylor. The shooting was later ruled justified.</p> <p>A man named Carl Haglund sued her and the city after she called him a “slumlord.”</p> <p>Sawant's office didn't respond to a request for comment Wednesday afternoon. Dana Robinson, the spokesperson for the City Council as a whole, said she hadn't spoken with Sawant about the tweet and therefore couldn't speak to Sawant's intent.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Ex-cop: Seattle getting worse for police
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/956350/seattle-getting-worse-for-police/
GIST	<p>A former Seattle police officer warns the city is becoming an increasingly hostile place for law enforcement.</p> <p>Steve Pomper recently retired from the Seattle Police Department, but he’s still speaking out on policing issues. In his new book “De-Policing America: A Street Cop’s View of the Anti-Police State,” Pomper argues social justice movements are making police less vigilant than they’ve been in the past.</p> <p>“I saw social justice as treating people as members of a group as opposed to individually,” Pomper told 770 KTTH’s Jason Rantz. “I just don’t see how social justice can combine with equal justice because they’re opposed to each other.”</p> <p>Pomper made headlines in The Seattle Times and The Stranger back in 2011 after writing a piece in the police union newspaper titled “Just Shut Up and Be a Good Little Socialist” where he complained about anti-bias training that officers were required to undergo.</p> <p>“We have to react to behavior,” Pomper said. “We were taught, certain cultures, you know, maybe you give them a little bit of leeway because of certain behaviors that are endemic in their culture. That kind of thing, I understand that, but for the most part, officers have to deal with actions and not with other extraneous elements at the time.”</p> <p>If you’re a police officer considering work in the Puget Sound area, Pomper doesn’t recommend Seattle.</p> <p>“As far as what filters into the Seattle media and what filters into the liberal government and establishment,” Pomper said, “you don’t feel supported at all.”</p>

	<p>Rantz asked Pomper if he thought things have improved since he retired.</p> <p>“No,” Pomper said. “In fact, from talking to the officers who are still on the job, it’s gotten worse.”</p> <p>The lack of support from Seattle government is the nucleus of Pomper’s complaint. He believes white officers responding to incidents involving people of color will be more hesitant because they’re worried about retribution.</p> <p>“The thing is it’s not bad when they do that, people have done that to cops forever,” Pomper said. “The difference is the reaction above.”</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 FBI: homeland threat info sharing
SOURCE	https://www.fbi.gov/news/testimony/from-boston-to-austin-lessons-learned-on-homeland-threat-information-sharing
GIST	<p>Kerry L. Sleeper Assistant Director, Office of Partner Engagement Federal Bureau of Investigation</p> <p>Statement Before the House Homeland Security Committee Washington, D.C. April 18, 2018</p> <p>From Boston to Austin: Lessons Learned on Homeland Threat Information Sharing</p> <p>It is my privilege to appear before you today as the assistant director of the FBI for the Office of Partner Engagement (OPE). We welcome this opportunity to meet regarding the status of the FBI’s information sharing initiatives within the FBI and with our law enforcement partners.</p> <p>The OPE implements initiatives and strategies which support engagement, communication, coordination, and cooperation efforts with law enforcement, intelligence, public and private agencies, and partners in a continuous effort to enhance the FBI’s capabilities in the domestic information-sharing architecture. The OPE accomplishes this mission by establishing and maintaining methods and practices to enhance engagement, coordination, and information sharing with the U.S. Intelligence Community; intelligence commander groups; federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement; and public and private organizations and working groups.</p> <p>Boston and Post-Boston</p> <p>I would like to begin my prepared remarks by affirming the FBI’s continued commitment to ensuring threat information is shared accurately and timely among our valued federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement partners. As we are all aware, the devastating attacks at the 2013 Boston Marathon highlighted challenges and deficiencies in information sharing. In response, the FBI—working with this and several of our oversight committees as well as national level law enforcement associations—took several steps to enhance information sharing with our state and local partners, to include regular FBI executive meetings with key partners; improvements to Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF) processes and procedures for sharing information; and enhancements to the eGuardian program, which today facilitates the reporting and sharing of terrorism, criminal, and cyber events and suspicious activities by our law enforcement partners. Additionally, the FBI continues to strengthen its partnership with the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) in order to identify and link counterterrorism investigations through law enforcement investigation records that reside at the Department of Justice’s multi-agency OCDETF Fusion Center, which regularly supports several investigations, including the Boston bombing investigation.</p>

Shortly after the attacks in Boston, the FBI witnessed a significant increase in the threat from ISIS and its affiliates, from al Qaeda, and from other terrorist organizations. The threat from international terrorism has become more diversified and individualized, as lone actors continue to self-radicalize in the homeland. This shift requires the FBI to evaluate more closely the effectiveness of terrorism information sharing with our law enforcement partners. In doing this, the FBI has undertaken several initiatives to improve engagement and collaboration.

In coordination with the National Fusion Center Association (NFCA) and other federal partners, the FBI developed the enhanced engagement initiative, or EEI. The EEI is a resource designed to provide FBI field offices and fusion centers with a common set of recommendations to ensure greater continuity and standardization of terrorism information sharing efforts. By focusing on key areas of engagement (such as JTTF participation and coordination, suspicious activity reporting, and intelligence analysis, production, and dissemination), the EEI supports the FBI and its efforts to ensure that state and local fusion centers have a complete understanding of the terrorism threat and are appropriately leveraged with other field-based information sharing partners to address the ever changing threat landscape.

In support of the EEI, the FBI has developed and delivers a two-week Analytic Writing for Fusion Center Analysts course, which provides training on the intelligence process and writing to intelligence community standards. This course has enabled fusion centers to identify greater opportunities to write intelligence products that benefit both their local area of responsibility and the federal government. It is anticipated that more than 130 fusion center analysts will successfully complete this training by the end of the fiscal year. At the request of the NFCA, the FBI also has provided greater guidance to its fusion center partners, using additional resources. We recently developed and disseminated a document entitled Dissemination of FBI Threat Information to State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers, which provides a list of the FBI's most commonly shared products and guidance on how they should be further disseminated. Last year, in coordination with the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI developed and broadly disseminated the Emerging Threat and Incident Notifications document to provide state and local partners with an overview of actions they may expect from the FBI and DHS in response to specific and credible threats or incidents.

From the above, it is clear that the FBI is more integrated with its law enforcement partners than ever before on the terrorism threat. Nearly 90 FBI personnel are assigned to 64 of the 79 fusion centers, and the FBI's classified network, FBINET, is installed in 58 centers. Ten fusion centers are co-located with the FBI, and we continue to process security clearances for fusion center personnel while engaging in joint initiatives that are yielding positive results. In addition, we have witnessed growth within our JTTFs, with a total of 184 JTTFs and over 4,300 JTTF members across the country. Simply stated, FBI JTTF investigations, disruptions, arrests, and convictions cannot occur without the tremendous support and dedication of our law enforcement partners in the field.

Moreover, coordination with our federal partners is much stronger and more collaborative. The FBI and DHS regularly hold joint conference calls with our law enforcement partners as terrorism and other critical incidents unfold. These calls generally are at the unclassified level, but may be classified depending on the nature of the event. The calls enable the FBI and DHS to provide timely but, more importantly, accurate information to our partners, who seek a consistent message from the federal government. For example, following the recent bomb attacks in Austin, Texas, the Austin chief of police, with support from the special agents in charge of the local FBI and ATF offices, hosted a conference call to provide in-depth details regarding the investigation and ongoing efforts. Thousands of law enforcement personnel on over 300 lines participated in the call to gain insight into the attacker's methods and tactics, and to discuss how resources can be deployed in support of these types of events.

Five years after the tragic attacks in Boston, we are witnessing a shift in the threat landscape. While we all remain intently focused on counterterrorism efforts, law enforcement departments and agencies across the country are facing an unprecedented increase in a multitude of threats. Violent crime, mass casualties, and school violence remain formidable threats, while nation-state adversaries are becoming bolder in their efforts to sow discord within our communities. The volume and variety of these threats require that state, local, and federal law enforcement and homeland security personnel understand the threats, openly discuss and share information on the threats, and identify means to collectively mitigate the threats.

Violent Crime Trends

To better understand violent crime trends, the FBI is working closely with several national-level law enforcement associations on programs and initiatives aimed at providing greater awareness and collaboration on priority threats. The FBI is collecting homicide and shooting data for inclusion in monthly and annual reports that are disseminated to participating departments and agencies. These reports provide real-time awareness of relevant data, which inform FBI and national-level strategies to combat violent crime. We also have created the Law Enforcement Watch, which is an FBI product that captures relevant news articles pertaining to executive-level law enforcement issues, school violence, police killed or injured in action, and use of force. This product is produced daily and is distributed broadly to our law enforcement partners for their situational awareness.

In coordination with the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA), the FBI is developing a process to aid police departments in identifying and prioritizing criminal threats within their areas of responsibility, with the ability to then compare their findings with those of departments across other jurisdictions. In response to a request from the MCCA, the FBI developed and delivers the Introduction to Intelligence Theory and Application for Law Enforcement Supervisors course, which is designed to assist law enforcement supervisors who oversee intelligence units to implement and manage intelligence-led policing. The FBI and Major Cities Chiefs also have engaged in an in-depth study to identify national-level best practices to reduce the rise in violent crime across some of America's most violent cities. Additionally, the FBI is in its second consecutive year of conducting studies identifying commonalities among assailants who killed or attacked law enforcement officers. We believe that this research will provide law enforcement partners with information on assailants' mindset, which may help in identifying additional officer-safety measures.

Mass Casualty Events

Perhaps one of the most troubling threats currently facing law enforcement is mass casualty events, including attacks within and violent threats against our schools. The FBI is leading several initiatives aimed at providing awareness and education to better equip our law enforcement partners to respond to ongoing threats, but more importantly, to identify and mitigate threats before they occur.

The FBI continues to provide basic active shooter response training, known as ALERRT, to sworn law enforcement officers within the United States and to foreign partners abroad. This 16-hour course provides law enforcement officers with standard tactical training on how best to isolate, distract, and neutralize an active shooter. In response to threats against schools, the FBI is prioritizing ALERRT training for school resource officers. The FBI also continues to collect active shooter data and will soon publish a biennial report of active shooter incidents that will cover the 2016-2017 time frame.

In response to tragic events like the October 2017 mass shooting in Las Vegas, the FBI is developing the Escape public awareness campaign, which will focus on public awareness messages emphasizing the importance of quick action to escape the scene of an active, violent attack. It is the FBI's hope that these messages will inspire quick action by potential victims that will reduce casualties.

In the wake of the February 14 school shooting in Parkland, Florida, the FBI is engaging more proactively with its law enforcement partners on school threats. We are compiling and sharing data related to threats of violent attacks against schools, while discussing how best to accurately collect this data in a standard way across the country. Our behavioral analysis specialists at Headquarters and in each field office are actively engaged with field office personnel and local law enforcement who are working school threats, as well as with community members who require greater education on the threat. Recently, our Behavioral Threat Assessment Center (BTAC) provided FBI field coordinators with numerous resources to utilize in outreach efforts, including The School Shooter: A Quick Reference Guide. In addition to providing key questions and descriptive statistics and motives, this one-page guide along with a corresponding training presentation for use in outreach efforts, identifies concerning behaviors and potential warning signs of a shooter that should prompt further inquiry by appropriate community members or law enforcement. Furthermore, the FBI's BTAC has embarked on an aggressive field-wide threat assessment enhancement

effort that will include the provision of advanced training for field office personnel on threat assessment and threat management.

The FBI also intends to address school shootings through the development of a documentary video that explores the details of past shooting events. This video will examine factors that led to the perpetrator's attack, behaviors and indicators of a potential shooter, and preventive measures that should be considered by schools and law enforcement. This video will be the third in a series created by the FBI to build community awareness of the pathways to violent behavior. In addition, in the coming months, the FBI intends to host a school violence seminar with key law enforcement partners to discuss several aspects of this increasing threat (including what we have learned from Parkland), crisis intervention and response plans, and information sharing.

Counterintelligence Threat

I would now like to shift my comments to the counterintelligence threat, which typically has not been a topic of information sharing with our law enforcement partners, but must be central to discussions moving forward. The FBI conducts targeted outreach within the intelligence community and with entities possessing information and assets sought by our enemies. However, the tactics of our adversaries have broadened beyond more traditional methods, requiring greater awareness and engagement with our local law enforcement partners. In response, the FBI is developing a counterintelligence awareness and information sharing program designed to increase awareness, information sharing, and reporting on counterintelligence matters that could affect our law enforcement partners. The FBI currently is providing counterintelligence threat briefings at national-level law enforcement meetings and other appropriate venues, and is disseminating a monthly counterintelligence bulletin that contains an overview of relevant hearings, press releases, and reporting on counterintelligence matters. Moving forward, the FBI would like to work more closely with its law enforcement partners to identify incidents of state-sponsored influence campaigns intended to fuel discord within local communities.

Conclusion and Challenges

The FBI today is sharing more information with its law enforcement partners than ever before. Our partnerships are strong, and will continue to grow. This occurs through daily interactions and direct support to interagency initiatives, such as the FBI hosting the upcoming 2018 Intelligence Summit, which is intended to further improve information sharing practices with our law enforcement partners.

We are assessing where the FBI can do better and we are making changes. One significant example is the ongoing Guardian expansion project, which will enable the FBI to manage tips and complaints across all program areas, with a single intake system for suspicious activity reporting, tips, leads, and other information received by the FBI, including information received through the FBI's Public Access Line.

Despite this, the FBI and its law enforcement partners still face challenges that are difficult to overcome and therefore limit our ability to fully identify, collect, and share information. The Going Dark problem is inhibiting law enforcement's ability, even with legal authority, from obtaining critical evidence in support of criminal and national security investigations. The Dark Web is enabling illicit and criminal activities that are more difficult to dismantle. The FBI is providing Dark Web familiarization training to law enforcement partners to provide familiarity on the methods and tools used to conduct investigations and to assist federal agencies investigating actors who use the Dark Web, but more is needed. Finally, appropriately addressing potentially violent persons who also have underlying mental disorders or mental illness remains a concern for public safety. The FBI currently is developing training for FBI Investigative personnel to recognize the signs of mental illness and to identify techniques and resources available to all law enforcement when interacting with persons exhibiting signs of a potential mental disorder or illness. More resources and commitments are also required at the federal, state, local, and community level to effectively understand and address this issue.

This concludes my prepared remarks, Mr. Chairman. I would be happy to respond to any questions.

HEADLINE	04/19 FAA orders planes fan blade inspections
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/7b50c05eac7440f1945dfc1a5bf48fbe/FAA-orders-fan-blade-inspections-after-jet-engine-explosion
GIST	<p>PHILADELPHIA (AP) — U.S. airline regulators have ordered inspections on engine fan blades like the one that snapped off a Southwest Airlines plane, leading to the death of a woman who was partially blown out a window.</p> <p>The Federal Aviation Administration’s announcement late Wednesday comes nearly a year after the engine’s manufacturer recommended the additional inspections, and a month after European regulators ordered their airlines to do the work.</p> <p>Pressure for the FAA to act grew after an engine on a Southwest plane blew apart on Tuesday, showering the aircraft with debris and shattering a window. A woman sitting next to the window was partially blown out and died of her injuries. The plane, which was headed from New York to Dallas, made an emergency landing in Philadelphia.</p> <p>Investigators said a blade that broke off mid-flight and triggered the fatal accident was showing signs of metal fatigue — microscopic cracks that can splinter open under the kind of stress placed on jetliners and their engines.</p> <p>The National Transportation Safety Board also blamed metal fatigue for an engine failure on a Southwest plane in Florida in 2016.</p> <p>That led manufacturer CFM International, a joint venture of General Electric Co. and France’s Safran SA, to recommend last June that airlines conduct the inspections of fan blades on many Boeing 737s.</p> <p>The FAA proposed making the recommendation mandatory in August but never issued a final decision.</p> <p>On Wednesday, the FAA said it would issue a directive in the next two weeks to require ultrasonic inspections of fan blades on some CFM56-7B engines after they reach a certain number of takeoffs and landings. Blades that fail inspection would need to be replaced.</p> <p>It was not immediately clear how many planes would be affected. Last year, the FAA estimated that an order would cover 220 engines on U.S. airlines. That number could be higher now because more engines have hit the number of flights triggering an inspection.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/19 SKorea discussing formal peace treaty
SOURCE	http://time.com/5246212/south-korea-formal-peace-treaty/
GIST	<p>South Korea confirmed Wednesday that it is discussing a peace agreement which could formally end more than 60 years of war with the North, while offering an incentive for Pyongyang to discuss denuclearization.</p> <p>Chung Eui-yong, South Korea’s national security adviser, told the New York Times that he discussed a potential treaty with John Bolton, his newly appointed American counterpart, in Washington last week.</p> <p>“We held in-depth discussions on various ways of how to end hostilities and eventually establish a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, how to address the North Korean concerns and how to ensure a bright future for the North if it makes the right choice,” he said.</p> <p>Chung’s remarks come amid preparations for an April 27 meeting between South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. The summit would be the third inter-Korean conference</p>

since the division of the peninsula in 1945.

South Korean officials have flagged denuclearization as a priority at the upcoming talks, but have offered little on what could be used to persuade the North to end the standoff over its weapons program.

Last month, Kim Jong Un reportedly told China he was willing to denuclearize the peninsula. The North has previously stipulated that a peace treaty and normalization of relations with the United States would be among the security guarantees it would need before discussing giving up its nuclear weapons.

The two Koreas technically remain at military odds after the Korean War was brought to a close in 1953 via an armistice. The agreement was inked by the North, China and the U.S., but South Korea refused to sign at the time. A formal peace treaty may involve Seoul, Pyongyang, Washington and Beijing.

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HEADLINE	04/18 National school walkout April 20th
SOURCE	http://time.com/5238216/national-school-walkout-april-20/
GIST	<p>Friday, April 20 is the 19th anniversary of the mass shooting at Columbine High School. It was the deadliest high school shooting in U.S. history – until 17 people were killed in Parkland, Florida in February.</p> <p>To mark the grim milestone, and in an effort to keep national attention on stopping school violence, students across the country are planning to leave class as part of the National School Walkout.</p> <p>The National School Walkout was started by Lane Murdoch, a 16-year-old who grew up just 20 miles from Sandy Hook Elementary School – where 20 students were killed in a mass shooting in 2012.</p> <p>The movement began as a Change.org petition following the Feb. 14 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. More than 250,000 people have signed the petition, and there are over 2,000 protests registered.</p> <p>Murdock, a sophomore at Ridgefield High School in Connecticut, is part of a wave of <u>student activists</u>, inspired by the shooting survivors from <u>Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School</u>, who are protesting violence in schools and calling for tougher gun control measures.</p> <p>“I was 15 when I started this; I’m a newly-turned 16 year old,” she said. “I guess there’s no way to control this, but just for people to know that whether it’s the Parkland students or myself and my team, we’re growing up while doing this.”</p> <p>This is the second major school walkout in two months. On March 14, students walked out of class for the <u>#Enough! National School Walkout</u>. Since February, student activists have also organized meetings with lawmakers, boycotts against companies that partner with the NRA and the <u>March for Our Lives</u> in Washington, D.C. – which had siblings protests around the globe.</p> <p>Here’s what you need to know about the National School Walkout.</p> <p>When is the National School Walkout? The National School Walkout is April 20 at 10 a.m. (the anniversary of the Columbine shooting). On April 20, 1999, 12 students and one teacher were killed at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado.</p> <p>What will the day look like? At 10:00 a.m. across time zones, students will walk out of their classrooms and observe 13 seconds of silence in memory of those killed at Columbine.</p> <p>Unlike the <u>#Enough National School Walkout</u> organized by Women’s March Youth Empower, which was</p>

for 17 minutes to mark the 17 people killed in Parkland, organizers want the walkout to last the entire school day. Students are encouraged to plan open mics, rallies, protests, voter registration drives, letter writing campaigns or other activism for the rest of the day.

The open-ended nature of the event is important to Murdock, who wants this to be focused on the kids. There is an entire [“Walkout Planning Guide”](#) at the National School Walkout website with resources on everything from a model walkout day schedule, to safety and legal rights, to inclusion and privilege.

“I want to see nation-wide empowerment,” Murdock said. “I think we’ve been told to ‘shut up and get through school and deal with things when we’re older,’ and it’s just not really how good society should function.”

What about safety?

As Francisco Negron, the Chief Legal Officer at the National School Boards Association, noted to [NPR in March](#), “Schools stand in what’s known as loco parentis (in place of parents), so we don’t simply release our students into the ether.” The NSBA issued guidelines for [student protests](#), and suggests working with students, teachers and parents and planning ahead of the protests.

The National School Walkout student organizers are also stressing planning ahead and working with teachers, administrators and local law enforcement — if students have a good relationship with them — and encouraging protesters to stay on campus in a centralized location.

“Making sure it’s in a contained, controlled environment has been really important, and it just makes their lives easier as well,” Murdock said. “You know it’s finding that balance between people realizing that this is civil disobedience — some of them may get punished for walking out — but making sure that they’re ensuring the safety of their own lives.”

Can students be punished for walking out?

“Yes,” says the ACLU in its guide for [students and free speech in public schools](#). “Because the law in most places requires students to go to school, schools can discipline you for missing class. But what they can’t do is discipline you more harshly because of the political nature of or the message behind your action.”

But, students don’t lose their First Amendment rights just because they’re at school. “You have the right to speak out, hand out flyers and petitions, and wear expressive clothing in school — as long as you don’t disrupt the functioning of the school or violate the school’s content-neutral policies,” according to the ACLU. This was upheld in the 1969 ruling of *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*. This, however, does not apply for students at private schools.

In terms of potential punitive measures for students who walk out, it will be up to individual schools and school districts.

In an interview with ABC News, one of Murdock’s co-organizers, Grant Yuan, a 17-year-old junior, said the response to the walkout has been “relatively neutral or positive.”

“Resistance does exist,” [Yuan told ABC](#), “thankfully it seems at least the majority — however slim the majority may be — of schools are at least friendly to the event or have accepted it’s going to happen whether they sanction it or not, and have made moves to accommodate.”

Who is participating?

The event is geared toward high schoolers, and there are more than 2,000 registered groups, according to the [National School Walkout page](#), where students can find a walkout planned in their area. Organizers are encouraging the day to be led by students – though parents, teachers and the community may lend support.

What are the students protesting for?

The students are protesting school violence, and “congressional, state, and local failures to take action to

prevent gun violence,” according to the website. In terms of specific causes, Murdock and the [National School Walkout website](#) mention universal background checks, asking lawmakers to vote against the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act – which would allow gun owners to carry weapons in any state, so long as they have a permit from their home state – and supporting other “common sense” gun control laws.

What about after the protest?

The National School Walkout is also starting [local chapters](#) — there are at least 150 so far — to continue working and communicating on school violence issues.

While Murdock worries about the momentum slowing, she said she is “not worried to the point of doubting this generation.”

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HEADLINE 04/18 Illegals from Bangladesh surge

SOURCE <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/apr/18/illegal-immigrants-bangladesh-aided-international/>

GIST

The number of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh jumping the border to sneak into the U.S. is on pace to double in the Laredo region of Texas, officials said Wednesday, in what is the latest worrying surge of migration from a country with terrorism dangers.

The illegal immigrants pay up to \$27,000 to international smuggling organizations to ferry them from Asia into the western hemisphere, where they make their way up through Central America and Mexico to the U.S. border, where they’re led across the Rio Grande.

Another four Bangladeshis were nabbed in the Border Patrol’s Laredo Sector on Wednesday, bringing the total through a little more than six months of the fiscal year to 188. That’s already more than the 181 apprehended in all of fiscal year 2017. In 2016, the sector saw just one.

The increase is worrisome both because of the presence of Islamist terror networks in Bangladesh, and because the immigrants are being coached on what to say when caught at the border, depriving agents of good intelligence.

“It’s definitely a Transnational Criminal Organization that’s doing that networking,” said Scott Good, acting deputy chief patrol agent for the Laredo Sector, who said the TCO, as authorities refer to such syndicates, facilitates the entire trip from start to finish.

TCOs dominate smuggling across the southwest border, and are increasingly a threat when it comes to so-called “special interest countries.”

“The cartels have this capability to move people from anywhere in the world. So if it’s not Bangladesh, where else could it be?” Laredo Assistant Chief Gabriel Acosta said.

Indeed, one of those other networks became clear Wednesday when the Treasury Department slapped sanctions on Nasif Barakat and a TCO he operates from Syria, which authorities said smuggled “hundreds” of people from Syria and Lebanon into the U.S. via the southwest border.

They paid about \$20,000 per person to be smuggled, Treasury said, and the money went to pay bribes, create fake documents such as European passports, and arrange transportation. Their standard route went from Syria and Lebanon to either Turkey or the United Arab Emirates, and from there to Brazil, from where they would make the journey north.

The Washington Times has also reported on a network operated by Sharafat Ali Khan, a citizen of Pakistan who moved illegal immigrants from Asia to Brazil and then up to the U.S. between 2014 and 2016.

Khan, who pleaded guilty last year but is appealing his sentence, charged his customers up to \$15,000 each, according to testimony in his court case.

Federal authorities said Khan specialized in illegal immigrants from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh — though his specialty was his home country. After his arrest, authorities said they saw a noticeable drop in illegal immigrants from that country.

One of the people smuggled in by Khan's network was listed in the FBI's Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment database as having suspicious relations.

Khan instructed his clients to claim asylum if they were caught by Border Patrol agents.

That's also true for many of the Bangladeshi migrants, who end up making asylum claims after the Border Patrol processes them, Deputy Chief Good said.

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HEADLINE	04/18 Seattle mayor unveils education levy
SOURCE	https://crosscut.com/2018/04/tax-fatigue-durkan-unveils-education-levy
GIST	<p>Mayor Jenny Durkan on Wednesday unveiled an ambitious seven-year, \$636 million property tax measure to fund K-12 education programs, expand the city's burgeoning preschool program and put funding behind her proposal to make community college more accessible.</p> <p>If the measure gets the green light from the Seattle City Council to go to the ballot next November, the campaign to pass it would be a fresh test of Seattleites' appetite for increased property taxes. It comes at a time when housing costs are increasing and property owners absorb large state and regional increases.</p> <p>But the proposal also comes as those same property owners see the value of their investments increase at breakneck speeds. At the same time, the region is struggling with vast inequality broadly and racial disparities in graduation rates more specifically.</p> <p>At a press event, Durkan sold the new measure as a means to bridge that gap, both through a concerted focus on closing achievement gaps in K-12 education and through making early childhood and college education accessible to everyone.</p> <p>"We are taking an incredible step today to really close the opportunity gap that exists in our city," she said. "Too many kids, too many families and too many neighborhoods have really been left behind. The key to that, the key to the future, is our schools."</p> <p>Durkan's proposal is a replacement of sorts for two expiring levies: the \$235 million Families and Education Levy, passed in 2011; and the \$58 million Seattle Preschool Program Levy, approved in 2014.</p> <p>In real dollars for homeowners, the new measure would mean a \$249 per year tab on a home valued at \$665,000. Calculating exactly how much of an increase that may mean is challenging — the previous two levies were estimated to cost homeowners \$170 a year, but valuations have changed enormously since those were passed.</p> <p>More than half of the proposed funding would go toward the city's preschool program, a significant ramp up from the previous proposal. City officials hope the increased funding would expand the free or reduced early childhood education program from 1,500 kids currently to 2,800 over the seven-year course of the package.</p> <p>The increased focus on the youngest children is a reflection of where Durkan believes the most strides can be made for closing the achievement gap. "We know it works," she said. "If they get to Kindergarten</p>

ready to learn that helps them in their life.”

And she likely has agreement on starting there: In a 2015 interview with Crosscut, author and Harvard Professor Robert Putnam, who’s written extensively on the disappearing American Dream, pointed to Seattle’s Pre-K efforts as more significant than even its increased minimum wage for the future of children.

About a third of the funding will go toward K-12, funding both school health programs and support outside of school hours. Although Seattle Public Schools’ graduation rates have improved, significant racial disparities remain. The proposal would increase spending for diversifying public school staff, job training, after-school programs and others.

The remaining 7 percent would dedicate dollars for Durkan’s “Seattle Promise” program to provide tuition support for any student graduating from Seattle Public Schools and wanting to attend community college.

Carmen Martinez is a member of the South Park Community. She says she works with a lot of kids who may be gang-involved, have single parents or need to take multiple busses to get to school. She’s also a homeowner. But the extra cost is worth it, she says. “It is very inexpensive to me as a homeowner who lives in Seattle to invest a couple hundred dollars a year,” she said.

Whenever a mayor proposes new property taxes, the specter of “tax fatigue” is exhumed. Seattle voters so far have shown no limit to their willingness to increase property taxes on themselves. And even still, Seattle has some of the lowest property tax rates in the Puget Sound region.

King County Assessor John Wilson has been ringing the alarm bell for some time now. “What I am hearing more and more as I travel around the county is, from those taxpayers who have been historically reliable ‘yes’ votes, they say, ‘I saw the notice and I’m not going to vote for anything more.... I’m at a point where I can’t afford it. It may sound good and I might even support it, but I just can’t bring myself to vote for it,’” he told Crosscut’s Kristen Clark recently. “That day, I think, is going to be a wake-up call to us.”

That said, no property tax measures have even come close to failing in recent years and the “tax fatigue” narrative has been proven unfounded.

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HEADLINE	04/18 State unemployment rate at 4.8%
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/958106/washington-unemployment-rate-at-4-8-percent/
GIST	<p>OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — Washington’s jobless rate increased slightly as the state added 3,900 jobs last month.</p> <p>According to numbers released Wednesday by the Employment Security Department, the unemployment rate for March ticked up to 4.8 percent from February’s 4.7 percent.</p> <p>Paul Turek, economist for the department, says in a written statement that the rate is still hovering “near historical lows.”</p> <p>The largest job gains last month were seen in manufacturing retail trade and leisure and hospitality. The biggest reductions were seen in financial activities and construction.</p> <p>Job gains and losses are estimates based on a survey by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The unemployment rate counts the percentage of people who are unemployed and actively looking for work, and doesn’t include those who have stopped looking for work.</p> <p>The national unemployment rate for March was 4.1 percent.</p>

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HEADLINE 04/18 Jefferson Co. settles PRA complaint

SOURCE <http://mynorthwest.com/958450/jefferson-county-settles-public-records-act-complaint/>

GIST PORT TOWNSEND, Wash. (AP) — Jefferson County commissioners have voted to settle a public records act violation complaint.

The Peninsula Daily News reports that commissioners on Monday voted to avoid litigation in the complaint brought by Joseph D’Amico, owner and operator of Security Services Northwest, Inc., and Fort Discovery, a gun range and training facility in the permitting process to be located in Jefferson County.

The county disputes any violation of the state’s Public Records Act but determined that the cost of litigating the issue would likely be much more than the settlement amount of \$6,165.

D’Amico had asked the county for a copy of an email, to which the county sent him a redacted document. The county sent him a document free of redactions as part of the settlement.

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HEADLINE 04/18 Snohomish council critical Sound Transit

SOURCE <http://mynorthwest.com/958027/snohomish-county-flawed-approach/>

GIST Snohomish County Councilmember Terry Ryan wants to know why Sound Transit light rail service will be available in other areas of Seattle before Tacoma and Everett.

“When did it become Sound Transit’s responsibility to move people from Ballard into Seattle as opposed to Metro?” he asked Sound Transit CEO Peter Rogoff during a meeting this week.

The short answer from Rogoff: “Things change. Things have changed.”

Rogoff says development patterns are very different now than when Sound Transit was first formed. In 1996, voters approved Sound Move. It was the first phase toward a high-capacity light rail system. The vote authorized the creation of the agency, tax collections, and the first set of projects. Those projects included service between Sea-Tac Airport and the University of Washington — among other things.

The Northgate station, currently in the works, was part of the initial voter-approved package. That was dependent on additional funding.

Sound Transit 2, approved in 2008, authorized the agency to expand the system by 36 miles. The 15-year program will add service to Lynnwood and east to Overlake and south of Sea-Tac Airport.

In 2016, voters within the agency’s taxing district approved Sound Transit 3; a 25-year program that is expected to complete the 116-mile system to Everett, down to Tacoma, west to Ballard and West Seattle, and to the Eastside.

The agency, Rogoff says, can’t prioritize constructing the “spine” — the north-south line between Everett and Tacoma — because the agency’s funding strategy uses money from its five taxing districts to benefit those particular areas. And Snohomish County brings in the least amount of money.

Council members say that’s flawed and want the agency to consider switching to a system-wide approach.

Service to Everett is not expected to begin until 2036. That is one year after Ballard and six years after West Seattle.

Tacoma will have light rail service to the Dome in 2030.

Sound Transit's taxing districts include the most populated areas of King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. In 2016, people within those districts approved Sound Transit 3 by 54 percent of the total vote. It passed in King and Snohomish counties. Fifty-six percent of voters in Pierce County rejected the measure.

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HEADLINE 04/18 Veteran fighter pilot saves crippled flight

SOURCE <https://www.thedailybeast.com/how-veteran-fighter-pilot-tammy-jo-shults-saved-crippled-southwest-flight-1380>

GIST Just how masterfully Tammie Jo Shults, the pilot of the badly crippled Southwest Airlines Flight 1380, handled the problem of an engine exploding at 30,000 feet is winning admiration from thousands of her fellow pilots—and should finally help to temper the hubris of what has been a notoriously testosterone-charged profession.

Consider this: The Boeing 737's left engine suffered a catastrophic failure when one of its fan blades—a part that looks like a pirate's scimitar and is just as lethal when let loose—broke away, ripped through the engine casing that was supposed to contain it, and then, along with other pieces of shrapnel, tore into the skin of the airplane's cabin.

Airplane cabins are like a pressure vessel. At 30,000 feet, where the jet was when the failure occurred, the pressure inside the cabin was far higher than in the outside air. The debris instantly punctured this pressure vessel, releasing an explosive rush of air. One cabin window was shattered and with the violent release of air, the woman seated at that window, Jennifer Rioardan, was partly sucked out, suffering injuries that were fatal.

Oxygen masks were automatically dropped to passengers to provide air that they could breathe—but inevitably this added to the visceral sense of impending catastrophe.

Simultaneously the crew put on their own oxygen masks. At this point Captain Shults and her copilot were carrying out a visual and audio assessment of the damage to the 737, simultaneously scanning all the instruments to note the condition of vital systems. Most alarmingly, they saw an alarm flashing, indicating that they had an engine fire. Fire of any kind is the last thing a pilot wants to see in a situation like this because if it gets out of control it can destroy an airplane in seconds.

The pilots' first priority was to make a rapid descent to 10,000 feet where the difference between the outside air pressure and the cabin pressure begins to equalize. This greatly reduces the risk that other parts of the cabin structure will rupture because of the pressure stresses.

At the same time Captain Shults was talking to controllers to report her situation, and requesting an emergency landing at Philadelphia, as well as requesting medical help for passengers.

For any pilot in this situation the most difficult and urgent thing to judge is how responsive the airplane is to their commands. An airplane as crippled as this one becomes difficult to handle. With only one engine working and damage to the other causing unusual air drag, the pilot must correct for asymmetrical power and drag—the airplane naturally tends to swing away from its direct course.

Here it is striking to compare Captain Shults' plight with that of Captain Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger in his legendary "miracle on the Hudson" landing. Sullenberger lost both engines to a bird strike, but his airplane, the Airbus A320, had "fly-by-wire" controls that gave him an automatic safety margin by restricting the control movements to a computer-dictated "envelope." In contrast, the flight controls of the Southwest 737, although monitored through computers, remain as they were in the analog age, with the pilot controlling directly through a "yoke."

And this is where Captain Shults' background came into play. She is an ex-Navy pilot and one of the first women to fly the "Top Gun" F-18 Hornet, eventually becoming an instructor. Landing supersonic jets on

the decks of aircraft carriers is one of the most demanding skills in military aviation. Now, flying on the one engine called for her to use all of her “seat of the pants” instincts to nurse the jet to the runway.

Normally a 737 on final approach would deploy its wing flaps to their full extent, to reduce landing speed to around 140 mph. But Captain Shults’ skills and experience forewarned her that an airplane flying that slowly with its flaps fully extended and with asymmetrical power could become fatally unstable in the final stage of the landing, so she used a minimal flap setting to maintain a higher speed and stability—taking the risk that the landing gear and particularly the tires could survive a higher speed impact.

As the jet came into land the controllers in the Philadelphia tower, looking at it through binoculars, could see that there was an open gash in the side of the cabin. At the same time it was reported that a large piece of the left engine’s cowling had fallen to the ground 60 miles northwest of the airport.

Captain Shults faced another problem with the speed of the landing: She could not deploy the airplane’s engine thrust reversers to help brake the speed after touchdown because of the damage to her left engine. However the touchdown was perfect and, once slowed, the jet came to rest on a taxiway where a fire crew sprayed the damaged engine with foam and put out a small fire from leaking fuel.

The warning of an engine fire had been a false one, probably caused by damage to the alarm system’s wiring.

According to reports Shults was raised on a New Mexico ranch near Holloman Air Force base. “Some people grow up around aviation. I grew up under it” she told Linda Maloney, the author of the book Military Fly Moms.

When she announced in her senior year at high school that she wanted to be a pilot a retired colonel told her “there are no professional women pilots.” That was, apparently, a problem for her when she applied to train to be a pilot in the Air Force. They rejected her, but the Navy gave her the break—and, obviously, it was a very smart move, particularly for everyone aboard Flight 1380.

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HEADLINE	04/18 Pro-gun rally in Olympia Saturday
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SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/south-sound-news/march-for-our-rights-pro-gun-rights-rally-expected-to-draw-2000-to-state-capitol/734218036
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GIST	OLYMPIA, Wash. - The "March for Our Rights" rally that will be held at the Capitol Campus in Olympia on Saturday could draw up 2,000 people, according to the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services.
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The pro-gun rights rally is scheduled to begin at noon Saturday at the northern steps of the Legislative Building. The rally is expected to run until 2:30 p.m.

While the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services predicts 2,000 attendees, a Facebook event page for the rally listed 9,600 people as "going" or "interested," as of 1:00 p.m. Tuesday.

Lauren Smith, of The Olympian, reported, "Participants are likely to openly carry during the rally, as allowed by state law."

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HEADLINE	04/18 Huge cruise ship coming to Seattle
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SOURCE	http://www.king5.com/article/news/nation-now/norwegian-cruise-line-takes-delivery-of-its-biggest-ship-ever-norwegian-bliss/465-494f2b23-3350-4dbb-9cba-c5477a6da06c
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GIST	BREMERHAVEN, Germany — Add Norwegian Cruise Line to the list of cruise companies with a giant
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	<p>new ship.</p> <p>Just three weeks after Royal Caribbean unveiled its biggest ship ever and two weeks after Carnival Cruise Line added a sizable new vessel of its own, Norwegian has taken delivery of its largest ship ever, the 168,028-ton Norwegian Bliss.</p> <p>German shipbuilder Meyer Werft on Thursday handed over the 20-deck-high, 1,082-foot-long vessel to Norwegian during a ceremony in Bremerhaven, Germany.</p> <p>Capable of holding 4,004 passengers at double occupancy, Bliss has been under construction for more than a year at the Meyer Werft shipyard in Papenburg, Germany. It's the third ship in Norwegian's Breakaway-Plus series, which also includes the 165,157-ton Norwegian Escape and 167,725-ton Norwegian Joy. The two earlier vessels debuted in 2015 and 2017, respectively.</p> <p>Bliss will sail today from Germany to Southampton, England, where its maiden voyage with paying passengers is scheduled to begin Monday. Twelve nights long, the maiden voyage is a trans-Atlantic sailing to New York that comes in advance of a series of voyages in the Americas.</p> <p>Designed to have all the trappings of a major mega-resort, Bliss features such over-the-top amusements as a two-deck-high racing course where passengers compete against each other in electric go-carts — a first for a vessel based in North America.</p> <p>Bliss will spend the coming summer sailing to Alaska out of Seattle. It's also scheduled to sail out of Miami and New York over the next two years.</p> <p>The deployment to Alaska is notable in the cruise industry as Bliss will be the largest cruise ship ever to sail in the state. In a nod to the deployment, the vessel is adorned with hull art by marine artist Wyland that includes a giant image of a mother humpback whale and her calf. It's called Cruising with the Whales.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 TSA rolling out new security at SEA
SOURCE	http://www.king5.com/article/travel/tsa-rolling-out-new-security-at-sea-tac-other-airports-heres-what-you-should-know/281-542656619
GIST	<p>Extensive TSA airport screening measures are now in place at airports all across the United States, the Transportation Security Administration has announced. The new screenings and security procedures come after a wave of fear over too-lax processes. Here's some of the new rules:</p> <p>Travelers at U.S. airports where TSA has security, must remove all phones, along with some foods, powders, books and reading materials, and anything else “that can clutter bags and obstruct clear images on the X-ray machine.”</p> <p>TSA also said that passengers can expect more delays with the new procedures as bag-checking and screenings will be more plentiful.</p> <p>However, those who are TSA Pre-Check passengers "will continue to experience expedited screening by not having to remove shoes, the 3-1-1 liquids bag, laptops, light outerwear jackets, or belts," the company announced in their press release.</p> <p>Passengers flying into the U.S. also now face enhanced screening at their overseas departure airport. Those on inbound flights may be asked additional questions before boarding the aircraft and possibly extra bag screening.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Everett 2-day free medical clinic
SOURCE	http://www.heraldnet.com/news/2-event-will-offer-free-medical-dental-services/
GIST	<p>For patients receiving dental and medical services at the Amen Everett Free Clinic, it won't matter that the event is a first for this area. They won't care that the corporate sponsor once had local ties. People in need will line up at Angel of the Winds Arena on Friday and Sunday for free care they might not otherwise get.</p> <p>"When I look at over 700 people from the area who have volunteered, I see something incredible," said Fred Cornforth, CEO of Community Development Inc., the clinic's corporate sponsor. "To volunteer their time, to see that impulse to do good and love others that way, it's a phenomenal thing."</p> <p>With nearly two dozen doctors, some 30 dentists plus vision specialists helping each day, the two-day free clinic is expected to serve 400 to 500 patients daily, said Dr. Kevin Clay, chief of ambulatory medicine at Providence Regional Medical Center Everett.</p> <p>Clay is medical director of the local Amen Clinic, one of more than a half-dozen such clinics Cornforth's organization has been involved with. "The majority of people volunteering, the physicians, dentists and vision team, are local," said Paula Beatty, the clinic's director here.</p> <p>The Amen Clinic is scheduled for 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday and Sunday — but not Saturday — in the arena's Edward D. Hansen Conference Center and the Community Ice Rink. Along with free dental, vision, and medical care, mental health services will be offered. Beatty said patients are expected to start lining up as early as 5:30 or 6 a.m., and will be issued wristbands.</p> <p>Community Development, Inc. is a private, nonprofit organization that builds affordable apartment housing.</p> <p>"My parents both lived in Everett, and Everett meant a lot to us over the years," said Cornforth, 58, who now lives in Boise, Idaho, with his wife, Jill.</p> <p>"I started CDI in 1994 with \$4,700," he said. Since then, he said, the firm has done \$900 million in apartment development. His organization's contribution to the clinic in Everett is about \$70,000, he said.</p> <p>His parents, Charlie and Eleanor Cornforth, lived in Everett about 20 years. He lived at their Rucker Avenue home about a year after finishing college in the 1980s. The family also lived on Whidbey Island for a time.</p> <p>"My mom worked at Providence Hospital a number of years," Cornforth said, noting that Providence Health & Services Northwest Washington is an Amen Clinic partner.</p> <p>Along with CDI and Providence, the clinic is sponsored by the Washington Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, ASI Northwest, United Healthcare Community Plan; Forest Park Seventh-day Adventist Church, Arcora Foundation, North Cascade Seventh-day Adventist Church, Care Partners Living, Molina Healthcare, and Cellnetix Pathology & Laboratories.</p> <p>Cornforth has helped put on clinics from Anchorage, Alaska, to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He lives in Idaho, but it takes a California organization to bring the Amen Clinic to Everett.</p> <p>Beatty said the California-based Amen organization provides all the equipment. "They run clinics all over the country," she said. The dental equipment and other needs will be trucked to Everett.</p> <p>Explaining clinic logistics, Beatty said patients will enter the conference center on Hewitt Avenue to register in the lobby. Second-floor rooms and a ballroom will be used for vision and other services. Dentists will work on the ice rink, which will be covered with boards and plastic.</p> <p>Medical services will include women's exams, pediatrics, blood glucose and blood pressure testing, lead testing for kids and much more.</p>

Patients will fill out registration cards just to keep track of them. “We don’t care who they are, they can use any name. We don’t care if they’re from Afghanistan or Athens, Georgia,” Beatty said. “And if they have no insurance, we don’t care.”

For the uninsured, the need is especially critical this year because another event, Project Homeless Connect, apparently won’t happen. On its website, United Way of Snohomish County announced that as of March 1, adequate funding for the summer event, which has happened for a decade, hadn’t been secured and the previous venue wasn’t available.

On Monday, local United Way spokeswoman Allison Matsumoto confirmed that “Project Homeless Connect is not happening this year.” United Way’s website lists the Amen Clinic among other services that are available. United Way is helping put on the third annual Youth & Family Wellness Fair, scheduled for May 5 at Everett’s Evergreen Middle School.

Cornforth has written several books about faith, among them “Knowing: An Agnostic’s Journey on the Way to Spiritual Clarity.” His philanthropy transcends any denomination or faith. “I call it the impulse of love,” Cornforth said.

“And we’re blessed with more than enough volunteers,” Dr. Clay added.

Amen Free Clinic

The Amen Everett Free Clinic is scheduled for 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday and Sunday (not Saturday) in the Edward D. Hansen Conference Center at Angel of the Winds Arena and the Community Ice Rink. Free dental, vision, medical and mental health services will be available. Patients will be served on first-come, first-served basis. Wristbands will be issued, beginning by 6 a.m. each day. The arena is at 2000 Hewitt Ave., Everett.

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HEADLINE	04/18 Snohomish students to walkout Friday
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SOURCE	http://www.heraldnet.com/news/students-to-walk-out-over-gun-issues-school-safety/
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GIST	EVERETT — Local students again are rallying as part of a national movement focused on school safety and gun violence.
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Walkouts are planned Friday at schools around the country, including at least nine in Snohomish County.

Over the past couple of months, thousands of area students have taken part in rallies and marches, including [the March 14 walkouts](#) and the [March for Our Lives](#). Some [went to Washington, D.C.](#) The student activism began after the Feb. 14 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida, where 17 people were killed.

Friday’s walkouts are meant to coincide with the 19-year mark since the shooting at Columbine High School, where 13 died.

Students at Henry M. Jackson High School plan to walk out around 10 a.m. They’ll march to Mill Creek City Hall, junior Xzavier Hamilton said. They’ll pick up garbage on their way.

Hamilton, 17, also was involved in the March 14 walkout, when students from Jackson High released a balloon each minute for 17 minutes, one for every victim of the shooting in Florida.

This time, they have chalk to write the names of every victim of a school shooting from Columbine to present on the pavement near City Hall, he said.

“What we’re trying to say is we don’t want gun violence in school,” he said. “We’re putting the message out there that we are tired of this and we want to feel safe.”

He hopes students are inspired to vote when they are old enough, and to speak out on issues they care about.

Students may be marked tardy or absent, depending on how long they are out of class, Everett schools spokeswoman Leanna Albrecht said. Leaving district property without parental permission is an unexcused absence.

“The safety of all students (both those participating in a walkout and those who choose not to) is our top priority,” she wrote in an email.

Student Rel Konot is organizing an event at Edmonds Community College. The plan is to have speakers and possibly voter registration in a courtyard on campus.

Konot supports raising the age to buy certain firearms from 18 to 21 and tightening background check requirements.

“A shooting in our community was narrowly averted,” Konot said, speaking of a [student’s alleged plan to shoot classmates at ACES High School](#). “That’s really what made me think it is important to talk about this here, too.”

Jocelyn van der Put is part of a committee planning a walkout at Lake Stevens High School.

They’ll walk to the football field at the start of third period, she said. She expects they’ll return to class after about 20 minutes, during which students will speak and hold a school supply donation drive.

The walkout is in solidarity with others across the country, she said. However, the focus in Lake Stevens isn’t gun control, but rather safety in general and bridging divides between students.

“We want it to be unifying for our student body,” she said. “There is a big political divide on this issue. We don’t want that to be the case, at least at our school.”

Some students are frustrated that the discussion won’t center on gun control, she said. The goal is to bring together all students who care about school safety, including those who do not support stricter gun laws.

In Marysville, where a freshman in 2014 fatally shot four classmates, wounded one other and killed himself, students may participate in activities led by their peers but are not to leave campus, according to [a message from acting superintendent Jason Thompson](#).

“School districts locally and across the nation have made decisions weighing students’ First Amendment rights to free speech with staying in class,” he wrote.

He expressed pride in the way young people have chosen to honor those lost in shootings.

“Students feeling passion and advocacy about an issue can be a powerful learning experience,” he wrote.

[An online map](#) shows where students have said they are planning events affiliated with the National Student Walkout. The map includes Cascade, Jackson, Mariner, North Creek and Lakewood high schools, Explorer Middle School, Cedar Way Elementary, and Edmonds Community College.

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HEADLINE 04/18 Amazon worker median pay: \$28,446

SOURCE <https://www.seattletimes.com/business/amazon/amazon-workers-median-pay-in-2017-28446/>

<p>GIST</p>	<p>Amazon says its median employee pay was \$28,446 last year.</p> <p>That data, disclosed Wednesday in Amazon’s annual proxy report, is a reminder that while the technologists, business managers and marketers at Amazon headquarters can make more than \$100,000, in most of the country, Amazon is a blue-collar logistics company where workers take home far less.</p> <p>In Seattle, Amazon’s more than 45,000 employees are paid an average of more than \$110,000, according to an analysis of individual worker data posted to job review site Glassdoor. The median, or midpoint, of Amazon’s 566,000 individual employee salaries worldwide stood far lower.</p> <p>At Amazon’s dozens of logistics depots around the U.S., entry-level work generally starts at between \$11 and \$16 an hour, according to Amazon job postings and Glassdoor reviews.</p> <p>Amazon Chief Executive Jeff Bezos received \$1,681,840 in compensation in 2017, the proxy statement said, \$1.6 million of which represents the cost of providing his security.</p> <p>Bezos — who owns 16 percent of the company’s shares, a stake that makes him the world’s richest man with a net worth of \$127 billion, according to Bloomberg — received the other \$81,840 as salary.</p> <p>The pay disclosure was mandated by the federal Wall Street reform bill passed after the 2008 financial crisis. Its aim is to allow a comparison of the top executive’s pay to rank-and-file pay.</p> <p>By that metric, Amazon’s disparity between CEO and average worker pay stood at 59-to-1, a relatively narrow gap. Compensation data firm Equilar, which surveyed companies earlier this year on the pay ratio they planned to disclose, found a median pay ratio of 140-to-1.</p> <p>In a statement, Amazon said that it offered highly competitive wages and benefits “in every country and every sector where we employ people.”</p>
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<p>HEADLINE</p>	<p>04/18 Strong quake strikes southern Iran</p>
<p>SOURCE</p>	<p>http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/04/19/magnitude-5-5-quake-strikes-southern-iran-near-nuclear-plant.html</p>
<p>GIST</p>	<p>An earthquake of at least magnitude 5.5 struck in southern Iran near the country's sole nuclear power plant on Thursday morning, shaking Bahrain and other areas around the Persian Gulf.</p> <p>There was no immediate report of damage or injuries.</p> <p>The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake struck at 0634 GMT some 60 miles east of Bushehr. That's home to the Bushehr Nuclear Power, the only operating nuclear power plant in the Islamic Republic.</p> <p>The USGS put the earthquake's magnitude at 5.5 while Iranian state television, citing officials, described the quake as a magnitude 5.9. Varying magnitudes are common immediately after a temblor.</p> <p>Iranian state TV did not report any damage at Bushehr plant, which has seen other earthquakes in the past and is built to resist damage from a temblor. It put the earthquake's epicenter near the town of Kaki.</p> <p>The Iran Red Cross described the epicenter as being in a sparsely populated area.</p> <p>In Bahrain, an island kingdom off Saudi Arabia, people on social media said they felt the quake and evacuated from high-rise buildings.</p> <p>The USGS put the earthquake's depth at 6.2 miles below the surface. Shallow earthquakes often have broader damage.</p>

	A magnitude 5 earthquake can cause considerable damage.
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HEADLINE	04/17 Drought returns to huge swaths in US
SOURCE	http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2018/04/17/drought-returns-to-huge-swaths-of-us-fueling-fears-of-a-thirsty-future
GIST	<p>AUSTIN, Texas — Less than eight months after Hurricane Harvey pelted the Texas Gulf Coast with torrential rainfall, drought has returned to Texas and other parts of the West, Southwest and Southeast, rekindling old worries for residents who dealt with earlier waves of dry spells and once again forcing state governments to reckon with how to keep the water flowing.</p> <p>Nearly a third of the continental United States was in drought as of April 10, more than three times the coverage of a year ago. And the specter of a drought-ridden summer has focused renewed urgency on state and local conservation efforts, some of which would fundamentally alter Americans’ behavior in how they use water.</p> <p>In California, for example, officials are considering rules to permanently ban water-wasting actions such as hosing off sidewalks and driveways, washing a vehicle with a hose that doesn’t have a shut-off valve, and irrigating ornamental turf on public street medians. The regulations, awaiting a final decision by the California State Water Resources Control Board, were in force as temporary emergency measures during part of a devastating five-year drought but were lifted in 2017 after the drought subsided.</p> <p>Water restrictions, either forced or voluntary, are nothing new to states and communities where battling drought is often a part of life. In Amarillo, Texas, the city’s water department stresses conservation with the message, “every drop counts,” and urges customers to do “at least one thing a day to save water.” A similar mantra — “squeeze every drop” — is part of the water-saving culture in Oklahoma City, where officials enforce mandatory lawn-watering restrictions and impose higher rates for excessive water use.</p> <p>Years of studies by government and environmental groups have warned that future demand for water is threatening to outstrip availability, particularly in the drought-plagued West and Southwest, unless policymakers take steps to reverse those trends.</p> <p>“More and more cities around the world are running into limits on how much water they have available to meet their needs,” said Peter Gleick, co-founder of the Oakland-based Pacific Institute and an expert on water and climate issues.</p> <p>To understand the potential dangers, U.S. officials might look halfway around the world, to parched Cape Town, South Africa, where residents this year faced a crisis that seems straight from science fiction. After three years of drought, the city of 4 million spent months united in a struggle to fend off Day Zero, when Cape Town was projected to become the world’s first major urban center to run out of water.</p> <p>Residents skimped on dishwashing and laundry, took minishowers, washed their hands with sanitizer, flushed the toilet with leftover shower water, and made numerous other sacrifices to daily routines. The objective: to cut individual water consumption to 50 liters a day, or 13.2 gallons, far below the U.S. average of 80 to 100 gallons. Hundreds queued up for daily water rations as the city deployed law enforcement officers — widely dubbed “the world’s first water police” — to enforce restrictions.</p> <p>The day of reckoning was originally expected to fall in mid-April, but was postponed to May and then to June.</p> <p>The draconian conservation campaign had enabled Cape Town to proclaim at least partial success in March when it pushed back Day Zero to sometime in 2019. But the executive deputy mayor, Ian Neilson, said the city is still in crisis mode until it completely replenishes its water supplies.</p>

Cape Town Scenarios in the U.S.?

The picture of a coastal metropolis going without water once seemed inconceivable. But as a waterless Cape Town has become a potential reality, its story has sparked new concerns over the growing scarcity of the planet's most basic resource.

U.S. government and environmental experts generally agree that no major city is in imminent danger of the kind of scenario confronting Cape Town. But residents in some small communities have struggled, and at the same time, U.S. experts worry that protracted global warming, worsening droughts, vanishing groundwater and growing populations will erode future supplies and make Americans increasingly vulnerable throughout the 21st century.

One critical water resource threatened by shortages is the Colorado River System, which includes parts of seven states and provides water for up to 40 million people. In the absence of "timely action to ensure sustainability," the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation said in a 2012 assessment of the river basin, "there exists a strong potential for significant imbalances between water supply and demand in coming decades."

Lake Mead, a reservoir sprawling 120 miles behind the Hoover Dam in Nevada, is less than half full after years of drought. The reservoir, which is part of the Colorado River System, serves nearly 25 million people in Nevada, Arizona and California.

Burgeoning population growth is also straining water resources. The Texas Water Development Board has authorized \$6.2 billion in financing for 48 municipal and regional projects after state water planners warned that the population of the second-most-populous state would grow by 70 percent over the next 50 years. Available water supplies were projected to fall by 11 percent during that same period without new investment.

The Environmental Protection Agency, in a January 2017 snapshot of the impact of climate change, predicted that the Southern Plains will face more "extreme heat" in the future, saying that the number of days of 100 degrees or hotter will quadruple by 2050.

"Increasing temperatures and more frequent and severe droughts," the EPA said, "are expected to heighten competition for water resources for use in cities, agriculture and energy production."

Adding to America's water insecurity is a decadeslong decline in groundwater resources, which supply half of the nation's residents and nearly all of its rural population, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

Sustained groundwater pumping has steadily taken its toll on aquifers throughout the country, lowering groundwater levels by hundreds of feet in some places. Water levels in the High Plains aquifer system, which underlies parts of eight states, have dropped by more than 100 feet in places, largely as a result of extensive irrigation, according to the USGS.

"As more wells and deeper wells have been drilled to access groundwater, it exacerbates the groundwater level decline and there is often no way to get that back," said Breton Bruce, a scientist with USGS in Denver. "Basically, we are pumping groundwater faster than it recharges."

Large sections of the United States are all too familiar with drought and its devastating impact on both surface and groundwater. Over the past decade, Texas and California endured — and are still recovering from — record multiyear droughts that plunged lake levels, killed millions of trees, and cost billions of dollars in lost crops and livestock. Georgia went through four droughts from 1998 to 2016. Arizona has been confronting drought throughout the 21st century.

Two small communities, East Porterville in California and Spicewood Beach in Texas, drew national attention during their states' droughts after their wells ran dry and outsiders came to the rescue with water deliveries. As many as 30 other Texas communities came close to running out of water during the drought,

according to press reports.

“Things were grim. I didn’t get water for 20 months,” recalls Jim Burr, a peace justice and 33-year resident of Terlingua, a small community of about 800 people in the remote Big Bend region of Texas. After his 16-foot-deep well ran dry during the height of the last drought, Burr was forced to dig another that extended 45 feet deep.

Water Policy Is Fraught With Conflict

The latest wave of droughts has descended on more than a dozen states across the country. The largest band stretches across the Southwest and includes parts of southern California, Utah, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Kansas and the panhandles of Texas and Oklahoma. Pockets of drought are also in the Northern Plains, including parts of Montana and the Dakotas, and the southeastern states of Georgia and South Carolina.

Brian A. Fuchs, associate geoscientist and climatologist at the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said the Southwestern drought that started in October is “the most intense significant drought area that we have going on right now.” The ultimate impact, he said, depends on how long it lasts. For now, he added, “the jury is still out.”

“It’s one of those situations where time is definitely going to tell,” he said. “If we see conditions continue to worsen over the next six months without any improvement, the situation is going to be a lot more significant than where we’re at right now.”

Most of the states on the front lines of the current drought already have spent decades shoring up their defenses, operating on a proven regimen that whenever one drought ends, another is lurking not far in the future. But at the same time, the search for effective state water policy also has been fraught with conflict, often displaying the competing interests of agriculture, property owners, big cities, small communities, energy developers, conservationists and environmentalists and a host of others. Solutions never come easy.

“Water is fundamental to all the interests,” said Luke Metzger, executive director of Environment Texas, “and, at times of scarcity, it can be a feeding frenzy, where all the interests are competing for a finite supply.”

Water necessity has also led to innovation. Two Texas cities — Big Spring and Wichita Falls — have drawn accolades from environmentalists with projects to recycle waste water into potable water. In 1980, Arizona enacted what has widely been hailed as a pioneering initiative with its Groundwater Management Act, which, among other things, required new developments to prove they could assure enough water to last 100 years.

“Arizona has had a longtime history of marshaling its water forces,” said Doug MacEachern, communications administrator for the Arizona Department of Water Resources. MacEachern said the state uses less water overall today than it did in 1957 when there were at least 5 million fewer people.

California has also produced an array of water-saving initiatives, including enacting its version of a groundwater management act in 2014. The same year, Californians approved a \$7.5 billion bond package on water projects that included expanding water storage, protecting rivers and lakes, bolstering groundwater sustainability and water recycling. In June, voters will be asked to spend another \$4.1 billion for initiatives that include water infrastructure and flood protection projects.

“We’re running fast to try to make ourselves resilient for the long term,” said Felicia Marcus, who chairs the California State Water Resources Control Board.

In Texas, memories of destructive droughts and fears of future water shortages prompted voters in 2013 to create the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT) to help ensure abundant water supplies through 2070. The initiative empowered the Texas Water Development Board to authorize low-interest loans and other incentives to finance municipal and regional projects envisioned under the state’s long-

range water plan.

“In general, there’s enough water for the projected future population ... if we do it right,” said Janice Bezanson, executive director of the Texas Conservation Alliance. She acknowledges the potential of “case by case” shortages in small communities, but said that the state is “planning far enough in the future” to assure its cities of sufficient water resources.

The Texas plan calls for the creation of 26 new reservoirs as well as for other initiatives: recycling, an expanded push for desalination and replacing infrastructure to get rid of aging, leaking pipelines blamed for water loss. Some of the proposed new reservoirs have ignited a fierce pushback from landowners and conservationists, who say new lakes would threaten farm and ranch land, endanger wilderness areas, and encroach on wildlife habitat.

Meanwhile in Cape Town, Executive Deputy Mayor Neilson said the race against Day Zero has fundamentally redefined the city’s water strategies. Officials there, too, want to find alternatives.

The city, which doesn’t have a reliable source of groundwater, draws its supplies almost exclusively from surface water in its six major reservoirs. Neilson said officials have learned that they’ll need to diversify their water supply to other sources: groundwater where possible, along with water re-use and desalination.

And what about Day Zero? Neilson said the city is placing its hopes on good fortunes from the upcoming rainy season as well as quick steps such as building temporary desalination plants, which would eventually be followed by permanent plants.

City officials will then reassess toward the end of the year, he said.

“You start off from having years of luxury and having plentiful water,” he said. “You have certain behaviors that you develop, and you then have to teach yourself to do things differently.”

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HEADLINE	04/18 Study: Americans waste 1lb food daily
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SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/americans-waste-nearly-a-pound-of-food-each-per-day-study-finds/
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GIST	Every day in the United States, consumers throw out nearly a pound of food each, according to new research. In a surprising finding, the report also showed a link between quality of diet and food waste: the healthier a person's diet, the more food they threw in the trash.
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"In the bigger picture, it's a waste of calories," study co-author Meredith Niles, a University of Vermont assistant professor, told CBS News. "It's a waste of environmental resources, but in our own households it's potentially a waste of our own financial resources, as well."

Between 2007 and 2014, U.S. consumers wasted nearly 150,000 tons of food per day. That's nearly a pound per person and equates to about 30 percent of the average daily calories consumed for every American.

The study, published Wednesday in the journal PLOS ONE, also found 30 million acres of land and 4.2 trillion gallons of water are wasted on food that goes uneaten each year.

Researchers also found higher quality diets were linked to higher levels of waste. Of the 22 food groups studied, fruits and vegetables were wasted most, accounting for 39 percent of the total waste. This was followed by dairy at 17 percent and meat and mixed meat dishes at 14 percent.

"Higher quality diets have greater amounts of fruits and vegetables, which are being wasted in greater quantities than other food," Niles said in a statement. "Eating healthy is important, and brings many benefits, but as we pursue these diets, we must think much more consciously about food waste."

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HEADLINE 04/18 More illnesses in E. coli outbreak

SOURCE <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/more-illnesses-reported-in-ecoli-outbreak-romaine-lettuce/>

GIST Eighteen more people have been sickened by the E. coli outbreak tied to chopped romaine lettuce from the Yuma, Arizona, growing region, health officials report. According to the latest update from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 53 people have now been affected in 16 states.

In total, 31 out of 48 people with available information have been hospitalized -- a rate of 65 percent -- including five people who have developed a type of kidney failure called hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS).

"This is a higher hospitalization rate than usual for E. coli O157:H7 infections, which is normally around 30 percent," the CDC said in a statement. "Health officials are working to determine why this strain is causing a higher percentage of hospitalizations." No deaths have been reported.

Health officials say information collected to date indicates that chopped romaine lettuce from the Yuma growing region could be contaminated with E. coli O157:H7. No common grower, supplier, or distributor has been identified yet.

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HEADLINE 04/18 Quick military deployments risk suicides

SOURCE <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/suicide-risk-rises-quick-repeat-deployments-study-shows-n867221>

GIST Soldiers are more at risk of suicide when they're repeatedly deployed with six months or less in between rotations, and when they're sent to war too soon after they join the service, new research shows.

Such quick turnarounds have become common as the U.S. sends combat troops to Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. Of the 1.3 million or so active duty military personnel, about 160,000 are permanently stationed overseas, according to the federal government's Defense Manpower Data Center.

At the same time, suicide rates have soared among veterans. On average, 20 veterans a day died by suicide in 2014, and many more attempted suicide.

"Rates of suicidal behaviors, including suicide deaths, attempts, and ideation, among U.S. Army soldiers increased considerably during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan," Dr. Robert Ursano of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences wrote in a report published Wednesday.

Ursano and colleagues studied a group of such soldiers: 593 men and women in the U.S. Army who had been deployed twice and who attempted suicide between 2004 and 2009. They were looking for specific factors affecting suicide risk.

"Those who served 12 or fewer months before their first deployment were approximately twice as likely to attempt suicide during or after their second deployment compared with those who had more time to train and acclimate to the military before initial deployment," Ursano's team wrote in the Journal of the American Medical Association's JAMA Psychiatry.

Those re-deployed within six months or less were 60 percent more likely to attempt suicide.

The findings don't surprise combat veterans, their families and mental health experts who work with veterans.

	<p>“Psychologically it just makes sense,” said clinical psychologist Tim Barclay of the Collateral Damage Project, a Frederick, Maryland-based nonprofit that offers free mental health treatment to veterans.</p> <p>Combat, Barclay said, changes the mind. “It literally changes the brain at a functional and cellular level,” he said. “It causes an overreaction of the sympathetic nervous system that doesn’t shut off.”</p> <p>This stress is worsened if people are deployed too soon, said Patricia Spencer, who trains social workers about military culture.</p> <p>“They haven’t had a chance yet to really bond with their unit, their squad,” said Spencer, who practices in Highland Park, New Jersey, and teaches at Rutgers University.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Calif. National Guard border duty deal
SOURCE	https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/california-national-guard-troops/2018/04/18/id/855341/
GIST	<p>California said on Wednesday it had reached a deal with the Trump administration to provide 400 National Guard troops to combat criminal gangs, human traffickers and illegal firearm and drug smugglers within the state and at the U.S.-Mexico border.</p> <p>California National Guard troops will not enforce immigration laws or participate in the construction of any new border barrier, the governor's office said in a statement.</p> <p>The deal comes after a U.S. Defense Department official last week said the Democratic-run state had declined a request to commit troops to Republican President Donald Trump's effort to send up to 4,000 National Guard troops to help the Department of Homeland Security secure the border with Mexico in four southwestern U.S. states.</p> <p>California Governor Jerry Brown has been a staunch opponent of Trump's efforts to tighten immigration law enforcement and build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. Brown last year signed a sanctuary law ordering state and local officials not to cooperate with federal immigration agents in certain situations.</p> <p>California reached Wednesday's agreement after securing the federal government's commitment this week to fund the mission, Brown's office said.</p> <p>Currently, 900 National Guard troops have been deployed in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona, officials said Monday.</p> <p>National Guard troops are not taking part in direct border security and are not performing law enforcement work.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/19 Taiwan: China naval drills regional threat
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/taiwan-calls-chinese-military-drills-threat-region-54575437?
GIST	<p>Taiwan's government said Thursday that recent Chinese military drills aim to intimidate the island and are a threat to regional peace and stability.</p> <p>China's attempts to "pressure and harass Taiwan and seek to raise tensions between the sides and in the region," the Cabinet-level Mainland Affairs Council said on its website.</p> <p>"Taiwan's people are very clear about this and will not accept it. We are determined in our defense of our nation's sovereignty and dignity and will absolutely not yield to military threats or inducements," the</p>

	<p>statement said.</p> <p>The statement specifically referred to China's live-fire exercises off its southeast coast on Wednesday, echoing earlier comments from the defense ministry that Beijing was playing up the limited-scope war games in hopes of intimidating Taiwan for political purposes.</p> <p>Beijing's hostility makes "the hugest mockery" of its assertion of a spiritual connection between people of the two sides, it said.</p> <p>China claims Taiwan as its own territory and says the sides, which separated during the Chinese civil war in 1949, must eventually be united, by force if necessary.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/19 Tensions high in Puerto Rico
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/puerto-ricos-worst-blackout-maria-leaves-island-residents/story?id=54563857
GIST	<p>Puerto Rico is facing its worst blackout since Hurricane Maria hit in September, leaving some residents wondering whether the island will ever fully recover.</p> <p>"Everyone is frustrated and it's so unstable," said Eileen Velez, a 37-year-old engineer who lives outside San Juan. "It feels like the hurricane side effects will never end."</p> <p>The power outage is affecting the entire island, according to the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA).</p> <p>"The entire electrical system in Puerto Rico collapses AGAIN! Back to September 20th," tweeted San Juan Mayor Carmen Yulín Cruz Wednesday.</p> <p>The main priorities for restoration are hospitals, airports, water treatment plants, banks, business and then homes, a PREPA spokesperson told ABC News, adding it will take 24 to 36 hours for the last person to get their power back.</p> <p>The trouble began when the contractor Cobra Energy used an excavator to remove a recently collapsed electrical tower on Wednesday, affecting the line that caused the outage, according to Justo Gonzalez, acting executive director of PREPA.</p> <p>Gonzalez said it is possible that only 1 to 2 percent of customers had power after the incident, as compared to 92.7 percent before the outage.</p> <p>Mammoth Energy, the parent company of Cobra, said in a statement to ABC News "Cobra is dedicated to the difficult work that lies ahead and continues to work around-the-clock with PREPA and the citizens of Puerto Rico to repair the entire infrastructure system to prevent outages such as this one from affecting the entire population on the island."</p> <p>Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rossello announced on Twitter that he has called for PREPA to drop Cobra as a contractor.</p> <p>Puerto Rico has been plagued by several blackouts in recent months, including a major outage last week that affected roughly 840,000 people.</p> <p>"Everybody is pissed off," said Dr. Jorge Gabriel Rosado, 30, a pediatrician on the island. "Especially when all these reports keep coming out that [seem to] confirm what was an unspoken truth: Response to this disaster was slower and more disinterested than any other emergency response in U.S. history."</p>

	<p>In February, Rossello told ABC News that he felt a lack of urgency from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in helping to restore power.</p> <p>"Two-thirds of the island's recovery on that front is in the Corps of Engineers' hands," Rossello said. "I have seen a lack of urgency on that, whether it is on the contracting side or the bringing materials side which is a current problem."</p> <p>The U.S. Army's top engineer said in February that their role was never to completely rebuild the power system.</p> <p>"We respond to get things back up to normal," Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite said. "Rebuilding the generating capability of Puerto Rico was not the Corps of Engineers' task."</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 'We won't be next Seattle' rally
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/students-organize-we-wont-be-next-seattle-rally-focused-on-shootings-outside-of-schools/734170146
GIST	<p>SEATTLE - In the wake of student rallies against school shootings, some Western Washington students want to bring more attention to shootings that take place outside of school.</p> <p>Niko Battle, a junior at Kamiak High School in Mukilteo, and Alicia Heia, a senior at Ingraham High School in Seattle, have been hard at work for more than three weeks organizing the "We Won't Be Next Seattle" rally scheduled for Friday, April 20th.</p> <p>"Research has shown that violence can affect how students perform in school," Battle told KIRO 7, "and how they live the rest of their lives."</p> <p>On Wednesday morning, KIRO 7 was at Occidental Park in Seattle's Pioneer Square as the students met the vendors who will set up for the rally on Friday. The idea is for students to walk out of class and make their way to Occidental Park by noon.</p> <p>The students say at this point they have commitments from students at 34 schools. They told KIRO 7 they chose Pioneer Square so students from all over can reach it by public transit.</p> <p>It's just a few blocks from light rail, bus stops, and the ferry terminal. Students from Bainbridge Island have confirmed they'll be there.</p> <p>Both Battle and Heia were connected through the Alliance for Gun Responsibility. They both participated in last month's March for Our Lives against school shootings.</p> <p>But they've seen how violence outside school impacts students and they want to give those students a voice.</p> <p>On March 28, a shooting at a Burien apartment complex parking lot killed two girls, ages 13 and 19.</p> <p>"I myself hear about this and feel very sad," Heia said. "But some people hear a gunshot on their street go off at night. And that's something they deal with daily."</p> <p>"And it's that type of fear that students in our community live with day in and day out," Battle said. "And it's that type of fear that us students are trying to address with the event on Friday."</p> <p>The two say the entire community is the audience and that this is a moment in a movement. They hope to have 2,000 to 5,000 students attend "We Won't Be Next Seattle."</p>

	“Our goal is to create passion in the youth and students of Seattle,” Heia said, “and to encourage them to get involved at whatever level they want to.”
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HEADLINE	04/18 Russia: will respond to US sanctions
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-russia-sanctions-response/russia-our-response-to-u-s-sanctions-will-be-precise-and-painful-idUSKBN1HP1DC
GIST	<p>MOSCOW (Reuters) - Valentina Matvienko, the speaker of the Russian upper house of parliament, said on Wednesday that Moscow’s response to U.S. sanctions will be targeted and painful, Russian news agencies reported.</p> <p>The United States this month added several Russian firms and officials to a sanctions blacklist in response to what it said were the Kremlin’s “malign activities”. Moscow says those sanctions are unlawful and has warned that it will retaliate.</p> <p>“No one should be under any illusions,” Matvienko, who is closely aligned with the Kremlin, was quoted as saying by the Interfax news agency.</p> <p>“Russia’s response to the sanctions, our so-called counter-sanctions, will be precise, painful, and without question sensitive for exactly those countries that imposed them (the sanctions) on Russia,” she was quoted as saying.</p> <p>“Sanctions are a double-edged sword and those who impose them should understand that sanctions against countries, especially those like Russia, will carry with them risks of serious consequences for those who impose them.”</p> <p>Lawmakers in the lower house of the Russian parliament have drawn up legislation that would give the government powers to ban or restrict imports of U.S. goods and services ranging from medicines to software and rocket engines. However, the Kremlin has not yet said if it backs such measures.</p> <p>A senior U.S. administration official said on Monday President Donald Trump has delayed imposing additional sanctions on Russia and is unlikely to approve them unless Moscow carries out a new cyber attack or some other provocation.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 France: student protests, train strikes
SOURCE	https://www.yahoo.com/news/spreading-student-protests-train-strikes-pressure-macron-092924213.html
GIST	<p>Saint-Dié-des-Vosges (France) (AFP) - President Emmanuel Macron faced booing from hostile railway workers Wednesday while touring a town in eastern France, as spreading student protests and a fourth round of crippling train strikes in a month piled on the pressure.</p> <p>The 40-year-old leader is facing the biggest test of his nearly 12-month presidency as train drivers, public sector workers and students challenge his economic reforms.</p> <p>On a visit to the town of Saint-Die-des-Vosges, Macron was booed and whistled by angry trade unionists from the hard-left CGT which is spearheading attempts to resist the centrist’s pro-business agenda.</p> <p>"We can have differences, but we need to respect each other," Macron said while calling on staff of the SNCF rail operator to end their rolling strikes, which began in early April and could continue until late June.</p>

<p>Return to Top</p>	<p>Only one in three high-speed TGVs and one in four inter-city trains were running Wednesday, with the same number expected on Thursday when a new round of mass demonstrations and stoppages have been called nationwide.</p> <p>Civil servants, workers in state retirement homes and students have been urged to demonstrate for the second time in a month after previous protests drew hundreds of thousands onto the streets.</p> <p>Unlike last time, the Paris metro also faces disruption, while a union leader in the energy sector warned of "targeted" power cuts in a campaign to push for the creation of a new national energy provider.</p> <p>On Tuesday, students occupied the prestigious Sciences Po university in Paris, the latest campus blocked by protesters over higher education reforms that will make university admission more selective.</p> <p>"Sciences Po students against Macron's dictatorship," read a banner hung from a window of the university, which has groomed generations of French politicians including Macron himself.</p> <p>- Standing firm -</p> <p>Macron has insisted he will not back down on his bid to shake up the big-spending public sector.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Assailants fire at UN team in Douma
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/delays-inspectors-reaching-syria-attack-site-54549835
GIST	<p>Assailants opened fire at a U.N. security team visiting the site of a suspected chemical weapons attack in Syria, an official said Wednesday, forcing it to retreat to its base and further delaying a fact-finding mission by outside experts to examine the claims.</p> <p>Gunmen shot at the U.N. team in Douma on Tuesday and detonated an explosive, leading it to return to Damascus, said the head of the international chemical weapons watchdog, Ahmet Uzumcu. He did not identify the assailants.</p> <p>Inspectors from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons have been waiting since Saturday to visit Douma, the site of the alleged April 7 attack. They were initially blocked by the Syrian government and its ally, Russia, on Monday. Then on Tuesday, the advance security team from the U.N. came under fire, compounding the delays. The OPCW inspectors have not yet been able to visit the site, and Uzumcu did not say when they would deploy.</p> <p>The town is under the protection of Russia's military police. The Russian military said a Syrian security employee was slightly wounded in the crossfire Tuesday, but no Russian servicemen were at the site of the attack.</p> <p>Journalists visiting Douma on a government-organized tour Monday did not report any security threats. The Associated Press met with residents who said they were overwhelmed by chlorine fumes on the night of the alleged attack, and lost their loved ones.</p> <p>With 11 days now having passed, concerns are growing that evidence could fall prey to tampering or be otherwise compromised.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Israel veiled warning to Iran on Syria
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/israel-marks-solemn-memorial-day-fallen-soldiers-

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GIST

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday issued a veiled warning to Iran, saying in a Memorial Day speech that his country will defend itself against anyone that tries to harm it.

The premier's remarks on Israel's national day of mourning come amid rising tensions between Israel and Iran over an alleged Israeli airstrike targeting a Syrian air force base last week that left at least four Iranian military personnel dead.

Iran has threatened to retaliate, casting a shadow over Israel's celebration of its 70-year Independence Day celebrations, which were to begin at sundown.

Netanyahu said Israel is "determined to stand strong" in the face of "continued incitement by our neighbors, a great many of whom refuse to come to terms with our existence."

He warned that "anyone who raises a hand against us won't be spared."

Iran has been a major backer of Syrian President Bashar Assad in the seven-year Syrian civil war, providing the Assad government with troops, arms and militiamen.

Israel has repeatedly warned that it will take action to prevent Iran from entrenching its forces in neighboring Syria or transfer strategic arms to the Shiite militant group Hezbollah in Lebanon. Israel has carried out numerous airstrikes in Syria, most believed to have targeted suspected arms shipments bound for Hezbollah.

But in recent weeks, Israel and its archenemy Iran have moved closer toward open conflict. In February, Israel shot down what it says was an Iranian drone, launched from Syria, carrying explosives aimed at an Israeli target. Israel responded with airstrikes in Syria, with one warplane shot down, while destroying Syrian anti-aircraft systems at the T4 air base.

Last week, that same base was attacked in an airstrike that Syria, Iran and Russia all blamed on Israel. The Israelis have not commented on the strike, which killed at least four Iranian military personnel, but Iran has vowed revenge.

Earlier on Wednesday, Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei on Twitter called for "offensive plans against the enemy," without specifically naming Israel.

Earlier this week an aide to Khamenei said Iran is capable of destroying Israel and "if you provide an excuse for Iran, Tel Aviv and Haifa will be razed to the ground."

Netanyahu spoke at ceremonies paying respects to fallen soldiers and victims of terrorism at the Mount Herzl cemetery in Jerusalem, hours before Israel was to begin celebrating its 70th anniversary at sundown.

Netanyahu doubled down on his defiant statement at an Independence Day celebration ceremony Wednesday night, saying Israel is "not deterred from a struggle against those who strive for our annihilation."

"If we're required to defend ourselves, we will rise to the challenge and ensure Israel's victory," Netanyahu said.

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HEADLINE 04/18 UN: more security needed at Douma

SOURCE <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/latest-syrian-rebels-disarm-latest-evacuation-deal-54551924?cid=clicksource 76 4 article%20roll articeroll hed>

GIST The United Nations says further steps are needed to secure the suspected site of a chemical attack in

	<p>Douma and a security team will need to make another visit before a fact-finding mission can go there.</p> <p>U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Wednesday the measures are needed in view of the small arms fire and explosive device detonated during a visit by the U.N. advance team Tuesday.</p> <p>Asked when the U.N. security team would make another visit, he said, "as soon as practicable."</p> <p>Dujarric told reporters at U.N. headquarters in New York that "there is still a lot of volatility in the area."</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Puerto Rico island-wide blackout
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/island-wide-blackout-hits-puerto-rico-officials-probe-54557385?cid=clicksource_76_2_hero_headlines_bsq_hed
GIST	<p>An island-wide blackout hit Puerto Rico on Wednesday as the U.S. territory struggles to repair an increasingly unstable power grid nearly seven months after Hurricane Maria. Officials said an excavator accidentally downed a transmission line.</p> <p>Officials said it could take 24 to 36 hours to fully restore power to more than 1.4 million customers as outage grew across the island about the state of Puerto Rico's Electric Power Authority. It is the second major outage in less than a week, with the previous one affecting some 840,000 customers.</p> <p>"This is too much," said Luis Oscar Rivera, a 42-year-old computer technician who just got normal power back at his house less than two months ago. "It's like the first day of Maria all over again."</p> <p>Several large power outages have hit Puerto Rico in recent months, but Wednesday was the first time since the Category 4 storm struck on Sept. 20 that the U.S. territory has experienced a full island-wide blackout. It snarled traffic across the island, interrupted classes and work and forced dozens of businesses to temporarily close, including the island's largest mall and popular tourist attractions like a 16th-century fort in the historic part of Puerto Rico's capital.</p> <p>Backup generators roared to life at the island's largest public hospital and at its main international airport, where officials reported no cancellations or delays. Meanwhile, the power company said its own customer service center was out of service and asked people to go online or use the phone.</p> <p>Officials said restoring power to hospitals, airports, banking centers and water pumping systems was their priority. Following that would be businesses and then homes.</p> <p>It is the second such incident in less than a week. On Thursday, a tree fell on a power line as the same private contractor cleared land in central Puerto Rico, leading to a widespread power outage. A backup line that was supposed to prevent that outage failed.</p> <p>Fredyson Martinez, vice president of a union that represents power company workers in Puerto Rico, told The Associated Press that he was concerned about the two back-to-back incidents.</p> <p>"That is not normal," he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Gusty winds spread wildfires in Plains
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/gusty-winds-spread-wildfires-plains-big-storm-moves/story?id=54550300&cid=clicksource_81_4_article%20roll_articleroll_hed
GIST	<p>Extreme drought and winds topping out around 90 mph have created perilous wildfire conditions from Colorado to Oklahoma.</p>

	<p>At least 28 wildfires were burning as of Wednesday morning in the Southwest and southern Plains. Winds are expected to subside today as the storm system that produced them moves east.</p> <p>Fire alerts in Arizona and New Mexico have been posted in advance of more strong winds forecast for Thursday.</p> <p>As the storm system heads east, winter storm warnings and advisories have been issued for six states, from Nebraska to Illinois.</p> <p>That system, now in the Plains, is bringing snow from the Dakotas into Iowa.</p> <p>The storm system is forecast to arrive in the Northeast Thursday morning, with rain falling from New York to Boston and snow in upstate New York and western Pennsylvania.</p> <p>Heavy snowfalls are expected in southern Minnesota and Northern Iowa, which may see as much as 8 inches through Thursday.</p> <p>Snow also is possible in southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois, as well as western Pennsylvania, upstate New York and parts of New England.</p>
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Cyber Awareness

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HEADLINE	04/18 Vulnerable Internet of Medical Things
SOURCE	https://healthtechmagazine.net/article/2018/04/The-Internet-of-Medical-Things-Opens-Health-Organizations-Up-to-More-Threats
GIST	<p>Healthcare ransomware incidents seem to be dominating headlines, recently. As destructive as previous attacks may have been, it's likely that the security landscape is only going to get worse as cyberattacks on Internet of Things devices are predicted to heat up. And soon, a new security battlefield will emerge: the Internet of Medical Things (IoMT).</p> <p>Frost & Sullivan estimates that there were 4.5 billion IoMT devices in 2015, a number that they expect to increase to between 20 and 30 billion by 2020. Why does this spell potential disaster? Medical devices are moving away from the walls of the hospital and now include consumer devices. Into a coffee shop, into a home — these devices and their users come and go frequently from a secure healthcare network, creating increased security risks.</p> <p>Moreover, as the number of connected devices continues to grow, so does the cybersecurity risk. There is no industry-standard operating system for medical products. Instead, according to the Food and Drug Administration, most medical devices use vulnerable off-the-shelf software.</p> <p>5 Threats to Medical Device Security</p> <p>This higher security risk is amplified by five environmental and market forces that are coming together to form an even more worrisome picture for medical device security in today's mobile world:</p> <p>The declining value of the medical record — Soon it will be cheaper to buy stolen medical records than to hack them, which will drive 'threat actors' to find more lucrative exploits (including hacking medical devices in order to control them).</p> <p>Evolving cyberattack schemes — Consumer cybersecurity risks become healthcare cybersecurity risks when mobile medical devices are involved. Every medical device is a "back door" into a hospital's IT network and attackers are now exploring a new strategy called "destruction of service," or DeOS, which will completely incapacitate the network.</p>

Easily compromised devices — Some medical devices were built **20 years ago** but still work, believe it or not. Sadly, many of these tools are still being used by hospitals (often to save money). However, those medical devices, including pacemakers, X-ray machines and CT scanners, use outdated security software that isn't automatically updated. This leaves hospitals and patients very vulnerable.

Clinicians prioritize patient care over cybersecurity — Clinicians are focused on patient care so, naturally, the prevention of cybersecurity hacks is not necessarily their No. 1 priority. With this in mind, it's important that cybersecurity for medical devices be simple and easy to update. Otherwise some clinicians may go rogue and start using unsanctioned applications in order to keep up with their workflow.

FDA-issued security recommendations are not mandates — Quite simply, without a firm mandate to follow, manufacturers and healthcare organizations struggle to follow the FDA's guidelines to reduce device security risks, especially if it costs more money and resources. [According to a 2017 study](#) conducted by the Ponemon Institute, only **51 percent** of medical device manufacturers and **44 percent of healthcare organizations follow FDA guidelines**.

Still not convinced? Consider the pacemaker recall by the FDA last year. At the end of August, [the FDA recalled 465,000 pacemakers](#) over fears that they could be hacked. The agency discovered cybersecurity vulnerabilities that could allow a hacker to take over the medical device that controls heart rhythm. The pacemakers were updated with new security software to fix the vulnerabilities. Luckily no pacemaker was actually hacked, but this security risk scenario is a real possibility.

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HEADLINE	04/18 New hack groups emerging Asia, Mideast
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazineuk.com/new-hacker-groups-emerging-in-asia-and-in-the-middle-east-finds-kaspersky/article/759368/
GIST	<p>Security researchers observed a noticeable spurt in the activities of advanced persistent threat (APT) groups based in certain parts of Asia and in the Middle East during the first three months of the year.</p> <p>In its latest quarterly threat intelligence summary, security firm Kaspersky Lab reports the emergence of new groups of cyber-criminals based in Asia and in the Middle East who are also leveraging new techniques to launch attacks on targeted organisations.</p> <p>These groups included some Chinese-speaking hackers who targeted government entities mainly in Malaysia and Taiwan, while also increasing their focus on targeted organisations based in the Philippines, Russia, and Mongolia. A couple of well-known examples of such groups were CardinalLizard and ShaggyPanther.</p> <p>Kaspersky Lab researchers also observed several hacking operations carried out by such groups based not on financial, but political interests. For example, a Chinese-speaking hacker group named IronHusky APT, which used to exclusively target Russian military entities, suddenly shifted its attention to Mongolia and started targeting Mongolian government entities just before their meeting with the International Monetary Fund.</p> <p>At the same time, the Kimsuky APT, which is allegedly composed of North Korean hackers, renewed its cyber-offensive on South Korean think tanks and political parties in the first three months of the year with a completely new framework designed for cyber-espionage and used in a spear-phishing campaign.</p> <p>"From January to March, the most common and accessible malware tools were used by a number of new threat groups, which varied in sophistication. During this time, no significant activity was observed from some well-known actors. This activity points us to the possibility that these threat groups are regrouping and reconsidering their strategies for attacks to come," said David Emm, principal security researcher at Kaspersky Lab.</p>

The researchers also observed the mushrooming of several new threat actors in the Middle East, most prominent of which were the StrongPity APT which launched several man-in-the-middle attacks on prominent ISPs, and the Desert Falcons which launched malware attacks on Android devices.

Security researcher Chris Doman from AlienVault told SC Magazine UK that even though organisations based in Asia have been hot targets for hackers for several years, the recent rise in targeted attacks coincides with a small drop in such attacks on the West.

He added that both North Korean and Chinese hackers have recently moved from primarily espionage based attacks to additionally executing financially motivated attacks, such as crypto-currency mining. When asked if such hacker groups are funded by their governments, he said that while it is certainly the case with North Korea, it is not so as far as Chinese hacker groups are concerned.

"It's difficult to imagine hackers from North Korea not being directed in some form by the state, even though many now operate outside of the country itself. In the case of Chinese attackers, it may be that they are trying to supplement income that they used to receive from the state but no longer do," he said.

The use of new techniques by Chinese hackers to target individuals and organisations in the West were also observed by security experts in the recent past. For instance, in August last year, researchers at Proofpoint spotted a Chinese advance persistent threat (APT) group carrying out phishing attacks, luring people to download leaked Game of Thrones episodes, and downloading remote access trojans in victims' systems.

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HEADLINE	04/18 DOD gears up to battle botnets
SOURCE	https://www.meritalk.com/articles/dod-gears-up-to-battle-the-bots/
GIST	<p>Bot-driven cyberattacks and other fast-spreading malware have been making some pretty big waves of late. The Mirai botnet, for example, launched several record-setting distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks starting in September 2016. The subsequent release of the Mirai source code opened the door for a new wave of botnets, as the U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team (US-CERT) noted in an alert. After the WannaCry ransomware, which affected systems in 150 countries last year, was halted by a “kill switch,” hackers reportedly used Mirai copies to try to relaunch it. Other notable, fast-spreading attacks include Hidden Cobra, Petya, and NotPetya.</p> <p>The autonomous propagation of malware has become a focus of the Department of Defense (DoD) and the intelligence community because of the threats it poses to government and private-sector operations. A presidential executive order last May classified botnets as a high-priority national security issue. And Navy Adm. Michael S. Rogers, the director of the National Security Agency and commander of the U.S. Cyber Command, last week warned Congress about the rise of cyber threats across the board. “Today we face threats that have increased in sophistication, magnitude, intensity, velocity, and volume, threatening our vital national security interests and economic wellbeing,” Rogers said.</p> <p>Botnet and ransomware attacks operate similarly to other cyberattacks, but their speed and evolving tactics for avoiding detection can make them a serious—and growing—threat.</p> <p>“These attacks have massive impact on global organizations, and have the capability to shut down operations entirely,” Brian Hussey, vice president of Cyber Threat Detection and Response at cybersecurity company Trustwave, said via email.</p> <p>The growing sophistication of the attacks also has taken ransomware past the point of just criminals trying to swindle people out of money, and into the realm of cyberwar or cyberterrorism, Hussey said. He noted how NotPetya, in an attack the United States and U.K., blamed on Russia, was used in June 2017 to destabilize Ukraine. “The victims in that attack were clearly based on country level aggression, so much so that the ‘payoff link’ for the ransomware wasn’t even valid,” Hussey said. “Profit was not the motivator,</p>

destruction was. This changes the game and points to more sophisticated ransomware type attacks coming in the near future.”

Interestingly, WannaCry, Petya, and NotPetya all exploited a flaw in Microsoft Windows called Eternal Blue, which is believed to have been developed by the National Security Agency and later released online by a hacker group.

DoD’s research wants to fight automation with automation, using a program called Harnessing Autonomy for Countering Cyberadversary Systems, or HACCS, which is looking to develop automated software capable of countering botnets and other large-scale malware attacks. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) has so far awarded HACCS contracts to three organizations: Sotera Defense Solutions, Systems Technology & Research, and Arizona State University. The contracts are in the \$7 million to \$8 million range, which isn’t large by DoD standards, but they are part of the larger effort to protect the Internet of Things—a target of Mirai—government systems, and industry. Defense contractor Boeing was among the companies hit by WannaCry, although the company said the impact was minimal.

“Current incident response methods are too resource and time consuming to address the problem at scale,” DARPA says. The agency wants to develop a scalable and quick method of identifying and neutralizing botnets, even if the affected organizations aren’t aware that they’ve been hit. HACCS is looking to develop ways to accurately identify botnets, develop non-disrupting software countermeasures, and create reliable software agents that can patrol networks hit by a botnet and disable botnet implants.

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HEADLINE	04/18 Botnets remain persistent cyber threat
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SOURCE	https://www.informationsecuritybuzz.com/news/botnets-remain-a-persistent-cyber-threat/
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GIST	Businesses, governments and consumers should pay more attention to the risk posed by botnets, according to a new threat report released by CenturyLink, Inc. (NYSE: CTL).
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In 2017, CenturyLink Threat Research Labs tracked an average of 195,000 threats per day impacting, on average, 104 million unique targets – from servers and computers to handheld or other internet-connected devices – due to the work of botnets.

“Botnets are one of the foundational tools bad actors rely on to steal sensitive data and launch DDoS attacks,” said Mike Benjamin, head of CenturyLink’s Threat Research Labs. “By analysing global botnet attack trends and methods, we’re better able to anticipate and respond to emerging threats in defense of our own network and those of our customers.”

Key Observations

- Geographies with strong or rapidly growing IT networks and infrastructure continue to be the primary source for cybercriminal activity.
- The top five countries by volume of global malicious internet traffic in 2017 were the United States, Russia, China, Brazil and Ukraine.
- The top five countries hosting the most command and control servers (C2s), which amass and direct botnets, were the United States, Russia, Ukraine, China and Germany.
- While countries and regions with robust communication infrastructure unknowingly supplied bandwidth for IoT DDoS attacks, they also represented some of the largest victims based on attack command volume.
- The top five target countries of bot attack traffic were the United States, China, Germany, Russia and the United Kingdom.
- The top five countries by volume of compromised hosts or bots were the United States, China, Brazil, the United Kingdom and Germany.
- Mirai and its variants have been the focus of consistent news coverage, but in 2017, CenturyLink Threat Research Labs witnessed Gafgyt attacks affecting more victims and with noticeably longer attack durations.

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HEADLINE 04/18 Atlanta spending \$2.7M on recovery

SOURCE http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2018/04/atlanta_spending_27_million_on.html

GIST Atlanta has spent \$2.7 million in response to a ransomware cyber attack that crippled some city services.

Attackers demanded a \$50,000 ransom to restore the city's services, though Mayor Keisha Lance Bottom would only say paying the bounty was "up for discussion."

Channel 2 Action News found the city has signed eight emergency contracts in response to the attack, including two \$1 million agreements with private technology firms to assist the city's information management and municipal court systems.

Atlanta has been grappling with the impact of the attack since late March. Systems that allowed customers to pay bills or access court-related information were down and most city workers were told not to turn on their computers.

The FBI, the Department of Homeland Security and the Secret Service have assisted city officials in investigating the attack.

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HEADLINE 04/18 Atlanta police files wiped in cyberattack

SOURCE <http://www.cbs46.com/story/37987639/sources-atlanta-police-files-wiped-in-cyber-attack>

GIST While many parts of Atlanta city government are back up and running, CBS46 has learned exclusively that the issues at the Atlanta Police Department are dire following a cyber attack.

While the department stresses their ability to respond to emergencies has not been affected, sources tell us it has not been easy on the inside.

Sensitive case files containing evidence for prosecuting crimes have been wiped in the attack. And it's unclear if and when they will ever be recovered.

The Bulldog investigative team has spent weeks pressing police and city officials for clarity on exactly what and how much is missing.

They haven't clarified, only admitting in a statement:

"Access to some city networks and databases has been impacted, resulting in a return to manual processes for certain tasks. We are working closely with our information technology partners to determine what backups may exist and what data we are able to recover."

We have also been pressing the district attorney's office for answers as they rely on APD's caseload at trial.

They refused to comment Wednesday.

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HEADLINE 04/19 Teacher uprisings harness social media

SOURCE <https://apnews.com/2ae29f41793f43e38b8069a26fe79b31/Teacher-uprisings-harness-social-media-in-fight-for-funding>

PHOENIX (AP) — The public education uprisings that began in West Virginia and spread to Arizona, Oklahoma and Kentucky share similar origin stories.

Teachers, long tired of low wages and a dearth of state funding, begin talking to each other online.

Their Facebook groups draw tens of thousands of members. They share stories of their frustrations and then they demand change.

Kentucky public school employee Nema Brewer co-founded the KY120 United Facebook group that drew more than 40,000 members in a month. Teachers there are calling for more education funding, triggering actions that forced more than 30 schools to close last Friday.

“We had no idea it would light a fire under people,” Brewer said.

Educators communicating online played a key role in forming grassroots groups that are storming statehouses and holding demonstrations. It started in West Virginia, where two teachers set up a private Facebook page last fall that grew to 24,000 members. The group provided a private forum for educators to plot strategy, bolster resistance and plan demonstrations. After they went on strike and won a pay raise, educators elsewhere took notice.

Jennifer Grygiel, a communications and social media professor at Syracuse University, said people are increasingly realizing they can coordinate online for social causes, such as the #MeToo movement. Engaging online can also be a way for people to form their own identities, she said. “It’s where we congregate now.”

In Arizona, teachers formed a Facebook group called Arizona Educators United that now has more than 40,000 members. Co-founder Noah Karvelis said social media has been “incredibly vital.” He said the first #RedforEd demonstration day was Twitter-driven.

Most recently, the group used Facebook Live to share news of a planned vote on whether to strike in their quest for a 20-percent raise and more than \$1 billion in new education funding. The vote was planned to be held Tuesday through Thursday after Gov. Doug Ducey has put forward a proposal to raise salaries 20 percent by 2020.

The online genesis of the Arizona movement cropped up outside of organized labor. But Arizona Education Association President Joe Thomas said the union stands in solidarity with the grassroots group. He spoke at a rally where Arizona Educators United unveiled their demands, joined them in a letter to Ducey asking for a meeting, and appeared in a video on the Facebook page.

He called Arizona Educators United a “breath of fresh air” in the fight for higher education funding.

“It shares the same purpose, and that’s why I think we can stand so easily next to each other,” he said. “I’ve said multiple times, ‘I don’t care who throws the touchdown, I want to win the game.’”

Tammy Custis has been acting as a site liaison for Arizona Educators at the school where she teaches in Peoria. In addition to staying tuned into the main Facebook group and a few other discussion pages, she’s using communication apps to stay in touch with teachers at her school about organizing efforts so they don’t have to use district resources. Online platforms have been key to staying connected, she said.

“It’s amazing how engaged these already-so-busy-teachers are in this fight,” she said. “They are finding a way to get their teaching done, and still finding time to have a voice.”

In Oklahoma, eighth-grade history teacher Alberto Morejon in early March founded the Facebook group supporting a teacher walk-out that’s now being used by about 80,000 teachers. Morejon, who said he doesn’t belong to a union, is continuing to push for new funding for public education.

<p>Return to Top</p>	<p>“We’re going to keep showing up until they do something,” he said.</p> <p>Once it started, the group grew quickly; within six hours of adding members to the newly created group, it had 17,000 members.</p> <p>“I think it shows there’s a problem, and it needs to be fixed,” Morejon said.</p> <p>Beth Becker, a social media coach and strategist in progressive politics, said that social media is “the great democratizer” and thus a powerful organizing tool.</p> <p>“It has given a voice to people who in the past didn’t have a voice, because they didn’t have that \$1 million to buy a member of Congress with,” she said.</p> <p>But online activism can’t be the sole front, she said. Marches and demonstrations are still necessary to draw attention to a cause, Becker said, citing the Parkland, Florida, students becoming activists to change gun laws and spurring the March for Our Lives.</p> <p>“You’re not going to win just because of your social media or anything online, but you’re not going to win without it,” she said.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Malware infects 50,000 Minecraft users
SOURCE	https://www.hackread.com/50000-minecraft-users-infected-with-hard-drive-wiping-malware/
GIST	<p>Nearly 50,000 Minecraft users have been infected with a nasty piece of malware that aims at reformatting hard drives, wiping out backup data from the targeted system along with deleting other important files.</p> <p>The malware was discovered by IT security researchers at Avast’s Threat Labs who noted that its prime target is those Minecraft users who have downloaded “skins” in PNG file format to alter the default look of a character in Minecraft.</p> <p>Apparently, these malicious “skins” contain a malicious Powershell script prompting the malware to delete user data and reformat their system’s hard drive. The malware infection also starts tourstart.exe loop which thwarts the performance of the target system.</p> <p>Furthermore, victims have witnessed receiving silly messages on their Minecraft account inbox indicating that the whole campaign is based on trolling users. The message shared by Avast’s researchers are:</p> <p>“You Are Nailed, Buy A New Computer This Is A Piece Of Sh*t” “You have maxed your internet usage for a lifetime” “Your a** got glued.”</p> <p>However, trolling apart, researchers have blocked 14,500 infection attempts against Minecraft users in the last 10 days which shows that users are at all time high risk of being infected with this malware.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 UK identity fraud hits all-time high
SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/uk-id-fraud-hits-an-alltime-high/
GIST	<p>UK identity fraud hit an all-time high last year, driven heavily by online attacks, according to the latest stats from Cifas.</p> <p>The fraud prevention service’s annual Fraudscape report compiles data from 306 participating organizations, so can be seen more as a snapshot of trends than a comprehensive tally of incidents.</p> <p>It claimed identity fraud stood at 174,523 cases in 2017, up 1% on previous years and driven mainly by</p>

	<p>online trends.</p> <p>"It remains a predominantly internet-based offence, with 84% of identity fraud occurring through online channels," a Cifas spokesperson told Infosecurity.</p> <p>Online retail fraud jumped by 49%, while Cifas claimed that 80% of fraudulent applications are now made online.</p> <p>Other industries hit by increases in fraud included telecoms (47%) and insurance (1600%).</p> <p>It is likely that many of these attempts also included an online element as scammers looked to move away from card fraud by targeting mobile phone contracts, online retail accounts, retail credit loans and short-term loans.</p> <p>A PwC report from February claimed that nearly half of UK organizations (49%) have suffered from cyber-related fraud in the past two years.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 LocalBlox: 48M detailed records leaked
SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/48-million-detailed-psychometric/
GIST	<p>About 48 million records of detailed personal information on tens of millions of individuals have been leaked, containing Cambridge Analytica-style information gathered and scraped from multiple sources.</p> <p>The culprit, as is the case all too often, is a misconfigured cloud storage repository, in this case belonging to a company called LocalBlox. LocalBlox bills itself as a personal and business data search service, but it's bread and butter is data-harvesting and the creation of psychometric profiles of individuals. It says that it's "the First Global Customer Intelligence Platform to search, combine and validate deep business and people profiles – at scale," according to its website, which also proclaims that "the need for deeper, more accurate data about individual businesses and consumers is becoming more urgent to compete."</p> <p>According to the UpGuard Cyber Risk Team, which said it gained confirmation of the breach from LocalBlox co-founder Ashfaq Rahman, the data that was left publicly accessible includes names, physical addresses, dates of birth, scraped data from LinkedIn job histories and Facebook, Twitter handles and more. In addition, it appears the prominent real estate site Zillow is used in the process as well, with information being somehow blended from the service's listings into the larger data pool.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/19 SANS: 5 most dangerous new attacks
SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/rsac-the-five-most-dangerous/
GIST	<p>At the RSA Conference in San Francisco on April 18 2018, three leading instructors and contributors from the SANS institute shared what they believe to be the five most dangerous new attack techniques in cybersecurity.</p> <p>Repositories and Cloud Storage Data Leakage</p> <p>Ed Skoudis named repositories and cloud storage data leakage as one of the techniques. "Software today is built in a very different way than it was 10 or even 5 years ago, with vast online code repositories for collaboration and cloud data storage hosting mission-critical applications," he explained. "However, attackers are increasingly targeting such infrastructures, looking for passwords, crypto keys, access tokens, and terabytes of sensitive data in such repositories and cloud storage." As a result, defenders need to focus on data inventories, appointing a data curator for their organization and educating system architects and developers about how to secure data assets in the cloud.</p>

Big Data Analytics, De-Anonymization, and Correlation

“The battle is shifting from hacking machines to hacking data - gathering data from disparate sources and fusing it together to de-anonymize users, find business weaknesses and opportunities, or otherwise undermine an organization's mission,” explained Skoudis. Defenders need to start analyzing risks associated with how their seemingly innocuous data can be combined with data from other sources to introduce business risk, he said, “all while carefully considering the privacy implications of their data and its potential to tarnish a brand or invite regulatory scrutiny.”

Exploitability in ICS/SCADA: Intent & Method

James Lyne explained how the grand majority of malicious code has undeniably been focused on fraud and profit. “Yet, with the relentless deployment of technology in our society, the opportunity for political or even military influence only grows greater,” he said. “Rare, publicly visible attacks like Triton/TriSYS show capability and intent to compromise some of the highest risk components of industrial environments.” This translates to an increase in the number of active campaigns, or more adversaries developing backup disruption capabilities. “Many systems in this domain lack the mitigations of modern operating systems and applications. Attackers have demonstrated they have the inclination and resource to diversify their attacks, such as to the aforementioned SIS, which opens up new and concerning possibilities.”

Attackers Monetize Compromised Systems Using Crypto-Miners

Johannes Ullrich talked about how attackers “no longer bother with data. Last year, we discussed how ransomware was used to sell data back to its owner. Crypto-currencies were the tool of choice to pay for ransom.” Due to the flood of stolen data offered for sale, he continued, “most commonly stolen data like credit card numbers of PII has dropped significantly in value. Attackers will instead install crypto coin miners.” These attacks are stealthier and less likely to be discovered.

Hardware Flaws

Software developers often assume that hardware is flawless, said Ullrich, which he described as a dangerous assumption. “Hardware is no less complex than software and mistakes have been made just as they are made in software. Patching hardware is a lot more difficult and often not possible without replacing entire systems or suffering significant performance penalties.” Developers need to learn to create software without relying on hardware, he continued. “Software need to authenticated and encrypt data within the system. Some emerging homomorphic encryption algorithms may allow developers to operate on encrypted data without having to decrypt it first.”

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HEADLINE	04/19 Popular Android apps leak user data
SOURCE	https://www.securityweek.com/popular-android-apps-leak-user-data-third-party-sdks
GIST	<p>Popular mobile applications that use third-party, ready-to-go advertising Software Development Kits (SDKs) expose user data by transmitting it over the insecure HTTP protocol, Kaspersky Lab warns.</p> <p>While analyzing popular dating apps, the security firm discovered that user data is often transmitted unencrypted when SDKs from popular advertising networks are used. With some of the apps having several billion installations worldwide, security flaws put a gigantic amount of private data at risk.</p> <p>Consisting of development tools and often provided free of charge, SDKs allow app developers to immediately include some capabilities into their apps and save time while focusing on other, more important elements. However, it also means that developers don't know that the used code may contain security issues.</p>

	<p>The advertising SDKs were designed to collect user data to show relevant ads and help developers monetize their product.</p> <p>These kits would send the collected data to the domains of popular advertising networks to ensure more targeted ad displaying, but the data is sent unencrypted over HTTP, meaning it remains unprotected from a variety of attacks while in transit. The data is exposed via unprotected Wi-Fi, Internet Service Providers, or malware on a home router, Kaspersky says.</p> <p>Not only can the data be intercepted, but it can also be modified, which could result in users being exposed to malicious ads instead of legitimate ones. This could result in users being tricked into downloading promoted applications that could turn out to be malware.</p> <p>The four most popular domains the apps were exposing data to via POST requests include ushareit.com (one of the apps had more than 500 million installs), Lenovo (which was leaking user data because of a mistake by developers), Nexage.com (nearly 1.5 billion installs in 8 apps alone), and Quantumgraph.com (with tens of millions of installs).</p> <p>In most cases, the SDKs were leaking data such as device information (screen resolution, storage size, volume, battery level, OS version, IMEI, IMSI, language), network information (operator name, IP address, connection type, signal strength, MAC), device coordinates, Android ID, app usage, and personal information such as user name, age and gender. Phone number and email address can also be leaked.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/19 Cyber fraudsters stealing millions
SOURCE	https://www.zdnet.com/article/cyber-fraudsters-now-stealing-millions-in-single-transactions/
GIST	<p>Business email compromise (BEC) attacks are continuing to rise in both frequency and severity, with victims now losing millions of dollars in single transactions, according to law enforcement agencies.</p> <p>A BEC attack, also known as a senior executive impersonation attack, is where an organisation's staff are manipulated into sending money to criminals. Typically, the criminals breach the corporate email system, and spend some time learning the organisation's business, structure, and communication style to improve their chances of success.</p> <p>"They'll insert themselves by putting a socially engineered piece of communication there," said Special Agent Ryan Brogan of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). "Those emails are very, very convincing."</p> <p>In one recent case, a local car dealership lost \$7 million after an employee received an email, purportedly from his CEO, saying he needed to wire then money to a new account to fund a new special project.</p> <p>"The actor sort of implied that the dealership manager's promotion would be on the line if this didn't happen," Brogan told the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) Conference in Canberra last week.</p> <p>"He goes and wires this money. He actually broke all of their internal controls."</p> <p>It was three days before anyone realised it had all been a fraud, when the employee happened to ask his real boss whether he'd received the money.</p> <p>\$7 million is by no means a record for BEC cases investigated by the FBI. Australia has also seen single-transaction BEC frauds in the millions of dollars.</p> <p>"The most recent one we had was AU\$26 million," said Detective Senior Sergeant Colin Keen, the manager for cybercrime investigations and covert online operations for the Western Australian Police Force.</p>

	<p>In that particular case, the money was recovered, but recent BEC cases in Western Australia have included an automotive conglomerate losing AU\$3.1 million, and a large mining company losing \$2.1 million.</p> <p>These figures are well up from the AU\$900,000 stolen from a WA company in 2015.</p> <p>Charities are also being targeted, with one WA charity recently losing AU\$615,000.</p> <p>Keen said the cybercriminals are becoming more sophisticated.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Stresspaint steals Facebook credentials
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/stresspaint-malware-steals-facebook-credentials-and-session-cookies/
GIST	<p>Security researchers have spotted a new information stealer that collects Chrome login data from infected victims, along with session cookies, and appears to be looking for Facebook details in particular, according to a Radware threat alert the company shared with this reporter.</p> <p>The new trojan, named Stresspaint, has been found hidden inside a free Windows application named "Relieve Stress Paint," distributed via aol.net —a domain that uses Unicode characters, which when converted to Punycode spell out xn--80a2a18a.net, instead of the real aol.net.</p> <p>Radware believes crooks are using email and Facebook spam to direct users to this misleading website.</p> <p>The malware then takes the collected login data and session cookies, encrypts it, and uploads it to a remote C&C panel, along with the user's GUID.</p> <p>Radware researchers tracked this data to a control panel available in the Chinese language. The control panel has dedicated sections for displaying Facebook credentials, and another one for Amazon data. This latter section is empty, suggesting attackers have not focused on extracting the Amazon details from the stolen data just yet.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Fake Starbucks coupons emerge
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/us/2018/04/19/fake-coupons-emerge-after-starbucks-incident-in-philly.html
GIST	<p>A series of fake coupons promising free beverages for “people of color” and “African American heritage,” are reportedly making the rounds on social media.</p> <p>The faux vouchers appeared to have originated on a site known for promulgating far-right content and ideas, The New York Daily News reported.</p> <p>The bogus coupons appeared after an incident in which two black men were arrested at a Philadelphia Starbucks after an employee reportedly called police on the two men who refused to leave.</p> <p>A video of the arrest went viral, prompting public outrage. Starbucks CEO Kevin Johnson called the incident “reprehensible” and said he had personally apologized to the two men.</p> <p>“We’re sorry,” reads one of the fake coupons. “We know we can do better. Starbucks values all people of color, and we are working on employee sensitivity training.”</p> <p>The coupon is adorned with different flavors of Starbucks’ signature frappuccino beverage next to the caption: “The best dialogue starts over a cup of coffee and we’d like to buy you one.”</p>

	<p>In the left-hand corner is the Starbucks logo and a barcode with the text: “Limit 1 coupon per person ... People of Color only.”</p> <p>Starbucks has denied the coupons’ authenticity.</p> <p>“This is completely false and in no way associated with Starbucks,” a representative for the company told Business Insider.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Russia heavy hand to block Telegram
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/russia-admits-blocking-millions-ip-addresses-54552464?cid=clicksource_79_2_hero_headlines_bsq_hed
GIST	<p>Russian authorities are freezing up vast swathes of the country's online world in what critics call a heavy-handed — and so far unsuccessful — attempt to block a popular messaging app, Telegram.</p> <p>The head of the communications watchdog acknowledged Wednesday that millions of IP addresses unrelated to Telegram have been blocked since a court ordered last week that the app be taken offline.</p> <p>The move has created trouble for millions of companies and consumers, and was described by some as "carpet bombing" the internet to get after one small company. Telegram was still available in Russia despite authorities' frantic attempts to hit it by blocking other services, but many users are preparing for the worst, setting up proxies to circumvent the ban.</p> <p>The row erupted after Telegram, which was developed by Russian entrepreneur Pavel Durov, refused to hand its encryption keys to Russia's intelligence agencies. The Russian government insists it needs them to pre-empt extremist attacks but Telegram dismissed the request as a breach of privacy.</p> <p>Alexander Zharov, chief of the Federal Communications Agency, told the Izvestia daily in an interview published Wednesday that Russia is blocking 18 networks that are used by Amazon and Google and which host sites that they believe Telegram is using to circumvent the ban.</p> <p>Countless Russian businesses — from online language schools to car dealerships — reported that their web services were down because of the communication watchdog's moves to bloc networks.</p> <p>Internet experts estimate that Russian authorities have blocked about 16 million IP addresses since Monday, affecting millions of Russian users and businesses.</p> <p>In the interview, Zharov admitted that the authorities have been helplessly trying to block Telegram and had to shut down entire networks, some of which have over half a million IP addresses that are used by unrelated "law-abiding companies," he said.</p> <p>Russia's leading daily Vedomosti in Wednesday's editorial likened the communications watchdog's battle against Telegram to warfare.</p> <p>Zharov also indicated that Facebook could be the next target for the government if it refuses to comply with Russian law.</p> <p>Authorities previously insisted that Facebook store its Russian users' data in Russia but has not gone through with its threats to block Facebook if it refuses to comply.</p> <p>Zharov said authorities will check before the end of the year if the company is complying with its demands and warned that if it does not, "then, obviously, the issue of blocking will arise."</p>

	Thousands of small businesses have used Telegram for many reasons, from advertising cheap airline tickets to offering advice on the stock markets.
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Terror Conditions

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HEADLINE	04/19 Kurds detain German tied to 9/11
SOURCE	http://www.dw.com/en/syria-kurds-detain-german-jihadi-tied-to-9-11/a-43447522
GIST	<p>A Syrian-born German citizen, who is alleged to have helped plan the attacks on September 11, 2001, has been arrested by Kurdish forces in Syria, according to a senior Kurdish commander.</p> <p>"Mohammed Haydar Zammar has been arrested by Kurdish security forces in northern Syria and is now being interrogated," the top official told reporters on Wednesday.</p> <p>Zammar is believed to have been an al-Qaida recruiter and close associate of members of the Hamburg terror cell of Islamic extremists thought to have been important operatives in the 9/11 attacks in the United States.</p> <p>Shortly after the attacks in 2001, Zammar left Hamburg for Morocco, where he was kidnapped by the CIA and handed over to the Syrian authorities. After the September 11 attacks, the United States had started a secret program to kidnap and interrogate terror suspects abroad.</p> <p>In 2007, a Syrian court sentenced him to 12 years in prison for being a member of the Muslim Brotherhood.</p> <p>After the Syrian war broke out, he is believed to have been released and to have joined the "Islamic State."</p> <p>The Kurdish commander who spoke to the AFP news agency on Wednesday declined to say if Zammar had been actively fighting as a member of an extremist group in Syria.</p> <p>In 2001, the German Federal Prosecutor's Office had initiated proceedings against Zammar for supporting a terrorist organization. But by 2008, the treatment of the German-Syrian had become the subject of a German parliamentary inquiry, after it was alleged that the German authorities did too little to protect a citizen from arbitrariness and torture.</p> <p>The then German foreign minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, strongly denied allegations that the German government had accepted Zammar's kidnapping by the US secret service CIA.</p> <p>The Pentagon has said it has received nothing to confirm Zammar's capture but is looking into it.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 UK jails owner of terror handbooks
SOURCE	http://home.bt.com/news/latest-news/owner-of-terrorist-handbooks-jailed-for-nearly-four-years-11364265214459
GIST	<p>A man has been jailed for three years and nine months for owning terrorist handbooks.</p> <p>Adam Wyatt, 48, of Bridgewater Street in Salford, was sentenced at Manchester Crown Court on Wednesday after pleading guilty to owning and sharing terrorist material, Greater Manchester Police said.</p> <p>He previously admitted disseminating a terrorist publication which said "Britain must atone for its sins in Palestine" and posting on social media that jihad was an obligation for Muslims.</p>

He admitted owning booklets, including one called the Mujahedeen Poisons Handbook.

A judge ruled Wyatt's actions were intentional rather than reckless.

Detective Inspector Mike Abbott, from Counter Terrorism Policing North West, said: "At today's hearing the judge not only decided that Adam Wyatt's actions were intentional but sentenced him to imprisonment.

"Wyatt used social media to air his abhorrent views and encourage terrorist attacks in Britain and across the world.

"Although Wyatt never pursued an attack himself, he was encouraging others and sharing information that could have led to the deaths of others.

"He will now spend the next three years and nine months in prison where he can no longer poison minds and encourage people to kill for his cause."

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HEADLINE	04/18 FBI agent in Ontario tip glad to help
SOURCE	https://globalnews.ca/news/4151896/fbi-agent-isis-attack-ontario/
GIST	<p>The FBI case agent who warned the RCMP about an imminent attack by a supporter of the so-called Islamic State (ISIS) two years ago says he was glad he was "in a position to make a positive contribution."</p> <p>"I do this work because once you are exposed to it and see the threat that is out there, you can't ignore it," Greg Hunt said in an alumni profile on the Washington & Lee University website.</p> <p>"It would haunt me if I didn't do something about it. If I could unlearn what I know about the counter-terrorism threat, I would — and I would probably sleep better at night."</p> <p>The coordinator of the Joint Terrorism Task Force in Roanoke, Va., Hunt was identified in the profile as the FBI agent who passed intelligence about Aaron Driver's planned terrorist attack to the RCMP on Aug. 10, 2016.</p> <p>The RCMP has said a tip from the FBI alerted them to a video in which an extremist pledged allegiance to ISIS and said he would be responding in Canada to a call by the terror group's leader for "jihad in the lands of the crusaders."</p> <p>After identifying the masked man in the video as Driver, police converged around his house in Strathroy, Ont. When Driver came out and got into a taxi, they confronted him but he detonated an explosive device and police shot him dead.</p> <p>"He wanted to detonate an IED [improvised explosive device] and kill as many Canadians as he could," Hunt said. "Fortunately, the Canadians were able to act on the information quickly."</p> <p>The son of an FBI agent, Hunt graduated from Washington & Lee University in 1997 and later went to work for a law firm in Roanoke, Va., according to the profile. But following the birth of his son and the death of his father in 2006, he decided to join the FBI.</p> <p>Based at the FBI's Roanoke Resident Agency, Hunt and his colleagues on the case were awarded the 2017 Director's Award for Excellence in Counter-terrorism last October, the profile said.</p> <p>"They've given me entirely too much credit, if you ask me, but it was an interesting case to work on, and I was glad I was in a position to make a positive contribution," Hunt told the university.</p>

“I was the case agent, but it took a village, as they say, including personnel from FBI headquarters, FBI offices around the world, and our Canadian counterparts,” Hunt said.

The RCMP arrested Driver in Winnipeg in 2015 over his online support for ISIS but he was never charged. Instead, police used a terrorism peace bond to try to reduce the risk he posed.

But after moving to Strathroy, he built an explosive device and plotted an attack. Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale has said Driver intended to attack Toronto’s Union Station, but the RCMP say investigators “cannot establish without a doubt the intended target, but Union Station was among other potential sites.”

The taxi driver injured by Driver’s bomb recently filed a \$1-million lawsuit accusing police of negligence for failing to stop the would-be terrorist before he detonated his explosives in the back seat of the cab.

“The defendants were negligent in the planning, preparation, and execution of the apprehension of Driver, and failed to properly supervise the operation to reduce the risk to innocent third parties,” reads the 12-page statement of claim.

The police agencies all declined to comment because the matter was before the courts.

A joint investigation by the Ontario Provincial Police and Strathroy-Caradoc Police Service concluded the police shooting was justified. An independent review by the Crown upheld the finding.

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HEADLINE	04/18 Ex-FBI against Portland JTTF role
SOURCE	https://www.portlandmercury.com/blogtown/2018/04/18/19824056/former-fbi-investigator-testifies-against-portlands-joint-terrorism-task-force
GIST	<p>Former FBI Investigator Michael German spoke at city council this morning against Portland's continuing participation in the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), a collaboration between Portland Police and the FBI that he says infringes on civil liberties. The city rejoined the task force—a partnership between various levels of law enforcement meant to take action against terrorism—in 2015 after leaving the agreement in 2004.</p> <p>Portland's participation in the JTTF includes the assignment of two full-time officers to the task force who share local information with the FBI.</p> <p>German's comments at the council meeting followed a panel discussion put on by the Oregon division of the American Civil Liberties Union last night, where he joined other panelists who had been affected by FBI monitoring of their communities, including Brandon Mayfield, a Muslim attorney who was wrongfully arrested by the FBI in connection with an attack in Madrid in 2004. Mayfield arrest likely played a role in the end of Portland's involvement with the JTTF back in 2005.</p> <p>“There are all kinds of people who find themselves continually harassed, including here in Portland.” - Michael German. Says mayday protest with broken windows ended up with JTTF monitoring anarchists. “The fact that they broke a federal court house window was a federal crime.”</p> <p>Panelist Zakir Kahn from the Council on American-Islamic Relations said the FBI's monitoring of Muslim communities is traumatizing for community members, yet investigators seem less interested in investigating hate crimes, despite their rising frequency.</p> <p>German also made reference to the Christmas Tree Bombing in 2010, a plot which the FBI manufactured by leading the suspect into performing an attack with a fake bomb.</p> <p>German argued that Portland should withdraw from the JTTF because it breaks local statute. Portland</p>

police are required to follow the reasonable suspicion standard, meaning investigations are based on specific facts instead of just a hunch. The FBI doesn't follow that standard and instead gathers intelligence on entire swaths of the population based on racial demographics and political affiliations, according to German. When the FBI shares that data with local police it breaks local statute requiring local police to abide by a higher standard, he said.

Mayor Ted Wheeler has previously expressed satisfaction with Portland's involvement with the JTTF.

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HEADLINE	04/19 UK sentences ISIS wannabe to prison
SOURCE	http://www.businessinsider.com/would-be-isis-terrorist-ahmedeltigani-alsyed-jailed-paintball-2018-4?r=UK&IR=T
GIST	<p>An aspiring Isis terrorist who trained for jihad in Syria with paintballing and gym sessions has been jailed.</p> <p>Ahmedeltigani Alsyed, 20, was sentenced at Woolwich Crown Court today to four and a half years behind bars.</p> <p>The Sudan-born extremist was a member of a secret chat group plotting to fight alongside terror groups in Syria, while also building his strength at the gym, the court was told.</p> <p>The young man from Hounslow, west London, previously pleaded guilty to engaging in conduct in preparation of terrorist acts between November 2016 and February 2017.</p> <p>He was also convicted of disseminating terrorist material, including execution videos and bomb-making guides, and possessing information likely to be useful to a person committing or planning acts of terrorism.</p> <p>His younger brother Yousif Alsyed, 18, also aspired to carry out acts of terror.</p> <p>He pleaded guilty to preparing terrorist acts and disseminating a terrorist publication. He will be sentenced at a later date.</p> <p>Commander Clarke Jarrett, of the Met's Counter Terrorism Command, said: "The evidence we recovered showed the clear intent of the Alsyed brothers to go to Syria, where they would join Daesh.</p> <p>"It is patent to me that their intention, once they had joined the terrorist group, was to fight alongside it as the brothers had invested time in training in the UK, including spending time at a paintballing camp and joining a gym.</p> <p>"The brothers shared with each other gory videos and images glorifying Daesh. They had their hearts set on joining their fight but our investigation stopped them."</p> <p>The brothers' terror plan was foiled when the younger of the two was referred to police by his school.</p> <p>They were later arrested at Heathrow Airport after returning on a flight from Egypt in August 2016.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 AQ raids in Somalia scuttle plans
SOURCE	https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-04-17/al-qaeda-attacks-in-somalia-scuttle-africa-s-plan-to-withdraw
GIST	African troops battling an al-Qaeda affiliate in Somalia for the past decade stand little chance of withdrawing by their deadline in two years as the government remains fragile and a spike in militant

violence has drawn in U.S. forces.

The longest-running African Union peacekeeping mission, known as Amisom, operates in a shattered country whose lawlessness has bred regional violence -- al-Shabaab has staged attacks in Kenya, Uganda and Djibouti -- and piracy that plagued global shipping in the early 2000s. Over the past year, the U.S. has boosted cooperation with the Somali army, targeting al-Shabaab and an Islamic State faction. The U.S. Africa Command said al-Shabaab controls about a fifth of Somalia, mainly in the south.

The scene of a blast after two car bombs exploded in the capital, Mogadishu, in October 2017.

Photographer: Mohamed Abdiwahab/AFP via Getty Images

Assaults on Ugandan peacekeepers this month show the challenge still facing the mission that deployed in 2007 as al-Shabaab stepped up its violence. Since October, Somalia has suffered its deadliest attack in three decades of civil war, debate in parliament threatened to turn violent and the federal and regional governments have been at loggerheads.

Amisom officials still talk as if departure is imminent and say 1,000 troops from about 22,000 uniformed personnel will leave this year. Yet in March they asked the United Nations to repeal a resolution to trim the force, which also includes Kenyan, Ethiopian, Djiboutian and Burundian soldiers.

A 2020 exit is “extremely unrealistic,” said Richard Cole, a former adviser to Somalia’s army. Talk of leaving is based on the “war-weariness” of the troop-contributing countries rather than “the situation on the ground, where al-Shabaab has not been decisively defeated and remains a constant threat,” he said.

U.S. forces have conducted 12 strikes against al-Shabaab so far this year, according to the U.S. Africa Command.

Amisom’s deputy head of mission, Simon Mulongo, said it “will most likely stay longer than 2020-21 because of challenges to statehood development, despite significant gains registered.” Without Amisom, the insurgents are “capable of easily retaking the reins of power,” he said.

Comprehensive Training

Many Somali officials agree 2020 isn’t feasible. The chief inspector of police, Hassan Mohamed Nur, said by phone that the army won’t be able to take over without increased capacity, an organizational overhaul and a comprehensive training program.

Political disputes among Somali officials are the Achilles’ heel of government forces, said Hussein Sheikh Ali, a former national security adviser. Amisom is undermined by a “lack of commitment” to finish the job and “constant clashes” between international donors, he said.

The spokesman for the Internal Security Ministry, Abdulaziz Ali Ibrahim, said the current priority is solving splits in the government. The speaker of Somalia’s parliament this month stepped down ahead of an impeachment motion brought against him by more than 100 lawmakers.

Amisom’s departure needs institutions that can assume responsibility for security, according to Matt Bryden, director of Sahan Research, an institute in neighboring Kenya and a former head of a UN sanctions monitoring group on Somalia.

Withdrawal ‘Premature’

“That scenario will prove unattainable unless there exists a stable political settlement, not only in Mogadishu, but also between the federal government and authorities in other regions,” he said.

Uganda’s army, the largest contributor to Amisom with more than 6,000 troops, has changed its stance on an early pullout after a review, military spokesman Richard Karemire said by phone from the capital,

	<p>Kampala.</p> <p>In Kenya -- whose army invaded Somalia in 2011, citing a wave of cross-border abductions by al-Shabaab, and later joined Amisom -- opinion polls show the majority of Kenyans want the troops home. Attacks by the Islamists on a shopping mall in Kenya's capital in 2013 and at a northeastern university campus in 2015 have claimed more than 200 lives.</p> <p>While Kenyan army spokesman David Obonyo acknowledged it would "be premature to withdraw before the country is fully fortified," the presence of his nation's forces depends on Amisom's UN mandate continuing. Officials from Djibouti, Ethiopia and Burundi didn't answer calls seeking details on their withdrawal plans.</p> <p>For Cole, the former Somalia army adviser, there's simply no alternative to Amisom at the moment.</p> <p>"While many Somalis berate and mock Amisom based on long-held grievances, they remain the only realistic option," he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/19 American ISIS widow seeks return home
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/19/middleeast/syria-us-isis-bride-intl/index.html
GIST	<p>Northern Syria (CNN)For Samantha Sally, a vacation was all it took to flip her quiet middle-American world of muscle cars, cotton candy and an Indiana packing company, into the horror of the ritual beatings, serial rape, torture and propaganda videos of ISIS's so-called Caliphate.</p> <p>A holiday is what her husband, Moussa Elhassani, promised her when she went to Hong Kong in 2014, she says. The couple was planning to move to Morocco to start a new, cheaper life, she says, and needed to go through Hong Kong to transfer money.</p> <p>Days later, Sally says, she stood on the Turkish border with Syria, on the edge of ISIS territory, her husband holding her daughter, Sarah, while she held her son, Matthew, 7, confronted with an impossible choice: Abandon her daughter to ISIS and save her son, or follow her husband into ISIS's so-called Caliphate. Following him was the only way to protect her daughter, she says.</p> <p>"To stay there with my son or watch my daughter leave with my husband -- I had to make a decision," Sally, 32, tells CNN in northern Syria.</p> <p>"Maybe I would never have seen my daughter again ever, and how can I live the rest of my life like that."</p> <p>Sally spoke to CNN in Syrian-Kurdish custody, in limbo, arrested after ISIS's collapse in Raqqa and unsure if she will ever see the United States again.</p> <p>The story of how Sally got there is a remarkable web of mystery, compassion, and animal savagery befitting ISIS's legacy of almost surreal terror. And in it, Sally flits between the role of naive, manipulated housewife, and the savvy pragmatist able to survive the savage, male-dominated world of ISIS.</p> <p>As she sits in a Syrian-Kurdish jail, waiting the US government to determine -- or not determine -- what to do with her, it is navigating that delicate balance between unknowing victim and deft manipulator that will decide her fate.</p> <p>'I was like a prisoner'</p> <p>Sally's journey to the former Caliphate begins in Elkhart, Indiana, where she and Elhassani worked at a delivery company. They lived with Matthew, her son from her first marriage to a US soldier, and their daughter Sarah.</p>

Elhassani took delight in souped-up cars, family videos show, and, according to Sally, used drugs and cheated on her -- showing few signs of devout faith. Their marriage was rocky at times, but Elhassani came up with a plan to move to his native Morocco for a year, where she could get cheap surgery on her knee and they might find a new start.

She says she went ahead to look, and was impressed enough to later fly to Hong Kong and help transfer some of their money. From Hong Kong, the couple together went to Turkey, on what Sally says was a romantic holiday, during which Elhassani lavished her with gifts.

At the time, the indirect trip to Asia before diverting to the Syrian border in Turkey, and the proxy transfer of funds to Hong Kong, were textbook methods of evading law enforcement for those seeking to join ISIS. But Sally insists she thought nothing was amiss before she reached the Turkish border town of Sanilurfa. It was there that Elhassani refused to let her leave the hotel room, saying the city was "too dangerous."

"Once we got to Sanilurfa everything changed," she says. "I was like a prisoner in the room."

Pushed as to how a woman adequately assertive to divorce her first husband in her 20s was now so submissive in a bustling Turkish city, she said: "This was years in the making. He separated me from my family. I could not see that he was the one that was wrong. It was always 'no, my husband is right.'"

Days later, they found themselves on the border, Sally faced with the agonizing choice. She insists the crossing was forced and then felt she could have come back again to Turkey later.

"People can think whatever they want but they have not been put in a place to make a decision like that," she says.

Buying slaves at a market

Inside the so-called Caliphate, her relationship with Elhassani changed. "Before he would spoil me. 'I love you.' We were very much in love. The romance never left. As soon as we came here it changed. I was a dog. I didn't have any choice. He was extremely violent. And there was nothing I could do about it. Nothing."

Sally says she feared divorcing him as that would leave her and her children yet more vulnerable in ISIS's society. She said at one point she was jailed by ISIS for three months while pregnant for trying to escape and for alleged espionage for the US.

She says she was held in solitary confinement and tortured, even sexually abused, in that jail. Sally says she was later released and went back to the small home she had made for her family on the outskirts of Raqqa, where Elhassani would periodically return from the frontline and -- in between fits of violence -- fathered two children by her.

The loneliness of her domestic existence made Elhassani propose an addition to their home, which was, by the warped standards of the Caliphate, commonplace. In 2014, the terror group had captured hundreds of Yazidis when it took Mount Sinjar in Iraq, and many of the younger women were being sold as slaves, some purely for the purposes of sexual abuse.

Elhassani suggested some Yazidi slaves would help keep Sally company while he was away, and he took her to the slave market. There she saw Soad.

"When I met Soad, I couldn't think about money, I needed to help her," she said. The 17-year-old girl cost her \$10,000 -- half the money she says she smuggled with her from their United States savings. She brought Soad home, and soon, her husband Elhassani began raping her.

But that was not enough. Elhassani soon decided to "buy" his own slave, using another \$7,500 from their

savings to purchase Bedrine, who was younger still. She was also raped by Elhassani. The family also bought a young boy, Aham, for \$1,500 later still.

Sally is defensive about the decision to buy the girls, saying she offered them a protection and care that other homes could not have.

"I was trying to hold on to that money as at some point I knew that he (Elhassani) was going to die and I was going to need that money. That wasn't the plan."

Asked if she feels she enabled the girls' serial rape, she said: "In every house that she was in before that was the same situation, but she did not have the support of someone like me. We constantly talked about going to see her mother. I was going to get her out and she was going to go back home."

Sally continued: "And no, no one will ever know what it is like to watch their husband rape a 14-year-old girl. Ever. And then she comes to you -- me -- after crying and I hold her and tell her it's going to be OK. Everything is going to be fine, just be patient."

"I would never apologize for bringing those girls to my house. They had me and I had them. And we knew that if we were just patient we would stick together. You understand? In any other situation they would be locked in a bedroom and fed tea every day. And the situation I was in with them, we cooked together, we cleaned together. Drank coffee together. Slept in the same room together. I was like their mother."

Two broken ribs

Sally does not outwardly appear a devout ISIS wife. She has a large blue tattoo of pursed lips on the right side of her neck and a nose ring. She smokes, and appears defiantly dismissive of the suggestion she must have known more about her husband's plans to join the Caliphate than she admits. Indeed, she has been interviewed by the FBI, and admitting to voluntarily joining ISIS would legally complicate her situation, if not result in charges.

CNN has spoken to several friends from her hometown, who say there were no open signs of her radicalization, and depict a loyal, single divorcee who found in Elhassani a generous provider-turned-controlling abuser.

"She was an amazing, wonderful, generous person, a really good friend and an excellent mom to Matt and Sarah," says friend Andria Lightner.

"I believe with all my heart she would never be willing to take her kids" to join ISIS.

A close friend in Indiana, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Sally became less available before she left and curiously did not confide in her friends that she intended to move to Morocco.

She quit her job, and declared she was going on vacation to Hong Kong, but the friend describes what would be their final farewell as ordinary: "It was 'I can't wait for you to be home and see you soon,'" the friend says. "She was being everyday normal Sam."

CNN also tracked down Soad, the older of the three Yazidi children Sally and Elhassani bought. Now 17, she is in a refugee camp in Iraq, reunited with her family, and has nothing but gratitude for the American housewife who purchased her into a life of repeated rape. She sent a video message to Sally in which she said: "I really want to see you, even if it is one last time. I miss you so much and I miss your children. Anything I can do to help you get out, I will do. I love you so much."

In other ways too, Sally's own children became victims. Her son Matthew, a US citizen through and through, was a prized cast member for ISIS as they increasingly sought to involve children in their macabre and sickening propaganda videos. Matthew was eventually visited by another ISIS fighter, who knew the ISIS propaganda wing, and approached Sally and Matthew with a script, part Arabic, part

English, for Matthew's appearance.

"After I saw the script was when the beating happened," Sally said, referring to her husband. "I was like, 'This is absolutely not acceptable'. All I could do was talk. He became very violent and scared my son into becoming complicit. I ended up with two broken ribs on that video. I fought. I fought. It was three days after my operation with her," she says, indicating to her youngest daughter. "I did not give birth naturally, it was Cesarean. I couldn't even fight back. There was nothing I could do."

Matthew, sitting next to his mother throughout her interview, chimes in: "It was a very bad beating." Sally added: "They learned the script but it was grueling. His days were long and he came home crying every day about how tired he was."

The video is one of ISIS's more notorious, in which Matthew is made to walk through a damaged mosque and streets, vow revenge on US President Donald Trump and pledge attacks on the West.

His mouth intermittently full of candy given to him by his Syrian-Kurdish captors, Matthew says: "It was extremely stressful and it was hard. I would have to say one word and then they would make me say another in Arabic. I never even knew Arabic before. I did not want to do it. He would hit me, he would stress me. About all those things."

Asked where he wants to go now, he said: "Back to my state. Back to America."

ISIS a bunch of 'drug-using thugs'

The family's escape from Raqqa came tantalizingly closer when a drone strike killed Elhassani in the middle of last year. "I was able to breathe," recalled Sally. "I was like -- OK -- we can start phase two. At least now we can all breathe."

The US coalition in Syria slowly tightened its noose around Raqqa, but Sally said she saw no avenue to escape with the thousands of civilians who had been fleeing the city during the assault.

"All that I knew was that if somebody tried to leave, the snipers -- which was my husband's job -- had permission to kill. So I am thinking if I try to walk out, I take the risk of IEDS (mines) if I go off road, and I run the risk that I will be sniped."

They remained in Raqqa until the very final days, released, Sally says, as part of the final hundreds of ISIS fighters -- many foreign hardliners -- whose departure from the city was negotiated with the US-backed Syrian-Kurdish fighters besieging ISIS. She left in that convoy east, and then found her way north, where she was eventually detained.

Sally's time in the Caliphate spanned from its most brutal start in late 2014 until its very final moments, the totality of which, in some way, complicates her defense that she was an innocent bystander.

Sally said: "I really don't care what people think and what people say. Once I left, I was extremely relieved and I was not able to breathe in three years until now. All I saw was a bunch of drug-using thugs who had no place. They created their own state here and called it in the name of God."

Yet it is the believability of her story -- that of the pliable and then abused housewife, turned savior of three child slaves -- upon which her and her children's fate surely hinges, as US authorities decide their next steps.

"I will do anything to get my kids back where they belong," Sally says. "If I have to spend 15 years in prison, it's better than anything here."

They dream of returning home, yet the FBI agents who visit them in custody to talk, have yet to bring charges or plane tickets home.

	"Me and my kids we talk about wanting to eat McDonald's," she said. "We want to live a normal life again."
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HEADLINE	04/18 Claim: Syria can still use chem. weapons
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-chemicalweapons/despite-strikes-syrias-assad-can-still-wage-chemical-attacks-u-s-sources-idUSKBN1HQ06E
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. assessments following the U.S., British and French missile strikes on Syria show they had only a limited impact on President Bashar al-Assad's ability to carry out chemical weapons attacks, four U.S. officials told Reuters.</p> <p>The conclusion contrasts with the Trump administration's assertion that the strikes on Saturday hit at the heart of Assad's chemical weapons program, language suggesting that Assad's ability to stage more attacks had been dealt a devastating blow.</p> <p>The United States, France and Britain destroyed three targets tied to Syria's weapons program. The most important of them was the Barzah Research and Development Center, which U.S. intelligence concluded was involved in the production and testing of chemical and biological warfare technology.</p> <p>But the U.S. officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the available intelligence indicated that Assad's stock of chemicals and precursors was believed to be scattered far beyond the three targets.</p> <p>Some of it, U.S. and allied intelligence suggests, is stored in schools and civilian apartment buildings, which one of the officials referred to as "human shields."</p> <p>U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, in remarks to Congress a day before the strikes, acknowledged that one of his top priorities in crafting the operation would be to minimize the loss of life to civilians.</p> <p>Asked about the assertion that the strikes had only a limited impact, a White House National Security Council spokesman said the purpose of the military operation was to hold Syria's government accountable, degrade its capability and deter it from chemical attacks in the future - "all while minimizing civilian casualties."</p> <p>A Pentagon spokesman referred Reuters to Mattis' warning to Assad and his forces to "not perpetrate another chemical weapons attack for which they will be held accountable."</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Report: Syria gives ISIS an ultimatum
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-yarmouk/jihadists-given-48-hours-to-surrender-enclave-near-damascus-report-idUSKBN1HQ0Q2
GIST	<p>BEIRUT (Reuters) - Islamic State militants have been given 48 hours to agree to withdraw from an enclave they control south of Damascus, the pro-Syrian government newspaper al-Watan reported on Thursday.</p> <p>"If they refuse, the army and supporting forces are ready to launch a military operation to end the presence of the organization in the area," it said.</p> <p>The jihadist-controlled enclave is centered around the Palestinian Yarmouk camp and the al-Hajar al-Aswad area south of Damascus. The area is much smaller than the eastern Ghouta region where the Syrian government recently defeated insurgents.</p>

	<p>A commander in the regional military alliance that backs the Syrian government said the Syrian army had begun shelling the jihadist enclave on Tuesday in preparation for an assault.</p> <p>Yarmouk, some 8 km (5 miles) from the center of Damascus, was home to Syria’s largest Palestinian refugee community before the Syrian war erupted in 2011. Although most residents have fled, the United Nations has said several thousand remain.</p> <p>The Syrian government has recovered swathes of territory from rebels by letting them leave to other rebel-held parts of the country after years of siege and ferocious military assaults backed by Russia and Iran.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/19 Saudis claim AQ militants killed in Yemen
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security/saudi-arabia-says-two-al-qaeda-militants-killed-in-yemen-idUSKBN1HQ0T6?il=0
GIST	<p>RIYADH (Reuters) - Coalition-backed forces killed two al Qaeda militants in Yemen in a raid in the southern province of Abyan on Wednesday, the Saudi government media office said.</p> <p>It described Murad Abdullah Mohammed al-Doubli, known as Abu Hamza al-Batani, and Hassan Basurie as among “the most dangerous leaders” of Yemen’s al Qaeda branch, known as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).</p> <p>The two men were killed in a clash with forces backed by the United Arab Emirates, a key component of the Saudi-backed coalition that intervened in Yemen’s civil war in 2015, said the statement issued late on Wednesday, citing security sources.</p> <p>AQAP has taken advantage of the three-year war between the Iran-aligned Houthi group and President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi’s Saudi-backed government to strengthen its position in the impoverished Arab state.</p> <p>There was no immediate statement confirming the deaths from AQAP, which operates in several provinces in south and eastern Yemen, including in Abyan, Shabwa and al-Bayda.</p>
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Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	04/18 WSFC releases ‘remote mind control’ files
SOURCE	https://www.thedailybeast.com/report-dhs-accidentally-releases-remote-mind-control-records?ref=home
GIST	<p>In response to a journalist’s standard FOIA request for records on Antifa and white supremacist groups, the Washington State Fusion Center reportedly released a file containing records on “remote mind control” techniques.</p> <p>According to Muckrock, a nonprofit group that publishes government information gathered through FOIA requests, the mind control documents came from the Department of Homeland Security-linked agency in the form of a file called “EM effects on human body.zip.” The file reportedly contained various diagrams detailing the horrors of “psycho-electronic weapon effects.” One diagram lists the various forms of torment supposedly made possible by using remote mind control methods, from “forced memory blanking” and “sudden violent itching inside eyelids” to “wild flailing” followed by “rigor mortis” and a remotely induced “forced orgasm.”</p> <p>It was not immediately clear how the documents wound up in the agency’s response to a standard FOIA request, but there was reportedly no indication the “remote mind control” files stemmed from any</p>

	government program.
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HEADLINE	04/18 Claim: SCL gave customer info to ICE
SOURCE	https://crosscut.com/2018/04/city-light-provided-customer-information-ice
GIST	<p>On at least three separate occasions in 2017, Seattle City Light provided Immigration and Customs Enforcement detailed information on customers, including names, phone numbers, and Social Security numbers, according to newly released documents provided to Crosscut.</p> <p>Customer information was provided to investigators with Homeland Security Investigations, a subset of ICE, in response to at least four drug-related subpoena requests from the federal agency, which has the authority to draft and deliver its own subpoenas without judicial review or approval.</p> <p>ICE investigators requested the information directly from staff who handle customer accounts. The employees readily complied, forwarding the customers' account information without any apparent legal review.</p> <p>A spokesperson for City Light said Tuesday the requests were only for drug enforcement, not for immigration related cases.</p> <p>The department's compliance with the subpoenas contrasts with a near identical request delivered to City Light in early 2018, which the department rejected until ICE more fully explained why it needed the customer information. The justification for refusing the information came, in part, from a 2007 Washington State Law, which requires a law enforcement agency provide a written statement explaining it believes the utility customer has committed a crime and "that the records could determine or help determine whether the suspicion might be true."</p> <p>If that bar is not met, the information obtained may be inadmissible in any criminal proceedings.</p> <p>In early 2018, before the most recent subpoena, Mayor Jenny Durkan introduced new protocols for handling requests from ICE, routing every inquiry for "access to non-public areas in City buildings and venues" and "actions seeking data or information (written or oral) about City employees, residents or workers" through her office's legal counsel.</p> <p>But the 2017 requests preceded such protocols. So although the earlier subpoenas were nearly the same as the one refused in 2018, customer information was turned over in 2017.</p> <p>In a statement, City Light spokesperson Scott Thomsen said the subpoenas were delivered under the Controlled Substances Act and not for immigration-related cases. "Seattle City Light has not received any immigration enforcement related subpoenas," he said. "All of these subpoenas are related to drug enforcement activities.</p> <p>Still, Stephanie Formas with the Mayor's Office, pointed to the changes in protocol. "In addition to clarifying the request process across all City departments, the City is requiring ICE to explicitly state the nature of their investigation under federal law (like the Controlled Substance Act) as well as note that the information is indeed relevant to a federal criminal investigation."</p> <p>For a city as proud of its status as a sanctuary city, the subpoenas highlight the complexity of clearly defining a tolerable level of cooperation with the federal law enforcement agency — and whether that means refusing to cooperate with ICE under any circumstances, as Oakland has chosen to do.</p> <p>The subpoenas delivered in 2017 had not been signed by a judge, which immigration attorneys say is cause for some skepticism. "There's no oversight to verify that ICE is in fact appropriately seeking information that corresponds to the norms under the law," said Matt Adams, legal director for the</p>

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project. “It would be on ICE to explain why they have the authority” to serve the subpoena.

Most of the documents provided to Crosscut through a public records request were redacted to hide the names and addresses tied to the accounts. However, one email associated with the rejected 2018 subpoena left an address unredacted. The West Seattle home targeted by the inquiry is associated with a construction business that allowed its license to lapse in 2014, according to King County records.

The first of last year’s three subpoenas was fulfilled on February 3, 2017. In emails, an agent with the Narcotics/Bulk Cash Smuggling Group was clearly frustrated with City Light’s legal compliance section, which she says had not responded to two prior subpoena requests. So she turned to a customer accounts manager, according to the documents.

“I’m mainly looking for the account subscriber information, duration and other account information,” the agent, Nichole Richardson wrote in an email. “Any insight you can provide would be appreciated.”

City Light provided the requested information to ICE within days.

The next subpoena came on April 13 from an agent in Homeland Security Investigations, ICE’s investigations arm. In an emailed subpoena the agent sought “all current Seattle City Light Account info” for a redacted address, as well as “other addresses, names or businesses, social security numbers, dates of birth, [and] emergency contact information.”

The request was fulfilled the following day by an account technician in the Customer Care Division.

The third subpoena, sent May 12, was identical to the one before it and was fulfilled several weeks later, on June 9, by an employee in Account Control. All three subpoenas make reference to the Controlled Substances Act.

The documents are signed by the Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Eben Roberts. On his LinkedIn page, Roberts describes his job as providing “strategic oversight of 3 operational groups targeting complex transnational organized crime engaged in financial and trade fraud, narcotics, and human trafficking.”

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HEADLINE	04/18 EWU student food cabinets to fight hunger
SOURCE	http://www.khq.com/story/37990625/ewu-getting-food-cabinets-to-help-fight-hunger
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. - Forget boxed lunches, at Eastern Washington University they're getting boxes of food.</p> <p>“It became a joke to be a hungry college student,” said Kayla Martinez who works for AmeriCorps Vista. “But it ignores the reality of what it means to be hungry and be pursuing a degree.”</p> <p>According to the Department of Health and Wellness, 33-percent of EWU students have run out of food at some point and 36-percent have worried about where their next meal will come from.</p> <p>That's double the average of U.S. households that are food insecure.</p> <p>“We are in class for the majority of the day,” said Martinez. “If you're wondering where your next food is coming from you're not putting all your focus toward your degree.”</p> <p>So, Martinez saw an opportunity to solve a problem and started a food pantry cabinet system.</p> <p>“We're going to have six locations around campus that will have food for students,” said Martinez.</p>

	<p>The idea is to end hunger at EWU.</p> <p>The pantries are supported by Second Harvest and the Dairy Farmers of Washington and are available to students to take what they need, when they need it.</p> <p>“We’re really low-barrier,” said Martinez. “We don’t want to put up anything between the food and the students so they’re open during the business hours of the building they’re located in and they’re accessible just by opening the cabinets and getting what you can use.”</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 First Saudi cinema shows 'Black Panther'
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/04/18/first-saudi-cinema-opens-with-popcorn-and-black-panther.html
GIST	<p>RIYADH, Saudi Arabia – The lights dimmed and the crowd of men and women erupted into applause and hoots Wednesday evening as Hollywood's blockbuster "Black Panther" premiered in Saudi Arabia's first movie theater.</p> <p>Though it was a private, invitation-only screening, for many Saudis it marked one of the clearest moments of change to sweep the country in decades. It's seen as part of a new era in which women will soon be allowed to drive and people in the kingdom will be able to go to concerts and fashion shows, and tuck into a bucket of popcorn in a cinema.</p> <p>"It's a new era, a new age. It's that simple. Things are changing, progress is happening. We're opening up and we're catching up with everything that's happening in the world," said Rahaf Alhendi, who attended the showing.</p> <p>Authorities said the public would be able to purchase tickets online Thursday for showings starting Friday. But there may be delays.</p> <p>Movies screened in Saudi cinemas will be subject to approval by government censors, and Wednesday night's premiere was no exception. Scenes of violence were not cut, but a final scene involving a kiss was axed.</p> <p>Still, it's a stark reversal for a country where public movie screenings were banned in the 1980s during a wave of ultraconservatism that swept Saudi Arabia. Many Saudi clerics view Western movies and even Arabic films made in Egypt and Lebanon as sinful.</p> <p>Despite decades of ultraconservative dogma, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has pushed through a number of major social reforms with support from his father, King Salman, to satiate the desires of the country's majority young population.</p> <p>"This is a historic day for your country," Adam Aron, CEO of AMC Entertainment, told the crowd at the screening. "It's been about 37 years since you've been able to watch movies the way movies are meant to be watched in a theater, together on a big screen."</p> <p>U.S.-based AMC, one of the world's biggest movie theater operators, only two weeks earlier signed a deal with Prince Mohammed to operate the first cinema in the kingdom. AMC and its local partner hurriedly transformed a concert hall in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, into a cinema complex for Wednesday's screening.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Alarming quake warning for new fault
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/hawyard-fault-line-zone-usgs-earthquake-warning-7-magnitude-

	san-andreas/
GIST	<p>It was one of the deadliest disasters ever to hit the U.S. On April 18, 1906, the great San Francisco earthquake killed more than 3,000 and destroyed half the city. As bad as it was, and as bad as subsequent earthquakes have been, the Bay Area is now bracing for something even worse.</p> <p>"It's coming," said Dr. Ken Hudnut, with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). "It's not if, it's when."</p> <p>A new report from the USGS says the biggest danger may be the Hayward Fault, because 2 million people live directly on top of it, including the cities of Oakland and Berkeley. The Hayward Fault could unleash a magnitude 7.0 earthquake, capable of catastrophic damage. That includes more than 800 deaths, 18,000 injuries and with gas lines severed and water pipes broken, hundreds of fires could ignite, burning at least 50,000 homes.</p> <p>"Those staggering numbers are not unchangeable, we can change the outcome," said Dr. Hudnut. "We can save lives and reduce risk by taking action now."</p> <p>Hudnut says cities haven't ignored the threat. Thousands of buildings have been retrofitted. When UC Berkeley learned that the fault ran right underneath its football stadium, the school installed seismic blocks, and completely rebuilt most of the stands.</p> <p>The biggest jolt may be that despite what's come before, the next "big one" could happen much sooner than later. The last major quake on the Hayward Fault happened 150 years ago. On average, a major quake happens every 150 years.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Miami at risk for yellow fever outbreak
SOURCE	https://www.newsmax.com/health/health-news/yellow-fever-spread-epidemic/2018/04/18/id/855281/
GIST	<p>Miami is at risk of a deadly yellow fever outbreak because the disease could thrive there but the city has no checks on travelers arriving from endemic zones, a study to be published by the World Health Organization showed.</p> <p>Yellow fever is spread by the same mosquito that causes Zika virus, which spread through the Americas after being detected in Brazil in 2015 and has been reported in southern Florida and southern Texas.</p> <p>The U.S. Centers for Disease Control advises that yellow fever is found in tropical and subtropical areas of Africa and South America, and is a very rare cause of illness in U.S. travelers.</p> <p>But the study, "International travel and the urban spread of yellow fever", showed that almost 2.8 million people flew to the United States from endemic yellow fever areas in 2016.</p> <p>Unlike some countries, the United States does not require travelers from such places to show proof of yellow fever vaccination.</p> <p>"At a time when global yellow fever vaccine supplies are diminished, an epidemic in a densely populated city could have substantial health and economic consequences," the researchers based in Canada, the United States and Britain wrote in the study.</p> <p>Around 9.5 million people live in U.S. urban areas such as Miami that are ecologically suitable for an outbreak, they wrote in the study, issued online ahead of its publication in the Bulletin of the World Health Organization.</p> <p>They said climate change, mobility, urbanization and a vaccine shortage had increased the risk of yellow fever globally and they called for a review of vaccination policies.</p>

	<p>The study found 472 cities suitable for an outbreak in 54 countries, but many, such as New Delhi, Mumbai, Karachi, Manila and Guangzhou, required vaccination certificates on arrival from endemic countries.</p> <p>WHO spokeswoman Fadela Chaib said the need for vaccination certificates was at each country's discretion.</p> <p>The researchers said a substantial proportion of the world's yellow fever vaccine stocks had been used up by recent epidemics in Africa and Brazil, and further depleted by manufacturing difficulties. Preventive campaigns could cause shortages.</p> <p>"Should another urban epidemic occur in the near future, vaccine demand could easily exceed the available supply," they said.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Report: 4-in-10 live w/unhealthy air
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Health_News/2018/04/18/Four-in-10-Americans-live-in-areas-with-unhealthy-air-report-says/1921523991459/?utm_source=fp&utm_campaign=ls&utm_medium=1
GIST	<p>April 17 (UPI) -- About 133.9 million people -- roughly one-fifth of the U.S. population -- live in counties with unhealthy levels of ozone or particle pollution, though the rest of the country can breathe a little easier.</p> <p>The data, collected between 2014 and 2016, is part of the American Lung Association's 2018 State of the Air report, released Wednesday. The survey ranks the most and least healthy air in states and metropolitan areas around the United States.</p> <p>Although ozone pollution worsened significantly because of warmer temperatures, particulate matter, which includes dust and soot, continued to improve, ALA researchers say.</p> <p>The report shows that air quality has improved significantly, despite concerns about changes to regulations at the Environmental Protection Agency.</p> <p>"I will say been we've seen great progress in reducing air pollution," Janice Nolen, assistant vice president of national policy at the ALA, told UPI.</p> <p>Rising ozone levels a concern</p> <p>The number of cars on the road in the United States continues to rise, but general pollution levels from cars have been reduced because of tougher emission standards.</p> <p>"We had more days of unhealthy days for ozone. But we began to look at why and found it was the second hottest year on record," Nolen said. "Ozone doesn't come out of a tailgate or a smokestack, it cooks in the atmosphere."</p> <p>According to the report, 40 percent of Americans live in 185 counties that earned an F grade for ozone. And of the 10 most polluted cities, seven cities had worse air days than the previous year's report, including Los Angeles and the New York City region.</p> <p>Eight of the 10 worst areas for ozone were in California: Los Angeles-Long Beach topped the list, followed by Bakersfield, Visalia area, Fresno area, Sacramento area, San Diego, Modesto area and the Redding area.</p> <p>The metro regions of New York-New Jersey-Connecticut and Pennsylvania was ninth, and the only city not on either coast was the Phoenix area -- but that city has made strides, according to the report.</p>

"With Phoenix, regulations have helped with emissions," Nolen said.

On average, the metro area had 31.2 unhealthy days for ozone, compared to 34.7 days in the previous report.

"Oil and gas makes a difference," Nolan said, although the city doesn't have many smoke-inducing factories. "With the heat, it's sitting there in sun."

Monitoring short-term particle pollution

In terms of short-term particle pollution, 35.1 million people lived in the 53 counties with too many days when it peaked at unhealthy levels.

Bakersfield had the highest short-term particle pollution levels and was followed by the Visalia area, Calif.; Fresno area, Calif.; Fairbanks, Alaska; Modesto area, Calif.; San Jose, Calif.; Los Angeles; Salt Lake City-Provo-Urem in Utah; El Centro, Calif.; and the Pittsburgh area.

In the past, Fairbanks lacked sufficient monitoring data to provide year-round information -- but this year the city has the highest year-round particle pollution, up from No. 17 in the 2017 report.

"The people of Fairbanks, Alaska, and all Americans, have the right to know if the air they are breathing is dangerous," American Lung Association National President and CEO Harold P. Wimmer said in a press release. "Improved monitoring is a critical step toward clean-up efforts that will save lives. Greater monitoring of air quality nationwide may also identify additional health risks in other locations in the United States."

The cleanest cities in this year's report, earning an A, are: Bellingham, Wash.; Burlington, Va., area; Casper, Wyoming; Honolulu; Melbourne area, Fla; and Wilmington, N.C. To qualify, they had no days of high levels of ozone or particulate matter, and were ranked among the 25 cities with the lowest year-round particle pollution levels.

One day before the ALA report was released, the State of Global Air for 2018 was released by the Health Effects Institute, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation and the University of British Columbia.

That report found that 95 percent of people live in areas where the outdoor fine particulate matter concentrations exceeds the World Health Organization's Air Quality Guideline. And almost 60 percent of people live in areas where fine particulate matter exceeds even the least stringent WHO interim air quality target. The United States, however, was listed in the safest of five categories.

Poor air quality contributed to an estimated 6.1 million deaths across the globe in 2016, the report said, and China and India were responsible for more than 50 percent of global deaths attributable to pollution.

There is now an 11-fold gap between the most- and least-polluted areas, compared to a six-fold gap in 1990, the researchers say.

"We used to have a slogan -- 'when you can't breathe, nothing matters,'" Nolan said. "It's not just lung disease. People are at risk from air pollutants."

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HEADLINE	04/18 Woman brings \$100K cash, gun to CIA HQ
SOURCE	https://wtop.com/fairfax-county/2018/04/woman-charged-with-bringing-loaded-gun-to-cia-headquarters/
GIST	WASHINGTON — A woman who drove into the CIA headquarters compound in McLean, Virginia, with

a loaded gun, a passport and \$100,000 in cash while wearing a wig is being held without bond.

Charging documents said Beth Huth drove her white Kia Soul onto CIA property in Langley last Friday afternoon past signs restricting access and warning against possessing weapons or ammunition.

According to an affidavit filed by CIA security protective service officer Michael Szczepanik, a CIA security protective service officer asked Huth for her badge — instead she produced a handwritten note.

The officer asked Huth if she was able to speak, and she nodded yes.

Asked if she was carrying anything illegal, Huth nodded yes, and reached for her black handbag resting on the passenger seat.

The officer ordered her to stop and write what she was searching for. She wrote “Gun.”

“I looked inside the handbag and found a loaded 9 mm pistol with four rounds of ammunition in the magazine and one round of ammunition in the chamber,” the officer wrote. “The safety mechanism for the loaded weapon was not engaged.”

Also found in the car were directions printed from a website that instructed how to drive from Ohio to “Langley, McLean, Virginia.”

Huth is charged with one count of possessing a weapon at a federal agency.

In U.S. District Court, in Alexandria, Tuesday, prosecutors said Huth suffers from mental health issues and is a flight risk, reported The Washington Post. Huth was wearing a wig when she drove to the CIA, and had a passport and \$100,000 in cash.

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HEADLINE	04/18 Armed men storm Nigeria's senate
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/18/africa/nigeria-parliament-chaos/index.html
GIST	<p>Lagos, Nigeria (CNN)The Nigerian Senate was on high alert Wednesday after armed men interrupted a session at Nigeria's parliament, stealing its mace.</p> <p>The men were allegedly led by suspended lawmaker Ovie Omo-Agege who seized the symbol of authority from the upper legislative chambers sitting in Nigeria's capital Abuja, the Senate said.</p> <p>The incident was branded "an act of treason" by Aliyu Abdullahi, a Senate spokesman who said the lawmaker was trying to overthrow a branch of the Federal Government of Nigeria.</p> <p>"This action is an affront on the legislature," he said in a statement.</p> <p>"Security agencies must stand on the side of due process and immediately mobilize their personnel to retrieve the mace and apprehend the perpetrators of this act," Abdullahi said.</p> <p>Laws cannot be passed by Nigeria's Senate in the absence of the mace, a symbol of authority binding decisions taken on the Senate floor.</p> <p>Despite the incident, sessions continued Wednesday in the 109-member assembly with a spare mace, Shehu Sani, a senator representing Kaduna Central said.</p> <p>"I and others insisted that the Senate must not adjourn. I removed my waist belt and lay to serve as a mace for us to continue."</p>

	<p>"My colleagues seconded. Then a spare mace brought in and the session continued," Sani added.</p> <p>The lawmaker who condemned the attack on Facebook called the incident an attempted coup that could fester if not addressed.</p>
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Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	04/18 Greece arrests Europe crime ring head
SOURCE	https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2018-04-18/greek-police-head-of-international-crime-ring-arrested
GIST	<p>THESSALONIKI, GREECE (AP) — Greek police say they have caught the suspected head of a European organized crime ring specializing in burglaries, robberies and extortion in France and Greece.</p> <p>Police said Wednesday the 57-year-old Georgian man was among 14 people arrested in the northern Greek city of Thessaloniki in a two-day operation involving more than 100 police officers. Those arrested included another two suspected leading members of the organization.</p> <p>The crime ring is believed to have carried out at least 56 burglaries in Thessaloniki in the last year, stealing items worth more than 1 million euros.</p> <p>Crime squad director Brig. Avraam Aivatizidis described the arrests as among the most important burglary cases in Greek police history.</p> <p>Another 17 suspected members of the crime ring were arrested in France for burglaries in Brittany and Normandy.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Vicious machete attack in Burien
SOURCE	http://q13fox.com/2018/04/18/person-stabbed-critically-injured-during-fight-at-burien-gas-station/
GIST	<p>BURIEN, Wash. -- A 39-year-old Burien man coming to the aid of a homeless man being harassed was attacked by two men with a machine and a chain, leaving him critically injured Wednesday, the King County Sheriff's Office said.</p> <p>Spokesman Sgt. Ryan Abbott said two intoxicated men came out of a restaurant near SW 148th Street and 1st Avenue SW in Burien and began attacking a passing homeless man, pushing over his bike and cart containing his belongings and his dog.</p> <p>"A good Samaritan saw this and tried to intervene," Abbott said, and the two assailants turned on him, striking him with a machete and a long chain.</p> <p>When officers arrived, the good Samaritan was rushed in critical condition to Harborview Medical Center.</p> <p>Two men -- a 25-year-old and a 30-year-old -- were arrested and were to be booked into the King County Jail on felony assault charges, Abbott said.</p> <p>"It sounds like a really random attack," Abbott said, adding that he didn't think the two suspects in custody knew the other transient man or the good Samaritan.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Global piracy attacks surge
SOURCE	https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/maritime-security/global-piracy-attacks-jump-first-quarter-year/
GIST	<p>A surge in armed attacks against ships around West Africa is pushing up global levels of piracy and armed robbery at sea.</p> <p>The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) Piracy Reporting Centre recorded 66 incidents in the first quarter of 2018, up from 43 for the same period in 2017, and 37 in Q1 2016.</p> <p>Worldwide in the first three months of 2018, 100 crew were taken hostage and 14 kidnapped from their vessels. A total of 39 vessels were boarded, 11 fired upon and four vessels hijacked. IMB received a further 12 reports of attempted attacks.</p> <p>The Gulf of Guinea accounts for 29 incidents in 2018 Q1, more than 40 percent of the global total. Of the 114 seafarers captured worldwide, all but one were in this region.</p> <p>All four vessels hijackings were in the Gulf of Guinea, where no hijackings were reported in 2017. Two product tankers were hijacked from Cotonou anchorage in mid-January and early February, prompting the IMB PRC to issue a warning to ships. Toward the end of March, two fishing vessels were hijacked 30 nautical miles off Nigeria and 27 nautical miles off Ghana.</p> <p>IMB said the hijacking of product tankers from anchorages in the Gulf of Guinea is a cause of concern. The intent of the perpetrators is to steal the oil cargo and kidnap crew. Prompt detection and response to any unauthorized movements of an anchored vessel could help in the effective response to such attacks.</p> <p>Nigeria alone recorded 22 incidents. Of the 11 vessels fired upon worldwide, eight were off Nigeria. Attacks in the Gulf of Guinea are against all vessels. Crews have been taken hostage and kidnapped from fishing and refrigerated cargo vessels as well as product tankers. In some cases, the attacks have been avoided by the early detection of an approaching skiff, evasive action taken by the vessel and the effective use of citadels. The IMB is working with national and regional authorities in the Gulf of Guinea to support ships and coordinate counter-piracy actions.</p> <p>Elsewhere, one incident was reported off Somalia, where a product tanker was fired upon and chased by two skiffs around 160nm SE of Hoby. At the end of March, a 160,000 DWT tanker reported being fired upon in the Gulf of Aden, while transiting within the Maritime Security Transit Corridor. The distance from land, sighting of ladders and firing upon ships continues to illustrate that the Somali pirates retain the capability and intent to attack merchant shipping in the wider Indian Ocean.</p> <p>Indonesia recorded nine low-level attacks against anchored vessels. Five bulk carriers reported actual or attempted attacks at Muara Berau anchorage in Samarinda, while waiting to load coal cargo.</p> <p>Maritime piracy had been experiencing a downturn since 2011. In fact, 2016 records showed the lowest number of attacks in 20 years. However, this trend looks to be reversing, requiring both enhanced and innovative efforts on the part of counter-piracy authorities and ship owners.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Burien: shot fired for teen's backpack
SOURCE	https://www.seattlepi.com/local/crime/article/Sheriff-Shot-fired-in-Burien-over-teen-s-backpack-12846070.php
GIST	<p>A 13-year-old boy was nearly shot during a backpack robbery after school in Burien Wednesday afternoon, according to the King County Sheriff's Office.</p> <p>The student was walking home from school about 2:55 p.m. in the 15700 block of First Avenue South when a red car without license plates pulled up next to him, according to an emailed statement from</p>

	<p>sheriff's spokesman Sgt. Ryan Abbott.</p> <p>Two suspects emerged from the car, one armed with a gun, reports indicate. Amid a short struggle, one shot was fired.</p> <p>The suspects made off with the teen's backpack and left heading south on First Avenue South.</p> <p>No one was hurt by the gunfire, reports say.</p> <p>The suspected robbers remain at large.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Fake soldier steals \$100K diamond
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/crime/man-claims-to-be-soldier-about-to-be-deployed-steals-100k-diamond-from-bellevue-store/
GIST	<p>A man walked into a Bellevue jewelry store dressed in military fatigues and boots and told an employee he wanted to buy a diamond engagement ring for his new fiancée before being deployed.</p> <p>Shown a 5.54-carat, marquise-cut diamond worth \$100,000, the man grabbed the stone, bolted out the door and made his getaway in an SUV, Bellevue police say.</p> <p>Thanks to fingerprints left on the store's glass door after the February theft, police last week arrested a suspect, identified in charging papers as Arquae Kennedy, 26, of Vancouver, Washington. Kennedy, who was charged Monday with second-degree robbery, never served in the armed forces, according to Bellevue police and King County prosecutors.</p> <p>Kennedy is accused of walking into Diamonds Inc., a jewelry store on Main Street in Old Bellevue, just before 7 p.m. on Feb. 22. He asked to see diamonds between 3 and 5 carats and was shown two rings, charging papers say.</p> <p>He then asked to see a bigger diamond, and the store's owner showed him a loose stone in a small jar, according to the charges.</p> <p>As the owner explained the diamond's price, Kennedy suddenly grabbed the jar and ran out the front door, the charges say. The owner and his son chased Kennedy as he ran until reaching a private drive, where an SUV drove up to them, charging papers say.</p> <p>The owner managed to grab hold of Kennedy's jacket as Kennedy jumped into the SUV, the charges say. The owner was dragged by the vehicle a short distance until Kennedy hit him, causing him to let go, say the charges, which note the store owner suffered a bloody nose, a cut lip, and scraped knuckles and knees.</p> <p>A woman who was driving by and who witnessed the pursuit was able to provide police with a license-plate number, which came back to a 2018 Mazda CX5 that had been rented by a man who did not match the description of the robbery suspect, say charging documents.</p> <p>The vehicle was driven by a woman, according to the charging papers.</p> <p>An employee told officers the store's windows had been professionally cleaned that morning and that she had just cleaned the glass door and display case before the theft. When police reviewed the store's video-surveillance footage, officers noticed the thief had pushed the glass open as he fled.</p> <p>Latent fingerprints found on the glass were run through an FBI database and matched Kennedy's fingerprints, say charging papers. The store employee and the owner's son independently identified Kennedy from a police photo montage, the charges say.</p>

	Bellevue police obtained a temporary arrest warrant for Kennedy and arrested him in Vancouver on Friday.
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HEADLINE	04/18 Probation for 911 operator 'hanging up'
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2018/04/18/Houston-911-operator-sentenced-for-hanging-up-on-hundreds-of-calls/7941524101128/?utm_source=fp&utm_campaign=lh&utm_medium=2
GIST	<p>April 18 (UPI) -- A former Houston 911 operator was sentenced to 18 months probation for systematically hanging up on hundreds of emergency callers.</p> <p>A Harris County, Texas jury found Crenshanda Williams, 44, guilty of interference with emergency telephone calls on Wednesday. Williams will also serve 10 days in jail.</p> <p>"The citizens of Harris County rely on 911 operators to dispatch help in their time of need," Assistant District Attorney Lauren Reeder said in a statement. "When a public servant betrays the community's trust and breaks the law, we have a responsibility to hold them criminally accountable."</p> <p>Williams was charged in October 2016 after authorities found she prematurely disconnected on 825 calls between October 2015 and March 2016.</p> <p>One of those calls was from a witness trying to report a violent robbery in progress. Another was from a security guard reporting a potentially dangerous street race where a fatal accident occurred weeks earlier.</p> <p>"Ain't nobody got time for this," Williams is heard saying in the 911 recording, just after disconnecting the call. "For Real."</p> <p>Williams' attorney, Franklin Bynum, said there were "systemic" problems at the Houston Emergency Center that caused calls to be dropped instead of rerouting if 911 operators cannot take them, the Houston Chronicle reported. He also said the HEC had poor training policies that contributed to Williams' mistakes.</p> <p>"She was going through a hard time in her life, and she was a poor performing worker at the Houston Emergency Center," Bynum said. "But punishing her doesn't do anything to fix the problems that still exist at the emergency center."</p>
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HEADLINE	04/19 Pakistan: attackers hurl acid at females
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/04/19/police-attackers-hurl-acid-at-3-female-students-in-pakistan.html
GIST	<p>ISLAMABAD – Pakistani police say a group of men on motorcycles hurled acid at three female university students in the city of Gujrat.</p> <p>Officer Umair Hayat says one of the three men was arrested after Thursday's attack, which occurred near a bus stop in the Dinga neighborhood as the girls were on their way to school.</p> <p>Hayat says one suffered burns to her face while the other two have burns on their arms. Two of the victims are sisters, the third is their friend.</p> <p>Hayat says the assault apparently followed a family dispute over the refusal of a marriage proposal and that the sisters' uncle was among the attackers, who had come from Islamabad to take revenge on one of the sisters.</p>

	Matrimonial refusals within families often trigger feuds in conservative Pakistan.
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HEADLINE	04/19 N.C. officials: 7 people shot; 2 dead
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/seven-people-shot-asheville-north-carolina-circumstances-unclear/
GIST	<p>Asheville, N.C. -- Two people were killed and five others wounded in a shooting here, the city's police say.</p> <p>Officers were called to the scene at 10:31 p.m. Wednesday, reports CBS Spartanburg, South Carolina affiliate WSPA-TV.</p> <p>The Asheville Police Department says one person died on the scene and another at Mission Hospital.</p> <p>Two of the others have life-threatening wounds, police add.</p> <p>Asheville police say there's no threat to the public, but information about how the shooting unfolded -- including on any arrests -- hasn't been released.</p> <p>Buncombe County Emergency Management officials say EMS and the fire department have cleared the scene.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Cocaine smuggler gets 8yrs in \$21M case
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/travel/2018/04/18/cocaine-smuggler-gets-8-years-in-21m-case-chastised-by-judge-for-social-media-lifestyle.html
GIST	<p>A convicted cocaine importer known for her Instagram photos at breathtaking travel destinations has been sentenced to eight years in prison for helping smuggle \$21 million worth of the drug.</p> <p>Melina Roberge, 24, a Canadian, wepted in an Australian courtroom while learning she will serve a minimum four years and nine months in prison, and a maximum eight years, with her earliest release date in May 2021, the New York Post reported.</p> <p>Roberge is the youngest of three Canadians who prosecutors said imported 209 pounds of cocaine on a luxury cruise en route to Australia, where it docked and was raided, the report said.</p> <p>Australian authorities called it the largest drug seizure on a commercial boat or plane the country has ever had, the BBC reported.</p> <p>Roberge stood to earn a possible \$100,000 from the plot, the Post reported. She was sentenced for trafficking 63 pounds of the drug — 50 pounds of it pure.</p> <p>In July 2016, the former jewelry store manager accepted a free holiday on a cruise liner, the Sydney Morning Herald reported.</p> <p>The Sea Princess vessel made stops in Ireland, the U.S., Canada, New Zealand and South American countries, including Colombia and Peru, during a seven-week journey, the report said.</p> <p>Roberge said she was motivated by her addiction to Instagram, the Post reported.</p> <p>Co-defendant Isabelle Lagace, 30, a former porn star, traveled with Roberge and the pair often posted bikini-clad photos of themselves with tropical backdrops, the report said.</p>

<p>Return to Top</p>	<p>The two were reportedly given first-class cruise tickets worth \$20,000, plus about \$5,000 in spending money.</p> <p>Judge Kate Traill of the New South Wales District Court said Wednesday she accepted that Roberge, was genuinely remorseful and had “a good chance of rehabilitation,” the BBC reported.</p> <p>But the judge criticized Roberge’s social media motivations for taking the cruise, the Post reported.</p> <p>“It is a very sad indictment on her relative age group in society to seem to get self-worth relative to posts on Instagram,” Traill said. “This highlights the negative influence of social media on young women.”</p> <p>Roberge had regretted her actions since her arrest and incarceration in different maximum security Sydney women’s prisons, the Post reported.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 NY gov. grants parolees right to vote
SOURCE	https://nypost.com/2018/04/18/cuomo-grants-parolees-the-right-to-vote/
GIST	<p>Appealing to his left flank, Gov. Cuomo announced Wednesday that he’s signed an executive order to give convicted felons on parole the right to vote.</p> <p>“In this state, when you’re released from prison and you’re on parole, you still don’t have the right to vote,” Cuomo said at the National Action Network’s conference in midtown.</p> <p>“Now how can that be? You did your time. You paid your debt. You’re released, but you still don’t have a right to vote.”</p> <p>The order will cover more than 36,000 parolees statewide.</p> <p>More than half — 54 percent — live in New York City, according to the state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision.</p> <p>The governor, a Democrat who faces a primary challenge from actress Cynthia Nixon, said his administrative action was necessary because the Republican-led state Senate has refused to pass a law to restore voting rights to parolees who’ve served their time.</p> <p>Under current state law, parolees can’t vote until they’re off supervision.</p>
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HEADLINE	04/18 Kansas mosque bombing plot convictions
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/men-convicted-kansas-plot-bomb-somali-refugees-54563512?cid=clicksource_76_4_article%20roll_articleroll_hed
GIST	<p>A federal jury on Wednesday found three men guilty of plotting to bomb a mosque and apartment complex housing Somali refugees in Kansas.</p> <p>Patrick Stein, Gavin Wright and Curtis Allen were convicted of one count of conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction and one count of conspiracy against civil rights. Wright was convicted of a charge of lying to the FBI. Sentencing is set for June 27.</p> <p>The three men were indicted in October 2016 for plotting an attack for the day after the presidential election in the meatpacking town of Garden City, about 220 miles (350 kilometers) west of Wichita.</p> <p>Prosecutors have said that a fellow militia member, Dan Day, tipped off federal authorities after becoming</p>

alarmed by the escalating talk of violence and later agreed to wear a wire as a paid informant. The government's case featured months of profanity-laced recordings in which militia members discussed plans and referred to the Somalis as "cockroaches."

Wright is captured in one recording saying he hoped an attack on the Somalis would "wake people up" and inspire others to take similar action against Muslims.

The government argued that the men formed a splinter group of the militia Kansas Security Force that came to be known as "the Crusaders." The testimony and recordings indicate the men tried to recruit other members of the Kansas Security Force to join them.

According to prosecutors, Stein was recorded discussing the type of fuel and fertilizer bomb that Timothy McVeigh used in the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, which killed 168 people. Stein was arrested when he delivered 300 pounds (135 kilograms) of fertilizer to undercover FBI agents to make explosives.

Attorneys for the defense said the FBI set up the men with a paid informant and all the talk about violence wasn't serious. They said the men had a right to free speech and association under the U.S. Constitution.

Prosecutors argued the plot was more than just words, telling jurors that the men also manufactured homemade explosives and tested them.

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