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## **The Homeland Security News Briefing**

**TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF**

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#### **Leading DHS News:**

**DEADLOCKED SUPREME COURT COULD DERAIL OBAMA'S IMMIGRATION ACTIONS.** The President "is facing the very real possibility" that "his immigration actions won't take effect before he leaves office" due to a Supreme Court deadlock, [The Hill](#) (4/3, Wheeler, 862K) reported. The High Court is set to hear oral arguments in the case, *United States v. Texas*, on April 18, and according to observers, a 4-4 split among the justices is possible, which would mean "the president's attempt to shield nearly 5 million people from deportation would be sent back to the lower courts for another lengthy legal battle that would surely spill into the next administration." The Administration's supporters "insist Scalia's death will have no outcome on the case, predicting that Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Anthony Kennedy could rule in the administration's favor."

#### **Immigration and Customs Enforcement:**

**ADVOCATES SPEAK OUT AGAINST POSSIBLE DEPORTATION OF BANGLADESHI ASYLUM SEEKERS.** [NBC News](#) (4/3, 3.58M) reports, "Asian-American and Muslim-American advocates are speaking out against the possible deportation of 169 Bangladeshi political asylum seekers Monday, using the hashtag #Deported2Death to draw attention to the risk they face if they are returned to Bangladesh." Desis Rising Up and Moving executive director Fahd Ahmed is cited saying, "Over 500 South Asian migrants from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan, have been relocated to a detention center in Florence, Arizona, in preparation for mass deportations on Monday, April 4." Ahmed "is also concerned that, due to racial and religious profiling, many of the asylum seekers have been incorrectly identified as 'terrorists' for being members of the opposition party in Bangladesh," and ICE "allegedly gave the Bangladeshi government access to the asylum seekers and allowed their names to be published in Bangladeshi media," thereby placing asylum seekers and their families at risk.

#### **Transportation Security Administration:**

**GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED COMMITTEE TO RECOMMEND COMMERCIAL DRONE STANDARDS.** The [AP](#) (4/3, Lowy, Press) reports, "A government-sponsored committee is recommending standards that could clear the way for commercial drone flights over populated areas and help speed the introduction of package delivery drones and other uses not yet possible." The standards "call for creating four categories of small drones that commercial operators can fly over people, including crowds in some cases." In a

“last-minute disagreement” that “nearly kept the committee from meeting the Friday deadline for the recommendations,” the Air Line Pilots Association and certain trade associations “wanted to require that all commercial drone operators pass an aviation knowledge test administered in person by the FAA and receive a background check from the Transportation Security Administration.” The disagreement “was resolved by the inclusion of a dissent by those in favor of the FAA test and TSA clearance.”

**AIR TRAVELERS WORRYING MORE ABOUT SAFETY.** [USA Today](#) (4/3, Elliott, 5.45M) reports air travelers are expressing more concern about their safety in recent months. The Transportation Security Administration has had “many public failures,” and the latest numbers from the Jet Airliner Crash Data Evaluation Centre in Germany found that none of top ten world’s safest airlines are American. An internal TSA report last year revealed that “inspectors posing as passengers successfully smuggled weapons past TSA agents in 67 out of 70 tests,” and follow-up testing later in the year “showed little improvement.” The recent terrorist attacks in Brussels, the FlyDubai crash in Russia last month, and a pending French report about the Germanwings crash have raised doubts about risk-free air travel, not to mention maintenance issues found in older fleets in the US.

**LINDLEY: TSA PAT-DOWNS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HAIR “AN INSULT.”** Writing in [Salon](#) (4/3, 837K), African-American writer Taja Lindley says her experiences having her hair patted down by TSA personnel “shows we still have a long way to go in balancing security and the rights of individuals—especially when those individuals aren’t white.” Lindley describes the experience as “an insult,” “racist,” and “it needs to stop.” Furthermore, “The TSA’s current practice does little to respond to an agreement it made with the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California (ACLUNC) last year” in which it would ensure that “training related to nondiscrimination is clear and consistent for TSA’s workforce” and track hair pat-down complaints “to assess whether a discriminatory impact may be occurring at a specific TSA secured location.”

## **Federal Emergency Management Agency:**

**SEVERE WEATHER HITS SEVERAL US REGIONS.** The [CBS Evening News](#) (4/3, story 2, 2:00, Glor, 11.17M) broadcast that there were cold “temperatures, snow and dangerous winds” in some parts of America’s eastern region this past weekend. Two people “died in Massachusetts when a tree fell on their car,” while an “empty beach house was blown over in New York.”

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (4/3, story 2, 1:40, Llamas, 14.63M) broadcast that high winds had been “wreaking havoc from the Midwest, all the way through the Northeast.” According to the report, strong wind gusts brought down trees and caused thousands of power outages in some areas. Frigid temperatures, meanwhile, brought snow to other spots. [NBC Nightly News](#) (4/3, lead story, 2:15, Snow, 16.61M) broadcast that as of last night, 29,000 New Jersey residents were without power.

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (4/2, story 4, 2:00, Vega, 14.63M) broadcast in a Saturday night report that snow and wind recently brought “whiteout conditions” to some parts of the Midwest. That “wild weather” was “moving east.” And on Friday night, [ABC World News Tonight](#) (4/1, lead story, 2:30, Muir, 14.63M) broadcast that a tornado recently damaged homes in Georgia. Also on Friday, [NBC Nightly News](#) (4/1, story 2, 1:50, Holt, 16.61M) broadcast that cleanup efforts were underway in Mississippi, “after several tornadoes touched down” in that state.

Tornado activity in Mississippi was also highlighted in a Friday night [CBS Evening News](#) (4/1, story 3, 1:40, Pelley, 11.17M) report. The CBS story also pointed out that heavy rainfall caused recent flooding in some parts of Georgia and Louisiana.

**LEEVE REPAIR FUNDING REQUEST TURNED DOWN.** The [AP](#) (4/2) reported that FEMA officials have turned down a request for levee repair funding in Grand Isle, Louisiana. Grand Isle Mayor David Camardelle said he and other local officials plan to appeal the FEMA decision. Similar coverage of this story appeared in an online [WVUE-TV](#) New Orleans (4/1, Masson, 44K) report.

## **Immigration:**

**UNDOCUMENTED FLORIDIAN PLEADS GUILTY TO POSING AS US CITIZEN.** The [Miami Herald](#) (4/3, 803K) reports, “An undocumented Colombian immigrant who pleaded guilty recently in a case involving the use of a Puerto Rican birth certificate to pose as a US citizen has been sentenced to what amounts to deportation.” Edinson Canaveral Sánchez was sentenced to five years’ probation. The Herald adds, “Since Canaveral Sánchez did not get any prison time in his sentence, it means he has to report to federal immigration authorities to be deported to his native Colombia.” The case “closes the latest chapter in a long series of similar cases involving the use of Puerto Rican birth certificates by undocumented immigrants in South Florida.”

**CHICAGO DOCTOR, STAFF MEMBER CHARGED WITH ENABLING IMMIGRATION FRAUD.** [Reuters](#) (4/1, Weinraub) reports that Chicago doctor Dr. Jasminka Kostic and a member of her staff, Nikki Pozdol, have been charged with improperly medical misdiagnosing US citizenship applicants as physically or mentally impaired such that they were unable to demonstrate US history knowledge or English ability. Such diagnoses enabled applicants to seek waivers for part of the citizenship test. Kostic was reportedly also charged with attempted unlawful procurement of citizenship or naturalization.

## **US Coast Guard:**

**FLORIDA MAYOR INTENDS TO RETURN FROM CUBA IN MAKESHIFT RAFT.** The [AP](#) (4/3) reports that Clint Johnson, mayor of DeBary, Florida, “still intends to go through with his plan to return home from a visit to Cuba alone in a makeshift raft.” Johnson is quoted tweeting after a Friday test, “Ocean test run complete! ... #Cuba next!” Johnson “said he plans to cross the Florida Straits in a couple weeks without a motor because he wants to understand what Cuban migrants experience.” However, “many, including the US Coast Guard, have urged him to reconsider.”

## **Secret Service:**

**MAN ARRESTED FOR JUMPING WHITE HOUSE FENCE.** [CNN](#) (4/2, Malloy, Morris, 3.96M) continues coverage of the arrest of a man Friday night “after he jumped the north fence of the White House.” A Secret Service statement is cited saying, “The individual was taken into custody immediately after throwing a backpack over the fence before jumping over himself shortly before midnight.” CNN adds, “This is the second arrest at the White House this week.”

[Fox News](#) (4/3, 9.42M) reports the Secret Service “conducted standard security sweeps after the incident and the White House complex resumed normal operations shortly after they were completed.”

[The Guardian \(UK\)](#) (4/2, 3.71M) reports, “Barack Obama was in Washington for a nuclear security summit on Friday and Saturday. It was not immediately clear if he was at the White House when the person scaled the fence.” Also, “There were no indications from the secret service that the intruder’s backpack contained any weapon.”

**SECRET SERVICE DISALLOWS INFLATABLE JOINT IN PRO-MARIJUANA PROTEST OUTSIDE WHITE HOUSE.** [Politico](#) (4/2, East, 1.07M) reports, “The Secret Service quickly snuffed out the hopes of pro-marijuana activists who planned a photoshoot of a giant, inflatable joint outside the White House on Saturday.” The joint “made it nowhere near the view of the White House as Secret Service knew of the plans ahead of time, and asked the group to deflate it.”

[Vice](#) (4/3, 1.65M) reports that Adam Eiding, the founder of the medical marijuana advocacy group that organized the demonstration, cited the Secret Service claiming the inflatable, which had the words “Obama, deschedule cannabis now!” written on the side, created a “sniper issue.” Eiding is quoted saying, “People could use the joint as a cover, it’s an open area. ... It’s a vulnerable spot in front of the White House. You could have a mass murderer there. So we listened. We’re not here to be dangerous.”

## **Science and Technology Directorate:**

**SCHUMER: DHS MUST WORK FASTER TO TEST EXPLOSIVE DETECTORS.** The [AP](#) (4/3) cites US Sen. Charles Schumer saying DHS “must move faster to test explosive detectors that can sense compounds that have been used in recent extremist attacks and to determine if the devices can be installed at airports and train stations across the country.” While the electronic trace detection system “has proved successful in laboratory tests, it hasn’t been scheduled for government field tests until the fall.” Schumer is quoted saying, “It is now clear [TATP] is the go-to explosive that ISIS uses, so we ought to not waste a minute and get it tested in real-life situations.” The AP notes DHS has been funding the work of chemical engineering professor Otto Gregory, who “developed the technology for the electronic trace detection system and said the work is now at the stage of ‘packaging’ the devices to make them portable.”

[Newsday \(NY\)](#) (4/3, 1.23M) cites Gregory saying, “The testing could not be done now because of personnel and other research-related hurdles, but it could be expedited by several months depending on funding and how much of a priority government officials give the technology.” Gregory is quoted saying, “You might be able to bump it up a little bit but not a whole lot.”

## **Terrorism Investigations:**

**TOP NYPD COPS SLAM OBAMA CALL TO CUT COUNTER-TERROR FUNDING, CRUZ PLANS.** The [New York Daily News](#) (4/3, Sit, 3.7M) reports that NYPD chief Bill Bratton, in a radio interview yesterday, “renewed criticism over President Obama’s ‘mind boggling’ proposal to slash federal counter-terror funding by 50%.” Bratton made his comments on John Catsimatidis’ “The Cats Roundtable” on AM 970.

NYPD’s Deputy Commissioner for Intelligence and Counterterrorism, John Miller, meanwhile, appeared on [CNN Fareed Zakaria GPS](#) (4/3, Zakaria, 410K), where he criticized Sen. Ted Cruz’s proposal for local police departments to patrol and secure Muslim neighborhoods against radicalization. Miller said, “First of all, the depth of that is less than an inch. It wouldn’t work. Second of all, it shows fundamental misunderstanding of American neighborhoods, but also American policing. The federal government does not direct local police departments to invade local neighborhoods. ... But the subtext or the code word there is not patrol and secure. The code word was to intimidate and that’s just not the way it works in America.”

**KING CALLS FOR MORE “INTELLIGENCE ON THE GROUND” AT HOME AND ABROAD TO COMBAT ISIL.** On [Fox Sunday Morning Futures](#) (4/3, Bartiromo), Rep. Peter King said, “We need more intelligence on the ground and that also means here in our own country and European countries to have more of an undercover police presence, to have informers, to have people on the ground, to be in the Muslim communities. That’s where the threat is coming from. Ninety-eight percent, 99 percent of Muslims are good Americans, but the threat is coming from there. ... Whether it was the Italian mob or the Irish gangsters, you went into those neighborhoods to find out where it’s coming from. We have to put political correctness aside – do it in Europe, do it here in the United States – to get the intelligence before the attacks can be started.”

**EUROPEAN TERROR PROBE HAS IDENTIFIED AT LEAST 22 SUSPECTS STILL AT LARGE.** The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/3, Dalton, Subscription Publication, 6.74M) reports on its front page on the investigation into a terror network linked to the attacks in Paris and Brussels. That investigation has identified 22 or more suspects at large with links to the network. Of those, many have been in earlier ISIL plots, and nearly all have spent time in Syria. Generally, they are described as having embraced Islam at underground mosques in Molenbeek, a neighborhood in Brussels. The group is thought to be helping to move veterans of battles in Syria to Europe. The article also offers some detailed descriptions of some important figures in Molenbeek and the investigation.

**Mudd: Terrorism Threat Presents Problems Europe Can’t Overcome.** On [CNN Fareed Zakaria GPS](#) (4/3, Zakaria, 410K), former CIA and FBI counterterrorism official Philip Mudd said that “the Europeans themselves have a problem I don’t think they can’t overcome. If you want to combat this kind of threat that involves tactical sharing of information about your citizens, real time email, phone, travel and the first question can’t be can I share information on my citizen with the neighboring state. It has to be soon as my



target moves, I've got to hand it over. ... They don't do that. ... The other problem we have is a bureaucratic reality. Until you sit together, virtual sharing in my experience as a former bureaucrat – I hate to say it – doesn't work. You have got to sit in the same place to feel the same reality of the threat. That combination of information sharing and sitting in the same place, those are two things I don't think will happen in Europe.”

**BRUSSELS AIRPORT REOPENS.** The [CBS Evening News](#) (4/3, story 6, 0:15, Glor, 11.17M) reported the Brussels airport reopened “under extremely tight security” on Sunday, 12 days after sustaining deadly terror attacks. Intercontinental flights “are expected to resume” on Monday. [ABC World News Tonight](#) (4/3, story 5, 0:20, Llamas, 14.63M) added that the first flight out of the airport was “bound for Portugal with heightened security.” [NBC Nightly News](#) (4/3, story 3, 0:25, Snow, 16.61M) reported that an airport official described the first flights “as a symbolic relaunch after what she called 12 days of difficult moments and horror.”

**FREED FROM BOKO HARAM RAPE CAMPS, VICTIMS FACE SUSPICION, ISOLATION.** The [Washington Post](#) (4/3, Sieff, 8.98M) reports on the “thousands” of victims of Boko Haram, “as young as 8,” kept prisoners by the group’s “savage campaign of rape and sexual slavery.” With many of them now rescued, there “have been few joyous family reunions for the victims,” since “most of the surviving women no longer have homes.” Instead, “the military has quietly deposited them in displacement camps or abandoned buildings, where they are monitored by armed men suspicious of their loyalties,” and “they are still labeled ‘Boko Haram wives.’” Moreover, they are encountering mistrust and suspicion, as “last year, 39 of 89 Boko Haram suicide bombings were carried out by women,” and 22 “of those female attackers were under the age of 18, many of them girls apparently abducted from villages and cities and converted into assassins.”

## **Cyber News:**

**WHITE HOUSE UNDERGOING TECH UPGRADES.** The [New York Times](#) (4/3, Shear, Subscription Publication, 12.03M) reports on tech upgrades at the White House, noting one of the President’s legacies “will be the office information technology upgrade that his staff has finally begun.” The Times highlights the efforts of Anita Decker Breckenridge, the deputy chief of staff for operations at the White House, David Recordon, “the information technology guy for the White House complex.” Breckenridge, who “said the White House has not had to request any additional money for the new upgrades,” expressed hope “that Mr. Obama will leave to his successor’s staff a building that is more useful in the Facebook and Twitter era, or whatever comes next.”

**ROMANIAN HACKER BEHIND BUSH, CLINTON BREACHES APPEARS IN US COURT.** The [Washington Post](#) (4/1, Zapotosky, 8.98M) reports Marcel Lehel Lazar, the Romanian hacker also known by his alias “Guccifer,” appeared in US court on Friday for the first time on charges of “cyber-stalking, aggravated identity theft and unauthorized access of a protected computer in a nine-count indictment.” The Post explains Federal prosecutors allege Lazar “was responsible for a range of high-profile hacks,” including “the email, Facebook account and other online accounts of a member of the Bush family, a former Cabinet member and a former member of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff,” as well as discovering the private email account of Hillary Clinton. Lazar “then blasted messages with personal information from those accounts to media organizations or congressional staffers, according to the indictment.”

**HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS WEIGH BENEFITS, RISKS OF ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORDS.** The [Baltimore Sun](#) (4/2, Duncan, McDaniels, 712K) reports that electronic medical records have many benefits such as “help[ing] patients avoid unnecessary tests,” and they can “help doctors tailor treatment even for patients they are meeting for the first time,” but “the new systems can leave hospitals vulnerable.” The Sun adds that hospitals were previously worried “that hackers could steal patients’ information to enable identity theft,” but the latest concern is ransomware where “hackers deny access to data rather than stealing it.” [NPR](#) (4/1, N\, LaChance, 1.81M) reported that hacks leaving hospitals without electronic medical records has led to several mistakes in patient care, which required resorting to paper records, or diverting patients to other hospitals.

**MALWARE SENDING PHILADELPHIA RESIDENTS FAKE SPEEDING TICKETS.** [Wired](#) (4/2, 3.82M) reports citizens in Chester County, Pennsylvania “have been receiving emails that contain fake speeding citations – along with a malicious phishing link.” Wired adds that Chester County Police say the “people receiving those emails really were speeding at the locations the citation claims,” which means the “hacker may have compromised a GPS-enabled app to give their scam an added dose of veracity.”

**CHICAGO SUN-TIMES BOARD CRITICAL OF IRS RESPONSE TO CYBERATTACK VULNERABILITY REPORT.** The [Chicago Sun-Times](#) (4/3, 764K) editorializes that “it is deeply unsettling to hundreds of millions of Americans that their most private tax return information may be at risk.” The Board is critical of the IRS’ response to a new GAO report that found the “IRS has not completely fixed some previously identified weaknesses.” The Board says that the best solution “would be strongly bipartisan congressional hearings,” which are held under public scrutiny to blame those responsible, and find a path forward in fixing any IRS security issues.

**NASA’S “GRYPHON X” CYBERSECURITY FACILITY STILL IN EARLY PLANNING STAGES.** The [San Jose \(CA\) Mercury News](#) (4/4, Baron, 648K) reports a NASA cybersecurity facility, called “Gryphon X,” that would “protect space missions from potentially catastrophic hacking and...increase collaboration with Silicon Valley” is still in “proposal and formulation stage,” according to NASA Ames Research Center CIO Jerry Davis. The Mercury News quotes Davis as saying “Gryphon X focuses on the reduction of cyber-based risks to NASA’s missions and their highly connected systems and high-value hardware and software in the field,” and NASA is currently “looking at the cost/benefit analysis and value proposition” of the program.

**US, CHINA CYBERSECURITY RELATIONS STILL HAVE ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT.** [Politico](#) (4/1, Starks, 1.07M) reported that the meeting last week between President Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping shows that “there’s not complete harmony” when it comes to cyber relations. Politico added that the sides hope to come to an agreement on a binding deal, rather than an agreed set of principles.

**NBC NEWS ANALYSIS: IOT CAN LEAD TO INFRASTRUCTURE VULNERABILITIES.** [NBC News](#) (4/3, Francescani, 3.58M) reports the newly released details of the Iranian hack on a New York dam shows that the Internet of Things (IoT) “has ushered in a new era of security vulnerabilities.” NBC news says that hackers have the ability to “remotely seize control of a spectrum of critical public and private infrastructure,” which was created and “designed before cybersecurity became crucial.” According to NBC News, researchers are concerned because some of the infrastructure systems are protected by “just a default username and password”, or “no password security at all.”

**Hackers Accessed New York Dam Through “Google Dorking.”** The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/1, Zimmer, Subscription Publication, 6.74M) reported the Iranian hackers accessed a New York dam’s network last year by a process called Google dorking, which allows hackers to use the search engine to find vulnerable security holes in networks.

## **National Security News:**

**IRAQI, SYRIAN FORCES TAKE BACK ADDITIONAL TERRITORY FROM ISIL.** In another day with little media coverage of Administration initiatives, reports indicate ISIL is being dealt significant defeats in both Iraq and Syria. In Iraq, notes the [AP](#) (4/3), government forces “took the northern edge of the Islamic State-held town of Hit, west of Baghdad, on Sunday in an operation led by the country’s elite counterterrorism forces.” While “the operation...was relaunched last week...the troops’ progress has been slowed by hundreds of roadside bombs and efforts to safeguard thousands of civilians trapped inside the town.” [USA Today](#) (4/3, Bacon, 5.45M) reports, meanwhile, that the Syrian army “claimed victory over the Islamic State in the town of Qaryatain on Sunday, one week after driving the militant group out of historic Palmyra.”

It was, says [AFP](#) (4/3), “a new blow” to ISIL. The [AP](#) (4/3) similarly speaks of “another setback to the ISIS extremists in Syria,” one that is “strategically significant for the government side.” According to a report by [Voice of America](#) (4/3, 60K), the Syrian forces achieved their victory backed up by Russian air power.

Seizing Qaryatain, added Voice of America, “gives the government a strategic victory, securing oil and gas routes between the Damascus area and oilfields in eastern Syria.” [Reuters](#) (4/3, Barrington) notes that the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights contradicted the government’s claims, claiming the army controlled only half of the town.

The [AP](#) (4/3) reports that “activists said last summer that Qaryatain had a mixed population of around 40,000 Sunni Muslims and Christians, as well as thousands of internally displaced people who had fled from the nearby city of Homs.” However, “many of the Christians fled the town after it came under ISIS attack,” and “dozens...have been abducted by the extremists.” The AP adds that “while the town was under ISIS control, some were released, others were made to sign pledges to pay a tax imposed on non-Muslims.”

[AFP](#) (4/4), meanwhile, reports on “a mass grave containing the bodies of 42 people executed” by ISIL in Palmyra. According to an unnamed military source, “twenty-four of the bodies found were civilians, including three children.” Russia’s [TASS](#) (4/3) agency, also reporting on Palmyra, cites Anne-Marie Descotes, “a senior official at the French Foreign Ministry,” as saying “a full-fledged start of restoration of monuments destroyed in Syria’s Palmyra will only be possible after a comprehensive truce is established in the country.”

In an editorial, the [Christian Science Monitor](#) (4/3, 442K) sees signs for optimism in Syria, based on the fact that the “two-month truce is largely holding,” Russia “has pulled back its fighter jets,” and ISIL “appears weaker.” Moreover, “a third round of talks will be held soon in Geneva to find a compromise on forming a democratic, secular state.”

**STRIKES KILL NUSRA FRONT SPOKESMAN, SON, 20 MILITANTS.** [AFP](#) (4/3) reports that according to Syrian Observatory for Human Rights chief Rami Abdel Rahman, “the spokesman for Al-Qaeda’s Syrian affiliate, Al-Nusra Front, his son, and 20 other jihadists were killed in air strikes Sunday in the northeast of the country.”

**DRONE STRIKE KILLS ISIL MILITANT WHO KILLED US MARINE.** [Reuters](#) (4/3) reports that the US-led coalition said yesterday that a drone attack had killed Jasim Khadijah, a former Iraqi officer who now fights for ISIL, and who was believed responsible for an attack that killed a US Marine in March. The [CBS Evening News](#) (4/3, story 7, 0:15, Glor, 11.17M) briefly noted the story last night.

**ISIL REPORTEDLY EXECUTES 15 OF ITS OWN FORCES.** [Reuters](#) (4/3) reports that according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, ISIL executed 15 of its members near Raqqa, Syria yesterday.

**PESHMERGA FORCES HAVEN’T BEEN PAID IN FOUR MONTHS.** The [CBS Evening News](#) (4/3, story 8, 2:50, Glor, 11.17M) reported Massrour BAlgani, head of the Security Council in Iraqi Kurdistan, said peshmerga forces battling ISIL haven’t been paid in four months, and he doesn’t “know for how much longer they can stand on the front lines without” receiving compensation. Holly Williams added that peshmerga are fighting the extremists “without enough body armor or helmets to go around [and] with very few heavy weapons.” Meanwhile, Williams said engineers warn that the Mosul Dam “could break at any time,” which could endanger 1.5 million people in the ISIL-controlled city and surrounding area, according to US officials.

**WPOST A1: US SPECIAL OPS FORCES CONTINUE USING FAULTY RIFLE SIGHTS.** In a 1,850-word article, the [Washington Post](#) (4/3, A1, Gibbons-Neff, 8.98M) reports on its front page that despite settling a lawsuit four months ago over faulty rifle sights made by the company L-3 Communications, US Special Operations forces are still using the defective sights. While L-3 says it fixed most of the issues with the sight, it hasn’t resolved the “most serious” problem, based on the government’s allegations. The problem, called thermal drift, causes the sight to be off target by up to 12 inches in extreme temperatures, which “can be disastrous for a soldier since it can be the difference between landing a fatal shot and missing the target.” Court records and military officials indicate that the issue “potentially endangers the lives of service members in combat.” The sights have “been used by every branch of the military, the FBI, the State Department and local law enforcement.”



**ARMY MEMO TELLS OFFICERS TO PREVENT RESTRUCTURING OF BATTLEFIELD INTEL SYSTEM.** The [Washington Times](#) (4/3, Scarborough, 285K) reports an internal memo from the Army National Guard intelligence directorate, or G2, on March 22, called for officers to fight Rep. Duncan Hunter's legislation to restructure the war-deployed network, called the Distributed Common Ground System (DCGS). A new test report found the latest upgrade to DCGS is "operationally effective," but it also quotes battalion commanders "as saying they did not find it 'very helpful' during battle." Hunter said the G2 memo provides further evidence of a long-standing campaign "within the Army to undercut attempts...to turn DCGS into an effective system." Hunter also said the email "is essentially encouraging lobbying, which is outlawed for the military," according to the Times.

**WPOST A1: US, ALLIES MAY BE NEARER TO RENEWED MISSION IN LIBYA.** The [Washington Post](#) (4/3, A1, Ryan, Raghavan, 8.98M) reports on its front page that the US and Europe are now "much closer to a renewed military mission" in Libya after "the shaky debut last week of a new unity government." That's because the US, Italy, France, and Britain have all said a renewed effort for stability in Libya depends on the unity government. The Post says North Africa is divided in its stance toward outside involvement with Algeria being "categorically opposed," while Egypt supports Libya's "eastern faction," and Tunisia "is facing increased terrorist threats." The Post says "the biggest challenge" to peace in Libya are the "divisions among Libya's myriad armed factions."

**DOCUMENT LEAK DETAILS INFORMATION ABOUT WORLD LEADERS' OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS.** [The Hill](#) (4/3, Savransky, 862K) reported in its "Blog Briefing Room" blog The Center for Public Integrity reported Sunday a "massive leak of more than 11.5 million documents exposed the offshore accounts of current and former world leaders." The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists on Sunday published an investigation of the files, which it said "exposes a cast of characters who use offshore companies to facilitate bribery, arms deals, tax evasion, financial fraud and drug trafficking. ... Behind the email chains, invoices and documents that make up the Panama Papers are often unseen victims of wrongdoing enabled by this shadowy industry."

The [AP](#) (4/3, Jordans) reports the data "concerned internal documents from a Panama-based law firm, Mossack Fonseca," which "has offices across the globe and is among the world's biggest creators of shell companies," according to the German newspaper Sueddeutsche Zeitung, which "said it first received the [data](#) more than a year ago." The [New York Times](#) (4/3, Schmidt, Myers, Subscription Publication, 12.03M) reports Sueddeutsche Zeitung, which "said its reporters had obtained the documents from a confidential source," shared the files "with other media organizations, like The Guardian and the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists." According to the Times, "media organizations looking into Mossack Fonseca are expected to publish many more articles based on the new documents in the coming days."

[USA Today](#) (4/3, Toppo, 5.45M) says the "massive, anonymous leak" has "revealed an extensive worldwide network of offshore 'shell' companies...that allow the wealthy to hide their assets from taxes and, in some cases, to launder billions in cash." The documents "show links to 72 current or former heads of state, including dictators accused of looting their own countries." According to [McClatchy](#) (4/3, Hall, Taylor, 22K), the leak "has blown open a window on the vast, murky world of shell companies, providing an extraordinary look at how the wealthy and powerful conceal their money," noting those exposed "include the prime ministers of Iceland and Pakistan, an alleged bagman for Syrian President Bashar Assad, a close pal of Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto and companies linked to the family of Chinese President Xi Jinping." The documents, McClatchy adds, "expose how secretive offshore companies at times subvert US foreign policy and mock US regulators."

A separate [McClatchy](#) (4/3, Hamilton, 22K) story notes Mossack Fonseca "had created 123 companies in Nevada," which prosecutors in Argentina claimed "had been used by a crony of Argentina's former president to steal \$65 million from government contracts." While a lawsuit in the US District Court in Nevada "seeking to claw back money that was said to have flowed through the mystery companies, asked the court to order Mossack Fonseca & Co. and its Las Vegas subsidiary to turn over inside information about them," the firm denied "that its Las Vegas operations, run by a company called M.F. Corporate Services (Nevada) Limited, were part of the Mossack Fonseca group." However, the documents published Sunday "raise new doubts over that sworn testimony."

The [Washington Post](#) (4/3, Higham, 8.98M) says the report showed “associates of Russian President Vladimir Putin have moved as much as \$2 billion through offshore accounts.” According to the report, “the documents uncovered a money trail that ‘came uncomfortably close to Putin.’” While the Kremlin “did not answer questions posed by the consortium,” on March 28, it “publicly accused the group of preparing a misleading ‘information attack’ on Putin and people close to him.” A Putin spokesman said last week that “the government would not respond to ‘honey-worded queries’ from the consortium or its partners because the questions ‘have been asked hundreds of times and answered hundreds of times,’ the report said.” An [AFP](#) (4/3, Williams) report on the leak says Putin “is not himself named in the documents,” according to the ICIJ.

**TRUMP: NATO IS “RIPPING OFF” THE UNITED STATES.** Donald Trump, appearing on [Fox News Sunday](#) (4/3, Wallace), defended comments he had made earlier in the week to Wolf Blitzer about NATO. Trump said, “We are paying so much money, disproportionately. We have countries that are being carried along. It’s not fair to the United States, not fair to the citizens, and not fair to the taxpayers. ... I think NATO has to be readjusted. ... We have to be very specific on terrorism. NATO is not specific to terrorism. Why are we taking the burden of the cost when big beneficiaries are paying very little? And the reason is because they’re ripping off the United States, just like everybody else that does business with us. They’re ripping off our country and that’s why we owe \$19 trillion.” On [CBS’ Face The Nation](#) (4/3, Dickerson, 4.61M), Trump continued to defend his stance on NATO, calling it “obsolete” and “too expensive.”

Jackson Diehl writes in the [Washington Post](#) (4/3, 8.98M) that Trump’s rhetoric about NATO has upset “a dozen Eurasian nations that Trump has probably never considered – including a few that are not even members of NATO,” such as Georgia. Georgia and other nations in the region have based their hopes of escaping Russia’s influence by a “single-minded pursuit of two big goals: membership in the European Union and admission to NATO.” And “now, suddenly, both the union and the alliance appear in danger of crumbling at the hands of populists and nationalists who would retreat behind re fortified borders, turn away migrants and abandon international commitments. What happens if the Trumpists win?”

**TRUMP: US CAN’T AFFORD TO CONTINUE DEFENDING JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA.** Donald Trump, appearing on [Fox News Sunday](#) (4/3, Wallace), said that the US can’t afford to continue defending Japan and South Korea from North Korea and reiterated his belief that the two countries would be better off defending themselves, even if that involves allowing them to develop their own nuclear program. Trump said, “When a guy like [John] Kasich gets up and talks about, Trump wants to give everybody missiles – I don’t want to give missiles. And by the way, I’d leave it the way it is, ideally. My number one choice is, leave it the way it is, but they have to pay us because we cannot afford to continue to lose the billions and billions of dollars that we’re losing in order to defend Japan and Germany and South Korea and Saudi Arabia.”

On [CBS’ Face The Nation](#) (4/3, Dickerson, 4.61M), Trump said, “When it comes to nuclear, you are going to have to ask yourself at what point and at what cost do we continue to protect Japan and Germany and many other countries? And now, they’re not paying for this protection in any way near what it’s costing us. ... At what point do they get involved and they say, we have to pay more money for this kind of protection? Now, at some point, they may have to protect themselves. Do I like that? Not particularly. But we cannot afford it as a country.”

**YEMENI PRESIDENT SACKS PRIME MINISTER.** In what [AFP](#) (4/3) calls a “surprise,” Yemeni President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi yesterday “relieved prime minister and vice president Khaled Bahah of his duties due to what he called government ‘failures.’” Instead, Hadi “appointed Ahmed bin Dagher, former secretary general of the General People’s Congress party to which the president once belonged, as prime minister.”

**GRAHAM REASSURES EL-SISSI OF CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT.** The [AP](#) (4/3, Mazen) reports that following a meeting with Egyptian President Abdel-Fatah el-Sissi, on a tour of the Middle East with a group of Republican members of Congress, Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) “sought to reassure the Arab world Sunday over the prospect of Donald Trump becoming president,” saying, “The Congress is going to

be around no matter who is president,” adding, “don’t let the political scenes at home get you too upset.” Graham favors increased US aid to Egypt and says the purpose of the visit “is to improve and deepen relations with el-Sissi.” Graham described el-Sissi as “a military man who understands terrorism” and “someone I can work with.” The AP notes that Secretary of State John Kerry recently “rebuked” Egypt for “its human rights record,” and says Graham said that the delegation is “encouraging Egypt to improve its record.”

**VIOLENCE FLARES UP IN DECADES-LONG NAGORNY KARABAKH STANDOFF.** [AFP](#) (4/3, Guliyev) reports that “clashes between Azerbaijani and Armenian forces rumbled on Sunday, despite Baku announcing a ceasefire after the worst outbreak of violence in decades over the disputed Nagorny Karabakh region sparked international pressure to stop fighting.” Azerbaijan said “it had decided to ‘unilaterally cease hostilities’ and pledged to ‘reinforce’ several strategic positions it claimed to have captured inside the Armenian-controlled territory.” Meanwhile, “the authorities in Karabakh – which claims independence but is heavily backed by Armenia – said they were willing to discuss a ceasefire but only if it saw them regain their territory.” It was, says the [Washington Post](#) (4/3, Roth, 8.98M), “the worst violence in the region since a cease-fire halted a war over the territory in 1994.”

[Reuters](#) (4/3, Bagirova, Mkrtychyan) notes that on Azeri TV, President Ilham Aliyev said, “Armenia has violated all the norms of international law. We won’t abandon our principal position. But at the same time we will observe the ceasefire and after that we will try to solve the conflict peacefully.” In an apparent reference to the territorial gains achieved yesterday, Aliyev hailed his country’s “great victory.”

The [Christian Science Monitor](#) (4/3, Thompson, 442K) reported that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan “expressed solidarity with the former Soviet republic, saying Sunday that Turkey country ‘will support Azerbaijan to the end,’” and adding, “We pray our Azerbaijani brothers will prevail in these clashes with the least casualties.” Turkey “shares an extensive border with Armenia, which has suffered from the unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh situation as both Azerbaijan and Turkey closed their borders with the state.”

The [New York Times](#) (4/4, MacFarquhar, Subscription Publication, 12.03M), meanwhile, indicates that “reports from Yerevan, the Armenian capital, said volunteers by the hundreds were streaming toward the front.” While “analysts were struggling to understand what had caused this eruption and whether it indicated the start of a new, violent phase of the war,” some experts “described the recent fighting as a natural outburst of the tensions that build up along the cease-fire line but that in this case escalated markedly, not least because both sides were deploying far more sophisticated weaponry.” For example, “instead of just exchanging mortar fire...there were reports that the countries were deploying heavy weapons for the first time since 1994.”

**UAE AMBASSADOR WARNS OF DANGERS FROM IRAN.** Yousef Al Otaiba, ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to the US, writes in the [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/3, Otaiba, Subscription Publication, 6.74M) on the first anniversary of the announcement of the framework for the nuclear agreement with Iran, warning that Iran has not changed and has continued its threats, violence, and expansionism throughout the Middle East. He describes Iran’s efforts in Yemen, Syria, and elsewhere, including threats to annex Bahrain.

**WPOST: US MAY NEED TO CHANGE TRADE STRATEGY WITH CHINA.** The [Washington Post](#) (4/3, 8.98M) editorializes that the US may need to re-evaluate its trade strategy with China given the latter’s rapid purchasing of foreign firms and the “nontransparent and cronyistic nature of Chinese companies.” The Post says China’s state-owned chemical company’s purchase of Swiss-based Syngenta illustrates the problem. If China’s strategy is to buy “Western biotech it can’t develop on its own – and give one particular importer favored access to China’s huge market,” US companies may be cut out of the picture altogether.

*To keep the email to a manageable size, the national news summary is available on the [website](#).*

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