

# THE HOMELAND SECURITY *NEWS CLIPS*

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**TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF**

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## **LEADING DHS NEWS**

### **Illegal Immigrant Families Surge Across Border At Record Pace**

**Cartels capitalize on lax policy on illegal aliens**

By Stephen Dinan

[Washington Times](#), April 24, 2016

The pattern of illegal immigration appears to be shifting yet again as families traveling together — usually mothers and their children — surge across the southwestern border at a record pace, posing more challenges for an Obama administration still struggling to figure out how to handle them.

They are increasingly coming into remote areas of Texas and Arizona where Border Patrol officials thought they had licked the problem. Analysts say it signals that new cartels are involved in trafficking.

Pushed from their homes by poor economies and violent communities, encouraged to come to the U.S. by friends and relatives who have made the crossing, and enticed by lax enforcement, more than 32,000 family members were apprehended at the border through the first six months of the fiscal year. That was more than double the rate of 2015.

This year's total has well surpassed the number of children traveling without parents, whom the Border Patrol

calls unaccompanied alien children, caught at the border during the same period last year.

While the majority are still coming through the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, the Border Patrol's Yuma Sector, which covers remote western Arizona and eastern California, has reported a 1,000 percent increase compared with 2014. Laredo and the Big Bend areas of Texas have also seen massive spikes.

Jessica Vaughan, policy studies director at the Center for Immigration Studies, said the cartels that control the approach on the Mexican side of the border in those regions appear to have taken up human smuggling.

She said the fact that families have surged ahead of unaccompanied children suggests Central Americans, who make up most of the new crossers, have learned to game the U.S. immigration system.

"They're not dissuaded from coming by the fear of being detained and sent back — they know that they're still going to be released," she said. "The fact that it's families coming now tells me that this may be people seeking to establish a foothold in the United States and taking advantage of this opportunity. When this surge was mostly kids, it was clear it was a family reunification phenomenon. Now it's starting to look more like an opportunistic flow of people."

State officials in Texas and Arizona referred questions to the Border Patrol, which didn't respond to a request for comment.

The flow of Central American children and families — chiefly from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador — began rising in 2013 and seemed to peak in early summer 2014. That was when Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson announced get-tough policies, including opening family detention centers to hold illegal immigrants, quickly put them through hearings and send them back home.

But a federal judge last year ruled that sort of treatment in many cases violated a legal agreement that the government reached with immigrant rights advocates. Homeland Security officials told the court that relaxing their policies would spur another surge, but they agreed to abide by the judge's order even as they appealed the case.

The 32,116 family members apprehended from Oct. 1 through March 31 set a record for the start of a fiscal year.

Meanwhile, the 27,793 unaccompanied children is just beneath the record pace set in 2014. Still, that is an improvement — through the first few months, the Border Patrol was on a record-breaking pace.

Homeland Security officials say the number of people apprehended is a good proxy for the total flow: If fewer people are caught, then fewer people are trying, and succeeding, to sneak into the U.S.

The numbers for children and families were running well above record pace in November and December, dropped

over the cold months of January and February, and are climbing again. In March alone, some 4,240 children traveling alone, and 4,452 people traveling together as families, were caught at the border.

James Phelps, a professor who studies border security at Angelo State University in San Angelo, Texas, said the November and December spike was likely in response to the Republican presidential race and the promise by leading candidate Donald Trump to build a border wall. More could be on the way, he predicted.

"Who gets elected in November will determine if the numbers will decline to a 'normal' influx or a massive surge in illegal border crossings. Basically, if a Republican with an anti-illegal-immigration platform wins, then everybody that can will cross the border so they will hopefully be grandfathered under the current administration's policies," he said in an email. "Should that happen, it's important to note there is no infrastructure to process or hold the numbers of people that will arrive."

For now, the number of unaccompanied children from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala is down significantly from its peak in 2014, Mr. Phelps said.

"This is expected," he said. "The countries are running out of a whole generation of youth to send north."

But there has been an uptick in the flow from Nicaragua, he said, noting that the Nicaraguan numbers climbed when the price of oil dropped, causing a chain reaction that cut off aid from oil-rich ally Venezuela, harming Nicaragua's economy.

Still, he said, the numbers generally appear to track the usual seasonal patterns.

"You can expect to see a decline in overall numbers and those of [unaccompanied alien children] in July and August, then an increase in September. This is typical of migrant movement over the longer periods of study. There are permutations, but they tend to be driven by other factors we haven't yet 'officially' narrowed down," he said.

Under the Obama administration's interpretation of the law, unaccompanied children are required to be processed and released as quickly as possible — usually to family or friends.

Congressional investigations found that some have become prime targets for recruitment by gangs, while others are used for forced labor or by sexual predators.

The Associated Press last week reported that 80 percent of unaccompanied children coming to the U.S. are placed with parents or relatives who themselves are in the country illegally. The Obama administration has said its goal is to find the children safe spaces, no matter the legal status of those who accept them.

## **Border Patrol Sees Increase In Number Of Migrants Being Detained At Mexico Border**

By Molly Hennessy-Fiske

[Los Angeles Times](#), April 24, 2016

Apprehensions of undocumented migrants at the Mexican border increased last month after dipping during the winter, immigration authorities said, and they're expected to continue climbing this summer.

Last month, 33,335 people were caught crossing the southern border illegally, 7,259 more than in February, a 28% increase, the Border Patrol said.

Of those, 4,452 were members of families traveling together, 46% more than the month before. Another 4,240 were unaccompanied youth, 37% more than the previous month.

The number of family members caught crossing illegally has nearly tripled compared with this time last year, and the number of unaccompanied children has almost doubled, the figures show.

The figures are substantially higher than in 2014, when an influx of families and children at the border prompted a slew of emergency measures, including expanded processing, detention, shelter and court services. That year, more than 68,500 unaccompanied children and about the same number of family members were caught crossing illegally.

From October through March of this year, nearly 28,000 unaccompanied youth have been caught at the border, a 78% increase compared with this time last year and only 3% less than during the same period of 2013-14.

Many of the youth and family members were from Central America, continuing a trend since migration from the region spiked in 2014, and most crossed the border through Texas' Rio Grande Valley. So far this year, more family members have come from El Salvador (11,093) than at this point last year (10,872).

Last month, Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson touted a month-to-month decrease in migration during the winter, noting that immigration officials had staged a series of raids and implying that stepped-up enforcement had tamped down migration. They had detained more than 300 recently arrived migrants, Johnson noted, many of them Central American youths and families.

But illegal crossings on the southern border usually decrease in wintertime. When compared to the previous year, this year's numbers actually increased during the fall and early winter.

In announcing the March figures, immigration officials said apprehensions "were generally in line with seasonal trends we have observed in prior years" and "significantly lower than those from March 2014."

"The Department of Homeland Security continues to closely monitor current migration trends and is working aggressively to address underlying causes and deter future increases in unauthorized migration, while ensuring that those with legitimate humanitarian claims are afforded the opportunity to seek protection," officials said in a statement. "We also continue to support broader regional efforts to address the humanitarian situation in Central America."

Mexican police tortured suspects in case of missing students, report says

With thinner crowds in a smaller space, Fiesta Broadway feels deeply diminished

Raised in the U.S. without legal status, he attains the American dream — in Mexico

## **TRANSPORTATION SECURITY** **ADMINISTRATION**

### **TSA Hits New Record After Confiscating 73 Guns In One Week From Carry-on Bags**

[Fox News](#), April 24, 2016

Airport screeners established a new record last week when they stopped passengers from boarding planes with 73 firearms in carry-on luggage.

The Transportation Security Administration officials said the number was reached in the seven days ending April 21 and the haul surpassed the previous high of 68 set in October.

After confiscating the 73 firearms, TSA carry-on screeners made a startling discovery: 68 of the weapons were loaded and more than two dozen had a round in the chamber, the Pittsburgh Tribune Review reported Saturday.

Two loaded guns were seized at Boston Logan Airport on Tuesday and Thursday, Fox 25 Boston reported.

Other airports where weapons were found included Raleigh-Durham, Dallas-Fort Worth, Phoenix and Detroit.

Guns aren't all that were found last week.

Two replica military rounds also were discovered in a checked bag at Tucson, the TSA reported.

Federal law bars guns in carry-on bags, but they can be transported in checked luggage if they are unloaded and declared to the airline before the flight departs, the Tribune Review reported.

"Unfortunately, these sorts of occurrences are all too frequent, which is why we talk about these finds," the TSA's Bob Burns said, according to the paper.

"Sure, it's great to share the things that our officers are finding, but at the same time, each time we find a dangerous item, the line is slowed down and a passenger that likely had no ill intent ends up with a citation or in some cases is even

arrested. The passenger can face a penalty as high as \$11,000," Burns said.

A case that ended in an arrest involved a 33-year-old woman who was going through a TSA checkpoint at Southwest Florida International Airport in Fort Myers, Fla.

A screener spotted the gun in a bag belonging to the woman, Julie Kimmel, and notified police, Fox 4 reported.

Kimmel, of Lehigh Acres, Fla., wound up being arrested because she didn't have a concealed carry permit, the station reported.

Kimmel told officers she forgot the gun was in her bag, Fox 4 reported.

Attempts to contact her were not successful, the station reported.

## **FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

### **Montgomery County Shifts Into Flood Recovery Effort**

By Bridget Balch

[Houston Chronicle](#), April 22, 2016

As Montgomery County begins to dry out after torrential rains drenched the region this week, the community has mobilized to start down the road to recovery.

Nearly 60 people slept in the South County Community Center on Lake Robbins Drive – a designated Red Cross shelter – Thursday night as they waited for the water flooding their homes to recede, Precinct 3 Commissioner James Noack said. About 200 homes – 120 of those in south county – were reported to have taken in water as of Thursday after the county was hit by about 15 inches of rain since Sunday night, said Cynthia Jamieson, homeland security planner for the county's Office of Emergency Management.

Among the hardest hit areas was the Timber Lakes-Timber Ridge subdivision just south of The Woodlands, where some residents fled feet of water swelling into their homes early Monday. On the east side of Interstate 45, about a dozen homes near Spring Hills and Spring Forrest Drives also experienced flooding, Noack said.

Officials said Thursday that they expected the worst of the weather had past and intended to focus on moving forward with the recovery.

To streamline the process, community leaders mobilized MC-CARES, Montgomery County – Community Assistance Recovery Efforts and Services – a collaborative effort pooling resources from the various community assistance organizations.

Interfaith of The Woodlands, a local nonprofit group, is one of the organizations coordinating assistance by providing

those affected by the storm with clothing, food, water, and, in some cases, temporary housing and financial assistance.

"People have lost everything," said Missy Herndon, chief executive officer of Interfaith.

But as great as the need is, Herndon said that the local community has responded with equal generosity.

"We've had an overwhelming, wonderful response from our community wanting to give food, bottled water, cleaning products ... wanting to give time," she said.

Interfaith is asking for monetary donations as well as new undergarments, socks, shoes, non-perishable food, bottled water, baby and personal hygiene care items and household and cleaning supplies.

The Montgomery County Food Bank is also working to provide meals for the storm victims, asking for \$10 donations, as well as easy-to-eat and single-serving meals and basic hygiene products.

"This community is so amazing about rallying around each other to help wherever there is a need," Herndon said.

Noack said that, with the help of the churches – including Sawdust Road Baptist Church, which volunteered its facilities as a shelter – and the various local charitable organizations, the victims have received immediate assistance.

"We've been fortunate to meet the needs of the residents: food, water, shelter, basic needs," Noack said.

Looking beyond immediate relief efforts, county officials hope that the federal government will follow Judge Craig Doyal's and Gov. Greg Abbott's leads in declaring the storm a disaster, making victims eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency aid.

In the meantime, the county is asking those affected by the storm to register with the Red Cross and to fill out a damage assessment, which is available at the Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management website, [mctxoem.org](http://mctxoem.org).

Want to help?

Interfaith of The Woodlands is accepting monetary donations, as well as donations of new undergarments and socks, nonperishable food (canned pasta, apple sauce cups, fruit cups, easy-open canned tuna, chicken, and vegetables), bottled water, diapers, wipes, household and cleaning items. All donations can be brought to Interfaith Central at 4242 Interfaith Way, The Woodlands. An additional drop-off location for undergarments, socks, shoes and household items is the Interfaith Hand Me Up Shop at 25018 Spring Ridge Drive.

To donate \$10 to the Montgomery County Food Bank, text MCFB to 45777. To volunteer, email [volunteers@mcfoodbank.org](mailto:volunteers@mcfoodbank.org).

## Damage Estimates For Houston-area Flooding On The Rise

By Juan Lozano And David Warren  
[Associated Press](#), April 22, 2016

HOUSTON (AP) — Widespread flooding that's claimed eight lives and displaced thousands of people in the Houston area has caused more than \$14 million in damage and inundated more than 1,700 homes — figures that authorities said Friday will increase significantly as floodwaters recede and inspectors get a closer look at ravaged neighborhoods.

Houston and nearby counties have been hit with more than a foot of rain since Sunday night, straining reservoirs and pushing rivers over their banks. Southwest of Houston, the Colorado River swelled to more than 48 feet, well past the flood stage of 39 feet, before slowly starting to recede.

In sprawling Harris County, which is anchored by Houston and its 2.2 million residents, emergency crews have determined damage in unincorporated areas from flooding has exceeded \$14.4 million, which is the county's threshold for requesting federal disaster relief.

The figure does not include a damage estimate for the city. A message left with the city of Houston's emergency management office was not immediately returned Friday.

"That number is just going to grow on a daily basis," said Francisco Sanchez, spokesman for the county's office of homeland security and emergency management.

The region was walloped over Memorial Day weekend last year when more than a foot of rain fell, causing many of the same problems seen this week. Sanchez said he spoke with one family that had just completed repairs on their home from last year's flooding, only to see it damaged again.

"We've still not resolved funding and relief efforts from Memorial Day," he said.

Authorities are working to mitigate the impact of future floods, he said, but the Houston area is beset by a number of factors that contribute to flooding: soil heavy in clay that doesn't absorb water; hundreds of watersheds, creeks and bayous; and its location at the tail end of riverways that make Houston a repository for runoff that's traveled hundreds of miles.

"Not only are we dealing with 12 inches of rain in eight hours but we're dealing with the rain north and west of us," Sanchez said.

Authorities, meanwhile, continue to monitor the Addicks Reservoir, one of two aging reservoirs in west Houston that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers considered "extremely high risk." The reservoirs are about two decades beyond their life expectancy.

The Harris County Flood Control District said the streets near the Addicks may be impassable over the next few days and reservoir water levels may remain high for days or weeks.

"It's ruined; all this is ruined. We can't even wash clothes," Brant Grimes, a nearby resident whose home flooded, told KHOU-TV. "There's my wedding tape right there, I don't have another copy of it."

Paula Favors, spokeswoman for the city of Wharton, a community of some 8,700 residents along the Colorado River about 50 miles southwest of Houston, said an evacuation order remained in place Friday for some low-lying neighborhoods. About 350 homes on the city's west side were evacuated along the rain-swollen Colorado.

While the river dropped to 47 feet on Friday, officials continued to monitor the Colorado and homes around it to see if there is any danger to residents, Favors said.

Some homes have been flooded, but officials are still trying to tally the total, she said.

For those who evacuated, a shelter was set up at the city's junior high school. About 74 people stayed in the shelter Thursday evening and the facility was expected to remain open for now.

Residents in the evacuated area have had to deal with flooding in the past, most recently last May, when heavy rains swelled the river and forced evacuations.

"People who live in that area ... they are very well accustomed to the flooding," Favors said.

In the last few years, the city has been working to address the problem by developing a project with the Army Corps of Engineers to build a levee and flood gates near the city's west side. The project is still in the planning stages.

"We have to go through red tape to be able to move forward," Favors said.

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Warren reported from Dallas.

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## Congress Being Asked To Provide \$300 Million For Flood Projects

By Mihir Zaveri  
[Houston Chronicle](#), April 22, 2016

As the flood threat across much of the Houston region lessened Friday, local leaders began shifting their focus to recovery and two Houston congressmen announced legislation to fund more than \$300 million worth of regional flood control projects.

U.S. Reps. Al Green and Gene Green said their bill, which they filed Thursday, might mitigate devastation like that caused by this week's deluge they called the "Tax Day floods": 240 billion gallons of rain water, more than 17 inches in some areas, drenched the county in the most significant downpour in 15 years.

"It's important for us to say that we want to take care of our city," said Al Green.

Authorities on Friday reported there were more than 3,600 homes damaged by the floods and more than \$30 million in damage – numbers that officials said were preliminary and would likely rise. At least eight people across the region died amid the floods.

On Friday night, 139 families evacuated from hard-hit Greenspoint were being given hotel accommodations by the city so they could leave a shelter.

The Houston congressmen's bill would appropriate \$311 million projects on several bayous across the county, including an ongoing widening project on Brays Bayou. Earlier this week, the bayou spilled over its banks, flooding dozens of homes, as it did last Memorial Day, when swaths of Meyerland were inundated by flood waters.

Funds would also go toward bridge replacements, detention ponds and widening and deepening measures on Clear Creek, Greens Bayou, Hunting Bayou and White Oak Bayou.

President Barack Obama's 2017 budget currently does not allocate funds despite multimillion dollar need, a challenge local officials said was part of an ongoing struggle

The Brays Bayou project was initially expected to be finished in 2016, but the completion is now anticipated for 2021, according to flood control district executive director Mike Talbott, in large part due to funding constraints.

Flood control district spokeswoman Kim Jackson said work on the Hunting Bayou – specifically an alteration to the shape of the channel that would allow water to better flow through – is also on hold due to lack of federal dollars. So are improvements to the White Oak Bayou, including a work on the channel from Cole Creek to upstream of Jones Road and the construction of one detention basin.

"We keep designing, designing and we'll construct as we can," Jackson said. "That's what's kind of gotten us behind."

It's not to say bayou improvements have not been made over the years. Three flood control basins have been built as part of the Brays Bayou project, along with 12.3 miles of improvements to the channel. Almost \$212 million in federal dollars have gone toward the project since 1998.

#### Funding

The flood control district estimates that without some of the improvements, 2,000 homes and business would have been flooded during last year's Memorial Day flood last year.

But flood control officials say more work is needed. If passed, the \$311 million in the legislation would provide a steady stream of funding for a decade, boosting many of the projects toward completion.

Despite enthusiasm for the bill's passage from both Congressmen, University of Houston – Victoria political science professor Craig Goodman said it would be an uphill

battle, in part because the sponsors are Democrats in a Republican-controlled legislature.

"Appropriations is going to be really tough in this Congress," Goodman said.

Both Congressmen were joined by Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner, City Councilman Larry Green and Harris County Precinct 1 Commissioner Gene Locke, among others, at a home near the Willow Waterhole Bayou Friday to make the announcement.

They stressed that while funds would not eliminate floods, they may alleviate some of the worst effects seen earlier this week, when flood waters inundated Greenspoint, Acres Homes, Inwood Forest, Meyerland and much of north and northwest Harris County.

Officials were still trying Friday to comprehend the damage wrought by the rains and floods as high water along hard hit Cypress Creek continued to slow progress.

Francisco Sanchez, spokesman for Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, said Friday the county has tallied more than \$30 million in damage to public infrastructure in the unincorporated county alone, meaning the county handily passed its \$14.6 million threshold to be eligible for certain federal recovery dollars.

Once the state also hits a threshold – \$35.4 million – it can forward the tally to the federal government, which would then send in inspectors to verify the damage, said Nim Kidd, chief of emergency management for the state.

Value of any property covered by flood insurance would be subtracted from the tally. Only then – if the thresholds are still met – can money from the Federal Emergency Management Agency flow down to the city and county for rebuilding after a presidential disaster declaration.

#### Recovery

Separately, for residents to get individual FEMA assistance, more than 800 homes statewide that are not insured and did not previously get FEMA assistance, would have to be either be completely destroyed or have major damage. That also would need to be verified and parsed by the state and FEMA.

"We've been in this a week now," Kidd said. "My heart goes out to all the families that have had water in their house and lost a lot of their belongings, but this process is time consuming."

Flood waters continued to create problems in some parts of the county Friday. Talbott said Addicks and Barker Reservoirs were likely to continue rise by less than a foot over the next days as water from the heavy northwest rains seeps in. Then, they should start going down, barring heavy rains.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has and will continue to release some water from the dams to try and regulate water levels, creating some higher than normal levels on Buffalo Bayou.



The San Jacinto River Friday was still flooding, with high waters in along the West Fork near Humble and south of Lake Houston near Sheldon and Highlands.

With favorable forecasts, and the number of rescues required dwindling, county leaders to their attention to recovery. They encouraged residents affected to report flood damage so federal dollars could arrive sooner, and to call the 211 line to be connected with services, like housing, meals and medication.

"We're good on the rain," said Talbott of the flood control district "Now it's the aftermath, dealing with the human tragedy."

County commissioners will vote Tuesday on whether to allocate \$6 million in contingency funds for debris removal and infrastructure repair. They will also vote on whether to waive permit and inspection fees for flood victims in the unincorporated county seeking to rebuild.

County Engineer John Blount said he is opening a phone line for residents to determine which waivers they would be eligible for.

## **Federal Officials Deny Illinois Appeal For Disaster Funds**

[Associated Press](#), April 22, 2016

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP) — The Federal Emergency Management Agency has denied the state's appeal for federal assistance to help local governments recover from flooding and storms in December and January.

Illinois Emergency Management Agency James Joseph said in a Friday news release that states with high populations of concentrated urban areas struggle to reach thresholds required by the federal government.

He says calls the process unfair and the state's poorest areas will continue to suffer.

The state appealed earlier this month after FEMA denied assistance to help local governments recover flood-related expenses. The appeal called for nearly \$17 million in costs for several counties, including Alexander, Cass, Jackson, Monroe, Pike and St. Clair.

The state's request for FEMA funds to help residents and businesses was also denied last month.

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## **US CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES**

### **House To Resume Debate On Releasing EB-5 Emails**

[Associated Press](#), April 25, 2016

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) – The Vermont House is set this week to resume debate on competing resolutions addressing records possibly related to state and federal fraud investigations into a series of development projects in northern Vermont.

The projects were funded through the federal EB-5 program, which allows wealthy foreigners to get a U.S. green card for investing at least \$500,000 into economic development in areas of the U.S. in need of it.

Attorney General William Sorrell has put a hold on releasing emails about the projects to and from Gov. Peter Shumlin's former staff members. Shumlin's office recently sought to delete some emails, which it says were unrelated to EB-5.

Burlington Progressive Rep. Chris Pearson wants those emails released. A competing resolution stops short of demanding the release of emails.

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## **IMMIGRATION**

### **Ruben Navarrette: Obama's Dangerous Action On Immigration**

[Washington Post](#), April 23, 2016

SAN DIEGO – In opposing President Barack Obama's executive actions on immigration, critics on the right have it wrong.

The arguments made to the Supreme Court by conservatives who oppose the administration's efforts to temporarily defer deportation and grant work permits to two groups of undocumented immigrants – young people brought to the United States as children by their parents, and the parents of U.S.-born children – were neither strong nor persuasive.

In a nutshell, Republicans like Texas Gov. Greg Abbott insist that Obama is making the law instead of executing it. As a former state attorney general, Abbott should know better. Prosecutorial discretion is a real thing, and law enforcement officials get to prioritize who to go after and in what order. Just because a policeman uses his discretion to give you a warning instead of a citation does not mean that he is unilaterally rewriting the vehicle code.

Besides, discretion is a double-edged sword. According to immigration attorneys I've heard from, the administration is currently moving Central American refugees – mostly women and children – to the front of the deportation line, placing them ahead of hardened criminals. Do conservatives have a problem with this, too? If so, they're being awfully quiet about it.

Opponents also worry that, if the White House allows illegal immigrants to remain on this side of the border, states like Texas – which is leading a coalition of more than 20 states in opposition to the administration – might have to provide the undocumented with driver's licenses and other benefits. So, they insist, this is an unfunded mandate.

Talk about taking the long way home. No one forces a state like Texas to provide driver's licenses, at least not without another court fight or putting the question on a state ballot. We still have states' rights. Obama didn't even issue executive (BEG ITAL)orders(END ITAL), which would have the force of law. He merely took executive action, which amounts to implementing minor policy changes at the Department of Homeland Security that can be easily undone by any future president.

So what is this really about? I have a theory: Republican critics of Obama's executive actions – better known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Deferred Action for Parents of Americans (DAPA) – are actually afraid of having to pay a price at the ballot box for their tolerance of demagogues like Donald Trump. They think the best way to avoid being held accountable is to fight any attempt to let the immigrants remain in this country.

But just because conservatives are off-base in their arguments against Obama's executive actions on immigration doesn't mean those policies are a home run. More like a foul ball.

Although I was once a supporter, I've come to realize that these executive actions represent a major step backward for those of us who want a permanent fix to our broken immigration system. They're crumbs that immigration reformers – out of hunger and desperation – like to imagine is a steak dinner.

Let's remember that these executive actions were born of dishonesty, cynicism and expediency. Obama spent the first three years of his presidency repeatedly denying that he had the very kind of executive power that he eventually exercised. In fact, he often pushed back against immigration activists, telling them that he was "not a king" and so he had to work with Congress. In June 2012, he did an about-face and went it alone to rekindle Latino support for his re-election, which had been on the wane due to his broken promise to fix the immigration system and a record number of deportations. This suggests that Obama launched these changes not because he wanted to, but because he felt he had to. This often makes for bad policy.

And while the deferred action is temporary – two or three years with the possibility of renewal – what's permanent is the jeopardy that applicants put themselves in to receive it. Immigration officials will have on file an individual's name, fingerprints, and a home address where they can find the applicant and his or her family members, some of whom may also be undocumented and subject to deportation. This is a

Band-Aid on a chest wound. And it's not just deficient. It's dangerous.

The 2016 presidential hopefuls are sometimes asked if they intend to preserve Obama's executive action on immigration. That's the wrong question. We should be asking the candidates how quickly they intend to end it and what they would replace it with.

## **Obama Says Merkel Is On 'Right Side Of History' On Refugee Crisis**

[Reuters](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## **Obama Praises Germany For Accepting Syrian Refugees**

By Dave Boyer

[Washington Times](#), April 24, 2016

Under fire at home for his program to accept 10,000 Syrian refugees this year, President Obama said Sunday that he is "proud" of German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the people of Germany for accepting far more migrants from the war-torn country.

In response to a reporter's question noting that Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump has called Mrs. Merkel's open-door refugee policy "insane," Mr. Obama defended her at a joint press conference in Hannover, Germany.

"In Europe, she is on the right side of history on this," Mr. Obama said. "I'm very proud of her for that and I'm very proud of the German people for that."

The president added: "For her to take on some very tough politics in order to express not just a humanitarian concern but a practical concern that in this globalized world, it is very difficult for us to simply build walls, she is giving voice to the kinds of principles that I think bring people together rather than divide them."

Germany accepted about a half-million refugees from Syria in 2015 alone, a policy that has caused significant tensions in the country.

Members of Congress, many governors and Republican presidential candidates have criticized Mr. Obama for taking in the refugees, citing security and terrorism concerns.

Mrs. Merkel has advocated the creation of "safe zones" inside Syria to protect refugees and slow the mass migration. Mr. Obama opposes the move, saying it would require a large deployment of ground forces to enforce, although he said a cease-fire that collapsed was aimed at creating safe havens in certain regions of the country.

## **'I Don't Envy' Merkel's Long Tenure**

By Gregory Korte

[USA Today](#), April 24, 2016

President Obama praised German Chancellor Angela Merkel during a joint press conference in Hannover. He said he would continue to admire “his friend and partner Angela” as a private citizen, after he leaves office.

VPC

Barack Obama will have made his mark on the world, for better or worse, after eight years as president. But German Chancellor Angela Merkel was in power long before Obama arrived on the world stage — and will likely remain for some time after he leaves.

And that’s just fine by Obama.

“I do not envy Angela Merkel for not having term limits,” he said Sunday. “I have come to appreciate, at least in the United States, the wisdom of our founders. I think it’s healthy for a big, diverse country like ours to have some turnover. To use a phrase from basketball, to have some fresh legs come in.”

Obama has made similar pronouncements before. But the constitutional limits on the American presidency were all the more striking as he stood next to Merkel Sunday at a trade fair in Hannover, Germany. Merkel has been the German chancellor since 2005 and is reportedly mulling a campaign for a fourth term in 2017.

“I’m glad that Angela’s still sticking around, because I think the world benefits from her steady presence,” Obama said. “And she is to be admired for her remarkable endurance.”

The 22nd amendment to the U.S. constitution, which took effect in 1951, prohibits any president from serving more than two full terms. That had been the practice before Franklin Roosevelt’s four terms, and the amendment was adopted by a Republican Congress to prevent it from happening again.

The German constitution has no such term limits, and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer served for 14 years from 1949 to 1963.

Merkel’s longevity and her role in leading Europe helped to propel her Time’s Woman of the Year last year, and a ranking as the second powerful person in the world by Forbes — just below Russian President Vladimir Putin and just ahead of Obama.

With nine months left in his presidency, Obama has become more open to talking about turning out the lights at the White House and returning to life as a private citizen. Using another sports analogy, he said he was working to “pass the baton.”

“My goal between now and the time I leave is to make sure when I turn over the keys to my office, that the desk is clean,” he said Sunday. “And if the world is not completely tidy, that at least it’s significantly better off than the way I found it.”

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## **Migrants Seek New Routes Into Balkans After Formal Borders Sealed**

By Fedja Grulovic

[Reuters](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## **US COAST GUARD**

### **Boat And iPhone Of Teens Lost At Sea Discovered Months Later**

[Associated Press](#), April 23, 2016

TEQUESTA, Fla. (AP) — The parents of one of two teenagers lost at sea last summer say their boat and an iPhone has been found.

The Palm Beach Post reported Saturday (<http://pbpo.st/1NHnFvS> ) that the parents of Perry Cohen said the 19-foot long boat was spotted 100 miles off the coast of Bermuda. The phone still had some personal items in it including an iPhone belonging to Austin Stephanos.

Last July, Stephanos and Cohen — both 14 — left Jupiter Inlet in the boat and never returned. Lengthy searches by the Coast Guard and private pilots turned up no clues.

The Coast Guard initially located the boat off New Smyrna Beach, but the company hired by the Coast Guard to bring the boat back couldn’t find it.

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### **Report: Maintenance Failure Led To Coast Guard Plane Crash**

[Associated Press](#), April 23, 2016

CRESSKILL, N.J. — Federal investigators say the crash of a Coast Guard Auxiliary plane near busy New Jersey athletic fields last year was probably caused by a maintenance failure.

The National Transportation Safety Board identified the likely cause of the September 2015 crash as a failure of a maintenance crew to properly install engine cylinder nuts and bolts.

The board says that failure resulted in the loosening of components, loss of lubrication and eventually to a total loss of engine power.

An earlier NTSB report said the plane was inspected in mid-July.

That report said pilots Jack Rosenberg and Erik Pearson were returning from Albany, New York, on a routine observation mission near New York City when their Cessna

Skyhawk's engine "stopped producing power," about 2,000 feet above the Hudson River.

As they descended, Rosenberg saw some athletic fields were in use, so he steered away from them and landed at the edge of a stand of trees.

Both men were seriously injured.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary is a volunteer organization that promotes safety for recreational boaters. Rosenberg has been an auxiliary member since 2005 and Pearson since 2010.

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## **Bubble Burst: Florida Man Using "Hydropod" At Sea Rescued**

[Associated Press](#), April 24, 2016

MIAMI (AP) — Authorities say a Florida man bidding to reach Bermuda in an inflatable bubble has been voluntarily rescued by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Coast Guard Petty Officer Mark Barney said that long-distance runner Reza Baluchi was picked up Sunday off Florida and his "hydropod" was being towed to shore.

Barney says the man set out from Pompano Beach on Saturday despite receiving an April 15 letter from the Coast Guard warning him not to depart. The Coast Guard said it had reviewed Baluchi's plan and determined it to be unsafe.

The letter was posed by the Coast Guard on Twitter.

Baluchi tried to make a similar attempt to reach Bermuda in 2014 and had to be rescued. He was picked up that time about 70 nautical miles east of St. Augustine.

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## **SECRET SERVICE**

### **Secret Service Paid Trump Over \$150,000 In The Last Five Years**

[BuzzFeed](#), April 22, 2016

When the Secret Service began guarding Donald Trump November 2015, it wasn't the Republican presidential candidate's first time dealing with the agency.

Government contracts reveal that the Secret Service has paid a total of \$152,578.92 over five years to Trump Palace Condominiums, a Trump-owned tower on Manhattan's Upper East Side. The latest contract, worth \$26,296.80, was signed in February of this year. The contracts refer to "lease or rental of equipment," as well as "communication, detection, and coherent radiation equipment," suggesting the rental of some kind of antenna.

The Trump Organization did not respond to multiple requests for comment, and the Secret Service declined to disclose the contracts' purpose, citing a policy not to discuss "specific capabilities or means and methods."

The Trump Palace — a 55-story residential skyscraper built in 1991 — bills itself as the "tallest building on the Upper East Side" and the "definitive standard of uptown luxury."

In a symbolic protest against Trump, the political commentator Keith Olbermann recently moved out of his 40th-story apartment in the tower, which is located on 69th Street and Third Avenue. He listed the apartment for sale this month.

The contracts with Trump Palace — which are publicly available — follow the template for all products or services bought by any federal agency. While they vary from year to year, all contain some reference to the "lease" or "rent" of "communication equipment" and "antennas." The earliest contract from 2011 lists the product description as "11-IRM-RAD-Site 314-1111." Another refers to "communication, detection, and coherent radiation equipment."

It is unclear what purpose the equipment serves, and why Trump Palace was chosen as its location.

While the Secret Service protects presidents and major presidential candidates, the agency also investigates financial and cybercrimes related to the nation's financial integrity.

### **Connecticut Man Made Threat On Twitter To Bomb Trump Rally: Police**

[Reuters](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

### **Conn. Man, 20, Charged For Allegedly Tweeting Bomb Threat During Donald Trump Rally**

[New York Daily News](#), April 24, 2016

A 20-year-old Connecticut man is facing charges after authorities say he tweeted out a bomb threat during a Donald Trump rally Saturday.

Connecticut State Police say the U.S. Secret Service contacted them Saturday afternoon after they say Sean Morkys posted on Twitter, "Is someone going to bomb the trump rally or am I going to have to?"

Police say that tweet was followed by another warning a friend to have his family members leave the rally so they wouldn't get hurt.

The Republican presidential hopeful appeared in Bridgeport, Conn., yesterday.

Authorities tracked the tweets to a Waterbury home, where they found Morkys.

After determining he didn't pose an immediate threat, he was taken into custody and released on \$25,000 bond.

No one answered a phone number for the Waterbury home. Morkys didn't immediately respond to a separate request for comment.

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## **TERRORISM INVESTIGATIONS**

### **Feds Get Into iPhone In NY Case, Ending Active Apple Litigation**

[ABC News](#), April 22, 2016

The government has been able to unlock another iPhone that has been the subject of ongoing litigation with Apple, according to the Justice Department, which filed a letter in federal court on Friday night in the Eastern District of New York.

In this case, however, the government did not pay more than \$1 million to a third party for a hack. In this case, someone simply provided the passcode.

On Thursday evening, "an individual provided the passcode to the iPhone at issue in this case," according to the letter from U.S. Attorney Robert Capers. "Late last night, the government used that passcode by hand and gained access to the iPhone. Accordingly, the government no longer needs Apple's assistance to unlock the iPhone, and withdraws its application."

The government's efforts to compel Apple to assist investigators to unlock an iPhone had been rejected by a federal magistrate judge. The case was under appeal.

The device in question was an iPhone 5 that was part of a DEA investigation.

"As we have said previously, these cases have never been about setting a court precedent; they are about law enforcement's ability and need to access evidence on devices pursuant to lawful court orders and search warrants," Justice Department spokeswoman Emily Pierce said in a statement. "In this case, an individual provided the department with the passcode to the locked phone at issue in the Eastern District of New York. Because we now have access to the data we sought, we notified the court of this recent development and have withdrawn our request for assistance. This is an ongoing investigation and therefore we are not revealing the identity of the individual."

There are about a dozen other All Writs Act orders for Apple's assistance with opening for other devices that are unresolved, but are not in active litigation, according to a Justice Department official.

FBI Director James Comey hinted earlier this week that the price tag for help hacking into the iPhone used by one of the San Bernardino shooters was more than \$1 million.

The iPhone 5c used by Syed Farook did not contain any identities of suspected co-conspirators or overseas contacts that investigators believe may be related to the attacks, law enforcement sources previously told ABC News.

One month after federal officials dropped their court case against Apple, the method to access the iPhone 5c and the identity of the third party who helped are still unknown. Comey said earlier this month the tool purchased from a private party and used to access Syed Farook's iPhone only works on a "narrow slice" of phones, such as the iPhone 5c running iOS 9.

Apple has been staunch in its position that creating a backdoor for government officials would undermine the security of millions of users.

### **Justice Department Ends NY Fight With Apple After Accessing iPhone**

[NBC News](#), April 22, 2016

The U.S. Department of Justice said Friday it no longer needs Apple's help unlocking the iPhone of a suspected New York drug dealer, ending a battle that touched on a struggle between law enforcement and the tech giant over access to locked devices.

"Yesterday evening, an individual provided the passcode to the iPhone at issue in this case," U.S. Attorney Robert L. Capers said in a letter to the court dated Friday. "Late last night, the government used that passcode by hand and gained access to the iPhone."

Related: Government Says It Got Data Off Terrorist's iPhone Without Apple

A federal judge in Brooklyn in February ruled against the government in its motion to compel Apple to unlock the phone of a convicted drug dealer.

The Justice Department did not identify in the letter the individual who provided the passcode.

The government was embroiled in a high-profile fight with Apple over access to the locked phone of San Bernardino mass shooter Syed Farook, but it ended up using a software tool to get into his phone.

Related: FBI's iPhone Hack Works on 'Narrow Slice of Phones': James Comey

The FBI paid \$1 million for the software solution allowing them to get into Farook's phone.

The government has said in court filings that method would not work in the Brooklyn case, and on April 8 signaled its intent to sue Apple to access the phone in the case.

### **Feds Gain Access To iPhone In N.Y. Drug Case, Drop Apple Pressure**

By Kevin Mccoy

[USA Today](#), April 22, 2016

NEW YORK – Government lawyers announced Friday night they had gained access to data on the iPhone of a New York City drug conspirator, and abruptly ended their effort to force Apple to help bypass the phone's password.

The surprise news was similar to the outcome of the previous battle to compel the tech giant's assistance in retrieving data from the iPhone of San Bernardino terror attack shooter Syed Farook.

The Department of Justice announcement came in a one-page letter to a Brooklyn federal court in a case focused on Jun Feng, a Queens, N.Y. Defendant who pleaded guilty to methamphetamine conspiracy last year.

Federal prosecutors sought access to the phone's data in part as an effort to determine if others were involved in the alleged plot. Government lawyer's wrote that a source they did not identify provided the password to Feng's iPhone, enabling investigators to key in the code by hand and access the unit's data.

Emily Pierce, Justice Department spokeswoman, said the government will no longer need Apple's assistance.

"As we have said previously, these cases have never been about setting a court precedent; they are about law enforcement's ability and need to access evidence on devices pursuant to lawful court orders and search warrants," Pierce said. "In this case, an individual provided the department with the passcode to the locked phone at issue in the Eastern District of New York. Because we now have access to the data we sought, we notified the court of this recent development and have withdrawn our request for assistance. This is an ongoing investigation and therefore we are not revealing the identity of the individual."

Apple attorneys argued last week that the FBI improperly sought the company's aid before exhausting all other means to bypass the built-in security code on the Apple-manufactured unit.

The California-based tech giant's legal team also contended the government misinterpreted provisions of the All Writs Act, the 1789 statute that Department of Justice lawyers cited as the legal basis for forcing Apple's assistance.

The legal struggle is part of a personal privacy vs. government security showdown that pits federal investigators against tech firms and cyber providers over the issue of electronic encryption.

The Brooklyn case also marks the latest legal flash point since the government withdrew a similar demand for Apple's help in obtaining data from the iPhone used by San Bernardino terrorist shooter Syed Rizwan Farook. The FBI ultimately turned to an unidentified outside party that helped investigators bypass the iPhone's security without destroying material stored inside.

FBI Director James Comey earlier this week indicated the agency paid at least \$1.3 million dollars for the tool that allowed it to break into Farook's iPhone 5c, which runs on Apple's iOS 9 operating system

In the most recent case, Feng is a Queens, N.Y. defendant who pleaded guilty in October to a methamphetamine conspiracy. Prosecutors indicated they sought access to his iPhone 5 in a bid to investigate other aspects of the alleged plot, including whether unknown others were involved.

In a March ruling, Magistrate Judge James Orenstein ruled that Apple was not legally required to help federal investigators get access to data on Feng's iPhone 5s, which runs on Apple's iOS 7 operating system. He concluded the All Writs Act didn't support "the necessity of imposing such a burden" on the company.

The Department of Justice appealed Orenstein's decision. The renewed legal arguments in the case are now being considered by Brooklyn U.S. District Judge Margo Brodie.

## **Feds: Someone Gave Us The Passcode In NY Drug Case, So We Don't Need Apple**

[Ars Technica](#), April 22, 2016

In a short letter filed Friday evening, federal prosecutors wrote to a Brooklyn judge to say that they no longer needed Apple's help in accessing the data on a seized iPhone 5S running iOS 7 associated with a drug case.

In the letter, United States Attorney Robert Capers wrote:

The government respectfully submits this letter to update the Court and the parties. Yesterday evening, an individual provided the passcode to the iPhone at issue in this case. Late last night, the government used that passcode by hand and gained access to the iPhone. Accordingly, the government no longer needs Apple's assistance to unlock the iPhone, and withdraws its application.

This case pre-dates the debacle that played out earlier this year in San Bernardino, but relied on many of the same legal arguments. Here, in October 2015, the government asked the court to grant it an order that would have forced Apple to assist the unlocking of a phone belonging to Jun Feng, a man who eventually pleaded guilty to drug charges. Unlike the case in California however, Apple does have the ability to extract data on pre-iOS 8 devices with minimal difficulty. Feng has claimed that he forgot the passcode to this particular iPhone.

Regardless, in both cases, the government claimed that it had the authority to force Apple to help under the All Writs Act, an obscure late-18th-century law. In a February 2016 ruling in this New York case, US Magistrate Judge James Orenstein sided with Apple and concluded that what the

government was asking for went too far. In his ruling, he worried about a “virtually limitless expansion of the government’s legal authority to surreptitiously intrude on personal privacy.”

The government said it would ask a more senior judge, known as a district judge, to weigh in. Last week, Apple responded, noting that it would continue to resist the government’s attempts to conscript its aid.

“The government has failed to show that it is has exhausted other potential repositories of the information it wants from Feng’s iPhone,” Apple lawyer Theodore Boutsos wrote in the 55-page filing, which was very similar to the earlier filings in the San Bernardino case.

In a statement issued Friday night, Emily Pierce, a Department of Justice spokesman, reiterated the government’s claim that such cases “have never been about setting a court precedent.”

“In this case, an individual provided the department with the passcode to the locked phone at issue in the Eastern District of New York,” she wrote. “Because we now have access to the data we sought, we notified the court of this recent development and have withdrawn our request for assistance. This is an ongoing investigation and therefore we are not revealing the identity of the individual.”

Apple spokesman Fred Sainz declined to comment.

## **UPDATE 2-U.S. Drops N.Y. Fight With Apple After Gaining Access To iPhone**

[Reuters](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## **Federal Prosecutors Drop Court Case To Force Apple To Unlock iPhone**

**This is second time the government said it couldn’t open an iPhone and then suddenly announced it had found a way without Apple’s help**

By Devlin Barrett

[Wall Street Journal](#), April 22, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

## **Feds Access iPhone Data Without Apple’s Help**

[Associated Press](#), April 24, 2016

The U.S. Justice Department said it has withdrawn a request to force Apple to reveal data from a cellphone linked to a New York drug case after someone provided federal investigators with the phone’s passcode.

Federal prosecutors said in a letter to U.S. District Judge Margo Brodie that investigators were able to access the iPhone late Thursday night after using the passcode.

The government said it no longer needs Apple’s assistance to unlock the iPhone and is withdrawing its request for an order requiring Apple’s cooperation in the drug case. StoryJudge sides with Apple in NY encryption caseSee alsoLetters: Apple vs. the FBI

“As we have said previously, these cases have never been about setting a court precedent; they are about law enforcement’s ability and need to access evidence on devices pursuant to lawful court orders and search warrants,” Justice Department spokeswoman Emily Pierce said in a statement Friday.

The Justice Department had sought to compel the Cupertino, California-based Apple to cooperate in the drug case, even though it had recently dropped a fight to compel Apple to help break into an iPhone used by a gunman in a December attack in San Bernardino that killed 14 people. In that case, a still-unidentified third-party came forward with a technique that managed to open the phone. That entity has not been named, and the Justice Department has not revealed the method used.

Representatives for Apple did not immediately respond to a request for comment Friday night.

The tech giant had been fighting the Justice Department’s attempts and said in court papers last week the government’s request was extraordinary because there is likely minimal evidentiary value of any data on the phone and that Congress never authorized it to pursue such requests through the 1789 All Writs Act. It also said there is no proof Apple’s assistance was necessary and that the same technique the FBI was using to get information from the phone in California might work with the drug case phone.

But prosecutors had argued that the government needed Apple’s assistance to access the data, which they contended was “authorized to search by warrant.”

On Thursday, several law enforcement groups filed arguments in Brooklyn federal court saying they feared the public will stop aiding police if Apple is allowed to refuse to give up information from the phone in the drug case. The groups said they supported the government’s efforts to try to reverse a magistrate judge’s ruling earlier this year for Apple.

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## **Feds Drop Case Against Apple In NY**

By Evelyn Rupert

[The Hill](#), April 22, 2016

The Justice Department has dropped its effort to compel Apple to unlock an iPhone tied to a New York drug case.

In a letter to a federal court in Brooklyn, prosecutors said someone gave authorities the phone's passcode, Reuters reports.

"Late last night, the government used that passcode by hand and gained access to the iPhone," the letter said, according to ZDNet. "Accordingly, the government no longer needs Apple's assistance to unlock the iPhone, and withdraws its application."

A federal judge ruled in February that the DOJ could not force Apple to provide access to the phone, and the government later appealed that ruling.

The case arose around the same time that Apple was fighting government demands to disable a key security feature to allow the FBI to access data on the phone of one of the San Bernardino shooters, sparking a highly publicized feud between the tech company and the bureau.

The FBI recently dropped that effort after enlisting outside help to crack into the phone.

## **Government Drops Another Demand For Apple's Help With Unlocking An iPhone**

[NPR](#), April 22, 2016

As it did in the San Bernardino terrorist case, the U.S. Justice Department has found another way to get through an Apple iPhone's passcode so it can access data on the device.

This time someone has assisted investigators in a drug case in Brooklyn, N.Y. This is what the Justice Department told the court late on Friday:

"Yesterday evening, an individual provided the passcode to the iPhone at issue in this case. Late last night, the government used that passcode by hand and gained access to the iPhone. Accordingly, the government no longer needs Apple's assistance to unlock the iPhone, and withdraws its application."

Apple has resisted any demands, saying if it needs to create new software to get past a device's security measures, that will create vulnerabilities for all iPhones, and giving any help could create a precedent for the government to make such demands again.

Justice Department spokeswoman Emily Pierce says:

"As we have said previously, these cases have never been about setting a court precedent; they are about law enforcement's ability and need to access evidence on devices pursuant to lawful court orders and search warrants. In this case, an individual provided the department with the passcode to the locked phone at issue in the Eastern District of New York. ... This is an ongoing investigation and therefore we are not revealing the identity of the individual."

NPR's Aarti Shahani and Alina Selyukh have written about how a third party brought the FBI a way to bypass security in the San Bernardino phone, and they report the government asked for different kinds of help in the two cases.

"A comparison between the New York and the San Bernardino case isn't, well, apples to apples. The cases involve different types of iPhones that run different types of operating systems and require different types of technical assistance from the company.

"After the FBI said it had unlocked — without Apple's help — the iPhone 5C running iOS 9 in the San Bernardino investigation, the bureau's ability to reuse its undisclosed unlocking method on other phones has been a major lingering question.

"FBI Director James Comey said this week that the method, in fact, does not work on every iPhone. Specifically, he said it wouldn't work on the newer versions of the device, such as the iPhone 5S or iPhone 6. The case in New York involves an iPhone 5S running the iOS 7 operating system, which has older encryption technology.

"The government says that for the New York phone, Apple already has the ability, in-house, to unlock that kind of device with that kind of operating system. And it's the kind of process that wouldn't require the company to write any new, special code that would undermine the phone's security features as in the San Bernardino case."

## **Department Of Justice Drops Brooklyn iPhone Case**

[San Francisco Chronicle](#), April 23, 2016

Another iPhone battle has come to an apparently anticlimactic end.

On Friday, the Department of Justice said in a filing that it would no longer seek a court order to compel Apple to help it unlock a Brooklyn drug dealer's iPhone.

In a letter sent to Judge Margo K. Brodie of the Eastern District of New York, who had been considering the government request, U.S. attorneys said that an unnamed individual had provided the device's pass code and that "the government used that pass code by hand and gained access to the iPhone."

An Apple spokesman said the company had no comment. In previous court filings, Apple had disputed the agency's need for its assistance.

In another high-profile case, involving an iPhone used by San Bernardino shooter Syed Rizwan Farook, the FBI ended up paying more than \$1 million dollars to a technical expert who provided a method to bypass Apple's built-in security protections, according to Director James Comey. In that case, too, the government had sought Apple's assistance, which the company refused to provide.

"As we have said previously, these cases have never been about setting a court precedent," Justice Department spokeswoman Emily Pierce said. "They are about law enforcement's ability and need to access evidence on devices pursuant to lawful court orders and search warrants.



... Because we now have access to the data we sought, we notified the court of this recent development and have withdrawn our request for assistance.”

Pierce said the agency would not reveal the identity of the person who provided the pass code.

While this particular case appears over, more are likely to emerge, increasing calls for new legislation that clarifies whether law enforcement can seek court orders to get tech companies’ assistance in unlocking phones.

In a hearing before a House of Representatives subcommittee Tuesday, Amy Hess, the FBI’s executive assistant director for science and technology, said that the agency had not been able to access data on about 13 percent of the pass-code-protected smartphones it had seized as evidence in the past six months.

## **Feds Get Into iPhone In NY Case, Ending Active Apple Litigation**

[Yahoo! Good Morning America](#), April 23, 2016

The government has been able to unlock another iPhone that has been the subject of ongoing litigation with Apple, according to the Justice Department, which filed a letter in federal court on Friday night in the Eastern District of New York.

In this case, however, the government did not pay more than \$1 million to a third party for a hack. In this case, someone simply provided the passcode.

On Thursday evening, “an individual provided the passcode to the iPhone at issue in this case,” according to the letter from U.S. Attorney Robert Capers. “Late last night, the government used that passcode by hand and gained access to the iPhone. Accordingly, the government no longer needs Apple’s assistance to unlock the iPhone, and withdraws its application.” How the FBI Cracked the iPhone Encryption and Averted a Legal Showdown With Apple Apple Files to Vacate Court Order in San Bernardino iPhone Case Apple Encryption Battle: What’s Next After Feds Drop Case

The government’s efforts to compel Apple to assist investigators to unlock an iPhone had been rejected by a federal magistrate judge. The case was under appeal.

The device in question was an iPhone 5 that was part of a DEA investigation.

The defendant in the DEA case, Jun Feng, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine weeks after the government asked a court to order Apple to help open the phone. Until it dropped the case Friday night, the Justice Department had continued to press the case to compel Apple to assist, citing an ongoing investigation.

“As we have said previously, these cases have never been about setting a court precedent; they are about law enforcement’s ability and need to access evidence on

devices pursuant to lawful court orders and search warrants,” Justice Department spokeswoman Emily Pierce said in a statement. “In this case, an individual provided the department with the passcode to the locked phone at issue in the Eastern District of New York. Because we now have access to the data we sought, we notified the court of this recent development and have withdrawn our request for assistance. This is an ongoing investigation and therefore we are not revealing the identity of the individual.”

There are about a dozen other All Writs Act orders for Apple’s assistance with opening for other devices that are unresolved, but are not in active litigation, according to a Justice Department official.

FBI Director James Comey hinted earlier this week that the price tag for help hacking into the iPhone used by one of the San Bernardino shooters was more than \$1 million.

The iPhone 5c used by Syed Farook did not contain any identities of suspected co-conspirators or overseas contacts that investigators believe may be related to the attacks, law enforcement sources previously told ABC News.

One month after federal officials dropped their court case against Apple, the method to access the iPhone 5c and the identity of the third party who helped are still unknown. Comey said earlier this month the tool purchased from a private party and used to access Syed Farook’s iPhone only works on a “narrow slice” of phones, such as the iPhone 5c running iOS 9.

Apple has been staunch in its position that creating a backdoor for government officials would undermine the security of millions of users.

## **FBI Ends Stand-off With Apple Over iPhone**

By Tim Bradshaw In San Francisco

[Financial Times](#), April 23, 2016

Full-text stories from the Financial Times are available to FT subscribers by clicking the link.

## **U.S. Drops Appeal Seeking Apple Help In Brooklyn iPhone Case**

By Christie Smythe

[Bloomberg News](#), April 23, 2016

The U.S. government said it no longer needs Apple Inc.’s help to get into an iPhone used by a drug dealer in New York after obtaining a passcode.

The Justice Department’s action follows its decision last month to drop its case seeking to force Apple to help it unlock an iPhone used by a gunman in the December terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California.

“Late last night, the government used that passcode by hand and gained access to the iPhone,” the U.S. said in a court filing Friday. “Accordingly, the government no longer needs Apple’s assistance to unlock the iPhone, and withdraws its application.”

The drug dealer's iPhone is just one of more than 1,000 Apple phones that cops around the U.S. say they can't break into, but it's been at the epicenter of a legal fight over privacy and security that may redefine the relationship between police and the public.

## **U.S. Drops N.Y. Fight With Apple After Gaining Access To iPhone**

[Reuters](#), April 22, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## **US Justice Dept. Drops Bid To Force Apple To Unlock An iPhone**

[Reuters](#), April 22, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## **On Encryption Battle, Apple Has Advocates In Ex-National Security Officials**

By Eric Lichtblau

[New York Times](#), April 22, 2016

In their years together as top national security officials, Michael V. Hayden and Michael Chertoff were fierce advocates of using the government's spying powers to pry into sensitive intelligence data.

Mr. Hayden directed a secret domestic eavesdropping program at the National Security Agency that captured billions of phone records after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Mr. Chertoff pushed for additional wiretapping and surveillance powers from Congress both as a top prosecutor and as Homeland Security secretary.

But today, their jobs have changed, and so, apparently, have their views on privacy. Both former officials now work with technology companies like Apple at a corporate consulting firm that Mr. Chertoff founded, and both are now backing Apple — and not the F.B.I., with which they once worked — in its fight to keep its iPhones encrypted and private.

They are among more than a half-dozen prominent former national security officials who, to varying degrees, have supported Apple and the idea of impenetrable “end-to-end encryption” during a furious national debate over the balance between privacy and security in the digital age.

In white papers, op-ed articles, conferences, newspaper and television interviews and elsewhere, the former officials have made their support for Apple clear. While their former jobs in the government are always featured prominently in their public appearances, their current business affiliations often go unmentioned.

The barrage of support has given Apple a public relations boost in a fight it once seemed destined to lose, but it has surprised and angered some law enforcement officials.

These officials question whether the business relationships that some of the former officials now have with Apple and other Silicon Valley companies — jobs that usually pay far above their former government salaries — are behind their enthusiastic advocacy of privacy and encryption.

Among those who have voiced support for Apple's position are Mike McConnell, a former director of national intelligence; David H. Petraeus, a former director of the Central Intelligence Agency; R. James Woolsey, another former C.I.A. director; and Richard A. Clarke, a former top White House counterterrorism official. Like Mr. Chertoff and Mr. Hayden, they all now work with firms that have ties to the technology sector, records show.

It is unclear how much money Apple and other technology firms involved in the F.B.I. litigation have paid to the firms where the former officials now work; most of the firms declined to discuss their private business dealings, calling them irrelevant.

Mr. McConnell, who served as national intelligence director under President Obama and George W. Bush, argues that keeping the United States' computer systems safe from rival nations and rogue hackers should outweigh the F.B.I.'s interests in unlocking smartphones in criminal cases.

“I believe ubiquitous encryption is something that the nation is going to have to embrace,” Mr. McConnell, who is now a senior executive adviser at the consulting giant Booz Allen Hamilton, said in a telephone interview. “Apple has been leading the fight to go down that path, Google is right behind and Microsoft will be there before too long.”

Booz Allen's executive vice president, Thad W. Allen, a former Coast Guard commandant, has also voiced support for Apple's position on encryption, because, he said, American technology firms need to stay competitive in the international market.

Booz Allen has made a recent push to form “strategic alliances” with Apple and other technology companies, executives said.

Mr. McConnell and other former national security officials said that their work in the private sector had no impact on their public support for Apple. Not everyone agrees.

“They've followed the money and adopted pro-privacy positions that they wouldn't have dreamed of taking while in government,” said Tim Shorrock, a writer and foreign policy commentator who wrote a book on the business side of intelligence.

Some current law enforcement officials say they have been angered by the former officials' sharp and sometimes personal criticism of the F.B.I. (Mr. Hayden, for instance, said

in an interview, "I think Jim Comey's wrong," referring to the bureau's director.)

The Justice Department and the F.B.I. declined to comment. But Stewart Baker, a former Homeland Security official who is one of the few former officials publicly backing the F.B.I. in the encryption debate, said it was frustrating to see old colleagues now echoing what he sees as erroneous assertions from Apple about the threat to its customers' privacy.

Still, he conceded that the efforts had been effective. What started as a dispute over a locked iPhone used by a terrorist in San Bernardino, Calif., has instead become a broader one over privacy and computer security, Mr. Baker said, and "they're getting a lot of people to side with Apple."

So strong is their support that Apple has included comments from several of the former officials in its legal pleadings. One filing included a comment from Mr. Chertoff at a conference last month that if Apple were forced to create a "back door" to get around its encryption, it would be like creating "a bacteriological weapon."

Another vote of support that Apple has included in its legal filings came from Mr. Hayden, who is one of the top executives at Mr. Chertoff's consulting firm, the Chertoff Group. "America is more secure — America is more safe — with unbreakable end-to-end encryption," Mr. Hayden, who led both the National Security Agency and the C.I.A., told a television interviewer a week after the Apple fight broke out.

Mr. Chertoff's firm also produced a 28-page report this year on the value of encryption, and its dealings with technology companies on security issues are extensive. Apple was also a corporate sponsor of a cybersecurity conference it hosted in October.

Mr. Hayden has acknowledged that he might have come down differently in the Apple dispute when he was the head of the N.S.A. If faced with an unbreakable device, he might have gone straight to the budget office and said, "I'm going to need another \$500 million because I'm going to kick my way in," he told the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank.

Still, Mr. Hayden said in a telephone interview that his strong stance on encryption dated back years and was not influenced by his post-government work at the Chertoff Group.

"It doesn't have any relevance to what I think about this," he said. "I answered this on its merits."

Mr. Chertoff was traveling and unavailable for comment, the Chertoff Group said. The firm declined to discuss its financial dealings with Apple.

But Mr. Chertoff acknowledged in a panel discussion last month that during his time inside the government, there were situations in which "I knew I had to move heaven and earth" to find out where a threat was coming from. His current

focus on encryption, he said, is complementary to that previous stance on security and not contradictory.

The encryption debate erupted in February after the F.B.I. said it needed Apple's technical help to get into the iPhone used by Syed Rizwan Farook, one of the San Bernardino attackers.

Initially, the F.B.I. appeared poised to win the battle for public opinion. The attack, which killed 14 people, was the worst terrorist strike on American soil since the Sept. 11 attacks. Mr. Farook was dead; the phone's owner — the county of San Bernardino, where he worked — had consented to the search; and the Justice Department had a court order to do it.

But Apple has since gained public sympathy, with polls giving it a small but growing edge over the F.B.I. in support, and the battle has essentially ended in a draw now that the F.B.I. has managed to get into the phone by paying an outside group to help hack it.

With the F.B.I. still pushing to open other locked phones, Apple's backers are preparing for a long fight.

Mr. Hayden, the former N.S.A. director, warned listeners last month at the American Enterprise Institute that the flare-up in the San Bernardino case was "not a one-and-done."

Encryption is at the root of Internet communications, Mr. Hayden said, and "there is nothing we can do to stop that." His advice to his onetime government colleagues on the other side of the fight was simple: "Get over it," he said.

## **Sources Doubt Anonymous Gray Hats Cracked San Bernardino Shooter's Phone. So Who Did?**

[Fast Company](#), April 22, 2016

The identity of the group that helped the FBI access the encrypted data from San Bernardino shooter Syed Farook's iPhone is still a mystery.

The common thinking now is that it was a group of anonymous "gray hats"—that is, security pros operating in the gray area between legit research and criminal hacking. But not so fast, say some in the security community; the mysterious helper might yet be Cellebrite, the Israeli security company originally thought to have cracked the phone for the FBI.

The FBI has contracted with the Sun Corporation subsidiary for \$338,581 worth of gear and services since December 2, 2015—the date of the San Bernardino attack—according to Federal Procurement Data System records. Neither the FBI nor Cellebrite would say if this was indeed payment for the hack.

Cellebrite and other Sun Corporation companies are in the business of helping extract encrypted data from cell phones—like the iPhone 5C used by Farook, for instance.

The FBI won a court order in mid-February demanding Apple's help in cracking the Farook phone. Apple refused, and so began a six-week testy exchange of court filings and public statements. The FBI finally abandoned the order on March 21, saying that a "third party" had come forward with a hack to gain access to the phone.

Interestingly, that very same day, the FBI issued a \$15,278.02 purchase order for Cellebrite.

In a March 23 report in the Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth Cellebrite was identified as the party thought to have provided the FBI with the Farook phone hack. Over the following few days, stock of Cellebrite's parent company, Sun Corporation, rose 20% on the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

Even after a widely read April 12 Washington Post story saying a group of "professional hackers," not Cellebrite, had identified a "zero day" software vulnerability in the Farook phone's software, Sun Corporation's share price remained high. Its shares closed at 736 yen March 22 before surging to 1,006 yen in the wake of the hack report. Sun Corporation is still trading at 945 yen per share today, which may suggest that the investor community continues to believe Cellebrite helped the FBI.

Sources tell Fast Company that gray hats working for Sun Corporation companies have in the past identified vulnerabilities in systems and devices and sold them for profit.

One source said that if it was truly an anonymous private hacker group that helped the FBI, there would have been chatter about it on the "dark net"—the unindexed web—where hackers routinely brag about their exploits. There wasn't.

The source, who has worked in cyberdefense for the government, says it's possible that the FBI originally let slip that Cellebrite had provided the hack, but then tried to walk it back by pointing members of the media toward an anonymous gray hat group.

FBI director James Comey suggested Thursday that the FBI paid hackers as much as \$1.3 million for the Farook phone hack, but our source has serious doubts that the price was that high. Only in a couple well-publicized competitions has a price anywhere near that amount been paid for a zero-day exploit, the source says.

## **'Going Dark' Battle Moves To Congressional Encryption Hearing**

[TechTarget](#), April 22, 2016

Whether it's called the encryption debate or the battle over "going dark," experts on both sides testified this week at a hearing titled "Deciphering the Debate Over Encryption: Industry and Law Enforcement Perspectives" in Congress.

The law enforcement experts called first in a separate panel by the House Energy and Commerce Committee to

testify included Amy Hess, executive assistant director for science and technology for the FBI; Thomas Galati, chief of the intelligence bureau of the New York City Police Department; and Captain Charles Cohen, commander of the office of intelligence and investigative technologies with the Indiana State Police.

"We are not asking to expand the Government's surveillance authority, but rather we are asking to ensure that we can continue to obtain electronic information and evidence pursuant to the legal authority that Congress provided to us to keep America safe," Hess said in her witness statement. Hess emphasized that the "going dark" debate is not about giving the government more powers, but rather to prevent criminals from hiding evidence from lawful search warrants.

"One of the bedrock principles upon which we rely to guide us is the principle of judicial authorization: that if an independent judge finds legally sufficient reason to believe that certain private communications contain evidence of a crime, then the Government can conduct a limited search for that evidence."

Hess said that over the past six months, 30% of the phones seized during investigations by the FBI were protected by passwords, and 13% of those devices yielded no information to investigators.

Talk of backdoors to resolve the going dark problem was limited, and Galati referred to the possibility of using a technical solution for accessing encrypted data under a court order as going through a "front door." He also noted that during the six months from October 2015 to March 2016, the NYPD had been locked out of 67 Apple devices as well as 35 non-Apple devices.

Galati said of the devices in custody: "In every case, we have the file cabinet, so to speak, and the legal authority to open it, but we lack the technical ability to do so because encryption protects its contents."

The second half of the hearing included panelists from the technology sector, including Bruce Sewell, Apple's senior vice president and general counsel; Matthew Blaze, associate professor of computer and information science, school of engineering and applied science at the University of Pennsylvania; Amit Yoran, president at RSA Security; and Daniel Weitzner, principal research scientist of MIT computer science and artificial intelligence lab and director of MIT Internet Policy Research Initiative.

Sewell stated: "The best way we, and the technology industry, know how to protect your information is through the use of strong encryption. Strong encryption is a good thing, a necessary thing. And the government agrees. Encryption today is the backbone of our cybersecurity infrastructure and provides the very best defense we have against increasingly hostile attacks.

"Keep in mind that the people subject to law enforcement inquiries represent far less than one tenth of one

percent of our hundreds of millions of users. But all of those users – 100% of our users would be made more vulnerable if we were forced to build a back door,” Sewell said.

Blaze stated: “Any law enforcement access scheme of the kind apparently envisioned by the FBI would, necessarily, involve a mechanism for the transmission and storage of sensitive secret keys to a third party (whether the government or some other entity that holds it). This approach is sometimes called key escrow, key recovery or trusted-third party encryption; the secret is held “in escrow” by a third party. Key escrow was the widely criticized approach incorporated into the Clipper Chip in the early 1990’s. It destroys the end-to-end design of robust encryption systems without any benefit to the application.”

Blaze wrote the paper that sank the U.S. government’s Clipper chip key escrow proposal in 1994, and he echoed similar points about encryption during this week’s hearing. “The most basic problem with third-party access cryptography is simply that we do not fully understand how to design it securely,” Blaze said. “Any key escrow or lawful access cryptography system, by its very nature, increases its number of points of failure. Unfortunately, we do not understand the problem well enough to even precisely quantify how this reduces security, let alone identify a safe level for this reduction.” EFF sues DoJ

The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) this week filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit against the Department of Justice (DoJ) to discover “whether the government has ever used secret court orders to force technology companies to decrypt their customers’ private communications.”

The EFF argued that doing so undermines “the safety and security of devices used by millions of people,” and that the DoJ must disclose whether it has “ever sought or obtained an order from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC) requiring third parties – like Apple or Google – to provide technical assistance to carry out surveillance.” The suit also charges that the DoJ has not made available FISC opinions that should have been declassified under the USA Freedom Act.

EFF Senior Staff Attorney Nate Cardozo said that breaking or weakening encryption, or creating backdoors to access personal information on laptops or smartphones, undermines the security and safety of the people who use those devices to store “deeply personal, private information.”

“If the government is obtaining FISC orders to force a company to build backdoors or decrypt their users’ communications, the public has a right to know about those secret demands to compromise people’s phones and computers,” Cardozo said. “The government should not be able to conscript private companies into weakening the security of these devices, particularly via secret court orders.” Further “going dark” and iPhone fallout

Sources in the FBI disclosed that data recovered from the San Bernardino shooter’s work iPhone has helped them to confirm that that phone contained no evidence that it was used to contact ISIS, that it was not used to contact any of the killers’ friends or family, and that no encrypted communications were sent using that phone, CNN reported.

According to FBI director James Comey, speaking at the Aspen Security Forum in London, the cost of the hack was “more than I will make in the remainder of this job.” Comey’s term has more than seven years to run, and at his current salary, that would be more than \$1.3 million. Comey said “it was, in my view, worth it.” Polling shows government not winning hearts and minds over privacy, backdoors

U.S. voters of all stripes believe that their data should be secure and private, according to a survey conducted by Purple Insights on behalf of ACT | The App Association and released this week. And those same voters said they trust technology companies over the federal government when it comes to protecting personal data. According to the poll, which surveyed 1,250 registered voters, 54% trust technology companies more, while only 21% trust the federal government more – and the results were consistent across political parties.

The results showed that 93% of voters believe “that it is important to keep information they store on their electronic devices and in mobile apps or share online secure and private.”

ACT | The App Association also reported that 85% of those surveyed agreed with the statement: “Digital encryption and security features help prevent crime and terrorism – they keep people from disrupting critical infrastructure like our financial system or our air traffic control system.”

Meanwhile, Spiceworks, the online IT community based in Austin, Tex., this week asked its members: “Do you believe government and/or law enforcement backdoors (in encryption protocols, hardware, or software) put organizations more at risk of a data breach?” and (so far) over 600 IT professionals responded overwhelmingly: 87% said it did increase the risk of data breach; only 8% responded “no,” while 4% didn’t know. Meanwhile, in Other News:

Rep. Ted Lieu (D-Calif.) had his phone hacked on 60 Minutes using a flaw in the ancient Signaling System 7 (SS7) protocol, which allows attackers to track the phone’s location and spy on all phone calls and texts. Lieu called for an investigation of the vulnerability on Monday.

On the heels of WhatsApp’s rollout of end-to-end encryption, the Viber messaging service, which claims over 700 million users worldwide, will provide “complete end-to-end encryption across all devices,” the firm announced this week. Users need to get the latest version of the Viber app to get encryption on voice or video calling, messaging, video and photo sharing, both for group messaging and one-to-one communication. “As part of this update, Viber also launches

“Hidden Chats” allowing users to hide specific chats from the main screen so no-one but the user knows they exist. These chats can only be accessed using a four-digit PIN, providing an optional additional layer of privacy to users’ personal communications.” Viber Media is owned by Japanese e-commerce company Rakuten.

Google is updating its User Data Policy for the Chrome Web Store, the search giant announced late last week. “The new User Data Policy extends existing policies to ensure transparent use of the data in a way that is consistent with the wishes and expectations of users,” the company said. Google’s new rules included requirements that developers be transparent about how user data is handled and privacy practices are disclosed, post privacy policies, encrypt personal or sensitive data and get consent from users before collecting personal or sensitive data. The new policy also prohibits “the collection of Web browsing activity when it’s not required for an item’s main functionality.”

The NTT Group published its “2016 Global Threat Intelligence Report” this week, and one key finding was “a steady increase in Adobe Flash exploit usage in exploit kits from 2012 to 2014, followed by a dramatic increase in 2015.” According to NTT, exploit researchers turned their attention to Flash after improvements were made to Java security in 2014. “The total number of Flash vulnerabilities identified in 2015 was the highest ever, with an almost 312% increase over 2014,” the report stated. NTT also reported that almost 21% of vulnerabilities detected in client networks were more than three years old; 12% were more than five years old; and over 5% were more than 10 years old.

Shortened URLs can be vulnerable to brute-force attacks that can reveal documents shared over the cloud as well as inference of “residential addresses, true identities, and extremely sensitive locations they visited that, if publicly revealed, would violate medical and financial privacy,” researchers working at Cornell University reported last week. Vitaly Shmatikov, professor of computer science at Cornell Tech, and grad student Martin Georgiev of the University of Texas at Austin reported that cloud storage providers such as Microsoft OneDrive and mapping services like Google Maps used shortened URLs that were vulnerable. “Our scan discovered a large number of Microsoft OneDrive accounts with private documents,” Shmatikov wrote. “Many of these accounts are unlocked and allow anyone to inject malware that will be automatically downloaded to users’ devices. We also discovered many driving directions that reveal sensitive information for identifiable individuals, including their visits to specialized medical facilities, prisons, and adult establishments.”

## **Justice Department’s Secret Searches Reach Too Far**

[Des Moines \(IA\) Register](#), April 23, 2016

Who’d have thought that in a battle between the government and giant data-storage companies, that it would be the corporations, not our public servants, championing the rights of American citizens?

Microsoft sued the U.S. Department of Justice last week, arguing that it’s unconstitutional for the government to prohibit the company from alerting its customers to the fact that federal agents are combing through their data.

The outcome of this case could have enormous ramifications. The lawsuit focuses not only on Microsoft’s First Amendment right to share information with its customers, but also on the Fourth Amendment rights of millions of Americans whose information — personal and financial — is increasingly being stored off-site in data-storage clouds managed by others.

The lawsuit coincides with an entirely separate battle between the Justice Department and Apple Inc., in which investigators have tried to force the tech giant to defeat the security passcode on a terrorist’s iPhone. Apple has refused to cooperate, and the Justice Department has been able to access that particular phone’s contents with the help of others. The larger question remains: Can the government force a private company to essentially become an arm of law enforcement by routinely turning over customers’ protected information?

The Microsoft lawsuit won’t stop, or even slow, government intrusion. Nor will it make it any harder for prosecutors to obtain search warrants that allow them to indulge in both legitimate criminal investigations and baseless fishing expeditions. But it could, finally, put a stop to the gag orders that often accompany those search warrants.

What’s at stake is the right of citizens to know about the government’s efforts to lay claim to their personal information. If citizens have no such right, then it follows they have no right to contest such actions — and that’s a concept all Americans, liberals and conservatives, should vigorously oppose.

Before the advent of data-storage clouds, most, if not all, of the information now being sought by investigators was stored on hard drives that were physically located in homes and businesses. If they were to be searched by police or prosecutors, the owners of the data would be served with a warrant, putting them on notice that their information was being accessed.

Now, with so much data stored off site, in the care and custody of third parties like Microsoft, investigators can get their warrant and serve it not on the people whose data is being sought but on the company that’s entrusted to safeguard it.

According to Microsoft, it has received 5,624 federal demands for customer information in the past 18 months, averaging 10 such demands per day. Of those, nearly half

had gag orders attached, prohibiting the company from telling its customers the government had carted off their data for its own analysis and investigation.

To make things worse, judges issued 1,752 of those gag orders with no expiration date, which means the ban on disclosure could continue indefinitely.

A central element of Microsoft's lawsuit is the allegation that the government now seeks access to electronic communications far more than it had previously sought access to physical, hard-copy communication. The company's theory is that simply because these electronic records can be accessed in near-total secrecy, with little oversight and with diminished constitutional safeguards, the Justice Department is actually escalating the number of searches it conducts.

"The government," Microsoft claims, "has exploited the transition to cloud computing as a means of expanding its power to conduct secret investigations."

There's no question that in some cases temporary gag orders are necessary to protect an investigation that's still in progress, and Microsoft acknowledges this. But the company also argues, persuasively, that too many of these orders are being issued, and that none should be issued indefinitely, with no provision for eventual disclosure.

It will likely be years before all of the issues in the Microsoft case are fully litigated, and in the meantime, the Justice Department will continue obtaining warrants at a rate of 10 per day — and that figure counts only the warrants being served on Microsoft. No one knows how many warrants are being served on AT&T, Time-Warner, Sprint, Facebook, Google, Apple, Twitter, Yahoo, etc.

That's why Congress needs to act quickly by updating the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986 to raise the bar for obtaining gag orders; to eliminate their open-ended status; and to recognize the legitimate privacy expectations of people whose personal information has been uploaded to a data-storage cloud.

The law has to keep pace with technology, and in this case, it has fallen far behind.

## **An Amateur Vs. ISIS: A Car Salesman Investigates And Ends Up In Prison**

By Scott Shane

[New York Times](#), April 23, 2016

By his own account, Toby Lopez was a supremely ordinary guy. He sold Toyotas and lived with his mother in a tidy rancher here with a cherry tree out front. He was proud that he could connect with customers — anyone from a Superior Court judge to, as he put it, "Redneck Bill from down on the farm." What passed for excitement was the time his young niece won a beauty contest and he chauffeured her in a red Corvette in a local parade.

Then a high school friend was killed in Afghanistan, and the Islamic State began beheading American journalists. Horrified, Mr. Lopez heard on CNN one day in the fall of 2014 that the Islamic State was active on Twitter, and he went online to see what he could find. "I was intrigued," said Mr. Lopez, 42. "What could they possibly be saying on Twitter?"

What followed was a radical break from his humdrum life. He was pulled into the murky world of Internet jihadists, sparring with them from his office at the car dealership and late into the night at home. Before long, he was talking for hours on Skype with a man who claimed — falsely, as it would turn out — to be a top ISIS military commander, trying to negotiate the release of hostages. Mr. Lopez contacted the F.B.I. and began a testy relationship with counterterrorism agents who came to believe he might pose a danger. In the end, he landed in federal prison, where he was held for nearly 14 months without trial.

The story of one man's deepening obsession with a terrorist group is a reminder of how the Internet provides easy portals to distant, sometimes dangerous worlds. It shows the complications for law enforcement agents who confront an overeager amateur encroaching on their turf.

But it also underscores how lost a person can feel inside the criminal justice system. Deprived of his freedom, his sanity in question, Mr. Lopez found himself without a legal advocate he trusted or access to evidence he believed could free him.

The hundreds of emails, text messages and recorded Skype calls that Mr. Lopez saved show him growing more and more frantic when F.B.I. agents did not see things his way. Believing American hostages' lives were at stake, he sent an agent 80 increasingly overheated messages in 10 days. In one, he declared, "Just remember whatever ends up happening to you ... You deserved it," and added an expletive. On Feb. 11, 2015, a dozen police and F.B.I. cars surrounded the house with the cherry tree, arrested Mr. Lopez and charged him with transmitting a threat.

He was shuttled among federal facilities in Pennsylvania, New York, Oklahoma and North Carolina. Without access to his records, prison psychologists assumed his tales of talking to Islamic State members were fiction, symptoms of a mental illness that made him incompetent to stand trial. Prosecutors sought a hearing to decide whether he should be forcibly medicated.

The defense finally obtained a third mental health evaluation — the first one by a psychologist who had actually reviewed Mr. Lopez's voluminous files. It found him competent, and he was released on bail late last month.

"Without having the documents," Kirk Heilbrun, a Drexel University psychologist, wrote in his March 2 evaluation, "I would have concluded that his account of this entire series of events sounded both grandiose and delusional. Having

reviewed these documents, however, I would not describe his account as delusional.”

On Friday, the United States attorney’s office in Delaware said it had taken the “exceedingly rare” step of dropping the charges. “We have not hesitated to do so when the facts and law support such a decision,” a statement said.

In an interview last week, Mr. Lopez’s voice broke as he described his prison ordeal. “Nobody deserves to get dragged through what I got dragged through, along with my family,” he said. “It’s sad that when someone does something with righteous intentions and gets treated by the government this way.”

By his own admission, Mr. Lopez knew almost nothing about the Islamic State before 2014. Athletic and fun-loving, he had managed an Italian restaurant for years before becoming a car salesman. He became addicted to painkillers for a while, but he kicked the habit and has been off drugs for several years, he said. “Toby is your regular guy,” said Mary Roloff, who is married to Mr. Lopez’s half brother, Edward.

At first, Mr. Lopez said, he started insulting people who praised the Islamic State on Twitter. Then he decided to learn more about his social media adversaries. He picked up a few Islamic terms online and began to engage the terrorist group’s supporters, even quoting the Quran to counter them. He found the anonymity of the Internet intoxicating. As he put it, nobody knew he was “little Toby, the car salesman from Delaware.”

On Google, Mr. Lopez discovered that one man who had engaged him on Twitter, calling himself @shishaniomar, seemed to be Omar al-Shishani, or Omar the Chechen, the nom de guerre of the military commander of the Islamic State. Soon the two were regularly chatting on Skype. By early November 2014, he had left his job, agreeing with his boss that his online life had become a distraction.

The man who claimed to be the Islamic State commander regaled him with tales of battle, grumbled about condescending Arab bosses and called Mr. Lopez “brother.” The man confided that he did not believe that Islam condoned the taking of women and children as slaves. Soon he asked Mr. Lopez to raise ransom to free hundreds of members of the Yazidi religious minority held hostage by the Islamic State.

When relatives gathered for Thanksgiving in 2014 at the Roloffs’ home near Baltimore, Mr. Lopez showed them jihadist videos and text message exchanges with Islamic State fans.

“We love ‘CSI,’” Ms. Roloff said. “We thought, ‘This is really cool.’ But some of what he shared with us — like videos of kids hanging from a tree — started to scare me. It was beyond our comprehension.”

Mr. Lopez contacted the F.B.I., and two agents visited his home and interviewed him, he said. Through Allan Ripp, a New York public relations specialist he found online, Mr.

Lopez also contacted The New York Times. Two reporters visited him in January 2015 and spent several hours reviewing his emails, texts and audio recordings.

But after checking with experts, the reporters concluded that Mr. Lopez was talking not to the real, red-bearded Mr. Shishani, but to an impostor. The actual commander did not speak fluent English, and the language overheard in the background of Skype calls was not Chechen, as the impostor claimed, but Kurdish. His multiple Twitter accounts had an antic tone; he once posted a “Simpsons” cartoon about the Islamic State.

“It’s definitely a fake,” Joanna Paraszczuk, a British journalist and researcher who tracks the Chechens fighting in Syria, said by email. She said the same man had duped an Australian radio station into interviewing him but later admitted that he was not the ISIS commander, but a Kurdish immigrant to Scandinavia.

The man’s motive appeared to be money: He asked Mr. Lopez to bring the ransom to Sweden, supposedly to be forwarded to Syria.

When the Times reporters told Mr. Lopez they did not believe he was dealing with the real Islamic State commander, he grew angry. He was hearing similar skepticism from the F.B.I., according to email exchanges with Jeffrey A. Reising, a senior counterterrorism agent based in Wilmington, Del.

From the emails, it appears that Mr. Reising was exploring Mr. Lopez’s contacts even as he tried to persuade him to disengage from the online jihadist world. But Mr. Lopez connected with a second Twitter user claiming to be an Islamic State figure who could get American hostages released, and Mr. Lopez tried to contact several hostages’ families. At least one of them complained to the F.B.I.

Convinced that he could save lives, Mr. Lopez brushed off Mr. Reising’s warnings. He wrote dozens of emails to the F.B.I., some proposing that he talk to the bureau’s director or even to President Obama. He focused on the case of Kayla Mueller, a 26-year-old American aid worker being held by the Islamic State. His online contacts had suggested that she might be freed.

Despite his doubts about Mr. Lopez’s exploits, Mr. Reising appeared to believe he might have stumbled across useful information. “Can you provide all contact information for the person on that chat?” he wrote to Mr. Lopez on Feb. 4, 2015, referring to an exchange with a purported Islamic State representative.

Near midnight, Mr. Lopez excitedly emailed the F.B.I. agent. “I want to bring her home alive,” he wrote. “I know I can do it and I will look the PRESIDENT in his eyes and tell him exactly that ... Anything else your fooling yourself and your in denial!! Good night!”

The weary F.B.I. agent replied: “Toby....Seriously. Get some sleep.”



When Ms. Mueller was reported killed two days later in an airstrike, Mr. Lopez was furious and blamed the F.B.I. for not cooperating with him. His messages to the bureau grew more defiant.

"Any attempt to arrest me will be treated as a hostile act," he wrote to Mr. Reising. By then, agents had been informed by the Delaware State Police that Mr. Lopez's mother, Joyce Lopez, had told them that her son had a shotgun and was in a "poor mental state." Mrs. Lopez, 78, said recently that she had simply asked whether the gun had to be registered.

By Feb. 11, the F.B.I. had had enough. Mrs. Lopez arrived home to find her house surrounded. "Cars all over the place," she recalled. "Toby was standing there with his hands up. I said, 'What's wrong?'"

The authorities had interpreted Mr. Lopez's heated emails as a "threat to injure" Mr. Reising, a crime with a sentence of up to five years. Mr. Lopez said later that he had threatened only to expose what he considered government bungling to the news media. He was locked up, and federal prosecutors soon sought a court order for a mental health assessment.

At an initial court hearing in Wilmington, family members urged Mr. Lopez's public defender, Daniel I. Siegel, to collect the records of his online contacts, which they thought showed his intentions were good. By their account, Mr. Siegel ignored their pleas. "He just said, 'Your brother is very sick and he needs help,'" Ms. Roloff recalled.

Mr. Lopez said Mr. Siegel never came to see him in the year that followed, as he cycled through the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Manhattan (where he surprised a few terrorism defendants with Arabic phrases); a medical prison in Butner, N.C., (where he played on the softball team); and three other facilities.

The first two psychological evaluations found that Mr. Lopez was suffering from "delusional disorder, grandiose type." To Mr. Lopez's distress, Mr. Siegel did not contest the findings.

A year into Mr. Lopez's imprisonment, after complaints from his family and reporters' inquiries, Edson A. Bostic, the chief federal public defender in Delaware, took over the case. He quickly obtained from the family the files documenting Mr. Lopez's online history and arranged for the third psychological assessment.

Dr. Heilbrun, the Drexel psychologist, declared in his report that if Mr. Lopez had not been talking with the real Mr. Shishani (who was killed last month), then someone posing as the Islamic State commander had pulled off "a clever, detailed, and well-constructed hoax."

In a statement on Friday, Mr. Bostic called the case "a complex matter" and praised Mr. Siegel's record of representing indigent clients. But he said the complaints from

Mr. Lopez and his family would be investigated. Mr. Siegel did not respond to emails seeking comment.

Now that the charges have been dropped, Mr. Lopez, who missed two family weddings while in prison, is reconnecting with friends and relatives.

"All over you see those billboards that say, 'See Something; Say Something,'" said Tana Stevens, Mr. Lopez's sister. "He tried to do that. And they basically kidnapped him for 14 months."

Mr. Lopez said he had consulted lawyers and was considering a lawsuit against the government officials responsible for his incarceration. "If I hadn't gotten another evaluation, I might still be sitting down at Butner, with a needle in my arm," he said. "This was the United States of America, flexing its muscles on me."

## **APNewsBreak: Feds Nix Case Over Purported Hostage Negotiator**

By Randall Chase

[Associated Press](#), April 22, 2016

WILMINGTON, Del. — Federal prosecutors on Friday dropped criminal charges against a former car salesman who had aggravated the FBI with claims he was negotiating with Islamic State militants to free Western hostages.

The decision to drop the case against Toby Juan Lopez came less than a month after prosecutors agreed he was competent to stand trial, and on the eve of a preliminary hearing next week at which FBI agent Jeffrey Reising would have faced questions under oath about his communications with Lopez.

Lopez had been charged with threatening Reising in a February 2015 email after being told to stop trying to contact families of hostages and people he believed to be Islamic State militants, including ethnic Chechen military commander Omar al-Shishani, who reportedly was killed in a U.S. airstrike last month.

David Fitz, a spokesman for the FBI in Baltimore, referred questions Friday to Kim Reeves, a spokeswoman with the U.S. Attorney's Office in Delaware.

"When new information, facts or analysis becomes available that affects the viability of a case, justice requires that prosecutors evaluate that information and, in some instances, dismiss charges," Reeves said in an emailed statement, which did not include any details. "While dismissing a charged case is exceedingly rare, we have not hesitated to do so when the facts and law support such a decision."

After spending more than a year in federal custody, Lopez was placed on home detention last month after prosecutors agreed with a defense expert's report that Lopez was mentally competent, contradicting prior evaluations by two government psychologists, including one who concluded

that he suffered from a delusional disorder. At one point, prosecutors planned to seek court approval to have Lopez forcefully medicated.

Lopez, who was never indicted, has steadfastly maintained that there was nothing wrong with him, and has suggested that government officials were trying to marginalize him and keep him quiet for fear of being embarrassed. He said last month that the government tried to “break” him, but failed.

“He’s so happy. He’s so excited,” his mother, Joyce Lopez, said Friday after the case was dismissed. “He’s heading down to the beach with some of his friends.”

Lopez’s attorney, chief federal public defender Edson Bostic, said he was appreciative of the government’s decision to dismiss the complaint.

“This has been a very complex matter,” Bostic said. “I believe that the dismissal is an appropriate thing that was entered after due consideration by all concerned.”

Prosecutors had initially indicated they might challenge the defense expert’s conclusion that Lopez was competent, saying that a follow-up study by a government psychiatrist would require him to spend six more months behind bars.

Meanwhile, Bostic told the judge in a letter earlier this month that the defense would call Reising as a witness at a preliminary hearing and had asked the government to turn over emails, texts and other materials relevant to the case and the alleged threat made by Lopez.

Lopez has several audio recordings of what he claims are Skype conversations with al-Shishani, which he shared with the government. He also has copies of email communications with Reising and phone records documenting conversations with FBI agent Nile Donahue.

At one point, however, Lopez began complaining that the FBI was not cooperating with him and was putting the lives of hostages, including American Kayla Mueller, in danger. In an email, he called Reising a liar and said he deserves “whatever ends up happening to you.”

Fitz declined to comment last month when asked whether the FBI believes Lopez had indeed been communicating with al-Shishani or other Islamic State terrorists, or whether Lopez provided any useful information to federal authorities.

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[Associated Press](#), April 24, 2016

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## **White House To Make Decision On 9/11 Report By June: Bob Graham**

By Diane Bartz

[Reuters](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## **White House Poised To Release Secret Pages From 9/11 Inquiry**

By Deb Riechmann

[Associated Press](#), April 24, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – The Obama administration will likely soon release at least part of a 28-page secret chapter from a congressional inquiry into 9/11 that may shed light on possible Saudi connections to the attackers.

The documents, kept in a secure room in the basement of the Capitol, contain information from the joint congressional inquiry into “specific sources of foreign support for some of the Sept. 11 hijackers while they were in the United States.”

Bob Graham, who was co-chairman of that bipartisan panel, and others say the documents point suspicion at the Saudis. The former Democratic senator from Florida says an administration official told him that intelligence officials will decide in the next several weeks whether to release at least parts of the documents. The disclosure would come at a time

of strained U.S. relations with Saudi Arabia, a long-time American ally.

“I hope that decision is to honor the American people and make it available,” Graham told NBCs’ “Meet the Press” on Sunday. “The most important unanswered question of 9/11 is, did these 19 people conduct this very sophisticated plot alone, or were they supported?”

Tim Roemer, who was a member of both the joint congressional inquiry as well as the 9/11 Commission and has read the secret chapter three times, described the 28 pages as a “preliminary police report.”

“There were clues. There were allegations. There were witness reports. There was evidence about the hijackers, about people they met with – all kinds of different things that the 9/11 Commission was then tasked with reviewing and investigating,” the former Democratic congressman from Indiana said Friday.

Fifteen of the 19 hijackers were citizens of Saudi Arabia. The Saudi government says it has been “wrongfully and morbidly accused of complicity” in the attacks, is fighting extremists and working to clamp down on their funding channels. Still, the Saudis have long said that they would welcome declassification of the 28 pages because it would “allow us to respond to any allegations in a clear and credible manner.”

The pages were withheld from the 838-page report on the orders of President George W. Bush, who said the release could divulge intelligence sources and methods. Still, protecting U.S.-Saudi diplomatic relations also was believed to have been a factor.

Ben Rhodes, President Barack Obama’s deputy national security adviser, said Obama asked National Intelligence director James Clapper to review the papers for possible declassification.

“When that’s done we’d expect that there will be some degree of declassification that provides more information,” Rhodes told reporters in Riyadh last week where Obama met with King Salman and other Saudi leaders. The White House says the 28 pages did not come up during discussions.

Neither the congressional inquiry nor the subsequent 9/11 Commission found any evidence that the Saudi government or senior Saudi officials knowingly supported those who orchestrated the attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people. But Graham, the relatives of victims and some lawmakers think there is reason to further probe possible Saudi links.

Roemer said many questions remain about the roles of Fahad al Thumairy, an official at the Saudi consulate in Los Angeles who allegedly helped two of the hijackers find housing and transportation after they arrived in Southern California. Al Thumairy was later denied entry into the United States in May 2003 after the State Department alleged that he might be involved in terrorist activity. Roemer also wants

to know more about Omar al Bayoumi, who was strongly suspected of being a Saudi spy and was alleged to have been helpful to the hijackers.

"We did not discover ... Saudi government involvement at the highest level of the 9/11 attacks," Roemer said. But he added: "We certainly did not exonerate the Saudis. ... Saudi was a fertile ground for fundraising for al-Qaida. Some of these issues continue to be problems today. That's why we need to continue to get to the bottom of this."

The online 28pages.org, an Internet site pushing to get the documents released, points to another document declassified in July 2015 that outlined ways in which the commission could examine possible Saudi links.

The 47-page document lists several pages of individuals of interest and suggests questions that could be pursued. One name is suspected al-Qaida operative Ghassan al Sharbi.

Al Sharbi, who was taking flight lessons in the Phoenix area before 9/11, was captured in 2002 in the same place in Pakistan as Abu Zubaydah, a top al-Qaida trainer who was apprehended and waterboarded dozens of times by U.S. interrogators.

The document said that after al Sharbi was captured, the FBI discovered some documents buried nearby. One was al Sharbi's pilot certificate inside an envelope from the Saudi Embassy in Washington, although it's unclear whether the license had been mailed by the embassy or if the envelope was simply being reused.

A CIA's inspector general report in June 2015 said there had been no reliable reporting confirming Saudi government "involvement with and financial support for terrorist prior to 9/11." But it also that people in the CIA's Near East Division and Counterterrorism Center "speculated that dissident sympathizers within the government may have aided al-Qaida." The rest of chapter, titled "Issues related to Saudi Arabia," is blacked out.

A bill directing the president to release the 28-page chapter was introduced in the Senate, and nearly three dozen Republicans and Democrats in the House are backing a similar resolution.

Reps. Walter Jones, R-N.C., Stephen Lynch, D-Mass., and Thomas Massie, R-Ky., wrote Obama last week saying they don't think releasing the chapter will harm national security and could provide closure for the victims' families.

California Rep. Adam Schiff, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, has read the pages and said this past week that while he wants to see them declassified to end speculation about what they say, releasing them will not quell the debate over the issue.

"As is often the case, the reality is less damaging than the uncertainty," he said.

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## Rights Groups Want White House Framework Banning Monitoring Of Muslims

By Julian Hattem

[The Hill](#), April 22, 2016

More than two dozen civil liberties and human rights groups on Friday pressed the White House to make sure anti-terrorism efforts don't infringe on people's ability to freely practice their religion in peace.

Especially given the "current climate of scapegoating and anti-Muslim bigotry," the groups wrote, the Obama administration should be sure to implement policies making it difficult for a future president to use current policies to monitor Muslims.

"It is all too easy to imagine a subsequent administration seizing on CVE [countering violent extremism] programs that are now in development as vehicles for systematic and large-scale profiling, patrolling and surveillance of American Muslim and communities presumed to be Muslim," the 27 organizations wrote in the letter to White House counterterrorism adviser Jen Easterly.

Many rights groups have routinely been concerned about CVE programs, which aim to prevent violent extremism by encouraging teachers and community leaders to discuss ways that people become radicalized. Critics worry that the programs quickly amount to having people spy on their neighbors, and allow police to use schools, community centers and religious institutions to gather intelligence.

"Among our concerns is that law enforcement may use CVE as a pretext for intelligence gathering and other activities that treat entire communities as suspect," the groups wrote Friday.

Rights advocates have been outraged at suggestions by Republican presidential candidates Donald Trump and Ted Cruz that law enforcement officials should monitor mosques and Muslim communities.

On the heels of the terrorist attacks in Brussels last month, Cruz said that the U.S. should "patrol and secure Muslim neighborhoods before they become radicalized."

The Obama administration has advocated for CVE-style programs, but has so far refrained from the kind of federal guidance for which the rights groups have advocated.

The organizations say that the White House should issue a federal framework for which kinds of policies to avoid, that could be implemented by federal, state and local agencies.

"[A]ppropriate strategies would treat communities holistically and address a range of needs and social problems, rather than through the singular lens of national security or law enforcement," they wrote.

Among the groups signing Friday's letter were Amnesty International, the American Civil Liberties Union, the U.S. Council of Muslim Organizations and the Brennan Center for Justice.

## **CYBER NEWS**

### **U.S. Directs Cyberweapons At ISIS For First Time**

By David E. Sanger

[New York Times](#), April 24, 2016

While officials declined to discuss the details of their operations, interviews with more than a half-dozen senior and midlevel officials indicate that the effort has begun with a series of "implants" in the militants' networks to learn the online habits of commanders. Now, the plan is to imitate them or to alter their messages, with the aim of redirecting militants to areas more vulnerable to attack by American drones or local ground forces.

In other cases, officials said, the United States may complement operations to bomb warehouses full of cash by using cyberattacks to interrupt electronic transfers and misdirect payments.

The fact that the administration is beginning to talk of its use of the new weapons is a dramatic change. As recently as four years ago, it would not publicly admit to developing offensive cyberweapons or confirm its role in any attacks on computer networks.

That is partly because cyberattacks inside another nation raise major questions over invasion of sovereignty. But in the case of the Islamic State, officials say a decision was made that a bit of boasting might degrade the enemy's trust in its communications, jumbling and even deterring some actions.

"Our cyberoperations are disrupting their command-and-control and communications," Mr. Obama said this month, emerging from a meeting at the C.I.A. headquarters in Langley, Va., on countering the Islamic State.

Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, offered broad outlines of the new campaign against the Islamic State, which is also known as ISIS or ISIL, during a news conference in February.

"We're trying to both physically and virtually isolate ISIL, limit their ability to conduct command and control, limit their ability to communicate with each other, limit their ability to conduct operations locally and tactically," he said.

"But I'll be one of the first ones arguing that that's about all we should talk about," General Dunford said. "We want

them to be surprised when we conduct cyberoperations. And, frankly, they're going to experience some friction that's associated with us and some friction that's just associated with the normal course of events in dealing in the information age."

In an interview this month in Colorado Springs, where she talked to Air Force Academy cadets, Mr. Obama's national security adviser, Susan E. Rice, said that the fight against the Islamic State had to be thought of as a multifront war — and that computers were just another weapon in the arsenal.

"It should not be taken out of proportion — it is not the only tool," she said when asked about Mr. Work's "cyberbombs" comment. In fact, some of Mr. Work's colleagues acknowledged that they had winced when he used the term, because government lawyers have gone to extraordinary lengths to narrowly limit cyberattacks to highly precise operations with as little collateral damage as possible.

But Ms. Rice said the Islamic State had "uniquely utilized cyberspace" to recruit, to communicate over encrypted apps and to coordinate its operations from Syria to Europe.

Ms. Rice would not comment on reports from officials in the Pentagon that Mr. Obama had asked — quite pointedly — in the fall why the arsenal of cyberweapons that had been developed at a cost of hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars was not being utilized in the fight against the terrorist group.

Several officials said that Mr. Carter had complained that Cyber Command was too focused on traditional adversaries, and that he had set deadlines for a new array of operational cyberplans aimed at the Islamic State. Those were ultimately delivered by Adm. Michael S. Rogers, the commander of Cyber Command and the director of the National Security Agency.

But inside Fort Meade in Maryland, home to the N.S.A. and Cyber Command, initial demands from the White House generated some resistance, according to officials involved in the debate.

The N.S.A. has spent years penetrating foreign networks — the Chinese military, Russian submarine communications, Internet traffic and other targets — placing thousands of "implants" in those networks to allow it to listen in.

But those implants can be used to manipulate data or to shut a network down. That frequently leads to a battle between the N.S.A. civilians — who know that to make use of an implant is to blow its cover — and the military operators who want to strike back. N.S.A. officials complained that once the implants were used to attack, the Islamic State militants would stop the use of a communications channel and perhaps start one that was harder to find, penetrate or de-encrypt.

"It's a delicate balance," Ms. Rice said. "We still have to keep our eye on the Russia-China state-sponsored activity, but this was a new mission, one where we have to balance the collection equities against the disruption equities."

In Britain, the Government Communications Headquarters, the country's equivalent to the N.S.A., has been going through a similar debate. It is a familiar one for the British: According to an oft-repeated legend from World War II, Winston Churchill decided to let the Nazis bomb Coventry, at a cost of hundreds of lives, rather than reveal that Britain had used its Enigma machine to crack German codes. (There is a historical dispute about whether Churchill knew the city was to be targeted.)

Lisa O. Monaco, a deputy national security adviser and Mr. Obama's top adviser for counterterrorism, has led efforts examining how to disrupt the use of social media for recruiting. She has met technology executives in Silicon Valley; Austin, Tex.; Boston; and Washington to come up with a more integrated plan for both taking down social media posts and encouraging the development of a counternarrative.

One effort has included amplifying the testimony of Islamic State recruits who have escaped and now describe the group's brutality and question its adherence to the true tenets of Islam. Facebook, YouTube and Twitter are also growing more efficient at finding and removing Islamic State posts — which they can take down without court orders because the posts are a violation of the companies' terms of service, executives say.

But Ms. Monaco suggested that the effort was just beginning. "We are not going to kill our way out of this conflict," she said. "And we are not going to delete our way out of it, either." Continue reading the main story

## **NSA Deputy Sounds Alarm Over Critical Infrastructure Insecurity**

By Andrew Blake

[Washington Times](#), April 22, 2016

Security flaws affecting computer systems that control critical infrastructure are being explored by foreign adversaries as hackers find new ways to wage potentially debilitating cyber attacks, said NSA Deputy Director Richard Ledgett Jr.

Mr. Ledgett, speaking Thursday during a cybersecurity summit at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York, acknowledged that systems used by utility companies, telecommunication providers and other critical infrastructure components are increasingly susceptible to cyberattacks.

"There's no doubt that Chinese military planners understand the importance of industrial control systems and the critical infrastructure they control," Mr. Ledgett said during

his keynote address at the Joint Service Academy Cyber Security Summit, according to the Pentagon.

Industrial control systems haven't always been prime targets for hackers, Mr. Ledgett said, partly on account of being composed of "weird software with proprietary system." As those technologies became less obscure, however, hackers have routinely discovered unpatched security flaws that affect the control panels of a growing number of critical infrastructure components.

"Any system is only as strong as its weakest link," Mr. Ledgett said. "You don't need to cause physical harm to affect critical infrastructure assets. Today, anyone with a computer and a fairly decent level of knowledge and an Internet connection can pose a very serious threat to an individual, a business, a city and a foreign nation.

In February, President Obama requested \$19 billion in federal funding to bankroll a new suite of cybersecurity initiatives intended to strengthen critical infrastructure components and other "important technologies."

"It's only a matter of the when, not the if, you are going to see a nation state, a group or an actor engage in destructive behavior against critical infrastructure of the United States," NSA Director Adm. Mike Rogers told attendees at a security conference in San Francisco the following month.

## **Key US Infrastructure Is Under Major Threat From Cyber Attacks**

By Russ Read

[Daily Caller](#), April 22, 2016

One of the National Security Agency's (NSA) highest ranking officials warned Wednesday of a serious threat posed to the nation's critical infrastructure from potential cyber threats.

Speaking during a keynote address to a cyber security summit in West Point, N.Y., NSA Deputy Director Richard Ledgett warned the U.S. infrastructure is far too dependent on what are called industrial control systems, or ICS.

"There's no doubt that Chinese military planners understand the importance of industrial control systems and the critical infrastructure they control," said Ledgett.

ICS programs are pieces of software that control the processes of infrastructure systems like power grids, oil pipelines and water distribution and treatment centers. The problem with ICS, explained Ledgett, is they are not secure and many companies have failed to update them.

"Adversaries are seeing what they can get by compromising those industrial control systems," said Ledgett. He pointed to a test conducted in 2007 where government researchers conducted a test of the U.S. power grid to check for vulnerabilities. Referred to as the "Aurora Generator Experiment," the test showed the massive generators which

produce much of the electricity in the U.S. could be infiltrated through a cyber attack, causing them to eventually malfunction. Researchers claimed the test showed that should an adversary conduct a larger, coordinated attack on multiple generators, entire regions of the U.S. could lose power for months.

Dr. Mike Lloyd, a cyber security guru with over 20 years experience and the chief technology officer of security company RedSeal, agrees U.S. infrastructure is woefully unprepared for a cyber attack.

"We have a very fragile infrastructure," said Lloyd during a telephone interview with The Daily Caller News Foundation. "We need to get better at protecting ourselves."

Lloyd pointed to a 2013 cyber attack on a small New York dam as a recent example of the danger the U.S. faces. A group of Iranian hackers utilized a technique that Lloyd calls "Google dorking" to probe the network that runs the dam's ICS. The technique is fairly simple: using a Google platform, hackers essentially ping the various "doors" of networks to see which will let you in. Lloyd says the scan sends back millions or even billions of vulnerabilities which the hackers can then test. In the case of the New York dam, it is most likely the hackers targeted a broad swath of U.S. systems and found the dam was particularly poorly secured. Though the probe did not cause any physical damage, Lloyd said that it exposed the weakness of the U.S. infrastructure.

With more and more devices and networks connected to the Internet, the "target surface" for U.S. adversaries becomes larger and larger. Lloyd recognizes this is inevitable and is worth doing to make life easier for Americans, but he also believes we need to prepare our system to withstand a cyber attack and keep going. Based on his experience, most companies, industries and other key facets of the U.S. economy are not prepared to operate while containing a cyber attack.

"America is the tall kid in dodge ball, but we are [also] the easier target," said Lloyd. "We shouldn't think about where the cyber 'Pearl Harbor' will be." Instead, Lloyd believes we need to focus on what can be done now to compartmentalize the problem so we can manage future threats.

## **Industrial Control Systems Vulnerable To Cyber Attacks**

[ExecutiveGov](#), April 24, 2016

Rick Ledgett, deputy director at the National Security Agency, has said that industrial control systems and other critical infrastructure assets are vulnerable to cyber attacks as infrastructure providers fail to address security risks, the Army News Service reported Thursday.

David Vergun writes Ledgett made the remarks in a keynote speech to the Joint Service Academy Cyber Security

Summit hosted by Palo Alto Networks and the Army Cyber Institute at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y.

"You don't need to cause physical harm to affect critical infrastructure assets," said Ledgett, who is also NSA's senior civilian lead.

He cited a cyber attack on Ukraine's power grid in December that resulted in a power failure as an example.

Ledgett predicted Internet-of-Things-based devices worldwide to increase from approximately 6.4 billion this year to approximately 20.8 billion by 2020 and that industry should work to address emerging network vulnerabilities with the launch of new software and hardware platforms.

## **Hacking Risks Found In U.S. Army's \$12 Billion Mobile Network**

By Anthony Capaccio

[Bloomberg News](#), April 22, 2016

A \$12 billion mobile Internet network that the U.S. Army is using in Iraq, Afghanistan and Africa has significant cybersecurity vulnerabilities that were found in combat testing.

After a review ordered by the Pentagon's chief weapons buyer, the Army and contractor General Dynamics Corp. are working to improve the systems already in the field and to embed updates into networks that will be deployed through 2028, according to the service.

The assessment conducted by Johns Hopkins University and the Army Research Laboratory "recommended both improvements to user training techniques and procedures and hardware and software enhancements to harden against the cyberthreat," Army spokesman Paul Mehney said in an e-mail. Citing security concerns, he said he couldn't comment on "specific improvements to operational units."

The WIN-T Increment 2 network made by General Dynamics is designed for secure on-the-move voice, data and image transmissions from brigade commanders down to company-level vehicles tearing through terrain. It's already deployed to 11 of the Army's 32 combat brigades. Frank Kendall, the Defense Department's acquisitions chief, approved full production in June.

The network is the latest defense system found to have major cybersecurity vulnerabilities.

One high-profile example is the Navy's Littoral Combat Ship that's designed to perform mine-clearance, submarine-hunting and surface warfare. Michael Gilmore, the Pentagon's director of operational testing, said in January that the vessel had "cybersecurity deficiencies that significantly degrade operational effectiveness."

Kendall directed the independent assessment of the Army's mobile network last year because "cybersecurity vulnerabilities reduced the program's operational capability

and could incur growth cost and schedule delays if significant changes are necessary," the U.S. Government Accountability Office said last month in its annual review of major weapons programs.

The GAO didn't disclose how the system could be broken into or attacked or how its use has been limited because of the risks.

The network's vulnerability poses a difficult challenge because it's "dependent upon the cyberdefense capabilities of all mission command systems" Gilmore said in a separate report.

"General Dynamics Mission Systems is supporting the Army's efforts" to improve cybersecurity "to address the constantly changing threat environment," Carol Smith, a spokeswoman for the Falls Church, Virginia-based contractor, said in an e-mail.

Mehney said the Army program office "continues to incrementally enhance" the network's "cyber-protection capability with additions of a new firewall" and other changes "to ensure the system is less vulnerable to external threats."

## Serious Weaknesses Seen In Cell Phone Networks

By Cory Bennett, The Hill  
[The Hill](#), April 24, 2016

America's digital adversaries may have spent years eavesdropping on officials' private phone conversations through vulnerabilities in the global cell phone network, according to security experts.

A recent "60 Minutes" segment displayed the extent of the weakness, spurring government into action this week. Federal agencies vowed to investigate and Capitol Hill has begun looking into the issue.

Specialists believe countries like China, Russia and Iran have all likely exploited the deficiency to record calls, pilfer phone data and remotely track high-value targets.

"I would be flabbergasted if these foreign governments were not monitoring large numbers of American officials on their cell phones," Rep. Ted Lieu (D-Calif.) told The Hill.

Lieu, who holds a bachelor's degree in computer science, offered up his phone to German computer scientist Karsten Nohl to test the extent of the vulnerability on "60 Minutes." Hackers were able to record Lieu's calls, view his contacts and monitor his movements, armed with just the Los Angeles Democrat's phone number.

Despite the government's pledges to rectify the problem, Lieu and security researchers insist officials have lost valuable time.

The vulnerabilities have been known for several years, and even bubbled up in the media in late 2014. After the flaws came back into the spotlight, Lieu said the government failed to take basic steps.

For instance, he said, "I am still dumbfounded as to why I have yet to see an alert go out to members of Congress."

Most telecom companies use decades-old protocols known as Signaling System No. 7 or SS7 to direct mobile communications around the world.

It is these protocols that are seen as insecure.

"The SS7 network was never designed to be secure," explained Les Goldsmith, a researcher with Las Vegas security firm ESD. "It was originally a cable in Europe. It had no encryption."

But SS7 serves a vital purpose. The network helps keep calls connected as users bounce from cell tower to cell tower, and routes text messages to their final location. It's also how people get service when they travel to another country, outside the reach of their normal carrier.

The problem is that anyone who can gain entry to the SS7 system can also repurpose these signals and intercept calls and texts.

The attack surface is vast. There are over 800 cell phone networks around the world, each with roughly 100 to 200 interlocking roaming agreements with other networks, Goldsmith said.

That means virtually every cell phone network is interconnected, allowing hackers to potentially tap any phone, regardless of location. Lieu's phone, for example, was infiltrated from Germany.

"The smallest carrier in the Middle East ... can actually reach into AT&T and Verizon's network," said Christopher Soghoian, principal technologist for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

And the problem is not going away. SS7 will continue to be used for well over a decade, experts predict.

The system's shortcomings are not news to many security researchers and even to some government officials.

Goldsmith spoke about SS7 vulnerabilities at an industry conference last month, and his firm, ESD, has been briefing governments and telecom carriers on the issue since January of 2015. The first rumblings of the weaknesses appeared in 2010, Soghoian said.

ESD tests carriers' networks to determine the extent of malicious SS7 tracking. One European telecom carrier, Goldsmith said, had one third of its subscriber base being monitored. He suspects a nation state was behind the snooping.

At a House hearing this week, Lieu pressed a top Department of Homeland Security (DHS) cyber official, Andy Ozment, on whether his agency was aware of these SS7 flaws.

Ozment said the DHS had known about the issue since 2014, but could only warn telecom companies about the dangers since the DHS is not a regulatory agency.

After the "60 Minutes report," the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which does regulate



the telecom industry, did announce it would examine the SS7 security concerns.

Soghoian is doubtful the investigation will produce meaningful outcomes. The FCC has made similar pledges previously, he said, and told the ACLU in a meeting last year that it was open to a sit-down with the German researcher from the "60 Minutes" segment. But Soghoian said the agency has since dragged its feet on setting up such a briefing.

In a statement, FCC spokeswoman Kim Hart said the agency had simply decided to refer the SS7 investigation to an FCC-affiliated council composed of industry leaders and federal officials.

That group will offer the FCC recommendations on how it can protect cell phone networks from SS7-related spying, Hart added.

Still, Soghoian feels the FCC "is basically asleep at the wheel." Not because of "ineptitude," he said, but because of "conflicting missions."

The agency is tasked with securing phone networks, but is also under pressure from law enforcement and the intelligence community to preserve America's ability to exploit SS7 for its own surveillance efforts, Soghoian said.

Soghoian pointed to SS7 references in documents leaked by former government contractor Edward Snowden that indicate the National Security Agency has likely used the flaws to its benefit.

"This is a problem that needs to be solved and I suspect will only be solved through congressional attention," Soghoian said.

At least two House committees are considering launching investigations.

Lieu pressed his House Oversight Committee to look into the matter, and Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.), who chairs a key technology subcommittee, told The Hill he was also being "briefed up" on the issue.

But the SS7 flaws are still at the periphery for many Congressional cybersecurity leaders. Several key cyber lawmakers acknowledged to The Hill this week that the topic was either low on the priority list or something they were not yet aware of.

John Marinho, the vice president of cybersecurity and technology for CTIA, an industry group representing wireless communications firms, said hackers need "extraordinary access" to get into the SS7 system.

"That is the equivalent of giving a thief the keys to your house; that is not representative of how U.S. wireless operators secure and protect their networks," he said.

Lieu called the response "bizarre."

"The notion that somehow this flaw is not a big deal because ... your average hacker might not be able to access it?" Lieu said. "That's just a ludicrous response."

Lieu and other privacy advocates like Soghoian want the government to push for officials and members of Congress to adopt end-to-end encrypted chatting apps, such as WhatsApp, which only allow the sender and receiver of a message to see the content. Numerous apps also allow for encrypted phone conversations.

These solutions would prevent much of the SS7 eavesdropping, although they would still leave GPS data exposed.

"After I watched the '60 Minutes' episode," Lieu said, "I went and downloaded WhatsApp," adding that he had encouraged others to do the same.

"Now I do text messages to the extent possible on WhatsApp."

## **Lithuania Govt Websites Hit By Cyberattacks For 3rd Time**

[Associated Press](#), April 24, 2016

VILNIUS, Lithuania (AP) — Lithuanian officials say government websites have been hit by cyberattacks for the third time this month.

The latest so-called denial-of-service attacks disrupted the websites of Parliament and the ministries of finance, defense, agriculture and others for about 30 minutes on Thursday.

Police launched an investigation but couldn't immediately say who was behind the Thursday attacks and those earlier this month. The most intense attacks happened on April 11 during a meeting of Crimean Tartars in Lithuania.

Arvydas Zvirblis, head of the Infobalt cybersecurity committee, said "these coordinated attacks are unpredictable and can cause serious damage." He said Lithuania needs to upgrade its cyber defense capabilities.

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## **McCormack, Correa Partner To Turn DHS IT Buying On Its Head**

[Federal News Radio \(DC\)](#), April 24, 2016

Register for Federal News Radio's Ask the CIO free online chat with DHS CIO Luke McCormack and CPO Soraya Correa on April 27 at 10 a.m.

The Homeland Security Department is turning its approach to buying and implementing technology on its head.

DHS says this next generation concept brings together agile development, open source software and other leading edge ideas.

Luke McCormack, the DHS chief information officer, said the focus initially is on business systems to test out these approaches.

DHS has begun five pilots with different components, and then will take those lessons learned and expand them across the rest of the department.

"In order to do that, we need to have ready access to a variety of technologies, cloud technologies, software development technologies, security technologies, and this is where the close partnership with the procurement organization comes into the fold," McCormack said. "The ability to have real-time access to these emerging technologies is really important to us. The partnership and variety of techniques we are using to do that are really important." DHS CIO Luke McCormack.

Over the last six months McCormack and Soraya Correa, the DHS chief procurement officer, have been collaborating on how to get the department moving in that direction.

Correa said her team has to be ready to respond to the requirements, the timing and how best to acquire these things.

One way Correa has been addressing the move into modern techniques is through the Acquisition Innovations in Motion (AIIM) initiative, which is a set of integrated priorities to be more innovative, agile and engaged with industry. DHS kicked off AIIM in early 2015.

Related to AIIM is the DHS Procurement Innovation Lab (PIL), which Correa's office also runs.

The PIL gives DHS components a virtual safe place to bring ideas on how to streamline and improve the acquisition process. DHS launched the PIL also in 2015.

"We are the leaders of our respective organizations and our teams see us partnering together they start to better understand what we mean," Correa said of her collaboration and coordination with McCormack. "We have to push it down through our organizations, but we have to be talking to each other constantly. Luke and I are leading several initiatives. We meet on a regular basis with our teams to discuss the acquisitions that we have in process and when we are strategizing what we think we want to buy or conceptually what we are thinking about, we are bringing in CIOs and CAOs to have these conversations."

Correa and McCormack agreed this change will not happen overnight and that's why these first five pilots are important.

McCormack said to gain a better understanding in how best to use these modern techniques requires real-world and real time understanding of how they would work.

The five pilots include:

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service's verification system

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's flood insurance program

FEMA's grants management program

The Immigration and Custom Enforcement's Commercial Vehicle Information System

The Transportation Security Administration's Technology Infrastructure Modernization program

"They are in various stages and based on those stages there are various types of procurement activities that need to happen. So through those pilots, we learn how to implement. We learn how to acquire. We learn how to govern. We learn how to deliver," McCormack said. "And this is all about focusing on the operator and delivering these services to our operating components."

U.S. CIS, led by its CIO Mark Schwartz, has been ahead of most of the other components in trying out a different approach to system development. Schwartz said recently in an interview with Federal News Radio that he's breaking the modernization effort into pieces, moving it to the cloud, making updates and then making that service available to the agency. He said eventually, the new pieces of the system become an entire system in their own right.

McCormack said USCIS's efforts really are considered the alpha stage of where DHS as a whole is heading.

"This is about agile. This is about continuous delivery. This is about modular capability. These are the common best practices that are available, that we've all learned and are tried and true in the private sector and have had a lot of success in the public sector, and we are trying to take the best of all that and bring it together," he said. "We want it to be a common practice, an institutional practice."

He said there is a lot to think about from testing to security to governance to speed to oversight.

"We want the friction level to be very low for the components and that is where the leadership at the department comes into play on the oversight, on the ability to acquire these goods and services very quickly so they can focus on delivery to mission," McCormack said. DHS chief procurement officer Soraya Correa.

Correa said to reduce that friction from the beginning of the process her staff, McCormack's staff and the component's technology, acquisition and mission staffs get together to "white board" what the component is trying to buy and how industry sells that product or service—basically starting with the end first and working backwards.

"When we talk about agile development, there are multiple ways that we can structure the contract and how we design that structure will be largely driven by the project itself, how that project wants to work, how they want to place their orders and how they want to deliver the ultimate product or service," she said. "When we talk about building the procurement, instead of focusing on how we structure the contract to make the buy, we go into the next step which is how are you going to use the contract once it's awarded? That is essential. If I understand the who, what, where, why

and how you are going to want to order, then I can structure the contract right in the first place.”

Correa said then it’s a matter of laying out their vision and concept to industry to get feedback. By the time DHS goes out with a solicitation, it understands the best way to make the program work.

McCormack said real-time access, good competition, the ability to consume the technology by the drink or by the slice, and the ability to update technology when necessary are the hallmarks of the approach.

Beyond moving to an agile or iterative approach to projects, McCormack said he’s also focused on cybersecurity, including implementing the continuous diagnostics and mitigation (CDM) program.

He said DHS is piloting the first piece of CDM in the National Capital area.

“We will get through that sometime in early May and focus is to have that fully implemented across the department by the end of this fiscal year,” McCormack said. “It’s going very well, and as we learn and experience different things we give that feedback early to National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD) so they can use that and roll into the other agencies that are rolling that out.”

McCormack said DHS also recently restructured its data center contracts to buy the services based on usage or consumption.

“That’s the first step into this open source, open market capability where we will use our private cloud services when that makes sense and we will also get access to the public cloud services using FedRAMP, and we will have a hybrid configuration. We are trying to lay a framework down so when it makes sense to use our private cloud services they are available, economically viable and you have ready access to it. You also have same sort of capability in the public cloud when it makes sense to hybrid into that public cloud service that will be available.”

## **Hackers Accessed Personal Info Of 831 Members Of U.K. Defense Community**

By Andrew Blake

[Washington Times](#), April 22, 2016

A security breach suffered year by a British defense contractor allowed for the personally identifiable information of hundreds of individuals with high-level security clearances to become compromised, The Register reported on Friday.

Following up on an incident that came to light in November, documents obtained by Freedom of Information Act requests revealed to The Register this week that upwards of 831 members of Britain’s defense community were affected when Niteworks, a government-affiliated business networking group, was breached by hackers.

Members of the Niteworks forum received an email in November indicating hackers had attacked a database containing account information, and were told at the time that no sensitive government information had been accessed. Because organizations that work with the Ministry of Defense are obliged to immediately report “any security incident involving MoD owned, processed or generated information” with the government, The Register has since been able to acquire email exchanges detailing the scope of the breach.

According to those emails, whomever breached Niteworks subsequently accessed “the personal data of MoD and defense industrial partner staff which was limited to name, organization and email address” pertaining to the 831 account holders. Passwords were also accessed, the correspondence revealed, but were protected with strong encryption.

Although the compromised data reportedly consisted of only names, affiliations and email addresses, cybercriminals could nonetheless capitalize off of a list of defense contractors by using the information to launch targeted attacks specifically crafted to be attractive to military members. The U.S Department of Homeland Security’s Industrial Control Systems Cybersecurity Emergency Response Team, or ICS-CERT, said that it was aware of nearly 100 attacks against the critical manufacturing sector in 2015 that involved the use of so-called “spear phishing” attacks directed at specific targets.

Emails “were sent to the 831 non-suspicious account addresses informing them of the breach, advising them to change passwords in any other sites using the same combination of email address and password as was used at niteworks.net and warning them of the increased likelihood of phishing attacks against their registered email address,” according to an email cited by Niteworks. Nearly half of those emails, however, were “returned as undeliverable,” suggesting whomever breached Niteworks accessed a database that was largely useless.

## **Dutch Police Seize Encrypted Communication Network With 19,000 Users**

[Reuters](#), April 22, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## **Tech’s Plan To Encrypt Web Now Covers “Millions” Of Sites**

By Cory Bennett, The Hill

[The Hill](#), April 22, 2016

A tech sector initiative to secure internet browsing for the entire web now covers millions of websites.

The campaign, Let's Encrypt, offers encryption certificates to websites, free of charge. As of Thursday, Let's Encrypt had issued two million certificates. Each certificate protects multiple websites.

That's "millions and millions of sites" now securing internet traffic, said the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), a digital rights advocate behind Let's Encrypt.

"This rapid adoption has already made Let's Encrypt one of the world's largest public certificate authorities by number of certificates issued," EFF said in a blog post.

A cross-section of the tech industry is backing the effort.

EFF, Firefox manufacturer Mozilla and researchers at the University of Michigan co-founded the project. Tech giant Cisco Systems and cloud services company Akamai then came on as founding co-sponsors. After the launch, Silicon Valley bigwigs such as Google and Facebook also joined as sponsors.

Since Edward Snowden exposed a variety of U.S. surveillance programs, internet companies have worked to boost their security by implementing HTTPS, an encrypted version of basic HTTP, which is how all data moves around the internet.

While several prominent services, including major social networks and banking websites, now encrypt their traffic by default, the vast majority of websites do not.

EFF said "almost all" of Let's Encrypt certificates are going to these websites that had "never supported" HTTPS.

"Let's Encrypt is steadily helping to make HTTPS encryption more and more conveniently available to everyone, across the entire web," EFF said.

The spread of encryption has caused tension between the tech community and the government.

While digital companies insist that widespread encryption is essential to global digital security and online privacy, federal officials warn that the technology is impeding legitimate law enforcement investigations.

Sens. Richard Burr (R-N.C.) and Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) — leaders of the Intelligence Committee — recently released draft legislation that would force companies to decrypt data upon government request.

## **Big Paydays Force Hospitals To Prepare For Ransomware Attacks**

[NBC News](#), April 23, 2016

Infected by ransomware, hospitals around the country have been forced to pay hefty sums to criminal hackers.

One of the most extreme cases took place in February, when Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center handed over \$17,000 to hackers who took over its systems. Since then, two other hospitals in California, as well as in Kentucky and Maryland, were also hit.

While ransomware isn't new, it was rare in the past for hospitals to be targeted, according to Kevin Haley, director of Symantec Security Response.

What changed? That \$17,000 payday made headlines.

"This was a very public case of a hospital paying a great deal of money to make a problem go away," Haley told NBC News. "I think it led to the targeting of these organizations."

It wouldn't be such a pressing problem if hackers were attacking other types of businesses. But hospital computers contain a wealth of sensitive data from patients, and staff need to be able to communicate 24 hours a day. The rise of smart medical devices, which can also be hacked, have raised the stakes even higher. More money, more problems

Ransomware is malware that infects a computer and then encrypts files until victims pay to have them unlocked. Usually, hackers target individuals for \$300 to \$400 each, Haley said. But the rise of bitcoin has made demanding large amounts of money more feasible.

Bitcoin is a digital currency traded anonymously. In the past, ransomware was disguised as virus protection software or a message from the FBI in the hopes of tricking someone into handing over their credit card number. With bitcoin, there is no need for deception. Hackers don't need to hide their intentions because the transactions are so difficult to track.

Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center confirmed that it paid 40 bitcoins, equivalent to around \$17,000, to bring its systems back online. The other recent attacks also involved demands for bitcoin. No longer do criminals need complicated schemes to funnel cash.

"Bitcoin takes a little bit of sophistication, but overall, it isn't anything you can't learn by going on Wikipedia," Ed Cabrera, vice president of cybersecurity strategy for Trend Micro, told NBC News.

Pair that with the fact that ransomware isn't incredibly difficult for your average hacker to acquire, and you have a formula for disaster. Overall, according to statistics from Symantec, there was an average of 1,000 ransomware attacks per day in 2015, an increase of 35 percent from the year before. This year, there have been days where that number has reached 4,000. Very few of them are attacks against hospitals, of course, but that could change as hackers eye bigger and bigger ransoms.

"Everybody is running from whatever they were doing to this," Haley said, "because the dollars are big, the risk is low, and it's easy to get into." Hospitals become targets

Last month, ransomware hit three California hospitals — Desert Valley Hospital, Chino Valley Medical Center and Alvarado Hospital Medical Center — run by Prime Healthcare, forcing them to shut down their systems. Radiology and "other ancillary services" were down for several days, a company spokesperson told NBC News, but no patient or employee records were compromised.

In the end, Prime Healthcare was able to recover without paying the ransom. But there is a lot of pressure on hospitals to do the opposite. Hollywood Presbyterian said in a statement sent to NBC News that it handed over the \$17,000 in the “best interest of restoring normal operations” after communications within the hospital were completely shut down.

Unfortunately, preventing these kinds of attacks in the future won’t be easy.

“There are a lot of different layers to a hospital,” Cabrera said. There are patient and outpatient records, insurance documents, internal communications and a host of other files being handled by multiple vendors. And if it all fails? People with serious health problems could be denied care.

Despite how critical their operations are, most hospitals lag behind financial institutions and other businesses that have been dealing with these kinds of attacks for years, according to Cabrera.

“As a whole, you look at healthcare, and it’s not at the leading edge when it comes to cybersecurity,” he said.

Most often, ransomware infects a computer through an email attachment. Hospitals not only need to beef up security so they can detect malicious files earlier, they also have to train employees not to open them. Constantly patching vulnerabilities is vital, too, according to Cabrera.

All of this takes money. The healthcare industry is “ill-prepared” to face these threats, according to a report from ABI Research, because it “spends very little on cybersecurity, comparatively to other regulated critical industries.” The report claims that less than 10 percent of cybersecurity spending by 2020 will be from the healthcare industry.

Hospitals also have to spend to develop contingency plans in case things go wrong. That includes deciding which files get backed up and how often.

Prime Healthcare said that it had “multiple levels of backup” that protected important files from being affected, and that it worked with “national expert incidence response firms” to respond quickly to the attacks.

Fortunately, nobody was hurt during the ransomware incidents. For hospitals, the worst-case scenario involves hackers taking over smart devices that monitor vital signs and deliver drugs.

“If it has an IP address and an attacker can reach it, it becomes fair game,” Cabrera said.

The negatives might not outweigh the positives in healthcare when it comes to the Internet of Things (IoT). By 2025, according to a McKinsey report, remote monitoring with smart devices could create as much as \$1.1 trillion a year in value by improving the health of people with chronic diseases.

Right now, said Cabrera, patients can probably rest easy. It’s not worth it for hackers to go after smart devices, he

said, since traditional networks are so easy to target and lucrative to attack. But IoT security is something that hospitals will increasingly have to watch.

In the end, it falls on the leadership of hospitals to make sure cybersecurity is a priority, because there really isn’t much patients can do to protect themselves.

“If these attacks make hospitals take a hard look at their security and take these threats seriously, in the end it could be a good thing,” Haley said. “This is a risk they can’t ignore anymore.”

## **COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

### **Countering Extremism In Minnesota: A Beautiful Goal, Barely Begun**

[Minneapolis Star Tribune](#), April 24, 2016

Ducking, visitors quickly learn, is a valuable skill for spectators at Coach Ahmed Ismail’s soccer practices at the Phillips Community Center in south Minneapolis.

Ismail’s West Bank Athletic Club, which serves about 180 kids in the Twin Cities’ large Somali-American community, operates on a bare-bones budget. There are no goal nets at today’s practice and just one soccer ball so worn its patches are barely visible. When one of the long-limbed athletes is in scoring position, the ball whizzes by those on the bleachers and smacks the wall behind them, earning a coveted “Gool qurux badan baa dhalisey!” (Beautiful goal!) from Coach Ahmed, as his players call him with affection.

Many of those who come to play are sitting in the bleachers, too. With inadequate funding to rent facilities elsewhere, Ismail, a father of three who drives in from suburban Savage most days, has a partitioned half of the community center’s dated gym for his athletes. That forces him to play the youths in shifts so that each of the 40-plus Somali-American teen boys at this day’s practice gets a turn.

Even those waiting to play, however, are fortunate. There are 140 youngsters on a waiting list who want to play, too, but the nonprofit club’s limited finances mean it can’t expand, a situation that other Somali-American youth development programs struggle with as well.

In other cities, this unmet need would be a local concern. But with poverty plaguing this impoverished immigrant community — the nation’s largest Somali settlement — and terrorist recruiters preying on its young people, the lagging support for organizations directly aiding vulnerable young people is a national security crisis requiring swift remedy. Research shows that social programs are critical in preventing radicalization, yet the federal and state governments are failing to adequately fund basic steps to build community resilience.

Congress and the Obama administration need to work together to get past gridlock and boost funding that has fallen

far short of the rhetoric from President Obama and others about countering radicalization. But given federal inaction, and the economic challenges facing Somali-Americans here, a Minnesota-made solution also is needed.

It's increasingly urgent for the state's lawmakers, business community and respected nonprofits to take their support to the next level. A logical start on it is passing three bills in the Legislature that currently face daunting headwinds in a short session where there's little time and when anti-immigrant rhetoric is shamefully shaping election-year rhetoric. The bills would expand a vital Cedar-Riverside neighborhood center, boost opportunities for youth employment and provide \$2 million for Somali-American youth development grants.

The West Bank Athletic Club would be eligible to compete for these additional grant dollars. More funding would help the organization include kids on its waiting list, buy better equipment, travel or host more tournaments, and perhaps even find alternatives to having Ismail and his volunteer assistants use their own vehicles to pick up kids for practice. "This is my dream," he said.

#### Underfunded 'model'

When presidential contender Hillary Clinton visited the Twin Cities in December, she lauded the "Minnesota model" of combating radicalization in immigrant communities. Visitors from other cities and countries also frequently visit here to learn how the state and city are helping new citizens integrate and build new lives far from their war-torn African homeland.

The Census Bureau estimates the state's Somali-American population at 29,000 to 36,000, with other estimates much higher. Many live in crowded high-rise apartments in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood less than a mile from downtown Minneapolis. A finding in a state task force report released in February illustrates why the state is on the front lines when it comes to countering recruiting by terrorists in Syria and Iraq. Between 2011 and 2015, "15 of the 58 publicly-identified U.S.-originating foreign fighter recruits were from Minnesota," the report said.

It comes as a shock after Clinton's high-profile praise to realize what a work in progress the "Minnesota model" still is and how much of the progress is due less to coordinated federal support than to local officials and organizations stepping up on their own to aid a struggling new immigrant community. Minnesota law enforcement in particular stands out for its early work establishing communication channels, community liaisons and adding Somali-American officers after concerns arose about a decade ago about recruitment by Al-Shabab, an African terror organization. An estimated 22 Minnesotans left to join the group. Now, of course, the outside threat is ISIL in the Middle East.

Many of the state's best-known philanthropies and businesses — including the General Mills Foundation, the Mayo Clinic, the McKnight Foundation, the Otto Bremer

Foundation and the Minneapolis Foundation — have for years consistently funded a variety of Somali community health and development efforts. Still, between 2004 and 2014, annual support dropped from \$948,500 to \$127,800, according to an editorial writer's analysis of the Minnesota Grantmakers Online database, underscoring the need for renewed private help, as well as federal and state aid.

These early local initiatives helped lay the foundation for a burgeoning community of grass-roots organizations such as Ismail's soccer club and innovative private nonprofits such as Youthprise, whose mission is to bridge the gap between large philanthropies and small groups, such as those within the Somali community, that often struggle connecting with wealthy nonprofits. Youthprise's aim is not only innovative grantmaking but "building capacity" in such communities, helping them learn how to apply for grants, for example, and track how funds are spent.

This strong, local foundation would have ensured that federal funds to bolster youth development, education and economic opportunities in the Somali community would have been put to work quickly and effectively — had these funds been appropriated. In 2011, the White House released a national strategy paper that called well-equipped families, resilient communities and local institutions the "best defenses against violent extremist ideologies." In 2014, the U.S. Department of Justice named Minneapolis-St. Paul one of three "Building Resilience" pilot cities, along with Boston and Los Angeles. But it wasn't until 2015 that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) asked Congress for dedicated grants funding, specifically for community organizations that work with at-risk young people.

The amount Congress approved in the federal spending bill that passed in December? A paltry \$10 million. Considering that experts believe \$5 million a year is needed just in Minneapolis-St. Paul, the \$10 million for grants to be distributed nationally, and not just in the pilot cities, is shockingly low, especially compared with the overall DHS budget of \$41 billion.

Asked about the delay and the amount, agency officials provided an excerpt from a recent speech by DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson. He called it a "modest" start and said his agency would try to push a gridlocked Congress for more. At the same time, Johnson urged the tech industry and philanthropies to aid these efforts, suggesting that future federal dollars are far from certain. The U.S. Department of Justice has also sought funding for nationwide efforts to counter extremism, but the money was not appropriated by Congress.

Some federal money has already made its way to Minnesota, with credit due to U.S. Attorney Andrew Luger, who is working to bridge the gap between the rhetoric and the actual sums for building resilient communities. About \$216,000 in U.S. Department of Justice funds, combined with

private contributions, allowed Youthprise to award \$300,000 in one-year grants to six Minnesota organizations to fight youth radicalization. The nonprofit reserved \$100,000 for technical assistance and capacity-building to help applicants who didn't get funded.

Requests for the grant money totaled more than \$1 million, far outstripping the available dollars. "Next time there will be even more qualified applicants," said Youthprise's Karen Kingsley.

#### Motives questioned

U.S. Attorney Luger's advocacy for funding has not come without controversy. Jaylani Hussein, the executive director for the Minnesota chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, is among those alarmed by the funding's dual purpose: countering extremism and improving social services. Refugees from a Somali government that abused and killed its citizens fear there is government surveillance of funded programs. They also worry that the negative spotlight stigmatizes young people and the community, he said.

Hussein also wants to know why it's taken so long to spotlight the community's economic struggles. Somalis have been emigrating to the state since the 1980s. Fifty-seven percent are living at or near the poverty level — the highest percentage of any of the state's ethnic communities, according to a new Minnesota State Demographic Center report. Only 8 percent of Somali-Minnesotans own their own homes, the lowest rate of any of Minnesota's ethnic communities, and 27 percent do not have a vehicle.

Hussein said private organizations and local government need to diversify their staffs and ensure they are meeting today's needs. In particular, Hussein is critical of the Minneapolis and St. Paul parks leadership, saying they are acting like "there are still Polish kids running around northeast Minneapolis" by focusing on T-ball and hockey when newer immigrant communities such as Latinos and Somali-Americans are interested in soccer and other activities.

But Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board officials recently announced that they are taking steps to improve parks in underserved areas — an overdue but nevertheless welcome move. Hussein's criticism also overlooks Minnesota's long history of welcoming refugees and the comparatively generous support provided by both the public and private sectors. It's true that the terror recruitment has highlighted the need for improved support, but Hussein badly underestimates his home state if he thinks that this is the only reason Minnesotans want to help the Somali community here succeed.

Passage of the bills championed in the Minnesota Legislature by Rep. Phyllis Kahn and state Sen. Kari Dziedzic — both DFLers — would not solve all of the community's challenges. But the \$2 million for youth and community development, much of which would go through Youthprise,

would nevertheless quickly benefit young Somali-Minnesotans while helping fill the federal anti-radicalization funding gap. Among those that could benefit from the additional money if the bill is passed: Ismail's West Bank Athletic Club, which received a \$25,000 grant this year through Youthprise and could apply again. Ka Joog, another well-respected youth program that runs arts programs, camping retreats and an urban 4-H program, could be another beneficiary.

Expanding the heavily used Brian Coyle Community Center would be another practical and high-profile step to build trust and bolster the Somali community. The Coyle Center is just across the street from the colorful Cedar-Riverside high-rise apartments. Every last inch of space is used in the 23-year-old building, which houses offices for Somali community organizations, classrooms for language classes and homework help, and a food shelf that serves 1,500 families a month. Half its square footage is a gym that's in constant demand for youth sports, gym classes for a nearby school, community gatherings and even weddings.

Legislators and other potential backers, especially those who are parents, would quickly see the reason why the center's expansion is so important for young Somali-Minnesotans. The Cedar-Riverside neighborhood, one of the metro's most densely populated, is nearly walled off from the surrounding areas by Interstates 35W and 94, the Blue and Green light-rail lines, the Mississippi River, and large University of Minnesota buildings.

Other than tiny Currie Park adjacent to the Coyle Center, there's little space for young kids to play or for older kids to hang out, especially in the winter. The Coyle Center is a safe harbor for those who want to do something other than spend time online, and most kids head there after school, staying until closing to play basketball or get homework help. But the center is maxed out, even as a new apartment building rises on the last scraps of green space across the street.

"The population is going up but the resources are going down" said Abdirahman Mukhtar, the Coyle Center's youth manager.

State lawmakers passed legislation last year providing \$250,000 for anti-terror efforts in Minnesota, a sum that pales compared with the community's needs. The bills introduced this year are aimed more specifically at youth development and are big enough to make a difference. The \$2 million in grants and the \$5 million to \$6 million for adding a second floor to the Coyle Center are manageable amounts — especially when the state has a \$1.03 billion surplus and Gov. Mark Dayton is taking aim at the state's long-standing racial disparities.

Disenfranchisement and hopelessness leave young people here and around the world vulnerable to deceptive promises from afar. Minnesota must do more than the

minimum and hope for the best. It ought to fight back with targeted investments that not only show young Somali-Americans that they matter, but help them realize their dreams of a bright future in their new homeland.

## **NATIONAL SECURITY NEWS**

### **Obama Says Syria Safe Zones Won't Work As Merkel Backs The Idea**

By Justin Sink

[Bloomberg Politics](#), April 24, 2016

U.S. President Barack Obama reaffirmed his doubts about creating "safe zones" for refugees in Syria, even as German Chancellor Angela Merkel stood by the idea as part of a negotiations to halt the five-year civil war.

While Obama and Merkel sought to smooth over any differences at a news conference in Hanover, Germany, on Sunday, the proposal for such a protected zone has been a persistent difference between the close allies.

"As a practical matter, sadly, it is very difficult to see how it would operate short of us being willing to militarily take over a chunk of that country," Obama said. "And that requires a big military commitment" to protect refugees from attacks.

Merkel said safe zones couldn't be imposed from outside but would have to come out of negotiations in Geneva to end the war, identifying areas where people can feel "particularly safe." Obama said he agreed with that version of the proposal.

About a million migrants entered Germany last year, and Merkel has been politically bruised by her handling of the refugee flows. The influx is credited for losses by Merkel's party in three state elections last month, and the rise of Alternative for Germany, a populist-right party whose platform calls for closing the nation's border to "uncontrolled" migration. Obama praised Merkel for her sensitivity to the refugee crisis. 'Behind a Wall'

"Perhaps because she once lived behind a wall herself, Angela understands the aspirations of those who are denied their freedom and seek a better life," Obama said of the German leader, who grew up in Communist East Germany.

"She's on the right side of history on this," Obama said. "For her to take on some very tough politics in order to express not just a humanitarian concern but a practical concern that in this globalized world it is very difficult for us to simply build walls."

Even some Germans who support providing safe haven to the refugees have been dismayed by Merkel's handling of the crisis, and particularly her concessions to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in a bid to slow the flood of migrants. In addition to a 6 billion euro (\$6.7 billion) aid package offered by the European Union, Merkel granted Turkey's request to allow the possible prosecution of Jan

Boehmermann, a German satirist who lampooned Erdogan in a bawdy poem. Members of Merkel's governing coalition said the decision was anti-democratic.

On Saturday, Merkel and other European Union officials visited the Turkish-Syrian border to tour a refugee camp and meet with Turkish leaders. Merkel raised her support of safe zones then. Srebrenica Lesson

"It's very easy to identify such regions along the Turkish-Syrian border," Merkel said at a news conference in Gaziantep, Turkey, on Saturday after meeting Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu. "The safer people feel, the less reason they have to leave their home country."

But the head of the United Nations refugee agency and nongovernmental aid organizations have warned against the idea, saying that setting up the zones and adequately protecting them would be extremely difficult. In 1995, the UN-protected town of Srebrenica, Bosnia was overrun, leading to the massacre of 8,000 people. Secretary of State John Kerry said last month that establishing Syrian safe zones would require 15,000 to 30,000 U.S. troops.

In an interview published Saturday by Germany's Bild newspaper, Obama said Merkel's leadership was "essential" to "dealing with the large number of migrants in a humane and safe manner." He also praised her handling of Russia's incursion into Ukraine and said the German leader was "pragmatic and focused."

"I value her partnership tremendously, and I'm proud to call her my friend," Obama told Bild.

### **Merkel Says Geneva Talks Should Aim To Agree Safe Areas In Syria**

[Reuters](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

### **Obama Reiterates Opposition To Syria 'Safe Zones'**

By Kim Hjelmgaard

[USA Today](#), April 24, 2016

HANNOVER, Germany — President Obama reiterated Sunday his view that creating "safe zones" inside Syria for the thousands of people fleeing the 5-year-old conflict would require a large military commitment and ground troops.

"Sadly, it is very difficult to see how it would operate short of us essentially being willing to militarily take over a chunk of that country," he said during a news conference here with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

The German leader has previously expressed approval of the idea.

Merkel said Sunday that she believes these zones could be carved out without foreign military intervention, and



the concept should be part of the peace negotiations in Geneva.

Obama said he agreed with that version of the proposal being part of peace negotiations, saying it demonstrated that “there’s no space between us” over Syria and trying to find a political resolution.

“Perhaps because she once lived behind a wall herself, Angela understands the aspirations of those who are denied their freedom and seek a better life,” he said.

Merkel spent her youth in East Germany, then part of the Communist bloc.

Obama again said he is concerned about the recent increase in fighting in Syria, which also threaten to halt the peace talks in Geneva. Airstrikes and shelling pounded the Syrian city of Aleppo for a third straight day on Sunday, killing at least two dozen people, Reuters reported.

The indirect peace talks being brokered by the United Nations envoy have been teetering amid the rising violence in Syria. The partial cease-fire, or cessation of hostilities, went into effect Feb. 27.

## **More Deaths In Aleppo As Obama Calls For ‘Reinstated’ Syria Truce**

[AFP](#), April 24, 2016

Aleppo (Syria) (AFP) – Regime and rebel bombardment killed 26 civilians on Sunday in Syria’s second city Aleppo as US President Barack Obama urged the conflict’s warring parties to “reinstate” a troubled ceasefire.

Eight weeks into the declared truce between President Bashar al-Assad’s regime and non-jihadist rebels, violence has escalated around Aleppo, with dozens killed by government air strikes and rebel rockets.

The surge in fighting and stalled peace talks in Geneva have dimmed hopes that the ceasefire would lay the groundwork for finally resolving Syria’s devastating five-year conflict.

On Sunday, Obama said he had spoken to his Russian counterpart – a key Assad ally – to try to shore up the truce.

“I spoke to President Vladimir Putin early last week to try to make sure that we could reinstate the cessation of hostilities,” he told reporters in Germany.

An EU spokesperson, in a statement, also urged the US and Russia as brokers of the ceasefire “to bring the maximum influence to bear in order to end these breaches of the agreement”.

After at least 27 reported civilian deaths in regime bombardment across Syria on Saturday, a fresh barrage of air strikes hit Aleppo around midday Sunday.

Twelve civilians died after a strike hit an open-air fruit and vegetable market, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said.

An AFP photographer saw a man in a bright-blue cap carrying a shell-shocked, bleeding and barefoot young boy.

– ‘Attack on Geneva process’ –

Emergency responders, known as White Helmets, told AFP they were “exhausted” by the past three days of bombing in Aleppo city.

“We’re back to working 24-hour shifts after we started working shorter hours because of the truce,” one volunteer said.

According to the Observatory, four more civilians died Sunday in strikes on other opposition neighbourhoods.

In Aleppo’s western government-held parts, 10 civilians including a woman and two children were killed early Sunday by rebel rocket fire, the Observatory said.

A regime air strike on the Salhin district also damaged the main water main, cutting off the city’s supplies, local authorities said.

While officials have yet to declare the ceasefire dead, Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman said the escalating violence in Aleppo and elsewhere meant it had effectively collapsed.

Peace negotiations due to run in Geneva until Wednesday have faltered after Syria’s main opposition group last week suspended its official participation in the talks.

The High Negotiations Committee walked away in frustration at the devastating humanitarian situation on the ground.

“The Assad regime’s bombing offensive is not only a brutal attack on Syrians, but an attack on the Geneva process that is the only possible pathway to peace,” HNC spokesman Salem al-Meslet said on Sunday in an emailed statement.

The truce was part of the biggest diplomatic push yet to resolve Syria’s conflict, which began in March 2011 with widespread anti-Assad protests.

It has since spiralled into a multi-front war that has killed 270,000 people and drawn in regional and world powers.

– Ground troops ‘a mistake’ –

In an interview with the BBC aired Sunday, Obama warned Western governments should not send troops to topple Assad’s regime.

“Syria has been a heartbreaking situation of enormous complexity, and I don’t think there are any simple solutions,” he said in London.

“It would be a mistake for the United States, or Great Britain, or a combination of Western states to send in ground troops and overthrow the Assad regime.”

He urged all parties “to sit down at the table and try to broker a transition”.

Obama first urged Assad to step down in August 2011 but has resisted calls by critics to use American military force to end the Syrian regime’s rule.

Washington did, however, launch air strikes in mid-2014 against the Islamic State group after it seized large parts of Syria and neighbouring Iraq.

IS has suffered several major defeats in Syria's north at the hands of the Kurdish People's Protection Forces (YPG) and allied groups.

But in the northeastern city of Qamishli this week, Kurdish militia turned their weapons on Syrian government forces in rare fighting between the two sides.

The clashes began Wednesday with a scuffle at a checkpoint and, according to Kurdish security forces, have killed 17 civilians, 10 Kurdish fighters and 31 regime troops and allied militiamen.

Kurdish security forces said they had also arrested 102 members of pro-regime forces.

After several days of mediation, regime officials and Kurdish representatives agreed Sunday to swap an unspecified number of prisoners and maintain a local truce.

Kurds will keep the positions they seized during the clashes, including a prison, the source said.

## **At Least 26 Killed As Fighting Rages In Syria's Aleppo**

[Associated Press](#), April 24, 2016

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) – Air strikes and shelling pounded Aleppo for a third straight day on Sunday, killing two young siblings and at least 24 others in Syria's largest city and former commercial capital.

The northern city has been bitterly contested between insurgents and government forces since 2012. Opposition groups control the eastern part of the city but have come under intense strain as the government has choked off all routes to the area except a narrow and perilous passage to the northwest.

At least 10 people were killed by rebel shelling on government-held areas in the city, according to activists and Syria's state news agency, SANA. Rockets struck schools and residential areas, SANA reported. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said two young siblings were among the dead.

Air strikes on the opposition side of the city killed 16, including a mother and her daughter, the Observatory said.

A video posted on social media by the Syrian Civil Defense first responder group, known as the White Helmets and which operates in opposition-held areas, suggests some of the strikes hit a market in the neighborhood of Sakhour, with footage showing overturned vegetable carts strewn among the wreckage.

The opposition High Negotiations Committee, which suspended its formal participation in peace talks with the government in Geneva last week, called the strikes "an attack

on the Geneva process that is the only possible pathway to peace."

Salem Meslet, HNC spokesman, called on Russian President Vladimir Putin to hold its Damascus allies to the terms of a U.S. and Russia-brokered cease-fire that parties signed onto nearly two months ago.

"The key to ending these attacks, and to making progress in the talks, lies in Moscow," said Meslet.

The cease-fire is still technically in place, but may have completely unraveled on the ground – with violence returning to most of the contested areas of the country. The U.N.'s Special Envoy to Syria last week called on the two superpowers to salvage the truce before it totally collapses.

The Aleppo Conquest rebel coalition on Saturday threatened to dissolve the truce if pro-government forces continued to strike civilians in opposition areas.

The al-Qaida branch in Syria, the Nusra Front, and its more powerful rival, the Islamic State group, are not included in the cease-fire. The Nusra Front is deeply rooted in the areas in northern Syria controlled by opposition forces, complicating the oversight of the truce.

U.N.-mediated talks in Geneva have also been bogged down by the violence, with the Saudi-backed opposition delegation suspending its formal participation last week. The government delegation is nonetheless set to meet with U.N. envoy Staffan De Mistura Monday.

Opposition groups have said reports of a new government offensive on the opposition-held side of Aleppo would wreck the peace talks.

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Issa reported from Beirut.

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## **U.S. To Send 250 Additional Military Personnel To Syria**

By Gordon Lubold And Adam Entous

[Wall Street Journal](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

## **Obama To Announce Plans To Grow U.S. Special Operations Force In Syria**

By Missy Ryan,

[Washington Post](#), April 24, 2016

LONDON — President Obama will announce the addition of 250 Special Operations troops to the American

advisory force in Syria, U.S. officials said Sunday, the administration's latest move seeking to intensify pressure on the Islamic State.

A senior administration official, who like others spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss measures that have not yet been announced, said that Obama will make his decision public on Monday, during remarks at a technology fair in Germany.

"The president has authorized a series of steps to increase support for our partners in the region, including Iraqi security forces as well as local Syrian forces who are taking the fight to ISIL," the official said. ISIL is another name for the Islamic State, the militant group that controls a wide swath of both countries.

The extra forces, which will be placed in areas of Syria that are removed from conflict and will travel in and out of the country, will bring the number of U.S. advisers there to about 300.

A U.S. defense official said the decision is aimed in part at helping to grow the ranks of Arab fighters in a network of rebel groups, now dominated by Kurdish fighters, that the United States is backing as it battles the Islamic State. The additional U.S. forces will advise those troops as they seek to isolate Raqqa, the militants' de facto capital in Syria.

"We've had success and obviously want to . . . sustain it, build on it and potentially garner more success," the official said.

Obama's intention to make the announcement Monday was first reported by the Wall Street Journal.

The decision to increase the number of Special Operations forces in Iraq and Syria was made earlier this month. It was determined that Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter would announce an additional 200 troops during a visit to Baghdad and that the Syria announcement would wait for Obama's arrival in Germany, where he is holding talks with the leaders of Germany, Britain, France and Italy.

As part of the Iraq announcement Carter made last week, Obama also has authorized U.S. commanders there to use Apache attack helicopters and deploy American advisers with lower-level Iraqi units to assist local troops in a future offensive to reclaim the city of Mosul. U.S. officials think those measures will enhance the effectiveness of Iraqi troops, but they also will expose U.S. forces to greater risk.

The increase is part of an overall acceleration in the fight against the Islamic State. Despite a string of what the administration has described as successes — including territory reclaimed from the militants in Iraq and Syria and the severing of supply and communication lines between Islamic State forces in the two countries — some aspects of the conflict have gone more slowly, or unsuccessfully, than anticipated.

While Iraqi military forces, backed by U.S. air power and other enhancements, retook the city of Ramadi early this

year, plans to move toward Mosul, in northern Iraq, have dragged as the Baghdad government contends with economic and political difficulties, and the melding of Iraq's Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish military forces into a unified offensive force has proved problematic.

The Iraqi military also continues to struggle with issues of morale, leadership and logistics.

In an interview last week with CBS News, Obama said he believed preparations for the Mosul offensive — what the military calls "shaping" operations to surround and weaken Islamic State forces there — should be finished this year and allow the "eventual" retaking of the city.

The plan to move toward Raqqa follows last year's successful northern Syria offensive that was led primarily by Kurdish forces, aided by U.S. airstrikes, with some support from a group of Sunni opposition fighters the United States has been struggling to support. Raqqa, farther to the south, is a Sunni city that Kurdish forces are not eager to move toward, and where they would not be welcome.

A promising, partial cease-fire in the fight against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has seriously frayed in recent weeks, sparking renewed fighting in the northwest region near the Turkish border and complicating administration plans to begin air operations in aid of an opposition attempt to stop an Islamic State advance in that area.

Speaking to reporters late last week after a visit to Iraq, Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Obama had not at that point made a decision to send the additional troops to Syria. But he said the president had promised to consider granting more resources as plans came together for advancing Syrian forces' campaign against the Islamic State.

"It's linked to our partners on the ground, in supporting our partners on the ground and their continued operations," he said.

Jaffe reported from Hanover, Germany, and DeYoung reported from Washington.

## **Administration: Up To 250 Military Personnel Headed To Syria**

By Darlene Superville

[Associated Press](#), April 24, 2016

President Barack Obama will send an additional 250 military personnel to Syria to help local forces fighting the Islamic State group, increasing to 300 the number of U.S. forces battling extremists in the war-torn country, administration officials confirmed Sunday.

Obama was expected to announce his decision Monday during a speech in Hannover, Germany, at the close of a weeklong trip, where IS was a focus of his meetings with world leaders in Saudi Arabia, Great Britain and Germany.

The move will significantly increase the U.S. presence in Syria and comes a week after Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced the deployment of a similar number of troops to Iraq, where Islamic State militants also control territory.

About 50 U.S. special operations forces are already operating in Syria. Most of the additional 250 personnel will also be special operations forces, largely Army Green Berets. The group will also include an unknown number of medical and logistical troops to provide them with support.

Senior U.S. officials have been touting the success of the forces in Syria, including their ability to generate critical intelligence that gives the U.S.-led coalition a better view of what is happening on the ground, including efforts to target insurgents.

In a sign of Obama's reluctance to use of force, Monday's announcement will cap a trip during which the president advocated diplomacy over military intervention.

Asked last week whether he planned to increase special operations forces in Syria, Obama did not answer directly. But he said he'd had discussions with an adviser about options should a fragile cease-fire break down.

"None of the options are good," he said in the Saudi capital of Riyadh. "It has been my view consistently that we have to get a political solution inside of Syria and that all the external actors involved have to be committed to that as well as the actors inside of Syria. ... The sooner we can end fighting and resolve this in a political fashion, the better."

Obama has said he remains opposed to large-scale U.S. military intervention in either Iraq or Syria. But he has incrementally deepened U.S. involvement in both countries.

The increase of U.S. troops in Syria has been discussed for weeks, including rumblings last week when Carter announced sending an additional 217 U.S. troops to Iraq, the first major increase in U.S. forces in Iraq in nearly a year. Eight Apache helicopters were also being sent to Iraq for the first time to help fight against the Islamic State group there.

Both moves were carried out to help Iraqi forces as they prepare to retake the key northern city of Mosul.

The deployment brought the total authorized troop total to just over 4,000.

Obama re-entered Iraq in June 2014 with an initial contingent of 170 soldiers serving Iraqi forces as advisers in June 2014, in response to the Islamic State group's seizure of much of the northern and western part of the country.

Obama's decision on Syria was first reported Sunday by The Wall Street Journal.

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## Fighting Erupts In Iraq, And The Islamic State Isn't Part Of It

By Loveday Morris And Mustafa Salim

[Washington Post](#), April 24, 2016

BAGHDAD — Kurdish troops and Iraqi Shiite forces exchanged mortar and machine-gun fire Sunday in a flare-up that killed at least 12 people and raised concerns about the state's ability to control an array of armed militia groups as areas are freed from the Islamic State.

The fighting broke out in Tuz Khurmatu, an ethnically and religiously mixed tinderbox town that is 120 miles north of Baghdad. Both sides blamed each other for the conflagration.

The Islamic State was pushed out of the surrounding area in 2014, but the armed groups here have since jostled for control and influence. Keeping militias under state control, and preventing them from turning on one another, is a major test for the Iraqi government as it slowly claws back territory from the Islamist militants.

As the fighting escalated Sunday, with both Kurds and Shiite militias sending reinforcements to the town, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi ordered the army to "take all necessary measures to control the situation." Leaders from all sides were contacted to "defuse the crisis" and focus efforts against the common threat of the Islamic State, a statement from his office said.

The area, home to a mix of Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen, and both Sunnis and Shiites, is not new to clashes. Fighting also broke out between Shiite Turkmen and Kurdish forces in November last year, until a cease-fire was reached between local leaders. Since then, some residents have erected concrete walls to divide their neighborhoods.

Turkmen fighters with Iraqi Shiite militias claimed to have burned two tanks belonging to the Kurdish forces during the clashes Sunday. A Kurdish commander, Col. Azad Serwan, was also killed, both sides confirmed.

At least 10 fighters and two civilians were killed, Reuters reported. Shiite militias accused Kurdish forces of blocking them from being able to transport their casualties to a hospital.

Heavy shelling hit residential neighborhoods of the city, said Mohammed Ahmed, a 28-year-old resident, speaking by phone, with the crack of gunfire audible behind him.

The town has become a "second Kashmir" said Turkmen member of parliament Niazi Oghlo, referring to disputed territory between Pakistan and India.

Hadi al-Amiri, the leader of Iraq's Badr Organization, one of Iraq's most powerful Shiite militias, arrived in nearby Kirkuk to negotiate a resolution with Kurdish commanders.

"All sides have agreed to stop hostilities immediately," said Kirkuk's Kurdish governor, -Najmaldin Karim. He said there would be a subsequent meeting to work out a longer-term solution but that he thought armed groups that are not

official state forces should not be allowed inside towns and cities.

"It's not the first time — there is always tension," he said.

## **Kurdish Forces To Keep Areas Taken From Syrian Government Forces Truce**

[Reuters](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## **A Syrian Rebel's Slaying In Turkey Points To The Long, Lethal Reach Of ISIS**

By Hugh Naylor

[Washington Post](#), April 24, 2016

NIZIP, Turkey — On a drizzly afternoon this month, they gathered in the tree-lined cemetery here to bid farewell to a charismatic rebel and outspoken enemy of the Islamic State.

The mourners wept as they hoisted his coffin, draped in the three-star flag of Syria's opposition. They proudly recalled his valor in battles against government forces and his defiance of the religious extremists who have tried to overtake their rebellion.

But the way that Zaher al-Shurqat's life ended filled those at his funeral with dread.

An apparent Islamic State militant followed the 36-year-old into an alley in the Turkish city of Gaziantep and fired a round into his head. He was the fourth prominent Syrian critic of the Islamic State to be assassinated in the past six months in southern Turkey, far beyond the militants' stronghold in Syria.

"We're not safe here in Turkey. ISIS is watching us," said a 24-year-old former rebel who attended the funeral in Nizip, a town about 30 miles east of Gaziantep. As do many fellow Syrians who have taken refuge in the area, the man spoke on the condition of anonymity because of fear of the militant group, also known as ISIS and ISIL.

After rising to prominence as leader of a rebel brigade and then as a television host, Shurqat eventually fled to southern Turkey for safety. But even in exile, he couldn't escape his radical Islamist foes back home.

The Islamic State asserted responsibility for his killing, an attack that further demonstrates how the group can still strike beyond its center of gravity despite suffering mounting losses on the battlefields of Iraq and Syria. Its fighters carried out a series of assaults that rocked Paris, Brussels and Beirut. In Turkey, the group's multiple suicide bombings over the past year have killed dozens.

But the Islamic State appears to be waging a different kind of campaign against the Syrian journalists, activists and

former rebels who spend their time in exile in southern Turkey working to expose the group's atrocities. Many suspect it of running a network of informants and assassins who monitor opponents and then behead them at their homes or gun them down in alleys.

Over the past year, Turkish authorities have clamped down on the once-porous, 500-mile-long border with Syria in an attempt to halt the flow of militants. But concerns have grown that the group operates among the more than 2 million Syrians who have taken refuge in Turkey, as well as among Turkish citizens.

"They have really been trying to intimidate us in Turkey," said Hussam Eesa, 27, an activist from the Syrian monitoring group Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently who recently left Turkey for Germany.

In an especially gruesome killing last October, an Islamic State member shot dead two activists at their apartment in the city of Sanliurfa and then decapitated them. One of the victims, Ibrahim Abdul Qader, worked with Eesa at Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently, which has won accolades for taking extreme risks to document the Islamic State's atrocities.

Many of the group's activists have based themselves in Turkey, but the country has become so dangerous that a number of them have moved to Europe.

"They knew where we lived in Turkey, where we worked. They even went after my friends in Raqqa," said Eesa, who relocated to Germany because of the threats.

In the seven months that he lived in Turkey, Shurqat received a steady stream of menacing phone calls and text messages, his family and friends said. Some of the threats came from Syria's government, they said, and many more came from the Islamic State.

In December, a Syrian journalist and friend of Shurqat, Naji Jerf, was shot dead in downtown Gaziantep by an assailant who used a silenced pistol. Jerf had produced a documentary detailing the Islamic State's systematic killing of anti-government activists in the northern city of Aleppo. The Islamic State is suspected of killing Jerf.

But Shurqat refused to stop speaking out against the group's radical interpretations of Islam and attacks on moderate rebel forces, said Barry Abdullatif, an opposition activist who grew up with Shurqat in al-Bab, a town in northern Syria.

"To say that he was brave is an understatement. You have to be kind of crazy to do what he did," said Abdullatif, who also relocated to Turkey.

Over the past two years, Shurqat hosted shows on the pro-opposition Aleppo Today television channel that regularly featured guests who accused the Islamic State of undermining the now five-year-old rebellion against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

On a program that aired a few days before his slaying, Shurqat interviewed a rebel leader who described the Assad government as the “biggest patron” of the militant group. He cited its release of radical Islamists from its jails, among other calculated efforts to empower extremists against rebel forces.

Appearing in a dinner jacket, a bespectacled Shurqat would often use the airtime to pick apart the Islamic State’s religious justifications for its brutality. An important weapon in his theological critiques was his degree from the University of Damascus in Islamic studies and his adherence to Sufism, a mystical form of Islam that is known for espousing tolerance.

“ISIS feared him because he showed how their practices are not Islamic. They’re just violent animals,” said Shurqat’s twin brother, Anas.

Shurqat’s issues with the Islamic State started years before, in al-Bab, where he founded a rebel outfit during the early phases of the Syrian uprising. Initially battling with hunting rifles, his brigade drove government forces out of al-Bab and then joined other rebel groups in assaulting the nearby city of Aleppo.

In late 2013, as the Islamic State militants grew in power, Shurqat’s fighters began battling the group. He even forced a now-famous standoff with the group over control of al-Bab’s main mosque, which resulted in the town’s residents siding overwhelmingly with him.

But the moderate rebels of al-Bab were outmatched by the Islamic State’s superior firepower and sheer ruthlessness.

The group drove them out of the town, and Shurqat relocated to the rebel-held areas of Aleppo. There, friends and family said, he faced attempted assassinations and kidnappings, which eventually convinced him to relocate last year to Gaziantep.

On April 10, Shurqat had just escorted his pregnant wife to a tram station in Gaziantep’s downtown when his killer struck. CCTV footage shows the killer walking up behind Shurqat, pulling out a firearm and then running off after the assassination.

Shurqat is buried in a rocky grave with a cinder-block headstone in Nizip, where members of his family live. Even amid the palpable fear of the Islamic State’s intensified efforts to silence critics, hundreds turned out on that rainy afternoon to thank the man who refused to be cowed.

“Of course we are sad today, but what has happened is the will of God,” said Muntasir Abu Talib, 28, Shurqat’s brother-in-law. “And all I can do is thank God for what he did for us.”

Zakaria Zakaria contributed to this report.

## **One Dead, 26 Wounded As Rockets Hit Turkish Town Near Syrian Border**

By Umit Bektas And Akin Aytekin

[Reuters](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## **The Rise And Deadly Fall Of Islamic State’s Oil Tycoon**

By Benoit Faucon And Margaret Coker

[Wall Street Journal](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

## **Three Ukrainian Troops Killed In New Upsurge Of Fighting: Kiev**

[AFP](#), April 24, 2016

Kiev (AFP) – Three Ukrainian soldiers have been killed and six injured in a fresh upsurge of fighting between pro-Russian rebels and government forces in the country’s separatist east, the Kiev military said on Sunday.

“As a result of hostilities, three Ukrainian soldiers have been killed and another six wounded over the past 24 hours”, military spokesman Oleksandr Motuzyanyk told reporters.

He said the situation along the frontline “had escalated again”, accusing separatists of ramping up attacks against the Kiev military and using heavy weapons.

“The invaders are actively using mortars and armoured vehicles along the entire frontline”, he said.

The new casualties came after three Ukrainian soldiers were killed by pro-Russian rebels in a mortar attack earlier this week, in the deadliest attack in nearly two months, the Kiev military said.

A series of truce agreements have helped reduce the violence, although sporadic clashes continue and prevent the sides from reaching a firm political reconciliation deal.

Around 9,200 people have died and more than 21,000 been injured since the revolt against Ukraine’s pro-Western leadership erupted in eastern Ukraine in April 2014.

Kiev and the West accuse Russia of supporting the insurgents and sending regular troops across the border, claims that Moscow denies.

Earlier this week, Ukraine’s defence minister Stepan Poltorak warned it may take years to end a war that plunged Moscow’s relations with the West to a post-Cold War low.

## **Obama Dismisses NKorea Proposal On Halting Nuke Tests**

By Eric Talmadge

[Associated Press](#), April 24, 2016

NEW YORK (AP) – A day after North Korea’s foreign minister told The Associated Press that his country is ready to halt its nuclear tests if the United States suspends its annual military exercises with South Korea, President Barack Obama

said Sunday that Washington isn't taking the proposal seriously and Pyongyang would "have to do better than that."

North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong, interviewed Saturday by the AP, also defended his country's right to maintain a nuclear deterrent and warned that Pyongyang won't be cowed by international sanctions. And for those waiting for the North's regime to collapse, he had this to say: Don't hold your breath.

"Stop the nuclear war exercises in the Korean Peninsula, then we should also cease our nuclear tests," he said in his first interview Saturday with a Western news organization.

Obama dismissed North Korea's latest overture at a news conference Sunday with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Hannover, Germany.

"We don't take seriously a promise to simply halt until the next time they decide to do a test these kinds of activities," Obama said. "What we've said consistently ... is that if North Korea shows seriousness in denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula, then we'll be prepared to enter into some serious conversations with them about reducing tensions and our approach to protecting our allies in the region. But that's not something that happens based on a press release in the wake of a series of provocative behaviors. They're going to have to do better than that."

Obama also said that until North Korea does better, as he put it, the U.S. will continue to "emphasize our work with the Republic of Korea and Japan and our missile defense mechanisms to ensure that we're keeping the American people safe and we're keeping our allies safe."

Ri's interview with the AP came just hours after North Korea test-fired a ballistic missile from a submarine in its latest show of defiance as this year's U.S.-South Korea exercises wind down. He referred to the launch in the context of current tensions caused by the military exercises. "The escalation of this military exercise level has reached its top level. And I think it's not bad – as the other side is going for the climax – why not us, too, to that level as well?"

The U.S. State Department said that in response to Saturday's launch, it was limiting the travel of Ri and his delegation to U.N. functions in New York, where they are attending a U.N. meeting on sustainable development. The U.S. noted "launches using ballistic missile technology are a clear violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions."

In his interview with the AP, Ri held firm to Pyongyang's longstanding position that the U.S. drove his country to develop nuclear weapons as an act of self-defense. At the same time, he suggested that suspending the military exercises with Seoul could open the door to talks and reduced tensions.

"If we continue on this path of confrontation, this will lead to very catastrophic results, not only for the two countries but for the whole entire world as well," he said, speaking in

Korean through an interpreter. "It is really crucial for the United States government to withdraw its hostile policy against the DPRK and as an expression of this stop the military exercises, war exercises, in the Korean Peninsula. Then we will respond likewise." DPRK is an abbreviation for North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Ri, who spoke calmly and in measured words, a contrast to the often bombastic verbiage used by the North's media, claimed the North's proposal was "very logical."

He granted the interview in the country's diplomatic mission to the United Nations. He spoke beneath portraits of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jung Il, North Korea's two previous leaders – the grandfather and father of current leader Kim Jong Un.

If the exercises are halted "for some period, for some years," he added, "new opportunities may arise for the two countries and for the whole entire world as well."

It is extremely rare for top North Korean officials to give interviews to foreign media, and particularly with Western news organizations.

Ri's proposal, which he said he hoped U.S. policymakers would heed, may well fall on deaf ears. North Korea, which sees the U.S.-South Korean exercises as a rehearsal for invasion, has floated similar proposals to Washington in the past, but the U.S. has insisted the North give up its nuclear weapons program first before any negotiations.

The result has been a stalemate that Ri said has put the peninsula at the crossroads of a thermonuclear war.

In Seoul, South Korea's Foreign Ministry released a statement Sunday that called the North's proposal "not worth considering." The ministry noted that the North's suggestion is nothing new, and said that the comment was just part of its maneuvering to wiggle out of the difficult situation created by stronger international sanctions.

In response to Ri's remarks, a U.S. State Department official defended the military exercises as demonstrating the U.S. commitment to its alliance with the South and said they enhance the combat readiness, flexibility and capabilities of the alliance.

"We call again on North Korea to refrain from actions and rhetoric that further raise tensions in the region and focus instead on taking concrete steps toward fulfilling its international commitments and obligations," said Katina Adams, a spokeswoman for the State Department's Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs.

Sanctions, Ri said, won't sway the North.

"If they believe they can actually frustrate us with sanctions, they are totally mistaken," he said. "The more pressure you put on to something, the more emotionally you react to stand up against it. And this is important for the American policymakers to be aware of."

Ri said the possibility of conflict has increased significantly this year because the exercises have taken on what Pyongyang sees as a more aggressive and threatening tone – including training to conduct precision “decapitation” strikes on North Korea’s leadership.

This year’s exercises are the biggest ever, involving about 300,000 troops. Washington and Seoul say they beefed up the maneuvers after North Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test, in January, which also brought a new round of tough sanctions by the U.N. down on Pyongyang’s head. The exercises are set to continue through the end of the month.

Pyongyang, meanwhile, has responded with a series of missile launches and statements in its media that the country has developed its long-range ballistic missile and nuclear warhead technologies to the point that they now present a credible deterrent and could even be used against targets on the U.S. mainland, though not all foreign analysts accept that claim.

In the interview, Ri stated that the United States has used its power to get other countries to join in pressure on North Korea.

“A country as small as the DPRK cannot actually be a threat to the U.S. or to the world,” he told the AP. “How great would it be if the world were to say to the United States and the American government not to conduct any more military exercises in the Korean Peninsula ... But there is not a single country that says this to the U.S.”

“These big countries alone or together are telling us that we should calm down,” he said. “For us this is like a sentence, that we should accept our death and refuse our right to sovereignty.”

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Associated Press writers Kathleen Hennessey in London and Tong-hyung Kim in Seoul, South Korea, contributed to this report.

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## **Obama Says U.S. Won’t Stop Military Drills, Spurning North Korea**

By Justin Sink

[Bloomberg Politics](#), April 24, 2016

President Barack Obama said the U.S. won’t back down from strengthening its military alliances and defenses against North Korea until the country “shows seriousness”

toward eliminating nuclear weapons from the Korean peninsula.

“If North Korea shows seriousness in denuclearizing the Korean peninsula, then we will be ready to engage in serious conversations with them to reduce tensions,” Obama said Sunday at a news conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Hannover, Germany, the final stop of a three-nation international tour.

North Korea would “have to do better” than announcing “via press release” that it intends to step back from nuclear weapons development, he said.

North Korea on Saturday test-fired a ballistic missile from a submarine, according to the U.S. Strategic Command. It wasn’t clear how far the missile flew, and the U.S. said it “did not pose a threat to North America.” The move was the latest in a string of military provocations from the regime of Kim Jong Un, and would represent a significant advance in North Korean weapons capability.

“Although more often than not they fail in many of these tests, they gain knowledge each time they engage in these tests,” Obama said. “We take it very seriously, and so do our allies and so does the entire world.”North Korean Claims

In recent months, North Korea has also claimed to have successfully tested its first hydrogen bomb, launched a satellite into orbit, and developed miniaturized nuclear bombs.

North Korea’s foreign minister told the Associated Press on Sunday the country was willing to halt its nuclear tests if the U.S. suspended its annual joint military exercises with South Korea. Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong also said in the interview that international sanctions wouldn’t change the behavior of the regime.

“If we continue on this path of confrontation, this will lead to very catastrophic results, not only for the two countries but for the whole entire world as well,” he said. “It is really crucial for the United States government to withdraw its hostile policy against the DPRK and as an expression of this stop the military exercises, war exercises, in the Korean Peninsula. Then we will respond likewise.”Military Exercises

The U.S. and South Korea intensified the military exercises, which are expected to continue through the month, after North Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test in January. Approximately 300,000 South Korea troops and 17,000 U.S. troops are participating in the drills, according to the joint U.S. and South Korean military command.

The United Nations also implemented additional sanctions limiting the banking activities of the regime abroad. The U.S. has credited China, which has more financial ties with North Korea, with helping to pass and implement the new penalties.



## **Obama Expresses Skepticism Over North Korean Offer**

**President says onus is on Pyongyang to show it is serious about giving up its nuclear-weapons program**

By Colleen McCain Nelson And Kwanwoo Jun

[Wall Street Journal](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

## **Obama Rejects North Korea's Offer To Suspend Missile Tests**

By Dave Boyer

[Washington Times](#), April 24, 2016

President Obama said Sunday he doesn't take seriously North Korea's offer to suspend its missile program if the U.S. ends annual military exercises with South Korea.

Speaking at a press conference in Germany, Mr. Obama said North Korea's repeated "provocative" actions, including the reported missile launch this weekend from a submarine, demonstrate that Pyongyang isn't committed to stabilizing the Korean peninsula.

"We don't take seriously a promise to simply halt until the next time they decide to do a test," Mr. Obama said. "That's not something that happens based on a press release in the wake of a series of provocative behaviors. They're going to have to do better than that."

The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff said Saturday that North Korea fired what is believed to be a submarine-launched ballistic missile off the east coast of the Korean Peninsula. South Korean officials said the missile appears to have flown about 19 miles, well short of a successful test.

A North Korean official later offered to suspend such tests if the U.S. would halt its military exercises with South Korea.

Mr. Obama said the U.S. and the "entire world" take North Korea's testing seriously.

"Although more often than not they fail in many of these tests, they gain knowledge each time they engage in these tests," Mr. Obama said, adding that such behavior is "why we've cultivated cooperation with the Chinese to put more pressure on North Korea."

"Although it is not where we would completely like it to be, I will say we've seen the Chinese be more alarmed and take more seriously what North Korea is doing," he said. "They have been willing to be more forward leaning in exacting a price on North Korea's destructive behavior."

## **Obama Calls On China To Increase Pressure On N.Korea**

[AFP](#), April 24, 2016

Hanover (Germany) (AFP) – US President Barack Obama on Sunday urged China to increase pressure on North Korea after another "provocative" weapons test.

Speaking after a North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un hailed a submarine-launched ballistic missile test as an "eye-opening success," Obama said: "North Korea continues to engage in continuous provocative behaviour."

He added: "We have cultivated cooperation with the Chinese to put pressure on North Korea. Although it is not where we would completely like it to be."

The test is the latest in a series of nuclear and missile tests by the isolated country.

It was followed just hours later by a North Korean offer to impose a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing if the United States suspends annual military drills with South Korea.

But Obama said: "We don't take seriously a promise to simply halt until the next time they decide to do a test."

He said progress was only possible if North Korea showed a willingness to mothball its nuclear weapons programme.

The escalating tensions come as North gears up for a rare and much-hyped ruling party congress early next month – the first in 36 years – at which Kim is expected to take credit for pushing the country's nuclear and missile weapons programme to new heights.

Analysts and senior South Korean officials have suggested the regime may carry out a fifth nuclear test as a display of defiance and strength ahead of the congress.

## **North Korea Fires Submarine-launched Missile: South Korea**

By Ju-Min Park

[Reuters](#), April 23, 2016

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## **North Korea Claims Success Firing Missile From Sub**

By John Bacon

[USA Today](#), April 24, 2016

North Korea claimed Sunday to have successfully launched a ballistic missile from a submarine this weekend, adding another weapon "capable of hitting the heads of the south Korean puppet forces and the U.S. imperialists anytime as it pleases."

The announcement dismissed a South Korean report that Saturday's test failed. Pyongyang's Korean Central News Agency said the test "confirmed and reinforced" the reliability of the North's underwater launching system.

Also Sunday, President Obama said he doesn't take seriously North Korea's offer to halt nuclear tests if the U.S. and South Korea stop joint military exercises. Last month Pyongyang threatened a pre-emptive nuclear strike over the annual exercises, ramped up this year to include hundreds of thousands of South Korean troops and more than 15,000 U.S. forces.

U.S. Strategic Command said it detected and tracked Saturday's test but said it did not pose a threat to North America.

The State Department responded to Saturday's test by announcing it would limit the travel of North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong, in New York for a United Nation's meeting on sustainable development, to locations required to perform his official duty.

"Launches using ballistic missile technology are a clear violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions," State Department spokesman John Kirby said in a statement. "We call on North Korea to refrain from actions that further destabilize the region and focus instead on taking concrete steps toward fulfilling its commitments and international obligations."

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff confirmed that the North fired what could be a ballistic missile from a submarine in the East Sea (Sea of Japan) but said it flew less than 20 miles. South Korea's Yonhap news agency, citing the South's military, said the minimum range would normally be 10 times that distance, adding that the military speculated the missile test had probably failed.

Still, any progress made by the North in submarine missile launches are viewed as serious. Such technology would allow for quicker attacks, harder to track and from shorter range than land-based missiles.

The North has conducted numerous land-based missile launches in recent months while vehemently opposing a series of expansive joint military exercises involving U.S. and South Korean forces. North Korea complained to the United Nations that the exercises were part of a conspiracy to overthrow leader Kim Jong Un.

The South Korean newspaper Donga Ilbo, quoting South Korean military source, said North Korea appears to have completed all preparations for its fifth nuclear test.

Obama, fielding questions on a variety of issues at a news conference Sunday in Hannover, Germany, said the world needed more than just a press release from North Korea to show that it was serious about easing tensions.

"We're still analyzing with precision what's going on in North Korea," Obama said. "What's clear is that it continues to engage in provocative behavior. Yet when its (nuclear tests) fail, they also gain knowledge."

Kim on Sunday again stressed Pyongyang's "strategic intention to react to nuclear weapons in kind," the Korean Central News Agency reported. He urged his scientists and

defense chiefs to bolster "the nuclear force to mount nuclear attacks on the U.S. imperialists and the south Korean puppet group of traitors any time when the Party is determined to do."

Contributing: Kim Hjelmgaard

## China To Build Floating Nuclear Power Plants In South China Sea

By L. Todd Wood

[Washington Times](#), April 24, 2016

China is planning to construct up to 20 floating nuclear power plants for remote locations, including the South China Sea, where China has been building man-made islands that could threaten freedom of navigation in the area. Although the build up of infrastructure in these vital shipping lanes is ostensibly for civilian purposes, the projects could easily mask a military agenda.

The Chinese military has recently landed fighter aircraft, via newly constructed airstrips, on several island chains that are disputed territory. It has also deployed air defense and anti-ship missile capability.

"Nuclear reactors afloat would give the Chinese military sustainable energy sources to conduct their full panoply of operations, from air early warning and defences and offensive fire control systems to anti-submarine operations and more," said Patrick Cronin, senior director of the Asia-Pacific Security Program at the Centre for a New American Security, a think tank. Air-defence radars, in particular, could benefit from extra power, because that would increase their range, reported the Sydney Morning Herald.

In addition to military concerns, the Pacific community is concerned about safety and environmental issues. "China has already done enough damage to the maritime environment by hastily building artificial islands and destroying irreplaceable coral reefs," Mr. Cronin said. "We do not need a nuclear accident in these importing fishing grounds and sea lanes."

Mr. Cronin and other security experts noted that floating nuclear reactors could also give China an extra measure of protection from any potential attacks, whether by the United States or other militaries in the region, because of the risk of sparking a nuclear disaster at sea, the Herald also reports.

## Chinese Modernization Comes To An Isolated People

By Edward Wong

[New York Times](#), April 24, 2016

Those peaks no longer cut off this valley, where the Dulong have lived for centuries in hillside villages. It is not just the new road and tunnel that now connect residents here to the outside world. China Mobile has set up 4G cellular data service across much of the valley, and is not shy about

advertising this on billboards. One sign on the approach from the mountains to the main administrative village, Kongdang, says, "Take a photo of the beautiful scenery, transmit it to the world."

By the words are images of the jade river and of a local woman with intricate indigo tattoos on her face, once a common sight here.

The buildings in Kongdang are concrete blocks, and many were built or renovated a few years ago. They are painted orange and have a silhouette of a horned cow's head, a Dulong totem. A cow statue sits at the town entrance.

"The changes have been tremendous," said Yang Yi, an ethnic Han man living in the Nu Valley who has been driving a passenger minivan between the two valleys for a decade.

"Transportation, clothes, daily life — it has all been transformed," he said. "If you came here a decade ago, you would recognize the Dulong from their colorful clothes. Around three to five years ago, they began wearing modern clothes."

Even President Xi Jinping noted the changes. In January 2015, Mr. Xi met with seven representatives of the Dulong in Kunming, the provincial capital, and spoke of "getting rid of poverty" and "building a moderately well-off society," according to an official news report.

The valley is still quiet, except for occasional bursts of construction. One paved road runs north from Dulong Town toward the Tibetan border, ending near Mr. Li's hometown. Another goes to the border with Myanmar and no farther. In the last village is a red church; some Dulong are Christians, though most are animists.

There is no frontier checkpoint. Along a dirt trail into Myanmar, the border is demarcated by nothing more than a small stone.

With no paved roads leading out of the nearby villages in Myanmar's Kachin State, ethnic Dulong there walk into this valley to sell herbs and vegetables.

It is tourism that provincial and county officials want to sell to the outside world. Word of the valley's beauty is trickling out, and international agencies have recognized the Gaoligong Mountains National Nature Reserve as a crucial biosphere. The new road has made visiting easier, even if the nearest airport is a long day's drive away.

One recent afternoon, three ethnic Han backpackers from central China sat in the last village by the Myanmar border. People from outside the valley, many from other Yunnan towns, have come to work in restaurants and other service businesses that are counting on a tourist boom.

In the village of Pukawang, just south of the government town, a group of tourists from Shanghai drove up to a boutique riverside hotel, Green Cottage, opened in October by a Beijing entrepreneur — a poverty alleviation project supported by local officials.

On a slope behind the hotel is the old village. The few remaining residents there sit in wooden homes with fire pits, sometimes drinking homemade corn whiskey.

The hotel occupies half the new village. The village homes and hotel villas were all designed and built together around 2012.

Officials gave families in Pukawang two new homes, one to live in and one to rent to the hotel company for use as guest villas. To each family, the hotel pays 5,000 renminbi per year, under \$800. The hotel charges guests \$25 to \$75 per night for each of the 13 villas.

"Living here is much better than where we were before," Kong Mingqing, 21, said as he stood by the porch of his new family home behind the hotel.

Few ethnic Dulong have lived outside the valley, but Mr. Kong is an exception. He left to study vehicle maintenance in Hunan Province, he said, but returned in 2013 because of financial problems.

"When I came back, it had already been transformed," he said. "I don't think too much about the changes coming. Of course, there will be changes."

In Pukawang, the hotel has tried to employ villagers — part of the official plan to help raise local incomes — but has found that hard to do, said a manager, Yang Yubiao, an ethnic Bai from the Dali area.

"The villagers said they were tired of the work," he said. "They left after two to three days."

Three of the hotel's nine employees are ethnic Dulong from elsewhere in the valley, and the rest are outsiders, Mr. Yang said.

"Has the poverty alleviation plan succeeded?" he asked. "We've raised the awareness of the Dulong people here — how to communicate with outsiders, how to make money, how to live a better life."

But Mr. Yang also said he had heard that a couple of women in Pukawang had committed suicide a few years ago by drinking pesticide. He has a theory: "This was a primitive society," he said. "Now the leap is happening too fast. Some of them cannot adapt."

## **A Publisher's Daughter Grapples With Her Father's Abduction By China**

By Fred Hiatt

[Washington Post](#), April 24, 2016

Angela Gui, 22, a university student in England, and her father, a publisher who lives on the other side of the world, don't get to see each other as often as they would like. But they spent a happy Christmas together in 2014, and last fall Angela was looking forward to seeing her father again in November.

A month before they were to meet, he went missing.

Angela knows that her father, Gui Minhai, did some shopping on the morning of Oct. 17. A video camera in his Thai condo showed him returning home with his groceries, carrying them upstairs and then driving away again with a man who had been lurking in his garage.

Angela has not spoken with her father since, although she has received messages from him — or someone who claims to be him.

This is a mystery, then, and a missing-person story, but not of a conventional kind. Gui is missing from public view, but we can be fairly certain that he is in a prison somewhere inside China.

He was born in China, in 1964, and traveled to study at Sweden's University of Gothenburg in 1988. The following year, China's Communist Party crushed peaceful pro-democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square. Gui spent the next decade in Sweden, becoming a citizen, earning his PhD and having a daughter, Angela, his only child, who also is a Swedish citizen.

As the political climate in China relaxed, Gui returned, and eventually helped establish a company in Hong Kong that published gossipy volumes about China's leaders. Last fall it had a potential blockbuster in the works: a biography of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The book has never been published.

All Angela knew, at first, was that her father uncharacteristically had stopped communicating.

Eventually her father's friend and colleague in Hong Kong, Lee Bo, sent her an email: " 'Your dad has gone missing. We're afraid he was taken by Chinese agents for political reasons.' . . . That was an incredible shock," she said.

Gui's car has never been found. Thailand claims to have no record of his leaving the country. But in November, Angela received a brief text message purportedly from him. "I hope you will be fine," it said.

Angela, whose soft-spoken British-accented English carries barely a trace of her native Swedish, paused to compose herself as she recalled that time.

"He didn't respond to my messages," she said. "It was clear to me by then that somebody was controlling him."

In December came another shock: Lee also disappeared, apparently abducted from Hong Kong as Gui was from Thailand.

"I knew he had British citizenship," Angela said. "He had said, 'As long as I'm still in Hong Kong, I'll be okay.' "

It was not unheard of in years past for China's Communist rulers to reach beyond their borders to silence critics. In 2002, they kidnapped democracy activist Wang Bingzhang from Vietnam; he remains in a Chinese prison to this day.

But the brazenness and frequency of such actions have been growing. Overseas Chinese who speak out discover that relatives inside China have been jailed or threatened.

And altogether, five employees of Gui's Hong Kong publishing house have been disappeared for periods of time.

Lee eventually resurfaced in Hong Kong. He delivered a bizarre statement regretting his involvement with the publishing house, praising China and refusing to provide any information about his disappearance. He then went missing again.

Gui's reemergence was even odder. In January, he appeared on Chinese television, tearfully claiming to have voluntarily returned to China to take responsibility for a hit-and-run accident in 2003.

Angela has yet to watch the supposed confession from beginning to end. "I'm trying to stay focused on getting him released," she said. "If I watched the whole thing, with my father in tears, I don't think I could go on."

But she has watched enough to know it is false. "That's just not the way he talks," she said. She had never heard him speak of any accident.

Compounding her misgivings is one final message she received from his Skype account.

"He said he was okay, that he went back to China on his own to solve his own problems. 'If anyone asks about me, please keep quiet, because that's important to me.' "

"I replied, 'What do you mean? Where are you?' " But there was no response.

Angela, a sociology major who never expected to be an activist, finds herself knocking on official doors in Stockholm and Washington, hoping that governments eager for smooth relations with China will stir themselves to object to such egregious behavior.

"Even though he told me to keep quiet, I don't believe that's his actual wish, and I believe that if I did keep quiet, I would just be assisting in a crime against international law," she said.

"I hope that's the right thing. I don't know."

She paused again to compose herself.

"It's been seven months now, and I've not heard a thing."

## Republicans To Take Aim At The National Security Council

By Karoun Demirjian

[Washington Post](#), April 24, 2016

House Republicans plan to move a proposal that would restrain White House control over foreign policy planning, amid mounting complaints that the roles of the Pentagon and other national security agencies are being curtailed by West Wing micromanaging.

House Armed Services Chairman Mac Thornberry will offer an amendment as soon as this week to the annual defense policy bill that would slash the National Security Council staff to "well below" its estimated current level of 400,

give Congress more oversight over the council and subject the president's national security adviser to the Senate confirmation process, according to committee aides.

The changes are a response to a litany of recent complaints about how closely the NSC controls decision making regarding foreign policy and military strategy that traditionally was coordinated by national security agencies. Former Obama administration Defense Secretaries Robert M. Gates and Leon E. Panetta have been particularly outspoken about their frustrations since leaving the Pentagon about the amount of control exercised by NSC staff.

Gates said it wasn't the big picture policy discussions that bothered him, but how closely the White House tried to control the process of implementing that strategy.

"It was White House micromanagement of military affairs," he said at the Reagan National Defense Forum in November 2014 in Simi Valley, Calif.. "It was that micromanagement that drove me crazy."

Thornberry has echoed those critiques in the past and hinted earlier this year that "it may be time to look at" the NSC charter.

Critics inside and out of the administration argue the NSC's size and insular nature has led it to fail in its core mission of helping President Obama make swift decisions about how to approach conflicts and diplomatic crises in places like Syria, Ukraine and Egypt.

The council was created during the Truman administration to better coordinate diplomacy and defense planning for the president. But since the start of the century, it has ballooned in size, almost quadrupling since the end of the Clinton administration.

The White House has pushed back against scathing reviews of the NSC, pointing out that the growth didn't occur under Obama's tenure alone. Current National Security Advisor Susan Rice has made a point of paring back its size, NSC spokesman Ned Price said, cutting staff by 10 percent since December 2014.

A spokesman for committee Democrats did not say on Friday whether the minority would oppose the proposal.

Thornberry's staff said he also wants to use the \$610 billion defense authorization bill to attempt to depoliticize the selection of the president's top military advisor by extending the Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman's term of service from two years to four years, commencing in the middle of the president's own term. The move is intended to provide continuity and preserve the independence of the job through presidential transitions.

The bill also would make a number of structural changes to the military's organization to cut costs and streamline the often competing functions of the different service branches – a move lawmakers on both sides of the aisle believe is needed.

The proposal reduces the top rank at combatant commands from a four-star to a three-star officer, a move that would reduce the number of staffers in these commands and cuts costs. It also would elevate the profile of the Pentagon's Cyber Command to reflect the growing importance of planning for cyberwarfare.

While there has long been bipartisan agreement that structural reforms in the military are overdue, committee Democrats have yet to comment on Thornberry's draft legislation.

But some Democrats are voicing concerns over Republican-driven financial priorities in this year's defense policy bill, which would commit more money than the president requested to military pay raises, overseas train-and-equip programs and expensive military equipment. Democrats are expected to be upset that Republicans are planning to pay for these priorities by using funds from a war funding account, which would leave less money than the White House wants for active operations in foreign conflicts.

This plan could lead to the war fund running out sooner than the administration budgeted, which would likely lead to Congress passing an emergency spending bill to fund these critical military campaigns.

A similar fight almost killed last year's defense authorization bill, which Obama vetoed once over complaints that Republicans were using war account as a "slush fund" to get around budget caps.

House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wisc.) on Thursday said he supports Thornberry's approach and would have the Appropriations Committee follow his lead.

## **War In Yemen Takes A Major Turn With Offensive Against Al-Qaeda**

By Ali Al-Mujahed

[Washington Post](#), April 24, 2016

SANAA, Yemen — Signaling a major shift in Yemen's grinding civil war, Saudi-backed forces on Sunday appeared to mount a large-scale offensive to drive militants aligned with al-Qaeda out of their strongholds in the country's south.

Under cover of airstrikes from a coalition led by Saudi Arabia, fighters aligned with Yemen's internationally recognized government pushed toward the city of Mukalla, which has become the de facto capital of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

AQAP, considered the most powerful al-Qaeda franchise, seized the port city last year amid Yemen's widening chaos, a development that alarmed the United States. AQAP militants have used Mukalla as a base to plant even deeper roots in the desperately poor Arabian Peninsula nation, possibly to stage attacks on Western targets.

"Coalition warplanes have been targeting the city since midnight, hitting the airport and cultural center," said Ali

Atkhaleqi, a freelance journalist who spoke by telephone from Mukalla. Coalition ground troops have begun an assault on the city's eastern outskirts, he said.

The offensive on Mukalla and surrounding areas comes amid recently restarted peace efforts led by the United Nations to end the multifaceted civil war, which pits Shiite rebels known as Houthis against the government. The conflict has killed an estimated 6,000 people and caused what U.N. officials describe as a humanitarian catastrophe for Yemen's 25 million residents.

The coordinated attacks on AQAP strongholds in the south appear to be a first for the Saudi-dominated coalition, a grouping of mostly Arab Persian Gulf countries and local allies that began launching air raids and then ground attacks last year against Houthi rebels. Saudi Arabia views the Houthis as proxies of its primary regional rival, Shiite Iran.

Until the recent attacks, coalition forces — including fighters linked to the government of Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi — had refrained from attacking AQAP. The group's militants also have fought the Houthis and, in turn, mostly refrained from attacks against forces aligned with the coalition, raising suspicion of an informal truce between them.

Footage posted on social media, which could not be independently verified, purported to show clashes on the outskirts of Mukalla, as well as the aftermath of air raids on the city. In one video, heavy gunfire can be heard in the background as residents flee to safety in their vehicles.

It is unclear why the coalition has turned its firepower on AQAP-held areas. In private, U.S. officials have expressed concern that Saudi Arabia's intervention in Yemen has empowered the al-Qaeda affiliate.

Even as coalition attacks avoided AQAP, U.S. drone strikes have continued to target its militants, killing senior leaders.

Unconfirmed reports posted Sunday on Twitter by residents in Yemen alleged that ground forces from the United Arab Emirates were involved in the attacks on Mukalla.

UAE troops provided critical momentum to allied Yemeni fighters during an assault last summer on the strategic port city of Aden, in southern Yemen. Houthi militants were driven out, and Aden subsequently became a base for pro-coalition forces and Hadi's government.

But Aden eventually became notorious for lawlessness, including attacks claimed by Yemen's nascent Islamic State affiliate. One of those attacks, a car bombing, killed Aden's governor in December.

Since the summer, the Saudi-led coalition's progress has largely been halted by fierce Houthi counterattacks. The rebels toppled Hadi's government last year and still control the capital, Sanaa, despite heavy air raids by coalition warplanes.

## **Yemen Govt Troops Retake Key Qaeda-Held City: Army**

[AFP](#), April 24, 2016

Marib (Yemen) (AFP) — Yemeni troops backed by Saudi-led coalition air strikes on Sunday recaptured a southeastern provincial capital held by Al-Qaeda for the past year and an oil terminal, military sources told AFP.

"We entered the city centre (of Mukalla) and were met by no resistance from Al-Qaeda militants who withdrew west" towards the vast desert in Hadramawt and Shabwa provinces, said the officer, speaking to AFP by phone from the city which the jihadists seized last April.

The officer who requested anonymity told AFP that residents of Mukalla, home to an estimated 200,000 people, had appealed to the jihadists to spare the city the destruction of fighting and pull out.

The Saudi-led Arab coalition battling Iran-backed rebels in Yemen since March 2015 carried out air strikes against Al-Qaeda positions in Mukalla to pave the way for the entry of Yemeni troops, according to military sources.

Troops also recaptured Mina al-Dhaba oil terminal in Shehr, further east, the sources said, while a provincial official in Shabwa said jihadists had fled from the nearby city of Azzan.

## **Yemeni, UAE Troops Enter Qaeda-held City: Residents**

By Mohammed Mukhashaf And Mohammed Ghobari

[Reuters](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## **Britain Says Can't Rule Out Sending Troops To Libya: Newspaper**

[Reuters](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## **We Can't 'Rule Out' Sending Troops To Libya**

By Tim Ross

[Telegraph \(UK\)](#), April 23, 2016

Mr Hammond stressed that he did not think it was likely that Libya would invite foreign military intervention while the country is still struggling to re-establish a sense of national identity.

But he indicated that Britain and other allies would reserve the right to act to protect their own citizens, even without a Libyan government invitation, if the threat from Isis developed into a major security crisis.

On Monday, David Cameron will attend a summit in Hanover with President Obama, the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel and the leaders of France and Italy to discuss world security issues.

President Obama discussed the crisis with Mr Cameron during his visit to London, insisting that the west was “more than prepared” to help Libya with investments in border security and efforts “to drive out terrorists”. Philip Hammond on Libya

“No – I do not love Europe,” Philip Hammond declares, indignantly.

Mr Hammond is sometimes unkindly compared to a dull, grey accountant, pushing pens around Whitehall, a safe but uninspiring pair of hands.

Yet the Foreign Secretary has clearly decided that now is not the time for diplomatic niceties.

In an outspoken interview with The Telegraph, Mr Hammond goes into battle on three fronts. He warns that British troops may be needed to defeat the growing threat from Islamic State jihadists in Libya.

He suggests Boris Johnson’s outbursts over President Obama’s intervention in the EU debate could render the Mayor of London unsuitable for high office.

And he tells Tory MPs who now have a “thirst for rebellion” that they must accept the outcome of June’s EU referendum and re-unite to deliver the party’s manifesto promises in government.

## **South Africa’s Zuma In Iran Praises 1979 Revolution**

[AFP](#), April 24, 2016

Tehran (AFP) – South Africa’s embattled President Jacob Zuma praised Iran’s 1979 revolution Sunday at the start of a three-day state visit which he said could “dramatically expand trade” with the Islamic republic.

The overthrow of a US-backed Shah was a source of encouragement as black South Africans fought against apartheid, Zuma said at a press conference with President Hassan Rouhani, before later meeting Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran’s supreme leader.

With international sanctions against Iran now lifted under its nuclear deal with world powers, business activity is likely to increase.

“Iran occupies a special place in our struggle against apartheid,” Zuma said, noting how Tehran cut ties with South Africa when it was under white rule, only resuming relations in 1994 after Nelson Mandela was elected as its first black president.

Mandela, who served one term before voluntarily standing down in 1999, visited Tehran before his election and soon after leaving office.

“South Africans were inspired by the 1979 revolution, which showed that emancipation is possible, whatever the odds,” said Zuma, the first serving South African president to visit since.

Having signed eight cooperation agreements ranging from energy development to business insurance, Zuma said the nuclear deal was an opportunity to deepen commercial links.

“The challenge is to dramatically expand trade volumes,” he added.

Rouhani, whose government in January implemented last summer’s nuclear deal with Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States plus Germany, paid tribute to Mandela, who died aged 95 in 2013.

“Let us cherish the memory of the late Nelson Mandela,” after whom a street is named in Tehran, Rouhani said. “He is so very much revered by both the South African and the Iranian people.”

Rouhani, who Zuma confirmed has been invited to visit South Africa, said he would like to see direct flights opening up from Tehran.

Zuma’s trip comes as he is under fire and accused of corruption at home.

Julius Malema, the firebrand head of South Africa’s radical opposition Economic Freedom Fighters, warned that he could seek to remove Zuma’s African National Congress (ANC) government “through the barrel of a gun”.

Late last month, a constitutional court ruled Zuma had violated the constitution in using public funds to upgrade his private residence and said he must repay the money.

Malema, 35, was expelled from the ANC in 2012 when he was head of the party’s youth wing, having said the government was not doing enough to help South Africa’s poor.

## **NATIONAL NEWS**

### **Obama, Merkel Urge Action On Trade Agreement**

By Colleen McCain Nelson And Anton Troianovski  
[Wall Street Journal](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

### **Obama Delivers Strong Defense Of International Trade Deals**

By Darlene Superville And Kathleen Hennessey  
[Associated Press](#), April 24, 2016

HANNOVER, Germany (AP) – President Barack Obama delivered a strong defense of international trade deals Sunday in the face of domestic and foreign opposition, saying it’s “indisputable” that such agreements strengthen the

economy and make U.S. businesses more competitive worldwide.

Obama, on a farewell visit to Germany as president, is trying to counter public skepticism about a trans-Atlantic trade deal with Europe, while also facing down criticism from the 2016 presidential candidates of a pending Asia-Pacific trade pact.

Despite all that, Obama said, “the majority of people still favor trade. They still recognize, on balance, that it’s a good idea.”

“It is indisputable that it has made our economy stronger,” Obama said about international trade. He said he was confident the trans-Atlantic trade deal could be completed by the end of year, to be presented for ratification. And he said that once the U.S. presidential primary season is over and politics settle down, the trans-Pacific pact can “start moving forward.”

Obama, at a news conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, made a strong public show of support for her handling of the migrant issue, saying she was “on the right side of history on this.”

Her decision to allow the resettlement in Germany of thousands fleeing violence in Syria and other Mideast conflict zones has created an angry domestic backlash. Merkel recently helped European countries reach a deal with Turkey to ease the flow, but she and the other leaders are now under pressure to revisit it.

Obama said Merkel was “giving voice to the kinds of principles that bring people together rather than divide them,” and credited her with taking on some tough politics.

But the president reiterated U.S. opposition to the idea of establishing a “safe zone” in Syrian territory, saying it would be difficult to put in place.

“As a practical matter, sadly, it is very difficult to see how it would operate short of us essentially being willing to militarily take over a chunk of that country,” he said.

Merkel, in contrast, has endorsed the notion of creating areas that could provide safe haven for the thousands of migrants fleeing the violence, and said such zones would improve access to humanitarian aid. She insisted the proposal would not require outside intervention, saying safe areas should be part of the Geneva peace negotiations that involve the Syrian government and moderate opposition groups.

Obama, looking to project a united front with a leader he referred to as his “trusted partner,” said making safe zones controlled by moderate opposition part of the peace talks shows that “here there’s no space between us.”

Obama spoke after Merkel rolled out the red carpet for him at Hannover’s Herrenhausen Palace, a rebuilt version of the former summer royal residence destroyed in World War II. After reviewing German troops in a palace garden, they climbed a spiral staircase and stepped inside for private talks.

The two later spoke at the opening of the Hannover Messe, the world’s largest industrial technology trade fair, where Obama made the case for swift action on the trans-Atlantic trade deal known as TTIP. The trade pact is a hard sell in much of Europe, particularly Germany.

After three years of negotiation on the deal, Obama said, “we’ve made important progress but time is not on our side.”

“If we don’t complete negotiations this year, then upcoming political transitions in the United States and Europe could mean this agreement won’t be finished for quite some time,” he said.

Thousands of people took to the streets in Hannover to protest the trade deal on Saturday, before Obama arrived. Some carried placards that said “Yes We Can – Stop TTIP!” It was a riff on Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign slogan.

In November, more than 100,000 people in Berlin protested against the proposed pact.

Proponents say the deal would boost business at a time of global economic uncertainty. Critics fear the erosion of consumer protections and environmental standards.

Negotiators in Washington and Europe are trying to finalize key parts of the deal before the end of the year, after which Obama’s successor and election campaigns in major European countries could further complicate the already difficult negotiations.

Obama said it was important to conclude negotiations even though ratification would be unlikely before he leaves office. “But if we have that deal, then the next president can pick that up rapidly and get that done,” he told the BBC in an interview broadcast Sunday.

It’s not certain that the next president would pick up where Obama leaves off on the trade deal. The pact has not been a top issue in the campaign to choose Obama’s successor. Both leading candidates – Democrat Hillary Clinton and Republican Donald Trump – oppose the Asia-Pacific trade pact for its potential impact on American jobs and wages.

On Monday, Obama was joining Merkel to tour the trade show and giving a speech on challenges facing the U.S. and Europe.

Merkel also used the occasion of Obama’s visit to invite the leaders of France, Britain and Italy to Hannover for a meeting Monday to discuss Syria, Libya, IS, migration and other issues.

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Superville reported from Aerzen, Germany. Associated Press writers Kathleen Hennessey and Frank Jordans in Hannover, Germany, contributed to this report.

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Follow Darlene Superville on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap> and Kathleen Hennessey at <http://twitter.com/khennessey>



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## US, EU Must Continue Forward With T-TIP Trade Pact

By Mary Alice Salinas

[Voice of America](#), April 24, 2016

U.S. President Barack Obama said the United States and the European Union must move forward on a landmark free-trade agreement, despite strong opposition to the accord.

"It is indisputable" the United States has benefited from free trade, as have other countries that engage in it, Obama said during a joint news conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Hannover, Germany.

The United States and Germany are among each other's largest trade partners and hope to build support for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

Pros, cons

Germany's government has pushed the T-TIP deal, saying it would boost the global economy and give small and mid-sized companies a better chance at competing on the world market, while reducing bureaucracy.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, right, greets U.S. President Barack Obama at the stately Schloss Herrenhausen, once the summer residence of the Royal House of Hannover, April 24, 2016.

Opponents have been critical of what they perceive as opaque negotiations carried out away from public scrutiny, and they fear the pact will hand too much power to big multinationals at the expense of consumers and workers.

Officials have estimated the U.S.-Europe deal would add \$100 billion annually to the economies on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

Obama argued some oppose the deal because they are "unsettled by globalization," but most "people recognize on balance that it is a good idea." He predicted a deal would be reached before he leaves office in January, although it will take longer to ratify.

The United States will "make every effort" to reach an agreement this year," he said later at the spectacular opening of the Hannover Messe, a massive trade fair for industrial technology.

The European Union and United States have been negotiating since 2013, and supporters hope T-TIP deal will gain momentum now that the United States, Japan and other

Pacific Rim nations have reached an agreement on a separate deal.

U.S. President Barack Obama gestures as he makes a speech during the opening ceremony of the Hannover Messe in Hanover, Germany, April 24, 2016.

Obama began his two-day visit by holding talks with Merkel on a broad range of pressing global issues, including terrorism, the migration crisis in Europe and transatlantic security.

Terrorism

On terrorism, Obama said the United States and Germany are committed to using all "the tools at their disposal to prevent terrorists from plotting attacks."

Germany is a member of the U.S.-coalition against Islamic State.

Obama said the two discussed additional steps NATO can take to support the campaign and economic assistance the G-7 can pledge during a summit in Japan next month.

Merkel said while she supports a classic "safe zone" in Syria, she hopes the peace talks going on in Geneva could pave the way for a humanitarian area for refugees.

Guard of honor arrives before the welcome ceremony of U.S. President Barack Obama at Schloss Herrenhausen in Hanover, Germany, April 24, 2016.

Obama said a safe zone in Syria would be difficult without a large military commitment. He added the issue "is not a matter of an ideological objection," but rather "a very practical issue about how you do it."

Both expressed concern a cease-fire in Syria had not held in recent days.

"We continue to believe that the only durable solution is a political solution that leads Syria to an inclusive government that represents all Syrians," Obama said.

Ukraine

In Ukraine, "unfortunately we don't have a stable cease-fire," said Merkel, and she urged Ukraine and Russia to fully implement the Minsk agreement "as quickly as possible."

They also discussed the importance of backing a fragile unity government in Libya.

Protesters wear masks of U.S. President Barack Obama and German Chancellor Angela Merkel as they demonstrate against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP) free trade pact at the Hannover Messe in Hannover, Germany, April 24, 2016.

On Monday, Merkel and Obama will hold talks with their counterparts from Britain, France and Italy.

The leaders will discuss "the full range of challenges we face together," Obama told reporters.

White House officials say that will include talks on the NATO summit in Warsaw in July.

Obama said given the increased pressure Europe is facing from the south and aggressive and enormous

spending by Russia it is important for NATO members to meet alliance obligations.

Obama will cap his visit with a speech Monday outlining his vision for future U.S.-European relations.

## **Obama Pushes Controversial Trade Deal In Germany**

By Kim Hjelmgaard

[USA Today](#), April 24, 2016

HANNOVER, Germany — President Obama on Sunday defended a controversial trade deal between the United States and the European Union that he wants to finalize before leaving office in January.

Speaking at a news conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Obama said people around the world are unsettled by globalization, but that trade has brought tremendous benefits and more jobs.

“When people visibly see a plant lost or jobs lost, the narrative drives a lot of suspicion about these trade deals,” he said. “If you look at the benefits for our economies, it is indisputable that they are made stronger.”

Obama said it was necessary to complete the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement because 95% of markets are outside U.S. borders. He said he was confident that TTIP could be completed by the end of the year. A separate trade pact covering 12 Pacific rim countries known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership could “start moving forward” once the U.S. presidential election is over, he said.

Obama praised Merkel several times during the news conference before the two leaders then opened the Hannover Messe, the world’s largest industrial technology trade fair.

“This is as important a relationship as I have had during my presidency. Angela has been consistent and steady,” Obama said. “She has a really good sense of humor that she doesn’t always show in press conferences. That’s probably why she has lasted so long as a leader. She watches what she says.”

He said Merkel was “on the right side of history” for her lenient policies to admit refugees, and she was “courageous” for her handling of Europe’s migrant crisis because it was a position that has harmed her political approval ratings.

Obama arrived in Germany on Sunday from London, where he met with British Prime Minister David Cameron, had lunch and dinner with members of the royal family and interjected his opinion into the United Kingdom’s contentious debate over whether that country should leave the EU.

Britain will hold a June 23 vote on the issue. The president angered anti-EU campaigners by saying the U.K.’s trade clout outside the 28-member bloc would be diminished.

TTIP’s supporters say the trade pact would make it easier and cheaper for companies on both sides of the

Atlantic to do business together, as well as provide a much needed boost to the global economy amid persistent, sluggish growth. There is fierce opposition to TTIP in Germany — Europe’s largest economy and most important political voice — where it is believed the deal would erode consumer and environmental protections.

About 35,000 people marched in Hannover on Saturday against the proposed deal that would cover more than 800 million people.

Merkel said in the news conference that adopting TTIP was an important step that would allow European economies to grow. “We need to speed matters up now,” she said.

While in London, Obama said TTIP would bring millions of jobs and billions of dollars in benefits to both regions. About 300 U.S. companies are attending the trade show in Hannover.

Obama acknowledged that negotiating trade deals was “tough” because countries want to fight for their domestic interests. “The main thing between the United States and Europe is trying to just break down some of the regulatory differences that make it difficult to do business back and forth,” the president said.

Journalists await the arrival of President Obama at the airport in Hannover, Germany, on April 24. (Photo: DPA)

A recent survey published by the Bertelsmann foundation, a Germany-based research group, found only one in five Germans favors the proposed trade pact, and one in three would reject it completely. In the U.S., only 18% of respondents oppose TTIP, the report found.

“Support for trade agreements is fading in a country that views itself as the global export champion,” said Aart De Geus, the foundation’s chairman and chief executive. “Trade is a key driver of the German economy. If it weakens, Germany’s economic power as well as its labor market could falter.”

Obama and Merkel said they discussed a number of other issues in their meeting Sunday, including the ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan, Libya and Syria.

Obama said American and German thinking was aligned regarding Syria, but they differ over the idea of carving out “safe zones” in Syria for the thousands of people fleeing violence.

“As a practical matter, sadly, it is very difficult to see how it would operate short of us essentially being willing to militarily take over a chunk of that country,” Obama said.

Merkel previously endorsed the idea.

## **Obama Says EU And U.S. Must Move Forward With TTIP**

[Reuters](#), April 24, 2016

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## **Economy, Crises In Focus As Obama Heads To Germany**

By Roberta Rampton  
[Reuters](#), April 23, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## **Obama Says He Expects Progress On Asia, Europe Trade Deals**

By Patrick Donahue  
[Bloomberg Politics](#), April 24, 2016

President Barack Obama said he expects the U.S. Congress to vote on a trade deal with Asia-Pacific nations after the primary season over, and that his administration will complete negotiations on a similar pact with the European Union by the end of his presidency.

"When we're in the heat of campaigns people are naturally going to worry more about what's lost than what's gained, with respect to trade agreements," Obama said Sunday at a news conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Hanover. The leaders appeared at the opening of the Hanover Messe, which bills itself as the world's leading trade show for industrial technology. "I'm confident we are going to be able to get this done," Obama said.

White House officials say the Trans Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, or TTIP, which would reduce tariffs on scores of products traded between the U.S. and European Union, remains a top priority for the president. Still, negotiators in both the U.S. and Europe acknowledge the prospects for ratification of the deal are essentially non-existent until the next administration.

### **'Political Transitions'**

"I don't anticipate that we'll be able to have completed ratification of a deal by the end of the year, but I do anticipate we can have completed the agreement," Obama said of the European pact. If not, Obama said later in a speech at the trade show, "political transitions could mean this agreement is not concluded for quite some time."

"TTIP is a treaty that establishes standards in a very special way, so I want to very strongly express my support for using this window of time," Merkel said in comments to the same audience. "It won't come back anytime soon. So let's work on this together."

Congress has yet to vote on a trade deal Obama negotiated last year with 11 Asia-Pacific nations, the Trans-

Pacific Partnership. Many lawmakers in Obama's own party oppose the accord.

"After the primary season is over the politics settle down a little bit in Congress, and we'll be in a position to start moving forward," Obama said.

### **Warren's Challenge**

The president dismissed criticism of the Investor-State Dispute Settlement provisions in trade deals, which let companies challenge domestic laws in front of international arbitration panels. Senator Elizabeth Warren, a Massachusetts Democrat who at one point worked in the Obama administration, has said such provisions are a dangerous challenge to sovereignty and could allow the erosion of public health and environmental protections.

But Obama said "the terrible scenarios that are painted" haven't materialized under current trade agreements that include such provisions. "None of these things have happened with the many trade agreements that currently exist," Obama said.

Corporate leaders say they're thankful Obama is trying to set the table on trade for the next president. The Hanover Messe trade show, with 300 U.S. companies and 70 U.S. economic development organizations expected to participate, provides Obama and Merkel an opportunity to highlight the benefits of cross-Atlantic trade.

### **Networked World**

Obama's attendance at the show sends a message to the business community that "the president of the United States believes industrial production is important," Siegfried Russwurm, chief technology officer of Munich-based Siemens AG, said in a phone interview. "Hanover is a great opportunity to show how networked our world is, and sometimes politicians appreciate that reminder."

At a town hall with British youth on Saturday, Obama said the trade deal could create "millions of jobs and billions of dollars of benefits on both sides of the Atlantic."

"The main thing between the United States and Europe is trying to just break down some of the regulatory differences that make it difficult to do business back and forth," he said.

The president's visit may exacerbate concerns about the trade deal among some factions in Germany that are nervous it could open public services to foreign investments, endanger family farms and tacitly allow the monitoring of online activities.

In his remarks at the trade fair, Obama acknowledged that some farmers and workers have felt the costs of trade deals "without necessarily seeing or feeling the benefit."

"These anxieties are real, and at a time of growing inequality in many advanced economies we have to address them," he said.

## Obama Pushes Trade Deal During Stop In Germany

By Jessie Hellmann

[The Hill](#), April 24, 2016

President Obama on Sunday touted a trade deal between the United States and the European Union (EU), but said it may be difficult to get it approved by the end of the year.

“During presidential elections, it’s always tough when we’re in the heat of campaigns,” Obama said during a joint news conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Obama is in Germany to open the world’s largest industrial technology trade fair and try to win support for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), a free trade and investment agreement being negotiated between the U.S. and the EU.

There is opposition to the agreement in Germany, and thousands of protesters swarmed the streets in Hanover on Saturday carrying signs that read: “Yes We Can — Stop TTIP!”

Supporters say the agreement would boost business during a time of global economic uncertainty, while critics worry it could put consumer protections and environmental standards at risk.

“People naturally are going to worry more about what’s lost than what’s gained in response to trade agreements,” Obama said.

“I think what you’re seeing around the world is people are unsettled by globalization, although trade has brought enormous benefits to many of our countries that have been engaged in trade,” Obama said. “People see a plant moving and jobs lost, and the narrative develops that this is weakening rather than strengthening the positions of workers.”

Obama said in a BBC interview on Sunday that it’s unlikely Congress will ratify the deal before he leaves office but added that it’s important to finish negotiations before the end of the year.

“If we have that deal, then the next president can pick that up rapidly and get that done,” Obama said.

## Obama ‘Confident’ On TTIP As Clock Runs Down

By Vince Chadwick

[Politico Europe](#), April 24, 2016

BERLIN — U.S. President Barack Obama said Sunday he was “confident” that an agreement on a sweeping but controversial trade deal with the EU could be reached by the end of this year, as Washington and Berlin redoubled efforts to cinch the pact before he leaves office.

“I am confident that we’re going to be able to get this done,” Obama said in a news conference in Hanover with

German Chancellor Angela Merkel. “I don’t anticipate that we will complete ratification by the end of the year, but I do anticipate that we can have completed the agreement.”

The president’s reference to “ratification” suggests he will punt the final decision to his successor and the new Congress after he leaves office. Given the growing skepticism about free trade deals on both sides of the Atlantic, Obama’s latest endorsement of TTIP, as the transatlantic trade pact is known, is far from a guarantee that it will ever be completed. Obama acknowledged those challenges in his opening address to the Hanover Trade Fair.

“Time is not on our side,” he told an audience of senior German politicians and industry chiefs. “If we don’t make progress this year, then upcoming political transitions in the United States and Europe will [result] in this agreement not being finished for quite some time.”

A day before Obama’s arrival in Hanover, an industrial hub in western Germany, tens of thousands of TTIP opponents took to the streets to protest the deal. Those against the deal argue it would dilute European standards on everything from food to jurisprudence. About one-third of Germans say they are against the trade pact.

Though TTIP is little known in the U.S., free trade has become a hot-button issue in the presidential campaign as Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders have blamed past agreements for the loss of industrial jobs in America.

Acknowledging that the benefits of free trade “are often diffuse,” Obama used his speech to counter the arguments of TTIP opponents on both sides of the Atlantic.

“TTIP will not lower standards, it will raise standards even higher: high standards protecting workers, high standards protecting consumers, to give them more choices, high standards for the environment,” he said.

U.S. and European trade officials have been negotiating TTIP for years. While they’ve made substantial progress in recent months, they have yet to bridge differences in key areas such as agriculture and dispute resolution. A new round of talks, the 13th, is scheduled to begin on Monday in New York.

“She’s demonstrated real political and moral leadership,” — Obama, discussing German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Merkel, who in past months has largely avoided the subject of TTIP, echoed Obama’s sales pitch on Sunday.

“From a European perspective [TTIP] is absolutely helpful to boost our economy in Europe,” Merkel said. “It’s good for the German economy, it’s good for the entire European economy...we should hurry up.”

Earlier in the day, Obama and Merkel discussed a range of challenges facing the U.S. and Europe, including the humanitarian crisis in Syria, the fight against ISIL and political instability in Libya. They also addressed the ongoing

migration crisis in Europe that has been fueled by the unrest in the Middle East.

The U.S. president gave strong backing to Merkel's handling of the migration issue, saying she has had to "take on some very tough politics" in recent months.

"In Europe, she is on the right side of history on this," Obama said during the press conference. "It is very difficult for us to simply build walls. She is giving voice to the kind of principles that bring people together rather than divide us."

Obama arrived in Germany earlier Sunday on the last leg of his European tour, a trip he is using to bolster transatlantic ties and bid farewell as the end of his presidency nears. He and Merkel were scheduled to tour the Hanover Fair, the world's largest industrial fair, Monday morning.

While the official purpose of the trip is to push for deeper economic links, the underlying reason for Obama's visit is to highlight the importance of U.S.-German ties. During his presidency, Berlin has become Washington's key ally in Europe, in many respects surpassing the U.K. as America's most important overseas partner.

Obama has relied on Merkel's leadership in Europe on everything from the financial crisis, to tensions with Russia over the Ukraine to the recent influx of refugees. In the press conference, Obama said "the world benefits from her steady presence."

At times, the two leaders have found themselves at odds, especially when it came to NSA surveillance programs or the military intervention in Libya. Obama said in the news conference that "it was right thing to do" to intervene in Libya to prevent the "murderous behavior" of the Gadhafi regime but acknowledged that western powers had perhaps not prepared for the aftermath of that intervention "as effectively as we should have."

Even as they disagreed, Merkel and Obama have stressed the broader dimension of U.S.-German ties and refused to let their differences stand in the way of collaboration on other fronts.

Though it took time for the easygoing Hawaii native and the East German pastor's daughter to develop personal chemistry, they eventually built up a rapport that transcends their working relationship.

"I consider Angela one of my closest partners and also a friend," Obama told Germany's Bild newspaper in an interview published Saturday.

"I've worked with her from the moment I took office in the depths of the financial crisis, and we've been through a lot together ever since."

Obama's visit comes at a difficult moment for Merkel at home. Her decision last fall to allow more than 1 million refugees to come to Europe has divided Germany. As Germans struggle with the challenge of absorbing the new arrivals, Merkel's approval ratings have plummeted.

Obama has been one of Merkel's strongest supporters on the refugee question, praising her leadership on the issue as "courageous."

"She's demonstrated real political and moral leadership," he told Bild. "The politics around refugees and immigration is hard in any country, but I believe the best leaders are willing to take on the toughest issues — especially when it's not easy."

In addition to meeting Merkel, Obama will also sit down with the leaders of France, Italy and the U.K. on Monday to discuss security threats and how to counter the so-called Islamic State in the wake of recent terrorist attacks in Brussels and Paris.

Benjamin Oreskes and Hans von der Burchard contributed reporting from Hanover.

## **Obama Joins Angela Merkel In Pushing Trade Deal To A Wary Germany**

By Alison Smale And Michael D. Shear  
[New York Times](#), April 24, 2016

HANOVER, Germany — President Obama said on Sunday that he was confident the United States and the European Union would succeed in negotiating a new trans-Atlantic trade deal by the end of the year, saying the benefits of such an agreement were "indisputable."

Mr. Obama said images of factories moving overseas and lost jobs created a narrative about trade agreements that "drives, understandably, a lot of suspicion" in places like the United States and Germany. But, he added, well-designed trade deals can have greater benefits.

"It is indisputable that it has made our economy stronger," he said. "It has made sure that our businesses are the most competitive in the world."

Mr. Obama spoke while standing next to Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany at a news conference in Hanover as they prepared to preside over the opening here of the world's largest industrial trade fair.

In the evening, Mr. Obama and Ms. Merkel hosted a dinner for 29 chief executives of major American and German companies.

The president's visit to Germany was intended to bolster negotiators seeking to wrap up a trade agreement between the United States and the European Union, an accord that Ms. Merkel supports but that is highly unpopular in her country.

Ms. Merkel is among Mr. Obama's most trusted counterparts, and the president is eager to support her during difficult political times. Ms. Merkel has struggled in recent months to confront a surge of migrants and a weakening economy.

On Sunday, she echoed Mr. Obama's enthusiasm for the trans-Atlantic trade deal, using bolder language than is her usual style.

"We should get a move on," the chancellor said. "We all know the reproaches, worries and fears, and what difficulties remain."

But if time is used wisely, she said, an agreement that will raise living standards can emerge. "So my request to those who are present," she added, looking around the audience of hundreds of business leaders and politicians, is: "Do it, and then we can have a great success this year."

The chancellor greeted the president at the Schloss Herrenhausen, the former summer residence of the Royal House of Hanover. They stood in front of a line of German troops in gray overcoats and green berets as the national anthems of the two nations played before the two leaders returned inside for a private meeting.

Mr. Obama said he hoped the trade negotiations could be completed before he left office.

"I don't anticipate that we will be able to complete ratification of a deal by the end of this year, but I do anticipate that we will have completed the agreement," he said. Once negotiations are finished, he said, "people will be able to see exactly why this will be good for our two countries."

Yet even as he expressed confidence that a deal would be reached this year, Mr. Obama acknowledged that "time is not on our side," and he offered a thinly veiled warning that a deal could be doomed if politicians like Hillary Clinton, who opposes the accord, are elected this year.

"If we don't complete negotiations this year, then upcoming political transitions in the United States and Europe could mean this agreement won't be finished for quite some time," Mr. Obama said, not mentioning Mrs. Clinton, his former secretary of state, directly.

Earlier, Mr. Obama's commerce secretary, Penny Pritzker, told an audience of 350 business leaders, "We must ask ourselves: What is the cost of delay?"

"Now is the time for U.S.-German leadership," she said.

Yet Germans often veer between admiration and scorn of the United States. Rarely was that more clear than in the contrasting ways that two groups prepared to greet Mr. Obama here this weekend.

Undeterred by the scandal caused by Volkswagen's deceit about emissions from its diesel vehicles in the United States, Germany's export-driven businesses showed off their wares in eager anticipation of the fair's opening on Sunday and the first visit to this city by a sitting American president. Mr. Obama helped open the fair.

Mr. Obama kindled good will with an unusually glowing appraisal of Ms. Merkel, telling Germany's best-selling newspaper, Bild, that he was proud to call her a friend. In particular, he praised Ms. Merkel's "real political and moral

leadership" in welcoming more than a million migrants last year.

None of that impressed the tens of thousands of protesters who gathered in Hanover's Opera Square on Saturday. Their goal, as proclaimed in hundreds of banners and chants, was to topple the trade deal, the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

Germany depends on exports for its wealth and on the United States for its security. Yet many Germans do not see the trade agreement as a good thing.

Monica Orth, 54, a therapist for teenagers who lives in Bonn, is one of many here who see the trade pact as a plot by big businesses — often American ones — to lower consumer standards, bypass national justice systems and undermine Europe's way of life.

"I don't want Monsanto and Bayer to determine which seeds I eat," Ms. Orth said. As two friends nodded in agreement, she added, "Democracy is a really valuable thing, and I don't want big business to take that from me."

At least a dozen other protesters who were interviewed echoed her words. All accused corporations like Monsanto — the American biotechnology corporation reviled by some for using genetically modified seeds that it says help battle disease — or the German pharmaceutical company Bayer of trying to force on them products they do not want.

In a way, these Germans should be a source of American pride, fierce believers in the democratic creed that the Western Allies spread after the defeat of the Nazis.

Yet popular sentiment in Germany often turns against the United States, which, though admired for its liberty and technical prowess, is also mistrusted by many for its commercial and military dominance.

"Anti-Americanism plays a certain role" in the opposition to the trade accord, said Christian Bluth, a researcher at Bertelsmann Stiftung, a German research institute that recently commissioned a poll suggesting even stronger rejection of the deal than the latest survey by ZDF, a public-service television broadcaster, which found in mid-February that at least half of Germans opposed the proposed trade agreement.

"What I personally find very difficult to understand is why Germans are so full of fears about trade and the future at a time when they have it good and unemployment is relatively low," Mr. Bluth said in an interview.

Anton Hofreiter, a leader of the Greens party who observed the protest on Saturday, said anti-American beliefs were not the guiding force of the campaign against the trade pact. Yet he noted that demonstrators were wary that Mr. Obama had come to Europe partly to make a quick trade deal.

Protesters who were asked why they so feared a pact likely to enhance Germany's trade prospects or why they distrusted American regulators, who uncovered the

Volkswagen scandal when European regulators did not, insisted that they would be deceived, describing the trade talks as secretive.

As a leading commentator, Nico Fried, noted in the newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on Saturday, “It sometimes seems easier to get the conflicting parties in Syria to agree on peace than for the friendly trans-Atlantic partners to produce a trade agreement.”

## **Obama: U.S.-EU Trade Pact Possible In 2016, But Not Congressional Approval**

By Joe Schatz

[Politico](#), April 24, 2016

President Obama said in Germany that he thinks the U.S. and the EU can strike a deal on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) by the end of 2016, but that action by Congress and European governments on a final agreement would wait until after his administration has ended.

Speaking alongside German Chancellor Angela Merkel at the launch of the Hannover Messe, a huge industrial show two hours west of Berlin, Obama said he is “confident” the two sides can reach an agreement on the U.S.-EU trade pact this year despite widespread concerns in the United States and Germany about trade deals.

But “I don’t anticipate that we will be able to have completed ratification of a deal by the end of the year,” he noted.

Meanwhile, he added that he expects Congress to be able to “start moving forward” on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) deal after the end of the presidential primary season. The administration concluded the TPP deal last year, but the Republican-controlled Congress hasn’t acted on it. Many observers think TPP won’t move before a post-election lame duck session of Congress.

## **Obama Arrives In Germany, Facing A Europe Strained By The Migrant Crisis And A Slow Economy**

By Greg Jaffe

[Washington Post](#), April 24, 2016

HANOVER, Germany — President Obama arrived Sunday in Germany, where he will encounter a Europe struggling with terrorism, an anemic economy and an unprecedented migrant crisis that have provoked nationalism and xenophobia in some quarters of the continent.

“It’s not my place to tell Europe how to manage Europe,” Obama said in *Bild Zeitung*, a German newspaper, prior to his arrival.

But the president has used his tour of Britain and Germany to provide some unusually frank advice to the Europeans on issues such as dealing with refugees, major

trade deals and terrorism. In the United Kingdom, where Britons will go to the polls in June to vote on whether to remain in the European Union, Obama warned repeatedly — in an editorial, a news conference and a BBC interview — that a withdrawal from the bloc would be unwise.

He arrives in Germany at a moment when German Chancellor Angela Merkel, his closest overseas ally, is under unprecedented pressure due in part to her strong advocacy for migrants pouring into Europe at levels not seen since World War II.

Under a deal that Merkel brokered late last month with the Turkish government, virtually all of the migrants who attempt to enter Europe via the Aegean Sea — including Syrians — will be sent back to Turkey. In exchange, Turkey gets \$6.6 billion and the promise of jump-started talks on its E.U. membership. Merkel also has played an essential role in maintaining European unity for tough sanctions designed to punish Russia for its aggression in Ukraine. She has been an advocate for a far-reaching trade deal between the United States and Europe — the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership — that has drawn fierce opposition from some Germans.

Obama was fulsome in his praise for the German leader, saying that he had worked with “her longer and closer than any other world leader.” “She’s pragmatic and focused on what’s actually possible,” Obama told *Bild Zeitung*. “I trust her.”

He called her leadership on the migrant crisis “courageous.”

“She’s demonstrated real political and moral leadership,” Obama told the Germany newspaper. “We cannot simply shut our doors to our fellow human beings when they are in such desperate need. That would be a betrayal of our values.”

The president has had less-kind words for other European leaders in recent months. In an interview with the Atlantic magazine, Obama complained that European countries were depending too heavily on the United States for their security, calling them “free riders” and worrying about the state of the European Union.

“I wouldn’t describe European unity as in a crisis, but I would say it is under strain,” Obama said at a news conference in London.

On Monday, Obama is expected to speak at the Hannover Messe, a massive German trade show, on Europe’s future and the importance of its partnership with the United States. After the speech, he will huddle with the leaders of Italy, France, the United Kingdom and Germany at an impromptu summit organized by Merkel.

## **The International Odd Couple: How Obama And Merkel Forged A Special Bond**

By Greg Jaffe

[Washington Post](#), April 24, 2016

HANOVER, Germany — German Chancellor Angela Merkel was asked Sunday to reminisce about her fondest moments with President Obama during the seven years of his presidency.

Her short, remarkably unsentimental answer explains why she has become Obama's closest overseas ally and the president's political and ideological soul mate on critical issues such as Syria, terrorism and containing Russian aggression in Ukraine. More than most American presidents, Obama disdains what he regards as needy, showboating allies. Merkel is most definitely neither.

The chancellor grimaced at the question from the German reporter. "I am not in a position to take stock now," she replied curtly. There was too much important work to do.

Obama, who is incapable of speaking in anything other than full — and frequently florid — paragraphs, smiled broadly and used the moment to pay Merkel a compliment.

"She has a really good sense of humor that she doesn't show all the time at press conferences," Obama said. "She's a little more — she's much more serious in front of all of you."

A bemused smile flashed across Merkel's face, prompting a storm of clicking camera shutters from the photographers in the room.

Obama was officially in Germany for the Hanover Messe, a major trade and technology show here that is promoting American companies and products. After their news conference, he and Merkel presided over the fair's opening ceremony, which included robots and music from the Broadway show "Wicked." Later in the evening they dined with German and American CEOs.

The real reason Obama came to Germany was simpler and more straightforward: Merkel asked him.

These are tough times for Europe, which is struggling with terrorism, an anemic economy and an unprecedented migrant crisis. They are also tough times for the longtime German chancellor, who is under unprecedented pressure, due in part to her strong advocacy for migrants pouring into Europe at levels not seen since World War II.

"Perhaps because she once lived behind a wall herself, Angela understands the aspirations of those who've been denied their freedom and who seek a better life," Obama said of Merkel, who grew up in the communist east.

In an attempt to relieve some of the pressure, Merkel and Turkish leaders brokered a deal late last month that will send virtually all of the migrants who attempt to enter Europe via the Aegean Sea — including Syrians — back to Turkey. In exchange, Turkey gets \$6.6 billion and the promise of jump-started talks on its E.U. membership.

The challenges facing Merkel were front and center throughout the news conference, especially when the two leaders discussed the plight of Syrian refugees and the need

for a safe zone inside that country where the displaced would be protected from the Islamic State and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces.

Obama voiced sympathy for Syrians caught in the middle of their country's brutal civil war. "We all care deeply about the tragic humanitarian crisis inside of Syria. I live with this every day," he said. But he said he opposes a safe zone administered by the United States that might relieve the pressure, because securing such an area would require thousands of troops and come with too many difficult questions.

"How do you do it? And who is going to put a bunch of ground troops inside of Syria?" Obama asked "How do you let people in? And who do you let in and who do you let out? And how is it monitored?"

Merkel didn't disagree. Instead, she said Western allies had to figure out a way through the peace negotiations with Russia, Iran and Assad's regime to help protect Syria's most vulnerable citizens. "We have to send a message to them," she said of the thousands of desperate Syrians trying to flee the country for Europe.

The two leaders also talked about their mutual support for a far-reaching trade deal between the United States and Europe — the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership — that has drawn fierce opposition from some Germans. The day before Obama arrived, thousands of people gathered in Hanover to protest the deal. Obama expressed hope that some of the resistance to the deal in the United States might start to ease "after the primary season is over."

"I think we all know that elections can sometimes make things a little more challenging," he said. "People take positions, in part, to protect themselves from attacks."

Merkel offered her endorsement of the pact in typical no-nonsense fashion: "It is important for the German economy," she said. "It is important for the whole European economy. We ought to have an interest in speeding negotiations up."

The reporters offered up more questions. Merkel pressed forward with her staccato answers.

She was asked about the prospect of working with a Republican presidential candidate — front-runner Donald Trump — who has called her welcoming refugee policies "insane."

Merkel arched an eyebrow and cocked her head, a gesture far more revealing than her answer. Cameras clicked furiously. "First, I concentrate on the task ahead for 2016. I'm quite busy with that, thank you very much," she replied.

A reporter wondered whether she felt some vindication for keeping Germany out of the 2011 NATO-led effort in Libya that toppled Moammar Gaddafi, a mission that Obama now acknowledges was poorly planned. "Let's look ahead. Let's



look at what we want to achieve,” she said of the deeply tribal country. “It is not easy. Not at all.”

As the news conference ended, Obama was asked whether he had any regrets that he could not continue in office like Merkel, who has served as chancellor since 2005 and does not face a term limit. Obama replied that a country as big and diverse as America needs “fresh legs,” but that he is glad Merkel is sticking around. “The world benefits from her steady presence,” he said.

Picking up a thread from the Trump question, Obama closed with a forceful defense of Merkel’s wisdom and compassion, especially on the refu-gee issue.

“She is on the right side of history on this,” Obama said, his voice rising. “I am very proud of her for that, and I am proud of the German people for that.”

If Merkel was pleased, she didn’t show it. Instead, she flashed her poker face.

## **President Obama And German Leader Angela Merkel Share A Deep Bond, Aides Say**

By Michael A. Memoli

[Los Angeles Times](#), April 24, 2016

In London, it was a sight with long historical precedent: an American president and a British prime minister showing personal rapport as they tended to the long-running “special relationship” between their countries.

“I’ve always found Barack someone who gives sage advice,” said David Cameron, the conservative prime minister. “He’s a man with a very good heart and has been a very good friend.”

At a joint news conference, Cameron and Obama reminisced about basketball, table tennis and barbecues; a day later the pair agonized over their misfortune on the golf course.

Here in Hanover on Sunday, a different scene emerged as German Chancellor Angela Merkel was asked to recount the ups and downs of her time with Obama.

“We’re actually quite busy with the conflicts that we need to solve in the world,” she said, brushing off the question. “I am not in position to take stock today.”

Obama’s bond with Merkel often has seemed as transactional as the one with Cameron is chummy. But as the only leader of a major ally whose tenure has spanned Obama’s presidency, aides say they share a deep bond that has allowed them to weather domestic and global storms, and even clashes with each other.

“This is as important a relationship as I’ve had during the course of my presidency,” Obama said Sunday, describing Merkel as consistent, steady and trustworthy.

They may not demonstrate overt personal chemistry but in some ways, according to a senior administration official,

they are more compatible than Obama is with other leaders. Both are cool, deliberate and interested in finding solutions.

As Merkel responded in detail to a question about resolving the Syria quagmire Sunday, Obama at one point looked at her admiringly and nodded vigorously at the argument she made.

In an interview with the German newspaper Bild that was published before his arrival, Obama said that he has learned from Merkel over the years and that she embodies the leadership qualities he admired most, particularly her pragmatism.

“When she says something, she means it. When she says she’ll do something, she does it,” he said. “I trust her. And when there have been bumps in the bilateral relationship, as there inevitably are between any two countries, we’ve worked through them together as partners, with mutual respect.”

That Merkel invited Obama for his fifth visit suggests strains have eased since the dark days of October 2013, when leaks from fugitive Edward Snowden disclosed that the National Security Agency had been eavesdropping on Merkel’s telephone calls for at least three years.

Merkel was furious and Obama, who was embarrassed, later said he had ended the intelligence-gathering operation.

Merkel had her doubts about Obama early on, at least according to comments attributed to a former U.S. ambassador to Germany that were related to Hillary Clinton by her longtime confidant Sidney Blumenthal.

“She dislikes the atmospherics surrounding the Obama phenomenon, that it’s contrary to her whole idea of politics and how to conduct oneself in general,” Blumenthal wrote in an email made public by the State Department last year.

But the two leaders quickly found common ground.

As head of Europe’s largest and most stable economy, Merkel was an essential partner in Obama’s efforts to help steady the global economy after the recession. The administration also worked closely with Germany on emerging security threats.

In 2011, heading into his reelection year, the president feted Merkel with a Rose Garden state dinner. He awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom, tracing her path in Cold War East Germany to becoming the world’s most powerful woman.

Merkel now is eyeing Obama to buttress her political standing after fallout from the Syrian refugee crisis cost her party in recent regional elections. Before Obama arrived, she visited refugee camps in Turkey and helped broker a deal in which the Turkish government agreed to resettle refugees who had fled to Western Europe, particularly Germany.

Before Obama left Washington, the White House flatly said Obama wanted “to provide political support to her.” He did that Sunday at their news conference, responding both to

her critics at home and to Donald Trump's attack on her refugee policies as "insane."

"She is on the right side of history on this," Obama said. "She is giving voice I think to the kinds of principles that bring people together rather than divide them, and I'm very proud of her for that, and I'm proud of the German people for that."

Merkel refused to even consider a question about a prospective President Trump, saying she was "quite busy" with more immediate demands.

During Obama's two-day visit, he and Merkel will be joined by Cameron, French President Francois Hollande and Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi for a discussion of developments in Syria, the migration crisis and joint operations against Islamic State and other terrorist groups.

With efforts to forge a transatlantic trade deal sputtering, Obama and Merkel sought to present a united front at one of the largest international trade shows, the Hanover Fair. Protests outside the fair focused on the trade deal.

Obama told reporters that he is confident talks on a European trade deal could be revived and completed by year's end, attributing the U.S. opposition to the heat of an election campaign.

## **Barack Obama Goes To Hanover: How They Made It Happen**

[Deutsche Welle \(DEU\)](#), April 24, 2016

The organizers of the Hannover Messe pulled off a real coup this year: Never before had a US president opened the world's largest industrial technology fair. And it seems pretty likely that a visit to the capital of the German state of Lower Saxony would never have been on the agenda for a man often described as the world's most powerful.

More than a few people smiled wearily when Wolfram von Fritsch first suggested the idea. But the head of the international trade fair organizer Deutsche Messe is the person who is smiling now. His plan worked. The appearance of US President Barack Obama hasn't just made Hanover a place of global media interest for a couple of days: It has also lent new prestige to the industrial technology fair.

The increased attention has allowed the world's two leading industrial nations, the United States and Germany, to show – and impressively so – what production will look like in the future. But more about that later.

Obama's visit led to security measures around the spots the US president is scheduled to visit

Wen, Putin, Modi, Obama

Having a partner country has long been the tradition at both the digital business fair CeBIT and the Hannover Messe. In 2012, for example, China was the partner, with then-Premier Wen Jiabao making an appearance in Hanover. A year later, it was Russia and the guest was President

Vladimir Putin. How times have changed. Last year, India was finally chosen as the partner country, making Prime Minister Narendra Modi the most prominent politician at the 2015 trade fair. This year, it is Barack Obama.

Jochen Köckler, a Deutsche Messe board member and the man responsible for the Hannover Messe, told DW that organizers had come up with the idea five years ago. At the time, the United States had begun to reindustrialize with big oil having found a big boom in fracking. Finally, Obama had made it a goal of his administration to increase the US share of the global production market.

The trade fair is the world's largest display of machines and devices for industrial production. Organizers opened an office in Washington, DC, and, project leader Marco Siebert began to pound the pavement. "I banged on many doors," he told the German public broadcaster NDR.

At some point the project picked up steam. About a year ago, German Chancellor Angela Merkel invited Obama to Hanover. And, just before Christmas, the president announced his travel plans on Twitter. Trade fair organizers in Hanover must have been popping champagne.

### **Industry 4.0**

Naturally, the enormous security precautions that have been put in place mean that this year's Hannover Messe is different from most. Trade fair halls that Obama is scheduled to visit on Monday were already closed on Sunday. But exhibitors have generally been understanding. After all, Obama's presence is raising the trade fair's profile; one could say that this year Hanover is the Davos of industry. However, that also means that attention has been refocused on the excitement over Obama's visit and less attention is being paid to this year's theme: "Integrated Industry" – or "Industry 4.0."

In Hanover, the world's leading technology innovators and manufacturers are coming together. The United States is known for its pioneering information technology, and Germany for mechanical engineering, industrial manufacturing and automation.

Of course, there is also competition between the countries – for example, over the standards that will apply in the future: Will German Industry 4.0 lead the way? Or will it be the industrial internet from the United States? Either way, earlier this year the two countries agreed on common objectives for building reliable infrastructure and systems.

With 465 firms present, Americans make up a plurality of the foreign exhibitors at the Hannover Messe. In total, there are more than 5,200 exhibitors from 75 countries taking part in the trade fair – a significant rise in interest. It's debatable whether that's a result of the Obama factor. But trade fair organizers are pleased either way.

## **A US-UK Trade Deal After Brexit Could Take A Decade, Obama Says**

## **President reaffirms his preference for Britain to remain part of EU**

By Alexis Flynn

[Wall Street Journal](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

## **Obama's British Trade Threat**

**A U.S.-U.K. deal would be possible and desirable.**

[Wall Street Journal](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

## **Britain's Better Off In The E.U.: Our View**

[USA Today](#), April 22, 2016

In most cases, U.S. presidents don't advise foreign countries how to vote. But President Obama urged Britons on Friday to reject a measure that would take their country out of the 28-member European Union.

In an op-ed published Friday morning, and even more forcefully in a press conference with British Prime Minister David Cameron, Obama made three points:

Obama is right on all counts. And he is right to bring his personal popularity and prestige to bear in helping to inform voters of the consequences of approving a British exit, or Brexit, in the vote on June 23.

The United States needs a functional, prosperous Europe. Because of threats ranging from the Islamic State to Vladimir Putin, the NATO alliance is more important now than it has been in decades. Europe's immigrant crisis has repercussions around the world. And a moribund economy in Europe is one of the main reasons that the economy has not grown faster here.

To have an unseemly divorce in Europe now would be a huge blow to U.S. interests on a variety of fronts.

Even more troubling, a British exit would amount to a partial unraveling of the network of institutions created after World War II — including NATO, the G-7, the G-20, the Bretton Woods banking accords and the E.U. — that helped create the most peaceful and prosperous era in history in the aftermath of war and depression.

Great Britain is, of course, a free and sovereign nation. Just as it decided to join the European Union, it can decide to leave. But, viewed from this side of the Atlantic, it's hard to see why it would want to. It is in the highly advantageous position of being part of the E.U. without being one of the 19 nations that use the Euro as its currency.

Being part of the E.U. has given Britain unfettered access to markets on the continent representing roughly 7% of the global population. It has made it easier for British companies to sell their products, protected their intellectual property and boosted London's financial services sector.

The prime motivation of Brexit supporters seems to be one that Americans would know well: fear of immigration. Given the flood of refugees out of Africa and the Middle East, it's not hard to see why this would be an issue. But Great Britain is far removed from Europe's main entry points. And it chose — perhaps wisely — not to join the open-borders agreement within the E.U., so its ability to turn back refugees at its border would not be significantly affected by whether it is in or out.

By withdrawing, Great Britain would marginalize itself in both European and world affairs. European leaders would treat its departure as an affront. And, as Obama made clear, Great Britain would be pushed "to the back of the queue" in its trade dealings with a United States that would naturally focus its attention on larger economies.

Without question, Britain is better off as part of a united Europe, and it's in America's interest to make that case.

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## **Butt Out Of Brexit: Opposing View**

By Nile Gardiner

[USA Today](#), April 22, 2016

President Obama was in London on Friday, warning the British people against leaving the European Union. He has already been sharply criticized by British members of Parliament, including London Mayor Boris Johnson. And with good reason: Obama is sending the wrong message.

His intervention is proving both controversial and unpopular, a demonstration of how out of touch he is with public sentiment in the United Kingdom, at a time when there are mounting concerns with rising immigration from Europe and the growing Islamist terror threat on the continent.

America has nothing to gain from Great Britain staying in the EU. If the British vote for Brexit in the June 23 referendum, the U.S. should welcome their decision.

The EU has evolved into a decaying, overregulated, bureaucratic and fundamentally undemocratic entity. It is a monument to supranationalism and big government, increasingly trampling upon the power of nation states. Britain, like the 27 other members of the European Union, is no longer a sovereign nation and does not possess the power to fully control its own borders.

EU regulations have a huge impact on British law, and British courts can be overruled by the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg. The European Commission, the executive body of the EU, actively intervenes in the internal affairs of European countries and acts like a power on the

world stage, running its own network of embassies across the globe.

It is in America's interests to have a British ally that is able to act independently and robustly, without being constrained by Brussels. Brexit would reinvigorate the U.S.-U.K. special relationship, and it would boost trade and investment between the two nations. Freed from the shackles of the EU, Britain would be able to sign a free-trade agreement with the United States, advancing economic freedom on both sides of the Atlantic.

The U.S. has nothing to fear but plenty to gain from Brexit. We should applaud the British if they walk away from the failing European project.

Nile Gardiner is the director of the Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom at the Heritage Foundation.

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## Obama's Latest Pivot — To Europe

By Michael Crowley

[Politico](#), April 24, 2016

LONDON — Barack Obama planned to pivot to Asia, escape the Middle East, reboot with Latin America and elevate Africa. Europe, he hoped, would take care of itself.

No such luck.

Europe is in crisis, many U.S. officials believe, and when Obama delivers a speech in Hanover, Germany, on Monday, aides say he will be addressing the whole continent as it grapples with terrorism, nationalism, refugees and questions about the European Union's survival.

It also marks a turnabout in Obama's own thinking — amid grumbling by many European diplomats that the president hasn't given the continent the attention it needs. Even some Obama aides acknowledge that Europe has sometimes been overshadowed by Obama's other foreign priorities, like the Iran nuclear deal and relations with China.

Obama's trip is a way of "sending out a signal that he's not indifferent to what's happening in Europe," Peter Wittig, Germany's ambassador to the United States, told Politico.

Though Obama has worked closely with European leaders on key issues like Iran and the 2011 air campaign in Libya, until recently he has not made its internal politics a high priority. That's left some saying he prefers to cultivate new relationships in places like Havana and Tehran rather than shore up old alliances.

Obama came to office believing that "Europe had to think of itself as our partner, rather than us worrying about the security of Europe itself — which had been the preoccupation of the U.S. for a century," said Dan Hamilton, a State Department official under President Bill Clinton who is now at Johns Hopkins University's Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies.

But with the Islamic State menacing Europe from within and Vladimir Putin threatening it from without, the

preoccupation is back. In his address in Hanover, Obama will stress the need for a strong European Union as both an economic trading power and a source of common security.

Obama will also urge tolerance for the huge wave of refugees flowing into the continent from Africa and the Middle East, an issue that moves him personally.

Both issues will be on the agenda Monday when Obama meets with several European leaders, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Prime Ministers David Cameron of Britain and Matteo Renzi of Italy, and President François Hollande of France.

Meanwhile, National Security Adviser Susan Rice and Homeland Security adviser Lisa Monaco will huddle with European officials on the ongoing threat of the Islamic State.

Also joining Obama is his top trade representative, Michael Froman, who will aim to make progress on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership trade deal with the EU, which Obama hopes to seal before he leaves office. Overshadowed by Obama's Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact with Asia, the deal would still be one of the world's largest — though it is controversial enough to have drawn some 35,000 protesters in Hanover on Sunday.

Although Obama is personally popular among Europe's people and leaders, many high officials on the continent have long grumbled about his talk of pivoting to Asia and building ties with developing nations.

"Obama has the thinnest record on Europe of any American president since before World War II," Denis MacShane, a Labour Party member of Britain's Parliament and former British minister of state for Europe, recently wrote for Politico Europe.

It was perhaps a telling detail when New York Times columnist Roger Cohen noted in 2010 that world clocks in the office of then-National Security Council aide Denis McDonough displayed the time in places like Tehran and Sanaa, Yemen — but not London, Paris or Berlin.

Current and former Obama aides say they never forgot about Europe, noting they inherited a set of relationships badly damaged by President George W. Bush, who left office reviled across the continent and whose administration famously dismissed the likes of France and Germany as "old Europe."

"After the Bush era and the biggest crisis in trans-Atlantic relations in the postwar era over the Iraq War, European expectations for Obama were off the charts — and therefore impossible to meet," said Philip Gordon, Obama's former top White House aide for Europe. "Of course, Obama spent a lot of time on the Middle East, Asia and the fallout from the world financial crisis, and it would have been irresponsible not to, but I don't think you can argue Obama 'neglected' Europe."

Obama aides say these might not even be the darkest days Europe has faced since Obama took office. They recall

the way Treasury officials warned them in 2011 that the continent's spiraling debt crisis could trigger another global financial crash, one sure to bring down Obama's reelection prospects with it. Obama and his senior aides spent hours on the phone with Merkel and other European officials trying to avoid that outcome.

At the same time, aides concede the U.S. public is focused on Europe more than at any time in Obama's presidency — thanks in part to a U.S. media that now covers terrorism attacks in Europe with almost the intensity of attacks at home.

Though Obama will be addressing Europe as a whole, administration officials are also mindful of public opinion in Germany specifically. A 2015 Pew Research Center poll found Germans markedly less pro-American than their Western European neighbors.

While many older Germans fondly recall America's defense of Berlin in the 1950s and famous anti-communist speeches there by John F. Kennedy ("Ich bin ein Berliner") and Ronald Reagan ("Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"), younger Germans who came of age after the Cold War are more likely to associate the U.S. with the the Iraq War, shadowy drone strikes and the 2013 uproar over National Security Agency spying in their country — which included the tapping of Merkel's personal cellphone. ("American-style Stasi methods," one legislator who belongs to Merkel's party fumed at the time, referring to the notorious East German police force.)

Obama has still brought America's image a long way. In mid-2008, Pew found that only 31 percent of Germans had a positive view of the U.S. (Today the number is a healthier — if still wan — 50 percent.) Back then, Germans were twice as approving of Putin as they were of Bush.

Benjamin Oreskes contributed to this report.

## **No Need For Holmes. Obama Sheds Light On A Winston Churchill Mystery.**

By Michael D. Shear

[New York Times](#), April 24, 2016

HANOVER, Germany — It has been, perhaps, one of the most enduring mysteries of President Obama's tenure: What really happened to the bust of Winston Churchill that was once displayed in the Oval Office?

With just months left in his term, Mr. Obama's first comments on the matter, in Europe last week, may have finally cleared up the truth of a tale that has persisted for more than seven years.

For conservatives in both America and Britain, the disappearance of the bust from its place of honor soon after the end of George W. Bush's presidency was evidence of a liberal snub by Mr. Obama. In their view, he clearly did not fully appreciate the greatness of the British prime minister,

who served during and after World War II. (The bust was replaced, White House officials said at the time, with one of Abraham Lincoln.)

The conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer, the onetime Republican presidential contender Mike Huckabee and Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, a current Republican presidential candidate, are among those who have chastised Mr. Obama over the years for returning the bust to the British. Less than a month after Mr. Obama's first inauguration in 2009, a British newspaper bluntly accused him of sending "Sir Winston Churchill packing."

Not true, the White House insisted at the time, offering various explanations. William Allman, the White House curator, said in a 2010 interview with CBS News that the bust, on loan to Mr. Bush by Tony Blair, the former British prime minister, "was already scheduled to go back" before Mr. Obama took office.

The bust was returned "as a matter of course" by the new administration along with other art that had been on loan to Mr. Bush for display during his term in office, White House officials said. Dan Pfeiffer, the president's communications director at the time, blasted Mr. Krauthammer, calling his charge about the disappearing bust "100 percent false" and saying that "news outlets have debunked this claim time and again."

In a blog post labeled a "fact check" on the White House website, Mr. Pfeiffer wrote: "The bust still in the White House. In the Residence. Outside the Treaty Room."

Mr. Pfeiffer later apologized to Mr. Krauthammer after admitting that the bust outside the Treaty Room was, in fact, a different Churchill bust, given to President Lyndon B. Johnson in the 1960s. Still, Mr. Pfeiffer insisted, the return of the Oval Office bust was "not something that President Obama or his administration chose to do" and was not "a symbol of President Obama's failure to appreciate the special relationship."

But late last week, Boris Johnson, the mayor of London, renewed the charge, writing in a British tabloid that the Oval Office bust had been "banished" and suggesting that it could be "a symbol of the part-Kenyan president's ancestral dislike of the British Empire — of which Churchill had been such a fervent defender."

Countering such charges is typically left to a president's aides. But asked at a news conference Friday about the mayor's comments, Mr. Obama seemed to relish the chance to set everyone straight, once and for all, about the fate of the Churchill bust.

The president started by explaining that when it came to Churchill, "I love the guy." He offered as proof the Churchill bust that sits outside the Treaty Room, the president's private office on the second floor of the White House residence, not far from the first family's living quarters.

"I see it every day, including on weekends, when I'm going into that office to watch a basketball game," he said. "The primary image I see is a bust of Winston Churchill. It's there voluntarily, because I can do anything on the second floor. I love Winston Churchill."

But then Mr. Obama went on to explain what had happened to the bust lent by Mr. Blair, the one that critics had accused him of summarily sending back to the British. It was, Mr. Obama said, his decision to return that Churchill to his native land, because he wanted to replace it with a bust of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"There are only so many tables where you can put busts. Otherwise, it starts looking a little cluttered," the president explained. "And I thought it was appropriate, and I suspect most people here in the United Kingdom might agree, that as the first African-American president, it might be appropriate to have a bust of Dr. Martin Luther King in my office."

He added that the choice of Dr. King was "to remind me of all the hard work of a lot of people who would somehow allow me to have the privilege of holding this office."

That appears to contradict the longstanding denials by White House officials, including Mr. Pfeiffer, that neither Mr. Obama nor anyone else in his administration had chosen to dispatch Churchill's likeness in favor of someone else's. By Mr. Obama's admission, he made the decision to replace the Churchill bust with one of Dr. King.

"I think people should know my thinking there," Mr. Obama told the reporters in London.

Mystery solved.

Except for one thing: The version of events in which Lincoln had replaced Churchill was mentioned in most stories about the issue (including in this paper). Mr. Pfeiffer included news reports about it in his 2012 blog post attacking Mr. Krauthammer.

"The A.P. reported that President Obama 'replaced the Oval Office fixture with a bust of one of his American heroes, President Abraham Lincoln,' " he wrote.

Mr. Pfeiffer no longer works for Mr. Obama; he is now vice president of communications and policy for GoFundMe, a website that helps its users raise money for causes.

Current White House officials said the Churchill bust had been replaced with one of Dr. King, but the Oval Office still has a Lincoln bust as well, perhaps leading to the confusion.

After all, one White House official noted, Mr. Obama did say the Oval Office could get a little cluttered.

## A Healthy Agreement

[Washington Post](#), April 24, 2016

NO ARGUMENT against the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement packs more emotional punch than the claim that the deal would be bad for people's health

— and even result in avoidable deaths — both in the United States and in the 11 other signatory nations. The argument, repeated most recently in a letter to Congress from the U.S. branches of Doctors Without Borders, Oxfam America and about 50 other organizations, is that the TPP would unduly extend U.S. patent and intellectual property protections for the pharmaceutical industry, thus driving up prices for lifesaving medicines. In fact, the letter argues, the "TPP would do more to undermine access to affordable medicines than any previous U.S. trade agreement."

A good way to evaluate such warnings would be to examine data about the impact of those past agreements. There haven't been much, however — until now. Thomas Bollyky of the Council on Foreign Relations examined statistics on global pharmaceutical sales from the IMS Institute for Healthcare Informatics, including for 15 of the 17 countries with recent U.S. trade deals that enhanced pharmaceutical intellectual property protections. Basically, national drug spending remained flat as a share of the countries' total health spending, and per capita drug spending growth was comparable to that of nations of similar income that did not make trade deals with the United States. Meanwhile, the volume of pharmaceuticals consumed increased, with no particular uptick in more expensive, branded medicines over generics. Significantly, drug spending growth decelerated the most in the poorest nations, those of Central America and Peru.

By no means are Mr. Bollyky's numbers conclusive. As he acknowledges, the full effect on drug markets of more recent U.S. trade deals may not appear until more years have gone by. Certain drugs or classes of drugs may be disproportionately affected by trade deals, but that wouldn't necessarily be reflected in aggregate spending numbers. Still, the report fills in some blank spots in the evidence, adding context to the previous finding, widely touted by the TPP opponents, that drug prices in Jordan went up 20 percent in the four years after a U.S.-Jordan trade deal took effect in 2002.

In short, the biggest compilation of information so far suggests that trade deals do not drain national drug budgets and that the public-health threat from the TPP may be overblown. Indeed, the United States already has free trade, including some pharmaceutical patent provisions, with six of the 11 prospective TPP nations, so it would not change the status quo with them much. Meanwhile, the deal gives the poorest countries, such as Vietnam, more time to adapt to the most stringent provisions. As it happens, the Obama administration struck a compromise on the issue and the results were not as protective of the U. S. drug industry as the industry would have liked.

The United States and the world need medical innovation, but it costs money — billions of dollars sometimes — to develop a drug. One way to spur investment is to offer

innovators a temporary government-guaranteed monopoly on commercial exploitation. Fundamentally, critics are quarreling with that system as much as with the trade deal itself. The data we've seen so far don't support their worst-case scenarios.

## **Obama: Black Lives Matter Movement 'Can't Just Keep On Yelling'**

By Jason Silverstein

[New York Daily News](#), April 24, 2016

President Obama criticized the Black Lives Matter movement during a town hall meeting in London Saturday — saying the activist group “can't just keep on yelling” about the issues it wants to change.

Obama's comments came during day two of his visit to Europe, at a Q-and-A event for young people.

One audience member asked Obama if he felt his administration had done enough to discourage racial profiling at airports.

His answer led him to discussing social justice movements, with Obama specifically naming the Black Lives Matter movement. He said he admired such groups for being “really effective in bringing attention to problems” of racial injustice — but he also showed those movements some tough love.

“Once you've highlighted an issue and brought it to people's attention and shined a spotlight, and elected officials or people who are in a position to start bringing about change are ready to sit down with you, then you can't just keep on yelling at them,” Obama said.

“And you can't refuse to meet because that might compromise the purity of your position. The value of social movements and activism is to get you at the table, get you in the room.”

Obama has openly supported the Black Lives Matter movement in the past. At a White House forum in October, he dismissed the popular “all lives matter” rebuttal to the national group, saying: “I think everybody understands all lives matter...They were suggesting there is a specific problem that's happening in the African-American community that's not happening in other communities. And that is a legitimate issue that we've got to address.”

Obama in February praised prominent Black Lives Matter activist Deray McKesson for an “outstanding” job leading the movement in Baltimore, where McKesson is now running for mayor.

Black Lives Matter groups have consistently clashed with presidential candidates on the campaign trail. Several members have been assaulted at Donald Trump rallies, while Hillary Clinton has had heated exchanges with protesters accusing her of racial insensitivity.

Obama is scheduled to meet with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Sunday as part of his European tour. He and Merkel will open Hannover Messe, an international technology trade show which will feature the United States for the first time in its 69-year history.

## **Schumer's Self-Detonating Confirmation Demand**

**His insistence that SEC nominees reveal how they would vote on a speech matter ensures they would have to recuse themselves.**

By Joseph A. Grundfest

[Wall Street Journal](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

## **Michelle Obama Speaks In Mississippi, Slams Its New Anti-LGBT Law**

[Huffington Post](#), April 24, 2016

Michelle Obama spoke out against the wave of anti-LGBT “religious freedom” bills moving through state legislatures across the country while delivering the commencement address at Jackson State University in Mississippi.

“If we fail to exercise our fundamental right to vote, then I guarantee that so much of the progress we've fought for will be under threat,” the first lady said Saturday. “Congress will still be gridlocked. Statehouses will continue to roll back voting rights and write discrimination into the law. We see it right here in Mississippi — just two weeks ago — how swiftly progress can hurtle backward, how easy it is to single out a small group and marginalize them because of who they are or who they love.”

“So we've got to stand side by side with all our neighbors — straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender; Muslim, Jew, Christian, Hindu immigrant, Native American — because the march for civil rights isn't just about African-Americans, it's about all Americans,” she added. “It's about making things more just, more equal, more free for all our kids and grandkids. That's the story you all have the opportunity to write. That's what this historic university has prepared you to do.”

The Mississippi measure, called the Protecting Freedom of Conscience from Government Discrimination Act, allows individuals and organizations to use religion as a justification to discriminate against LGBT people.

More than 100 anti-LGBT measures are currently being considered across 22 states. Earlier this week, the U.K. issued a travel warning to LGBT travelers who “may be affected by legislation passed recently in the states of North Carolina and Mississippi.” The measures have also prompted

a wave of boycotts of the states by businesses and entertainers.

President Barack Obama also addressed the issue in a press conference with British Prime Minister David Cameron over the weekend. Obama said that while the people of North Carolina and Mississippi “are wonderful” and that the British people should feel welcome to visit those states, “the laws that have been passed there are wrong and should be overturned.”

## **Michelle Obama Tells Mississippi Grads To Fight Anti-LGBT Law**

By Neal Broverman

[Advocate](#), April 24, 2016

Speaking to the graduates of Jackson State University, a historically black college in Mississippi, First Lady Michelle Obama said on Saturday, “We’ve got to stand side by side with all of our neighbors — straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender.”

The First Lady mentioned the history of segregation and racism at Jackson’s Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium, where she spoke, and how Mississippi has long been the center of the African-American civil rights struggle; the state where black 14-year-old Emmett Till and NAACP leader Medgar Evers were killed. She urged graduates to continue fighting against injustice, especially Republican-led efforts to disenfranchise African-American voters, often in Southern states.

Then she mentioned the assaults against LGBT people in the South, including Mississippi’s newly-passed law allowing discrimination against same-sex couples and transgender people.

“If we fail to exercise our fundamental right to vote, then I guarantee that so much of the progress we’ve fought for will be under threat. Congress will still be gridlocked. Statehouses will continue to roll back voting rights and write discrimination into the law. We see it right here in Mississippi — just two weeks ago — how swiftly progress can hurtle backward, how easy it is to single out a small group and marginalize them because of who they are or who they love.

So we’ve got to stand side by side with all our neighbors — straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender; Muslim, Jew, Christian, Hindu immigrant, Native American — because the march for civil rights isn’t just about African Americans, it’s about all Americans. It’s about making things more just, more equal, more free for all our kids and grandkids. That’s the story you all have the opportunity to write. That’s what this historic university has prepared you to do.”

The First Lady also spoke of her popular husband’s civil rights legacy and reminded Jackson State University grads that much more progress is needed. Like the president often

does, Michelle Obama encouraged the students to be proactive and fight for change themselves. She also urged students to vote in this year’s election and to face the future with hopefulness.

“[Barack and I] love — our love for our children, our commitment to leaving them a better world. Our love for our country, which has given us so many blessings and advantages. Our love for our fellow citizens — parents working hard to support their kids, men and women in uniform who risk everything to keep us safe, young people from the toughest backgrounds who never stop believing in their dreams — young people like so many of you.”

## **North Carolina And Mississippi See Tourist Backlash After L.G.B.T. Laws**

By Shivani Vora

[New York Times](#), April 22, 2016

Charlotte isn’t the only area that has seen bookings vanish.

Marriott International and Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, with 134 and 20 properties, respectively, in North Carolina across their portfolio of brands, are also seeing axed reservations. In an email, Ken Siegel, Starwood’s chief administrative officer and general counsel, said, “Anecdotally, we know that some guests have canceled bookings at our North Carolina properties after the law passed to take their business outside of the state.”

Thomas Maloney, the senior director of government affairs for Marriott, said its properties’ handful of cancellations may not have a big financial impact now but that the brand is taking a longer view. “The biggest risk we are looking to measure is not cancellations right now but bookings that don’t come in down the line,” he said.

Smaller companies are not being spared, either.

“We’ve had several guests, who stated that they are not gay or transgender, cancel their stay with us because of this issue,” said Amanda Sullivan, the director of marketing and public relations at the Old Edwards Inn and Spa, a Relais & Chateaux property in the Blue Ridge Mountains. “We let them know that we completely understand their position, and that we look forward to hopefully welcoming them back one day soon.”

Mississippi is facing its own backlash among tourists in response to a law that allows people to discriminate against gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgender people based on religious grounds.

Like North Carolina, the state is highly dependent on its travel industry. In 2015, travel and tourism total employment — direct, indirect and induced — was 117,685, or 10.5 percent of statewide employment according to Visit Mississippi.



Linda G. Hornsby, the executive director of the Mississippi Hotel & Lodging Association, a group of more than 300 hotels, said that her organization's member hotels had reported some cancellations.

One family who won't be coming had plans to visit Delta blues attractions and Bay St. Louis, according to Mike Cashion, the executive director of the Mississippi Hospitality & Restaurant Association, who wrote a letter to the Mississippi House of Representatives relaying the immediate and worrisome impact on the travel industry because of the state's bill. "That family is going to New Orleans and Galveston instead, and they are not an isolated example," he said.

Jay Hughes, a Democratic member of the Mississippi House of Representatives for District 12, which includes the city of Oxford, famous for its rich literary culture, also reported seeing several cancellations.

"Tourism is not a cottage industry for us. It is a key economic driver, and the economic toll of people not coming to visit our state because of 1523 is unpredictable and definitely real," he said.

Oxford, in particular, is a big tourist draw. With a population of only around 20,000, the visitor spending there in 2015 was \$134.8 million, according to the local tourist council, Visit Oxford.

Travel industry executives and officials in North Carolina and in Mississippi are attempting to counter the message that they say the legislation delivers.

Mr. Hughes on April 12 introduced the Mississippi Economic Tourism and Recovery Act to the House, which would prevent businesses and individuals from discriminating against the L.G.B.T. community.

Marriott International's president and chief executive Arne Sorenson is one of several heads of hospitality companies who have signed an open letter to Gov. Pat McCrory of North Carolina asking for its repeal. That letter was written by the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest L.G.B.T. civil rights organization, and Equality North Carolina, the state organization working to secure equal rights for L.G.B.T. North Carolinians. Christopher J. Nassetta, president and chief executive of Hilton Worldwide, and Tom Mangas, chief executive of Starwood, also signed the letter (Mr. Nassetta signed a similar letter the Human Rights Campaign wrote to Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant asking for 1523 to be repealed).

Local tourist organizations, too, are taking action.

On April 13, the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority launched an Always Welcome campaign to communicate the city's inclusive culture. Businesses around town are participating by posting banners and signs with the Always Welcome logo.

Communicating a welcoming attitude is also how the Mississippi travel industry is trying to deal with the effects of its 1523 bill that was passed on March 30.

Linda G. Hornsby of the Mississippi Hotel and Lodging Association said: "The first thing we did after the bill was passed was to put up a banner on our website that says 'Everyone Is Welcome Here' because that's how we feel. This law is not what Mississippi is about." Continue reading the main story

## How Bathrooms And Transgender Rights Have Become A Flash Point In The GOP Race

By Katie Zezima

[Washington Post](#), April 24, 2016

MONROEVILLE, Pa. — Cletus Abate was aghast after learning last week that the Pennsylvania legislature is considering a bill that would extend protections to transgender people, including allowing them to use the bathrooms they choose.

So she took a petition and packets outlining what opponents see as threats from the legislation to a Ted Cruz rally, handing them out to anyone who would listen, including the candidate himself.

"I'm here because Donald Trump came out on the news and said he doesn't have a problem with transgender bathrooms," Abate said.

Transgender rights have become an unlikely and heated issue in the presidential campaign after North Carolina enacted a law that, among other things, mandated that people use the bathroom that corresponds to the gender on their birth certificate.

Cruz has seized on Trump's assertion that the North Carolina law, which also rolled back other protections for gay, lesbian and transgender people, was unnecessary and bad for business — corporations including PayPal and Deutsche Bank scrapped plans to create jobs in the state after the legislation was enacted. Trump said there has been "little trouble" with allowing people to use the bathroom they want, though he later said that states should have the power to enact their own laws. Trump also said he would let transgender reality television star Caitlyn Jenner use the women's bathroom at his properties.

Ohio Gov. John Kasich said he probably wouldn't have signed the North Carolina law, while both Democratic candidates have condemned it.

"There's been a significant amount of conversation about it on the presidential level," said Cathryn Oakley, senior legislative counsel at the Human Rights Campaign, who said 50 anti-transgender bills have been filed nationwide this year. "In terms of it being new territory, the answer is yes."

Cruz's argument centers on the idea that allowing transgender women to use the women's restroom would lead

to deviants dressing up as women and preying on young girls. His campaign released an ad accusing Trump of capitulating to the "PC police" and asking viewers whether a grown man pretending to be a woman should use a restroom with your daughter or wife.

"Donald Trump thinks so," the ad reads.

Cruz has woven his support of North Carolina's law into his stump speech. There has been some backlash: A woman holding a "Trans lives matter" sign protested outside of a stop Cruz made in Allentown, Pa., on Friday.

"As the father of two young girls, I can tell you it doesn't make any sense to allow adult grown men strangers to be alone in a bathroom with little girls," Cruz said at a rally here, the crowd loudly applauding.

He called Trump's views on transgender people "political correctness on steroids."

"Evil!" a woman in the crowd yelled.

President Obama weighed in on the issue Friday from the United Kingdom, which issued a travel advisory warning residents about the North Carolina law and another enacted in Mississippi that allows businesses to refuse service to same-sex couples on religious grounds.

"I want everybody here in the United Kingdom to know that the people of North Carolina and Mississippi are wonderful people," said Obama, who also took a question from a person who claims no gender. "I also think that the laws that have been passed there are wrong and should be overturned."

Democrats Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders have forcefully condemned the laws, and Sanders said he would overturn them if elected president.

Here in Pennsylvania, the battle over transgender rights has been brewing for years. It is the only northeastern state that does not extend anti-discrimination protections to gay and transgender people, which some members of the Republican-controlled legislature have attempted to change in session after session. They have found an ally in Gov. Tom Wolf (D), who this month issued executive orders barring gender-based discrimination against employees and job applicants in state government and its contractors. Pennsylvania's physician general is a transgender woman.

The governor has called for passage of the Pennsylvania Fairness Act, which would provide protections to gay and bisexual people in housing, employment and public accommodations — including public bathrooms. An employer does not need to construct new facilities to comply. The bill is stalled in the legislature because of a contentious battle over the budget.

Opponents here have seized on the national controversy over transgender rights, labeling it the "bathroom bill," as many did in North Carolina.

Sally Keaveney, chief of staff to state Sen. Larry Farnese (D), who sponsored the legislation, said this is the

first time opponents have used the specter of transgender people in bathrooms to fight a statewide anti-discrimination bill. A number of conservative groups have launched a website dedicated to defeating the bill. It urges Pennsylvanians to call their elected officials, highlights that the bill will affect the commonwealth's public schools and claims such legislation will lead to an increase in sexual assault, something organizations who work with assault victims call a myth.

More than 30 municipalities in Pennsylvania, including Allentown and Scranton, both of which Cruz visited Friday, have passed transgender protections, according to Adrian Shanker, executive director of the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center in Allentown.

"We are facing one of the most significant threats to religious liberty and privacy rights in the history of the Commonwealth," reads the handout that Abate brought here, which she got from one of the organizations opposing the measure.

Cruz has defended religious-liberty legislation in both North Carolina and Indiana, which has a primary May 3 and where controversy erupted last year after Gov. Mike Pence (R) signed a law that many viewed as anti-gay.

Campaigning in Indiana over the weekend, Cruz said people have the right to do whatever they want, including if a man wishes to dress as a woman and use her home bathroom. Cruz said he is fine with transgender people using a public unisex bathroom but that people do not have the right to impose their lifestyle on others.

Cruz said that if the law allows for a man to enter "a little girl's restroom, and stay there and he cannot be removed because he simply says at that moment he feels like a woman, you're opening the door for predators."

Don Uber, a 69-year-old accountant from Apollo, Pa., agrees with Cruz. Uber, who has a 2-year-old granddaughter, said he is more concerned about male sexual predators dressing up as women and going into female restrooms with girls than he is about predators using men's rooms near boys.

"They're gonna have other men in there that can protect the boys," Uber said. "It's our duty as men to be protectors, and opening up [women's] bathrooms to men is failing our responsibilities."

Uber said he believes the law will just allow men to walk into women's rooms.

"You don't even have to cross-dress. You can go in in a business suit and say, 'I define myself as a female,' and they're okay with that," he said.

Lizabeth Kleintop, a transgender woman and Moravian College professor from Bethlehem, Pa., said she doesn't use the women's bathroom because it is a choice, but rather because she identifies as a woman.

"Our interest in going to the restroom is to pee," Kleintop said.

Cruz does have at least one transgender fan: Jenner, who has said she supports Cruz and would like to be his transgender ambassador. In the latest episode of her show, “I Am Cait,” Jenner was informed that Cruz supported a group of pastors that worked to defeat a Houston anti-discrimination ordinance. Jenner called Cruz “totally misinformed” about transgender people but said he can “take care of the big issues.”

A representative for Jenner declined to comment when asked about Cruz’s stance on the North Carolina law.

Abate said she’s willing to fight as long as it takes to defeat the bill. She insists that she is not bigoted and has gay and lesbian friends and family members, but she believes such legislation violates the rights of people, businesses and places of worship that don’t want transgender people in single-sex bathrooms.

Abate’s newly enacted crusade is now driving her political choices. For months she has supported Trump’s candidacy, but his transgender comments have made her reevaluate, just days before Pennsylvania’s Republican primary on Tuesday.

“I guess that I am going to be pulling the lever for Cruz,” she said.

## **First Lady Michelle Obama Lauds Husband For Taking High Road**

By Gregory Korte

[USA Today](#), April 24, 2016

First Lady Michelle Obama gave a rare and impassioned defense of her husband’s legacy Saturday, saying he’s risen above personal attacks and taken the high road even as opponents have questioned his patriotism, his honesty, his citizenship and his faith.

“As I’ve walked this journey with Barack, I’ve gotten a pretty good look at what it means to rise above the fray, what it means to set your eyes on the horizon, to devote your life to making things better for those who will come after you,” she told the graduating class of Jackson State University, a historically black college in Mississippi.

“I have seen how, no matter what kind of ugliness is going on at any particular moment, Barack always stays the course,” she said.

The commencement address had echoes of a similar speech Mrs. Obama gave last year, at Tuskegee University in Alabama, when she confessed that criticism of her — often drenched in racial stereotypes — often caused her sleepless nights.

This year, her focus appeared to me more on President Obama’s legacy. She recited a litany of accomplishments during the Obama presidency on the economy, health care, foreign policy, gay rights and climate change.

“Yet, too often, instead of acknowledging or celebrating this change, we have a tendency to focus on conflict and controversy. We pay endless attention to folks who are blocking action, blocking judges, blocking immigration, blocking a raise in the minimum wage — just blocking,” she said. “We are consumed with the anger and vitriol that are bubbling up, with folks shouting at each other, using hateful and divisive language.”

The president has often been at the receiving end of that language, she said. “Charges that he doesn’t love our country. The time he was called a liar in front of a Joint Session of Congress. The nonstop questions about his birth certificate and his belief in God,” she said.

Mrs. Obama’s defense of her husband was in the context of a commencement address in which she told the 800 graduates that they, too, will face discrimination — in voting rights, criminal justice, education and housing — and have to make a choice of how to deal with it.

“Are you going to get angry or lash out?” she asked. “Or are you going to take a deep breath, straighten your shoulders, lift up your head, and do what Barack Obama has always done — as he says, ‘When they go low, I go high.’”

“That’s the choice Barack and I have made. That’s what has kept us sane over the years. We simply do not allow space in our hearts, minds, or souls for darkness,” she said.

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## **It’s A Stretch, But Mitch McConnell Is Reaching Across The Aisle**

By David M. Herszenhorn

[New York Times](#), April 24, 2016

WASHINGTON — Senator Mitch McConnell has a ready comeback for Democrats who keep chanting “do your job” in hopes of pressuring Republicans to consider President Obama’s Supreme Court nominee. It is simply, “We are.”

With a little guile and an agenda of limited ambition, Mr. McConnell of Kentucky, the Senate majority leader, can point to a number of legislative victories, complete with Democratic support. And he is not shy about boasting.

“This week we have seen what can be accomplished on behalf of the American people with a Senate that’s back to work under the Republican majority,” Mr. McConnell declared in a floor speech on Wednesday, minutes before passage of a bipartisan energy bill and a day after the adoption of legislation to tighten aviation standards.

“We just passed two broad-based bills aimed at protecting consumers and modernizing our energy policies respectively, and both bills take important steps to bolster national security,” Mr. McConnell said. “The Republican-led Senate has made important strides to get the legislative process functioning again.”

On those issues and others, like the opioid crisis, Democrats are actually helping him, even if some are not happy about it. Last week, Mr. McConnell pushed through a bill to fight abuse of painkillers and heroin, adding to his growing list of bipartisan achievements.

Given the Senate rules, under which 60 votes are needed to break filibusters, Mr. McConnell cannot win adoption of anything unless Democrats refrain from his strategy when he was in the minority, which was to block virtually everything. Democrats complain that Mr. McConnell is passing versions of some of the same bills that he blocked when Democrats were in control.

Still, Democrats are going along, helping Mr. McConnell create a new sense of productivity in the Senate. But they are also betting that Republicans' refusal to consider the nomination of Judge Merrick B. Garland to the Supreme Court will cement an image in voters' minds of Republicans as the party of "no."

Some Democrats say they would never want to share a reputation for obstruction. Others say Democrats are almost genetically incapable of refusing to deal, while a less kind analysis might say they cannot maintain the discipline in their ranks necessary to stop Mr. McConnell's initiatives.

Whatever the motivation, in this hotly contested election year, Democrats are making a risky wager that it is better to share some credit for legislative progress, an approach that could undermine their mantra on the campaign trail that Senate Republicans, by refusing to consider the nominee for the court vacancy, are not doing their jobs.

Senator Chuck Schumer, of New York, who is positioned to become the Democratic leader next year, said he believed no issue would matter more than the court. "All of these nice accomplishments will not get the Republicans well because they will be dwarfed by their obstruction on the Supreme Court," he said. "So it's a futile attempt."

Republicans say that the better-functioning Senate is a testament to Mr. McConnell's leadership, especially his willingness to give individual senators more freedom to offer amendments, and to his focus on legislation that has a chance of winning passage.

Asked why more legislation seemed to be moving, Senator Susan Collins, Republican of Maine, did not break stride as she walked toward the internal subway system in the Capitol basement.

"Because the Republicans are in charge," Ms. Collins said, "we have a true commitment to restoring the traditions of the Senate of open debate, amendments on bills."

She also pointed to a major education bill negotiated last year by Senator Lamar Alexander, Republican of Tennessee, and Senator Patty Murray, Democrat of Washington. "There's a huge difference," Ms. Collins said. "Certainly, there has been Democratic cooperation, and I

want to acknowledge and emphasize that, but it has been Republican leadership."

Republicans, however, have struggled to pursue policies that strictly reflect their conservative priorities, not only because of Mr. Obama's veto power, but also because of fierce internal disagreements that have forced Republican leaders, particularly in the House, to rely on Democratic votes. House Republicans have been unable to agree on a budget, for instance, because of opposition from hard-line conservatives.

Still, Speaker Paul D. Ryan of Wisconsin was happy to turn the Democrats' arguments around in praise of the Senate.

"They're actually legislating," Mr. Ryan said on Thursday at a news conference.

Senator Charles E. Grassley, Republican of Iowa and the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, who has taken the brunt of criticism over the refusal to convene confirmation hearings on Judge Garland, said the Democrats were wrong to think that voters would focus only on the fight over the Supreme Court vacancy.

"The court is one issue, and everything else is other issues," Mr. Grassley said in an interview. "If Scalia hadn't died," he said, referring to Justice Antonin Scalia, "we'd still be doing the same thing we're doing here."

At the start of the current Congress, some Democrats pushed to block all of the Republicans' legislative initiatives. That strategy might have denied some vulnerable incumbents the upbeat advertising that inevitably flows from having laws adopted, like the commercials in Ohio now touting a measure by Senator Rob Portman, a Republican, to fight the opioid epidemic.

Mr. Schumer said such an approach would have been futile. "We're Democrats," he said. "We cannot just block everything. We believe in government."

Some centrist Democrats, like Senator Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota, whose policy goals are more likely to align with those of Republicans, have been among the biggest beneficiaries of the current atmosphere, passing bills like a repeal of a 40-year-old ban on crude oil exports.

Ms. Heitkamp, however, gave credit to the Democrats. "We have become a much more effective minority because a lot of the stuff that is getting done is a product of compromise," she said. "It's a product of sitting down and moving the packages that need to be moved."

"It's a much more effective minority than majority," she added. "These are not the bills that would pass if Republicans were solely in charge."

Senator Maria Cantwell of Washington State, a Democrat, who negotiated the recently adopted energy bill with Senator Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, a Republican, said some of the recent accomplishments masked deeper dysfunction. In some cases, she said, Republicans were

helping pass legislation they had previously blocked, while on other issues Republicans were still refusing to cooperate, particularly on nominees.

“Nominees or courts, it’s pretty frustrating,” Ms. Cantwell said. “They are over there holding up an appointee to the Export-Import Bank. They won’t reappoint somebody to the F.C.C. You can’t point to it and say it’s a good process, and then not follow it in other areas.”

But Mr. McConnell has been effective doing just that.

## **Trump And Clinton Hold Strong Leads In Pennsylvania, New Poll Shows**

[NBC News](#), April 24, 2016

Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton hold double-digit leads in the April 26 primary contest of Pennsylvania, according to results from a new NBC News/Wall Street Journal/Marist poll.

In the Republican race, Trump gets support from 45 percent of likely Republican primary voters in the state — followed by Ted Cruz at 27 percent and John Kasich at 24 percent.

NBC News

Trump performs the best among those who strongly support a candidate (getting support from 57 percent from that group), men (52 percent), those without a college degree (52 percent) and those in the Northeast part of the state (52 percent).

He performs the worst among college graduates (37 percent), women (39 percent), white evangelicals (40 percent — but still leading Cruz’s 36 percent) and in the Philadelphia suburbs (38 percent — leading Kasich’s 34 percent).

In the Democratic race, Hillary Clinton is ahead of Bernie Sanders by 15 points among likely Democratic voters in Pennsylvania, 55 percent to 40 percent.

NBC News

Clinton leads among African Americans (67 percent to 29 percent), those ages 45 and older (66 percent to 28 percent), women (62 percent to 34 percent), self-identified Democrats (60 percent to 36 percent) and those strongly supporting a candidate (59 percent to 41 percent).

Sanders holds the edge among those who are under 45 (60 percent to 37 percent), those who are “very liberal” (58 percent to 41 percent), independents (55 percent to 39 percent) and men (49 percent to 45 percent).

Pennsylvania is one of five states holding presidential primaries on Tuesday; the others are Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland and Rhode Island.

Clinton, Sanders Lead Trump in General Election Matchups

In hypothetical general-election matchups in the Keystone State, Clinton leads Trump by 15 points among

registered voters, 54 percent to 39 percent, and Cruz by 11 points, 52 percent to 41 percent.

But Clinton trails Kasich, 48 percent to 45 percent.

Sanders, meanwhile, is ahead of Trump by 20 points (57 percent to 37 percent), Cruz by 22 points (58 percent to 36 percent) and Kasich by six points (50 percent to 44 percent).

Forty-nine percent approve of Obama’s job in Pennsylvania

Also in the poll, President Obama’s job-approval rating in Pennsylvania is at 49 percent among registered voters, Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf’s is at 45 percent, and Republican Sen. Pat Toomey’s is at 43 percent.

The NBC/WSJ/Marist poll was conducted April 18-20 of 2,606 registered voters (which has a margin of error of plus-minus 1.9 percentage points), 734 likely Democratic primary voters (plus-minus 3.6 percentage points) and 571 likely Republican primary voters (plus-minus 4.1 percentage points).

## **Poll: Trump, Clinton Leading In Rhode Island**

By Kristen East

[Politico](#), April 24, 2016

Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton hold comfortable leads among Rhode Island voters, according to a new Brown University poll.

Clinton leads Bernie Sanders 43 percent to 34 percent. Trump leads his rivals by double digits, with 38 percent of likely voters. John Kasich and Ted Cruz follow at 25 percent and 14 percent.

Roughly the same number of Democrats and Republicans are undecided: 16 percent of Democrats and 17 percent of Republicans, all likely voters, are unsure of which candidate to support on Tuesday.

The poll surveyed 600 likely voters in Rhode Island — 436 Democrats and 164 Republicans. The margin of error for the Democratic results is plus or minus 4.6 percentage points, and 7 percentage points for Republican results.

The overall margin of error was plus or minus 4 percentage points. The poll was conducted April 19-21.

## **For Hillary Clinton, Church Offers A Trusted Comfort Zone**

By Catherine Lucey

[Associated Press](#), April 24, 2016

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Sunday mornings at Baptist churches fall right into Hillary Clinton’s comfort zone.

“This is the day the Lord has made,” Clinton said recently at Grace Baptist Church in Mount Vernon, New York, as sunshine streamed through the stained-glass windows and hit the packed pews. “Being here at this church with these beautiful people, knowing how grateful I am for this spring day. I feel blessed and grace is all around us.”

Black Baptist churches may not seem like an obvious match for Clinton, a white Methodist from the Chicago suburbs. But the Democratic presidential candidate, who's been criticized for her tentative, even awkward political skills, often seems most at ease in houses of worship. It's where she's shared her faith for many years and earned a loyal following.

"One thing not a lot of people really understand about her is the central role of faith in her life," said Mo Elleithee, Clinton's spokesman in her 2008 White House campaign.

Clinton points to her faith as having sustained her through hard times and informing her approach to public service. Her days in Arkansas, coupled with her strong religious beliefs, have helped her connect to churchgoers in black communities, where she enjoys overwhelming support. Democratic rival Bernie Sanders has visited churches, too, during the campaign, but doesn't have the same rapport from the altar.

"The first time I ever walked into a black church with Hillary, she knew exactly where she was, you could see an exhale from her, a big smile came on her face, she didn't just step into the building, she stepped into worshipping with them," said Burns Strider, director of faith and values outreach during Clinton's 2008 campaign. "I must have done that a hundred times with her."

Clinton visited two churches in Philadelphia on the Sunday, two days before Tuesday's Pennsylvania primary. At Triumph Baptist Church and African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, she pledged to seek criminal justice reform and fight for tougher gun regulations before the largely African-American congregations.

"We as a people have to start showing each other more respect, more kindness more love," Clinton said, repeating a campaign mantra. "I am grateful for this chance to be with you and I would be honored and humbled to have your vote on Tuesday."

Visits to churches have prompted some of Clinton's most candid, intimate moments.

On a recent trip to the Holy Ghost Cathedral in Detroit, Bishop Corletta Vaughn referenced Clinton's strength in dealing with husband Bill Clinton's infidelities.

In response, Clinton spoke about the story of the prodigal son, alluding to, as she often does, a version written by Henri Nouwen, a Catholic priest and writer. She said what the parable "teaches us is to practice the discipline of gratitude every day."

According to Vaughn, Clinton's remarks showed a "deep reservoir of faith."

"I've been in the faith business for 42 years," Vaughn said. "I know one who is authentic and genuine. Her language speaks of her faith. ... When she started talking about the prodigal son, you didn't learn that this morning."

Strider, who emails with Clinton most days about Scripture and faith, said she has seemed more willing to talk about religion during this campaign than in the past. He said Clinton had "to recognize that she's not using her faith for other means. That was really valuable for her to understand that she was actually showing her faith which could lead others to make more rational choices."

Seeking to organize religious voters for Clinton, Strider founded a group called Faith Voters for Hillary about two years ago. While he is no longer directly involved, he said it has an active online presence and over 300,000 people in its database.

Still, some black pastors question Clinton's hold on religious voters.

Darrell Scott, the senior pastor of New Spirit Revival Center in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, has endorsed Republican Donald Trump and helped organize a meeting with Trump and black clergy last year.

"She's very, very liberal. This is what I don't understand about the pastors. Christians by nature, should be conservative," said Scott, who serves as CEO of Trump's new National Diversity Coalition. "She's the absolute wrong choice for a voter of faith."

Trump's efforts to win over black churchgoers have been mixed. At that November meeting last year, some pastors criticized Trump for racially-charged language, though others emerged offering support.

Clinton reflected on her faith journey during a speech before the United Methodist Women's Assembly two years ago. She spoke warmly about her childhood church in Park Ridge, Illinois, where her mother taught Sunday school and a young Clinton helped to clean and prepare the altar for services. She also remembered her father's nightly prayers, her grandmother's hymns and the charismatic youth minister who introduced her to the idea of "faith in action."

"I loved that church," Clinton said. "I loved how it made me feel about myself, I loved the doors that it opened in my understanding of the world."

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## **Clinton Can't Rely On Trump's Unpopularity**

By Albert R. Hunt

[New York Times](#), April 25, 2016

WASHINGTON — Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio is a relatively accessible fellow, but when asked for an interview on the subject of the schisms in his Democratic Party, his schedule was full. Instead, he sent a statement that the

Hillary Clinton-Bernie Sanders presidential primary battle was strengthening the party in contrast with the “divisive” Republican fight.

He’s right about the Republicans. The personal invective and policy splits threaten to tear the party apart and produce an electoral cataclysm in November.

Yet that is obscuring serious problems on the Democratic side: deep divisions on policy and an almost certain nominee, Mrs. Clinton, who if not for Donald J. Trump would be the most unpopular presidential front-runner in recent times.

The differences between Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Sanders are more pronounced than those between Barack Obama and Mrs. Clinton in 2008. Then, there were modest divergences on health care and national security, highlighted by her support five years earlier for George W. Bush’s decision to invade Iraq. Mainly it was a difference of style and persona, a new voice in an environment of change running against a candidate focused on recapturing the salad days of the last Democratic administration.

This time — on major economic issues, taxes, health care and regulating Wall Street — the gaps are much wider. On national security, too, as Mrs. Clinton hasn’t much moderated her interventionist inclination: She was a leading advocate for the 2011 military action in Libya. The aftermath of the invasion turned out disastrously and Mr. Obama has expressed regrets. She hasn’t.

Party platforms are window dressing, but they can be politically symbolic. It’s hard to see how the Clinton forces can accommodate Mr. Sanders’s demands for breaking up big banks, free college tuition and staying out of Syria.

Yet if she is the Democratic nominee, she’ll need Mr. Sanders’s followers in the autumn and would be taking a risk to rely on Mr. Trump’s unpopularity to carry her to the White House.

In the latest Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll, voters viewed Mr. Trump unfavorably, 65 percent to 24 percent, the highest negatives for a national political figure that the pollster Peter Hart said he had ever seen. But if it weren’t for Mr. Trump, the story would be about Mrs. Clinton’s negatives. In the same survey she was viewed unfavorably, 56 percent to 32 percent. She does poorly among some of Mr. Sanders’s core supporters, such as young people and independents.

If Senator Ted Cruz becomes the Republican nominee, there will be a fierce ideological battle, with both sides working to energize their base. Mr. Trump or Mr. Cruz can be counted on to raise sensitive issues, ignored by Mr. Sanders, such as potential problems involving the Clinton Foundation, which has accepted huge donations from wealthy donors as well as big contributions from foreign interests. Mrs. Clinton has said that the Clinton Foundation would continue to operate if she is elected president.

Mrs. Clinton’s backers say she holds more cards than her opponents. If, for instance, there is a foreign policy crisis during the fall campaign, many voters give her good marks for knowledge and experience. By contrast, in The Wall Street Journal/NBC News survey last week, voters, by more than 3 to 1, said they lacked confidence in Mr. Trump’s ability to deal with an international crisis.

She can send a message with her choice for vice president. To be sure, such chatter now is purely conjectural. At this stage in previous elections, Sarah Palin, Geraldine Ferraro and Dick Cheney — all eventually tapped — weren’t even on the radar.

But several people who talk to Mrs. Clinton think she would be comfortable with Senator Tim Kaine, a mature moderate who was a successful governor of Virginia, a swing state. She has been intrigued, they say, with the notion of picking another woman; Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts would excite the base.

There is little chemistry between them, however, and if she still wanted to play to the Sanders folk, a more palatable alternative might be the liberal Senator Brown, which may help explain why he didn’t want to talk last week. Continue reading the main story

## **Will Sanders Support Clinton In November? That Depends On Her, He Says**

By Gregory Korte

[USA Today](#), April 24, 2016

WASHINGTON — Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders said Sunday he’ll do everything he can to stop a right-wing Republican president in November. But he stopped short of saying he would enthusiastically support Hillary Clinton if she’s the Democratic nominee.

“That is totally dependent on what the Clinton platform is and how she responds to the needs of millions of Americans who are sick and tired of establishment politics and establishment economics,” Sanders told ABC’s This Week with George Stephanopoulos.

“If Secretary Clinton is the nominee, she is going to have to make the case to the American people, not just to my supporters, but all Americans, that she is prepared to stand up to the billionaire class, she is prepared to fight for health care for all Americans, that she is prepared to pass paid family and medical leave, make sure that college is affordable for the young people in this country,” he said.

Sanders’ coolness comes as Clinton has increasingly called on Sanders supporters to unify behind her. In a town hall forum on Good Morning America last week, she reminded Democrats that she endorsed then-Sen. Barack Obama in 2008 after he became the presumptive nominee, and rallied the party around him. “So I’m hoping that the same thing will happen this time,” she said.

But Sanders said it's not that easy.

"I can't snap my finger and tell people what to do. But what I will do is do everything that I can to make sure that somebody like a Donald Trump or some other right-wing Republican, does not become president of the United States," he said. "We do not need more tax breaks for billionaires, more cuts to Social Security, Medicare, more ignoring the facts. Republicans don't even accept the reality of climate change, let alone being prepared to do something about it."

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## **Bernie Sanders And Allies Aim To Shape Democrats' Agenda After Primaries**

By Nicholas Confessore

[New York Times](#), April 24, 2016

Even as his chances of winning the Democratic presidential nomination slip away, Senator Bernie Sanders and his allies are trying to use his popularity to expand his political influence, setting up an ideological struggle for the soul of the Democratic Party in the post-Obama era.

Aides to Mr. Sanders have been pressing party officials for a significant role in drafting the platform for the Democratic convention in July, aiming to lock in strong planks on issues like a \$15-an-hour federal minimum wage, breaking up Wall Street banks and banning natural gas "fracking."

Amid his unexpectedly strong showing in the Democratic primaries, Mr. Sanders has tapped his two-million-person donor list to raise money for liberal congressional candidates in New York, Nevada and Washington State. And in the waning months of Barack Obama's presidency, Mr. Sanders's allies are testing their muscle against the White House, mounting a public attack on the president's housing secretary, Julián Castro, over his department's sales of delinquent mortgages to banks and private equity firms.

"There is a greater goal here," said Representative Raúl M. Grijalva of Arizona, a co-chairman of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, who sent a letter to Mr. Castro criticizing the mortgage sales. "The contribution of Bernie that will be lasting for us is that we will coalesce around an agenda."

The pressure from Mr. Sanders and his allies is putting the party establishment, which is closely aligned with Hillary Clinton, in a delicate position. Democratic leaders are wary of steering the party too far left, but do not want to alienate the Sanders supporters whose votes Mrs. Clinton needs in November, or risk losing the vast new donor base Mr. Sanders has created.

The institutional bulwarks against Mr. Sanders are significant: Hundreds of the party's "superdelegates" have endorsed Mrs. Clinton, a signal of her broad support among the party's power brokers. The Democratic National Committee now relies on Mrs. Clinton's fund-raising to

provide a fifth of its monthly income, an arrangement the Sanders campaign has criticized.

And Mrs. Clinton is well positioned to block any proposals she would not want to defend in a general election. In January, the party chairwoman, Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida, appointed dozens of Clinton supporters and advisers to the three standing committees of the Democratic Party convention. Of 45 potential members submitted by Mr. Sanders, she appointed just three, according to Mr. Sanders's campaign.

Gov. Dannel P. Malloy of Connecticut, a top Clinton surrogate, will be co-chairman of the platform committee. Barney Frank, a former Massachusetts congressman and fierce critic of Mr. Sanders and his Wall Street proposals, will be a co-chairman of the rules committee, which governs procedure on the convention floor. Mark Longabaugh, a senior adviser to Mr. Sanders, said he believed the campaign would ultimately be well represented on all the committees as more members are named. But he questioned how Ms. Wasserman Schultz had chosen her discretionary appointments.

"Not only are they supporting Clinton, but they have been extremely critical of Bernie Sanders," Mr. Longabaugh said. "That doesn't seem like the right way to go if we want to have a convention that is evenhanded."

Luis Miranda, a spokesman for the Democratic National Convention, said the party was "committed to an open, inclusive and representative process" to draft the platform.

"Both of our campaigns will be represented on the drafting committee," Mr. Miranda said.

Some fissures within the Democratic family may be inevitable. For eight years, Mr. Obama's presidency has muted ideological disagreement within the party. His moral authority as the country's first black commander in chief, his popularity with grass-roots Democratic voters and his political battles with Congress have worked to squelch the kind of ideological battles that have divided the Republican Party.

But the Democrats' liberal wing, including lawmakers like Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, has become more restive in Mr. Obama's second term. Liberal groups have pressured the president on recent appointments to the Treasury Department and his deportation policies. At the same time, a younger generation of activists is challenging presidential candidates in both parties on issues of criminal justice, police violence and the rights of undocumented immigrants.

"A boldly populist, people-oriented type of platform is massively appealing to those who have come of age during the financial meltdown and the period afterward," said Kurt Walters, the campaign director at Rootstrickers, a group that favors limiting the influence of big donors in politics.

The party is relatively unified on raising the minimum wage to \$15, and Mrs. Clinton recently voiced qualified



support. But there is a risk, some Democrats said, that Mr. Sanders — an independent who is not actually a member of the party — would push the party to embrace positions that could later hurt Mrs. Clinton and other Democratic candidates.

Mr. Sanders is almost certain to win a prime-time speaking slot at the summer convention, providing one of the biggest audiences yet for his views. Some Democrats said they feared a left-wing equivalent of Pat Buchanan's searing speech at the 1992 Republican convention, when Mr. Buchanan, who had failed to win his party's nomination, called for a "cultural war" against "liberals and radicals."

Matt Bennett, a founder of the center-left think tank Third Way, said Mrs. Clinton had so far avoided tacking too far left to compete effectively in a general election. "They need to be careful not to go so far as to hand the Republicans something to beat them over the head with," Mr. Bennett said. "Bans on anything tend to be politically problematic."

The campaign against Mr. Castro's policies at the Department of Housing and Urban Development, called "Don't Sell Our Homes to Wall Street," could foreshadow the kind of leverage progressives would like to exert after November. Mr. Castro, one of the country's most prominent young Latino politicians, is seen as a potential vice-presidential pick for Mrs. Clinton.

But the pressure tactics are also likely to sow more of the bitterness that has come to dominate Mr. Sanders's primary battle with Mrs. Clinton.

This month, Mr. Sanders asked his supporters to contribute money to Lucy Flores, a former Nevada assemblywoman running for Congress.

In his email, Mr. Sanders also suggested that Emily's List, a political action committee that is dedicated to electing women who support abortion rights and is close to Mrs. Clinton, had spurned Ms. Flores in her race because she had endorsed Mr. Sanders. Emily's List, which has endorsed Ms. Flores in past campaigns, backed another Democratic candidate.

The claim drew a sharp response from Emily's List, one of the most powerful groups in mainstream Democratic politics.

"We support several candidates who have endorsed him, so he should stick to issues rather than disingenuous attacks," said Marcy Stech, a spokeswoman for Emily's List.

But in an interview, Ms. Flores said she believed there was a broader agenda at play in the group's decision.

"It's just like with the presidential race," Ms. Flores said. "The Democratic Party and the establishment have their ideas about who they want to support."

## **Sanders: Democratic Party Hasn't Been Fair To Me**

By Nick Gass

[Politico](#), April 24, 2016

Bernie Sanders says the Democratic Party hasn't been fair to him — but he has mixed feelings on the nominating process overall.

"Do you think this process has been fair to you? The Democratic nomination process?" moderator Chuck Todd asked the Vermont senator in an interview filmed Saturday in Baltimore and aired Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press."

"Yes and no," Sanders said, going on to criticize the role of the media for neglecting to focus on "real issues facing America." The media, he said, emphasizes "political gossip" rather than "issues that affect working people."

"So it sounds like the party, though, you feel like's been fair to you?" Todd asked Sanders.

"No," Sanders responded. "I think we have— look, we're taking on the establishment. That's pretty clear."

Pointing to the Democratic debate schedule, of which three of the first four took place on weekend nights, Sanders said they were "scheduled — pretty clearly, to my mind, at a time when there would be minimal viewing audience— et cetera, et cetera."

"But you know, that's the way it is. We knew we were taking on the establishment," he said. "And here we are. So [I'm] not complaining."

Todd then asked Sanders if he felt he was "given a fair shot" at the Democratic nomination.

"Yeah, we took advantage of the opportunities in front of us. We are in this race. We are not writing our obituary," Sanders said. "We're in this race to California, and we're proud of the campaign we ran."

Clinton is ahead of Sanders by 750 in POLITICO's delegate count, with superdelegates included — and could wrap up the nomination even if she loses every remaining state. The Sanders campaign has said it plans to persuade superdelegates to switch sides, but has shown little ability to do so thus far.

But Sanders himself betrayed little sign that he intends to quit the race before the final round of contests on June 7, when six states will hold presidential primaries.

While acknowledging that his path to victory is "narrow," Sanders said he could do "very well in California," pointing to a Fox News poll showing him down there by just two percentage points. He also talked up polls showing him faring better than Clinton against Donald Trump in a hypothetical general-election matchup.

And if he is not the Democratic nominee, Sanders suggested that he would not necessarily push his supporters to back Clinton.

"I will do everything that I can to make certain that Donald Trump is not elected president," he told Todd. "But if that scenario plays out, the major responsibility will be on Secretary Clinton to convince all people, not just supporters,

that she is the kind of president this country needs to represent working people in this country, to take on the big money interests who have so much power, to fight for what the American people want.”

How can she do that? Todd asked.

Clinton would have to be “very explicit about supporting a program which stands up for the needs of the middle class and working families, which, most importantly, makes it clear that she is prepared to take on Wall Street in a very clear way, take on the billionaire class, come up with a program that makes health care for all in this country a right within the next several years,” Sanders responded.

Sanders also took a few shots at the Democratic Party, which he said “needs a lot of reforming.”

“What mostly we need to do is to open the doors of the Democratic Party, which in many ways are not open right now, to millions of young people and working class people who want to make fundamental changes in the way this country operates,” he explained. “And the function of the Democratic Party cannot just be to go to wealthy people and raise money. It’s got to be meeting with ordinary people, hearing what’s on their mind and prepare to take on the powerful special interest, who today control this country legislatively, economically and media-wise.”

## **Bernie Sanders Says He’s Lost States Because ‘Poor People Don’t Vote’**

By Laura Bassett

[Huffington Post](#), April 24, 2016

Bernie Sanders said many of his primary losses to Hillary Clinton in states with the highest levels of income inequality can be chalked up to the fact that “poor people don’t vote.”

“I mean, that’s just a fact,” the Vermont senator said in an interview with NBC’s “Meet the Press” that aired Sunday. “That’s a sad reality of American society. And that’s what we have to transform. We have one – as you know, one of the lowest voter turnouts of any major country on Earth. We have done a good job bringing young

people in. I think we have had some success with lower income

people. But in America today – the last election in 2014, 80 percent of

poor people did not vote.”

Host Chuck Todd pointed out that 17 of the 25 states with the highest levels of income inequality have held primaries, and Clinton won 16 of those – even though Sanders has made fighting income inequality the central message of his campaign. Sanders said the outcome would

have been different if more low-income and working class people turned out to vote.

The Washington Post fact-checked Sanders’ claim, and it appears he might be mistaken about his popularity among low-income voters. Exit polls show that Clinton has actually won Democratic voters with household incomes below \$50,000 by 55 percent to Sanders’ 44 percent in the states that have held primaries so far.

## **Bernie Sanders On Key Losses: Poor People Don’t Vote**

By Tom Howell Jr.

[Washington Times](#), April 24, 2016

Democratic presidential contender Sen. Bernard Sanders said Sunday that his platform on income inequality hasn’t translated into victories in key states because of a simple reality — poor people don’t vote.

“I mean, that’s just a fact. That’s a sad reality of American society,” said Mr. Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist from Vermont.

Speaking to NBC’s “Meet the Press,” Mr. Sanders was trying to explain why he keeps losing to front-runner Hillary Clinton in states with high income inequality, even though that is his number-one issue.

Seventeen of the 25 states with the highest levels of inequality have held their primaries, and Mr. Sanders lost in 16 of them.

“If we can significantly increase voter turnout so that low-income people and working people and young people participated in the political process, if we got a voter turnout of 75 percent, this country would be radically transformed,” Mr. Sanders said.

Trailing by hundreds of delegates, Mr. Sanders acknowledged Sunday that he has a narrow path to victory, though he vowed to “fight through that path.”

He plans to fight Mrs. Clinton through the California primary in June, saying the front-runner needs to grapple with pay inequality, runaway college debt and other factors that are holding Americans back.

The Democratic nominees do agree, however, that GOP front-runner Donald Trump must be stopped.

“I will do everything that I can to make certain that Donald Trump is not elected president,” Mr. Sanders said.

If Mrs. Clinton becomes the nominee, he added, it will be her responsibility “to convince all people, not just supporters, that she is the kind of president this country needs to represent working people in this country, to take on the big money interests who have so much power, to fight for what the American people want.”

## Charles Koch Suggests That Another Clinton In The White House Would Be Better Than Trump Or Cruz

By Vanessa Williams

[Washington Post](#), April 24, 2016

Conservative political activist Charles Koch suggested in an interview with ABC News on Sunday that Democrat Hillary Clinton would be a better president than the Republican contenders, although he stopped short of saying he would support the former secretary of state if she ends up representing her party in a general election.

The billionaire, who with brother David has been active in Republican Party politics, criticized the tone of the GOP presidential primary campaign, citing it as the reason the brothers have not contributed to any campaigns, including efforts to derail Republican front-runner Donald Trump.

In the interview with chief White House correspondent Jon Karl, which aired on ABC's "This Week with George Stephanopoulos," Charles Koch said Bill Clinton had done a better job than George W. Bush in controlling government growth while president.

"So is it possible another Clinton could be better than another Republican?" Karl asked.

"It's possible," Koch responded.

"You couldn't see yourself supporting Hillary Clinton, could you?" Karl pressed.

Koch responded: "Well, I — that — her — we would have to believe her actions would be quite different than her rhetoric, let me put it that way. But on some of the Republican candidates we would — before we could support them, we'd have to believe their actions will be quite different than the rhetoric we've heard so far."

Koch said he has not and probably will not back any Republican in the waning weeks of the primary campaign because of the divisive rhetoric.

"We said here are the issues. You've got to be like Ronald Reagan and compete on making the country better rather than tearing down your opponents," he said. "And right off the bat, they didn't do it. More of these personal attacks and pitting one person against the other, that's the message you're sending the country. That's the way you should — you're role models, and you're terrible role models."

He slammed Trump's call for a ban on Muslims entering the country as "antithetical to our approach, but what was worse was this we'll have them all register. That's reminiscent of Nazi Germany. I mean that's monstrous, as I said at the time." Koch was referring to comments Trump made, then backed away from, last fall suggesting that he was open to the idea of a database to track Muslims in the United States.

He also had harsh criticism for Sen. Ted Cruz's threat to "carpet bomb" the Islamic State militant group. "Well, that's gotta be hyperbole, but I mean that a candidate, whether they

believe it or not, would think that appeals to the American people — this is frightening."

Koch said he and his brother, who in the past have spent millions backing conservative Republican candidates and causes, have stayed out of the primary fight, including efforts to stop Trump from getting the party's nomination.

"We read — I read, oh, we've given millions to this one, millions to that one, and millions to oppose Trump. We've done none of that. We haven't put a penny in any of these campaigns, pro or con," he said.

He suggested that he was moving away from that kind of heavy spending in national politics because the return on his investments "has been disappointing."

Asked whether he would sit out the presidential election, Koch said: "Well, we'll see. I mean, when we get a nominee, then we'll explore that. And we don't want arm-waving. We want to know specifics."

## Charles Koch Says He Could Possibly Support Hillary Clinton

By Michael Barbaro

[New York Times](#), April 24, 2016

Charles G. Koch, the billionaire industrialist, suggested in an interview Sunday that he was open to supporting Hillary Clinton for president and said it was possible she would make a better president than her Republican rivals.

It was an unexpected sentiment from Mr. Koch, who has for years deployed his vast wealth to champion conservative causes and Republican candidacies, emerging as a major foe of the Democratic Party.

Mr. Koch sounded at times baffled and disappointed by the language and ideas of several Republican presidential candidates in an interview with Jonathan Karl of ABC, which aired on "This Week with George Stephanopoulos."

He called a plan by Donald J. Trump to temporarily ban Muslims from entering the country "monstrous" and dismissed Senator Ted Cruz's proposal to carpet-bomb territory held by the Islamic State as "frightening" hyperbole.

Mr. Koch spoke somewhat fondly of former President Bill Clinton, suggesting he held down government spending and regulation compared with his successor, President George W. Bush. He called Mr. Bush "a fine person, and tried to do the right thing but was misguided."

That prompted a question about Mrs. Clinton. Below is a transcript of the ensuing exchange:

KARL: So is it possible another Clinton could be better than another Republican—

KOCH: It's possible.

KARL: Next time around?

KOCH: It's possible.

KARL: You couldn't see yourself supporting Hillary Clinton, could you?

KOCH: Well, I— that— her— we would have to believe her actions would be quite different than her rhetoric. Let me put it that way. But on some of the Republican candidates we would— before we could support them, we'd have to believe their actions will be quite different than the rhetoric we've heard so far.

## **Republican Financier Koch Says Clinton Might Make Better President**

[Reuters](#), April 23, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## **Koch Says It's Possible Clinton Would Be Better Than Republican**

By Ros Krasny

[Bloomberg Politics](#), April 23, 2016

Billionaire political donor Charles Koch said Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton may make a better president than any Republicans vying for the job, based on the example set by her husband's years in the White House.

Bill Clinton "wasn't an exemplar. But as far as the growth in government, the increase in spending, it was two and a half times" more under Republican George W. Bush than it was under Clinton, Koch said in an interview for ABC's "This Week."

"We would have to believe her actions would be quite different than her rhetoric. Let me put it that way," the 80-year-old Koch said when asked if he would consider supporting former Secretary of State Clinton. ABC released a short clip of the interview before Sunday's full broadcast.

The Koch brothers, Charles and David, whose combined net worth is \$106 billion, have spent hundreds of millions of dollars supporting Republican candidates whose platforms are consistent with their small-government views. They haven't backed any of the party's 2016 hopefuls, who have been whittled down to businessman Donald Trump, Texas Senator Ted Cruz and Ohio Governor John Kasich.

## **Charles Koch Calls Trump's Muslim Registry Plan 'Reminiscent Of Nazi Germany'**

[Politico](#), April 24, 2016

Conservative billionaire Charles Koch chastised Donald Trump for his plan to register all Muslims, calling the idea "monstrous."

"That's reminiscent of Nazi Germany. I mean, that's monstrous, as I said at the time," Koch said in an interview with ABC News' Jonathan Karl.

Koch also said Trump's proposal to temporarily ban all Muslims from entering the United States is "antithetical to our approach."

Trump has previously said, if elected president, he'd support creating a database of all Muslims in America. He later backed off the comment, saying a reporter had suggested the database.

Koch also said during the interview that "it's possible" that another Clinton would be better than a Republican president.

## **Charles Koch Compares Donald Trump To A Nazi**

By Laura Bassett

[Huffington Post](#), April 24, 2016

Conservative billionaire Charles Koch called Donald Trump's support of a registry for Muslims "reminiscent of Nazi Germany" in an interview that aired on Sunday.

Koch said Trump's proposed temporary ban on Muslims entering the country is "antithetical to our approach," but he has a real problem with Trump's support of using a database to track Muslims in the country.

"That's reminiscent of Nazi Germany. I mean that's monstrous, as I said at the time," the Koch Industries CEO told ABC News.

Despite his strong feelings about Trump's stance, Koch said he and his brother David will still not "put a penny" toward the "Never Trump" movement to stop the real estate mogul from securing the Republican nomination, even though they have been asked to contribute. The Koch brothers have not spent money for or against any particular GOP candidate in the primary.

"That's not what we do," Koch said. "What we're trying to do is build alliances to make the country better. Like we have one with the White House on criminal justice reform. You do it by trying to find areas where you can work with everybody."

Editor's note: Donald Trump regularly incites political violence and is a serial liar, rampant xenophobe, racist, misogynist and birther who has repeatedly pledged to ban all Muslims – 1.6 billion members of an entire religion – from entering the U.S.

## **Campaign's Populist Tone Rankles America's CEOs**

**Executives worry rhetoric on immigration and trade will have repercussions beyond November**

By Nick Timiraos And Ted Mann

[Wall Street Journal](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

## **Trump's Toned-down Demeanor Doesn't Mean Policy Change: Aide**

By Emily Stephenson

[Reuters](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## Trump Remains Strong After Break From Social Conservatives

**Supporters put weight on other issues**

By S.a. Miller

[Washington Times](#), April 24, 2016

HARRINGTON, Del. — Donald Trump's waffling on transgender bathroom use and his somewhat moderate stance on abortion hasn't fazed his supporters, who say they are hanging tough with the Republican presidential front-runner because social issues take a back seat this year to the country's economic and security crises.

Voters at a rally in this small state, which usually gets short shrift in presidential races, insisted that Mr. Trump's propensity to break with conservative orthodoxy was a plus.

They said Mr. Trump's views won't cost him support as he closes in on the Republican nomination and will help expand his appeal to swing voters in a general election race against likely Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton, who has moved dramatically left in her primary race.

"We've got too big other issues to worry about that," said Suzanne Keeler, 59, a lifelong Democrat who joined thousands of others for a Trump rally Friday in a livestock arena at Delaware State Fairgrounds.

Mr. Trump is expected to sweep primaries Tuesday in Delaware and four other Northeastern states: Connecticut, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island.

The race then heads to Indiana, which likely is the last best chance for Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas and the #NeverTrump movement to block the billionaire businessman from securing the 1,237 delegates needed to clinch the presidential nomination at the Republican National Convention in July.

Mr. Cruz has signaled that he is determined to keep attacking Mr. Trump over the bathroom and abortion issues to force a contested convention in Cleveland.

Ms. Keeler said she can't cast a ballot for Mr. Trump in Delaware's closed Republican primary but would be eager to vote for the real estate mogul in November.

"Other Democrats are going to switch over. He tells the truth," Ms. Keeler said, citing mistrust of Mrs. Clinton as a major factor. "As a woman, I don't want the first woman president to be Hillary Clinton."

The Trump campaign has touted the billionaire businessman as someone who can expand the Republican vote, attracting independents, blue-collar Democrats and voters who have stayed on the sidelines for years because politicians in both parties fail to inspire them.

Despite Mr. Trump's dominance of the Republican race and his proven ability to turn out new voters, polls show him to be unpopular in the general public.

His national unfavorability ratings top 60 percent. He also faces overwhelming opposition from Hispanics and women in a general election race, according to polls.

Mr. Trump's supporters are not impressed by such polls.

"I don't buy it," said Susan Roth, 60, a housewife and conservative Republican who scoffed at the polls. She also scoffed at the transgender bathroom issue.

"That's not important. I'm worried about jobs, the economy, Syrian refugees. I could care less about transgender bathrooms," said Mrs. Roth.

Many voters said their top issue was illegal immigration, which Mr. Trump has made the centerpiece of his campaign with a pledge to build a wall on the U.S. border with Mexico.

"Immigration — that is key, not whether a man wants to dress as a woman and use the woman's restroom," said Bob Crawford, 57, a registered Republican who works for the U.S. Postal Service.

Still, Mr. Trump invited criticism from conservatives last week when he came out in opposition to laws that require public facilities to segregate according to biological sex, not preferred gender identity. He also voiced support for adding exemptions for rape and incest to the pro-life plank in the Republican platform.

He later retreated from his stance on transgender bathroom use, saying it was an issue that local communities and states should decide. He has held firm on exemptions for abortion laws.

Mr. Cruz seized on Mr. Trump's initial remark about transgender bathroom laws as fresh evidence that the New York real estate mogul is not conservative and can't be trusted to protect religious freedom, gun rights and other right-wing ideals.

"Donald Trump is no different from politically correct leftist elites," Mr. Cruz said. "He joined them in calling for grown men to be allowed to use little girls' public restrooms."

Delaware state Sen. Brian G. Pettyjohn said Mr. Trump's abortion comment gave him "a little heartburn." But the Republican lawmaker, who has not endorsed any candidate in the presidential primary race, said he was willing to give Mr. Trump a pass.

"I tend to look at the entire candidate, the entire message," he said.

Mr. Pettyjohn also said Mr. Trump would appeal to swing voters, especially in the rural communities and seaside resort towns in southern Delaware.

"There's a lot of pent-up frustration, not just with Republicans but with independents and Democrats," he said. "They want to see something different."

## Muslims For Trump, Though Few, See Past Rhetoric, Bluster

By Jeff Karoub

[Associated Press](#), April 24, 2016

DETROIT (AP) – As a Donald Trump supporter, Nedal Tamer feels he's in the minority among Muslim-Americans, comfortable with his choice yet somewhat confounded that he doesn't have more company.

Small numbers of Muslims find comfort, not concern, in Trump's strong stance on immigrants. They see it as proof that the Republican presidential front-runner could better contain extremists than other candidates.

"People have the wrong idea, even Arabs and Muslims," said Tamer, 40, who works in real estate and construction and lives in the Detroit suburb of Dearborn, which is known for its large Arab and Muslim population. "I like the fact that he's a little nuts. He's got the good heart, he cares about America."

The discomfort that many Muslims have with the outspoken billionaire businessman comes from his suggestion that Muslims be banned from entering the United States. Trump also has said the U.S. should stop the flow of refugees from countries where the Islamic State group has a significant presence. For some, it's hardest to reconcile Trump's statement that "Islam hates the West."

The Associated Press spoke to a number of Muslims who back Trump, some of whom declined to be interviewed.

Tamer was born in Lebanon and immigrated to the U.S. in the late 1990s from the United Arab Emirates. He said Trump is speaking about extremists, such as the Islamic State group and those it inspires, not all followers of the religion.

"Many times, Trump has said, 'Not all Muslims' – he's not talking about all Muslims," said Tamer, a Republican. "He says there are certain people. ... We've seen what's happening. I don't think anybody would agree with what ISIS is doing," Tamer said, using an acronym for the extremist group. "He says, 'We have to stop ISIS now, immediately.'"

In heavily Arab and Muslim Dearborn, many support Democrat Bernie Sanders, and people in those communities helped turn the tide toward him last month in the state's primary. Sally Howell, an associate professor at University of Michigan-Dearborn and author of several books on Arabs and Muslims in Detroit, described them as a small demographic overall but certainly a factor in Sanders' Michigan victory over rival Hillary Clinton. It helped that he came to Dearborn to court them.

"It's not all about the Middle East (issues) – it was young people, people who care about bread-and-butter issues: the economy, health insurance, quality of schools and policing," she said. "They were the swing vote in Michigan.

Any group can claim that, but I think Arabs and Muslims considered themselves to have really made the difference."

That's not stopping some Muslims from organizing on behalf of the GOP and, by extension, Trump. Last fall, Saba Ahmed founded the Republican Muslim Coalition in the nation's capital and seeks to establish a presence nationwide.

"We will be supporting whoever the Republican nominee ends up being. And we are hopeful of Trump's business background, and that he would be able to use that to turn the economy around," she said.

Ahmed, a lawyer, said she has a lot of Muslim friends who are Democrats. But in her view, "Islamic values align with Republican values," and her list includes opposing abortion and backing traditional marriage. She acknowledges that coalition members are "very much concerned" by some of Trump's "very absurd comments," but counters that some of what he says is "overblown."

"Trump knows he can't win the general election with that type of hatred and those types of comments," she said. "So going forward, things will look different."

Some Arabs and Muslims not in the Trump camp have expressed tentative support for his comments related to the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He has said he would attempt to be "neutral," though he recently told a gathering of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee that he is "a lifelong supporter and true friend of Israel."

Osama Siblani, publisher of the influential Arab American News, said Trump's supporters – Muslim or otherwise – believe he is an "independent thinker" who "will do the right thing at the end of the day." Siblani added that Trump has business enterprises all over the world, including in Arab Gulf nations, which supporters believe should mute concerns over Islamophobia.

Still, Trump is neither Siblani's personal preference nor his paper's. The Dearborn-based publication, which supported George W. Bush in 2000, has endorsed Sanders.

"I believe Trump is playing on ignorance and cashing in on fear," Siblani said.

Both Ahmed and Tamer said their pro-Republican or pro-Trump positions have led to disagreements and even arguments with other Muslims, but Ahmed said that merely speaks to wide diversity among followers of Islam.

"We can have differences of opinion in the upcoming election, but it's important for all Muslims to get involved," she said. "We are the 1 percent that can shift the outcome of the presidential election. We need more engagement."

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Follow Jeff Karoub on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/jeffkaroub> . His work can be found at <http://bigstory.ap.org/author/jeff-karoub> .

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Associated Press writer Noreen Nasir contributed to this report.

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## **Cruz, Kasich Coordinate In New Anti-Trump Effort**

By Katie Glueck  
[Politico](#), April 24, 2016

Ted Cruz and John Kasich are ceding states to each other as part of a broader effort to stop Donald Trump, an abrupt change in strategy that the campaigns announced Sunday night.

"To ensure that we nominate a Republican who can unify the Republican Party and win in November, our campaign will focus its time and resources in Indiana and in turn clear the path for Gov. Kasich to compete in Oregon and New Mexico, and we would hope that allies of both campaigns would follow our lead," Cruz campaign manager Jeff Roe said in a statement.

Previously, the Cruz campaign had largely refused to acknowledge the Ohio governor's presence in the race except to dismiss him as a spoiler.

"Who?" Roe replied last week, when asked by reporters about Kasich.

The Cruz campaign had also previously planned to compete in those states, especially in New Mexico, with a memo from the campaign last month saying data showed that Cruz could win a majority of that state's delegates.

Also Sunday, Kasich chief strategist John Weaver announced, "we will shift our campaign's resources West and give the Cruz campaign a clear path in Indiana.

In turn, we will focus our time and resources in New Mexico and Oregon, both areas that are structurally similar to the Northeast politically, where Gov. Kasich is performing well. We would expect independent third-party groups to do the same and honor the commitments made by the Cruz and Kasich campaigns."

## **Ted Cruz, John Kasich Campaigns Officially Join Forces To Stop Donald Trump**

By Victor Morton  
[Washington Times](#), April 24, 2016

After weeks of dividing the vote of people who don't want to see Donald Trump at the head of the Republican ticket, the campaigns of Ted Cruz and John Kasich are officially collaborating to stop Mr. Trump.

In separate statements Sunday night, the Cruz and Kasich campaigns each said they are dividing up the

remaining states with upcoming primaries, with each only campaigning vigorously in a few states and ceding the others to the other.

The statements said Mr. Cruz will try to win in Indiana while Mr. Kasich will concentrate his efforts in Oregon and New Mexico. The aim is to keep Mr. Trump from winning the needed 1,237-delegate majority and forcing a contested convention in Cleveland in July.

In the Cruz statement, campaign manager Jeff Roe called a Trump nomination "a sure disaster" in November.

"To ensure that we nominate a Republican who can unify the Republican Party and win in November, our campaign will focus its time and resources in Indiana and in turn clear the path for Gov. Kasich to compete in Oregon and New Mexico," Mr. Roe said.

In a separate statement, Kasich chief strategist John Weaver said that "given the current dynamics of the primary [in Indiana], we will shift our campaign's resources West and give the Cruz campaign a clear path in Indiana."

## **Ted Cruz, John Kasich Join Forces To Stop Donald Trump**

By David Mark  
[CNN](#), April 24, 2016

(CNN)Ted Cruz and John Kasich issued startling statements Sunday night about their paths ahead, the first sign the two campaigns are coordinating to deny Donald Trump the Republican presidential nomination.

Within minutes of each other, the pair issued statements saying they will divide their efforts in upcoming contests with Cruz focusing on Indiana and Kasich devoting his efforts to Oregon and New Mexico. The strategy is aimed at blocking Trump from gaining the 1,237 delegates necessary to claim to GOP nomination this summer.

Cruz campaign manager Jeff Roe said in a statement the Texas senator will focus on the May 3 Indiana primary while the Ohio governor will have a free hand in the Oregon and New Mexico primaries in the flowing weeks.

In the statement, Roe called Trump at top of ticket "a sure disaster," adding "to ensure that we nominate a Republican who can unify the Republican Party and win in November, our campaign will focus its time and resources in Indiana and in turn clear the path for Gov. Kasich to compete in Oregon and New Mexico".

Kasich's chief strategist, John Weaver, said in a separate statement: "Due to the fact that the Indiana primary is winner-take-all statewide and by congressional district, keeping Trump from winning a plurality in Indiana is critical to keeping him under 1,237 bound delegates before Cleveland. We are very comfortable with our delegate position in Indiana already, and given the current dynamics of the primary there,

we will shift our campaign's resources West and give the Cruz campaign a clear path in Indiana."

Developing story – more to come

## **Cruz, Kasich Strategies Align With Goal Of Beating Trump**

By Steve Peoples And Ken Thomas

[Miami Herald](#), April 24, 2016

In an extraordinary move, Donald Trump's Republican rivals late Sunday announced plans to coordinate primary strategies in upcoming states to deprive the GOP front-runner of the delegates needed to win the Republican nomination.

Ted Cruz and John Kasich issued near-simultaneous statements outlining an agreement that may be unprecedented in modern American politics. The Kasich campaign will give Cruz "a clear path in Indiana." In return, the Cruz campaign will "clear the path" for Kasich in Oregon and New Mexico.

"Having Donald Trump at the top of the ticket in November would be a sure disaster for Republicans," Cruz's campaign manager, Jeff Roe, said in a statement explaining the new plans. "Not only would Trump get blown out by Clinton or Sanders, but having him as our nominee would set the party back a generation."

Added Kasich's chief strategist, John Weaver, "Our goal is to have an open convention in Cleveland, where we are confident a candidate capable of uniting the party and winning in November will emerge as the nominee."

The arrangement marks a sharp reversal for Cruz's team, which aggressively opposed the idea of a coordinated anti-Trump effort as recently as late last week. Yet it underscores a bleak reality for the billionaire businessman's Republican foes: Time is running out to stop him.

The announcement came less than 48 hours before voting begins across five Northeastern states where the New York billionaire is poised to add to his already overwhelming delegate lead. Trump campaigned Sunday in Maryland, which will vote on Tuesday along with Rhode Island, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Delaware.

Speaking to several thousand people in an airplane hangar in Hagerstown, Maryland, Sunday evening, Trump stressed repeatedly that he expects to win the 1,237 delegates needed in the first round of voting to stave off a contested convention.

"I only care about the first. We're not going for the second and third and fourth and fifth," said Trump.

Even before the plan was announced, Cruz all but abandoned the Northeastern states in favor of Indiana, which holds its primary on May 3. Both Cruz and Kasich had cast the state as a critical turning point. Under the terms of the new agreement, however, Kasich will allow Cruz take on Trump without interference.

As recently as three days ago Kasich's campaign announced investments in Indiana, including the opening of two offices and the creation of a campaign leadership team. And he had planned to campaign there Tuesday, with a town hall and gathering in Indianapolis to watch the results of Tuesday's primaries.

Those events have been canceled.

As Kasich backs out of Indiana, Cruz promised to not compete in primary contests in Oregon on May 17 and New Mexico on June 7.

"We will focus our time and resources in New Mexico and Oregon, both areas that are structurally similar to the Northeast politically, where Gov. Kasich is performing well," Weaver said.

Like Cruz's campaign, Kasich's campaign encouraged allied super PACs and other outside groups to "honor the commitments."

Trump did not immediately respond to the agreement. He has repeatedly denounced the GOP's presidential nominating system as "rigged."

There was far less drama on the Democratic side Sunday.

Underdog Bernie Sanders rallied thousands of voters in two New England states, seeking momentum even as he offered mixed signals on how hard he would push his differences with front-runner Hillary Clinton.

The Vermont senator largely steered clear of Clinton at a Rhode Island park, but hours later ramped up his critique before more than 14,000 supporters in New Haven, Connecticut. Sanders reiterated his call for Clinton to release transcripts of lucrative Wall Street speeches she delivered after leaving the State Department in early 2013.

"This campaign, unlike Secretary Clinton's, has not raised \$15 million from Wall Street and millions more from other special interests," he said as the crowd booed at the mention of Clinton's name. "This candidate has not given speeches behind closed doors on Wall Street for \$225,000 a speech."

Clinton eyed victories in four or five of Tuesday's contests, which would all but cripple Sanders' White House bid.

The former secretary of state went to two Philadelphia church services attended largely by African-Americans ahead of the primary in Pennsylvania, Tuesday's top delegate prize. She declined to attack her Democratic rival by name in the morning appearance and a subsequent stop in Bridgeport, Connecticut, focusing on the GOP candidates.

Democratic National Committee Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz downplayed tensions between Sanders and Clinton, whose rivalry has become increasingly nasty in recent weeks.

"Regardless of the intensity of what's played out here ... we are going to be unified," she declared.



## Cruz Dominates, Trump Falls Short Again As More States Pick Delegates

By Ed O'Keefe

[Washington Post](#), April 24, 2016

Ted Cruz dominated the race for delegate seats at weekend Republican meetings nationwide, further positioning the senator from Texas to overtake Donald Trump in the race for the GOP presidential nomination if the contest is decided on later ballots at the Republican National Convention.

In some instances, Cruz supporters won delegate seats in states that Trump won, meaning that in most cases they will be required to vote for the businessman on a first ballot. But if Trump fails to win the nomination in the first round, those Cruz supporters could switch to the senator on subsequent ballots.

The Trump campaign has assured supporters that it would begin performing better in such settings, but it still seems more focused on winning most of the remaining 15 contests through June and securing the 1,237 delegates needed before the Cleveland convention.

Trump still has a commanding lead in delegates — 845 compared with 559 for Cruz, according to the latest tally. That is likely to be padded on Tuesday, when Trump is poised to win primaries in New England and the Mid-Atlantic. Given Cruz's struggles to find traction in "Acela Primary" states, he has shifted his focus to Indiana, which votes next month and is seen as the last best chance for the "Stop Trump" campaign to stop the front-runner.

Maine hosted the marquee weekend contest, in which Cruz won 19 of the 20 delegate seats up for grabs. The win sparked a feud with one of Trump's most senior Republican surrogates, Gov. Paul LePage.

The governor claimed that Cruz reneged on an agreement that would have permitted supporters of the three presidential candidates to fill the delegate seats the contenders won in the March caucus. That would have meant 12 seats for Cruz, nine for Trump and two for Ohio Gov. John Kasich.

But LePage said Cruz's team "lied to us and broke the deal," adding that David Sawyer, a Cruz aide who was in the state helping the senator's supporters get elected, "stabbed us in the back, reneged on the unity slate and betrayed the Maine people."

"As we have seen throughout the country, Cruz's national campaign is run by greedy political hooligans," he added in a state posted on Facebook. "These are the same operatives in the Republican Establishment who worked for Mitt Romney to disenfranchise Maine delegates in 2012. They are using sneaky and deceitful operators like Sawyer to try to subvert the democratic process and take all 23 delegates. I can't stand by and watch as Cruz and the

Republican Establishment forcibly overrule the votes of Mainers who chose Trump and Kasich."

But Cruz aides said no agreement had been finalized.

"The guys in the state that helped win the caucus made the decision not to back [LePage's proposal] and put together their own slate," said a senior aide to Cruz who was not authorized to speak publicly about the dispute. "These are the people that represent the interests of Maine, and we're going to stand with the grass-roots activists before we stand with establishment politicians like Governor LePage."

Trump deployed former neurosurgeon Ben Carson to woo Maine Republicans, while Cruz sent former businesswoman Carly Fiorina in his absence. A Trump supporter won a delegate slot, while LePage will be one of the state's three at-large delegates.

Republicans also met Saturday at state conventions in Utah and Kentucky while party members met in congressional districts in Minnesota and South Carolina to pick their delegates.

In Utah, another state Cruz won overwhelmingly, 36 of the 37 available delegate seats were won by his supporters. His slate includes Sen. Mike Lee and Rep. Mia Love. Three more seats will be awarded to state party leaders. Cruz gets all 40 votes on the first ballot.

Kentucky's GOP also formally selected 25 delegates, including Gov. Matt Bevin, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Sen. Rand Paul. There was less controversy at the convention in Lexington on Saturday, given that the state party controls the selection process. On the first ballot, the commonwealth's 46 delegates will go this way: Trump (17), Cruz (15), Kasich (seven) and Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), who has dropped out of the race but will also be awarded seven delegates. Delegates are free to vote as they choose on subsequent ballots.

In Minnesota, Republicans in three congressional districts elected Cruz supporters for each of the nine seats up for grabs. The state concludes its selection process next month. Rubio won the state, meaning that he will get 17 of Minnesota's votes on the first ballot, while Cruz will get 13 and Trump eight.

And Trump again failed to have his supporters win seats in South Carolina, a state he won overwhelmingly. Cruz grabbed a delegate in the 6th Congressional District, a mostly Democratic area. So did Kasich. The third position went to a publicly uncommitted delegate who privately supports Trump, according to Republicans familiar with the contest. Trump gets all 50 votes on the first ballot.

The arcane process of picking Republican delegates continues next weekend in Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, Delaware, Missouri and Virginia. The contests in Arizona and Virginia are expected to be most closely watched, given that Trump won the state but Cruz and other anti-Trump forces have recruited candidates to run for open seats.

Related:

On policies, Ted Cruz shifts his stance to suit a fractured GOP

## Emails Deepen Criminal Cases In Flint, But Charges May Be Tough To Prove

By Monica Davey And Abby Goodnough

[New York Times](#), April 24, 2016

As Bill Schuette, the attorney general of Michigan, announced criminal charges against three government workers in Flint's water crisis, he pledged there will be more charges soon, saying, "We'll go wherever the truth takes us — and, in this case, wherever the emails take us."

Thousands of email messages, which were made public in the months since state authorities acknowledged lead contamination in the city's water last fall, are at the center of the state's case, and more messages may yet come to light as prosecutors appear likely to weigh possible charges against higher-level officials.

But even with an array of written evidence, legal experts and environmental lawyers say the 13 criminal charges announced last week in Flint are extremely rare, and some said prosecutors may face significant challenges proving them in court.

The charges — which include accusations of conspiring to manipulate water monitoring reports, tampering with reports on lead in the water, and misleading local and federal authorities about the safety of the water — are highly unusual because they were placed not only against a city employee who worked at Flint's water plant but also against state water regulators who were assigned to keep track of what Flint was doing.

"In 40 years of working in this field, I cannot think of another time when a regulator was charged in this way — they are prosecuting the people who are supposed to be the watchdogs," said Jane F. Barrett, a professor and director of the environmental law clinic at the University of Maryland, who has previously worked as a state and federal prosecutor on environmental cases.

"It's one thing to say they were sloppy or negligent. But in terms of proving the conspiracy count, they have to have evidence that the defendants deliberately agreed to cover-up the seriousness of the problems with the drinking water supply," she said.

Some legal experts suggested that the charges may have an effect on regulators beyond Flint or Michigan, raising a specter of heightened criminal charges for regulators. "People are going to sit up straighter in their chairs," said Mark N. Templeton, an associate clinical professor of law and director of the Abrams Environmental Law Clinic at the University of Chicago Law School. "They may need additional resources and training as well," he added.

Some of the emails would appear to lay out a stark case. They include assurances that the water in Flint was being treated with an anti-corrosion chemical, when it was not. The failure to add that chemical allowed lead to leach from the pipes, resulting in dangerously high levels of lead in the water that led officials to finally advise residents to stop drinking it last fall.

Officials said unfiltered water is still not safe to drink, and the long-term effects of drinking the tainted water for more than a year remain a worry, particularly for parents of small children.

The only city worker charged so far in the Flint crisis is Michael Glasgow, the city's laboratory and water quality supervisor, who is accused of tampering with evidence — lead testing reports — and willful neglect of duty.

The arrest of Mr. Glasgow, 40, came as a surprise to some, largely because he had cooperated with authorities, and had personally sought water samples last year from a home that was reporting high levels of lead. Mr. Glasgow also had voiced early concerns about switching the city's drinking water away from Detroit's water system to a new source in 2014, the event that set off the crisis that left residents drinking odd-smelling, foul-looking, lead-tainted water for months.

Robert Harrison, a lawyer for Mr. Glasgow, said he could not comment on the specific charges, but described his client as "an honest, decent person" who had spent years working for the city of Flint and had worked his way up from the bottom.

"Criminal charges against Mike are difficult to understand, given what Mike did in this case," Mr. Harrison said. "Not only was Mike strongly and publicly opposed to the transfer of the water system away from the Detroit system, but Mike voluntarily met with, and spoke with, numerous investigators from the attorney general's office and the Genesee prosecutor's office on several occasions."

In an email Mr. Glasgow sent to state regulators a little more than a week before Flint was to switch away from its water supply to a new source, the Flint River, Mr. Glasgow expressed doubts about safety monitoring of the water and about training workers at the Flint water plant.

Days after Mr. Glasgow's 2014 warnings about switching sources, the city went ahead with its plans, and Mr. Glasgow was quoted reassuring residents in a news release, drafts of which were emailed around the city and state. In the draft release, Michael Prysby, a state worker charged in the Flint case, promised that whatever doubts residents had about the river — seen among residents historically as a grimy dumping place for Flint industries — the state had deemed its water safe to drink.

Mr. Prysby, a water engineer with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, has entered a not guilty plea in the case, as has Stephen Busch, a water supervisor

with the state environmental quality department. Lawyers for both men did not return phone messages.

Charges against Mr. Prysby, 53, and Mr. Busch, 40, include misconduct in office, accusing them of knowingly misleading federal and county officials about whether the water was safe, as well as conspiring to tamper with evidence and tampering with reports on lead.

The pair also are charged with failing to require the city of Flint to add chemicals to its new water supply to prevent lead from leaching from service lines, which is standard protocol for dealing with aged water systems; with improperly manipulating water-testing samples by directing residents to “pre-flush” their taps, which would decrease lead levels; and with failing to collect enough samples from homes that were known to have lead service lines, where risks of lead contamination would be higher.

Records show that lead tests were sometimes conducted on homes that were described on reports as having lead service lines — the lines most vulnerable to contamination and the best test of a system’s safety — but that actually had service lines made of materials other than lead. Such testing could have given other authorities and residents a false sense of security about lead levels.

As residents and some authorities were voicing alarm about the water supply in early to mid-2015, emails from Mr. Busch and Mr. Prysby suggest they were assuring others that all was well.

In February 2015, Mr. Busch assured a concerned Environmental Protection Agency official, who was asking about some high lead findings, that Flint was indeed using chemicals to prevent leaching from the pipes, a process known as corrosion control, though the state now acknowledges that no such controls were in place at the time.

A day earlier, Mr. Prysby seemed to downplay high levels found at one Flint house, which belongs to LeeAnne Walters, offering explanations for why the alarming results may not have reflected a broader, Flint-wide problem, and suggesting that Ms. Walters flush her taps before retesting, a move that would temporarily lessen lead levels.

Scott Atkinson contributed reporting.

## **Flint Crisis Makes Governor Legal Target**

By Jennifer Chambers

[Detroit News](#), April 24, 2016

Being sued is part of the job for the state’s highest elected official, but these are especially busy days for Gov. Rick Snyder’s legal team.

Litigants looking to right alleged wrongs by the state start at the top with the governor, who’s in charge of signing into law and enforcing the state’s policies and statutes.

These civil actions, which legal experts say can number into the hundreds or even thousands a year in local, state or

federal courts, typically cover a wide variety of topics, from roads to billboards and from corrections to civil rights.

Yet lawsuits against the state or state officials related to contaminated water in Flint alone reached at least 82 separate cases at one point last week.

Most have been filed by Flint residents seeking to hold Snyder and others personally liable for damages. Other suits seek replacement of the pipes that leached lead into Flint’s water supply and long-term medical monitoring and health care.

And with the governor publicly speaking about what he knew or didn’t know about aspects of the crisis, legal experts expect Snyder will likely be deposed in many of these cases as well as be called to testify if a case reaches trial.

Republican strategist John Truscott said governors get sued all the time but rarely so many times on a single issue.

“With (former Gov. John) Engler, we were notified almost weekly. But they were all on different issues,” Truscott said. “With Snyder, it’s so concentrated and that’s why people take notice.”

Snyder also faces numerous lawsuits stemming from Michigan’s emergency manager law and the state’s management of Detroit Public Schools. And while he has been through the daily legal meat grinder before, when his legal team in the Detroit bankruptcy case was in daily contact with him about all of the city’s and state’s developments in court, the Flint lawsuits will be different, observers say.

Lansing attorney Kelly Keenan, who was Gov. Jennifer Granholm’s top attorney, said governors have legal teams to comply with the endless paperwork, research and court filings each case takes to defend, which often means governors get briefings but rarely set foot in a courtroom.

Yet it is highly likely, Keenan said, that Snyder will be deposed in some of the cases over Flint’s contaminated water because attorneys for the plaintiffs will argue he has personal knowledge of the crisis that can be of value.

Last week, the governor pinpointed Sept. 28, 2015, as the date he learned the extent of the problem, after an overnight briefing explicitly claimed Flint was not experiencing a health crisis. Faced with “outside people” saying otherwise, Snyder “pressed” his experts during a conference call, he said. They finally admitted the crisis during that call, according to the governor.

“I would not be surprised to see him deposed. Not all 81 cases, but I wouldn’t be shocked if there are a few cases where he is deposed or participates in discovery,” Keenan said. “It will be interesting. I’ve never seen anything like that.”

Daily briefing

While he never practiced as an attorney, Snyder has a law degree and could use his University of Michigan Law School knowledge to navigate issues.

He gets a daily briefing on a host of state issues, including litigation briefings from his legal team. Then he moves on to his daily duties as the state's top elected leader.

The onslaught of legal action against Snyder and the state overshadows anything former Granholm legal counsel Steve Liedel said he ever had to address, when the Governor's Office would keep an eye on five to 10 cases.

Liedel, who worked for Granholm as deputy legal counsel from 2003 to 2008 and chief legal counsel until 2010, said unless the governor's staff attorneys have experience with product liability or have a class action background, they would have to bring in a team to coordinate the response.

"You begin to move beyond the practice of law to project management," Liedel said. "My first reaction is a lot of these are going to be consolidated, but they need to be tracked and followed. ... It becomes a pretty Herculean task. It's the skill set you won't find in state government."

The number against Snyder recently dropped to 16 after some parties dropped the state from their list of defendants, according to the Governor's Office.

Snyder spokesman Ari Adler said last week that at least 64 of the dismissed cases are still active lawsuits against other defendants, but the state or a state official was removed.

"That's why our number is much smaller now. ... If cases do get dismissed by the courts, it can affect the standing of other similar cases. And, once a case is dismissed in federal court, people may turn around and sue in state court," Adler said. "This is all long from over."

Under authority from the State Administrative Board, Snyder can spend up to \$1.2 million to hire private attorneys to represent him in civil and criminal proceedings related to the Flint water crisis.

Detroit attorney Eugene Driker and his law firm were hired to represent the governor and his office in civil lawsuits brought by Flint residents over the city's lead-contaminated water.

\$540 an hour

Driker will be charging the taxpayers \$540 per hour for his services. Two other attorneys at his firm will charge \$400 per hour, according to the contract.

During remarks at a Pancakes & Politics breakfast at the Detroit Athletic Club, Snyder talked about the challenge of pending lawsuits and legal challenges.

"There are lots of lawsuits, there will probably be more lawsuits, and the issue is how do we do good things to help the people of Flint. That's where I'm putting my focus," Snyder said at the event on April 11.

"In many cases the lawsuits, lawyers can do well by them. I appreciate the legal profession. It's not a knock on them. We have a legal system that's intended to address issues like that, but what I want to do is say what can we do near term, and we are."

For example, Snyder said, the state has added school nurses in Flint and replaced fixtures in Flint schools because the state learned there is no requirement to do any water testing in schools.

"That's crazy, folks. It's not required in federal rules. What we're doing now is how do we do more early childhood services. ... Those are the kinds of things I want to stay focused on. Not these lawsuits.

"But can you effectively govern when you're dealing with this crisis and other things? You just keep going, and you get the job done."

Snyder gets a daily briefing on a host of state issues, including litigation briefings from his legal team, but his involvement is limited this early in the cases, observers said.

Constitutional law expert Robert Sedler with Wayne State University said in 2012 Snyder was named in a federal lawsuit challenging Michigan's ban on same-sex-marriage.

The federal lawsuit sought relief — action by state officials — for constitutional violations, as do many of the Flint cases.

"The governor (being named) is not legally important. Just as he was not important in the marriage equality case. Relief is against state officials," Snyder said.

No Snyder immunity

In state courts, where many of the plaintiffs are seeking damages, states are immune, but state officials do not have immunity, Sedler said.

"To overcome a claim of immunity you have to show they knew their actions was unconstitutional. Assuming all these allegations in these complaints can be proved, there would be wide area for damages," he said.

Truscott, president of Truscott Rossman public relations in Lansing, said he thinks many of the Flint lawsuits will be hard to win in court. And if one gets dismissed, he said, it means many others will, too.

"My sense is (Snyder) is focused on moving forward and letting the lawyers deal with the lawsuits," Truscott said. "I think it's too early in the process for it to be a distraction for him."

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## **As Bond Yields Rise, Some Investors Fear Another False Dawn**

**A drop in government-debt prices often signals improving economic sentiment, but such moves in recent years have been short-lived**

By Min Zeng And Christopher Whittall

[Wall Street Journal](#), April 24, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

## 'He Apparently Had No Fears': The Steep, Unexpected Downfall Of Dennis Hastert

By Matt Zapotosky

[Washington Post](#), April 24, 2016

J. Dennis Hastert had risen to the highest levels of American politics without any of the sordid allegations about his past coming to light. So when the FBI started asking questions about his unusual cash withdrawals, he tried a dangerous gambit: He told the agents he was an extortion victim, and he agreed to surreptitiously record his calls to help them catch the culprit.

Investigators soon concluded that the former U.S. House speaker — an Illinois Republican who had won the trust of countless students he had taught and wrestlers he had coached before he entered politics — was lying. By their assessment, Hastert had, decades earlier, sexually abused the man he claimed was extorting him, then paid him \$1.7 million to keep quiet.

Since then, authorities have uncovered four other possible victims, all of whom were teenagers affiliated with the wrestling team at the high school where Hastert coached. They say he abused them or made questionable, inappropriate contact. Hastert pleaded guilty in October to a bank-related charge that made no mention of the alleged sexual misconduct. But when a judge sentences the 74-year-old Wednesday, he will consider prosecutors' assertion that the once-revered coach, teacher and politician was a serial child molester.

In Yorkville, the small town outside of Chicago where Hastert coached and taught, and in the corridors of the Capitol where he once wrangled fellow Republican legislators, the revelations about the purported sexual misdeeds have been met with shock, outrage and a significant amount of soul searching.

Former wrestlers and students have called one another, trading theories about who the victims might be and asking about signs they might have missed. Former staffers have racked their brains trying to re-create some of the high-profile incidents Hastert weathered while in office, wondering whether the skeletons in his closet might have secretly informed his decision-making.

"In the back of his head, he must have been thinking, 'Oh my gosh, they're going to find me out,'" said one former Hastert staffer.

Thomas Green, Hastert's attorney, said in a statement responding to the allegations: "Mr. Hastert acknowledges that as a young man he committed transgressions for which he is profoundly sorry. He earnestly apologizes to his former students, family, friends, previous constituents and all others affected by the harm his actions have caused."

Hastert's rise to prominence was remarkable — especially in light of what he is accused of now. He began his

career as a history teacher and coach at Illinois's Yorkville High School, where he enjoyed a "pretty sterling" reputation, said Fred Kindelberger, 67, of Milwaukee, who wrestled on one of Hastert's teams. Hastert also led a Scout group, taking boys on scuba-diving trips to the Bahamas and canoeing expeditions in the Boundary Waters area of Minnesota.

Hastert wrote fondly of those times in a memoir published in 2004, describing how he tried to impart values and life lessons to those in his care.

"I was never a very good liar," he wrote, detailing an incident in which he tried unsuccessfully to deceive his mother. "Maybe I wasn't smart enough. I could never get away with it, so I made up my mind as a kid to tell the truth and pay the consequences."

To a man, former pupils, athletes and Scouts contacted by The Washington Post said they saw no signs Hastert was abusing anyone.

"Nothing at all makes sense to me," said Bill Loftus, 64, a former wrestler who still lives in Yorkville. "To me, Denny was the greatest guy. If it wasn't for him, I might not have even graduated. He just showed me great respect, and it made me want to do good."

That is not to say all those who knew Hastert doubt the allegations against him. Jim Stott, 64, a draftsman and former wrestler who lives in Yorkville, said that when Hastert was first charged in 2015, he was skeptical. But when prosecutors provided details of their investigation in a recent court filing, Stott began to think "maybe it did happen."

David McNelis, 63, a former wrestler who lives in Plano, Ill., said, "It's like he molested all of Kendall County now."

Republican Party leaders appointed Hastert to his first office in politics — a seat in the Illinois House of Representatives — in the early 1980s to replace a member who was terminally ill. His mentor, a state senator named John E. Grotberg, would go on to win a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, and when Grotberg, too, fell ill, Hastert ran to fill the vacancy. (Grotberg died in 1986).

In Congress, Hastert played a pivotal role in health-care and drug policy issues. His ascension to the speakership, though, was almost by accident. When Rep. Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) resigned from the post after the 1998 midterm elections — which saw Republicans lose five seats despite President Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky — Rep. Bob Livingston (R-La.) was tapped to succeed him. Then Livingston was forced to acknowledge he had had an affair. Hastert took the speakership instead, putting him second in line to succeed the president.

Hastert led the House until 2007 — making him the longest-serving Republican House speaker in history. The end of his time, though, was marked by scandal, as Rep. Mark Foley (R-Fla.) resigned amid reports that he had sent sexually explicit messages to an underage male Capitol Hill page.

Former Hastert staffers and other congressional aides said they never saw Hastert interact inappropriately with pages, and the U.S. Probation Office found “no evidence of any sexual misconduct since approximately 1979,” court documents show.

But those who worked closely with Hastert or for him wonder whether his handling of the Foley scandal was affected by his past. One former House staffer said Foley’s interest in pages was a poorly kept secret, even before the explicit messages were uncovered, and the former staffer never understood why Hastert or those working for him did not do anything about it sooner. “I thought it was more than weird,” the former House staffer said.

The former Hastert staffer said they questioned why, after the explicit messages emerged, it took so long for the speaker to take ownership publicly.

“Knowing what we know now, he must have been thinking to himself, ‘They’re going to find me out, at some level here, something will come out of all of this,’ “ the former Hastert staffer said.

A different former aide said Hastert moved swiftly to oust Foley once his misdeeds become public and that Hastert was -never suspected of similar wrongdoing.

“There’s no indication that there was anything like that going on in the last 40 years,” he said.

All the former staffers spoke on the condition of anonymity so as not to affect their current employment.

Even prosecutors remarked in sentencing papers on how Hastert achieved such a high-profile position with the alleged misdeeds in his past.

“Defendant was so sure his secrets were safe that he apparently had no fears about entering a profession where one is subject to constant scrutiny and media attention,” they wrote.

They ultimately charged Has-tert with structuring — withdrawing money in amounts low enough that they wouldn’t trigger federal reporting requirements — because the federal and state statutes of limitations had “long expired on potential charges relating to defendant’s known sexual acts,” they wrote in court papers. They wrote that when investigators were initially tipped to Hastert’s suspicious cash withdrawals, they did not know what to think and wondered whether Hastert was a victim of extortion. Hastert claimed as much after agents approached him, saying a person identified in court papers as Individual A was making false claims about sexual abuse.

The agents’ thinking changed after Hastert agreed to record phone calls with Individual A. They quickly realized the man’s “tone and comments during the recorded conversation were inconsistent with someone committing extortion.” And when they pressed Hastert to confront the man about his purportedly false allegations, Hastert ignored their instructions.

Investigators would come to learn that Individual A, who met Hastert as a child through family, was a former wrestler who alleged Hastert touched him in an inappropriate, sexual way on a team trip decades ago. The man confronted Hastert around 2010 and agreed to keep quiet if Has-tert, who became a lobbyist after leaving the House, paid him millions of dollars. Investigators soon found four other possible victims. Two former wrestlers alleged Hastert performed sexual acts on them after offering a massage. A third said Hastert brushed his genitals, though he was not sure whether the contact was on purpose.

The fourth, Steven Reinboldt, is deceased. His sister has said publicly that her brother confided in her that his first gay sexual experience was with Hastert. A former wrestler, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to protect his privacy, confirmed to The Washington Post that Reinboldt shared a similar story with him years ago, though at the time, Reinboldt was out of high school and the former wrestler was not sure exactly when the contact occurred.

“While defendant achieved great success, reaping all the benefits that went with it, these boys struggled, and all are still struggling now with what defendant did to them,” prosecutors wrote in a court filing. “Some have managed better than -others, but all of them carry the scars defendant inflicted upon them.”

Some former wrestlers said the town where Hastert was once beloved is now wary of him. His alma mater, Wheaton College, took his name off a public policy center he helped create.

Prosecutors have asked that Hastert face a sentence of up to six months in prison and that he be required to undergo a sex offender assessment. Reinboldt’s sister and at least one alleged victim are expected to testify at his sentencing.

Hastert’s attorneys have said he is in such bad health that he needs help getting out of bed, using the bathroom and dressing himself. They want him to face only probation.

“By any measure, appearing before this Court to receive its sentence will be the most difficult day in Mr. Hastert’s life,” defense attorneys wrote in a court filing. “Mr. Hastert’s fall from grace has been swift and devastating.”