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**TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF**

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## TODAY'S EDITION

### Leading DHS News

In Afghanistan, John Kerry Seeks End To Bickering Of Unity Government (NYT) .....	2
Kerry Visits Kabul In Effort To Ease Political Tensions (NEWSHR) .....	3
Kerry Aims To Ease Crisis Over Afghan Unity Pact During Kabul Visit (REU).....	4
Kerry Presses Afghan Leaders On Unity; No US Troop Changes (AP) .....	4
Kerry: 'No End Date' For Afghanistan Power-Sharing (BBC).....	5
Kerry Reiterates U.S. Support To Afghan Forces (XNA).....	6
Kerry, Afghan Counterpart Meet In Kabul To Review Defense, Security Cooperation (KNA).....	6
Three Rockets Hit Kabul During Surprise Visit By US Secretary Of State John Kerry (VICE).....	7
Kerry, In Unannounced Visit, Urges Afghanistan's Divided Leaders To Work Together (WP).....	8
US, Afghanistan Call On Taliban To Return To Peace Talks (VOA).....	8
Explosions Heard In Central Kabul Following John Kerry's Visit (AFP).....	9
Afghan General Plants Flowers In Helmand, But Taliban Lurk (NYT) .....	9

### Transportation Security Administration

Brussels Airport Bombings Bring New Security Measures In U.S. (WP).....	11
---	----

### Immigration

The Shaky Foundation Under Mr. Trump's Wall (WP) .....	12
--	----

### Office of Health Affairs

'A Premature And Unnatural Death' In Rural Oklahoma (WP)...	12
---	----

### Terrorism Investigations

U.S. Consulate Issues Warning Of 'credible Threats' For Americans In Istanbul (WT).....	16
Belgium Confirms Arrest Of 'Man In The Hat' At Airport Bombing (WP) .....	17
Belgium Holds 'Man In Hat' Suspect From Airport Bombing (BLOOM) .....	17
Man In Hat In Brussels Airport Attack Is In Custody, Belgium Says (NYT) .....	17

Belgium Captures 'Man With Hat' Terror Suspect (POLITICEU) 18 Last Main Brussels And Paris Suspects Held, Threat Remains (REU).....	19
Belgians Find Elusive 'Man In The Hat' From Airport Video (AP)19 Parents Face Limited Options To Keep Children From Terrorism (NYT).....	20
Inside Saudi Arabia's Re-Education Prison For Jihadists (NYT) 22	

### National Security News

U.S. Deploys B-52 Bombers To Qatar For Fight Against Islamic State (REU) .....	23
Why The US Is Sending B-52 Bombers To Battle ISIS (YAHOO) .....	23
U.S. Deploys B-52 Bombers To Middle East For The First Time In 25 Years (WT) .....	24
Rebels And Syrian Government Forces Battle In Fierce Clashes Near Aleppo: Monitor (REU) .....	24
U.S. Navy Leads 30-nation Maritime Exercise In Middle East (REU).....	24
Eastern Ukraine Sees Increase In Fighting, 2 Deaths Reported (AP).....	24
Non-Proliferation Crusader Obama Ponders A Visit To Nuclear Ground Zero: Hiroshima (WP) .....	25
Kerry Arrives In Japan For Landmark Hiroshima Visit (AFP) .....	26
Suspected Al Qaeda Militants Execute 17 Yemeni Government Soldiers (REU).....	27
Egypt And Saudi Arabia Agree \$16 Billion Investment Fund (AFP).....	27
Candidates For Next UN Chief To Face Nations For First Time (AP).....	27
The Race To Run The United Nations (NYT) .....	29
How Panama Ended Up In The Middle Of A Financial Scandal (WP).....	29
Why 'In-Law' Is Banned In Beijing (WP).....	31
TransCanada Receives Approval Notice For Keystone Pipeline Restart (REU) .....	31
Ex-Argentine President Fernandez Charged With Money Laundering: Media (REU).....	31
Argentine Prosecutor Probing Ex-President Kirchner: Reports (AFP).....	31
Argentine Prosecutor May Add Ex-President To Financial Inquiry (NYT) .....	32

## National News

President Obama Talks Building “Economy Where Everybody Has A Fair Shot” (KVNUAM).....	32
Senate Primary-race Pressures Work Against Obama’s Court Nominee (REU).....	33
Obama To Make First ‘Fox News Sunday’ Appearance (USAT).....	33
Obama Combines Fundraising, Golf In Whirlwind Trip To SF (SFC).....	33
Joe Biden, Lady Gaga Tour Aims To Stop Sexual Assaults On Campus (YAHOO).....	34
Bernie Zeroes In On Next Win (POLITICO).....	35
The Latest: Sanders Wins Wyoming, But Delegates Evenly Split (AP).....	36
Bernie Sanders And Ted Cruz Look To Gain Ground In West (NYT).....	37
Sanders Wins Wyoming To Boost Momentum Before New York Duel (BLOOMPOL).....	38
Bernie Sanders Prevails In Wyoming, Continuing Winning Streak Against Hillary Clinton (WP).....	39
Sanders Extends Win Streak With Wyoming Victory (HILL).....	39
Why New York Is Pivotal For Sanders And For Clinton (WP).....	39
Minnesota: Bernie’s Superdelegate Sweet Spot (POLITICO).....	41

Cruz Outmuscles Republican Rivals To Win Most Colorado Delegates (BLOOMPOL).....	41
Trump Is Ahead, But Cruz Keeps Winning The Trickier Delegate Contests (WP).....	41
Trump’s Saturday Delegate Disaster (POLITICO).....	42
As Campaigns Seek Delegates, Ordinary Voters Feel Sidelined (NYT).....	44
Somebody Used The Colorado GOP Twitter Account To Tweet #NeverTrump (WP).....	46
Colorado GOP Deletes #nevertrump Tweet, Pledges Investigation (POLITICO).....	46
Trump Team Vows To Win Delegate Majority As Rivals Prepare For Open Convention (WP).....	46
Trump Team Expects To Clinch Before Convention: Report (HILL).....	48
Exclusive: Blocking Trump Could Hurt Republicans In Election – Reuters/Ipsos Poll (REU).....	48
Puerto Rico Governor Declares Emergency At Government Development Bank (AP).....	48
J. Dennis Hastert Is Sorry For Past ‘Transgressions,’ Lawyer Says (NYT).....	49
A Fair Chance After A Conviction (NYT).....	50
Gun Dealers Hiding On Facebook (NYT).....	50

## LEADING DHS NEWS

### In Afghanistan, John Kerry Seeks End To Bickering Of Unity Government

By Jawad Sukhnyar And Mujib Mashal  
[New York Times](#), April 9, 2016

KABUL, Afghanistan — Secretary of State John Kerry arrived in Kabul on Saturday with a message of support for Afghanistan’s struggling coalition government, which has been bogged down by infighting as it confronts an emboldened Taliban insurgency.

It was Mr. Kerry’s first visit to the Afghan capital since he helped broker the coalition government in 2014, after a bitterly contested election threatened to unravel the country. President Ashraf Ghani and his rival Abdullah Abdullah, who serves as the government’s chief executive, have failed to put aside their hard feelings, even as the Taliban have seized more territory and a bleak economic outlook has prompted an exodus of young people to Europe.

Mr. Kerry, who met with both Mr. Ghani and Mr. Abdullah, also led a meeting of senior officials from both governments to assess the commitments from each side since the signing of a strategic partnership agreement between the United States and Afghanistan.

As if to underscore the perils confronting the government and the country, rockets landed near Kabul’s diplomatic district not long after Mr. Kerry’s departure. It was

not immediately known if the rocket attack caused injuries or deaths, or significant damage.

The United States has about 9,800 troops in Afghanistan, as part of NATO’s reduced mission to train and advise the Afghan forces, but also in a counterterrorism mission aimed at Al Qaeda and, as of January, the Islamic State affiliates that have arisen in parts of the country.

While the troop level is expected to be reduced to 5,500 by the end of the year, Mr. Kerry said President Obama’s decision would take into account the views of the new United States and NATO commander in Afghanistan, Gen. John W. Nicholson, who is in the middle of conducting an assessment before he presents his recommendations to the Pentagon.

Mr. Kerry’s remarks before his meetings with Mr. Ghani and Mr. Abdullah suggested that the two leaders’ continued bickering remained a concern.

“We need to make certain that the government of national unity is doing everything possible to be unified and to deliver to the people of Afghanistan,” he said.

Mr. Ghani, later appearing in a news conference with Mr. Kerry, thanked Mr. Obama for his flexibility on troop levels, and reaffirmed his government’s commitment to making reforms and fighting corruption.

Afghanistan must show clear progress in those areas before requesting continued financing and other international commitments at two coming conferences, in Warsaw and Brussels.

“The unity, national empathy, and responsibility of our political class in particular need to be strengthened,” Mr. Ghani said.

The Afghan leaders still do not see eye to eye on many basic issues in the political document that was Mr. Kerry’s instrument to bring them together, and their disagreements have slowed the government’s response.

In September, the Taliban overran Kunduz, their first takeover of a major city since their fall from power in 2001. The Taliban have also made gains in the south of the country in recent months, particularly in Helmand Province, where they control or pose a threat in majority of the 14 districts.

Yet at a time of raging violence, which took the lives of nearly 6,000 members of the Afghan security forces last year, the top security ministries have been run by caretakers who do not have parliamentary approval. The minister of defense, for instance, remains as a caretaker even after failing his parliamentary confirmation. The ministers of intelligence and the interior resigned with harsh public words for the government.

After months of limbo, a new interior minister was finally approved by Parliament on Saturday, while the two leaders continue to disagree over the choice for a new intelligence chief. On the same day that the interior minister was confirmed, the government also finally got its first attorney general — after the post had been vacant for a year and half.

The worsening security situation, dire economic prospects and uncertainty about the future have convinced many young and middle-class people that they would be better off elsewhere. Tens of thousands of Afghans have risked their lives on treacherous water routes to Europe even after the borders have begun to close down.

The Kerry-brokered agreement called for holding within two years parliamentary elections, delayed a year already, and a loya jirga, a grand assembly of elders from across the country, to amend the Constitution and change Mr. Abdullah’s role of chief executive to the position of prime minister.

To avoid another electoral mess, the agreement also calls for overhauling the voting process.

With the agreement’s deadline a little more than six months away, Mr. Ghani and Mr. Abdullah have sharply disagreed over the mechanics of the overhaul, and they are unlikely to meet the requirements on time.

A vocal political opposition, made up mostly of officials from former administrations who have been alienated by the current leaders, has intensified its criticism, with an eye on the deadline. Many have even declared that the government, born out of a political agreement, will lose its legitimacy in October if the two leaders do not fulfill the promises they signed on paper.

Yet Mr. Kerry, at the news conference with Mr. Ghani, asserted that the coalition government did not have an expiration date.

“Let me make this very, very clear, because I brokered the agreement, President Ghani signed it and Chief Executive Abdullah signed it,” Mr. Kerry said. “There is no end to this agreement at the end of two years or six months from now. This is an agreement for unity government the duration of which is five years.”

Western and Afghan officials say certain advisers to Mr. Ghani are envisioning a different outcome: using the deadline to force out Mr. Abdullah. They argue that while the position of chief executive expires, the president will still have a mandate, from an election that they say was cleansed by a United Nations audit.

But American officials have told Mr. Ghani’s faction that such a path would be unacceptable — that, essentially, the government is only legitimate as long as both men are in it.

## **Kerry Visits Kabul In Effort To Ease Political Tensions**

[PBS NewsHour](#), April 9, 2016

HARI SREENIVASAN, PBS NEWSHOUR WEEKEND ANCHOR: Secretary of State John Kerry made a surprise visit to Afghanistan today in an attempt to ease escalating political tensions there and prolong a power-sharing agreement he brokered two years ago.

Secretary Kerry met with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, whose security forces control 70 percent of the country’s territory but are fighting a resurgent Taliban, which was initially toppled by the U.S.-led invasion in 2001. Kerry also met with Ghani’s political rival, Abdullah Abdullah, who is chief executive of the unity government. Kerry later tweeted, quote, “The U.S. continues to support sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of self-reliant, democratic Afghanistan.”

Kerry visited troops serving at Camp Resolute Support in Kabul to thank them for their service. The U.S. plans to withdraw nearly half of the almost 10,000 troops stationed in Afghanistan next year.

Joining me now via Skype from Kabul, Afghanistan, to discuss Secretary Kerry’s trip is “Reuters” State Department correspondent, Arshad Mohammed.

So, first, it seems that there are two sets of problems that Kerry and the Afghans are trying to tackle. On the domestic side, they’ve got economic problems, political problems, and then they also have the big giant security concerns with the Taliban, which is now heading into its 15th year?

ARSHAD MOHAMMED, REUTERS STATE DEPARTMENT CORRESPONDENT: That’s exactly right. On the political side, the problem, essentially, is whether the current national unity government between President Ghani and so-called Chief Executive Abdullah, can continue on beyond what’s widely believed here to be the end of its two-

year kind of mandate in September. The security problems are well-known. The Taliban has been resurgent over the last year. The fighting season is about to start again. And the U.S. government is planning to cut the number of its troops to 5,500 from 9,800, toward the end of this year.

HARI SREENIVASAN: So what happens on that political front come September? Does that mean the government dissolves or collapses?

ARSHAD MOHAMMED: Well, there's a lot of ambiguity about what exactly happens. What Kerry today said — and he's the person who brokered the agreement that created the unity government — was that from his point of view it doesn't need to end — or it doesn't end in two years, that there's no specific termination date. What he's essentially and what U.S. officials are really trying to do here is to get the Afghan politicians, not just Ghani and Abdullah, but also the opposition politicians associated with former President Karzai to try to work out some kind of an agreement to keep the government going beyond September.

That's especially important because in October, aid donors are going to meet in Belgium and decide how much aid to give to Afghanistan, and they're not going to want to give money if it isn't clear an established government in place to spend the money wisely.

HARI SREENIVASAN: Secretary Kerry had almost a similar trip in Baghdad. There the common foe is ISIS.

ARSHAD MOHAMMED: That's right. We were in Baghdad yesterday, and again, he's trying to push Iraqi politicians to achieve consensus. And the case there, it's really trying to figure out how to craft a cabinet for the Iraqi government that enough of the politicians can live with.

You need to have in general a functioning, somewhat cohesive government, to prosecute the war against the Islamic state militants in Iraq or against the Taliban here in Afghanistan.

HARI SREENIVASAN: Now, when you're on these long plane rides with him and you have access to the secretary, do you ever see his optimism waning? I mean, when you think about this, thousands of American lives have been lost. It's been now 15 years. We've spent probably a couple of trillion dollars in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and here we are in situations where both of these countries, and parts of them, are completely lawless still.

ARSHAD MOHAMMED: You know, my impression is most secretaries of state are almost cogently optimistic because that's part of their job. Their job is to try to find ways to solve problems. We do see Secretary Kerry on the plane off the record sometimes. I can't talk about that. But most secretaries of state I've covered and I've covered for now tend to be looking for solutions rather than wringing their hands over the problems.

HARI SREENIVASAN: All right. Arshad Mohammed joining us today via Skype in the U.S. embassy in Kabul — thanks so much.

ARSHAD MOHAMMED: Thanks for your time.

## **Kerry Aims To Ease Crisis Over Afghan Unity Pact During Kabul Visit**

By Arshad Mohammed And James Mackenzie

[Reuters](#), April 9, 2016

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

## **Kerry Presses Afghan Leaders On Unity; No US Troop Changes**

[Associated Press](#), April 9, 2016

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Saturday committed to pushing reforms after his picks for attorney general and interior minister won long-sought Cabinet confirmation, while U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry pleaded with the government's power-sharing leaders to bury their "factional divisions" for the good of the country.

Yet Ghani could not cite progress toward ending a bitter feud with Afghanistan's chief executive, Abdullah Abdullah, that has hobbled the Kabul government for 18 months. The unwieldy arrangement, which Kerry helped to forge, has left interim ministers in critical positions while the U.S. ally struggles to confront lawlessness, corruption and the Taliban's resilient and perhaps expanding insurgency.

"Democracy requires credible institutions," Kerry told reporters at the end of his brief stopover in Afghanistan on his way to Japan for a meeting of foreign ministers. "More than that, it requires people from different political, ethnic and geographic factions to be able to come together and work toward a common good."

Ghani, at a news conference, hailed the Cabinet votes in parliament as a turning point. Progress on that front "assures us there will be fundamental, comprehensive reforms," Ghani said through an interpreter.

Kerry backed him up and stressed the need for a unified approach between the competing Ghani and Abdullah camps, hardened still even two years after a contested presidential election.

In the coming months, NATO and international donor summits could define long-term security and aid commitments critical to the Afghan government's survival, so Kerry sought clarity on Afghanistan's direction.

Kerry called on the Taliban to re-engage in peace talks dormant for almost a year, and said there was no change now in President Barack Obama's plans for troop levels in Afghanistan. There are 9,800 U.S. forces on the ground in Afghanistan, and that number is set to fall to 5,500 next year.

"But he always has said he will listen to his commanders on the ground," Kerry said.

Gen. John Nicholson, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, is reviewing needs; Kerry said that would guide Obama's final decision.

Ghani declined to weigh in on what he said was a U.S. matter.

For Kerry, the stop in Kabul was his second visit in as many days to a country that the United States long has wished to stabilize. On Friday in Baghdad, Kerry backed efforts by Iraq's prime minister to settle a political crisis and stressed the importance of having a "unified and functioning government" to confront the Islamic State group.

Kerry met alone with Ghani and then included Abdullah in a lengthy three-way discussion on a porch in the presidential compound. Kerry also participated in separate talks with the foreign minister on security, governance and economic development.

"We need to make certain that the government of national unity is doing everything possible to be unified and to deliver to the people of Afghanistan," Kerry said at that event, calling on Ghani and Abdullah to move past "factional divisions."

The challenges in Afghanistan are not unlike those Kerry encountered in Iraq.

The U.S. invaded both countries under President George W. Bush and hoped to foster stable democracies. It has not happened, even though the U.S. has spent some \$2 trillion so far and several thousand Americans have died in military operations.

Governments in both countries lack control over significant areas. Afghanistan's war against the Taliban is entering its 15th year. Iraq is still trying to muster the strength for an assault on Mosul, its second largest city, and other places held by IS.

Sectarian and personal rivalries threaten both governments. Security vacuums in each threaten the United States.

Despite Obama's pledges to end both wars, American troops cannot just leave. In Iraq, there are 3,780 now.

Obama has less than 10 months to leave both places in better shape, but the strategies differ: In Iraq, the U.S. seeks the destruction of IS; in Afghanistan, it hopes to draw the Taliban into peace talks.

It is not clear why the Taliban would seek out negotiations at a time the militants appear to making gains in the south, and the fighting season is only just beginning.

First, however, the Kabul government might need to reconcile its own divisions.

The Ghani-Abdullah partnership has never been defined and the government is in disarray, with fears it could collapse due to corruption and incompetence.

The bitterness stems from a belief in Abdullah's camp that the election was stolen and gifted to Ghani — an anthropologist who lived in the U.S. for three decades — as someone with whom Washington could more easily do business.

The leaders also are seen as pandering to different constituencies: in Ghani's case, the majority ethnic Pashtuns, and in Abdullah's, the Tajiks.

And Afghanistan's challenges are only deepening. The country's economy is contracting, unemployment stands at 25 percent, Afghanistan needs to secure more international aid, and an IS affiliate may now be making inroads.

\_\_\_ Continue reading the main story

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## **Kerry: 'No End Date' For Afghanistan Power-Sharing**

[BBC News \(UK\)](#), April 9, 2016

There is no fixed date for an end to the power-sharing deal between rival Afghan leaders, said US Secretary of State John Kerry on a visit to Kabul.

The assumption had been that the national unity government formed by Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah would finish in September.

Mr Kerry brokered the deal after disputed election results.

As he flew out of the country, several explosions rang out in the city's diplomatic area.

After the deal, there were expectations that a Loya Jirga, a special assembly of elders, would be convened within two years to amend the constitution and create the post of an executive prime minister.

During his visit, Mr Kerry held meetings with Mr Ghani and the country's Chief Executive Mr Abdullah.

Mr Ghani said they all hoped the Taliban would engage in peace talks and craft "a legitimate process that brings an end to violence."

At least two explosions as well gunshots were heard in Kabul's diplomatic area as Mr Kerry's plane was preparing to take off.

The Taliban have previously attacked prominent official and foreign targets in the Afghan capital.

Mr Kerry's visit came at a time when Nato forces are increasingly being deployed in battle zones to support Afghan forces fighting the Taliban.

Last year, the number of people killed and wounded in conflict in Afghanistan rose to the highest level yet recorded, the UN said.

## **Kerry Reiterates U.S. Support To Afghan Forces**

[Xinhua \(CHN\)](#), April 10, 2016

KABUL, April 9 (Xinhua) – The visiting U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry on Saturday reiterated United States support to Afghan security forces and the people of Afghanistan.

“The United States remains fully committed to the mission to train, advice and to assist the Afghan security forces as they combat the insurgency to protect their people,” Kerry told a joint press briefing with Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani.

Kerry added that the U.S. will firmly continue to help Afghans in the fight against Taliban militants and Islamic State (IS) terror outfit, saying “we are also deepening our counter-terrorism cooperation.”

The top U.S. diplomat arrived in Kabul earlier on Saturday for an unannounced visit.

The comments came as the violence has been on the rise in countryside as the spring and summer known as fighting season is drawing near. The Taliban insurgent group and IS militants have also increased their attacks since the drawdown of foreign forces over the past two years.

Nearly 13,000 foreign forces are currently stationed in Afghanistan within the framework of the NATO-led Resolute Support (RS) mission to help Afghan forces in the field of training and advising.

He made the comments as two international conferences on Afghanistan are scheduled to be held later this year – Warsaw in July and Brussels in October – – will focus on security and development on the top of its agendas respectively.

Regarding the presence of U.S. troops in Afghanistan after 2016, Kerry said that the decision will depend on the evaluation of U.S. military commanders on the ground.

Replying to a question regarding the stalled peace process with the Taliban, Kerry said that there was still hope for the peace.

In February, a quadrilateral group of Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States had invited the Taliban groups to take part in direct talks with Kabul by the first week of March.

However, the Taliban rejected the offer.

“So again, today, we call on Taliban to enter into a peace process, legitimate process, the real process, they provides equal rights protection for all Afghans and brings to an end to violence in the suffering, that the people of this country have endured for so many years,” Kerry said.

Earlier on Saturday, Kerry and Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani joined other high-ranking Afghan and U.S. officials to attend the third U.S.-Afghanistan Bilateral Commission meeting held in Presidential Palace.

They exchanged views on security and bilateral ties, and discussed the recent Afghan political and economic developments. The meeting aimed to review the progress in the above fields outlined in the Strategic Partnership Agreement signed by the two countries in 2012.

The meeting highlighted the continuation of the U.S. security presence beyond 2016 to carry out two important missions, including training, advising, and assisting Afghan forces and “cooperating bilaterally on shared efforts to counter terrorism.”

## **Kerry, Afghan Counterpart Meet In Kabul To Review Defense, Security Cooperation**

[Kuwait News Agency](#), April 9, 2016

WASHINGTON, April 9 (KUNA) – US Secretary of State John Kerry made an unannounced trip to the Afghan capital Saturday to meet with his counterpart Salahuddin Rabbani on a range of bilateral concerns including defense, security, and economic support, it has been revealed.

The two officials convened the third meeting of the US-Afghanistan Bilateral Commission in Kabul “to review progress ... and chart a course for future cooperation,” the Department of State said.

The discussion “reaffirmed the commitment of both governments to Afghanistan’s future as a strong, stable, democratic, and self-reliant state,” it added.

Among the key issues highlighted was “the continuation of the US security presence beyond 2016 to carry out two important missions: training, advising, and assisting the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) in coordination with international partners; and cooperating bilaterally on shared efforts to counter terrorism,” Saturday’s statement said.

The Commission “welcomed” the Obama Administration’s continuing financial support for the ANDSF through the Afghan National Army Trust Fund and the UN Development Program-managed Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), as Kerry and Rabbani “acknowledged the sacrifice and resolve” of Afghan troops “and called for an end to insecurity and violent attacks that resulted in over 11,000 civilian casualties in Afghanistan in 2015 alone,” the statement affirmed.

The US also announced that 14 MD-530 attack helicopters and eight A-29 aircraft have been successfully integrated into the Afghan security forces, and the addition of 14 more MD-530s before August 2016 “will further enhance the operational capabilities of the Afghan Air Force,” the statement showed.

The US further commended Afghanistan’s participation in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) “and its active cooperation in developing a strategic trade control system and associated border controls that help

prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction,” as well as Afghanistan’s membership in the 66-nation Global Coalition to Counter the so-called Islamic State group, the Department of State said.

Toward “creating a lasting peace in Afghanistan,” Kerry and Rabbani “welcomed the efforts of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) in creating an environment conducive to bringing the Taliban and its affiliates to the negotiation table,” and emphasized a negotiated political settlement as the only way forward, the statement added.

The QCG, which only came together in January of this year, is made up of the governments of Afghanistan, the US, Pakistan, and China.

On Afghanistan’s transition to democracy, Kerry lauded the government’s “commitment to combat corruption and promote democracy and good governance,” and both officials acknowledged the importance “of ensuring credible, inclusive, and transparent elections,” particularly as Rabbani conceded that “parliamentary elections are overdue and should take place as soon as possible once necessary electoral reforms have been implemented,” it was revealed.

Kerry and Rabbani also discussed the new Afghan National Drug Action Plan, “which offers a balanced, comprehensive, coordinated, and sustainable approach to combatting illegal drug production, trade, and use through 2019,” the statement said.

The US remains “the largest single contributor of humanitarian aid to Afghans displaced within Afghanistan and across the region, providing nearly USD 213 million in fiscal years 2015 and 2016 to date,” the State Department confirmed.

The fourth meeting of the US-Afghanistan Bilateral Commission will take place in Washington, but no date has yet been set. (end) ys.bs

## **Three Rockets Hit Kabul During Surprise Visit By US Secretary Of State John Kerry**

By Tess Owen

[Vice](#), April 9, 2016

US Secretary of State John Kerry made an unscheduled stop in Kabul on his way to Japan on Saturday — and the Afghan capital promptly came under a rocket attack.

Three rockets that were fired from unknown location landed in central Kabul on Saturday evening. One rocket landed inside a high school. Police said there were no casualties.

Kerry dropped in on Afghanistan to show support for a government he helped create less than two years ago, one that has continued to falter in the face of a weak economy, a seemingly irrepressible Taliban insurgency, and ongoing corruption. The UN issued a damning statement last month

that said “for 2016, survival will be an achievement” for the current Afghan government.

For the last 18 months, progress by Kabul’s government has been stymied by infighting between Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and the country’s chief executive Abdullah Abdullah. During his visit, Kerry urged the leaders to bury their “factional divisions” in the country’s interest. Ghani and Abdullah are sharing power under a deal that Kerry helped broker. But because the roles of each official were never clearly defined, Ghani and Abdullah were left in a power struggle following acrimonious runoff elections, which Abdullah alleged were rigged in Ghani’s favor.

The political tensions have been exacerbated by the ongoing and possibly escalating threat posed by the Taliban, and violence continues to rattle Afghanistan on a regular basis. Kerry reiterated his offer to moderate peace talks with the Taliban, and implored Afghanistan’s fragmented government to unite and work together to achieve peace.

“Democracy requires credible institutions,” Kerry said. “Even more than that, it requires a willingness of people.. from different political and ethnic and geographic factions to be able to come together and work for a common good.”

Related: War-Related Violence in Afghanistan Killed and Injured More Civilians Than Ever Last Year

NATO officials estimate that Afghanistan’s government has control over 70 percent of the country, at most. The US has slowly backed away from its counterinsurgency campaign, and provinces in the poppy-producing Helmand province, a longtime Taliban stronghold, have continued to fall to the militant group. The US has about 9,800 troops in Afghanistan, a level that is expected to fall to 5,500 by the end of the year.

According to a report by the Brookings Institute, “fighting season” last year between the Taliban and Afghan security forces was the bloodiest on record since the US-led invasion in 2001. Kerry and Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani acknowledged last year’s violence, which resulted in over 11,000 civilian casualties, in a joint press conference on Saturday.

“The US remains fully committed to the mission to train, advice and to assist the Afghan security forces as they combat the insurgency to protect their people,” Kerry said.

Watch the VICE News documentary Embedded in Northern Afghanistan: The Resurgence of the Taliban:

In a testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee in February, Army General John Campbell said that Afghanistan “is at an inflection point,” and that 2016 could be “no better and possibly worse than 2015” if without steps to improve matters. “Now, more than ever, the United States should not waver in Afghanistan,” Campbell said, warning against a complete withdrawal of US military support.

After his meeting with the Afghan leaders, Kerry announced that 14 MD-530 attack helicopters and eight A-29

airplanes were “successfully integrated into the Afghan security forces,” and promised to add a further 14 more helicopters to “further enhance the operational capabilities of the Afghan Air Force.”

The statement also said that the US “welcomed” Afghanistan’s membership in the 66-nation Global Coalition to Counter ISIL (Islamic State), and noted that Afghan and US forces had “already made significant process” against the ISKP, the Islamic State’s affiliate in Afghanistan.

Since 2002, the US has spent more than \$113 billion to rebuild Afghanistan. When adjusted for inflation, that’s more than what the US spent helping to rebuild 16 European countries after World War II.

## **Kerry, In Unannounced Visit, Urges Afghanistan’s Divided Leaders To Work Together**

By Carol Morello

[Washington Post](#), April 9, 2016

KABUL — Secretary of State John F. Kerry arrived in Afghanistan on Saturday to show support for a government that has grown increasingly unpopular as a stumbling economy and a resilient Taliban fuel a brain drain of Afghan migrants.

The visit to Kabul was Kerry’s second unannounced stop in two days. On Friday, he traveled to Baghdad as the Iraqi government readied a military offensive to retake Mosul from the Islamic State. Like Afghanistan, Iraq is grappling with economic, political and security crises. The secrecy in advance of Kerry’s visits underscored the precarious security and political instability in the two countries that the United States invaded after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

In Kabul, Kerry is to meet with Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani for the U.S.-Afghanistan Bilateral Commission, the framework for discussing the relationship between the two countries.

“The meeting is an opportunity for U.S. and Afghan leaders to discuss areas of mutual interest and cooperation and to outline progress in the areas highlighted in our Strategic Partnership Agreement: security and defense, democracy and governance, and social and economic development,” said State Department spokesman John Kirby.

Kerry also will meet with President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, two political rivals uneasily sharing power in an arrangement that has created a government riven by infighting.

Kirby said Kerry will stress U.S. support for the Afghan government and security forces, as well as ways to drum up international donations at coming summits in Warsaw and Brussels. They also will discuss the faltering attempts to hold peace talks with the Taliban and end years of conflict, Kirby said.

There are currently 9,800 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, down from 150,000 at the peak and a level President Obama wants to maintain through the fighting season. The number is to be whittled down to 5,500 by the beginning of next year, when a new administration will determine troop levels.

U.S. officials maintain that Afghanistan has made strides since the U.S. invasion in 2001.

“If we look at the sort of experience the international community, and specifically our country, has had in Afghanistan over the past 15 years, we want to take account of the advances that have been made in development, particularly health and education, electricity, communications,” said Richard Olson, the U.S. special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. “It really is a very changed society.”

But economic and security challenges have gotten in the way. The poverty rate has risen to 49 percent as foreign troops have withdrawn, leaving thousands of Afghans unemployed.

Government forces have gone on the offensive against Islamic militants, many of whom are said to be disaffected Taliban members. But prospective peace talks have stalled. After sitting down to negotiate last year, the Taliban representatives have refused to return, saying they will not negotiate while foreign troops are in the country.

Fighting between government troops and the insurgents has led to the closure of hundreds of schools and propelled an exodus of Afghans seeking a better life elsewhere. Afghans make up at least one in five migrants arriving in Europe, second only to Syrians.

In a recent interview with the BBC, Ghani said he had “no sympathy” for those who flee instead of staying to build their own country.

## **US, Afghanistan Call On Taliban To Return To Peace Talks**

By Pamela Dockins

[Voice of America](#), April 9, 2016

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN—The U.S. and Afghanistan are urging the Taliban to return to peace talks with the Afghan government.

Secretary of State John Kerry, who visited Kabul Saturday for talks with Afghan leaders, said the Taliban’s participation in the peace process could help end the violence and suffering that the Afghan people have endured during years of war.

At a joint news conference in Kabul, Kerry and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani discussed a wide range of issues, looking ahead to a NATO summit in Warsaw in July that will review the status of Afghan security forces, and also a conference on development aid to be held later this year in Brussels.



### More troop cuts

President Barack Obama has said he plans to reduce the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan from 9,800 to 5,500 by next year, but other recent reports predict that goal will be delayed. Kerry said Obama will rely on input from American military commanders in Afghanistan before making a final determination about troop cuts.

Shortly after Kerry left the Afghan capital, witnesses in central Kabul reported hearing at least two explosions. Authorities said they were still working to determine the nature of the blasts and had no reports of casualties.

### Bilateral commission talks

Earlier Saturday, Kerry and Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani presided at a meeting of the commission the two countries established to help Afghanistan's postwar development into "a strong, stable, democratic and self-reliant state."

Rabbani said the Kabul government is making every effort to advance peace and reconciliation, but that can happen only if the Taliban comes back to the negotiating table.

"We believe the international community can help encourage key actors in the region to have the Taliban group engage in direct talks with the Afghan government," the foreign minister said.

### Peace talks

The so-called Quadrilateral Coordination Group — the United States, Afghanistan, Pakistan and China — has been trying to get peace talks moving, but Taliban representatives refused to take any part in the most recent effort, shortly before it was to begin last month.

A lengthy and wide-ranging statement by the U.S.-Afghanistan Bilateral Commission stressed the two countries' "respect for human rights, the rules of law and democratic values." They pledged continuing cooperation and said three working groups would continue to meet on defense and security; democracy and governance; and economic and social development.

Kerry highlighted Afghanistan's need for peace and security.

"When lasting and historic change is the goal, there are no opportunities to relax," the top U.S. diplomat said. "When you have terrorists who are attempting to stop that work, stand in the way of that work, limit its success or even turn the clock backwards, obviously there is no time to relax."

### US support to national unity government

Another goal for Kerry's visit was to show continued U.S. support for Afghanistan's national unity government.

Kerry helped broker the deal that produced the power-sharing arrangement between Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, who is Afghanistan's "chief executive," with powers equal to that of the president. The unity agreement emerged after bitter disputes over results of the 2014 presidential election,

which Abdullah asserted he would have won but for electoral fraud.

The president/chief executive arrangement will continue, Kerry said, adding: "There is no end to this agreement at the end of two years, or six months from now. This is an agreement for a unity government, the duration of which is five years."

True national unity has been an elusive goal, however, and Afghanistan's people appear to be deeply dissatisfied with their government.

Kerry's trip to Afghanistan was part of a weeklong trip to the Middle East and Asia that also included an unannounced stop in Baghdad. He is now en route to Japan, where he will attend a Group of Seven ministerial meeting and visit a World War II memorial.

The Group of Seven are the seven major advanced economies as reported by the International Monetary Fund — Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States — plus the European Union.

## Explosions Heard In Central Kabul Following John Kerry's Visit

[AFP](#), April 9, 2016

Several explosions rang out in central Kabul Saturday night, shortly after the US Secretary of State John Kerry left the Afghan capital following an unannounced visit, an AFP journalist reported.

Authorities were not immediately able to comment on the nature of the blasts nor on whether they had claimed any casualties, but Taliban insurgents frequently attack government and military installations in the city.

## Afghan General Plants Flowers In Helmand, But Taliban Lurk

By Rod Nordland

[New York Times](#), April 9, 2016

Generals tend to create a lot of excitement when they move around the battlefield, especially in a place as central to the Afghan war as Helmand Province. And so it was with Maj. Gen. M. Moein Faqir as he prepared to board his helicopter to fly back to Camp Bastion, the venerable British complex he now commands.

As the commander of the 215th Corps of the Afghan National Army, General Faqir is the top military man in Helmand Province, more than half of which has been overrun by Taliban in the past year. After a visit two weeks ago in Lashkar Gah, the provincial capital, he was at the airstrip, with full entourage in tow: aides de camp, bodyguards, camp followers — and gardeners with lots of flower pots.

Everyone piled onboard a Russian-made MI-17 helicopter, one of four that do dual duty as transports and air ambulances, its pilot also a general of Communist-era

vintage. And then the ground crew loaded up the center aisle with the flower pots, earth and all, a score of them blooming with African daisies, begonias, morning glories, nasturtiums and something vaguely petunia-like and purple.

General Faqir explained: "Helmand is a desert. We need some color out here."

Back at Camp Bastion, as he sat down for an interview in his headquarters, soldiers went right to work outside, shoveling sheep manure into flower beds arranged around the corps flagpole and soaking everything down with trucked-in water.

General Faqir was appointed corps commander four months ago, with two of Helmand's 14 administrative districts in Taliban hands. The insurgents were so close to the outskirts of Lashkar Gah that officials in the capital were evacuating members of their families, even while assuring the public there was nothing to fear.

Those Taliban advances coincided with a scandal over ghost soldiers — thousands of men listed among the 215th's battalions for whom salaries were being paid, to someone at least, but who never actually made roll calls, if they had ever even drawn breath. General Faqir's predecessor was fired as a result, and General Faqir came in to clean things up, which he says he did successfully.

Battlefield success, however, has been more elusive. Since General Faqir came, the Taliban have taken over three more districts, including Now Zad and Musa Qala. Both are important agricultural zones and major sources of opium poppy, and Musa Qala is a center of opium refining and heroin production.

General Faqir's response to that has been to publicly dismiss Now Zad and Musa Qala — both fought over bitterly for the past 10 years by American and British troops — as "unimportant."

"I've changed my tactics against the Taliban," he said. Instead of using heavy weapons against them in thickly populated districts, he said, he has shifted his emphasis to night raids.

Teams of his special forces soldiers, usually with American advisers along, he said, have been raiding homes suspected of housing Taliban members. The result, he said, was a 70 percent decrease in casualties among his troops.

"There used to be 30, 40 wounded A.N.A. in the hospital here at a time," he said. "No numbers like that now."

One of his own officers, however, was openly critical of that. "The fighting has died down because the corps commander stopped fighting the Taliban," said Col. Mohammad Ahmadzai, one of the helicopter pilots. "He's lost three districts since he's been here."

General Faqir scoffed at that, saying districts change hands all the time in Helmand and could easily change again tomorrow.

General Faqir has not, however, lost Sangin District, the strategic and hugely symbolic district in northern Helmand where more American and British troops lost their lives than in any other Afghan district.

"The Taliban tried very hard to take Sangin, and they failed," General Faqir said. According to elders and officials from Sangin, only heavy American bombing and American Special Operations troops have managed to keep the district center in Sangin from falling to the Taliban — although the insurgents again have the rest of the district.

Last month, the American military reinforced Helmand with an unspecified number of troops from the United States Army's 87th Infantry Division; General Faqir put their numbers at "more than a battalion." (American battalions usually have around 700 to 800 troops.) Other estimates by Afghan officials and analysts have ranged from 700 to 1,000 new Americans.

The new troops are meant to reinforce Afghan training, with 1,500 fresh Afghan recruits now at Camp Bastion, intended to replace some of those missing ghost soldiers, as well as heavy losses from the past year.

At its height, Camp Bastion and its adjoining outposts, including the Marines' Camp Leatherneck, housed 22,000 American, British and coalition service members, plus contractors and Afghan troops.

Although the 215th Corps has 18,000 soldiers on its books, most of them are deployed around the province, leaving garrison troops, new recruits and Afghan special forces, no more than 5,000 in all, rattling around in the sprawling, built-to-last facility.

The most immediately evident change is the removal of all the "5 M.P.H." speed limit signs, a staple of American war-zone bases.

With the return of the battalion from the 87th Infantry Division, plus an unknown number of American Special Operations troops, there are probably 2,000 or more Americans here now, too. They are kept separate from the Afghans and mostly out of view, except when they come over to the Afghan side to hold training sessions.

The Afghan garrison commander, Col. Nasimullah Alishangai, has been here 10 years now. The rose garden in his personal compound shows it.

Huge bushes with half a dozen varieties — some already blooming — surround a roofed pavilion with two Life Fitness treadmills, left behind after the American withdrawal in 2014 and apparently not used since then. At the other end of the garden is a handsome grove of tall, spindly white birches, arranged in a horseshoe around a seating area.

"When I first came to this place, there were hardly any security forces," Colonel Alishangai said. "We only had the Third Brigade. Now we have an entire army corps here, and still the situation is getting worse day by day."

Colonel Alishangai is proud of the base's fully equipped, 100-bed military hospital, where there are many more doctors than patients — just five wounded Afghan soldiers during a visit on March 21. A couple months ago, the hospital was nearly full.

Helicopters of the same sort that transported General Faqir and his flowers are also pressed into service as air ambulances, and are in chronically short supply. General Faqir said he would happily deploy 10 of them if possible.

In the good old days — as a lot of the Afghans refer to the time before the American pullout — there was no need of Afghan medical evacuation aircraft, because the American military did that for them. Now, the Americans' much more limited evacuation assets are generally for Westerners only.

General Faqir and his senior officers are happy to see even the limited return of the American infantry troops. "We don't need them now, but of course they're our fellow soldiers, and they're going to fight shoulder to shoulder with us, if we need them to," he said.

In the meantime, the Afghan officers have their flower gardens to tend. In the old days, said Col. Shah Wali Zazai, the head of the new recruits' training center, some of the American military mentors and trainers scoffed at the gardeners of Camp Bastion.

"You see that row of trees?" Colonel Zazai asked, pointing to a long procession of willows alongside the road to the training ground. He planted them in 2004, and his American mentor asked why. "I said: 'Just wait. One day A.N.A. soldiers will be sitting in the shade of those trees, saving on air conditioning in the barracks.' "

The colonel paused in the shade of the willow trees, grown tall and thickly foliated. "It's a long war," he said. "See what I mean?"

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

### **Brussels Airport Bombings Bring New Security Measures In U.S.**

By Ashley Halsey III

[Washington Post](#), April 9, 2016

Expected to pass through airports in near-record numbers this summer, Americans can expect to be sniffed by more dogs, scrutinized by more armed police officers and faced with longer security lines. The reason, in a word: Brussels.

A plane carrying Transportation Security Administration head Peter Neffenger was nosing up to an arrival gate in Brussels on March 22 when the first of two bombs that killed 16 people exploded in the terminal. A third went off a short time later in a subway, also killing 16.

"Here's what we do to make sure that that doesn't happen here," said Neffenger, who was arriving in Belgium for a security meeting when the bombs went off. "There's a lot more patrolling of public areas here than I believe was the case in Brussels. We have explosive-sniffing dogs moving through the fronts of the big airports. And there's a lot of attention paid to people moving big items through airports."

Neffenger's remarks came during a discussion with reporters Friday, two days after a Capitol Hill hearing where he was grilled about airport security by Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), who told him: "The only person that is going to get the airports off their duff to limit the access into their airports is going to be you and your administration."

The Senate, eager to act after the bombings, voted Thursday to increase the vetting of airport workers, expand the number of TSA viper teams that sweep through airports unannounced to stop and search suspicious people, and double the number of TSA's bomb-sniffing dogs.

"There's some things you have to do after Brussels, and one of them is to realize that public areas of the world are vulnerable, by definition," Neffenger said Friday. "It helps that we have a vast national intelligence network. I'm comfortable that in the United States in particular, we are doing about as much as we can do to track, to identify and to pay attention to people of concern. If you've made a reservation, your name is automatically bounced against databases."

But he worries that may not be enough to stop a repeat of Brussels on U.S. soil.

"Would that have been enough to have caught that? I can't say that for certain, but I will tell you that there's a lot of attention being paid to just that kind of potential happening," he said.

Neffenger said that travelers will see a much more visible police presence at airports in the months to come and an increase in bomb-sniffing dogs as rapidly as they can be trained. He said passengers should expect more random searches both as they enter airports and after they pass through checkpoints into secure boarding areas.

"This is one of the highest volume travel years we've ever seen," he said. "That means we're going to have lots of people moving through the airports. Get to the airports early, because even if I can move you efficiently through the line, you're still going to find long lines there."

Neffenger said local law enforcement officers also might conduct random checks of cars and taxis heading toward the airport, a practice already in place at the Los Angeles airport.

"You have to get away from thinking about a perimeter," he said. "I'm much more interested in thinking about the security environment that is essentially from the moment that you make a reservation to the moment you physically arrive at the airport."

There have been suggestions that extending the airport perimeter in Brussels might have deterred the bombers, who apparently did not have tickets to board an airplane.

"There's a psychological aspect to setting a perimeter that says, 'I don't have to think about something outside the perimeter,' " he said.

"What you have to think about is a security environment that gets more and more secure as you get closer and closer to the aircraft."

One step Neffenger took last year already has intensified security closer to the boarding gate. He ended a practice under which passengers in what's known as a "standard" line at checkpoints were randomly selected to go through an expedited line normally reserved for those who have gone through federal background-check programs, like PreCheck or Global Entry.

"That was going to cause us some problems," he acknowledged.

But he says he has an antidote to that problem: more bomb-sniffing dogs working the passenger lines.

"Their effectiveness rate, though classified — I will tell you [they are] the best mobile explosive technology around," he said. "I take a standard line and turn that entire line into a PreCheck line with a dog."

TSA has 320 trained dogs, and local law enforcement agencies have committed almost 700 more to patrol airports. Most are trained to detect bombs in checked luggage. Neffenger is having all of the TSA dogs cross-trained so they can work passenger lines.

"They are the ones that are designed to walk up and down a security line and detect for explosive vapor wake, and then they trace it back to its source," he said.

"I certainly want to see dogs in all the major airports. I think we could put 500 [dog] teams to use."

## **IMMIGRATION**

### **The Shaky Foundation Under Mr. Trump's Wall**

[Washington Post](#), April 9, 2016

IN THREATENING to cut off billions of dollars in annual money transfers as a means of coercing Mexico to pay for his famous border wall, Donald Trump asserts, "We have the moral high ground here, and all the leverage." If only.

If Mr. Trump carried out his threat, the result would be disastrous not just for Mexico but for the United States as well. Millions of Mexicans and Mexican towns and villages, many of them already impoverished, would suddenly be deprived of a critical source of income. Hunger, disease and crime rates would spike; children would be among the most obviously and severely affected.

How does that provide a moral high ground?

As for leverage, it's not hard to foresee massive adverse impacts for the United States arising from Mr. Trump's plan, an effort to force his will on a country that has long been a key ally. As every general knows, the other side gets a say in how the battle is conducted.

For starters, seizing money transfers, known as remittances, as Mr. Trump threatens to do, could quickly yield a result contrary to what Mr. Trump seeks: a wave of newly impoverished Mexican immigrants seeking a better life north of the border. That would reverse the downward trend of illegal border crossings in recent years, partly stemming from better economic conditions in Mexico

Contrary to Mr. Trump's rhetoric, Mexico is a friendly neighbor, whose cooperation with Washington on bilateral issues is vital to North American prosperity. Mexico's help in interdiction was key to the Obama administration's efforts to stanch the wave of Central American youths heading toward the United States in summer 2014. Mexican authorities work closely with U.S. counterparts on cross-border trucking and trade, drug and human trafficking, and money laundering, among other issues.

If U.S. officials have not always thought Mexico's efforts were adequate, imagine what level of cooperation they could expect after a Trump administration declared economic war to extort a sum for a wall Mr. Trump prices at "\$5-10 billion," but other estimates peg as high as \$25 billion.

Separately Mr. Trump has vowed to deport every immigrant who is here illegally. It seems problematic to suppose Mr. Trump could block remittances from people who would no longer be in the country to transmit them. Legal experts say it would be difficult for Mr. Trump to use the USA Patriot Act, as he proposes, to block money transfers. And distinguishing transfers by legal immigrants from those by illegal ones would pose massive administrative challenges.

Illegal crossings at the United States' southwestern border are near a 40-year low, and since 2009 more Mexican immigrants have been leaving the country than entering it. What's more, a third of illegal immigrants enter the country as legal ones, then overstay their visas. Mr. Trump's plan to extort Mexico in the vain hope that a white elephant of a wall would "solve" illegal immigration is fanciful, naive and reckless, aimed more at exciting his base than grappling seriously with problems. But then, so is Mr. Trump's entire campaign.

## **OFFICE OF HEALTH AFFAIRS**

### **'A Premature And Unnatural Death' In Rural Oklahoma**

By Eli Saslow

[Washington Post](#), April 8, 2016

They had been expecting a full processional with a limousine and a police escort, but the limousine never came and the police officer was called away to a suspected drug overdose at the last minute. That left 40 friends and relatives of Anna Marrie Jones stranded outside the funeral home, waiting for instruction from the mortician about what to do next. An uncle of Anna's went to his truck and changed from khakis into overalls. A niece ducked behind the hearse to light her cigarette in the stiff Oklahoma wind.

"Just one more thing for Mom that didn't go as planned," said Tiffany Edwards, the youngest surviving daughter. She climbed into her truck, put on the emergency flashers and motioned for everyone else to follow behind in their own cars. They formed a makeshift processional of dented pickups and diesel exhaust, driving out of town, onto dirt roads and up to a tiny cemetery bordered by cattle grazing fields. In the back there was a fresh plot marked by a plastic sign.

"Anna Marrie Jones: Born 1961 — Died 2016."

Fifty-four years old. Raised on three rural acres. High school educated. A mother of three. Loyal employee of Kmart, Walls Bargain Center and Dollar Store. These were the facts of her life as printed in the funeral program, and now they had also become clues in an American crisis with implications far beyond the burnt grass and red dirt of central Oklahoma.

White women between 25 and 55 have been dying at accelerating rates over the past decade, a spike in mortality not seen since the AIDS epidemic in the early 1980s. According to recent studies of death certificates, the trend is worse for women in the center of the United States, worse still in rural areas, and worst of all for those in the lower middle class. Drug and alcohol overdose rates for working-age white women have quadrupled. Suicides are up by as much as 50 percent.

What killed Jones was cirrhosis of the liver brought on by heavy drinking. The exact culprit was vodka, whatever brand was on sale, poured into a pint glass eight ounces at a time. But, as Anna's family gathered at the gravesite for a final memorial, they wondered instead about the root causes, which were harder to diagnose and more difficult to solve.

"Life didn't always break her way. She dealt with that sadness," said Candy Payne, the funeral officiant. "She tried her best. She loved her family. But she dabbled in the drinking, and when things got tough the drinking made it harder."

There were plots nearby marked for Jones's friends and relatives who had died in the past decade at ages 46, 52 and 37. Jones had buried her fiance at 55. She had eulogized her best friend, dead at 50 from alcohol-induced cirrhosis.

Other parts of the adjacent land were intended for her children: Davey, 38, her oldest son and most loyal caretaker, who was making it through the day with some of his mother's

vodka; Maryann, 33, the middle daughter, who had hitched a ride to the service because she couldn't afford a working car; and Tiffany, 31, who had two daughters of her own, a job at the discount grocery and enough accumulated stress to make her feel, "at least a decade or two older," she said.

Candy, who in addition to being the officiant was also a close family friend, motioned for Tiffany and Maryann to bring over the container holding their mother's cremated remains. They opened the lid and the ashes blew back into their dresses and out into the pasture.

"No more hurt. No more loneliness," Candy said.

"No more suffering," Tiffany said.

They shook out the last ashes and circled the grave as Candy bowed her head to pray.

"We don't know why it came to this," she said. "We trust You know the reasons. We trust You have the answers."

All anyone else had so far was a question, one that had become the focal point of congressional hearings, health summits and presidential debates: Why?

Why, after 50 years of unabated progress in life expectancy for every conceivable group of Americans — men, women, young, old, rich, poor, high-school dropouts, college graduates, rural, urban, white, black, Hispanic or Asian — had one demographic group in the last decade experienced a significant percent increase in premature deaths? Why were so many white women reporting precipitous drops in health, mental health, comfort and mobility during their working-age prime? Why, over the last eight years alone, had more than 300,000 of those women essentially chosen to poison themselves?

"It's a loss of hope, a loss of expectations of progress from one generation to the next," said Angus Deaton, a Nobel Prize-winning economist who had studied the data.

"What we're seeing is the strain of inequality on the middle class," President Obama said.

"Erosion of the safety net," Hillary Clinton said. "Depression caused by the state of our country," Donald Trump said. "Isolated rural communities," Bernie Sanders said. "Addictive pain pills and narcotics," Marco Rubio said.

There were so many paths in the America of 2016 to what coroners termed "a premature and unnatural death," and one version was what had happened to Jones: Another night of drinking that ended in the emergency room, her seventh trip in the last four years. A diagnosis of end-stage liver failure. A week in a nursing home. A quiet death followed by burial four days later.

And now her family had caravanned from the graveyard to a memorial potluck, hosted at a senior center in a part of the country where fewer people were becoming seniors. The early death rate had risen twice as fast in rural Oklahoma as in the rest of the United States, and the walls of the center were adorned with posters about prescription overdose and the phone number for a suicide hotline. Candy set up a buffet

table and brought in her homemade biscuits. Other relatives came with macaroni salad, coleslaw and baked chicken. They lined the food on a foldout table near a collection of photos from Anna's life. Here she was riding a horse on her 10th birthday. Here she was behind the register at the hamburger counter, 13 years old and straight-shouldered in her uniform.

"So proud. So confident," said Kaitlyn Strayhorn, a friend, looking at the photo.

"She had to lie and say she was 16 to get that hamburger job," said Junior Sides, her brother. "She was a hard worker. Had it going good there for a while."

She had been born on the way to the hospital in the back seat of her father's car, the ninth of 10 children, and the family joke was that Anna had never stopped hurtling her way into the world. At a time when life on the far edges of the middle class came with dependable opportunities, her older siblings left home for the quarry, the machine shop and the military, and Jones moved out along with them even though she was only 17. She rushed off to get married in Reno, Nev. She got a job at a Kmart snack bar in California and worked her way up to manager. She was good at making people feel comfortable, at listening without judgment and aligning herself with the customer. She clipped coupons for regulars and gave free drinks to people who couldn't afford them. By the time she reached her mid-20s, Kmart was training her to become a regional manager. She had her own trailer in Ferndale, Calif., two children, two cars and a retirement savings account.

But the promotion never materialized and the marriage took work, and after a while her eagerness turned to restlessness. She drank more. She tried drugs. She left Kmart. She was arrested for drinking and for failing to pay her taxes. Her marriage unraveled and she moved home to Oklahoma with the kids. She helped push Maryann and Tiffany to finish high school, and then once all of her children left home she lived for a while with her mother, then her daughter, then her fiance and finally her son for the last years of her life.

Her brother Junior hadn't seen her for the last several months, and in the most recent photos her skin had turned pale and the fatigue lines beneath her eyes had hardened into deep red marks. "Sick and tired of being sick and tired," Junior said, and then he filled his plate and sat down at a table with her children and her friends.

"I think in some ways she was ready," he said. "You can see how much it took out of her."

"Sometimes the hard things in life eventually break you," said Kaitlyn, Anna's friend. Kaitlyn had lost one infant child to SIDS. She had lost another to miscarriage in the third trimester.

"It's a test of how much you can take," Junior said. He had been addicted to prescription pills and then recovered.

He had been shot five times by his son and chosen to forgive him.

"But there's a choice in how you handle it," Candy said. "That's what I always told her: You're choosing this. I'm sorry, but you are."

"Alcohol is a powerful drug," Davey said.

"Everybody needs a little something," Maryann said.

They finished eating and cleared their plates. Davey went outside to smoke a cigarette. Maryann found her way to an empty car and took a nap. After a while it was just Tiffany and a few others left in the senior center to clean up the dishes. "You have all this under control?" the last remaining relative asked Tiffany, already heading out the door, because with Tiffany it never seemed like a question. She always had it under control. She was the strongest sibling, the most responsible, the one who had gone to a year of college, the head of pricing at a grocery store, the dieter, the rare woman in rural Oklahoma whose well-being nobody seemed to worry about. And now she was alone at the sink, gripping hard onto the handle, closing her eyes.

"When does it get easier?" she said.

She finished the dishes and drove home to a trailer where everyone was waiting for her, and where all of them needed something. Her 4-year-old daughter wanted dinner. Her disabled 1-year-old daughter had another doctor's appointment in Oklahoma City. Her husband, Chad, needed their car to run errands. Her boss missed her at work. Her brother needed money for rent or a place to live. And then there was their trailer itself, which they had purchased for \$2,000 from a cousin because they wanted to tear it down and put a new trailer on their beautiful country lot. But now it was two years later and they were still in the old trailer, with faulty electricity, a broken shower and no door for the bathroom.

"A work in progress," Tiffany called it, and sometimes she thought that was true of so many lives in this part of Oklahoma. Goals receded into the distance while reality stretched on for day after day after exhausting day, until it was only natural to desire a little something beyond yourself. Maybe it was just some mindless TV or time on Facebook. Maybe a sleeping pill to ease you through the night. Maybe a prescription narcotic to numb the physical and psychological pain, or a trip to the Indian casino that you couldn't really afford, or some marijuana, or meth, or the drug that had run strongest on both sides of her family for three generations and counting.

"Shot and a beer for Mom?" she said now, raising a shot glass to her husband. He shook his head. She drank the shot and sat down next to him in the living room.

They had gotten drunk with her mother dozens of times, and it was almost always fun. She was a happy drinker who made for good company around a fire, with fun stories and a throaty laugh. After she was diagnosed with cirrhosis in 2009,

doctors had said her prognosis was good if she stopped drinking. Her liver had a few years left. She would be eligible for a transplant. And for a few months at a time she had managed to quit, but reality often left her depressed. Her fiance died. A few nephews were arrested for using drugs. She filed for bankruptcy. Her mother died. She drank until she was too sick to work.

"I could be mean to her sometimes," Tiffany said now, in the living room. "I kept saying to her, 'You're killing yourself.'"

"You were watching her die," Chad said. "You were the one taking her to all those doctor appointments."

"It made me so angry," Tiffany said.

"You were just trying to pull her out of the spiral," Chad said.

They each had gone through spirals of their own. Chad had been arrested for driving under the influence three times in the years after his mother's death before straightening himself out to take care of the children. Tiffany had sometimes been going to work hung over until she became pregnant, and then she went nine months without a beer or cigarette. "I'm not going to make my problems my kid's problem," she had told her mother then, because there was still hope that her children would have it easier. Maybe the world would open up to them.

"Don't you want to see what your grandchildren become?" Tiffany would ask her mother. "Don't you want to be there for them?"

But even though Anna loved her granddaughters — babysat them, admired the way Tiffany and Chad cared for them, bought them whatever she could — she could never give them that. She quit drinking and then started again, quit and then started. She fell down at her house and broke a leg. She had to use a wheelchair. She lost her car and then her driver's license. She stayed in her living room and watched TV for hours at a time unless Tiffany came to pick her up.

Tiffany stood up from the couch. She walked to the kitchen and reached into the cooler.

"Babe," Chad said, looking at her.

"What?" she said, but she closed the cooler and came back to him empty-handed. She wrapped her hand around his and leaned against his shoulder.

"She had family. She had friends," she said. "I don't understand why it wasn't enough."

There were days when the vast emptiness of rural Oklahoma could make someone feel alone — when the only sound was wind, and the prairie looked small beneath the sky, and the one car bouncing along the rutted gravel roads was Candy Payne's mail truck, circling its way from one house to the next.

It had been four days since she presided over her friend's funeral, and now she was back on her usual U.S. Postal route: 404 mailboxes in 126 square miles of

Pottawatomie County. The roads were in fact dirt trails, the houses were mostly farmsteads equipped with well water, and what she called the "traffic considerations" were turkey, deer and coyotes that darted across her route. In one of the most isolated parts of the United States, she was the only thread that connected one house to the next, and her customers were often standing at their mailboxes and watching for her. There were pill poppers waiting for packages of medication and people on disability waiting for their government check. There were lonely retirees who waited only for a wave, a smile or a few minutes of conversation with their only visitor of the day.

"Anything for me today?" said one woman, as she watched Candy drive by the long dirt driveway to her house.

"Not today," she said. "Better luck tomorrow."

The route took six hours, and she drove with a cigarette in one hand and an inhaler on the dashboard. She followed unsigned roads to addresses she knew by heart, stopping at houses in disrepair with cars rusting away in the weeds. Most of her route had been settled by land run in the late 1800s, all property free to whomever came first, and for generations it had been populated by farmers, dreamers and opportunists. But now the farming had gone away to big companies and the poverty rate had climbed above 20 percent. "A whole lot of places just going to pot," she said, grabbing another phone book out of the mail sack in her passenger seat, stuffing it into a box.

She was 62 with bad knees and a nagging cough, but she had no intent on retiring. Many of her friends had died in their 40s and 50s. Her husband was dead of cirrhosis and the Vietnam War veteran she lived with now was managing his way through liver disease with narcotic pain patches. She believed she had made it into her 60s as a woman in rural Oklahoma not just by avoiding alcohol and pills but also by forcing herself out into the world. "You see people. You talk a little bit," she said. "Otherwise you just sit at home and the end closes in."

A pickup came moving toward her from the opposite direction, and she pulled over to let it pass.

"Howdy, Candy," the driver said, slowing down to wave. "Sure is a windy one."

"I'm eating dust," she said, smiling back, continuing down the road.

She had watched the end close in on Anna, even as she tried to draw Anna out. They had talked over the phone every few days, and then a week before Anna's death Candy had gone over to visit her house, a two-bedroom rental near the funeral home in Tecumseh. Anna's clothes were piled up in a corner and there were no sheets on her bed. There was a hole in the living room wall, and the air smelled of sweat and smoke. Candy went into the kitchen to try to clean up a week's worth of unwashed dishes — "Relax. Breathe through your mouth. You can do this," she had told herself — but the

plastic plates were covered in mold and eventually she had decided to throw them out.

When Anna lost consciousness for the final time in the nursing home, Candy had gone to sit with her and hold her hand. All of Anna's children were also there — Davey, Maryann and Tiffany — and they looked exhausted from sitting by her bed through the night. Candy sent them home to rest, and after a while she went home, too. She had seen so many people die of cirrhosis, and the disease usually took its time in the final stages. Sometimes weeks. Sometimes months. But then the next morning she got a call telling her Anna had died in the night.

"That's one thing I keep thinking about," Candy said now, stuffing a phone book into another mailbox, nearing the end of her route. "I wish she wasn't alone at the end."

She drove up to the last address, hers, and turned off the engine. "The route's complete," she said, notifying a supervisor. The road behind her was quiet. There was only wind and a few hundred homes scattered across the plains.

One of those homes had been Anna and Davey's, and now it was just Davey inside with the doors locked and bed sheets blocking the windows. His mother's medications were still stacked on the counter. Those were her clothes strewn across the living room, her microwaved jambalaya leftovers in the sink and her \$8.75 liter of Heaven Hill Vodka pushed against the couch. Davey reached for the bottle and took a gulp. He chased it with water and then drank again.

"Last day," he said. "Tomorrow it's detox, getting a job, all that."

The day before had also been the last day, and so had the weekend before that, and now it was two weeks until \$350 in rent came due on the house. He had no money of his own and nowhere else to go. For the last five years he had been living with his mother and surviving on her disability payments and \$197 in food stamps. She had supported him and he had been her caretaker, lifting her out of bed in the mornings and pushing her wheelchair up the hill to a tornado shelter whenever a storm hit. He had monitored her medications, washed her jaundiced skin and dealt with the diapers.

He had even tried to keep her from drinking, just as the doctors insisted. But he was buying vodka with her money and drinking it in front of her, and she would yell and beg and then threaten to withhold Davey's cash so he couldn't drink either. Eventually he had decided to compromise by rationing out her liquor, filling half of a pint glass with vodka that she could nurse through the night. But sometimes he would pass out on the couch or go to the bathroom, and whenever he came back the bottle looked emptier than before.

"Do you blame me?" he had asked Tiffany once, a day after the funeral.

"You did the best you could," Tiffany had told him. "There's no sense obsessing over it."

Now the house was empty and there was nothing to do except reach back for the vodka and watch the same shows they'd always watched together: "Family Feud," "Sleepy Hollow," "Modern Family" and whatever else came through on the rabbit ear antenna. Day turned into night. Night turned back into day. He needed to shave, cut his hair and start putting in applications. "Last day," he said again, rolling his own cigarette, reaching down for the bottle.

They had lived together for five years, and yet there were so many questions he had never asked her. Did she know she was dying? Was she scared? Was she ready? "I keep having these conversations in my head," he said, and sometimes, as the days stretched on with no visitors, he would pick up his phone and call another relative to talk. "What happened? Was it my fault?" he would ask each time.

It was a choice, Tiffany said.

It was stress, Maryann said.

It was everything wearing her down, Junior said.

It was just the way it went, Candy said.

Davey sipped from the bottle. He gulped from the water. He lay back on the couch, where lately he had been having a recurring dream. He was sitting in the living room with his mother, a woman not yet 55 who had some color back in her cheeks and her hair pulled into a braid. He wanted to be honest with her, to tell her she was dying, and finally he blurted it out: You're dying, he said, but she didn't look back at him. You're dying, he said again. You're dying! But the TV was blaring, the bottle was in her hands, her eyes were glazed over, and she was too far gone to hear him.

## **TERRORISM INVESTIGATIONS**

### **U.S. Consulate Issues Warning Of 'credible Threats' For Americans In Istanbul**

By Kellan Howell

[Washington Times](#), April 9, 2016

The U.S. Mission in Turkey issued an emergency warning to Americans traveling in the country on Saturday, informing them of "credible threats" to tourist areas.

The emergency message said there had been credible threats to public squares and docks in Istanbul and Antalya.

"Please exercise extreme caution if you are in the vicinity of such areas," the warning says.

The warning comes a day after Israel's counterterrorism bureau urged all Israelis to avoid Turkey, saying, "There are immediate risks of attacks being carried out in the country, and we stress the threat applies to all tourism sites in Turkey."

Last month, the U.S. State Department and the Pentagon ordered the families of U.S. diplomats and military personnel to leave posts in southern Turkey due to security concerns.



Both the Islamic State terrorist group and Kurdish militants have claimed a number of attacks in Turkey in recent months.

## **Belgium Confirms Arrest Of 'Man In The Hat' At Airport Bombing**

By James McAuley

[Washington Post](#), April 9, 2016

The Belgian federal prosecutor confirmed Saturday that Mohamed Abrini — who was arrested Friday afternoon — was the “man in the hat” captured in surveillance footage alongside two suicide bombers at Brussels Airport on March 22.

Abrini had been at large since the Brussels attacks, which killed 32 and injured hundreds more at the airport in Zaventem and a metro station close to the headquarters of the European Union. Footage showed him calmly walking out of the airport and into the city, where he disappeared.

He was arrested Friday in the Schaerbeek section of Brussels, not far from the apartment where he and his collaborators left for the airport on the morning of the attacks.

“After being confronted with the results of the different expert examinations, he confessed his presence at the crime scene,” the federal prosecutor said in a statement. “He explained having thrown away his vest in a garbage bin and having sold his hat afterwards.”

Abrini was also a significant actor in the attacks in Paris on Nov. 13, 2015, which killed 130 and injured hundreds more in a coordinated series of shootings and suicide bombings at a stadium, concert hall and restaurants across the French capital.

According to European investigative files obtained by The Washington Post, Abrini ferried fellow terrorists back and forth across the French-Belgian border in the days leading up to the attacks. He was seen on camera with Brahim Abdeslam, who detonated a suicide bomb outside a Paris cafe, and with Salah Abdeslam, who was arrested in Brussels on March 18.

The documents also suggest that Abrini probably traveled from Europe to Syria and back, via Turkey, in the months before the November attacks.

In addition to Abrini, suspects identified as Osama K., Herve B.M. and Bilal E.M. have been charged with “terrorist murder” and participating in the “activities of a terrorist group,” the prosecutor’s office said Saturday.

Despite these arrests, Belgium’s Interior Minister Jan Jambon was quick to point out that more terrorists could still be at work in the small nation that has become a hotbed for radical Islamist activity in Europe.

“There are perhaps other cells that are still active on our territory,” Jambon told Belgium’s RTL television network on Saturday.

Belgium remains on high alert.

## **Belgium Holds 'Man In Hat' Suspect From Airport Bombing**

By James G Neuger

[Bloomberg News](#), April 9, 2016

Belgium said that Mohamed Abrini, dubbed the “man in the hat” from security videos, has confessed to being the third member of the terrorist squad that struck Brussels airport on March 22.

Abrini and a man identified as Osama K., an alleged accomplice of the Brussels subway station suicide bomber, were arrested on Friday as Belgian police continued to chip away at a jihadist network operating out of safe houses in Brussels.

Abrini was also sought in connection with the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris, making him a central figure in a network of Islamic State operatives that has spawned fears of a wave of terrorism across Europe.

“After being confronted with the results of the different expert examinations, he confessed his presence at the crime scene,” the federal prosecutor’s office said in an e-mail late Saturday.

The investigation into the blasts at the Brussels airport and downtown subway station, which killed 32, kicked into a higher gear after police on Thursday released security videos that traced the path out of the airport of the man now known to be Abrini.

After shepherding two suicide bombers toward the check-in counters, the so-called “man in the hat” planted a bomb that failed to detonate immediately and left the scene, according to prosecutors. Surveillance cameras spotted him on a 10-kilometer (6.2 mile) stroll toward central Brussels before the trail went dark near European Union headquarters.

Abrini dumped his light-colored jacket in a garbage bin and later sold the hat, according to the prosecutor’s statement.

As Abrini escaped, a suicide bomber accompanied by Osama K. struck at the Maelbeek subway station between the main EU buildings and the city’s historic center, according to prosecutors.

Two others arrested on Friday were charged with offering assistance to Abrini and Osama K. They were identified as Hervé B.M., a 25-year-old citizen of Rwanda, and Bilal E.M, 27, whose nationality wasn’t given.

Two other people detained Friday were released. Police on Saturday raided another suspected hideout near a former military barracks in Brussels but “no weapons or explosives were found,” the prosecutor’s office said.

## **Man In Hat In Brussels Airport Attack Is In Custody, Belgium Says**

By Alissa J. Rubin

[New York Times](#), April 9, 2016

PARIS — The man in the hat who accompanied the two suicide bombers who detonated their bags at Brussels Airport on March 22, and who was seen in a surveillance image walking away from the airport after the explosions, has been identified as Mohamed Abrini, the Belgian prosecutor's office said Saturday in a statement.

Mr. Abrini was detained on Friday in Brussels and was charged with participation in the activities of a terrorist group and terrorist murder earlier on Saturday. Later in the day, he confessed that he had been also directly involved in the explosions at Brussels Airport, the prosecutor's office said.

"After being confronted with the results of the different expert examinations, he confessed his presence at the crime scene," the office announced in its statement. "He explained having thrown away his vest in a garbage bin and having sold his hat afterwards."

The arrest of Mr. Abrini and his confession is a major breakthrough in the case, and, if followed by further information, it could help investigators identify the rest of the Islamic State network in Belgium and France.

Mr. Abrini is also suspected of providing logistical support for the Nov. 13 attacks in and around Paris that killed 130 people, the prosecutors said. Until Friday, Mr. Abrini was the only known suspect in the Paris attacks who had not been killed or captured.

Mr. Abrini, 31, according to the prosecutor's office, now says he was at the attack at Brussels Airport, which killed 15 people and the two suicide bombers. He remained in Belgium at least for part of the time between the two attacks, officials say, and is likely to have at least some information, and perhaps a great deal, about the planning and individuals involved.

## Belgium Captures 'Man With Hat' Terror Suspect

By Ivo Oliveira

[Politico Europe](#), April 9, 2016

Belgian authorities said they had apprehended two men who took direct part in last month's terrorist attacks in Brussels, including the 'man with the hat' seen on video minutes before the bombings at Zaventem airport.

In a series of raids in the last 24 hours, Belgium police arrested six men and charged three with involvement in a terrorist group in connection with both the Brussels and Paris attacks last November.

Late on Saturday, Belgian prosecutors said that Mohamed Abrini, who was arrested on Friday, confessed that he was the third attacker at Brussels international airport. The other two men in the video killed themselves in the bombings.

Law enforcement authorities identified two other men who were charged on Saturday as Bilal El Makhoukh, a member of the salafi group Sharia4Belgium, and Osama K.

Prosecutors said Osama K. was the man seen alongside Khalid el-Bakraoui just before the bombing of the Maalbeek metro station. El-Bakraoui was the suicide bomber who struck a subway car.

The attacks at the subway stop and the airport in Brussels killed at least 32 people.

Prosecutors initially weren't sure that Abrini was at the airport, but when he was shown pictures of the three attackers walking through the departure hall, he said, "Ok, it's me," according to Eric Van Der Sypt, a spokesman for the Belgian prosecutor. "He confessed also that he was involved" in the November 13 Paris attacks, Van Der Sypt told POLITICO.

Belgian prosecutors said DNA and fingerprints found at an ISIL safe houses in Brussels, and a car used in the Paris attacks, matched Abrini's. He was also seen on CCTV footage in the company of another Paris suspect, Salah Abdeslam, at a gas station in France two days before the Paris attacks, prosecutors said.

Abrini was already the subject of an international manhunt following the November 13 Paris attacks that killed 130 people. Several of the Paris plotters have been linked back to Brussels.

Abdeslam was arrested on March 18, after four months on the run, in a hideout just a couple hundred meters from his home in the Brussels neighborhood of Molenbeek which is notorious for Islamist radicalization. He is to be extradited to France to answer charges that he helped organize the Paris attacks, in which one of his brothers participated as a suicide bomber.

Osama K. confessed that he was the second metro bomber, said Van Der Sypt, the prosecutor's spokesman. He also said that Osama K. told authorities that last

October 3 he drove to Ulm, Germany to pick up Abdeslam and man identified as

Amine Choukri, who was arrested with Abdeslam last month. Choukri also uses the name Monir Ahmed Alaaj.

Osama K. was also "present in the City2 shopping mall when purchasing the bags that were used later in the attacks," the prosecutor's office said in a statement Saturday.

In announcing the charges against the three, prosecutors said el Makhoukh was suspected of assisting Abrini and Osama K.

Two of the six men arrested on Friday have been released, the statement said.

Belgian and French security sources identified another of the men arrested on Friday as Abu Amrid. A Belgian source described him as "the ringleader" of the Brussels attacks. Van Der Sypt said he was unable to confirm that.

Tara Palmeri contributed reporting to this story.

## Last Main Brussels And Paris Suspects Held, Threat Remains

By Robert-Jan Bartunek  
[Reuters](#), April 9, 2016

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

## Belgians Find Elusive 'Man In The Hat' From Airport Video

By Raphael Satter And Lorne Cook  
[Associated Press](#), April 10, 2016

BRUSSELS (AP) – After nearly three weeks of frantic searching, Belgian authorities announced Saturday they had finally identified the elusive “man in the hat” spotted alongside the two suicide bombers who blew themselves up at Brussels Airport: It was Paris attacks suspect Mohamed Abrini.

Belgium’s Federal Prosecution Office said the recently detained Abrini – the last identified suspect at large from the deadly Nov. 13 Paris attacks – had also confessed to being the vest- and hat-wearing man linked to the Brussels bombers whose image had been widely circulated by authorities.

“After being confronted with the results of the different expert examinations, he confessed his presence at the crime scene,” they said in a terse statement.

The revelation that a Paris attacks suspect escorted two of the Brussels bombers to their deaths at the city’s airport is the strongest sign yet that the Islamic State attackers who brought mayhem to both European cities – killing a total of 162 people – were intimately linked.

Abrini, 31, was one of four suspects charged Saturday with “participating in terrorist acts” linked to the March 22 Brussels bombings that killed 32 people and wounded 270 others at the airport and in the city’s subway.

The prosecutors said Abrini, a Belgian-Moroccan petty criminal who was detained Friday in a Brussels police raid, threw away his vest in a garbage bin and sold his hat after the March 22 bombings.

Prosecutors did not respond to calls seeking further details. A legal representative for Abrini could not be immediately located for comment Saturday night.

Surveillance footage placed Abrini in the convoy with the attackers who headed to Paris ahead of the Nov. 13 massacre that left 130 people dead and hundreds wounded in the French capital.

Abrini was a childhood friend of Brussels brothers Salah and Brahim Abdeslam, both suspects in the Paris attacks, and he had ties to Abdelhamid Abbaoud, the Paris attackers’ ringleader who died in a French police raid shortly afterward. Brahim Abdeslam blew himself up in the Paris bombings while Salah Abdeslam was arrested in Brussels on March 18

– four days before the attacks there – after a four-month manhunt.

Abrini’s fingerprints and DNA were not only in a Renault Clio used in the Paris attacks but also in an apartment in the Schaerbeek neighborhood of Brussels that was used by the airport bombers.

Abrini was also believed to have traveled to Syria, where his younger brother died in 2014 in the Islamic State’s Francophone brigade.

One European security official told The Associated Press that Abrini made multiple trips to Birmingham, England, last year, meeting with several men suspected of terrorist activity. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to provide details about the investigation.

Abrini and three other men – identified as Osama Krayem, Herve B. M. and Bilal E. M. – were all charged by Belgian authorities earlier Saturday with participating in “terrorist murders” and the “activities of a terrorist group” in relation to the attacks. Two other suspects arrested in the last couple of days were released “after a thorough interrogation,” the prosecutors said in a statement.

Osama Krayem, identified by prosecutors only as Osama K., is known to have left the Swedish city of Malmo to fight in Syria. The prosecutor’s office accuses him of being the second person at the March 22 attack on the Brussels subway station that killed 16 people and of being at a shopping mall where the luggage used in the airport bombings was purchased.

Krayem had earlier been identified posting photos from Syria on social media, according to Magnus Ranstorp, a counterterrorism expert at the Swedish National Defense College.

“He also tried to recruit people in Malmo,” Ranstorp told The Associated Press.

Swedish officials had no immediate comment on the suspect.

An African link also emerged Saturday; prosecutors described Herve B. M. as a Rwandan citizen arrested at the same time as Krayem and accused him of offering assistance to both Abrini and Krayem.

There was no immediate comment from the Rwandan government, but the African nation arrested several people on suspicion of IS links in January.

The developments Saturday were rare successes for Belgian authorities, who have been pilloried for mishandling leads in the bombings investigation. But despite multiple arrests, Brussels remains under the second-highest terror alert, meaning an attack is still considered likely.

“There are perhaps other cells that are still active on our territory,” Belgian Interior Minister Jan Jambon told RTL television on Saturday.

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Satter reported from Paris. Paisley Dodds in London, Lori Hinnant in Paris, Jan M. Olsen in Copenhagen, Denmark, Ignatius Ssuuna in Kigali, Rwanda and Geert Vanden Wijngaert in Brussels contributed to this report.

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## Parents Face Limited Options To Keep Children From Terrorism

By Matt Apuzzo

[New York Times](#), April 9, 2016

FREMONT, Calif. — The banging on the door jolted Sal Shafi awake. F.B.I. agents were looking for his son. “Where’s Adam?” they yelled. “Where’s Adam?”

Terrified, Mr. Shafi led the agents, guns drawn, up the stairs toward his son’s bedroom. He watched as they led his 22-year-old son away in handcuffs, backed by evidence of Adam Shafi’s terrorist ambitions.

He had come to the attention of officials not by a well-placed informant or a sting operation. His father, concerned and looking for help, had simply picked up the phone and led the government right to his son. For months, over the objections of his lawyer, Mr. Shafi had been talking to the F.B.I., believing he was doing the right thing.

“My God,” he thought, soon after the arrest in July. “I just destroyed Adam.”

Had things been different, Mr. Shafi, 62, a Silicon Valley executive, might have become a much-needed spokesman for the Obama administration’s counterradicalization campaign. Who better to talk to other parents about the seductive pull of terror organizations? Trust the government, he would tell them. They do not want to take away your children.

Despite nascent efforts to steer young people away from terrorism, the government’s strategy remains largely built on persuading people to call the F.B.I. when they first suspect a problem.

“Alert law enforcement,” Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch said in December. “It could simply be your neighbor having a bad day. But better be safe than sorry.”

For parents, particularly those who see their children as misguided but not dangerous, the decision to make that call can be agonizing. Do you risk sending your son to prison? Or hope things improve and he does not hurt anyone?

The Justice Department praised Mr. Shafi’s efforts to save his son, but said in court that his son was living a “terrifying” double life. Prosecutors said Adam Shafi was

“such an unpredictable threat” that he was too dangerous to be anywhere but a jail cell. Mr. Shafi and others, though, say the case shows that there were never any alternatives.

“This is an abject failure, that there is no system in place that doesn’t result in spending 20 years in jail,” said Seamus Hughes, a former National Counterterrorism Center official who once helped implement the Obama administration’s strategy for countering violent extremism.

The Justice Department’s campaign against American supporters of the Islamic State is rife with examples of family members acting out of desperation. Mothers have hidden passports and money to keep their sons from traveling. In Minnesota, a fight broke out as relatives tried to keep a young man from flying out of the country. In Texas, a family lured a 19-year-old home from Turkey by tricking him into thinking his mother had fallen ill.

Mr. Shafi chose a different route. He did what the government asked. His story is a desperate search for someone to help his son.

The Shafis were vacationing in Cairo in the summer of 2014, visiting extended family, when they awoke on a Saturday to find Adam gone. He sent a text message to a younger brother, saying he had left “to protect Muslims.”

Mr. Shafi has never been deeply religious — “don’t do bad things,” is how he describes his faith — but his son had embraced religion. Outwardly at least, that meant charity. He made sandwiches and delivered them to San Francisco’s homeless. He talked about opening a free health clinic. Perhaps, Mr. Shafi thought, Adam, who was 21 at the time, was at a mosque working on a social cause.

But when he did not come home, Mr. Shafi became frantic. A protective father of five, he had installed tracking software on his children’s phones. But it did not work overseas. On Sunday, he called the American Embassy in Cairo. An official there was polite but dismissive and told him to wait another day.

“Maybe he’s been recruited,” Mr. Shafi said. That grabbed the man’s attention.

Mr. Shafi now says he was merely trying to prod the embassy into helping his son. But he acknowledged that, at the time, he was also thinking about the parents on the news who discovered that their children had fled to join the Islamic State.

At the embassy later that day, Mr. Shafi told officials that he worried that his son might be following extreme imams online, according to court documents. His son, he said, had been “grieving about what is happening to Muslims” abroad. “Maybe he is in Syria? Iraq? Gaza?” Mr. Shafi said.

It turned out that Adam Shafi was in Turkey, a common gateway for foreign fighters to Syria. Not long after the embassy meeting, he texted his family that he was on his way back. He told his family he had gone to witness the plight of refugees there.

"Why didn't you let us know?" Mr. Shafi demanded. He remembers his son's response. "He said, 'You wouldn't have let me go.' Which is true. You say you're going to visit refugees by yourself? Hell no."

Back home in California, Mr. Shafi's lawyer ordered him not to talk to the F.B.I. But when two agents arrived at the house a few weeks later, Mr. Shafi invited them in.

"We don't have criminal minds," Mr. Shafi said later. "Maybe I'm naïve. I've never dealt with the authorities before. I wanted to cooperate." He arranged for the agents to interview Adam at a coffee shop.

In conversations over many months, court documents show, Mr. Shafi told the agents that he worried about his son's depression and said he had encouraged counseling. Sometimes, when the television showed people suffering in war-torn Syria, his son would leave the room and cry, Mr. Shafi said.

With his son under F.B.I. investigation and facing few options, Mr. Shafi arranged for him to visit a suspected terror financier, Armin Harcevic, in a nearby jail. Mr. Shafi told the F.B.I. that he hoped it would help him "see the error in his ways or at least the grave consequences," according to court documents.

Once, Mr. Shafi said, the agents mentioned the Boston Marathon bombing and said they believed his son had been radicalized. Mr. Shafi laughed. "I don't think so," he told them. "I can assure you that Adam is not violent."

The F.B.I. had good reason to doubt those assurances — agents had been secretly eavesdropping on Adam Shafi's phone conversations.

"I just hope Allah doesn't take my soul until I have at least, like, a couple gallons of blood that I've spilled for him," he said in one conversation last June, according to court records. He also mused about killing American soldiers.

In another call, he said the Islamic State killed too indiscriminately, but he admired the Nusra Front, which is linked to Al Qaeda. Nusra, like the United States, is fighting both the Islamic State and the Syrian government of President Bashar al-Assad. But it is a designated terrorist group, and supporting it is illegal. "I am completely fine dying with these guys," he said, according to court documents.

Then, on June 30, 2015, Mr. Shafi's phone-tracking software alerted him that his son was at the San Francisco airport, at a gate for Turkish Airlines, trying to go to Turkey again.

Mr. Shafi scrambled to contact overseas relatives to intercept his son in Istanbul, but F.B.I. and Homeland Security agents had met him at the gate and were interviewing him at the airport. He told them that he no longer wanted to live in the United States and that he wanted to help the refugees in Turkey.

"Adam claimed that some people helped by building a house, while others picked up a gun," Christopher Monika, an

F.B.I. agent, wrote in court documents. Adam Shafi told the F.B.I. he was not going to pick up a gun. Eventually, the agents sent him home.

But days later, the F.B.I. went to the Shafi home with a warrant for attempting to support a terrorist organization — a charge that carried up to 20 years in prison — and led Adam Shafi away in handcuffs. His case was kept under seal while his family and his lawyers tried to negotiate a way out. Normally, that means a plea deal and a hope for leniency. Mr. Shafi pitched something else — a program in which counselors, mental health experts and religious leaders worked with Adam to set him straight. If all went well, Mr. Shafi hoped, his son could avoid prison and a criminal record.

Though the White House and a congressional task force have endorsed this concept, no such program exists. So Mr. Shafi tried to create one. He flew to Washington in November to attend a Brookings Institution seminar on radicalization. There he met Daniel Koehler, a German de-radicalization expert who offered to help.

"There have simply been too many cases of families who didn't have any help," Mr. Koehler said in an interview. "I thought back then that this could be a good test case."

The F.B.I. has quietly and slowly embraced the notion of interventions. In a few cities, agents work with parents, mental health experts, community leaders and sometimes religious figures to help minors or mentally ill people who agents believe have the intent, but not the capability, to hurt people. Though civil libertarians — and some F.B.I. agents — are skeptical of what they see as blurring the line between social work and law enforcement, supporters say interventions are an alternative to long-term surveillance, which strains F.B.I. resources.

Law enforcement officials said they have offered interventions to only about a dozen people, and they acknowledge that it is too soon to say whether they work.

At 22, Adam Shafi was not eligible for such an intervention, but his father and lawyers remained optimistic. The government did not dismiss the idea out of hand, they said. Then came the attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, Calif. "You see these events that narrow the universe of what's possible," said Joshua Dratel, a New York lawyer representing Adam Shafi. There would be no deal.

In December, the Justice Department unsealed the case and prepared for trial. In court documents, prosecutors said that neither a well-intentioned father nor the threat of an F.B.I. investigation were enough to steer Adam Shafi away from terrorism. Mr. Shafi's efforts aside, prosecutors said, his son was simply too dangerous to remain free.

The process has shaken Mr. Shafi's faith, both in his decisions as a parent and in his government.

"Every minute, I just imagine him in that solitary confinement, facing 20 years, because I cooperated with the

government,” he said, adding, “It’s a horrible feeling. I can’t get rid of it.”

Less than a year ago, he had offered to quit his job and help build support for government counterterrorism programs. His message now to parents of troubled or confused children? “Don’t even think about going to the government.”

## Inside Saudi Arabia’s Re-Education Prison For Jihadists

By Ben Hubbard

[New York Times](#), April 9, 2016

The “guests” are issued key cards for their rooms, receive three catered meals per day and sleep in luxury suites outfitted with big-screen TVs, king-size beds and shiny wallpaper.

They call it the Family House, and it feels like a boutique hotel, if you can overlook the lack of windows, the towering walls outside and the location — inside one of Saudi Arabia’s high-security prisons for jihadists.

The house is designed to give jihadists who behave well a respite from inmate life and help them reconnect with their wives and children, and perhaps even conceive new ones.

That positive reinforcement is emblematic of the Saudi approach to its homegrown jihadists, which would not translate well to the West. Those who have done their misdeeds abroad and have not participated in attacks at home are generally regarded as misled Saudi sons who need to have their thinking corrected so they can return to society as good, obedient subjects.

That philosophy was clear during a recent tour of al-Ha’ir Prison south of Riyadh, one of Saudi Arabia’s five facilities holding its more than 5,000 inmates charged with terrorism-related offenses.

“Here we have all the types of terrorism that you have in the kingdom,” said a guide, a portly, mustachioed assistant prison director who gave only a nickname, Abu Nawaf, for security reasons.

“Prison is not just to punish a person and then let him out,” he said. “That’s a danger to him and to society. If he gets out and is good with himself, his family and society, that is better.”

The effectiveness of that approach — which the Saudis argue is preferable to, say, sending inmates to Guantánamo Bay, Cuba — is hotly debated and probably will be for some time, as independent assessments are rare.

Saudi officials say recidivism is low, but Abu Nawaf could provide no statistics. And the International Committee of the Red Cross has no presence in Saudi Arabia, so it cannot monitor prison conditions.

Western human rights groups, rarely allowed inside the kingdom, say conditions are believed to be better in high-

security facilities than in regular criminal prisons, where allegations of mistreatment and overcrowding are more common.

The imposing and unmarked facility sits on the edge of the desert, ringed by two high walls interrupted by well-guarded gates. More than 1,700 inmates — all men — reside in wards that are connected by bright white corridors. The iron gates, doors and guard booths are purple.

All inmates get certain benefits, Abu Nawaf said, like a monthly stipend equivalent to \$400 for incidentals and the possibility of “temporary release” for family functions. An inmate heading to a relative’s wedding, for example, gets \$2,666 so he can give a gift.

Large rooms with couches and tables are provided for family visits, and inmates who are not considered dangerous also receive “special visits” from their spouses in small rooms with pink walls, pink beds, a minibar (no alcohol, of course) and a bathroom.

Each wife can visit once a month, resulting in a polygamy benefit for men with more than one spouse.

“Those with four wives get one visit each week,” Abu Nawaf said.

Even inmates on death row are allowed these special visits. Abu Nawaf saw no problem with their being able to procreate.

“It is not only his right,” he said. “It is his wife’s right, too.”

Nearby is the local branch of the Prince Mohammed bin Nayef Center for Advice and Care, a reform program staffed by psychologists and religious officials who try to deradicalize inmates by teaching them what Nasser al-Ajmi, a psychologist with the center, called “correct Shariah thought.”

Newly arrived inmates are assessed by a psychologist to identify social factors that may have led them astray, like drugs or alcohol, family troubles or hanging out with the wrong crowd, Mr. Ajmi said.

When appropriate, inmates then meet with clerics to talk ideology. One cleric, Khalid al-Abdan, said his work often involved correcting misunderstandings about jihad and telling inmates that the wars in Syria and Iraq did not qualify because they were more about sectarianism and politics than about religion.

He also reinforces the idea that individuals should be obedient to their rulers and not declare jihad on their own. “These instructions can only come from the rulers,” he said.

When asked what he teaches regarding Shiites, considered infidels by most Saudi clerics and militant Sunni groups like the Islamic State, who often execute their captives, he said the inmates could hold whatever views they liked as long as they were not violent.

“If someone says that Shiites are infidels, that is his opinion and it is not important for us,” he said. “If he wants to kill them, that is a problem.”

A banner on one wall listed numbers of successful sessions and participants, but no one recalled Yousef al-Sulaiman, a young Saudi who went through this reform center two years ago.

In August, Mr. Sulaiman blew himself up inside a mosque used by the security forces, killing at least 15 people, according to Saudi news media. Other graduates of this and other branches of the center have also returned to militancy, including a man who blew himself up near a mosque last year, and 44 of 77 suspects in a deadly attack on a Shiite mosque the year before.

"Here, we treat ideological sickness," said Mr. Ajmi, the psychologist, when asked about such failures. "Just like when a child gets sick and gets better, the sickness can come back later."

At the end of a white corridor lined with cells was a courtyard with artificial turf and a metal grate for a roof, where the inmates are permitted to hang out, smoke and get fresh air. There were a small market selling drinks and snacks, a room where inmates could make (monitored) telephone calls and a small library.

On the library's shelves were newspapers and books on education and religion, including "English for Beginners" and an Arabic translation of "The Eighth Habit," the sequel to the self-help hit "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People," which was not available.

A nearby cell held five inmates, each with a neatly made single bed and a set of shelves holding books, bottles of cologne and a chess set.

One inmate, Abdullah Mohammed, 29, said he had been studying Shariah at a state university in Riyadh in 2014 when images of violence he saw in Syria persuaded him to travel there and join the Nusra Front, Syria's affiliate of Al Qaeda.

"I saw that people were being displaced as refugees, so I wanted to save them," he said. But he was soon disappointed.

"Then I went there and saw chaos, people killing everyone else, and you didn't know who was your friend and who was your enemy," he said.

So he fled to Turkey, where the Saudi Embassy helped him get home. The government was offering amnesty to foreign fighters at the time, so he did not go to prison right away. But he soon got mixed up in some other nefarious business that landed him behind bars.

"I had some contacts with some people," he said, declining to elaborate.

He placed blame for his ordeal not on bad decisions or incorrect thinking but on the government and the news media — of the United States.

"I am a victim of the American government and the American media," he said, despite being unable to understand rudimentary English.

His wife had come to visit two weeks before, he said. They do not yet have children, he said, but they might by the time he is supposed to get out, in seven months.

## **NATIONAL SECURITY NEWS**

### **U.S. Deploys B-52 Bombers To Qatar For Fight Against Islamic State**

By Andrea Shalal

[Reuters](#), April 9, 2016

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

### **Why The US Is Sending B-52 Bombers To Battle ISIS**

By Bamzi Banchiri

[Yahoo! News](#), April 9, 2016

As part of a larger effort to bolster its fight against ISIS (aka Islamic State), the United States is deploying the B-52 bombers – the first time the Pentagon is sending the aircraft to the Middle East since the 1991 Gulf War – officials said Saturday.

An unknown number of B-52s will be based at Al Udeid air base in Qatar, replacing the B-1 Lancer bombers that were withdrawn from the fight in Syria in February, to undergo maintenance and upgrading. The officials could not disclose the exact number of B-52s sent due to "operational security reasons."

"The B-52 demonstrates our continued resolve to apply persistent pressure on Daesh and defend the region in any future contingency," said Air Force Lieutenant General Charles Brown, commander of US Air Forces Central Command, using the Arabic acronym for ISIS, Al Jazeera reported.

Recommended:

Are you smarter than a US Marine? Take the recruitment quiz

With the withdrawal of the B-1 bomber, the total number of bombs dropped on ISIS fell to an eight-month low in February, according to statistics published by the US Air Force, Fox News reported.

Despite flying only 7 percent of strike missions against ISIS in Iraq and Syria, B-1s dropped nearly 40 percent of all the bombs. In addition to carrying many more bombs than USAF fighter jets, the B-1 could loiter over the battlefield for up to 10 hours at a time. It can fly at supersonic speeds meaning it can be anywhere over Iraq and Syria in minutes.

The B-52s could be a good replacement, since it can also linger over an area for up to 12 hours at time.

The 60-year-old B-52s – based in Louisiana and North Dakota – are among the oldest active aircraft in the US Air

Force, and still dominate the force's long-range bomber fleet. Launched in the 1950s during the Eisenhower administration, the aircraft became iconic during the Cold War, due to its capabilities, and was the first plane to drop a hydrogen bomb, on the Bikini Atoll islands in 1956.

Though it was slated to retire some years ago, the 185,000-pound aircraft has continued to be deployed in conflict areas, as The New York Times reports, owing to its rugged design that allows it to be deployed in any part of the world, and can carry a wide range of bombs and up to 70,000 pounds of bombs, mines, and missiles.

"There have been a series of attempts to build a better intercontinental bomber, and they have consistently failed," Owen Coté, a professor of security studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology told the New York Times last December. "Turns out whenever we try to improve on the B-52, we run into problems, so we still have the B-52.

Heavy bombing during the 1972 Christmas destroyed large sections of Hanoi in North Vietnam, resulting in the deaths of thousands of civilians, subsequently tainting the usage of the aircraft in conflicts. The killings sparked widespread international condemnation, and prompted the Pentagon to make significant changes to it. In recent years, laser-targeting pods have been added to the wings' bombers in order to allow them to drop guided "smart" bombs, the New York Times reported.

The B-52 bombers being deployed in Qatar will now be able to deliver precision weapons and carry out a range of missions without endangering civilian lives, the US officials said.

"Accuracy is critically important in this war," said Lieutenant Colonel Chris Karns, spokesman for the Central Command, Reuters reported. "Carpet-bombing would not be effective for the operation we're in because Daesh doesn't mass as large groups. Often they blend into population centers. We always look to minimize civilian casualties."

## **U.S. Deploys B-52 Bombers To Middle East For The First Time In 25 Years**

By Kellan Howell

[Washington Times](#), April 9, 2016

The U.S. Air Force has deployed B-52 long-ranger bombers to the Middle East, for the first time since the Gulf War ended, to conduct strikes against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, officials said Saturday.

An unknown number of B-52s will be based at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, the U.S. Air Force Central Command said in a statement.

"The B-52s will provide the coalition continued precision and deliver desired airpower effects," Lt. Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., commander, U.S. Air Forces Central Command

and Combined Forces Air Component said, Fox News reported.

The announcement comes a day after Secretary of State John Kerry said the U.S. would "turn up the pressure further" against the Islamic State during a surprise visit to Baghdad Friday to meet with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi.

## **Rebels And Syrian Government Forces Battle In Fierce Clashes Near Aleppo: Monitor**

By John Davison

[Reuters](#), April 9, 2016

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## **U.S. Navy Leads 30-nation Maritime Exercise In Middle East**

[Reuters](#), April 9, 2016

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## **Eastern Ukraine Sees Increase In Fighting, 2 Deaths Reported**

[Associated Press](#), April 9, 2016

MOSCOW (AP) — Ukraine on Saturday reported a sharp increase in attacks by Russia-backed separatists around the government-held town of Avdiivka in eastern Ukraine, resulting in at least one civilian death. The rebels also reported increased shelling from government forces and the death of one of their fighters.

The fighting that broke out in eastern Ukraine two years ago has killed more than 9,100 people and left swaths of territory under rebel control. A cease-fire agreement signed in February 2015 in Minsk, Belarus, has significantly reduced the violence, but it is regularly violated by both sides and the political settlement that was part of the agreement has not been implemented.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, responsible for monitoring the truce, on Thursday expressed concern about what it called the highest level of cease-fire violations since September. The head of the monitoring mission, Ertugrul Apakan, "noted as particularly troubling the extremely high number of incidents involving the use of heavy weapons and mortars."

Ukraine's military said the situation around Avdiivka has significantly deteriorated since last weekend and accused the rebels of using tanks, mortars and artillery to attack the town, located just 17 kilometers (10 miles) north of Donetsk, the separatist stronghold. On Friday, a mortar attack killed a civilian woman, the statement said.



Five Ukrainian servicemen were wounded Friday, including four in Avdiivka, the Interfax news agency reported, citing Andriy Lysenko, presidential spokesman for Ukrainian forces in the east.

The rebel forces accused government troops of widespread shelling in violation of the cease-fire. Eduard Basurin, deputy head of the Donetsk military forces, said one fighter was killed by a Ukrainian sniper and two civilians were wounded, Interfax reported.

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## **Non-Proliferation Crusader Obama Ponders A Visit To Nuclear Ground Zero: Hiroshima**

By David Nakamura

[Washington Post](#), April 9, 2016

HIROSHIMA, Japan — For nearly 71 years, the consequences of the world's first atomic bombing have remained close to the surface here.

Construction workers digging under the Peace Memorial Museum recently discovered the charred and mangled remains of a bicycle, a rice paddle, a toothbrush and a fountain pen, tangible artifacts of a civilization that was buried in ash on Aug. 6, 1945.

The memory of that moment has defined this Japanese city of 1.1 million for more than seven decades, but the ghosts of that horrifying past also have prevented a final reconciliation with the nation that dropped the bomb.

No sitting U.S. president has ever visited Hiroshima, out of concern that such a trip might be interpreted as an apology. The bombing killed 140,000 people but has been viewed by many Americans as a necessary evil to end World War II and save the lives of U.S. troops.

Today, however, there is growing sentiment inside the White House that President Obama, who in his first year envisioned a world without nuclear weapons, should cap his final year with a grand symbolic gesture in service of a goal that remains well out of reach.

No final decision has been made, but aides have begun exploring the possibility of Obama spending several hours in Hiroshima in May, after attending the Group of Seven Summit in Ise-Shima, halfway between Tokyo and Hiroshima. One senior Obama administration official, in an interview, suggested that the president could potentially deliver a speech there that evokes the nonproliferation themes of his address in Prague in 2009. Such a move would draw international attention in a more emotional fashion than did his nuclear security summit in Washington last week.

On Sunday, Secretary of State John F. Kerry will arrive in Hiroshima for the G-7 foreign ministers' conference — the first-ever visit by the United States' top diplomat — and White

House advisers are closely watching his time there as a prelude to a possible Obama trip.

"I think the president would like to do it," said John Roos, who served as the U.S. ambassador to Japan from 2009 to 2013 and in 2010 became the first American diplomat to participate in the annual Aug. 6 memorial observance in Hiroshima. "He is a person who bends over backwards to show respect to history, and it does advance his agenda."

The White House is well aware of the potential for domestic criticism around a Hiroshima trip, especially in an election year. Republicans have consistently portrayed Obama's foreign policy as feckless and weak, and the president was ridiculed in 2009 when he bowed to the Japanese emperor in Tokyo. During the 2012 presidential campaign, GOP nominee Mitt Romney accused Obama of undertaking a global "apology tour."

In Japan, anticipation is high ahead of Kerry's arrival, and local officials said the public has long been enamored of a potential visit from Obama. Yet even here, the geopolitics are complicated, in light of China's rise and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's pursuit of a stronger Japanese self-defense strategy.

Abe has ramped up defense spending and won new powers for Japan's pacifist self-defense forces to play a stronger international role in the face of China's growing military capabilities and a nuclear-armed North Korea. Last year, on the 70th anniversary of the war's end, Abe made a concentrated effort to resolve lingering World War II-era disputes with Seoul and Beijing that had complicated relations between the Asian powers.

"On the security side, particularly in East Asia, the rise of China poses a challenge to Japan's security, and the military buildup of China reminds us of the importance of balance," said Nobumasa Akiyama, nuclear security policy professor at Hitotsubashi University in Tokyo. "Here in East Asia, there is a divide between the nuclear abolitionists and the security people."

Some Abe aides fear that an Obama appearance in Hiroshima would renew debate in the United States over Japan's imperial past and complicate the prime minister's security agenda in Asia by forcing him to respond to U.S. campaign trail criticism and justify his policies. One Abe adviser, in an interview, suggested that Obama delay a visit until after he leaves office; former president Jimmy Carter toured the memorial park in 1984, several years after he left the White House. And Abe himself visited Hiroshima last August for the 70th anniversary memorial ceremonies.

Japanese foreign policy analysts said Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, who was born in Hiroshima and is more moderate than the conservative Abe, is more committed to the disarmament message and to Japan's pacifist post-war policies.

One Tokyo-based academic who closely advises Abe said that “no matter how allergic the Japanese have been on the nuclear issue, let’s just face it: On the other side of the coin is the continued commitment from the United States to provide protection to Japan under its nuclear umbrella.”

This official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss Abe’s thinking, added that China “is the only country constantly investing in a nuclear arsenal. The number of warheads is on the rise . . . I wonder if President Obama and his advisers are fully aware of this subtle but substantial difference between Europe and East Asia.”

Obama administration officials emphasized that Tokyo has not made any objections, publicly or privately, and suggested that Abe has many advisers with differing opinions.

White House aides say they are confident that Obama can pay respects to the victims of the war — on both sides of the Pacific — without provoking a major political backlash in the United States. The feeling within the White House is that a Hiroshima visit, while not crucial to the future of the U.S.-Japan alliance, would offer the president another opportunity to recognize history without being, in his words, “imprisoned” by it.

In his second term, Obama has made historic trips to Burma and Cuba and negotiated a landmark nuclear deal with Iran.

“It’s not lost on us that this would bring the Prague speech and the conception of a world without nuclear weapons full circle and offer a very poignant platform for a message that is so central to the Obama presidency,” said one senior administration official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because plans are not finalized. “This is not a triple bank shot. The risks are manageable.”

Local officials in Hiroshima said that most Japanese would be satisfied if the president were to express empathy and renew his call for disarmament. A former mayor once termed his constituents the “Obamajority” to signal their enthusiasm for the president’s nonproliferation agenda.

“If he comes to Hiroshima, I think the majority will welcome him because we see that he’s trying to move things forward,” Hidehiko Yuzaki, the governor of Hiroshima prefecture, said in a recent interview. “The difference between President Obama and the heads of other nuclear weapon countries is that, of course, the U.S. dropped the bomb. But we’re not expecting President Obama to apologize.”

In his city hall office, Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui keeps a three-ring binder full of photos of the artifacts discovered by construction workers under the peace museum. He flipped through them for a foreign visitor on a recent day, before pulling out a pre-war map of the city and explaining that 4,000 people lived on the site that is now the memorial park.

Matsui, 63, said he hoped the foreign ministers “touch the emotions, feelings and thoughts of A-bomb survivors,” who are called “hibakusha” in Japan. (His mother, uncle and paternal grandmother were among them.) On Monday, Kerry is expected to join his fellow foreign ministers to lay flowers at the cenotaph in Peace Memorial Park.

“We are not looking at the past, but we are future-oriented,” Matsui said through an interpreter. “President Obama is well known for the message he gave in Prague in 2009, saying he would like a world without nuclear weapons. He was awarded the Nobel [Peace] Prize. If he truly understands our sentiments, [a visit] would play an important role for his inner thoughts, and the role he can play as a politician.”

But the hair-trigger sensitivities have been weighed by each of the American officials who have been invited to Hiroshima. In 2008, then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) became the highest-ranking U.S. government official to visit the city when she participated in a global summit of the heads of parliament.

Pelosi, now the House minority leader, recalled in an interview that she discussed the optics ahead of time with two Democrats who had served as ambassadors to Japan — Walter Mondale and Thomas S. Foley. They told her that a boycott of the event by the American delegation would result in “a loss of face” for their hosts and represent a greater political risk.

“The White House will have to weigh all of that,” Pelosi said. “This is not about Japan or the U.S. even. It’s about humanity.”

## **Kerry Arrives In Japan For Landmark Hiroshima Visit**

[AFP](#), April 9, 2016

John Kerry arrived in Japan on Sunday for a Group of Seven meeting in Hiroshima, marking the first-ever visit to the atomic-bombed city by a US secretary of state.

Kerry landed at a US military base west of Hiroshima from Afghanistan for the two-day G7 gathering set to discuss a host of global issues though the symbolism of his visit is overshadowing the broader diplomatic agenda.

Kerry’s trip is seen as possibly paving the way for Barack Obama to become the first serving US president to journey to the thriving metropolis next month when he visits Japan for the G7 Summit.

The Hiroshima meeting begins Sunday and will also host diplomats from nuclear-armed Britain and France, as well as Canada, Germany, Italy and Japan.

The gathering is part of the run-up to the G7’s rotating annual summit, scheduled this year from May 26-27 in the Ise-Shima region between Tokyo and Osaka.

The US secretary of state, Britain's Philip Hammond, France's Jean-Marc Ayrault and other ministers are expected to discuss global hotspot issues including the Middle East, the migration crisis, the conflict in Ukraine and terrorism.

Host Japan also hopes to highlight other issues, such as rising territorial tensions in the South China Sea and North Korea's nuclear sabre-rattling.

But what has captured the imagination of the Japanese public is the location and what they hope will be greater understanding of their staunch anti-nuclear stance as the only country to suffer atomic attacks.

Japanese foreign minister Fumio Kishida, who represents Hiroshima in parliament, also hopes to issue a "Hiroshima Declaration" at the meeting to promote nuclear disarmament.

Kerry and the other G7 foreign ministers are scheduled to visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, which houses the ruins of the iconic domed building gutted by the blast, and an accompanying museum.

The first American bomb on August 6, 1945, killed 140,000 people in Hiroshima, including survivors of the explosion who died soon after from severe radiation exposure. Three days later another blast killed some 74,000 people in Nagasaki.

Japan gave up the fight six days after Nagasaki, forswearing militarism and reviving itself as an economic dynamo protected, ironically, by the nuclear-armed United States.

Indeed, when asked about its place under Washington's nuclear umbrella, Kishida said Japan knows the world's security realities, citing North Korea, for example, as a key threat.

Recent comments by Republican US presidential candidate Donald Trump suggesting that he could accept a nuclear-armed Japan have alarmed the country's political establishment.

Washington hopes to use Kerry's visit – he will be the highest ranking US official in Hiroshima since then Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi in 2008 – to stress the tragedy of the war and also highlight Obama's anti-nuclear stance, expressed in a famous speech in Prague in 2009.

## **Suspected Al Qaeda Militants Execute 17 Yemeni Government Soldiers**

By Mohammed Mukhashaf

[Reuters](#), April 9, 2016

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

## **Egypt And Saudi Arabia Agree \$16 Billion Investment Fund**

[AFP](#), April 9, 2016

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and Saudi King Salman on Saturday oversaw the signing of several agreements, including a \$16 billion investment fund, as the monarch visited Egypt for a third day.

The 80-year-old Saudi monarch's rare visit to Egypt has been seen as an overwhelming show of support for Sisi, the former military chief who toppled his Islamist predecessor Mohamed Morsi in 2013.

Since touching down on Thursday, Salman and his delegation have announced a string of investments in Egypt, as well as a lavish plan to build a bridge over the Red Sea to connect the two countries.

On Saturday, the third of his five-day trip, Salman met Sisi at the historic Abdeen Palace in Cairo where the two oversaw the inking of further deals Egypt hopes will boost its battered economy.

A live Egyptian state television broadcast showed an official announcing the agreements, signed by a representative of each country.

The two countries agreed "to set up a Saudi-Egyptian investment fund with a capital of 60 billion Saudi riyals (\$16 billion)," the announcer said, giving no further details.

More than a dozen other agreements, including a memorandum of understanding to set up an industrial zone in Egypt, were also announced.

Saudi Arabia has been a key backer of Sisi since the overthrow of Morsi, whose Muslim Brotherhood movement was viewed by Riyadh with suspicion.

It has since pumped billions of dollars in aid and investment into Egypt.

## **Candidates For Next UN Chief To Face Nations For First Time**

By Edith M. Lederer

[Associated Press](#), April 10, 2016

UNITED NATIONS (AP) – For the first time in the 70-year history of the United Nations, all the member states will get a chance to question the candidates for Secretary-General, in a move to make the usually secret selection process for the world's top diplomatic post more transparent.

Last year, the U.N. General Assembly responded to the strong demand from many countries that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's successor be chosen in a more open process, unanimously adopting a resolution allowing public hearings on how candidates would respond to global crises and run the U.N.'s far-flung bureaucracy.

The secretary-general is chosen by the 193-member General Assembly on the recommendation of the 15-member Security Council, according to the U.N. Charter.

In practice, this has meant that the council's five permanent members – the U.S., Russia, China, Britain and

France – have veto power over the candidates. That will not change in deciding whom to recommend to succeed Ban, whose second five-year term ends on Dec. 31.

But General Assembly President Mogens Lykketoft said in a recent interview that the two-hour public discussions with each of the eight current candidates, starting Tuesday, are “potentially game-changing.”

If a leading candidate emerges and a critical number of countries rally around him – or, in what would be a first, her – “I think it will be very difficult, and probably not possible, for the Security Council to come up with quite a different candidate,” he said.

If the race is unclear, however, then the Security Council “will have a more deciding influence,” Lykketoft said.

The resolution adopted last September stresses the need for “gender and geographical balance while meeting the highest possible requirements.”

By tradition, the job of secretary-general has rotated among regions. East European nations, including Russia, argue that they have never had a secretary-general and it is their turn. There has also never been a woman secretary-general and many countries support the idea of the first female U.N. chief.

The resolution invited all countries “to consider presenting women as candidates,” but also stressed that the candidate must be highly competent.

There are currently four women and four men who have thrown their hats in the ring – six from Eastern Europe, one from Western Europe and one from the Asia-Pacific region.

They are: former Macedonian Foreign Minister Srgjan Kerim; former Croatian Foreign Minister Vesna Pucic; former Montenegro Prime Minister and current Foreign Minister Igor Luksic; former Slovenian President Danilo Turk; UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova from Bulgaria; former Moldovan Foreign Minister Natalia Gherman; former U.N. refugee chief and ex-Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Guterres; and former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark, who heads the U.N. Development Program.

“I’m sure more candidates will be coming, that’s for sure,” Lykketoft said, “but how many, I don’t know.”

There is no deadline for jumping into the race, but diplomats said the Security Council is expected to hold its first “straw poll” on the candidates in late July. The 15 council members will vote “encourage” or “discourage” on each candidate and the result will be made public.

Two women mentioned in U.N. corridors as possible strong late entries are German Chancellor Angela Merkel, though she reportedly isn’t very keen on the job, and Kristalina Georgieva, another Bulgarian who is the European Commission’s budget chief and a former top official at the World Bank.

The concentration of power in the five permanent members known as the P-5 often has produced U.N. chiefs

with the appearance, some observers have said, of being more secretary than general.

Natalie Samarasinghe, executive director of the United Nations Association-UK and one of the founders of the 1 for 7 Billion campaign for reform in the secretary-general selection process, said that throughout the U.N.’s history “the Security Council concern has always been, ‘who’s not going to rock the boat, and who’s going to cause the least trouble for us.’”

That dynamic has changed somewhat with the new, more open selection process, which “is going to be impossible for the Security Council to completely ignore,” she said.

Britain’s U.N. Ambassador Matthew Rycroft, who encouraged more “credible candidates” to enter the race, said the interviews will be “very important” in the final decision.

“If a candidate does well in the hearings then clearly that is going to increase the prospects of Security Council members encouraging them through the process,” he said.

Russia’s U.N. Ambassador Vitaly Churkin was more cautious, saying the hearings “might” influence the P-5’s decision.

“For us it’s important that the next secretary-general enjoy the broadest possible support among members of the United Nations,” he said.

Ukraine’s U.N. Ambassador Volodymyr Yelchenko, a council member, called it “a very useful exercise, although with many, many unclear questions of what will be the outcome, and what will be the final platform to judge the qualities of each of eight candidates.”

The 1 for 7 Billion campaign, which Samarasinghe said is supported by 750 non-governmental organizations worldwide, is also calling for a single longer term to give the next secretary-general more independence from the major powers.

Lykketoft said the Nonaligned Movement, which represents over 100 developing countries, supports the idea but he doesn’t know whether they will push for a General Assembly resolution on a single term, possibly seven years.

The interviews will continue through Thursday. Lykketoft said they will be followed by a second round for expected new candidates.

Secretary-General Ban is staying away from the hearings but is “delighted” they are happening, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Friday.

Asked whether the U.N. chief had any advice for the candidates ahead of the hearings, Dujarric said that Ban always recalls the advice a middle school teacher in South Korea gave him: “Keep your feet firmly on the ground and your head in the clouds.”

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## The Race To Run The United Nations

[New York Times](#), April 9, 2016

For the past 70 years, each time the post of secretary general of the United Nations has been open, those interested in the job lobbied and cajoled the five permanent members of the Security Council behind closed doors. The Council chose the finalist, whose name was then presented to the General Assembly as a done deal. This obscure process for selecting one of the world's most important leaders has gone unchallenged for decades.

Not anymore. The race to replace Ban Ki-moon, who will step down at the end of the year, fortunately, will be different. At the insistence of small nations that traditionally had no say in the matter, the United Nations has asked that governments that wish to nominate a candidate for the job do so openly. Next week, diplomats from the United Nations' 193 states will have an opportunity to meet and question the four women and four men who are vying for the job.

Among the candidates are five United Nations veterans, including Helen Clark of New Zealand, a former prime minister, who has led the United Nations Development Program since 2009, and Irina Bokova of Bulgaria, the head of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Also in the race are António Manuel Oliveira Guterres of Portugal, who served for a decade as the United Nations high commissioner for refugees, through last year; Danilo Turk, a former assistant secretary general who served as president of Slovenia from 2007 to 2012; and Srgjan Kerim of Macedonia, who served as foreign minister and ambassador to the United Nations.

The other contenders are Vesna Pusic, the foreign minister of Croatia; Natalia Gherman, a senior diplomat from Moldova; and Igor Luksic, the foreign minister of Montenegro.

Most candidates are Eastern European because that region is widely assumed to be the next in line to have a representative at the top of the United Nations. The Security Council is also under pressure to give serious consideration to female candidates, since no woman has run the United Nations. The Council will start vetting the candidates in July and will pick one later in the year.

The next secretary general will face a series of challenges that will require deft leadership and tenacity. The United Nations needs to play a central role in ending wars in Syria, Libya, Yemen and elsewhere, even as it struggles to provide resources and aid to millions of refugees who have fled Syria and other countries roiled by war.

The new leader will also inherit internal problems. The United Nations was slow to acknowledge and respond to allegations of widespread sex abuse by peacekeepers in

Africa, a situation that could destroy its reputation and credibility in areas already struggling with the ravages of war and famine. The World Health Organization, which came under criticism for its inadequate response to the Ebola crisis in 2014, will also require sustained attention.

Those vying for the job will need to clearly outline their priorities and vision for a job that becomes ever more daunting in a conflict-ridden world.

## How Panama Ended Up In The Middle Of A Financial Scandal

By Joshua Partlow And Ana Swanson

[Washington Post](#), April 9, 2016

Couldn't it be called something else?

The Law-firm Letters? The Tax-Free Files? Anything but that most unfortunate alliteration.

"It should be named the Offshore Papers," Eyda Varela de Chinchilla, Panama's vice minister of finance, insisted.

"Panama is part of the story but not a major player," Álvaro Alemán Healy, the president's chief of staff, pointed out. "From a banking perspective, undoubtedly, it shouldn't be called the Panama Papers."

And yet it is.

Before the Panama Papers scandal landed on this equatorial isthmus with hurricane force, the little country had been riding high. It boasted one of the fastest growth rates in Latin America last year, above 6 percent. A decade-long project to double the capacity of the Panama Canal will be formally completed in June, raising hopes for a financial boon that a former president predicted would usher Panama into the First World.

But all that good news evaporated when two German newspaper reporters got their hands on 11.5 million documents from the Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca. The flood of disclosures that began earlier this month has revealed oceans of dark money sloshing through offshore companies the firm helped create. The leak outed the global rich and infamous: from relatives of China's Politburo and Russian President Vladimir Putin's cellist friend to British Prime Minister David Cameron and soccer god Lionel Messi. The Papers forced the president of Iceland to resign and the president of Argentina to announce: "I have nothing to hide."

Here in Panama, the 17th-century colonial seaside palace where the president keeps his office sits around the bay from a cluster of gleaming high-rise towers, a visible reminder of the old-vs.-new conflict at the heart of this crisis, where a business model born in the pre-Internet age has been slow to adapt to modern notions of transparency. Panama's leaders have expressed dismay at the revelations and tried to deflect blame, but have also risen to the defense of an industry that has helped transform the nation and earns \$500 million a year. They admit that regulations to identify the

true beneficiaries of shell companies have been slow in coming and expect this offshore business may one day fade into something like a relic.

"I think this will have an effect worldwide," Alemán said.

Panama has been in the business of creating offshore shell corporations, companies that can be set up in low-tax or no-tax jurisdictions, and operate with a premium on secrecy, since the early 20th century. They did not invent these benefits: their corporate law in 1927 was modeled after Delaware. The country's geography and its canal positioned Panama to serve international shipping companies. U.S. cargo ships as far back as Prohibition were registering under Panamanian flags to transport booze or avoid taxes on oil shipments.

The industry gained more notoriety in the 1980s under military dictator Manuel Noriega, who helped make Panama a welcome port for stashing Colombian cocaine-trade profits.

"Panama was a pioneer in the offshore finance system, and has been central to drug-money laundering schemes, to various kinds of arms-dealing schemes," said Jack Blum, an adviser at the Tax Justice Network. "That offshore center has become — second next to the canal — the principal source of income in Panama."

Tax havens have different specialties. The British Virgin Islands forms more corporations than anywhere in the world. The Cayman Islands deals in bank accounts, while its Caribbean neighbor, St. Kitts, focuses on foreign trusts. Panama has a reputation for secrecy, incorporating companies and forming foundations. The size of the offshore financial industry is difficult to judge, but economist Gabriel Zucman, of the University of California at Berkeley, has estimated that \$7.6 trillion, or 8 percent of global financial assets of households, are held in tax havens.

Panama offers a wealth of benefits for the world's wandering money. Setting up an offshore company in Panama is cheap: It costs about \$1,000 to buy a company, including the franchise tax and fees. Foreign-sourced income is not usually subject to taxes here, and more than 100 multinational businesses have set up shop. Panama law firms tout the fact the country has no capital gains taxes except for real estate and no interest income tax. There are strict privacy laws and criminal penalties for releasing financial information.

"They saw an opportunity to fill a void, as more and more of the traditional tax havens were moving toward greater transparency and tax information exchange," said Daniel Reeves, former lead investigator for the Internal Revenue Service's offshore compliance initiatives. "The problem is that the only people who really need absolute financial secrecy are criminals and tax evaders. That's the market segment they may have cut out for themselves, and maybe that's why they're in trouble today."

The law firm at the center of the scandal is not a back-alley outfit that requires a secret knock to enter. From its glass-fronted headquarters in the capital, Mossack Fonseca employs more than 500 people and has a network of branches, run as franchises, around the world. Until his formal resignation this week, one of its owners, Ramon Fonseca, had been an adviser to President Juan Carlos Varela and regularly attended cabinet meetings on Tuesdays.

"From the offshore perspective, they were the biggest law firm in Panama," Alemán, the chief of staff, said.

The Mossack Fonseca documents, of which The Washington Post does not have access, have revealed four decades of work creating offshore companies for a range of wealthy clients. The many law firms that perform this work here act as intermediaries, doing the paperwork to set up the business, offering an address and a mailbox. They can also open bank accounts, purchase real estate and produce "nominee directors" who are the faces of the company, creating further layers between the public and the actual beneficiary of the company. The firm opens about 20,000 offshore companies per year but also rejects some 70 to 80 applicants, Fonseca told the Associated Press.

Mossack Fonseca has denied any wrongdoing. "Nothing in this illegally obtained cache of documents suggests we've done anything wrong or illegal, and that's very much in keeping with the global reputation we've worked hard to build over the past 40 years of doing business the right way," a company spokesman said in a statement.

While Panama's attorney general has said that there will be an investigation into the company, so far other political leaders are standing behind the firm.

But others here have taken issue with the industry's hands-off approach.

"In all of this, there is an ethical problem," Juan Jované, a former presidential candidate and economics professor, said. "I don't share the idea that, 'I create an anonymous corporation, and I don't know what could happen with it.' This is like saying, 'I make guns, and I don't know how they might be used.'"

In recent years, Panama has made some overhauls to increase transparency in its financial and corporate services industries. Earlier this year, an international agency that monitors money laundering took Panama off its gray list. The country also recently passed a law whereby non-financial institutions, such as law firms, have to report suspicious financial transactions, which, officials here point out, the United States has not yet accomplished.

The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, which represents a few dozen wealthier nations, still says that Panama lags far behind other comparable financial centers in transparency. The OECD and Panama have had an ongoing dispute about what type of financial reporting standards the country is willing to use.

Since the scandal broke, Panamanian authorities have been bombarded by consternation from abroad. A European Union official has threatened sanctions against Panama. French authorities placed Panama on its list of uncooperative nations over concerns about information sharing.

All of the uproar, Alemán said, probably means change must occur: The offshore business will not disappear but will probably diminish in size. “Not only in Panama,” he said. “This will be a worldwide matter.”

Panamanian authorities know their reputation has been sullied. The best they can hope for, they say, is for countries who participate in this market to agree to more openness. Until then, Varela said, “Panama is going to be in the eye of the hurricane.”

## **Why ‘In-Law’ Is Banned In Beijing**

[Washington Post](#), April 9, 2016

What is the real meaning of the Panama Papers, millions of documents leaked from a law firm, Mossack Fonseca, showing that leaders around the world have stashed their money in offshore accounts? In many cases, offshoring was not illegal. Rather, the practice betrays a lack of confidence in the tax laws and other conditions in the leaders’ own countries, even as they were supposed to be enforcing those laws and creating better conditions at home. They were guilty in many cases of hypocrisy.

President Xi Jinping of China has implored members of the Communist Party to eschew the trappings of wealth, and he has carried out a campaign to root out corruption and emphasize “socialist core values.” He might be embarrassed that relatives of top officials in China opened offshore accounts to hold their riches. According to journalists who examined the papers, “eight current and former members of the Politburo Standing Committee, the country’s top decision makers, have relatives with secret offshore companies.” One of them was Mr. Xi’s brother in law, Deng Jiagui. In Russia, too, President Vladimir Putin has made a show of urging businessmen and others to bring their offshore property home. But the Panama Papers show that Putin’s pals, including a mysteriously wealthy professional cellist, were moving hundreds of millions of dollars through offshore accounts.

For some leaders in the West, too, the Panama Papers proved unsettling. The prime minister of Iceland, Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson, who had promised to defend the nation’s currency and stressed the importance of keeping money in Iceland, was found to have an offshore company, held for a while with his wife. British Prime Minister David Cameron has been thrown on the defensive about a disclosure that he earned money from an overseas investment trust established by his late father, which he sold before taking office as prime minister. Although there was

nothing illegal in it, the optics are bad; Mr. Cameron has been outspoken about fighting international tax evasion.

Note how reactions differed, based on the type of government. In Iceland, a massive street protest by outraged citizens led the prime minister to resign. In Britain, Mr. Cameron is being openly challenged by other politicians. And in China? Censors went to work not only blacking out any mention of the reports about Mr. Xi but blocking any online search for “brother-in-law” lest it reveal news of Mr. Deng’s holdings. In Russia, Mr. Putin said “your humble servant” was not named in the documents so “there is nothing to talk about.” He added that leak of the Panama Papers was an American plot against Russia. “In this connection, attempts are made to weaken us from within, make us more acquiescent,” Mr. Putin declared, ever the paranoid.

The Panama Papers have made an important contribution to accountability. In democratic societies, this means that leaders answer for their actions. In China and Russia, they try to conceal the truth.

## **TransCanada Receives Approval Notice For Keystone Pipeline Restart**

By Catherine Ngai

[Reuters](#), April 9, 2016

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## **Ex-Argentine President Fernandez Charged With Money Laundering: Media**

By Rosalba O'Brien And Jorge Otaola

[Reuters](#), April 9, 2016

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## **Argentine Prosecutor Probing Ex-President Kirchner: Reports**

[AFP](#), April 9, 2016

Argentine former president Cristina Kirchner, who only just left office after eight years in power, could be investigated for alleged money laundering, local media reported Saturday.

Federal prosecutor Guillermo Marijuan is seeking an investigation of Kirchner based on information given by a protected witness in an ongoing case, local media said, citing court sources.

The reports said the unnamed witness was believed to have pointed both to Kirchner (in power 2007-2015) and her late husband, the former president Nestor Kirchner (2003-2007).

As part of the case, a judge on Wednesday ordered the arrest of Lazaro Baez, 59, who is accused of laundering money during the Kirchner presidencies.

He was a family friend of the Kirchners who allegedly helped the presidential duo launder money on their behalf in Switzerland, the reports said.

Baez built a massive business empire in the southern province of Santa Cruz, the Kirchners' political base.

Separately, Kirchner is scheduled in a few days to testify in court in an investigation into whether she committed mishandling of public funds in connection with Central Bank currency-related operations while she was president.

## **Argentine Prosecutor May Add Ex-President To Financial Inquiry**

By Jonathan Gilbert

[New York Times](#), April 9, 2016

An Argentine federal prosecutor is seeking to include former President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in a widening investigation into money laundering, according to news media reports on Saturday.

The prosecutor, Guillermo Marijuán, made the decision after a financier, who had been jailed in a separate case, gave lengthy testimony on Friday, according to Télam, the state news agency.

The judge overseeing the investigation, Sebastián Casanello, must decide how to proceed with the recommendation to investigate Mrs. Kirchner, the country's president from 2007 until last December, and Julio de Vido, a prominent former minister in her administration.

It is unclear whether Mr. Marijuán has actually filed the recommendation yet. Efforts to speak to his office on Saturday evening were unsuccessful.

The money-laundering case has gripped Argentina since 2013, when Jorge Lanata, an influential broadcast journalist, first revealed allegations of a scheme that involved Lázaro Báez, a construction baron in Patagonia who had ties to Mrs. Kirchner and her late husband and predecessor, Néstor Kirchner, and the financier who testified on Friday, Leonardo Fariña.

Mr. Báez was arrested last week and accused of laundering about \$5 million. Tracing the arc of the investigation to Mrs. Kirchner, prosecutors on the case have said tens of millions of dollars may have been siphoned off from government funds for infrastructure projects. During her presidency, Mrs. Kirchner asserted that her administration was not corrupt and denied any wrongdoing.

Mrs. Kirchner currently holds no public office. On Wednesday, she is scheduled to give testimony in a separate investigation into alleged misdeeds at the Central Bank during the final months of her presidency.

Allegations of corruption shrouded both Kirchner administrations. Last year, a former transportation minister was convicted in a corruption case. Mrs. Kirchner's former vice president, Amado Boudou, has been indicted in yet another corruption case. He has proclaimed his innocence.

## **NATIONAL NEWS**

### **President Obama Talks Building "Economy Where Everybody Has A Fair Shot"**

[KVNU-AM Logan \(UT\)](#), April 9, 2016

The White House(WASHINGTON) – In his weekly address, President Obama spoke about “playing by the same rules” with regards to the U.S. economy, explaining some of the actions taken by the Administration this week to try and “level the playing field” for American taxpayers.

“I believe that rather than double down on policies that allow a few at the top to play by their own rules, we should build an economy where everybody has a fair shot, everybody does their fair share, and everybody plays by the same set of rules,” President Obama said.

He talked about the Treasury Department cracking down on tax inversions, or companies who merge with others outside the U.S. to have a lower tax rate, and the Labor Department's new rule to make the retirement industry more accountable. According to the president, the Labor Department's new rule “will boost working folks' retirement savings by billions of dollars a year. And it will level the playing field for the many good advisors who do work in their clients' best interest. “

Read the president's full address:

Hi everybody. Over the past seven years, we haven't just been recovering from crisis, we've been rebuilding our economy on a new foundation for growth – growth that benefits everybody, not just folks at the top. Our businesses have created jobs for 73 straight months – 14.4 million new jobs in all. We've covered another 20 million Americans with health insurance. We've helped more Americans afford college, and invested in industries that create good jobs that pay well, like clean energy. And wages are finally rising again.

But there will always be more work to do. And this week, my Administration took two big steps that will help make sure your hard work is rewarded, and that everybody plays by the same rules.

First, we're helping more Americans retire with security and dignity. Right now, if you go to a retirement advisor for investment advice, some of them don't have to act in your best interest. Instead of telling you the best way to save your hard-earned money, these advisors can get backdoor payments from big companies for steering you toward investments that cost more and earn you less. As a result,



when you retire, you might be missing out on tens of thousands of dollars – because your advisor got paid more to give you bad advice.

If that seems wrong, that's because it is. That's why the Department of Labor just finalized a rule to crack down on these kinds of conflicts of interest. And a lot of Wall Street special interests aren't very happy about it. But across the country, this new rule will boost working folks' retirement savings by billions of dollars a year. And it will level the playing field for the many good advisors who do work in their clients' best interest.

Second, the Treasury Department took action to crack down on big corporations that change their address overseas after acquiring smaller companies, in order to reduce their tax bill here at home. It's a loophole called "corporate inversion." And it means that American companies can take advantage of America's technology, America's infrastructure, America's workers – but then, when it comes to paying their fair share of taxes, suddenly claim they're not American companies after all. That's why, this week, the Treasury Department made it more difficult for companies to exploit this loophole and stick the rest of us with the tab.

Together, these steps build on the work we've already done to make our tax code fairer and consumer protections stronger. Because I believe that rather than double down on policies that allow a few at the top to play by their own rules, we should build an economy where everybody has a fair shot, everybody does their fair share, and everybody plays by the same set of rules.

That's what this country is all about. That's what we've been working toward these past seven years. And that's what I'm going to keep fighting for as long as I'm your President.

Thanks everybody. Have a great weekend.

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## **Senate Primary-race Pressures Work Against Obama's Court Nominee**

By Richard Cowan

[Reuters](#), April 9, 2016

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## **Obama To Make First 'Fox News Sunday' Appearance**

By Heidi M Przybyla

[USA Today](#), April 9, 2016

President Obama will make his first appearance on Fox News Sunday as president, while the 2016 race for the White house will dominate the other talk shows.

Obama wants to press Republicans to support his Supreme Court nominee, Merrick Garland. The Republican-

led Senate is refusing to hold confirmation hearings considering Garland, nominated to fill the vacancy created by the death of Justice Antonin Scalia in February. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and other GOP leaders say the vacancy should be filled by the next president. Obama believes Garland should get a hearing and an up-or-down vote this year.

The show's host, Chris Wallace, taped the interview Thursday and predicted the president will make bigger news with his comments about Hillary Clinton's emails. The Federal Bureau of Investigation may be close to finishing its review of the private server Clinton maintained as the nation's top diplomat.

Presidential election politics will be the focus on the other shows, with Sen. Bernie Sanders hitting three different programs ahead of a critical contest in New York on April 19. Polls currently show him behind Hillary Clinton, who will also appear, in addition to Republican presidential candidate John Kasich.

Here's the full lineup:

- CBS' Face the Nation: Kasich, Sanders
- NBC's Meet the Press: Sanders
- CNN's State of the Union: Sanders; Clinton
- Fox News Sunday: Obama
- ABC's This Week: Sanders

## **Obama Combines Fundraising, Golf In Whirlwind Trip To SF**

By Hamed Aleaziz

[San Francisco Chronicle](#), April 9, 2016

After a wet and foggy round of golf at the Olympic Club on Saturday morning, President Obama departed San Francisco en route to the White House after a quick, two-day fundraising sweep through California.

At San Francisco International Airport, the president jogged up the stairs to Air Force One and was airborne and heading home by 2:40 p.m.

The president, who was joined by his 17-year-old daughter, Malia, on the trip, spent less than 48 hours in the state, where he was the featured guest at Democratic fundraisers.

Friday was an early night for the president, whose motorcade returned from a Pacific Heights fundraiser to his hotel, the Intercontinental at Fifth and Howard streets, shortly after 8:30 p.m. But Obama was out early Saturday to sneak in a round of golf before returning to Washington.

The drizzly, gray weather didn't deter Obama, an avid golfer. He arrived at the Olympic Club just before 10 a.m., put on a beige ball cap and a dark-colored rain jacket, and hit the links with White House aides Marvin Nicholson and Joe Paulsen, and David Katz, a former White House policy adviser.

The press pool traveling with Obama caught a glimpse of the president teeing off on the 9th hole just before noon and driving his golf cart. The rain had stopped, but the overcast remained as the president finished his round and left for the airport shortly after 2 p.m.

Plenty of San Francisco drivers won't be sad to see the last of the president, for this trip at least. With Obama staying at a South of Market hotel, security measures caused a traffic nightmare in the neighborhood, with street closures and detours tying up the streets for much of Friday and Saturday.

The trip began in Los Angeles on Thursday evening with a \$33,400-a-couple fundraiser for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and continued Friday with a morning event in Los Angeles and San Francisco fundraisers in Potrero Hill and Pacific Heights.

The president used the Pacific Heights event, which was held at the home of billionaire Gordon Getty and his wife, Ann, to criticize Republican senators who refuse to allow his Supreme Court nominee, Merrick Garland, the 63-year-old chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C., to receive a confirmation hearing.

"We have some work to do," Obama told the crowd of about 100. "We have a Republican Senate that has decided not only not to vote for him, but to not give the American people an opportunity to hear what he has to say through a hearing."

Chronicle staff writer

John Wildermuth contributed to this report.

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## Joe Biden, Lady Gaga Tour Aims To Stop Sexual Assaults On Campus

By Christina Beck

[Yahoo! News](#), April 9, 2016

In any other circumstances, Vice President Joe Biden and pop singer Lady Gaga would make an unlikely pair. During the "It's On Us" tour to end sexual violence, it could be argued that the two complement each other perfectly.

The two are touring the country, speaking at college campuses about sexual violence and the White House's "It's On Us" campaign to discuss the causes of rape and assault. The campaign aims to address student apathy and cultural and gender norms on campus that are seen as contributing to the problem.

Mr. Biden first introduced Lady Gaga at this year's Oscar ceremony, where she performed surrounded by sexual assault survivors. The singer and songwriter has spoken about her own past experiences with sexual assault before.

Recommended:

How much do you know about America's first ladies? Take our quiz!

"Imagine the courage it takes for her to speak out and then imagine the courage it takes for her to sing a song, 'Til It Happens to You,'" said Biden, introducing Lady Gaga at the University of Las Vegas, Nevada, "that is branded in her heart," the Associated Press reported.

Biden has been involved in the fight against sexual violence since he wrote the Violence Against Women Act, 22 years ago. In November 2015, he wrote a moving opinion piece on sexual assault for the "It's On Us" campaign, which appears on the White House website.

Biden spoke to the need to stop asking the wrong questions about what a victim did that caused rape or assault to happen, but rather ask questions about what makes perpetrators think that rape is ok.

"We have to ask the right questions – What made him think that he could do what he did without my consent? Why on Earth did no one stop him instead of standing by? What can we do to make sure everyone has the courage," wrote Biden, "to speak up, intervene, prevent and end sexual assault once and for all?"

Several colleges and universities also printed Biden's piece in their campus newspapers.

At Thursday's event in Las Vegas, Biden spoke for forty minutes about the problems surrounding sexual assault.

After Biden's talk, Lady Gaga performed 'Til it Happens to You." The two have spoken and performed together at three campuses this week, as part of the "It's On Us" Week of Action, including the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Colorado, Boulder.

At every appearance, Biden asks attending students to make a pledge to be active in the fight against sexual violence. As of November, over 250,000 students had taken the pledge. The "It's On Us" website features videos by celebrities like Jon Hamm who have also taken the pledge. The campaign says that more than 300 campuses have hosted over 1,000 "It's On Us" events.

What can students do? Biden writes:

To intervene instead of being a bystander.

To recognize that any time consent is not – or cannot – be given, it is sexual assault and it is a crime.

To do everything you can to create an environment where sexual assault is unacceptable, and all survivors are supported.

Has the "It's On Us" campaign made a difference? It may be too early to tell. Critics of the program say that although it has garnered many celebrity sponsors, it has done little to generate real dialogue.

Biden and Lady Gaga are making the rounds to college campuses as campus rape cases continue to abound. On Friday, former Vanderbilt football player Corey Batey was found guilty of raping an unconscious student on the university's campus.

The victim says that while she does not remember the rape, she does remember waking up confused in an unknown room. She was dating another football player, Brandon Vandenberg, at the time. Vandenberg was also accused of rape.

According to the Associated Press, this case is unusual in that it features film and photograph evidence of the crime generated by the perpetrators.

The AP also noted that this trial “once again raised questions about bystanders in campus sexual assaults. At least five student athletes saw the unconscious woman in a state of distress but did not call for help, including several who testified that they saw her lying partially nude in a dorm hallway.”

The Christian Science Monitor reported that new research shows that “women who experienced incapacitated rape before college were six times more likely to experience that again in college and four times more likely to be forcibly raped than women who had not been previously raped while incapacitated.”

Colleges have been criticized, for instance, for focusing too much effort on teaching young women to avoid certain situations at parties.

“We need to really reframe how we think about risk reduction ... and focus more on who are the perpetrators and why are they ‘seizing the opportunity’ of vulnerable populations,” says Jane Stapleton, co-director of UNH’s Prevention Innovations: Research and Practices for Ending Violence Against Women.

## **Bernie Zeroes In On Next Win**

**In Wyoming, Sanders is looking for his eighth win in his last nine contests against Hillary Clinton.**

By Gabriel DeBenedetti

[Politico](#), April 9, 2016

Bernie Sanders appears poised to pick up his eighth win in the last nine contests on Saturday, as Wyoming’s Democrats caucus in the final electoral showdown between Sanders and Hillary Clinton before New York’s pivotal primary later this month.

While only 14 delegates are at stake in Wyoming — which Sanders only swung through once, and Clinton never visited — the Vermont senator’s likely wide win there is expected to add fuel to his claim that he has the political momentum in the second half of the Democratic primary season, as he struggles to chip away at Clinton’s pledged delegate lead of over 200 pledged delegates.

Hours before the caucuses were scheduled to begin, the Sanders campaign released its own internal pledged delegate count and a list of superdelegate supporters, designed to advance the idea that the campaign is picking up steam.

“Sen. Sanders won these recent contests by large and impressive margins,” said Jeff Weaver, Sanders’ campaign manager in a statement. “As a result, we have cut Secretary Clinton’s delegate lead by 101 since March 15, which amounts to one-third of her then-total margin. That dramatic gain leaves us only 214 delegates behind — a margin we can and fully intend to surpass by the conclusion of voting on June 14.”

While Clinton’s campaign sent former President Bill Clinton to Wyoming once, the state has hardly been a battleground between the two Democrats. It fits the mold of Idaho and Utah, two neighboring states where Sanders cruised to victory last month: a conservative stronghold with a small, largely white, Democratic population that holds a caucus. Clinton lost Wyoming handily to Barack Obama in 2008.

Nonetheless, Sanders is likely to lean heavily on his momentum argument coming out of Wyoming, as tensions have risen noticeably while both campaigns bear down on New York’s high-stakes contest — and its 247 delegates — on April 19. Far from resetting the race, the Wyoming results are at risk of getting lost in the rush of New York while both candidates campaign there on Saturday.

The two have recently clashed after Sanders claimed Clinton was “unqualified” to be president, but the mood simmered a bit on Friday as Sanders recanted the assertion and Clinton said Sanders was qualified, as well. Both turned their scorn instead on Republicans Donald Trump and Ted Cruz.

The underdog, who needs to start winning large states like New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland by roughly 60 percent to 40 percent if he wants to overtake Clinton by the time California votes in June, has been on a streak ever since Clinton built a 300-odd delegate lead with primary wins in Florida, Illinois, Missouri, Ohio, and North Carolina in mid-March. Sanders then won the Democrats Abroad primary and caucuses in Idaho, Utah, Alaska, Hawaii, and Washington, while Clinton took Arizona.

Then, on Tuesday, Sanders beat Clinton in Wisconsin’s primary, celebrating his victory with a speech in Laramie, Wyoming.

The country’s top coal-producing state is one where neither candidate made a particularly targeted pitch, due to its small delegate haul, but Clinton was dogged by her statement at an Ohio town hall event before that state’s primary that “we’re going to put a lot of coal miners and coal companies out of business.”

Her comment came within the context of a pitch for a broader switch to clean energy — she prefaced it by noting “I’m the only candidate which has a policy about how to bring economic opportunity using clean renewable energy as the key into coal country” — but Republicans seized on the remark, seeking to make it resonate in coal-producing areas.

Still, after Wyoming the road ahead gets tough again for Sanders, starting in his birth-state of New York, where Clinton, the state's former senator, is favored. In order to remain competitive in the nomination fight, he likely needs to come close to her there, but he has yet to demonstrate an ability to win states like New York that hold closed primaries where only Democrats can participate in the party's primary.

His primary election wins thus far — in New Hampshire, Vermont, Michigan, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin — have each come in states with open or semi-open primaries that allow independents and, in some cases, any registered voter, to participate.

But few of the states left on the calendar hold such contests, raising the importance of his performance in New York, which is likely to set the tone for the rest of the month.

Clinton campaign officials say they expect Sanders to be effectively eliminated after the April 26 contests in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, while Sanders aides maintain he will be in the race at least until the July Democratic convention — and contend he will grab the delegate lead in California on June 7.

## The Latest: Sanders Wins Wyoming, But Delegates Evenly Split

[Associated Press](#), April 10, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – The Latest on the presidential campaign, with the focus Saturday on the delegate hunt for Republicans in Colorado and Democrats in Wyoming, while several candidates campaign in New York, which holds its primary April 19 (all times Eastern Daylight Time):

6:25 p.m.

Bernie Sanders may have won the Wyoming caucus, but in terms of delegates it was a draw.

Sanders split the state's delegates evenly with Hillary Clinton. Each picked up seven.

Democratic contests award delegates in proportion to the vote, so even the loser gets some. In Wyoming, Sanders' victory with 56 percent of the vote wasn't enough to secure an additional delegate over Clinton.

That means barely a change in the overall delegate count.

To date, Clinton has 1,287 delegates based on primaries and caucuses to Sanders' 1,037.

When including superdelegates, or party officials who can back any candidate, Clinton has 1,756, or 74 percent of the number needed to clinch the nomination. Sanders has 1,068.

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5:45 p.m.

Bernie Sanders' campaign in New York is getting some help from moviemaker Spike Lee, singer and activist Harry

Belafonte and Erica Garner, the daughter of Eric Garner, who was killed by New York police.

Lee has produced a new TV spot that features Belafonte, Garner and other advocates for minorities endorsing Sanders' efforts on behalf of people of color.

Belafonte is quoted as saying "People of color have a deeply vested interest in what Bernie Sanders brings to us in this election."

Garner continues the thought by adding, "people like Michael Brown, Sandra Bland and my father, Eric Garner."

Hillary Clinton has been drawing lopsided support from minorities in the Democratic primaries and caucuses, and Sanders is trying to reverse that trend.

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4:55 p.m.

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders' wife interrupted his remarks at a campaign rally in New York with news of his latest victory: Wyoming.

Sanders quickly relayed the word to the crowd of several hundred people, and after a standing ovation, he joked that there are probably more people at his event than live in Wyoming.

He picked up at least seven of the state's 14 delegates to Hillary Clinton's six. One delegate remains to be assigned, pending a final vote tally.

The victory on Saturday means Sanders has now won 16 states, compared to Clinton's 18. But it will do little to change the overall delegate count, which Clinton leads by a large margin.

To date, Clinton has 1,286 delegates based on primaries and caucuses to Sanders' 1,037.

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4:45 p.m.

Bernie Sanders' win in Wyoming isn't yielding much in delegates.

With just 14 delegates, Wyoming has the fewest pledged delegates to offer among the 50 states.

Sanders prevailed in caucus voting Saturday, and has now won 16 states to Clinton's 18.

He picked up at least seven delegates to Clinton's six. One delegate remains to be allocated, pending the final vote tally.

That means little change to the overall delegate count, in which Clinton leads by a large margin.

To date, Clinton has 1,286 delegates based on primaries and caucuses to Sanders' 1,037.

When including superdelegates, or party officials who can back any candidate, Clinton has amassed even more delegates, 1,755 compared to 1,068 for Sanders.

Sanders still needs to win 68 percent of the remaining delegates and uncommitted superdelegates if he hopes to take the Democratic nomination. It takes 2,383 to win.

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4:35 p.m.

Put Wyoming in the victory column for Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders.

Sanders won the state's caucuses over Hillary Clinton, but the win isn't likely to help him make up much ground against in the delegate race that will decide nomination.

Wyoming awards just 14 delegates overall, and before Saturday's results, Clinton held a commanding lead of more than 200 pledged delegates.

Her edge over Sanders is even greater when you count the party insiders who are known as superdelegates.

Sanders has dominated in states where Democrats make their presidential preference choice in a caucus – but there are only a few caucuses left on the election calendar.

Most of the states still to vote will hold primaries – contests where Clinton has generally performed better.

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3:50 p.m.

Ted Cruz says there's no room for subtlety in politics – and his team is making that clear at Colorado's Republican state convention.

Cruz's supporters in Colorado Springs are wearing bright orange T-shirts – with his slate of desired delegates printed on the back.

That's in contrast to Donald Trump, who skipped the convention to remain in his home state of New York, which holds its primary April 19.

Trump's organizers in Colorado distributed a slate that included incorrect information for four of his desired delegates.

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2:15 p.m.

Maximum bickering between the Democrats over the minimum wage.

Bernie Sanders says it's "amusing" to see Hillary Clinton join New York's governor in celebrating a bill raising the state's minimum wage to \$15 an hour because – as Sanders notes – Clinton supports increasing the federal minimum wage to \$12.

But she does back Senate legislation that would give cities and states the ability to set a higher threshold.

Sanders made the comment during the first of four stops Saturday in New York City. The state's primary is April 19.

After recently questioning Clinton's qualifications to be president, Sanders is sticking largely to the issues – the minimum wage, Social Security, campaign financing.

Sanders wants Clinton to make her position on Social Security clearer.

She says she'll preserve the program by asking the wealthy to pay more.

Sander says he'd lift the cap on taxable income to ensure the wealthy are contributing more and he promises to expand benefits.

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12:45 p.m.

Donald Trump has visited the National Sept. 11 Memorial and Museum in Lower Manhattan.

The Republican presidential front-runner arrived shortly after noon and spent about 30 minutes touring the museum.

He left without speaking to members of the media who were invited along for the visit by the campaign.

Trump has criticized rival Ted Cruz for comments that Cruz made at a GOP debate criticizing New York values.

In defending his home city, Trump has pointed to New York's response to the Sept. 11 attacks.

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## **Bernie Sanders And Ted Cruz Look To Gain Ground In West**

By Amy Chozick

[New York Times](#), April 10, 2016

Senator Bernie Sanders is looking to extend his winning streak Saturday as the Democratic presidential race comes to Wyoming, while Senator Ted Cruz will try to pad his winning margin in the Colorado's Republican contest.

With just 14 delegates up for grabs, a victory by Mr. Sanders in Saturday's Wyoming caucuses would only peck away at Hillary Clinton's 219-delegate lead. But coming after his recent big wins in Washington State, Alaska, Idaho, Utah, Hawaii and Wisconsin, a Sanders victory in Wyoming would continue to expose Mrs. Clinton's weaknesses among white and liberal voters as the race moves to major primaries in New York and elsewhere in the Northeast.

In Colorado, where Republican delegates have been voting over several days, Mr. Cruz had clinched a majority of the state's 37 national delegates by Friday night. Thirteen others were to be decided on Saturday at the Republican state convention, where Mr. Cruz is scheduled to speak. Like Mr. Sanders, Mr. Cruz still trails the front-runner in his race, in his case, Donald J. Trump. And the campaign now moves to territory likely to be far more favorable to Mr. Trump.

Though Mr. Sanders was favored in the Wyoming Democratic race, Mrs. Clinton, as she has in most states, had endorsements from more elected officials, and the state's four "superdelegates" are supporting her. In 2008, she lost to Barack Obama in Wyoming by 24 percentage points.

The state is exactly the type of contest she struggles in. It is mostly white, and it uses a caucus format. Mrs. Clinton has not campaigned in Wyoming, choosing instead to devote time and resources to the delegate-rich New York and Pennsylvania primaries on April 19 and April 26, respectively.

Instead, the campaign dispatched former President Bill Clinton to the state to campaign on his wife's behalf. On a stop in Cheyenne this month, he talked about the need for clean energy and a transition away from coal and other fossil fuels — comments that came as 500 Wyoming coal workers faced being laid off. A protester outside held a sign that read, "God, guns and coal made America great."

Mr. Clinton spoke about the layoffs. "Just think about the jobs that would be created in Wyoming if we decided to maximize your capacity to export wind as you export coal," he said at the Cheyenne-Kiwanis Community House.

The former president seemed acutely aware of his wife's chances in the state's caucuses. "There are a lot of young college students who have been very enthusiastic about her opponent because he promises free tuition for everyone," he said. (Mr. Sanders has proposed free tuition at public colleges.)

"But," Mr. Clinton said, "if you read the fine print, the free tuition comes two-thirds from the federal government and one-third from the state." He said it was unrealistic to expect the state's Republican governor and Legislature to support the program.

Mr. Sanders himself showed up in Wyoming, holding a rally Tuesday in Laramie, where he delivered his victory speech after winning the Wisconsin primary.

"I believe we have an excellent chance to win New York and a lot of delegates in that state," Mr. Sanders said in Laramie. "We have an excellent chance to win in Oregon, and to win in California."

Referring to his large deficit among superdelegates, the party leaders and elected officials who have overwhelmingly backed Mrs. Clinton, but who could still change their mind, he said: "I think a lot of these superdelegates are going to be looking around them. And they are going to be saying, 'Which candidate has the momentum?'"

James King, a political science professor at the University of Wyoming, said the state, which has struggled to diversify its economy beyond coal, gas and oil, was a good fit for Mr. Sanders. "He really has to, I think, at each success build on another success, and he is running out of states obviously," Professor King said.

New York, Mrs. Clinton's adopted home state and Mr. Sanders's birth state, could be a firewall that lets her reclaim the momentum and take a big step toward making her delegate lead insurmountable. Its more diverse population and its more traditional primary method of voting make the state friendlier territory for Mrs. Clinton. Continue reading the main story

## Sanders Wins Wyoming To Boost Momentum Before New York Duel

By Michelle Jamrisko

[Bloomberg Politics](#), April 9, 2016

Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders secured his seventh consecutive nominating-contest victory after voters caucused in Wyoming, to give his campaign a fresh shot of momentum heading into New York's pivotal primary later this month.

With 96 percent of Saturday's Wyoming vote counted, Sanders had 56 percent to Hillary Clinton's 44 percent, according to the Associated Press.

"All right, news bulletin: we just won Wyoming," Sanders said during a rally at LaGuardia Community College in New York after his wife, Jane, went on stage to tell him the result. "We appreciate and thank the people of Wyoming so much for their support."

Sanders's win, following a triumph in Wisconsin earlier this week, will do little to narrow his disadvantage in pledged delegates to front-runner Clinton. Wyoming awards 14 delegates proportionally, and has four superdelegates. The contenders next face off in New York on April 19, where 291 delegates are at stake.

Double-Digit Lead

Clinton, the former secretary of state who represented New York in the U.S. Senate, has a double-digit lead over the Brooklyn-born Sanders, according to an average of recent polls compiled by Real Clear Politics.

Clinton captured the Arizona primary on March 22. Since that result was called, Sanders has prevailed in Idaho and Utah, also on March 22, and in Alaska, Hawaii, Washington state and Wisconsin. He held his April 5 Wisconsin victory rally at the University of Wyoming in Laramie.

Sparsely populated Wyoming fits the profile of several states won by Sanders so far: rural and mostly white. Democrats are a minority in the state, which Mitt Romney carried over Barack Obama by 40 points in the 2012 general election. Obama won the 2008 Democratic caucus over Clinton by 61 percent to 38 percent.

Tumultuous Week

The Wyoming matchup capped a tumultuous week for Sanders, during which his campaign was engaged in a war of words with Clinton's team over the candidates' respective fitness to succeed Obama. Clinton said some of the answers Sanders gave in a recent interview with the New York Daily News made it seem like he "hadn't done his homework."

The Vermont senator still would need to overcome a large Clinton lead in pledged delegates and superdelegates — party officials and elected lawmakers — in order to secure the Democratic nomination at the July convention. A candidate needs 2,383 delegates to win.

Earlier Saturday, the Sanders campaign said the democratic socialist has more delegates than reflected in recent tallies by the AP. It estimated pledged delegates at 1,088 to Clinton's 1,302; the AP put the contest, before Wyoming, at 1,030 to 1,280.

Clinton spent Saturday stumping in New York City. She worked the room at Junior's Cheesecake in Brooklyn, where a diverse and enthusiastic crowd at one point started a "Hillary for President" chant.

The Republican National Committee, in a statement, said Clinton had lost her status as "inevitable front-runner" among Democrats after recent losses and termed the former first lady "beatable" in November if she becomes the nominee.

## **Bernie Sanders Prevails In Wyoming, Continuing Winning Streak Against Hillary Clinton**

By John Wagner

[Washington Post](#), April 9, 2016

NEW YORK — Democratic hopeful Bernie Sanders won the Wyoming caucuses on Saturday, continuing a winning streak against front-runner Hillary Clinton as the two head for a key showdown next week in New York.

The Associated Press called the race for the senator from Vermont, who has now defeated Clinton in the past seven of eight states that have held nominating contests.

During a rally in Queens, Sanders announced from the stage that he had just won Wyoming, prompting an extended standing ovation.

Sanders has generally performed better than Clinton in caucus states, and the electorate in Wyoming mirrored that of some other Western states where Sanders has done well: It is largely rural and white. Unlike in some other states where Sanders has prevailed, the Wyoming contests was closed to independent voters, who tend to break in Sanders's direction.

Only 14 delegates were at stake Saturday. Sanders was expected to win a majority of them, but his victory won't significantly dent Clinton's formidable lead in the race for the nomination.

Heading into Saturday, she led Sanders by 250 pledged delegates, according to an Associated Press tally. Sanders's campaign said the gap was actually 214 by its count, taking into account delegates still to be formally awarded in states where he has performed well.

Clinton also maintains a huge advantage among superdelegates, the Democratic elected officials and other party leaders who get a say in the nomination and are not bound by the results of their states.

Sanders made a campaign stop Tuesday in Laramie, Wyo, where he held a rally in the college town on the night of his victory in the Wisconsin primary.

Clinton didn't campaign in the state but dispatched her husband, Bill, the former president, to stand in for her.

Sanders's wife, Jane, also made some campaign stops on his behalf.

In recent days, both Sanders and Clinton have largely turned their attention to New York, where 247 delegates are at stake on April 19.

To catch Sanders among pledged delegates, Sanders will have to win most states remaining on the nominating calendar by large margins.

## **Sanders Extends Win Streak With Wyoming Victory**

By Jessie Hellmann

[The Hill](#), April 9, 2016

Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders is projected to win the Wyoming caucuses, giving him eight wins in the last nine contests.

The state awards just 14 delegates on a proportional basis, but the win is another jolt of momentum for Sanders heading into the critical New York primary April 19.

With 96 percent of precincts reporting, Sanders held 56 percent of the vote.

Both campaigns paid little attention to Wyoming. Sanders held a rally there Tuesday. Rival Hillary Clinton did not go to the state, but her husband Bill Clinton did.

Sanders's victory follows rising tensions between the two candidates after he questioned Clinton's qualifications to run for president, a remark that snowballed into a week-long dispute.

He said Wednesday that her super-PAC support, Iraq War vote and support of trade agreements disqualified her. The campaign doubled down a day later, arguing that Clinton and her allies had insinuated that Sanders himself wasn't qualified to run, but she brushed aside those accusations.

The argument appeared to die down Friday when Sanders said "of course" Clinton is qualified.

Entering Saturday, Clinton led the race with 1,280 pledged delegates to Sanders's 1,030, according to the Associated Press.

In addition, Clinton has 469 superdelegates and Sanders 31.

## **Why New York Is Pivotal For Sanders And For Clinton**

By Dan Balz

[Washington Post](#), April 9, 2016

NEW YORK — The Democratic presidential nominating contest has become a discussion about momentum, not mathematics, and that's become a major problem for front-runner Hillary Clinton in her battle against Sen. Bernie Sanders.

Clinton has won more states, more popular votes and more pledged delegates, but Sanders has had the momentum. He has won six of the past seven contests, including last week's Wisconsin primary. But after stumbles by the Vermont senator over the past half-dozen days, New York's April 19 primary and the series of contests that follow April 26 provide Clinton the opportunity to change the conversation. For both practical and psychological reasons, she badly needs to do so.

The Vermont senator has been running a remarkable campaign politically, having generated support and enthusiasm far beyond what anyone anticipated. Even more astonishing is the fact that he continues to raise money faster and more easily than Clinton. The Sanders grass-roots, online money machine guarantees that he will have the resources — and the passion behind his candidacy — to contest every primary and caucus between now and June 7.

In recent weeks, thanks to huge victories in caucuses, he has chopped Clinton's lead in pledged delegates substantially. That has given rise to his talk of potentially moving ahead of Clinton in pledged delegates, of a related battle to convert Democratic super delegates — elected officials and party leaders who have automatic seats at the convention and are free to support whomever they choose — to his column, even to suggestions of an open convention in Philadelphia.

The cold realities of the nominating process have been stated many times. Democratic rules make it difficult for anyone to gain a significant lead in pledged delegates because they are awarded proportionally. But once someone has a lead, a rival candidate faces an even more daunting task trying to catch up. That's the situation Sanders has faced for some time, but his big victories in recent caucuses and the Wisconsin vote have kept the focus on his successes more than his challenges.

Clinton's team had hoped that the hard realities of delegate math would set in earlier this spring. Instead, the opposite has occurred. The more Sanders has won, the more the focus has been on what's wrong with Clinton. She has had to keep virtually her entire focus on the primary campaign. At some point, however, as the likely nominee, she will need to turn her attention — and some of the resources of her campaign — to assembling the building blocks for a likely general election. That clock is now ticking louder.

The Clinton team believes that by the end of the month, the numbers will be incontrovertible, that she will be seen as the presumptive nominee. Senior officials who have run the numbers argue that by month's end, Clinton will have accumulated roughly 90 percent of the delegates needed to clinch the nomination. "There won't be a path for Bernie to succeed," said one of those advisers, who declined to be identified to share internal information.

That won't end the competition with Sanders. The calendar looks better for him in May than late April. He will most likely win contests that month, giving rise to more questions about Clinton. This isn't uncommon in nomination battles. President Obama, in his 2008 campaign against Clinton, lost more contests than he won between early March and the end of the primary season. But his delegate lead barely wavered. By the time we get to California in June, Clinton could be in a position to claim the nomination while still losing the state to Sanders by a wide margin.

The Clinton campaign's projections of her trajectory are based on a combination of pledged and super delegates. The current Associate Press count gives her 1,280 pledged delegates and 469 super delegates for a total of 1,749. AP says Sanders has 1,061, including 38 super delegates.

The Sanders camp pegs his total slightly higher. Beyond that, his advisers say that neither candidate can achieve the necessary 2,383 delegates needed for nomination on the basis of pledged delegates alone and say that would leave the issue of who becomes the nominee in the hands of the super delegates. Still, Clinton is likely to have a majority of those pledged delegates based on current projections.

Clinton's strength among super delegates appears to be understated by public counts. Campaign officials have told their allies in the party that their actual super delegate count is at least 100 more than the AP count and now closing in on 600 overall. Nor are those tasked with keeping an eye on those super delegates seeing any defections, according to several party officials.

The campaign's internal numbers are higher than the public numbers for two reasons. First, there are some super delegates who have publicly committed who haven't yet been identified. Beyond that, there are more who have made private commitments to the Clinton campaign but don't want to say so publicly for the time being, with some likely to wait until the primaries are concluded.

Clinton knows Sanders will run to the end of the primaries; she did the same against Obama in 2008 when she was the underdog and trying to close the gap. But general election planning also looms. Working backwards from Election Day, the time is fast approaching when any smart campaign must start to set up organizations in the battleground states and prepare in other ways as well.

That is unglamorous but necessary work — picking state directors who in turn will build out their paid staffs and link up to a bigger network of volunteers. In some states, early voting will begin a month out from the election, which means that by early September, a campaign focused on winning in the fall must have its teams up and running at full speed — to identify its voters and get them to the polls.

That work needs to start sometime within the next month, if history is any guide. It can be done in a shorter



amount of time but there are risks. The fractured Republican nominating contest could give Clinton some cushion, but in practice, the prospect of a contested GOP convention gives Democrats an opportunity to take aim at the Republicans before they're truly ready to fight back.

That's why New York is so important to Clinton. It's not just winning, it's changing the conversation. A loss to Sanders in the state she represented in the Senate for eight years would be a huge setback, far bigger than what happened in Wisconsin. Victory could start her on a path that could make the Democratic race look far different in a matter of weeks.

## **Minnesota: Bernie's Superdelegate Sweet Spot**

By Daniel Strauss  
[Politico](#), April 9, 2016

Congressman Rick Nolan threw his support behind Bernie Sanders on Saturday, making him the third member of Minnesota's congressional delegation to back the Vermont senator's presidential campaign.

Nolan, a superdelegate, said he would vote for Sanders at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia this summer. He joins two other Minnesota superdelegates, Congressmen Keith Ellison and Collin Peterson, in supporting Sanders. No other state has more than one Democratic congressman in the Sanders camp.

"The Democratic Party is fortunate to have two qualified presidential candidates, both of whom offer substantive solutions to the problems facing Americans," Nolan said in a statement. "I've considered a number of factors in making this decision, including the will of Minnesota caucus attendees, specifically those in the 8th Congressional District. Bernie's message and his authenticity appeals to voters here, and it appeals to me. I'll be proud to cast my vote for him in Philadelphia this summer."

Nolan joins a list of 38 superdelegates backing Sanders. Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton has 469 listed in her camp.

Sanders supporters had been urging Nolan to back Sanders since the Vermont senator won Minnesota's Democratic caucuses on March 1.

## **Cruz Outmuscles Republican Rivals To Win Most Colorado Delegates**

By Jennifer Oldham  
[Bloomberg Politics](#), April 9, 2016

Ted Cruz, showing off a strong campaign organization and popularity among grass-roots activists, secured the support of a majority of Colorado delegates who will attend the Republican National Convention in July.

After ballots on Friday, the junior senator from Texas had the backing of 21 of the state's 37 delegates who will be

headed to Cleveland. He is well positioned to pick up more on Saturday, when party loyalists will vote to select 13 delegates at a statewide Republican meeting in Colorado Springs. Three Colorado party leaders also will attend the national convention in Cleveland.

Slates loyal to Cruz won in all seven of the state's congressional district assemblies, including some Friday that attracted several thousand activists to a packed hotel conference space near the official state convention venue.

The balloting continued a troubling trend for the campaign of billionaire Donald Trump, whose lack of a robust national campaign infrastructure has left him vulnerable to losses in states with complex delegate selection systems such as in Colorado. Cruz is trying to deny the Republican front-runner enough delegates for a first-ballot nomination in July.

### **Contested Convention**

The 37 delegates from Colorado are a small fraction of the 1,237 needed to win. Yet with the likelihood of a contested national convention on the rise, a handful of delegates could make a difference, and the competition for their selection has taken on much greater significance than has traditionally been the case.

Instead of holding a statewide primary or caucus like most states, Colorado employs a series of local, congressional district and statewide gatherings where people compete to be delegates. That months-long process will wrap up on Saturday.

Cruz is scheduled to speak at the state convention on Saturday before continuing on to Las Vegas for an appearance before the Republican Jewish Coalition.

Neither Trump nor Ohio Governor John Kasich, the other remaining Republican presidential candidate, was scheduled to attend Colorado's convention. Both sent surrogates to pitch their messages.

## **Trump Is Ahead, But Cruz Keeps Winning The Trickier Delegate Contests**

By Ed O'Keefe  
[Washington Post](#), April 9, 2016

COLORADO SPRINGS — Donald Trump still leads the Republican presidential race, but Ted Cruz continues to beat him at a trickier game — securing convention delegates in states that don't hold caucuses or primaries.

If Trump fails to secure the 1,237 delegates needed to win the GOP presidential nomination before the party convention in Cleveland this July, his missteps in more obscure delegate contests could be the ones that cost him a victory.

It happened again Saturday, as Cruz was poised to sweep all the available delegates in Colorado during a day-

long state convention, a win that came just days after he won the Wisconsin primary.

"We have beaten Donald Trump," Cruz told convention attendees here as he stood on stage in a hockey arena flanked by supporters in bright orange T-shirts.

The senator's appearance capped more than a year of work by his volunteers and staffers in Colorado, one of six states and territories that hold a convention instead of caucuses or a primary to determine its presidential preference. With voting continuing into the evening, Republicans were on the verge of awarding all of their 34 delegates to Cruz.

The win pales in comparison to Trump's victories in larger, winner-take-all states. Trump still holds a commanding lead in total delegates, and polls show he is far ahead of Cruz in New York, which holds its primary on April 19. But the proceedings here on Saturday exposed embarrassing missteps by Trump, part of the reason he has shuffled his campaign team in recent days.

In the hours before Saturday's vote, Trump supporters distributed glossy white fliers to convention attendees with the names of candidates to fill 13 statewide delegate slots. But several names were misspelled or assigned the wrong ballot number.

The gaffe was exposed just as Republicans were walking onto the arena floor to take seats and prepare to cast ballots. Trump volunteers printed new lists with new names and ballot numbers — but those lists also had mistakes, including the wrong ballot numbers or the names of people who had pledged to vote for Cruz.

Alan Cobb, a Trump campaign senior adviser in Colorado for the convention, accused the state party of changing the ballot numbers in the final hours before the vote.

"Awful process," he said in a text message. "Our slate was correct at the time of print."

Trump supporters conceded that their team was coming up short.

"I've been in politics exactly 37 days," said Pamela Gentry, a real estate agent and contractor from Westcliffe, Colo., who was loudly drawing attention to a Trump campaign booth just off the arena floor.

Gentry said she began organizing a slate of Trump delegates when she realized that the campaign hadn't deployed staffers to the state.

"It would have been nice if it was a couple of months ago. Because I think every delegate counts," she said.

Elsewhere on Saturday, Republicans in Iowa, Indiana, Michigan and Virginia also began assigning people to serve as delegates to the national convention in July, which could become the party's first contested convention in four decades.

In the nomination race, Trump has 743 delegates, and Cruz was poised to climb to 566 with his win on Saturday. Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), who dropped out of the race last month, still has 171 delegates, and Ohio Gov. John Kasich has 143.

Most delegate trackers forecast that Trump needs to win slightly more than 60 percent of the remaining available delegates to win the nomination before the July convention. Until then, the process of picking delegates will continue to earned outside scrutiny.

In Virginia, Cruz outworked Trump in the commonwealth's 9th Congressional District, winning two of the three delegates up for grabs. Trump easily won the state's southernmost congressional district but apparently failed to turn out the votes needed Saturday to win the three delegate slots.

In Michigan, Republicans formally awarded Trump 25 delegates and Cruz and Kasich 17 delegates each. The Trump and Kasich teams blocked the Cruz slate from earning any of the state's eight seats on convention committees that will set the convention rules and write the party platform.

Republicans in Iowa were beginning the process of assigning delegates from its four congressional districts. Cruz won the state and Trump placed second, meaning both will pick up at least some of the state's 30 delegates.

But Colorado's colorfully chaotic proceedings were the most intriguing of the weekend.

"Isn't democracy messy? It's messy and wonderful and I love it," said Joy Hoffman, chairwoman of the Arapaho County GOP. "Every time we do this, this is proof of the success of the greatest experiment we have."

Jerry Demey, a 73-year old delegate from Pueblo, Colo., marveled at the attention the convention was earning from the national media.

"Thank you, Donald Trump," he said. Despite Cruz's organizational prowess in Colorado, he said that the businessman "got more people off their ass this year than I've ever seen before."

## **Trump's Saturday Delegate Disaster**

**In Colorado and South Carolina, the GOP's embattled front-runner had another very bad day.**

By Eli Stokols And Kyle Cheney

[Politico](#), April 9, 2016

Donald Trump's struggle to win loyal delegates to the Republican National Convention grew even more desperate on Saturday, with crushing losses in Colorado and South Carolina that put victory at a contested convention further from his grasp.

Trump, who handed the reins of much of his campaign this week to strategist Paul Manafort in an effort to shore up his operation before the nomination slips away, so far has been swept out of delegate slots up for grabs at Colorado's

state convention. Adding to his woes, he picked up just one delegate of six on the ballot in South Carolina. The most painful result, though, may have been Trump's failure to capture two of three slots in his strongest South Carolina congressional district.

In fact, Trump lost five of the six delegate seats on the ballot in South Carolina's 3rd and 7th congressional districts. Ted Cruz nabbed a delegate in the 7th district, while another, Alan Clemmons, remained uncommitted despite Trump's dominant finish there in the state's Feb. 20 primary. (The Manhattan billionaire won 43 percent of the district's vote, to Cruz's 20 percent and Kasich's 6 percent.) Cruz also won two of three delegates in the 3rd district, while a third — Susan Aiken, a supporter of Marco Rubio — will go to the convention as an uncommitted delegate.

At the same time, Trump so far has been swept in Colorado, which unlike most states chooses its delegates indirectly, through a series of caucuses. Cruz received a thunderous ovation in Colorado Springs at Saturday afternoon's chaotic GOP assembly as he announced his preliminary delegate haul while Trump's bare-bones operation struggled to get organized.

After firing the organizer initially put in charge of Colorado last week, Trump's team hired Patrick Davis, a GOP operative from Colorado Springs, to put together a slate in an effort to win some of the delegate slots to be elected by just fewer than 4,000 party activists at Saturday's assembly. Heading in, Cruz had already swept the seven assemblies held in the state's congressional districts, each of which elect three delegates, giving him 21 of Colorado's 37 delegates — a majority — before ballots hit the floor at the state convention.

And Trump's last-minute organizing effort does not appear to be going well. The leaflet his campaign handed out listed a slate of 26 delegates. But in many cases the numbers indicating their ballot position — more than 600 delegates are running for 13 slots — were off, meaning that Trump's team was mistakenly directing votes toward other candidates' delegates.

Cruz now has a strong chance of picking up the 13 statewide at-large delegates chosen during Saturday's convention, with the final three appointed automatically by the Colorado Republican Party.

"Cruz had the crowd eating out of his hand when he spoke," said Kelly Maher, a GOP operative based in Denver. "I won't be surprised if he sweeps this when all the votes are in."

It's an extension of a losing streak for Trump that threatens the mogul's odds of winning the Republican nomination at what is increasingly likely to be a contested convention in July. Trump is close to falling short of enough support in the state-level primaries and caucuses to clinch the nomination outright, meaning his fate would be determined by delegates in Cleveland.

Yet Trump's thinly staffed operations, even in the states he carried easily in February and March primaries, have left little organization behind to support delegate candidates. In addition to the congressional-district routs in South Carolina and Colorado, he's been dealt setbacks in Indiana, North Dakota, Tennessee, Louisiana, South Dakota, and Georgia. Massachusetts is also shaping up as a delegate battleground, despite Trump's dominance of the popular vote there.

Trump has primarily lost delegate races to Cruz, whose superior organization, months of preparatory work and resonance among the GOP's activist base has helped him consolidate support in the insider-oriented battle for delegates. Trump has begun mobilizing for a delegate push in recent days, empowering Manafort, a veteran of past convention battles, to lead his effort, but the 67-year-old lobbyist and political consultant is still playing catch-up.

Trump dominated South Carolina's Feb. 20 primary in a much more crowded field, earning the obligatory support of all 50 of the state's convention delegates on the first ballot at the national convention, set to be held in Cleveland. But if Trump falls short of clinching the nomination on a first vote, these delegates will become "unbound" on a second ballot, free to support the candidate of their choice.

Trump's lone South Carolina delegate on the day, Jerry Rovner of Pawleys Island, said he'd stick with Trump so long as it looked like he had a shot to win the convention on subsequent ballots. But he said he's open to backing Cruz as well, though he won't consider any other candidate, even new entrants into the contest at the convention.

"The people that put the work in, that's who I'm gonna support. I'm going to start with Donald Trump and I'll stay with him," he said.

Gerri McDaniel, who won an alternate slot for Trump in the 7th District, said she was frustrated to finish just outside the top three in voting and noted that she had been sick, preventing her from actively campaigning in the delegate fight.

"If I had not have been sick — this is my fourth day out of the house — probably the results would have been quite different," she said.

Trump was always poised to struggle to win delegates in South Carolina because the process favors party insiders who typically have rejected his brash, establishment-bashing style.

John Kasich got some good news in Michigan on Saturday, when the state's newly elected delegation named three of the Ohio governor's backers to crucial convention committees, including the powerful Rules Committee, which could draft convention procedures that make it more difficult for Kasich to compete if left solely to Trump and Cruz delegates. Every state gets two slots on the committee. Kasich backer Judi Schwalbach won the rules slot, and

Trump supporter Matt Hall won the other, a rare double defeat for Cruz.

Cruz was also boxed out by Trump and Kasich supporters from any of the other convention committees. Kasich delegate Chuck Yob won a slot on the Convention Credentials Committee, which will rule on challenges to delegates' eligibility to be seated in Cleveland. And Kasich delegate Yvonne Whitbeck won a spot on the Permanent Organization Committee, which — among other tasks — will elect a chairman to preside over the convention.

On Friday evening, as the scope of Cruz's victory in Colorado was coming into view, Trump seemed to recognize his plight.

"Isn't it a shame that the person who will have by far the most delegates and many millions more votes than anyone else, me, still must fight," he tweeted.

## As Campaigns Seek Delegates, Ordinary Voters Feel Sidelined

By Jeremy W. Peters

[New York Times](#), April 9, 2016

WASHINGTON — When it comes to nominating presidential candidates, it turns out the world's foremost democracy is not so purely democratic.

For decades, both major parties have used a somewhat convoluted process for picking their nominees, one that involves ordinary voters in only an indirect way. As Americans flock this year to outsider candidates, the kind most hindered by these rules, they are suddenly waking up to this reality. And their confusion and anger are adding another volatile element to an election being waged over questions of fairness and equality.

In Nashville a week ago, supporters of Donald J. Trump accused Republican leaders of trying to stack the state's delegate slate with people who were anti-Trump. The Trump campaign posted the cellphone number of the state party chairman on Twitter, leading him to be inundated with calls. Several dozen people showed up at the meeting at which delegates were being named, banged on the windows and demanded to be let in.

Backers of Senator Bernie Sanders, bewildered at why he keeps winning states but cannot seem to cut into Hillary Clinton's delegate count because of her overwhelming lead with "superdelegates," have used Reddit and Twitter to start an aggressive pressure campaign to flip votes.

Javier Morillo, a member of the Democratic National Committee and a superdelegate from Minnesota, said he discovered his email posted on a website called a "Superdelegate Hit List." The list had an illustration of a donkey, the party's symbol, with two crossbow arrows behind its head. "I was a little annoyed," he said.

Mr. Morillo, who is backing Mrs. Clinton, said he tried at first to reply to all the emails beseeching him to switch his support to Mr. Sanders, the Vermont senator who won 62 percent of the vote in Minnesota's caucuses. But the volume has gotten so high lately, he said, "I haven't been able to keep up."

If supporters of Mr. Trump and Mr. Sanders feel stymied by the delegate process, that is because it was designed years ago precisely to make it difficult for candidates like them to become their nominee — candidates who party leaders believe, rightly or wrongly, could never win in November.

Like with any private members-only club — political parties are not official government entities — the party leaders exercise considerable control over which candidate gets their endorsement and the attendant privilege of using their political infrastructure, financial support and loyal voter base, without which winning in November is all but impossible.

In the earliest days of the republic, members of Congress determined the presidential nominees, cutting ordinary Americans out of the process. The national convention system has evolved over more than a century and a half to gradually decentralize the decision making.

But not completely. The role of Democratic superdelegates was created after the 1980 election to ensure that rank-and-file voters could not easily vote in an activist candidate. Superdelegates include major Democratic elected officials like governors and members of Congress; national and state party leaders; and notable party figures like former presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton. Democrats have added more superdelegates over the years, and this year they will make up 16 percent of all delegates.

Each of their votes has equal weight to delegates awarded through primaries and caucuses. In New Hampshire, for example, the site of Mr. Sanders's first big victory, he won about 150,000 votes and 15 traditional delegates. Hillary Clinton won nine traditional delegates. But because six of New Hampshire's superdelegates are supporting her (the other two are uncommitted), she is effectively tied with Mr. Sanders in the state.

Republicans have far fewer superdelegates. But the way the party conducts elections — a complex, layered system of contests that selects local delegates who in turn select state delegates who then vote for national delegates — can be difficult for newcomers without sophisticated operations to penetrate, as Mr. Trump is discovering.

"It's hard to start explaining now," said Curly Haugland, the Republican national committeeman in North Dakota who has tried to draw attention this year to the important role that delegates play. Mr. Haugland summed up the collective realization of many voters this way: "These primaries weren't really worth much — except maybe to spend a billion dollars."

Even if Mr. Trump wins a state, the delegates who are supposed to vote for him at the national convention might privately support one of his opponents, and if no candidate clinches the nomination after the convention's first ballot, these delegates are usually freed from the requirement that they represent the preference of the voters back home. The campaign of Senator Ted Cruz of Texas has been working in many states to get his supporters named as delegates, even if they must vote for Mr. Trump on the first ballot.

Though some voters are only now discovering that sometimes their choices amount to little more than a Facebook "like," party leaders today say the rules are nothing new.

Debbie Wasserman Schultz, the chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee, pointed out that superdelegates have been around "since 1984, the year I graduated high school," and have never been a decisive factor. Sean Spicer, the chief strategist for the Republican National Committee, said of the rules, "This is a process that has existed since the 1800s," even though he acknowledged, "It is incumbent on us to explain it."

But the sense of futility is building among supporters of Mr. Trump and Mr. Sanders, both of whom have strong appeal with people who already believe that a rigged political system leaves them voiceless and disenfranchised.

"It's people who are in charge keeping their friends in power," said Tom Carroll, 32, a union plumber who lives in Bethpage, N.Y., summing up how he viewed the electoral system. Mr. Carroll, who was at Mr. Trump's rally on Long Island on Wednesday, expressed irritation at a system that does not always abide by the one person, one vote concept. "In other countries, we pay to fix their election systems and they get their fingers colored with fingerprint ink when they vote," he added. "What's the point of everyone voting if the delegates are going to do what they want?"

Even if superdelegates did not exist, Mr. Sanders would still trail Mrs. Clinton by more than 200 delegates. And his hopes of catching her in the traditional delegate race are looking increasingly thin with several large states favorable to her yet to vote, including New York and Pennsylvania.

His supporters, however, say their votes are effectively being nullified by the superdelegates.

"Our presidents, our congressmen, anyone in Washington, should not be decided by anyone but the public," said Jordan Float, 25, a nursing assistant at a Philadelphia hospital, and a volunteer with the Sanders campaign.

Though Mr. Sanders has criticized the "rigged political system," he has been less caustic about the influence of superdelegates, cognizant that he needs to woo them in order to win. (There is also a sense on the Clinton side that the system is not completely fair. Mr. Morillo, the Minnesota superdelegate who supports Mrs. Clinton, said he would

withhold his vote if the race came down to party leaders like him.)

Some of Mr. Sanders's fans have followed his lead and dialed down their attacks. The "Superdelegate Hit List," which was created not by the campaign but by a supporter of Mr. Sanders, no longer uses the word "Hit." And the arrows behind the donkey's head are now telephone cords.

Anxiety over the process is far more acute on the Republican side of the race because Mr. Trump, who unlike Mr. Sanders is the front-runner in his party's delegate race, stands a chance of not being the nominee. Right now, he is in danger of falling short of the 50 percent-plus-one delegate threshold the Republican National Committee has set in order to clinch the nomination before the convention, a possibility that has started to sink in only recently inside his campaign and among his supporters.

Mr. Trump and his backers have been aggressive in criticizing the process, fanning fears that his delegates will be "stolen" at the convention, as they have put it. One of Mr. Trump's longtime associates, Roger Stone, has made the rounds on conservative radio to urge people to demonstrate en masse at the national convention in Cleveland in July. "Don't let the Big Steal go forward without massive protests," he said the other day on a radio program with Alex Jones, a host who has indulged conspiracy theories about tragedies like the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and the Sandy Hook massacre. Mr. Stone has also threatened to post the hotel room numbers of delegates who switched their votes against Mr. Trump.

The Trump campaign has hired a new senior adviser to oversee his convention efforts, the veteran Republican strategist Paul Manafort, who has described his duties as an enforcer "to secure and protect Mr. Trump's nomination."

In Tennessee, Republican officials are already feeling the Trump campaign's wrath. When the state Republican Party executive committee met for what should have been a routine task — appointing 14 of the state's 58 delegates — suspicious Trump supporters sprang into action. Two of the delegates, they said, seemed hostile to Mr. Trump based on comments they had made even though they were required to vote for Mr. Trump, at least for the first two ballots at the convention.

Then Ryan Haynes's cellphone started ringing. "It would ring about every 10 seconds," said Mr. Haynes, the party chairman. "And they weren't Tennessee calls, they were from all over the country."

He soon found out why. The Trump Tennessee campaign manager, he said, told him that an order came down from on high to post his number on Twitter. "Donald Trump had asked for my phone number and told them to do that," Mr. Haynes said. "So they did."

Jon Hurdle contributed reporting from Philadelphia and Nate Schweber from Bethpage, N.Y.

## Somebody Used The Colorado GOP Twitter Account To Tweet #NeverTrump

By Ed O'Keefe

[Washington Post](#), April 9, 2016

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — This is not the best way to end a Republican state party convention.

Just moments after Colorado Republican Party Chairman Steve House announced the results of a day-long convention that awarded Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) 34 delegates to the Republican National Convention, the party's official Twitter account sent out a message suggesting party leaders were pleased with the results.

"We did it. #NeverTrump" the tweet said.

"It's not us!" a party spokesman shouted as he ran into a room full of reporters covering the convention. The tweet was immediately deleted — but not before reporters spotted it and took screen grabs:

Excited to see how Trump campaign reacts to what Colorado state party said was unauthorized access to their account pic.twitter.com/bmThY8UXcX

— Ben Jacobs (@Bencjacobs) April 10, 2016

The state party is investigating who might have sent the unauthorized message, which was sent just as the state's newly elected delegates began meeting in the basement of a hockey arena here for its first organizational meeting.

The last tweet was the result of unauthorized access to our account and in no way represents the opinion of the party. We are investigating.

— The Colorado GOP (@cologop) April 10, 2016

## Colorado GOP Deletes #nevertrump Tweet, Pledges Investigation

By Kristen East

[Politico](#), April 9, 2016

Colorado GOP officials are investigating how a tweet was posted to their official account Saturday evening with the #nevertrump hashtag.

After Ted Cruz secured Colorado's delegates in a state convention held Saturday, a tweet reading "We did it. #NeverTrump" was sent from the Colorado Republican Party's Twitter account.

The tweet was quickly deleted.

Officials said the tweet "in no way represents the opinion of the party," and are investigating the matter.

— The Colorado GOP (@cologop) April 10, 2016

The "unauthorized" tweet comes as Donald Trump suffered blows in both Colorado and South Carolina, losing delegates to Cruz.

The #nevertrump hashtag has become popular on social media as a way to express anti-Trump sentiment among Republicans.

## Trump Team Vows To Win Delegate Majority As Rivals Prepare For Open Convention

By Dan Balz, Philip Rucker And Robert Costa

[Washington Post](#), April 9, 2016

NEW YORK — Leaders of Donald Trump's new campaign team said they have revised targets that would make the real estate mogul the presumptive Republican presidential nominee by mid-May and that would win him the delegates needed to clinch the nomination before the party's convention this summer.

To do so, Trump would have to go on a month-long hot streak, starting in New York on April 19, that would deliver a sizable haul of delegates — including increased commitments from those who are unbound — and silence the widespread talk that his unpopularity and his campaign's sloppy execution have made it nearly impossible to avoid a contested convention.

The earliest Trump could assemble the 1,237 delegates needed for the nomination is on the final day of the primary season, June 7, when the big states of California and New Jersey vote. Between now and then, he needs to win nearly 60 percent of the delegates still available — a higher percentage than he has thus far.

"Our target date is June 7, but our goal is in the middle of May to be the presumptive nominee," Paul Manafort, Trump's newly installed convention manager, who has been given broad authority to shape the campaign, said in a wide-ranging interview here.

The expressions of confidence come as Trump has begun a significant transition in his campaign, one designed to build ties to the institutional Republican Party, allay fears about a possible general election defeat and adopt more traditional elements in what has been an impulsive operation.

Trump's remaining two rivals — Sen. Ted Cruz (Tex.) and Ohio Gov. John Kasich — offer a distinctly different assessment. They see the race transitioning into a more granular phase as the three candidates compete to win committed delegates and persuade those who are unbound. They are convinced — as, increasingly, are many party leaders — that the Cleveland convention in July will be contested.

That outcome would result in two weeks of fights over rules, credentials, platform planks and eventually the nomination itself. In the absence of a nominee, it will fall to Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus to stage manage the potential chaos. The RNC already has a group at work trying to anticipate flash points or trouble spots and to think through how to smooth a process that has not occurred in decades.

The unresolved drama leaves the Republican Party and its candidates partially frozen at a moment when ordinarily a presumptive nominee would begin the arduous job of uniting

the party; raising money, hiring staffers and opening offices in fall swing states; vetting and selecting a vice presidential running mate; appealing to a broader electorate; and drawing contrasts with the other party.

Former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney was free to do just that four years ago this Sunday, when former senator Rick Santorum (Pa.) dropped out of the race.

"These are all big, tough moves that must be coordinated and implemented flawlessly," said Scott Reed, a veteran GOP strategist who now advises the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

To get an early start, the RNC has begun talks with the three remaining campaigns about entering joint fundraising agreements, RNC chief strategist Sean Spicer said. This arrangement — similar to one Hillary Clinton has with the Democratic National Committee — would enable the candidates to raise money for the national party at far higher levels than the \$2,700-per-person legal limit for individual campaigns.

Meanwhile, the RNC has invested in data programs and built a ground organization in the battleground states that the eventual nominee stands to inherit.

"The RNC is exponentially better equipped and staffed than at any point in history," Spicer said. When Romney assumed the nomination, Spicer said, "we had four people in the field in 2012. We now have hundreds, and they've spent multiple years doing voter contact and getting ready for what will be the nominee."

But the GOP today is riven by distrust and dissent. In an age when social media acts as an instantaneous conveyor belt for rumor, gossip and incendiary accusations, party figures are imagining a nightmare scenario: the Republican convention showcasing hour after hour of fighting and floor demonstrations followed by a Democratic National Convention that amounts to a week-long Clinton infomercial.

As others prepare for an open convention, Trump's team is anticipating a convention in which Trump is the major partner in designing the week's program, with the expectation of a fairly traditional convention. Trump's message will not change in any fundamental ways, Manafort said, but the presentation could be different.

"In some respects, the campaign's going to get more traditional," he said. "It's developing. The campaign is maturing now. It has new responsibilities and new needs, and Trump is addressing those needs. He recognizes it, and he wants to fix these things."

Asked about the possibility of a contested convention, Manafort said, "I'm going to have a contingency plan." But he expects a different atmosphere in Cleveland. "From my standpoint, all of this chatter from the opposition of the last two to three weeks is great coverage, but it's totally irrelevant if we execute."

Broad swaths of the Republican electorate — not to mention the GOP leadership — are firmly opposed to Trump, and a preponderance of polling data shows him losing hypothetical matchups to Clinton and Sen. Bernie Sanders (Vt.) by wide margins.

Cruz does not fare much better. Kasich is the only Republican who regularly beats the Democrats in swing-state polls — a point he and his allies plan to make to persuadable delegates. Nonetheless, Kasich continues to struggle among Republican primary voters, having won only his home state and still trailing in delegates to Sen. Marco Rubio (Fla.), who dropped out of the race nearly a month ago.

Explaining his decision to vote for Trump, former New York mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani said of Cruz: "He can't win. Ted Cruz is straight fastball down the middle of the plate for the Democratic Party, which they are expert at hitting out of the ballpark. . . . If it's Donald, there is no playbook."

Cruz, who enraged many Senate colleagues by instigating the 2013 partial shutdown of the federal government, and his allies are trying to build bridges to the party firmament.

He has tapped former U.S. senator Phil Gramm (Tex.) as his liaison to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (Ky.) and House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (Wis.). Cruz's Senate chief of staff, Paul Teller, is close to hard-line conservatives in the House, while Cruz aides are in regular contact with the Heritage Foundation and attend anti-tax activist Grover Norquist's private Wednesday meetings of conservatives.

"Are there a lot of hard feelings in Congress? Sure. But it's not black and white," Gramm said. Referring to McConnell and Ryan, he added: "All I've been trying to do is say to them, 'We want to work with you.' That's different than asking for their help."

Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah), another Cruz supporter trying to thaw relations, said Cruz holds no grudges against Republicans who have criticized him in the past. "He's like Lincoln, who could easily assemble a team of rivals and bring people together," Lee said. "He's grateful to anyone who's willing to join him on an issue."

Elsewhere in Cruz's orbit, there are lingering fears of betrayal — worries that establishment figures backing him now are doing so only to help bludgeon Trump, and in successive rounds of balloting at an open convention would abandon Cruz in favor of drafting someone more to their liking, such as Ryan.

"There is still distrust over whether or not the party is actually willing to accept Cruz as the nominee or if they're using him to shut down Trump only to then stab Cruz in the back come summer," said Erick Erickson, a conservative pundit and vocal Cruz supporter.

The past few weeks have emboldened Cruz. Trump has been damaged by self-inflicted wounds that have exposed a lack of depth on issues, changes in his position on

abortion and his campaign's inadequate preparation for the laborious work of delegate courtship at the state level.

Trump advisers vowed that, in the coming weeks, Cruz and Kasich will face a more organized and disciplined operation. Trump empowered Manafort to play the campaign's key strategic and operational role, alongside embattled campaign manager Corey Lewandowski.

Manafort, who reports directly to Trump, said of the campaign's earlier structure and strategy: "They had a different model and the model worked. But it wasn't a model for the full campaign. A new model had to be created, a more traditional model, and Trump recognized this fact, which is why he reached out to me."

Cruz has skillfully worked state conventions in Louisiana, Tennessee, North Dakota and this weekend in Colorado to boost his delegate numbers. Trump's team anticipates additional setbacks in Wyoming this coming week. For now, Trump's goal has been to minimize the bloodletting. But officials expect a turnaround.

"After Wyoming, [Cruz] is done," Manafort said. "We're going to have our act together. We're going to start putting numbers on the board and that will become infectious."

Elements of a more traditional campaign include set speeches by the candidate in non-campaign rally settings, similar to the scripted speech he gave before the American Israel Public Affairs Committee recently.

A major goal will be to repair relations with the hierarchy of the Republican Party. That should have started when Trump met with Priebus in Washington recently. Instead, the meeting became more of a grievance session. "We're going to do it the right way," Manafort said.

Trump harbors resentment over the failure of the party to begin to treat him as a presumptive nominee when he was on a winning streak in March. Instead, the party rebelled against him, with Romney leading the charge with a speech that excoriated Trump as unfit to be president. Trump's hope is that, if he has another victory streak now, the party will, however grudgingly, rally behind his candidacy.

In addition to New York, the April calendar looks favorable for Trump and includes contests in Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland and Rhode Island. Those are followed in early May with what could be a critical showdown in Indiana, and then contests in Nebraska, West Virginia, Oregon and Washington state. The season ends with California, New Jersey, Montana, New Mexico and South Dakota.

Some of those states will be good for Cruz, although it's possible that in some of the eastern states he could run third behind Kasich. But Trump's team anticipates strong performances and a hefty delegate haul from California and New Jersey, which together will award 223 delegates.

As for what is required to break the 1,237-delegate barrier, Manafort said, "blocking and tackling, not a Hail Mary."

Rucker and Costa reported from Washington.

## **Trump Team Expects To Clinch Before Convention: Report**

By Jessie Hellmann

[The Hill](#), April 9, 2016

Donald Trump's campaign says it has revised targets that would make the GOP presidential front-runner the party's presumptive nominee by mid-May and win him the delegates needed to clinch the nomination before the convention in July, the Washington Post reported.

"Our target date is June 7, but our goal is in the middle of May to be the presumptive nominee," said Paul Manafort, Trump's new convention manager.

He said Trump would have to go on a month-long hot streak starting with New York's April 19 primary, quiet talks of a contested convention and gain commitments from unbound delegates.

The earliest Trump could amass the necessary 1,237 delegates to clinch is June 7, when California and New Jersey vote. Between now and then, he'd need to win 60 percent of the delegates available, according to the report.

Trump's rivals Ted Cruz and John Kasich have said they anticipate a contested convention in which they'll try to flip Trump delegates.

## **Exclusive: Blocking Trump Could Hurt Republicans In Election – Reuters/Ipsos Poll**

By Chris Kahn

[Reuters](#), April 9, 2016

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

## **Puerto Rico Governor Declares Emergency At Government Development Bank**

[Associated Press](#), April 9, 2016

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Gov. Alejandro García Padilla -announced Saturday that he has declared a state of emergency at the Government Development Bank, a move aimed at ensuring that Puerto Ricans continue to receive essential government services.

The governor said he issued an executive order Friday to halt the erosion of the bank's dwindling liquidity by allowing withdrawals only to fund necessary costs for health, public safety and education services. The order does not call for a moratorium on the bank's principal or interest payments. García said the government bank, known as GDB, is in talks



with creditors regarding a payment of nearly \$423 million, due in May.

The order is the first taken under the Puerto Rico Emergency Moratorium and Financial Rehabilitation Act enacted this past week, which gives the governor emergency powers to deal with the fiscal crisis, including the ability to declare a moratorium on all bond payments.

“The GDB’s financial condition has continued to deteriorate and, absent the measures ordered in this executive order, there is an imminent risk of a drastic decrease in GDB’s liquidity in the immediate term. This, in turn, would jeopardize the provision of essential services by the commonwealth,” the order states.

It notes that the government and creditors are in discussions to address the government’s immediate liquidity challenges and to ensure that its debt service is sustainable over the long-term.

Because restructuring could take time, the order says, “the commonwealth has a duty to take any and all actions reasonable and necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of its residents by ensuring the continuation of essential services.”

Without debt restructuring, Puerto Rico will be forced to default as it faces nearly \$2.5 billion in bond payments from May through July, government officials have said.

The U.S. House Natural Resources Committee this week will consider legislation that will provide bankruptcy powers to Puerto Rico while subjecting it to the authority of a federal oversight board. The U.S. Supreme Court is also reviewing federal court rulings that said a local bankruptcy law enacted by the commonwealth is unconstitutional.

García announced in June that Puerto Rico’s nearly \$70 billion debt was not payable. Since then, a deal has been struck with creditors to restructure much of the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority’s nearly \$9 billion debt.

On Thursday, the utility filed a petition before the island’s energy regulator for a new securitization charge, which would pay for the restructured debt following a planned bond exchange. Officials estimate that the charge, which will be revised quarterly, will initially be \$11.98 a month for residential customers and .03 cents per kilowatt hour for nonresidential customers, according to the filing.

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## **J. Dennis Hastert Is Sorry For Past ‘Transgressions,’ Lawyer Says**

By Mitch Smith And Monica Davey

[New York Times](#), April 9, 2016

CHICAGO — A lawyer for J. Dennis Hastert, the former speaker of the House who is awaiting sentencing for a federal

banking violation, said Saturday that his client acknowledged committing “transgressions” decades ago as a high school teacher and wrestling coach, but again stopped short of detailing those misdeeds.

The statement from the lawyer, Thomas Green, came a day after federal prosecutors provided details of sexual abuse Mr. Hastert allegedly committed while coaching in Yorkville, Ill., in the 1960s, ‘70s and ‘80s. The prosecutors outlined a series of lewd encounters between Mr. Hastert and teenage boys in the high school locker room and a motel room, staining the legacy of a Republican Party stalwart who served as House speaker from 1999 until 2007.

“Mr. Hastert acknowledges that as a young man, he committed transgressions for which he is profoundly sorry,” Mr. Green said in the statement. “He earnestly apologizes to his former students, family, friends, previous constituents and all others affected by the harm his actions have caused.”

Mr. Hastert pleaded guilty in October to illegally structuring bank withdrawals, and prosecutors said at the time that he was using the funds to pay “hush money” for misconduct from years past. Though sources had said the misconduct involved sexual abuse, prosecutors did not publicly confirm that until Friday, when they said the educator-turned-politician’s life had been “marred by stunning hypocrisy” and that he should receive a sentence that took into account his past actions.

In that court filing, prosecutors said Mr. Hastert’s odd banking habits had come to investigators’ attention after a series of withdrawals that appeared structured to avoid federal reporting rules. When confronted in 2014, Mr. Hastert initially said he was just wary of banks, but his lawyers later claimed he was being extorted.

When investigators listened to calls between Mr. Hastert and the man he claimed was extorting him, they said they detected no threats and instead came to believe that Mr. Hastert was making payments on an agreed-to settlement of up to \$3.5 million. Mr. Hastert was indicted last May and has remained free on bail.

Prosecutors said the man receiving the payments, named in court records only as Individual A, was not committing extortion, and that Mr. Hastert had molested Individual A and shared a bed with him on a trip to a wrestling camp.

Mr. Hastert, who is 74 and recovering from a stroke, is set to be sentenced later this month in Chicago. He has not been charged with any sex crimes, because statutes of limitations expired long ago. Prosecutors have asked that he face up to six months in prison; Mr. Hastert’s lawyers have asked for probation.

Outside of brief court appearances, Mr. Hastert has not spoken publicly about his conduct, and he has stayed largely out of view. In his statement Saturday, Mr. Green reiterated

that Mr. Hastert was physically ailing and had been humiliated by the attention to his misconduct.

“He accepts responsibility for his conduct, seeks no special consideration and is prepared to receive the court’s sentence,” Mr. Green said.

## **A Fair Chance After A Conviction**

[New York Times](#), April 9, 2016

The Obama administration has worked diligently over the last five years to ease the marginalization of more than 70 million Americans with criminal records that can shut them out of jobs, housing, higher education or the consumer credit system — sometimes for minor offenses in the distant past or arrests that never led to conviction. By addressing this problem, Mr. Obama is pushing the country to re-evaluate longstanding policies that trap people with criminal records at the very edges of society, driving many of them right back to prison.

Last week, for example, the Department of Housing and Urban Development warned private landlords that blanket bans on renting to people with criminal convictions — common throughout the country — violate the Fair Housing Act and can lead to lawsuits and charges of discrimination.

The guidelines make clear that landlords cannot use arrests — which quite often do not lead to conviction — to disqualify applicants, and must consider the nature and severity of convictions in evaluating rental applicants and prove that any exclusions are justified. Landlords who reflexively bar people with criminal records risk being hauled into court unless they revise that policy.

The department took a similar step toward policies in public housing last year, advising local agencies that administer federally assisted housing programs against shutting out applicants based on arrests and discouraging “one strike” policies that automatically evict people for brushes with the law.

These and other policy changes can be traced to the Federal Interagency Reentry Council, a group of more than 20 federal agencies led by the attorney general and convened in 2011. The council and its member agencies have been especially focused in removing unfair barriers to employment that have become pervasive since employers turned to computer-based arrest and conviction records for job-screening purposes.

These records are notoriously inaccurate, and frequently contain mistakes, including records of arrests that either were dismissed or never led to conviction. To address this problem, the administration is creating a national clearinghouse that will teach legal aid programs how to clean up such mistakes.

The federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission took an important step in 2012 when it updated a ruling that bars companies from automatically denying jobs

to people based on arrest or conviction records. The commission’s guidance explained that companies needed to take into account the seriousness of the offense, when it had occurred and whether it was relevant to the job. The agency has since taken strong enforcement actions against companies that have failed to observe the ruling.

Many states and counties already forbid public agencies and in some cases private businesses from asking applicants about their criminal histories until after they have had a chance to prove their qualifications. The administration joined this “ban the box” movement last year when it ordered federal agencies to take the same approach.

Another area of marginalization has been in higher education. There is no doubt that inmates who receive college degrees in prison — or who even attend classes without graduating — are far less likely to end up back behind bars once they leave. Yet Congress disqualified inmates from getting federal Pell Grants during the “tough-on-crime” 1990s. Mr. Obama opened the door to prison education again last year with an executive order creating a pilot program that will permit a limited number of inmates to pay for college courses through federal Pell Grants. More than 200 colleges in 47 states have expressed interest in participating in the program.

In the 1990s, Congress caused great damage by denying federal grants and loans to people with minor drug convictions. It later narrowed the rule so that only people enrolled in school and receiving aid at the time of the offense would be disqualified. Both the House and the Senate are considering bills that would repeal the whole rule and bar the Department of Education from including questions about drug convictions on the federal application for financial aid, known as the Fafsa. More than 20 million people use the form each year.

By committing himself to reform in this area, Mr. Obama is leading the country away from policies that once wrote off millions of people and cast them permanently aside.

## **Gun Dealers Hiding On Facebook**

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Facebook, with more than one billion users worldwide, is increasingly being used by shady gun dealers who find it easy to hide in this sprawling and lightly policed virtual marketplace. And they are not just individuals skirting gun-control laws to sell a pistol or rifle. Facebook groups have been used to trade anti-aircraft weapons, grenades, heavy machine guns and guided missiles in battleground regions of the Middle East, according to a report in *The Times*.

The gun bazaars have been operating in Islamic State strongholds, among other places, with sellers offering “a seemingly bottomless assortment of weapons provided to Iraq’s government forces by the Pentagon during the long American occupation,” according to *The Times*’s C. J. Chivers. Weapons supplied more recently by the United

States to Syrian rebels have also surfaced in the social media marketplace, offering ordnance ranging from assault rifles to a sophisticated antitank missile system.

This trading violates the ban Facebook put in place in January on the private sale of weapons. But the company is finding enforcement increasingly difficult as black marketers discover that Facebook and other social media sites offer far easier opportunities than physical gun stores for customer contacts, the display of wares and the concealment of transactions.

The deals have been tracked in Libya by the private consulting firm Armament Research Services, with The Times investigating Web bazaars in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. Facebook, which mainly relies on user alerts for enforcement, quickly shut down six suspicious groups investigated by The Times, but there's no guarantee that dealers won't resurface under different identities.

Domestic firearms traffic on Facebook is no less persistent despite the company's ban, according to a Forbes report last month that found more than 100 suspicious groups seemingly intent on gun deals. Some coyly portray themselves as gun enthusiasts merely interested in chatting, but their real intent can come across with lines like: "Show off your stuff and how much you think it's worth."

Facebook, which has been moving increasingly into e-commerce with an easy payment process, chose to ban private sales of guns and ammunition after protest from gun-safety groups. Numerous gun bazaars have been shut down, according to Forbes, but Facebook has no automated keyword system to flag violators. Company officials say their enforcement of the gun sale ban is an evolving policy. It had better be. Alerts from Facebook users cannot contain this dangerous traffic.