

THE HOMELAND SECURITY *NEWS CLIPS*

PREPARED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BY BULLETIN INTELLIGENCE WWW.BULLETININTELLIGENCE.COM/DHS

TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 2016 5:00 AM EDT

TODAY'S EDITION

Leading DHS News

Campaign Rhetoric On Muslims Harms U.S. Security Efforts: Homeland Security Chief (REU)	4
DHS Secretary: Cruz, Trump Rhetoric 'Counterproductive' (HILL)	4
DHS Secretary Blasts Cruz, Trump Rhetoric On Muslims (POLITICO)	5
EgyptAir Hijacker Arrested, Hostages Free (KGTDTV)	5
Jeh Johnson: 2016 Campaign Rhetoric About Muslims Is 'Counterproductive' (WT)	6
NYPD Commissioner: 'Our Own Citizens' Pose Bigger Threat To Americans Than Migrants (WT)	7
Michael Hayden, Ex-CIA Director: Donald Trump 'Already Made Americans Less Safe' (WT)	7

Customs and Border Protection

2 Migrants Killed, 3 Injured In I-8 Collision Near Arizona (WT/AP)	7
Woman Charged In Border Crash That Kills 2 In California (HC/AP)	8
Border Patrol: Incomplete Tunnel Found In Nogales, Arizona (ALBQJRN)	8
A Wall Apart: Divided Families Meet At A Single, Tiny Spot On The US-Mexico Border (GUARD)	8

Transportation Security Administration

TSA Suspends Controversial Transfers That Were Subject Of Hawaii (HINN)	10
--	----

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Flooding Blamed For Up To \$20M In Road And Bridge Damage (AP)	11
---	----

US Citizenship and Immigration Services

Study: American Economy Hampered By Limits On Skilled Immigrant Workers (USNEWS)	11
Biggest Users Of High-tech Visas Hired 95 Percent From India (WASHEX)	13

Immigration

Poll: Majority Of Republicans Support Path To Citizenship (HILL)	13
---	----

Protesters Rally At Hillary Clinton's Brooklyn Office To Back Bangladeshi Asylum Seekers Facing Deportation (NYDN)13	
In Georgia, Black Activists Team With Latino Immigrants (MYAJC)	14
U.N. Seeks To Resettle One-tenth Of 4.8 Million Syrian Refugees By 2018 (REU)	15
Italy Rescues Nearly 1,400 Migrants In Southern Mediterranean (REU)	15
Inside The Migrant-Smuggling Trade: Escapes Start At €1,000 (WSJ)	15

US Coast Guard

The Latest: 11,500 Gallons Of Oil Spilled Near La. Bayou (HC/AP)	15
---	----

Secret Service

No Guns Allowed At Republican Convention, Secret Service Says (NYT)	16
Open-carry Petition Came From Hillary Clinton Supporter (HILL)16	
Liberal Clinton Supporter Behind Open-carry Petition For Republican National Convention (WT)	17

National Protection and Programs

Company Invents Gun That Folds Up To Look Like A Cellphone (NBCNEWS)	17
Senate Backs REAL ID-compliant Licenses For Louisiana (HC/AP)	18
Lawmakers Say First Step In Upgrading IDs Moving Forward (WT/AP)	18
Idaho Gov. C. L. "Butch" Otter Approves Real ID Legislation (WT/AP)	18

Office of Health Affairs

WHO: Ebola No Longer World Health Emergency (AP)	19
--	----

Terrorism Investigations

US Orders Diplomatic, Military Families Out Of South Turkey (AP)	19
Pentagon And State Department Order Families Of U.S. Troops And Diplomats To Leave Turkey (WP)	20
Families Of U.S. Diplomats, Military Personnel Ordered To Leave Turkey (WSJ)	21

Families Of U.S. Personnel Ordered To Leave Parts Of Turkey Amid Security Concerns (REU).....	21	1,000 Locked Devices In Limbo After FBI Quits iPhone Case (USAT)	41
Pentagon Pulling Military Families Out Of Turkey (USAT)	21	The Unanswered Questions And Unsettled Issues : All Tech Considered : NPR (NPR)	42
U.S. Orders Diplomatic, Military Families Out Of Turkey Over Security Fears (WT)	21	FBI Owns Proprietary Rights To Method Used To Crack iPhone « CBS New York (WCBSTV)	43
ISIS Issues Chilling Warnings: More Attacks Targeting U.S., Europe Are Coming (WT).....	22	FBI iPhone Solution May Not Necessarily Crack Other Cases (HC/AP).....	44
Al Qaeda Offshoot Offers Its Take On U.S. Presidential Race (WSJ)	22	Apple's Encryption Battle With United States Still Alive In Brooklyn (REU).....	45
Nuclear Materials Remain Vulnerable To Theft, Despite U.S.- Led Effort (NYT).....	23	After The FBI-Apple Fight In California, The Encryption Debate Isn't Going Away (USNEWS)	45
Spanish Court Says To Try Alleged Islamists, Renews Request For US Help (REU).....	24	The FBI Unlocked A Terrorist's iPhone, But We Still Need To Talk About Encryption (WP).....	46
EgyptAir Plane Hijacked In Blow To Struggling Egypt Tourism (BLOOM)	24	DHS Wants Input On Sharing Data For Cyber Insurance (FEDTIMES)	46
Hijacking Of Egypt Plane By 'Unstable' Man Ends Peacefully (AP)	25	Hackers Breach Law Firms, Including Cravath, Weil Gotshal (WSJ)	47
No One Hurt As EgyptAir Flight Is Forced To Cyprus In A Hijacking From The Heart (NYT).....	26	Russian Cyber Criminal Targets Elite Law Firms (BIZINS)	47
EgyptAir Jetliner Hijacked, Lands In Cyprus (WSJ).....	27	Here's How Maryland And Virginia Are Luring Cyber Start-ups To The Region (WP).....	48
Egyptair Passenger Plane Hijacked, Forced To Cyprus (REU) .	27	Hacker Sends Anti-Semitic Fliers To Network Printers At Princeton, Many Other Colleges (WP)	48
Plane Hijacking Rekindles Concerns About Egyptian Airport Security (WP).....	28	Hacker Attacks 1000s Of Printers In Internet Of Things 'Experiment' (FORTUNE)	51
Why Airline Hijackings Became Relatively Rare (NYT)	29	MedStar Health Turns Away Patients After Likely 'ransomware' Cyberattack (WP)	51
Second Assailant Likely Took Part In Brussels Subway Attack, Officials Say (WSJ).....	30	MedStar Struggles To Work Around Computer Hacking Crisis (USNEWS).....	52
FBI Warned Dutch About El Bakraoui Brothers Week Before Brussels Attacks (REU)	30	MedStar Paralyzed As Hackers Take Aim At Another US Hospital (AP).....	53
Russia Shows What Happens When Terrorists' Families Are Targeted (NYT).....	30	Two More Healthcare Networks Caught Up In Outbreak Of Hospital Ransomware (ARSTEC)	54
Young Pleads Guilty In ISIS Case (JCL).....	31	Global Majority Backs A Ban On 'Dark Net,' Poll Says (REU) ...	55
Mississippi Woman Pleads Guilty On Charge That She Tried To Join ISIS (CNN)	32		
Mississippi Woman Pleads Guilty To Trying To Join Islamic State (REU)	32		
Cyber News		National Security News	
Israeli Firm Helped FBI Hack iPhone (HILL).....	32	Syria's Assad Says Military Gains Will Speed Up Political Deal (REU)	55
Apple Still In The Dark About How FBI Hacked iPhone (AP)	33	Syria's Assad Tries To Polish Image With Palmyra's Recapture (AP).....	55
FBI Hacking Of iPhone Raises Questions About Method, Who Helped (ABCNEWS)	34	Moscow's Call Not To Discuss Assad's Fate May Halt Syria Peace Talks: Agency (REU)	56
FBI Won't Say How It Hacked Into San Bernardino Shooter's iPhone (CSM)	35	How Russian Special Forces Are Shaping The Fight In Syria (WP)	57
Apple Wants The FBI To Reveal How It Hacked The San Bernardino Killer's iPhone (LAT).....	35	ISIS Fighters Laid Mines Around Palmyra's Ancient Ruins Before Retreating, Syrians Say (NYT)	58
How The FBI Cracked The iPhone Encryption And Averted A Legal Showdown With Apple (ABCNEWS)	36	Iraq Army's Mosul Offensive Stalls In Face Of Fierce Fighting, Desertions (USAT)	58
FBI Hacked iPhone By Overriding The 10 Passcode Tries: Official (AP).....	37	Iraqi PM Asks Parliament To Clarify Stance On Corruption- fighting Cabinet (REU).....	59
The Apple Case May Show That The FBI Lags In Tech Smarts (WP).....	38	Islamic State Claims Central Baghdad Bombing (REU)	59
Apple's Fight For The iPhone Only The Beginning (USAT)	40	A Wave Of Political Defections Spells New Trouble For Afghanistan (WP)	59
FBI's Retreat Doesn't Mean Its War With Apple Is Over (MASHABLE).....	40	U.S. Military Jet Crashes In Afghanistan, Pilot Safe: Pentagon (REU)	61

F-16 Fighter Jet Crashes In Afghanistan During Takeoff From Bagram Airfield (WP).....	61
Pakistan Arrests More Than 200 Suspected Militants Following Easter Bombing (WP).....	61
Pakistan Militant Group Jamaat-ul-Ahrar Threatens Fresh Wave Of Violence (WSJ).....	62
NATO Needs To Beef Up Defense Of Baltic Airspace: Top Commander (REU).....	62
Obama, Turkey's Erdogan To Have Informal Discussion This Week: White House (REU).....	62
Biden To Host Turkey's Erdogan As Ties With U.S. Show Strains (REU).....	62
Mr. Biden Must Press Mr. Erdogan On His Brutish Behavior Toward The Press (WP).....	62
What Obama Has Gotten Right About The Foreign-policy Establishment (WP).....	63
Exclusive: Iran Missile Tests Were 'In Defiance Of U.N. Resolution – U.S., Allies (REU).....	64
A Grim Warning Against America's Overuse Of Sanctions (WP).....	64
Iran's Rouhani Calls Off Austria Visit At Last Minute, Citing Security (REU).....	65
Iran's Rouhani Suddenly Cancels Trip To Vienna Citing Security (BLOOM).....	65
Obama Faces A Tough Balancing Act Over South China Sea (NYT).....	65
US: NKorea Threat Compels Security Steps China Won't Like (AP).....	67
South Korea Says North Korea Fired Short-range Projectile (AP).....	67
North Korea Fires Another 'Projectile' Amid Threats (USAT).....	68
North Korea Fires Short-range Missile Along Its Coast (REU).....	68
Netanyahu To Meet Putin In Moscow On April 21: Israeli Source (REU).....	68
Nigerian Troops Capture Boko Haram Key Base At Alargano: Army (BLOOM).....	68
France Calls For Urgent Set-up Of Libya Unity Government (REU).....	69
Children Pay 'Highest Price' As Yemen Falls Apart, U.N. Says (NYT).....	69
Yemen's President: A Path To Peace (NYT).....	70

National News

Obama Joins Fight Against Opioid Abuse (USAT).....	71
Obama In Atlanta To Address Drug Overdoses (AJC).....	72
Opioid Treatment Too Scant, "Underresourced" (RC).....	73
Obama Announces New Measures To Combat Heroin, Painkiller Abuse (WSJ).....	74
Pres. Obama To Visit Atlanta For Drug Abuse Summit (WSBTv).....	74
Amid "Heartbreaking" Stories, Obama Pushes For More Funding To Treat Addiction (WP).....	74
Obama: "We Have To Be Honest" About Race In Drug Addiction Debate (HILL).....	76
'Blunt' Obama: Drug Problem Was Ignored When It Was Hurting Minority Communities (BREITBART).....	76

What Official In Recovery Says US Should Do About Heroin Epidem (PMBCHPST).....	76
Obama Steps Up US Effort To Fight Abuse Of Heroin And Painkillers (NYT).....	77
Obama Wants To Spend More Than \$1 Billion To Fight Opioid Addiction In The US (VICE).....	77
Obama Announces New Moves To Fight Opioid And Heroin Abuse Epidemic (CNN).....	79
White House Says U.S. Leadership, Prestige At Stake In Debate Over Pacific Rim Trade Deal (WP).....	80
Higher Taxes In Obama's Budget Would Cut Deficits: CBO (REU).....	81
Justices Seem To Seek Compromise In Birth Control Case (AP).....	81
Supreme Court Asks For More Info On ObamaCare Birth Control Case (HILL).....	81
Supreme Court Seeks Alternative Ways To Deal With Contraceptive Coverage (WP).....	82
U.S. Top Court Seeks More Information In Contraception Insurance Case (REU).....	82
High Court Order On Contraceptives Hints At Possible Compromise (BLOOMPOL).....	83
Supreme Court Seeks Compromise In 'Contraceptive Mandate' Cases (USAT).....	83
Public Employee Unions Dodge A Supreme Court Bullet (USAT).....	83
Tied 4-4 After Scalia's Death, High Court Gives Unions A Win (AP).....	85
Victory For Unions As Supreme Court, Scalia Gone, Ties 4-4 (NYT).....	86
Mandatory Union Fees Survive As U.S. Supreme Court Deadlocks (BLOOMPOL).....	87
Supreme Court Deadlocks Over Public Employee Union Case; Calif. Teachers Must Pay Dues (WP).....	88
The Eight-Justice Supreme Court Strikes Again (BLOOM).....	89
A Supreme Court Absence Is Felt (WSJ).....	89
Supreme Court Hands Victory To Labor Unions In 4-4 Tie (HILL).....	89
Supreme Court Hands Win To Unions, Splits 4-4 Without Scalia (REU).....	90
Unions Win, But The Court Is Still Hobbled (NYT).....	90
Rauner Calls Pro-union Supreme Court Ruling 'Tragic' (CHIT).....	91
Supreme Court Struggles To Deal With 4-4 Split (WSJ).....	92
Garland Holds First Meeting With GOP Senator, Kirk Of IL (AP).....	92
Senator Kirk Criticizes Fellow Republicans On Garland Boycott (REU).....	93
First Senate Republican Meets With Supreme Court Nominee Garland (WSJ).....	93
Kirk Becomes First GOP Senator To Meet With Garland (CHIT).....	93
Senators Who Won't Meet With Garland Are 'Too Closed-minded,' Says GOP's Kirk (WP).....	93
GOP Senator 'Perplexed' By McConnell's Supreme Court Strategy (HILL).....	94
Yellen Says Caution In Raising Rates Is 'Especially Warranted' (BLOOM).....	94

Fed Chair Janet Yellen: Central Bank Should Move 'cautiously' In Raising Rates (WP).....	95	Cruz Says Backlash From Plan To Patrol Muslim Neighborhoods Is 'badge Of Pride' (HILL).....	104
Janet Yellen Says Fed Still Plans To Raise Interest Rates But Carefully (NYT).....	96	Police Charge Trump Campaign Manager With Battery (AP) ..	104
Yellen Stresses That Fed Foresees Gradual Pace Of Rate Hikes (AP).....	97	Trump Campaign Manager Charged With Battery In Florida (WP).....	105
Janet Yellen Says Global Uncertainty Justifies Slower Path Of Rate Increases (WSJ).....	98	Campaign Manager For Donald Trump Is Charged With Battery (NYT).....	106
Nafta May Have Saved Many Autoworkers' Jobs (NYT).....	98	Trump Campaign Manager Charged With Battery Against Journalist: Report (BLOOMPOL).....	107
House Republicans Unveil Puerto Rico Lifeline (WSJ).....	100	Trump Campaign Manager Denies Allegation Of Assault (WSJ).....	107
Second Federal Judge Grants Legal Discovery Into Clinton Use Of Private Email Server (WP).....	100	Trump Solicits Audience Sympathy For His Campaign Manager (POLITICO).....	107
Plaintiffs In Hillary Clinton Records Case Get A New Boost (WSJ).....	100	Mr. Trump's Defense Of His Campaign Manager Shows His Lack Of Judgement (WP).....	108
US Judge To Allow Further Digging In Clinton Email Lawsuit (AP).....	100	'Abusive Culture' In Trump Campaign Led To Campaign Manager's Battery Charge, Cruz Says (WP).....	108
Second Judge Says Clinton Email Setup May Have Been In 'Bad Faith' (REU).....	101	Polls Find Trump Benefits From Mayhem At His Rallies, At Least For Now (MCT).....	108
Hillary Clinton Focuses On Gun Violence In Courting Wisconsin Blacks (NYT).....	101	Cruz Statistically Even With Trump In Head-to-head Poll (HILL).....	109
G.O.P. Gave Voters A Greater Say, And They Said Donald Trump (NYT).....	101	Donald Trump Vs. Ted Cruz Creates A Headache For Talk Radio Hosts (NYT).....	110
All Three Republican Presidential Candidates Back Away From Pledge To Support Eventual Nominee (WP).....	102	Stands On Social Issues Tear At The Two Main Conservative Bases (WP).....	111
Trump, Cruz Revoke Vows To Support Eventual Republican Nominee (WT).....	103	Nev. Candidate Says Reid Urged Him To Quit, Because 'a Muslim Cannot Win This Race.' (WP).....	113
Trump Takes Back Pledge To Support GOP Nominee (POLITICO).....	103	House Candidate: Reid Told Me Not To Run Because I'm Muslim (HILL).....	114
All Three GOP Candidates Break Pledge To Support GOP Nominee (CNN).....	104	Iranian Miniskirts, Bags Of Cash Raise Doubts Over Controls At HSBC (WSJ).....	115
Cruz Says Kasich Wouldn't Make Ballot At Contested Convention (POLITICO).....	104	Funds Flow To Venture Firms (WSJ).....	115

LEADING DHS NEWS

Campaign Rhetoric On Muslims Harms U.S. Security Efforts: Homeland Security Chief

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

DHS Secretary: Cruz, Trump Rhetoric 'Counterproductive'

By Jesse Byrnes

[The Hill](#), March 29, 2016

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Jeh Johnson early Tuesday knocked rhetoric from leading Republican presidential candidates Donald Trump and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz involving Muslims amid a renewed focus on counterterrorism.

"I think that in this phase, it is critical that we build bridges to American Muslim communities, not vilify them, not drive them into the shadows, and encourage them to work with us," Johnson said during an interview on MSNBC's "Morning Joe," where he was pressed on Trump and Cruz.

"I believe that inflammatory comments about patrolling and securing Muslim neighborhoods or barring Muslims from entering this country, having an immigration policy based on religion, is counterproductive to our homeland security and national security interests," he added.

Cruz caught flak last week after suggesting that the U.S. "patrol" Muslim neighborhoods following the terrorist attacks in Brussels, which were claimed by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). He has since feuded with New York Police Commissioner Bill Bratton over the call to monitor Muslims.

Trump claimed that Brussels was the latest example of the U.S. needing to more vigorously vet those refugees entering the country when fleeing violence in Syria. He has seen months of criticism over his proposal to temporarily ban

Muslims from traveling to the U.S., though a poll this week found half of voters support it, including seven in 10 Republicans.

Johnson said Tuesday that U.S. officials remain vigilant and continue to be “very concerned” about efforts to carry out a terrorist-inspired plot in the United States, saying they represent a “new era” of attacks.

DHS Secretary Blasts Cruz, Trump Rhetoric On Muslims

By Nick Gass

[Politico](#), March 29, 2016

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson on Tuesday sharply criticized rhetoric about Muslims from both Ted Cruz and Donald Trump, slamming both Republican candidates for their “counterproductive” and “inflammatory” comments.

Cruz, who last week called for increased patrolling of Muslim neighborhoods, has already stoked the ire of New York City Police Commissioner Bill Bratton, with the two public figures trading opinion pieces and television hits criticizing the other.

Asked about Cruz’s Monday op-ed in the New York Daily News in which he wrote that “we cannot fight and win without identifying and confronting the enemy,” that being radical Islamic terrorism, Johnson told MSNBC’s “Morning Joe” that while he agreed with the Texas senator’s broad sentiment, he strongly disagreed with the means to accomplish that.

“We’ve spent a lot of time building bridges to American Muslim communities as you know because the Islamic State is targeting those communities to carry out attacks, to conduct attacks in the homeland,” Johnson said. “So we spent a lot of time working with Muslim communities, American Muslim communities, and they’re not a monolith; there are many of them across the country, to help them help us in our homeland security efforts.”

At this juncture, Johnson added, “it is critical that we build bridges to American Muslim communities, not vilify them, not drive them into the shadows and encourage them to work with us.”

“I believe that inflammatory comments about, like patrolling and securing Muslim neighborhoods or barring Muslims from entering this country,” he said, referring to Trump’s repeated calls, “having an immigration policy based on religion is counterproductive to our homeland security and national security interests.”

EgyptAir Hijacker Arrested, Hostages Free

[KGTU-TV San Diego](#), March 30, 2016

LARNACA, Cyprus – An Egyptian man who hijacked an EgyptAir plane during a routine domestic flight to Cairo and forced it to land on the island of Cyprus on Tuesday has

surrendered and was taken into custody after he released all the passengers and crew.

His surrender ended an hours-long drama and standoff at the Larnaca airport in southern Cyprus. The hijacker had earlier freed most of the passengers but kept seven people — four crew members and three passengers — with him.

Just minutes before the arrest, local TV footage from the airport showed several people disembarking from the aircraft and a man who appeared to be a crew member climbing out of the cockpit window and sliding down the side of the plane.

Alexandros Zenon, the permanent Secretary of the Foreign Ministry in Cyprus, confirmed the hijacker’s surrender and subsequent arrest, saying the situation was “over.” The arrest was also reported by Egypt’s prime minister, Sharif Ismail, and Civil Aviation Minister Sharif Fathi.

“All passengers and crew are safe,” Fathi said on state television.

The man’s motivation was unclear, but Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades said the hijacking was “not something that has to do with terrorism” and a Cyprus government official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing investigation, said the man “seems (to be) in love.”

Anastasiades, appearing alongside European Parliament President Martin Schulz in Nicosia, was asked by reporters whether he could confirm that the incident was about a woman. “Always, there is a woman” involved, he replied, drawing laughter.

A Cyprus police official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he’s not authorized to disclose details of the situation, says the hijacker walked off the plane and was taken into custody by special anti-terrorist police. The official said the man wore a belt but there were no explosives in it. The Cypriot woman who the hijacker had asked to speak to is his former wife with whom he has four children, the police official said. The hijacker had also complained about the current Egyptian government and had demanded the release of female prisoners from Egyptian jails.

A civil aviation official, also speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn’t allowed to talk to the media, said the man gave negotiators the name of a woman who lives in Cyprus and asked to give her an envelope. It was not clear if she was his former wife.

The flight MS181 took off from the Mediterranean coastal city of Alexandria on Tuesday morning en route to Cairo with at least 55 passengers, including 26 foreigners, and a seven-member crew.

An official with flight-tracking website FlightRadar24 said the plane showed no immediate signs of distress. The flight between Alexandria and Cairo normally takes about 30 minutes.

There was also confusion about the hijacker's identity. At a news conference in Cairo, Egypt's Civil Aviation minister, Sharif Fathi, refused to identify him.

Earlier, Egyptian government spokesman Hossam al-Queish said the hijacker was Ibrahim Samaha, but an Egyptian woman who identified herself as Samaha's wife said her husband is not the hijacker and was on his way to Cairo so he could fly to the U.S. to attend a conference.

The woman, who identified herself only as Nahla, told the Egyptian private TV network ONTV in a phone interview that her husband had never been to Cyprus and that a photo on Egyptian and regional TV channels that supposedly showed the hijacker was not him. Later, the official Middle East News Agency gave a different name for the hijacker.

Egypt's state news agency, MENA, later identified the hijacker as Seifedeen Mustafa. The name was confirmed by a senior Cypriot official.

Al-Queish, the government spokesman, also told the private CBC TV network that authorities could not confirm that the hijacker had explosives on him. An earlier statement from the Egyptian Aviation Ministry said the man claimed he had a belt with explosives.

The plane landed at the airport in the southern Cypriot city of Larnaca, also on the Mediterranean. A statement from the Egyptian Civil Aviation Ministry statement said the foreigners on board included eight Americans, four Britons, four Dutch, two Belgians, a French national, an Italian, two Greeks and one Syrian. Three other foreigners could not be identified.

The initial batch of passengers released by the hijacker were seen calmly walking off the plane down a set of stairs, carrying their hand luggage, and boarded a bus parked by the plane's side. Security was tight at the airport, with police repeatedly pushing back reporters and TV news crews working just outside the facility's fence, near where the aircraft stopped.

Police also evacuated the nearby Makenzy beach, a stretch of coast close to the airport and popular with tourists. It was not immediately clear why.

An Egyptian aircraft was expected to later fly to Larnaca so it could bring back the released passengers, according to officials.

The incident raises more questions about security at Egyptian airports, five months after a Russian aircraft crashed over Egypt's Sinai Peninsula minutes after it took off from Egypt's Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

All 224 people on board were killed in the crash. Russia later said an explosive device brought down the aircraft and the extremist Islamic State group took responsibility.

U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson, appearing on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" program Tuesday, said that a "very good question" is whether the man who

hijacked the plane Tuesday was able to pass through airport security with a bomb-laden belt.

The hijacking was reminiscent of a deadly 1978 incident that involved Egyptians, planes and Larnaca airport.

The incident arose when two Palestinians assassinated an Egyptian government minister at his hotel in Nicosia. The assailants took hostages and drove to the airport, where they boarded a plane with them. They later returned to Cyprus, where they had an hours-long standoff until an Egyptian C-130 carrying commandos landed at Larnaca airport.

The commandos attempted to storm the Cyprus Airways jet, but were fired upon by Cypriot troops. Many were killed. The Palestinians eventually surrendered. They were arrested, sentenced and released years later.

The incident poisoned Egypt's relations with Cyprus for years. Relations eventually improved, but it was Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, in office since June 2014, who has forged close ties with Cyprus. El-Sissi and Anastasiades frequently confer in person or on the phone. They spoke by phone Tuesday about the hijacking.

Jeh Johnson: 2016 Campaign Rhetoric About Muslims Is 'Counterproductive'

By David Sherfinski

[Washington Times](#), March 29, 2016

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson said Tuesday that recent rhetoric about Muslims by 2016 GOP presidential candidates has been "counterproductive" to the United States' homeland security and national security interests.

"I think that, in this phase, it is critical that we build bridges to American Muslim communities, not vilify them, not drive them into the shadows, and encourage them to work with us," Mr. Johnson said on MSNBC's "Morning Joe."

Mr. Johnson was asked about Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, who recently called for stricter law enforcement patrols in Muslim neighborhoods to stamp out Islamic extremism in the wake of the Brussels attacks. Last year, GOP presidential front-runner Donald Trump had proposed a temporary ban on Muslims entering the United States in the wake of the San Bernardino attacks.

"I believe that inflammatory comments about patrolling and securing Muslim neighborhoods or barring Muslims from entering this country, having an immigration policy based on religion, is counterproductive to our homeland security and national security interests," Mr. Johnson said.

Mr. Cruz has cited an New York Police Department program that reportedly surveilled parts of the city's Muslim community as an example of what he was talking about, which sparked a back-and-forth with NYPD Commissioner Bill Bratton in recent days.

Mr. Bratton had written over the weekend that the unit was purposed to map the ethnic makeup of the city to better understand the domain of the New York metro area, and its work was finished.

"[W]e do not single out any populace, black, white, yellow or brown for selective enforcement," Mr. Bratton wrote in the New York Daily News. "We do not 'patrol and secure' neighborhoods based on selective enforcement because of race or religion, nor will we use the police and an occupying force to intimidate a populace or a religion to appease the provocative chatter of politicians seeking to exploit fear."

"Bratton has a difficult job, and I am grateful for all he does to keep the people of New York safe," Mr. Cruz wrote Monday in response. "I also understand that politically, he has no choice but to implement the de Blasio-Obama liberal agenda. But his explanation for dismantling the unit makes no sense; it ignores the nature of the threat that we face from radical Islam."

NYPD Commissioner: 'Our Own Citizens' Pose Bigger Threat To Americans Than Migrants

By Kellan Howell

[Washington Times](#), March 29, 2016

New York Police Commissioner William Bratton on Monday refuted GOP candidates' recent remarks about the dangers of immigrants coming into the U.S. and explained that the biggest threat to Americans comes from the country's own citizens.

Speaking to Don Lemon on CNN Monday night, Mr. Bratton said he disagreed with businessman Donald Trump's assessment that America was unsafe because of a surge of Muslims coming into the country.

"America is a very safe place," Mr. Bratton said, Mediaite reported. "But we have had our incidences, as we know. We've had more than our fair share of mass killings, some committed by terrorists, but the vast majority committed by American citizens living here who have access to firearms."

"The bigger threat at the moment is from our own citizens than from those abroad," Mr. Bratton added.

He said that the threat may change over time as the world becomes "less stable" but said that since 9/11, U.S. law enforcement has put in place significant counterterrorism measures to ensure the safety of Americans.

Michael Hayden, Ex-CIA Director: Donald Trump 'Already Made Americans Less Safe'

By Andrew Blake

[Washington Times](#), March 29, 2016

Former CIA director Gen. Michael Hayden said Donald Trump's campaign speeches are aiding the recruitment efforts of the Islamic State and other terror groups.

Speaking to Al Jazeera for an interview to be broadcast later this week, the retired four-star general said the GOP presidential front-runner is fanning the flames of international terrorism each time he previews his foreign policy plans.

"The fundamental narrative of ISIS, Al-Qaida, Al-Shabab and so on is that there is undying enmity between Islamic and the western world," Gen. Hayden said in an excerpt from the interview published online by Al Jazeera on Tuesday, using an acronym for the terror group also known as Islamic State and ISIL.

"When Mr. Trump says some of the things that he has said — 'They all hate us, we shouldn't let any of those people in our country' — what he does is underscore and underpin the fundamentals of their narrative of undying enmity," Gen. Hayden said.

When asked by Al Jazeera's presenter if Mr. Trump could be described as a "recruiting sergeant" for terror groups, Gen. Hayden responded with a resonating "Yes."

"You don't have to be president — you don't have to get to be president — for that kind of statement from someone so prominent in the American political system to have already made Americans less safe," Gen. Hayden said.

The former intel chief's remarks were made on the heels of reports regarding a purported Islamic State propaganda video in which Mr. Trump is seen discussing the group's recent assault on the Belgian capital that claimed 35 lives.

"Brussels was one of the great cities, one of the most beautiful cities of the world 20 years ago," Mr. Trump says in a clip included in the video. "It was amazing, actually, and safe. And now, it's a horror show, an absolute horror show."

Gen. Hayden served as NSA director from 1999 to 2005 before running the CIA for three years under the administration of President George W. Bush.

Earlier this week, Gen. Hayden described the presidential hopeful as "erratic" during an interview with Politico, and said he believes Mr. Trump would pose more of a problem for national security issues than former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton if he were to beat out the presumptive Democratic nominee for the White House come November.

"I just don't know what it is he's going to do," Gen. Hayden said.

CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

2 Migrants Killed, 3 Injured In I-8 Collision Near Arizona

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

YUMA, Ariz. (AP) — Two immigrants died and three others were seriously injured when a car they were being smuggled in collided with a large vehicle hauler near the Arizona-California border last week.

The Border Patrol says an agent tried to pull the sports utility vehicle over when it fled, colliding with an empty car hauler on Interstate 8 near the state border.

Agent Richard Withers says the incident began on March 23 when agents spotted the men coming out of the desert and getting into the vehicle. An agent later tried pulling the vehicle over, but it fled after initially pulling over.

Two Mexican men were killed and three others hospitalized. Their condition is unknown. The driver, a 30-year-old woman who is a U.S. citizen, suffered minor injuries and has been arrested.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Woman Charged In Border Crash That Kills 2 In California

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

EL CENTRO, Calif. (AP) — A U.S. citizen has been charged with immigrant smuggling after allegedly slamming an SUV into a semi-trailer in California's Imperial Valley, killing two Mexican passengers and seriously injuring three others in the vehicle.

A criminal complaint says Lydiana Castro, a 30-year-old woman from Calexico, California, told authorities that she panicked and accelerated when a Border Patrol agent activated flashing lights March 23 on Interstate 8 near the Arizona state line. Another agent said he saw the driver fishtail into the truck.

Two men inside the vehicle died at the scene, and three others were taken to Phoenix for treatment. Federal authorities said Tuesday that one is brain dead on life support, another is paralyzed from the waist down.

Castro's attorney, Brian White, called it an unfortunate accident with tragic consequences. He emphasized that the immigrants were in seats not tucked into a trunk or other unsafe space.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Border Patrol: Incomplete Tunnel Found In Nogales, Arizona

[Albuquerque \(NM\) Journal](#), March 29, 2016

TUCSON, Ariz. — U.S. Border Patrol agents are investigating the discovery of an incomplete, cross-border tunnel in Nogales, Arizona.

Agents from the Tucson Sector acted on information provided by Mexican authorities Monday.

Mexican government officials say they had located a tunnel entrance in Nogales, Sonora.

The tunnel is about 80 feet long and extends approximately 30 feet into Arizona east of the Morley Port of Entry.

Border Patrol officials say the tunnels generally are used by criminal organizations to smuggle narcotics into the United States.

Since agents discovered the first illicit tunnel in 1990 in Douglas, Tucson Sector Border Patrol agents have investigated some 115 tunnels and seized more than 17,500 pounds of narcotics.

Authorities say that of the 115 tunnels investigated, 110 were in the Nogales area.

A Wall Apart: Divided Families Meet At A Single, Tiny Spot On The US-Mexico Border

By Paul Lewis

[The Guardian \(UK\)](#), March 29, 2016

There are 1,954 miles of border separating the US and Mexico but only one tiny stretch, measuring no more than 15 meters wide, where families are sanctioned to touch fingertips through a steel-mesh fence. This spot, where the Pacific ocean joins the sandy shoreline, and where San Diego becomes Tijuana, is where US Customs and Border Protection allows families torn apart by an unforgiving immigration system their own, fleeting connection. It is a wafer-thin and slowly shrinking no man's land, where border agents will look the other way as Mexican-American families with mixed legal status convene in the baking sun. In an election year which has been dominated by hardline anti-immigration and anti-Mexican rhetoric, the encounters along this tiny segment of border have been given a new sense of urgency. The Republican frontrunner Donald Trump and his main challenger Ted Cruz are both campaigning on the promise of turning the reinforced fence that separates the US from Mexico into a wall. Any such move would have very practical repercussions for people like Jonathan Magdaleno, a 25-year-old who was on the US side of the fence one recent Saturday, his palms against the warm metal grill. On the other side, squinting through the fence, latticed shadows across their faces, were his boyfriend, mother and two sisters. Experts on border security are divided over whether walls make the best barriers. Concrete is no less penetrable than highly-fortified steel.

The 650-mile stretch of the US-Mexico border not already made impassible by mountains and rivers is one of the most surveilled places on earth. Motion sensors, radars, drones, closed-circuit cameras and an army of border agents have waged a largely successful war on unlawful border crossing. With their proposed wall, Trump and Cruz are calling for an enormous infrastructure project at a point in US history when unauthorized border crossings from Mexico appear to be at a historic low. It would do nothing to resolve the problem

of visa overstayers, who comprise as many as half the undocumented migrants in the US, and would make no difference to the drug smugglers who build cross-border tunnels such as the one discovered in the California desert last week.

Trump's wall – which he has said would be between 30 and 50 feet tall, and which he claims Mexico will pay for – would however be a potent symbol, transforming the border into one that more closely resembles the old Berlin Wall, or the concrete that separates Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank. If that happens, it would mark the natural culmination of a decades-long process that has seen the border incrementally fortified. Over the years those changes have transformed Friendship Park, which was inaugurated as a California state park by then first lady Pat Nixon. In those days the border was marked by barbed wire, but even that was too much for Nixon. When she visited the park in 1971 she ordered the wire cut so she could cross into Mexico to meet a large crowd of locals. "I hope there won't be a fence here too much longer," she said. The fence has grown and hardened ever since, reflecting the toughening of immigration policies in Washington. The barbed wire was upgraded to a ragged chain link fence in 1979, under President Jimmy Carter. That much-maligned structure, which rusted and bent, survived Ronald Reagan's administration, when an amnesty was granted to millions of undocumented Mexicans, but was upgraded around 1994. The new version was a 10ft wall made of hard-wire mesh. The holes were large enough to pass through food, and down on the beach, where the gaps between separated steel girders were even wider still, couples could kiss and small children could slip through for a quick embrace with relatives. Another decade passed and extended families gathered on the sand, as they had done for generations, sharing picnics and looking out to the ocean. But that changed in the post-9/11 era, when the George W Bush administration ushered in the major reinforcement to the border that exists today, and which enabled the federal government to forcefully reclaim Friendship Park from California. The park was declared a construction zone in 2008, and a year later families arrived to discover the two fortified steel fences, some 90 feet apart, in what looked like a quasi-militarized zone. It was not until four years ago that border patrol, under intense pressure from local churches and humanitarian groups, finally allowed families past the first fence to the second, where they could once again meet with relatives. The park is open only between 10am and 2pm on Saturdays and Sundays, and most visitors only know about the openings through word of mouth. It is a safe space, but not one the border patrol encourages people to visit. The only reference to Friendship Park on the border patrol's website warns of people smuggling, drug trafficking and the trade in false documents. "Though it has long become a gathering

spot for families separated by the border, all activity is not considered innocent," it states.

The border guards who monitor the park are specially trained in community liaison techniques, and are mostly courteous to visitors, but still very much view themselves as law enforcement. "To us, this is a wall," said border patrol agent Payam Tanoami, who was recently on duty at the park. "It is an obstacle to get over." Remarkably one local activist, Enrique Morones, persuaded border officials to agree to lift a steel girder that locks a solitary gate in the fence for a ceremony that allows children separated from their mothers to briefly embrace. The gate opened in this way in 2013 and 2015, for two-minute reunions between pre-screened mothers and children, to mark Children's Day, a Mexican holiday celebrated in April. The gate is scheduled to open again for a few minutes this April. Lourdes Barraza, 43, who lives in Tijuana, was one of the handful of mothers afforded the chance last year to embrace her two boys, Giovanni, 13, and Alexis, 11, who live Fresno. When the gate opened her boys rushed forward, unaware they had to wait in line behind other families. She recalled how difficult it was to have to shoo them away, to tell them to wait their turn. "The border patrol said if we didn't obey the rules they would close the gate," she said. Barraza, originally from the Mexican state of Sinaloa, crossed the border – sharing the trunk of a car with other stowaways – in 1996, in the hope of giving a better life to the children she hopes she would one day have.

She survived by picking grapes in the Central Valley of California until, in 2013, she was deported along with her infant daughter, leaving her two sons with an estranged partner. Barraza was sat on a bench on the Mexican side of the fence when she told that story, just a few yards from the gate in the fence. "It was something wonderful, lovely," she said, replaying the memory. "But also very sad." The Tijuana side of Friendship Park is much more befitting of its name than the US side, which feels like a highly-secure prison.

The Mexican side is open to anyone, anytime, and the rusting girders have been transformed into a colorful mural, adorned with artwork and graffiti that testifies to solidarity, empathy and friendship with the country to the north. Murillo had assumed he was automatically granted US citizenship when he enrolled in the military but had no reason to check. He discovered otherwise after he completed a 37-month sentence for transporting marijuana in Arizona and was transferred to a detention facility. He was deported three months later, in 2012. Ever since Murillo has tried to scrape together a life in Rosarito, a small coastal town 10 miles south of the border, where he coaches Mexican children how to play American football. On Sundays he goes to the fence for meetings through the steel mesh with campaigners who are trying to get him and other deported veterans re-admitted to the country they were were prepared to die for. "What can be more American than a US soldier?" Murillo said, a

perplexed look on his face, as though he had just disembarked from a plane and discovered himself at the wrong airport. He pressed his face against the mesh. "Imagine what it would feel like to be kicked out of your country?"

TRANSPORTATION SECURITY

ADMINISTRATION

TSA Suspends Controversial Transfers That Were Subject Of Hawaii

[Hawaii News Now](#), March 29, 2016

Congressional investigators have begun looking into the Transportation Security Administration's controversial practice of involuntary employee reassignments with short notice, following a lawsuit filed by two former TSA managers in Hawaii.

The two former senior TSA managers have filed discrimination and prohibited practices complaints that said they were transferred to mainland posts with only a few days notice after speaking out about security deficiencies at airports in the islands.

On February 29, the TSA temporarily suspended involuntary reassignments of its employees after some of them complained managers sent them to faraway states in retaliation for whistle blowing.

That happened just two weeks before Hawaii News Now reported on two top TSA managers in Hawaii who said they were transferred to Seattle and Los Angeles with just a few days notice after pointing out security vulnerabilities in airports across Hawaii.

U.S. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hawaii) said that, "If it comes out that it's true that there are people in leadership positions who are retaliating on those who report problems, who are creating this culture of retribution, then they should be immediately removed from that position."

The U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform has asked the TSA for detailed records on all involuntary employee assignments going back four years.

Honolulu attorney Elbridge Smith, who represents the two Hawaii women who have filed whistleblower and gender discrimination complaints against the TSA, said he's happy to see the Congressional investigation.

"I think now that Congress is actually looking and demanding documents, and demanding people to come, maybe some things will happen," he said.

"We'd like to see some heads roll so that the next people that come along understand that they need to follow the law the same as the rest of us do," Smith said.

The whistleblowers said at least 50 TSA officers and managers across the country have been involuntarily transferred to faraway jobs because they fell out of favor with management for one reason or another in the last four years.

Heather Callahan Chuck, a former deputy federal security director in charge of day-to-day TSA operations at Honolulu International Airport, is one of the whistleblowers.

"I think they lose a lot of historical knowledge when folks leave. I think the disruption to leadership impacts ongoing security initiatives. I think it's a morale bummer, downer, if you will," Chuck said.

Chuck said she was blamed for security vulnerabilities that had existed for years before she arrived in Hawaii.

With three days notice, she was sent to the Los Angeles for two months, then transferred back to Honolulu in the fall of 2014. She said TSA bosses later gave her a bad evaluation, a demotion and wanted to transfer her to La Guardia Airport in New York City, so she quit the agency.

The other whistleblower, Sharlene Mata, was also a deputy federal security director who oversaw day-to-day TSA operations at all neighbor island airports.

A lifelong Kauai resident, she was given just three days by her TSA superiors to transfer to Seattle to a lower paying job. Both women said the involuntary transfers came just two weeks after they filed a gender discrimination case against the agency. Mata remains at TSA in Seattle two years later, overseeing administrative matters for the TSA in Washington state.

"Many lives and careers have been destroyed because of this. This regime's success in doing so has really plagued the TSA's leadership across the nation with the fear of retaliation in speaking up," Mata said.

"I believe our story has created a grassroots movement of people across the TSA that have been wronged and are now wanting to share their stories," Mata added.

After Hawaii News Now ran two stories about the women earlier this month, Chuck said he was "overwhelmed" by social media, email messages and phone calls from TSA employees across the country.

"I've had other employees calling me. Every place from Boston to Washington, DC, Alaska, California, saying, 'Hey, we've also been mistreated and we hope you get some resolution and here's our story in case that helps or you can help us,'" Chuck said.

The man who oversaw the two in Hawaii, Stanford Miyamoto, retired from the TSA as federal security director in Hawaii and the Pacific at the end of 2015, a TSA spokesman said.

Chuck said the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform has called at least four TSA employees to give sworn testimony in its investigation and the two Hawaii women have spoken at length with Congressional investigators.

The two women said they've also been interviewed by a reporter from The New York Times, which is expected to run a story about the issue soon.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Flooding Blamed For Up To \$20M In Road And Bridge Damage

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Louisiana's transportation secretary says recent flooding from storms that struck earlier this month caused up to \$20 million in road and bridge damage.

The Advocate reports (<http://bit.ly/1qf4dkK>) Shawn Wilson described the damage Tuesday in a House budget hearing, saying 455 roads and bridges were closed during the worst flooding. He said 60 or so roads and bridges remained off-limits this week.

North Louisiana experienced more bridge damage while south Louisiana saw mostly road problems.

Wilson says bridges known to be in a weakened condition before the storms got the first attention after weather conditions improved. He says interstates also received early attention because of the traffic volume they handle.

The repairs will be jointly financed between the state and federal governments. Wilson says Louisiana has the dollars for its share.

Information from: The Advocate, <http://theadvocate.com>

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved.

This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

US CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES

Study: American Economy Hampered By Limits On Skilled Immigrant Workers

[US News & World Report](#), March 29, 2016

Rigid policies restricting skilled immigration are hurting U.S. job growth while costing domestic companies thousands of dollars per worker, a new report from a Dartmouth College professor shows.

Matthew Slaughter, dean of Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business and a former member of the Council of Economic Advisers under President George W. Bush, on Wednesday will unveil the findings of his new report at the National Press Club in Washington. The white paper, provided to U.S. News

ahead of the event, suggests existing H-1B visa regulations are limiting productivity growth in the U.S. and costing American firms a fortune.

"People have concerns about jobs and wages for themselves and their children, and that's not unfounded. It's sobering how poor income growth in particular has been for so many families and workers in the U.S. for so many years at this point," Slaughter says. "The paradox I come back to is that there's a preponderance of evidence that high-skill immigration is a dynamic force that can help the U.S. create not just jobs, but good jobs."

The Department of Homeland Security caps the number of skilled immigrants allowed into the U.S. each year through the H-1B visa program at 65,000 annually, though there are some exceptions related to education. But the demand among prospective immigrants to work in the U.S. — and the demand among domestic firms to fill vacancies requiring a high level of skill — far exceeds that cap. Tens of thousands of foreign workers who would like to emigrate to the U.S. are blocked from doing so each year, with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services estimating it received nearly 233,000 H-1B visa applications for fiscal 2016 alone.

Critics of the H-1B system contend it allows domestic firms to import foreign workers who can be paid cheaper wages, so it makes sense that government officials would limit how many skilled foreign workers enter the U.S. labor market each year.

Slaughter's paper, however, notes that recent evidence suggests H-1B visa holders typically make as much as — or more than — their American-born counterparts. He cites a Brookings Institution study that said H-1B holders earned an average of \$76,356 in 2010, compared with the \$67,301 average paid to native-born Americans with a bachelor's degree.

Meanwhile, prospective immigrants can't even obtain an H-1B visa unless they find a company willing to sponsor them — a process that costs U.S. firms thousands of dollars.

An American Competitiveness Alliance poll tied to Slaughter's report found that 82 percent of U.S. companies that responded to the survey said their costs associated with hiring a foreign worker are equal to or greater than the costs of hiring a domestic worker. About three-quarters of respondents described the costs of H-1B compliance as "too high."

"We're not making it easier. If anything, I think it's accurate to say we're making it more difficult for companies in America to hire talented foreign nationals," Slaughter says, noting that the prohibitive costs disproportionately hurt small businesses. "Smaller, younger firms may not have the history or the resources in terms of legal counsel and human resources to bear these costs."

The natural follow-up questions, of course, are: Why not just hire U.S. workers? As an employer, why go through the H-1B process in the first place?

Simply put, it's because most unemployed Americans don't have the high level of skill many employers are seeking.

"America has long needed skilled workers – be they skilled immigrants or native-born Americans – to drive the innovation at the foundation of growth in output, jobs, incomes and opportunity," Slaughter's report says. "In recent years many companies, scholars and policymakers have voiced growing concern that America increasingly faces an insufficient supply of talented workers necessary to create and drive the new possibilities of information technology and other frontiers."

H-1B visa holders are typically required to work in positions that would require at least a bachelor's degree or its equivalent at minimum. That means many are college-educated, either through U.S. or international universities.

And considering less than 32 percent of America's civilian noninstitutional population – meaning those not currently imprisoned, institutionalized or serving active military duty – held at least a bachelor's degree in 2014, according to the Census Bureau, it's not terribly surprising that employers would have a hard time finding the skills and qualifications they need among domestic workers.

"Pretty much across all industries – but particularly in IT and tech industries that rely on STEM workers – talent is a big challenge for companies," Slaughter says. "And for these particular parts of the labor market, where it's at least bachelor's degrees or advanced degrees that are required under the H-1B visa program, the demand is pretty acute."

Immigration policy in general has historically been a deeply partisan issue, and H-1Bs are no different. In the current U.S. presidential race, Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton has voiced support for a higher H-1B cap that would allow more workers into the U.S.

On the other hand, Republican presidential candidate Sen. Ted Cruz has vowed to temporarily suspend the H-1B system and completely revamp it "to ensure that it protects American workers." And while GOP front-runner Donald Trump has flip-flopped on the issue, his website says he wants to introduce a requirement that would force domestic firms to "hire American workers first."

But Slaughter says the problem with the Cruz-Trump line of thinking is that many companies, particularly in tech-intensive industries, simply aren't going to find qualified workers among America's current pool of the unemployed. And the longer these positions remain unfilled, the greater the hit the country's productivity will take.

"One of the big problems we have in our economy is that there's a very clear skills gap in America," says former New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, a Democrat who has previously advocated for an increased H-1B visa cap. "Our

economy desperately needs skilled professionals, and that fact is far outpacing the supply of professionals with experience and capability needed to advance and grow."

The ACAAlliance study found that 77 percent of companies said their operations were hurt if skilled positions were left unfilled for more than 30 days. And 71 percent said they'd consider relocating to another country if it became too difficult or expensive to hire workers in the U.S.

"It's not just that we want the talent. It's that these individuals create new businesses that we're losing. Those are jobs," Richardson says.

Another recent study published by the National Foundation for American Policy found that more than half of America's billion-dollar startups have been founded by immigrants, many of whom first came to the U.S. on an H-1B visa. The 44 immigrant-founded companies profiled in the report held a collective market value of \$168 billion and employed an average of 760 people per company.

"The key thing to understand about high-skill immigration is that they make the economic pie bigger because of the talents that they bring. It's not a matter of adding people to a fixed supply of jobs," Slaughter says. "Whether they're U.S.-born or foreign-born, innovative workers drive productivity growth and grow the economy."

It's worth noting that H-1B holders themselves can't start new companies in the U.S., though some go on to create new startups or work in high-profile U.S. companies, employing thousands of domestic workers and other H-1B holders once they become naturalized. Google CEO Sundar Pichai and Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella are both former visa holders, for example.

On the other hand, Kunal Bahl, who ended up founding Snapdeal – India's Amazon.com e-commerce equivalent, which now stands as one of the country's most valuable companies – graduated with a master's degree in business administration from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School in 2007 and wanted to obtain a visa to stay in the U.S. He couldn't and was forced to go back to India, where he later founded a company that is now flourishing.

Slaughter's paper ultimately suggests a more open H-1B system – or at least a higher visa cap – would help the U.S. economy generate new opportunities for domestic workers while avoiding the loss of billion-dollar companies like Snapdeal. Future legislation should aim to "reduce, not increase, the cost to companies in America of hiring skilled immigrant workers," he says.

"Whether you're a Republican, independent, Democrat – what people across all parts of the political spectrum are worried about is whether we're creating enough good jobs and good wages in the U.S.," Slaughter says. "And skilled foreign nationals have long made outsized contributions to the growth of new ideas and new companies and new industries in the U.S."

Biggest Users Of High-tech Visas Hired 95 Percent From India

[Washington Examiner](#), March 29, 2016

At least 95 percent of foreign workers hired by the eight biggest users of high-tech visas were from India, according to a new analysis of 2015 statistics.

About 50,000 of the total 85,000 imported workers were hired through the eight companies, and the large majority of them were male Indian college graduates, largely from south and west India, according to Information Week's study.

"By hiring 98-99 percent Indians, the outsourcing firms are not only discriminating against U.S. workers, they are also discriminating against those from the rest of the world," David North, fellow for the Center of Immigration Studies, wrote Tuesday.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement data showed Cognizant Tech Solutions, the largest H-1B contractor, won 15,680 visas, 99.6 percent of which were distributed to Indians.

Infosys, the runner-up, distributed 98.1 percent of its 8,991 visas to Indian workers. Tata Consultancy Services shelled out 99.7 percent of its 6,339 awarded visas to recipients from the country.

North speculated the companies are motivated by profit.

"Academic experts on the H-1B program – that is those not directly funded by industry – are convinced that the employers of H-1Bs favor them because they are \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year cheaper than comparable resident workers; that the system, in fact, indentures them to their employers, and that they are a pliable, non-mobile work force that would not think of joining a union," North said.

IMMIGRATION

Poll: Majority Of Republicans Support Path To Citizenship

By Rafael Bernal

[The Hill](#), March 29, 2016

Most moderate and liberal Republicans — and nearly half of the party's conservative members — support a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants, according to a poll released Tuesday by the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI).

In all, 52 percent of Republicans said they support a path to citizenship, while 30 percent support the identification and deportation of all illegal immigrants.

Democrats overwhelmingly support immigration reform, but the divide between liberals (78 percent in favor) and conservatives (63 percent) covers a much larger spread. Identification and deportation is not a popular position among Democrats — only 11 percent support the idea, including 17 percent of those who identify as conservative Democrats.

The survey measured the attitude of Americans toward immigrants and immigration reform, accounting for age, political tendency, religion, geography and ethnicity.

Americans in general expressed support for immigration reform (62 percent of respondents), with those under 30 (69 percent), African-Americans (69 percent) and Hispanics (67 percent) showing stronger approval for a path to citizenship.

Younger Republicans were also shown to have more liberal views on immigration than their older counterparts: 63 percent of Republicans under 30 support a path to citizenship, compared to only 47 percent over age 65.

PRRI underlined the association between attitudes toward immigrants' roles in American society and support for immigration reform.

Of Americans who believe the influence of immigrants overall is positive, 74 percent support allowing them to become citizens. Only 37 percent of those who believe immigrants threaten American culture support deportation, while 46 percent support a path to citizenship.

Pew Research estimates there were 11.3 million illegal immigrants in the United States as of 2014, down from a peak of 12.2 million in 2012.

Protesters Rally At Hillary Clinton's Brooklyn Office To Back Bangladeshi Asylum Seekers Facing Deportation

By Aidan McLaughlin, New York Daily News

[New York Daily News](#), March 29, 2016

Protesters rallied in front of Hillary Clinton's Brooklyn campaign headquarters Tuesday in support of hundreds of Bangladeshi asylum seekers facing deportation.

The Democratic front-runner has criticized the anti-immigration rhetoric spewed by Donald Trump and other GOP presidential candidates, but protesters said they want to know where she stands on the looming deportations.

"We're facing the imminent deportations of at least 500 South Asian asylum seekers — a good number of whom will face detention, disappearance, torture or death upon returning to Bangladesh," says DRUM executive director Fahd Ahmed.

The rally, attended by a few dozen people and lasting two hours, included a number of asylum seekers that were involved in hunger strikes at detention centers across the country last year in protest of poor conditions and deportations.

Kamran Ahmed, 31, an asylum seeker who had been detained at a center in El Paso with a number of the men still detained and facing deportation, said he feared for their fate back in Bangladesh.

"Because they are political asylum seekers, they will most likely be abducted and tortured," Ahmed said.

"Their names were leaked to the media, so the Bangladeshi government knows who they are, and has already threatened their families. Unless action is taken, they will be sent to their deaths."

Mini Timmaraju, a director for Hillary Clinton's campaign, spoke with protestors and promised a response from the Democratic candidate.

The rally was organized by DRUM, a social justice organization focusing on the rights of South Asian immigrants.

In Georgia, Black Activists Team With Latino Immigrants

[Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#), March 29, 2016

Salvador Alvarado-Linares wore homemade orange and black monarch butterfly wings to the sit-in at the University of Georgia. Fashioned from paint, a cardboard box and ribbon, the El Salvadorian native's broad wings were meant to show "migration is beautiful" — Monarch butterflies fly from the U.S. and Canada to Mexico each year, a highly publicized spectacle.

For many hours last month, the 21-year-old Berkmar High School graduate refused to budge from a UGA classroom. He did it to protest state policies that bar him and other immigrants without legal status in the U.S. from attending some of the state's top universities and paying lower in-state tuition rates to attend other Georgia colleges.

Exhilarated by his first experience with civil disobedience, Alvarado-Linares also feared he would get in trouble with the law and jeopardize the temporary deportation deferral he had received from the Obama administration's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. Yet he was encouraged to stick it out because he wasn't alone.

More than 90 other protesters from a dozen colleges — including U.S. citizens and people like Alvarado-Linares who were illegally brought here as children — had joined him at sit-ins at UGA, Georgia Tech and Georgia State University. All three are closed to immigrants without legal status under a policy covering state institutions that have not admitted all academically qualified applicants for the two most recent school years. Among the other protesters were Hispanics, whites and Asian-Americans as well as black students from Spelman and Morehouse colleges.

Such multi-racial coalitions are forming across the U.S., finding common cause over discrimination and low voter participation while demonstrating against anti-illegal immigration policies. For example, the Black/Brown Coalition of Arizona has called on Congress to adopt a pathway to citizenship for immigrants without papers. And last month, black and Hispanic activists brought traffic to a halt in downtown Chicago, while protesting against recent immigration enforcement raids.

Critics object to such disruptive tactics — 14 students were arrested on charges of trespassing during the campus sit-ins in Georgia — and say in-state tuition should be reserved for Georgians with legal status.

The arguments for and against illegal immigration are familiar. Opponents contend it depresses wages and displaces U.S.-born workers, especially low-skilled laborers. Many prominent economists say immigration grows demand for goods and services, creating more jobs and allowing U.S.-born workers to take higher-skilled positions.

But the new alliances could give the movement fresh voices while, at the same time, evoking the Civil Rights struggle.

Tyra Beaman — a Spelman student from Richmond, Va. — joined the sit-ins at Georgia State University on Feb. 1. That was the same day the Georgia Supreme Court unanimously rejected an appeal aimed at allowing students like Alvarado-Linares to pay the substantially lower in-state college tuition rates. The timing was a coincidence as the students had planned their protests over four months to happen on the 56th anniversary of the Greensboro, N.C., lunch counter sit-ins aimed at desegregating Woolworth's stores.

Blacks and Hispanics, Beaman said, now face some of the same struggles in the U.S.

"Realizing that as much as we expect people to fight for us in terms of civil rights and voting rights and fighting against police brutality," she said, "we need to be fighting for them as well."

It's a two-way street, she added. Alvarado-Linares and other Freedom University students have joined forces with her and others from historically black colleges in helping draft a "United Appeal for Human Rights." It is modeled after the 1960 "Appeal for Human Rights" black civil rights activists published in Atlanta newspapers to combat segregation.

Some of those who were involved in the original appeal — Lonnie King and Charles Black — are guiding the young students in the new effort. King has been encouraging black and Latino activists to team up and start a "nonviolent, morally-based movement couched in human rights."

"What you have here is a logical extension of the struggle by all people to get under the umbrella of freedom, justice and equality in America," said King, a Morehouse graduate and one of the founding members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, a civil rights group. "The Hispanics and the blacks ought to come together. They have a lot of commonality of interests."

Gathering at a friend's home near Candler Park, King, Black and the young activists recently worked on the appeal with Laura Emiko Soltis, the executive director of Freedom University. It was growing late in the evening. Paper plates laden with discarded pizza crusts were piled up on the coffee table. Alvarado-Linares occasionally took photos to mark the

occasion. Bleary-eyed, the students wrestled with what to include and what to leave out of their appeal. They talked about the ills of income inequality, racial profiling and the private corrections industry.

Among others working on the document are Caleb Henderson, a Morehouse student from Kansas City, and Susana Ramirez, a Freedom University student and a native of Colombia with a temporary deportation deferral. Henderson, who is black, said he sees parallels between the obstacles faced by blacks and Hispanics and wants to continue building bridges between the two groups in Atlanta. Ramirez, who was brought to the U.S. when she was five and now lives in Norcross, agreed. She said it was an honor to have King and Black's help.

"I think about how in the future I might be them," she said. "And I might be 60. But I might be sitting in a living room telling the new group of youths who are experiencing oppression in the United States what to write about and how to write it."

"You have immigrants — you have people coming from out of state — so you have all these people there putting money into this piggy bank, but only a few are able to benefit from it. We strive to be a nation to increase education and at the same time increase contributions... If we are allowed to continue (our education) and become attorneys, doctors and teachers, then we will be able to give back not only to the community but also in economic terms."

— Salvador Alvarado-Linares of Norcross, an El Salvadorian native who has received a temporary deportation deferral and who has demonstrated against Georgia's in-state college tuition and admission policies.

"We respect our students' right to protest in an appropriate manner. Our policy was adopted several years ago to mirror applicable (state) law. That law required public higher education — including the University System — to ensure that only students who could demonstrate lawful presence were eligible for certain benefits, including in-state tuition. That law remains in effect, and, therefore, so will our policy."

— Charles Sutlive, a spokesman for the University System of Georgia.

U.N. Seeks To Resettle One-tenth Of 4.8 Million Syrian Refugees By 2018

By Stephanie Nebehay

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

Italy Rescues Nearly 1,400 Migrants In Southern Mediterranean

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

Inside The Migrant-Smuggling Trade: Escapes Start At €1,000

By Nektaria Stamouli

[Wall Street Journal](#), March 29, 2016

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

US COAST GUARD

The Latest: 11,500 Gallons Of Oil Spilled Near La. Bayou

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The Latest on an oil spill in southern Louisiana (all times local):

10:40 a.m.

The Coast Guard says a contractor is cleaning up about 11,500 gallons of oil that overflowed from a tank being filled in south Louisiana.

Lt. j.g. Lisa Siebert (SEE'-burt) says much of the oil ended on the ground rather than a nearby bayou. The Environmental Protection Agency took over the investigation and cleanup supervision.

Siebert says Bayou Teche remains closed. Investigators don't know how much oil got into the water.

She says PSC Industrial Outsourcing reported the spill about 8 p.m. Monday and is paying for the cleanup.

State police say a shelter-in-place advisory for nearby residents was lifted about 8 a.m. Tuesday.

Siebert says the spill apparently happened because an alarm failed to signal that the tank was too full as it was being filled Monday.

1 a.m.

The U.S. Coast Guard says an unknown amount of crude oil has spilled into a bayou in southern Louisiana.

The Coast Guard said in a statement Monday night it received a report around 8 p.m. that a tank along the edge of Bayou Teche near Charenton was being filled with crude oil when the spill began.

The statement says the source of the spill has been secured and crews have deployed more than 200 yards of boom.

NOLA.com/The Times-Picayune reports some residents of nearby St. Mary Parish were advised to shelter in place.

The cause of the spill is under investigation. The Coast Guard says the spill was reported by PSC Industrial

Outsourcing. The company couldn't immediately be reached by The Associated Press early Tuesday.

A stretch of the 135-mile-long waterway will be closed to commercial traffic during the cleanup.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

SECRET SERVICE

No Guns Allowed At Republican Convention, Secret Service Says

By Mike Mcphate

[New York Times](#), March 29, 2016

The Secret Service said it would forbid attendees to carry firearms at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland in July, neutralizing a debate that had put pressure on the candidates to take a side on the issue.

"Only authorized law enforcement personnel working in conjunction with the Secret Service for a particular event may carry a firearm inside of the protected site," Kevin Dye, a spokesman for the agency, said in a statement Tuesday.

The debate over whether to permit guns at the Quicken Loans Arena in the second-largest city in Ohio flared in the past week after an online petition appeared on Change.org, taking issue with the arena's anti-weapons policy in a state that allows "open carry" of firearms.

"This is a direct affront to the Second Amendment and puts all attendees at risk," said the petition, which had gathered more than 50,000 signatures by Tuesday morning.

The petition may have been a ruse intended to put Republicans on the spot over their support for open-carry laws. A CBS News report linked it to a liberal activist who said it was intended as satire, and some of its signatories seemed to be playing along.

Momentum over the issue grew, nonetheless, and the Republican candidates faced increasing pressure to take a position.

Appearing on ABC's "This Week" on Sunday, Donald J. Trump, the G.O.P. front-runner, said that he had yet to review the petition, but added that delegates risked becoming "sitting ducks, utterly helpless against evildoers and criminals."

He said he was a "very, very strong person for the Second Amendment."

The other Republican contenders, Senator Ted Cruz of Texas and Gov. John Kasich of Ohio, have not commented on the petition, but Mr. Cruz has been a vocal opponent of so-called gun-free zones. Messages left with their campaigns on Tuesday were not immediately answered.

The fight against gun-free zones has been propelled by Republicans in recent years partly as a response to the drumbeat of mass shootings in the United States. Gun rights

advocates have pushed a "good guy with a gun" argument: that licensed gun owners could save lives during such shootings.

Mr. Trump, who has a wide lead in the delegate count and is under Secret Service protection, said in January that he would eliminate gun-free zones on "my first day" in the White House.

Among the latest battlegrounds is Texas, where a law was approved last year to allow licensed gun owners to carry them in buildings at state universities, setting off protests by some faculty members and student groups.

The Secret Service said Tuesday that it had the authority to ban guns from sites visited by presidential candidates under its protection.

A perimeter would be set up outside the arena during the convention — July 18 to 21 — which "individuals determined to be carrying firearms will not be allowed past," Mr. Dye said.

Open-carry Petition Came From Hillary Clinton Supporter

By Jordan Fabian

[The Hill](#), March 29, 2016

A man who says he authored a petition to allow open carry of guns at the Republican National Convention says he did it to test the limits of the party's support for the Second Amendment.

The petition, which has attracted national attention, reads as if it was written by a supporter of gun rights.

Instead, the man behind the petition is a Democrat who plans on supporting Hillary Clinton for president.

The man, who said his name is Jim, is from the Philadelphia area. But he would not provide his full name, saying he has received threatening messages since the petition was published.

An anonymous blogger, who goes by the pseudonym Hyperationalist, is listed as the author of the petition on the website Change.org. Jim reached out to The Hill in response to an email sent to an address associated with the blog.

In a phone interview with The Hill, Jim said he published the petition to call attention to what he sees as a discrepancy in Republicans' position on gun rights.

He said if GOP candidates were actually against gun-free zones like they claimed, they would support the allowing open carry at the convention.

Some reporters and Twitter users have called the petition a masterful parody of the Republican Party's position on guns. But Jim said he is serious about his position.

"Everyone wants to call it satire or trolling," he said. "But it is a serious issue. I tried to write the petition taking them at 100 percent face value."

"If the rest of us get to have law-abiding citizens protecting us with guns at restaurants and schools," Jim added, then why shouldn't Republicans have it at their convention?

Jim had a feeling the petition would raise eyebrows, given that Republican frontrunner Donald Trump has floated the prospect of "riots" if party elders block him from receiving the nomination at the Cleveland convention.

"With talk of a contested convention heating up, the issues came together in a way that made sense," he said.

But Jim said he "certainly was surprised" by the reaction to his petition. It has amassed more than 50,000 signatures as of Tuesday morning. All three Republican presidential candidates have weighed in on it.

Jim expressed disappointment at the Secret Service's decision to ban guns from the convention.

He also posed a question to Trump and his two rivals: Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and Ohio Gov. John Kasich: would they support repealing the federal law that allows the Secret Service to ban guns even in jurisdictions that allow open-carry.

"Or at this point are they just going to acquiesce to the Treasury Department's tyranny?" he asked of the candidates. "It seems to me they shouldn't take the agency's position at face value."

Liberal Clinton Supporter Behind Open-carry Petition For Republican National Convention

By Jessica Chasmar

[Washington Times](#), March 29, 2016

A self-described liberal Democrat who supports Hillary Clinton for president is behind a popular petition demanding the right to bring guns to the Republican National Convention in July, CBS News has found.

The U.S. Secret Service responded to the petition Monday, saying attendees will not be allowed to carry firearms during the event at Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland. More than 50,000 people have signed the petition, which calls the gun ban "a direct affront to the Second Amendment" that "puts all attendees at risk."

The petition was created by someone operating under the handle "Hyperationalist." CBS News was able to track down the man behind the handle, who would only give the name Jim.

"Jim wouldn't say where he lives, only that he has roots in Philadelphia and works in the public health sector," CBS News reported.

He is a self-described liberal Democrat who intends to vote for Mrs. Clinton should she win her party's nomination. He also did some volunteer work on President Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, the report said.

Jim said he is "pretty passionate" about his gun control activism and that he wrote the petition "knowing it was somewhat preposterous."

"There were never going to be guns at the convention. Not a million signatures were going to make that happen," Jim told CBS News.

He said he also sought to challenge Republican candidates on how pro-Second Amendment they really are: "If they can't live in accordance with the policies they impose upon us, they owe us that rational conversation," Jim said.

"I thought, 'How do we square how unsafe they're going to be with what they say makes them safe?'" he said.

But he denied that his petition is satirical.

"I'm 100 percent sincere in my conviction that guns should be allowed at the GOP convention. [It would be a reflection of] the policies they sought to impose around the nation," he told CBS News.

NATIONAL PROTECTION AND PROGRAMS

Company Invents Gun That Folds Up To Look Like A Cellphone

[NBC News](#), March 29, 2016

A Minnesota company has invented a handgun that folds up to look just like a smartphone.

The .380-caliber pistol, called Ideal Conceal, will be available later this year and "will be virtually undetectable because it hides in plain sight," Ideal Conceal says on its website.

In locked position, the two-shot plastic gun with a metal core can be discreetly slipped into pockets, like a real phone. But "with one click of the safety it opens and is ready to fire," Ideal Conceal claims.

The creator, Kirk Kjellberg, told NBC News the idea came to him after he attracted attention for carrying a concealed weapon in a restaurant.

"A boy spotted me in the restaurant and said loudly, 'Mommy, Mommy, that guy's got a gun!' And then pretty much the whole restaurant stared at me," he said.

So Kjellberg, who calls himself a "serial inventor," decided to make a gun that wouldn't stand out so much. He says the Ideal Conceal is the same size as his Galaxy S7 phone with a protective case on it: About 3 inches by 5 inches.

A Facebook page for Ideal Conceal already has more than 13,000 likes. But the product has attracted concern too, with critics arguing its design could pose a security threat at airports and other places.

Kjellberg denies that.

"It's kind of an erroneous idea that this is any different from any other pistol, because when you run it through an x-ray, it has barrels and triggers and hammers — all the things other guns have. It has enough metal in it that it can't escape the metal detector," he said.

Related: Gun Sale Background Checks Hit New High in December 2015

The Department of Homeland Security has contacted him about the pistol, and he plans on giving them x-rays of it so law enforcement can distinguish it from cellphones during airport screenings.

Kjellberg also dismissed concerns about children seeing the phone-shaped weapon and accidentally getting hurt.

"In America, we have lots of children in contact with pistols already. There's been quite a few incidents long before my product came along," he said. "For me, it's not the gun. It's the people. So if you have a pistol and you have children anywhere near you, it's your responsibility to lock that stuff up and keep it away from children."

An Ideal Conceal prototype is slated for June, with sales beginning in October. The gun is listed for \$395.

More than 4,000 people around the world have expressed interest in buying it, Kjellberg told NBC affiliate KARE in Minneapolis.

Gun sales hit a new high in 2015 and have nearly doubled since President Obama took office, federal data shows. They peaked in December after the mass terror attacks in Paris and San Bernardino.

Senate Backs REAL ID-compliant Licenses For Louisiana

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Louisiana senators voted to scrap a law that prohibits Louisiana from issuing driver's licenses that comply with the security measures of the federal REAL ID act.

The Senate advanced the proposal — pushed by Gov. John Bel Edwards — to the House with a 31-7 vote Tuesday.

Supporters of the measure by Sen. Yvonne Dorsey Colomb, a Baton Rouge Democrat, worry that without REAL ID compliance, Louisiana residents could need a passport to board domestic flights starting in 2018.

Colomb's bill would let residents decide if they want the personal document scanning and retention required for a REAL ID-compliant license.

Sen. John Milkovich, a Keithville Democrat, opposed the proposal, calling REAL ID a federal government effort to create a national database to spy on people.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Lawmakers Say First Step In Upgrading IDs Moving Forward

By Kevin Burbach

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — The Minnesota House overwhelmingly approved a bill Tuesday night that sets in motion necessary upgrades to Minnesota driver's licenses.

The measure was approved in a 125-to-2 vote.

Rep. Dennis Smith, R-Maple Grove, told reporters before the House met that the bill would launch a study on how to comply with the federal Real ID Act. Upgraded licenses will be necessary to board domestic flights by October 2020.

The measures are part of a plan to eventually adopt upgrades to state licenses later this session, "so Minnesotans can continue to fly and have access to federal buildings and have entrance to military facilities throughout our country," Smith said.

Minnesota is one of just five states that haven't upgraded its IDs to meet the national standards. Though federal officials won't start checking for the upgraded IDs at airport gates for a few years, legislative leaders want a new system in place by this fall so Minnesota residents can get their current licenses replaced in their normal, four-year renewal period.

House GOP spokeswoman Susan Closmore says the House amended the Senate version of the bill at the governor's request to give the Department of Public Safety a little more time to gather information for lawmakers looking at the changes. The Senate will need to approve the amended measure before it heads to Gov. Mark Dayton; Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk has said the chamber will.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Idaho Gov. C. L. "Butch" Otter Approves Real ID Legislation

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Idaho will finally implement a federal mandate to toughen ID requirements, reversing its nearly decade-long stance against the Real ID Act.

Gov. C. L. "Butch" Otter signed legislation to comply with the federal law on Monday.

Lawmakers initially refused to comply with the federal act, passed in 2005, because they deemed it an unfunded mandate.

The Real ID is designed to make driver's licenses less susceptible to forgery by requiring proof of U.S. residency. It also requires states to retain copies of other identification documents, like birth certificates.

Since 2014, the Department of Homeland Security has granted Idaho compliance extensions. However, the latest extension expires in October.

Real ID will be needed to board all commercial airlines by 2020 and is currently needed to visit some federal facilities.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

OFFICE OF HEALTH AFFAIRS

WHO: Ebola No Longer World Health Emergency

By Krista Larson

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) – The World Health Organization said Tuesday that the Ebola outbreak in West Africa no longer qualifies as an international health emergency, although it cautioned that male survivors can infect their sexual partners for up to a year after recovering.

The decision by WHO's Ebola emergency committee comes following flare-ups that emerged in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone after authorities declared virus transmission over. The new cases sometimes were publicized only hours after the public announcements were made.

"Complacency at this stage would be completely wrong," said Robert Steffen, the committee's vice chair.

The announcement puts an end to the international emergency declaration that has been controversial. An Associated Press investigation found that WHO initially delayed making the declaration – similar to an SOS signal – on political, economic and religious grounds.

Tuesday's announcement also comes as the organization fights the Zika virus that has prompted concern in the Americas. Steffen said the battle against Zika in no way dictated the committee's decision to declare the Ebola emergency over.

While there have been flare-ups of new cases, health authorities said Tuesday those were not linked to the original chains of transmission dating back to December 2013.

"We know that little clusters will continue to flare up. That will be normal life just as in previous decades, there have been every now and then, outbreaks of Ebola in various parts of sub-Saharan Africa," Steffen said.

More than 11,000 people have died mostly in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone since December 2013. There are currently no known cases in Liberia or Sierra Leone, though Guinea recently reported two confirmed and three probable cases. Authorities are now monitoring nearly 1,000 contacts of the sick.

Associated Press Medical Writer Maria Cheng in London contributed to this report.

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

TERRORISM INVESTIGATIONS

US Orders Diplomatic, Military Families Out Of South Turkey

By Matthew Lee And Lolita C. Baldor

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – The State Department and Pentagon ordered the families of U.S. diplomats and military personnel Tuesday to leave posts in southern Turkey due to "increased threats from terrorist groups" in the country.

The two agencies said dependents of American staffers at the U.S. consulate in Adana, the Incirlik air base and two other locations must leave. The so-called "ordered departure" notice means the relocation costs will be covered by the government.

Pentagon press secretary Peter Cook said no specific threat triggered the order, but said it was done "out of an abundance of caution" for the safety of the families in that region. He said he was not aware of a deadline for the families to leave, but said "this will move very quickly."

In a statement, the military's European Command said the step "allows for the deliberate, safe return of family members from these areas due to continued security concerns in the region."

The orders cover the Adana consulate, U.S. military dependents in Incirlik, Ismir and Mugla as well as family of U.S. government civilians at Ismir and Mugla. The State Department also restricted official travel to that which it considers "mission critical." Cook said that the order does not affect about 100 family members who are based in Istanbul and Ankara.

The move comes amid heightened security concerns throughout Turkey due to the ongoing fight against Islamic State militants in neighboring Syria and Iraq and was accompanied by an updated travel warning advising U.S. citizens of an increased threat of attacks. It also comes as Turkey's president is set to arrive in Washington to attend President Barack Obama's nuclear security summit.

"We understand this is disruptive to our military families, but we must keep them safe and ensure the combat effectiveness of our forces to support our strong ally Turkey in

the fight against terrorism,” the European Command statement said.

Incirlik is a critical base in the fight by the U.S.-led coalition against the Islamic State group, and includes strike aircraft, drones and refueling planes.

Turkey's decision last year to allow the coalition to conduct airstrikes with aircraft based at Incirlik shortened the time and distance required to conduct airstrikes in Syria and Iraq, compared with strikes flown from bases in the Persian Gulf area. And it increased the number of U.S. personnel at the base.

NATO's Allied Land Command is based at Ismir and there is a Turkish base at Mugla where some U.S. military personnel go for training and other missions.

It was not immediately clear how many family members would be affected in total. The Pentagon said the order would affect about 680 military family members and roughly 270 pets. The State Department and Pentagon had begun a voluntary drawdown of staff at the two posts last September after Turkey announced it would take a greater role in the fight against Islamic State militants.

At the time, military officials said they had recommended the voluntary departure from Incirlik because of specific calls by militants for lone wolf attacks against the air base.

On Monday, Secretary of State John Kerry met with Turkish Foreign Mevlut Cavusoglu. State Department spokesman John Kirby said the two discussed measures to secure the Turkey-Syria border and disrupt extremist networks.

According to a U.S. official, the decision to order families to leave stemmed from the ongoing assessment of security threats in Turkey. The official was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly, so spoke on condition of anonymity.

The decision comes a day after Israel issued a new travel advisory for Turkey, warning its citizens to leave the country as soon as possible and to avoid any traveling there.

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Pentagon And State Department Order Families Of U.S. Troops And Diplomats To Leave Turkey

By Dan Lamothe

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

The United States will withdraw virtually all family members of U.S. troops and diplomats from its installations in Turkey, U.S. officials said Tuesday, citing security concerns as the campaign against the Islamic State continues.

The military decision was announced on the blog for U.S. European Command, which also instituted travel restrictions in Brussels last week after a terrorist attack killed 38 people, including three suicide bombers. At least four Americans were killed and about a dozen more were wounded, including an Air Force officer who was stationed in Europe and members of his family.

“The decision to move our families and civilians was made in consultation with the Government of Turkey, our State Department, and our Secretary of Defense,” Air Force Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, the commander of European Command, said in a statement. “We understand this is disruptive to our military families, but we must keep them safe and ensure the combat effectiveness of our forces to support our strong Ally Turkey in the fight against terrorism.”

In a separate advisory, the State Department said it had ordered the departure of family members of officials posted to the U.S. consulate in Adana, near the Mediterranean coast in south-central Turkey and in Izmir and Mugla provinces on the western coast. Official travel in Turkey has been restricted to “mission critical” only. The advisory warns that foreign and U.S. tourists have been “explicitly targeted” by terrorist organizations, and should avoid any travel “in close proximity to the Syrian border.”

Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook said about 670 people will be affected by the move, while about 100 more in Ankara and Istanbul will be allowed to stay. The decision was made due to an “abundance of caution” based on threats in the region, he said.

The move is escalation to the U.S. government's efforts to protect family members in Turkey. Last year, the Defense Department urged hundreds of family members to leave voluntarily but did not require it. But it's still noteworthy, considering Turkey's status as a NATO ally and its role as in the campaign against the Islamic State.

The decision affects military families who are stationed in the cities of Adana, Izmir and Mugla. Adana is home to Incirlik Air Base, which has been used to carry out airstrikes against the Islamic State. Izmir is about 200 miles southwest of Istanbul on Turkey's western coast and home to an Air Force installation. Mugla province is home to Aksaz Naval Base, on the Aegean Coast.

The decision comes a few weeks after the third bombing in Turkey's capital city of Ankara since October. Istanbul, Turkey's largest city, also was hit with bombings this month and in January. Both bombings in Istanbul were linked to Islamic State militants.

Turkish officials have linked the October bombing in Ankara with the Islamic State, but the Ankara attacks in

February and March have been claimed by the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons, a nationalist militant group that wants to establish a separate Kurdish state in southeastern Turkey. The group is considered a breakaway group from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has been designated a terrorist organization by the State Department.

The State Department warned earlier this month of increased threats by terrorist groups throughout Turkey and advised Americans not to travel to southeastern Turkey, closer to Syria and Iraq.

"Recent terrorist attacks from international and indigenous groups have targeted popular tourist sites, U.S. government buildings, police, and other local authorities throughout Turkey," the State Department said in a warning issued March 17. "The threat of kidnapping remains a concern, especially in the southeast. There have been incidents of cross-border shelling from Syria into Turkey."

Staff writer Karen DeYoung contributed to this report.

Families Of U.S. Diplomats, Military Personnel Ordered To Leave Turkey

Step reflects worries over wave of terrorist attacks in Turkey and elsewhere in Europe

By Dion Nissenbaum

[Wall Street Journal](#), March 29, 2016

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

Families Of U.S. Personnel Ordered To Leave Parts Of Turkey Amid Security Concerns

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

Pentagon Pulling Military Families Out Of Turkey

By Andrew Tilghman

[USA Today](#), March 29, 2016

Families of U.S. military members stationed across southern Turkey are being sent home as a precaution amid growing violence in the region, the Pentagon said.

Hundreds of family members and other U.S. civilians assigned to Incirlik Air Base in Adana and smaller facilities in the cities of Izmir and Mugla will be affected.

Incirlik Air Base, home to the U.S. 39th Air Base Wing, is a crucial player in the war against the Islamic State. Last year, Turkey agreed to allow use of the base for U.S.-coalition jets conducting airstrikes in Syria and Iraq. NATO's Allied Land Command is based in Izmir.

The mandatory evacuation comes amid an uptick in violence in Turkey, including a Feb. 18 car bomb in the

capital, Ankara, and a March 19 suicide bombing on a popular shopping street in Istanbul. On March 9, the Defense Department-run school at Incirlik was closed due to security concerns and the base imposed additional force-protection measures.

The total U.S. military force deployed at Incirlik has grown to nearly 2,500, from about 1,300 last year, after the Turkish government agreed to let U.S. combat aircraft use the base. The base's increasingly prominent role in the fight against the Islamic State group also raised new security concerns.

In July, worries about extremists targeting U.S. troops and their families prompted military officials to lock down the base and prohibit the roughly 5,000 American troops, civilians and dependents from venturing out to the "American alley" outside the installation's main gate, where troops for years have patronized kabob shops, carpet salesmen and local markets.

In September, the Defense Department offered voluntary evacuations to about 900 military dependents at Incirlik, but only about 80, or less than 10%, decided to leave, Incirlik officials said. The dependents that remain now must leave, the Pentagon said.

Gen. Philip Breedlove, chief of the U.S. European Command, said the military made the decision in consultation with the U.S. State Department and the Turkish government. He said the decision does not foreshadow a permanent end to accompanied tours of duty in the area.

"We understand this is disruptive to our military families, but we must keep them safe and ensure the combat effectiveness of our forces to support our strong ally Turkey in the fight against terrorism," he said.

U.S. Orders Diplomatic, Military Families Out Of Turkey Over Security Fears

By Kellan Howell

[Washington Times](#), March 29, 2016

The State Department and Pentagon have ordered the families of U.S. diplomats and military personnel to leave posts in southern Turkey due to security fears.

The two agencies said dependents of Americans stationed at the U.S. Consulate in Adana and the Incirlik air base and two other locations must leave.

The "ordered departure," will affect about 670 Defense Department dependents. Relocation costs will be covered by the government, The Associated Press reported.

"We understand this is disruptive to our military families, but we must keep them safe and ensure the combat effectiveness of our forces to support our strong ally Turkey in the fight against terrorism," the European Command statement said, AP reported.

The move was accompanied by an updated travel warning advising U.S. citizens of increased threats of terror attacks in Turkey.

It also comes as Turkey's president is set to arrive in Washington to attend President Obama's nuclear security summit.

Last week the State Department also issued a travel warning to Americans traveling to Europe in the wake of terrorist attacks in Brussels that killed 31 people, including four Americans.

ISIS Issues Chilling Warnings: More Attacks Targeting U.S., Europe Are Coming

By Rowan Scarborough

[Washington Times](#), March 29, 2016

Islamic State terrorists have taken to social media to tell the West that the March 22 attacks in Brussels are just the beginning of waves of violence that will strike more targets in Europe and the United States.

The messages were produced by the Islamic State's media company, Al-Wafa, which published a series of deadly predictions that indicate the terror army based in Syria has scores of attacks in the pipeline.

"America, You Are Next" is the headline on one column. The U.S. is leading a coalition whose objective, through air strikes and commando raids, is to defeat or destroy the Islamic State and its so-called Caliphate in Syria-Iraq.

"America has forgotten that Muslims do not accept humiliation and will not forget to retaliate," says the article, according to a translation by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), which monitors jihadi communications traffic

"We haven't forgotten the screams of the virgin girls who were raped when you invaded Iraq. Today, with Allah's help, we will avenge them and restore every maiden's honor. Today we will blow up your honor, today we will eliminate your myth, today we will take your women captive and sell them at slave markets at prices reserved for the most unclean. Today we will take your children and raise them among Muslim children until they grow up, fight, and break the noses of those who remain among you."

The writer points to the San Bernardino massacre carried out by American-born Syed Farook and his wife.

"Then how about we send you 10 Syed Farooks? How about we send you eight lions like the heroes who set France on fire [Nov. 13] and turned it on its head," the writer says.

The Islamic State, also known as ISIL and ISIS, has pledged in previous posts to infiltrate with its terrorists the streams of refugees from the Syria civil war.

President Obama over the weekend said he plans to bring more migrants into the country as a show of opposition against ISIL.

Another Al-Wafa article specifically threatens Europe under the headline, "Today It Is Brussels and [Its] Airport, and Tomorrow It Might Be Portugal and Hungary."

The mentioning of two countries not thought to be ISIL's crosshairs appears to be an effort to show that the terror group can strike anywhere in Europe.

"The meaning is that no European nation or capital is safe from ISIS attacks," says a MEMRI analysis.

States the article: "They [the perpetrators] told Belgium: We have come to you today with bombs, explosive belts, and rifles. We will yet send you to hell in coffins. Yes, by the Almighty Allah, we will strike you in the nightclubs, the stadiums, the schools, and the universities; on land, on sea, and everywhere. We will target the military, the police, women, men, the elderly, and children. We will leave none of you [alive]."

ISIL's primary weapon, displayed in mass killings in Iraq and in Brussels, is a suicide bomber. The death toll in the Brussels attack has reached 35, and of the more than 300 wounded, some 60 are in intensive care.

ISIL, via ally Jamat-ul-Ahrar in Pakistan, carried out a horrific suicide bombing in Lahore, Pakistan, on Easter Sunday. The target: Christians. The bomber killed more than 70 Christians and Muslims in a crowded park. Jamat broke away from the equally brutal Pakistan Taliban and now works for ISIL, which is also attempting to create an army in Afghanistan to bring down the U.S.-backed elected government.

ISIL also appears to be growing in Yemen, where it is believed to have crucified a Catholic priest on Good Friday.

Another ISIL media article vows to establish a strong presence in London, where the government has adopted a new get-tough policy to tap down radical Islam. Prime Minister David Cameron also has condemned the global Muslim Brotherhood as a supporter of violence and says it may be banned in Great Britain.

In contrast, Mr. Obama has reached out to American Muslim leaders tied to the Brotherhood.

"My message in this article is addressed to the Crusader pig Cameron," the ISIL operator writes. "Do not think that what happened in Brussels, and before that in Paris, is far from you, oh lowly Crusader."

Said Robert Maginnis, a retired Army officer and terrorism expert: "I believe among the hundreds of returnees from Syria/Iraq and the Islamic population now in Europe there are plenty of willing people to continue to terrorize Europe. The Europeans are not of one mind much less trust each other to work as closely as necessary to prevent further assaults."

Al Qaeda Offshoot Offers Its Take On U.S. Presidential Race

Donald Trump's election would bring about a 'drastic change' in U.S. policy in the Middle East, according to publication linked to terror group

By Reid J. Epstein

[Wall Street Journal](#), March 29, 2016

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

Nuclear Materials Remain Vulnerable To Theft, Despite U.S.-Led Effort

By David E. Sanger And William J. Broad

[New York Times](#), March 29, 2016

WASHINGTON — As President Obama gathers world leaders in Washington this week for his last Nuclear Security Summit, tons of materials that terrorists could use to make small nuclear devices or dirty bombs remain deeply vulnerable to theft. Still, Mr. Obama's six-year effort to rid the world of loose nuclear material has succeeded in pulling bomb-grade fuel out of countries from Ukraine to Chile, and has firmly put nuclear security on the global agenda.

But despite the progress, several countries are balking at safeguards promoted by the United States or are building new stockpiles.

President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, where some of the largest stockpiles of civilian nuclear material remain, has decided to boycott the summit meeting, which begins Thursday night. Mr. Putin has made it clear he will not engage in nuclear cleanup efforts dominated by the United States.

In addition, Pakistan's embrace of a new generation of small, tactical nuclear weapons, which the Obama administration considers highly vulnerable to theft or misuse, has changed the way the administration talks about Pakistani nuclear security. While Mr. Obama declared early in his presidency that the United States believed Pakistan's nuclear assets were secure, administration officials will no longer repeat that line. Instead, when the subject comes up, they note the modest progress Pakistan has made in training its guards and investing in sensors to detect break-ins. They refuse to discuss secret talks to persuade the Pakistanis not to deploy their new weapons.

Pakistan, China, India and Japan are all planning new factories to obtain plutonium that will add to the world's stockpiles of bomb fuel.

And Belgium, where a nuclear facility was sabotaged in 2014 and where nuclear plant workers with inside access went off to fight for the Islamic State militant group, has emerged as a central worry. The country is so divided and disorganized that many fear it is vulnerable to an attack far more sophisticated than the bombings in the Brussels airport and subway system last week.

For the first time, the Nuclear Security Summit will include a special session on responding to urban terrorist attacks — and a simulation of how to handle the threat of imminent nuclear terrorism.

"The key question for this summit," said Matthew Bunn, a nuclear expert at Harvard and a former White House science adviser, "is whether they'll agree on approaches to keep the improvements coming."

The nuclear initiative has been a signature issue for Mr. Obama: It is among the goals he campaigned on in 2008 and part of the reason he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize barely a year into his presidency. Benjamin J. Rhodes, a deputy national security adviser, told reporters on Tuesday that the administration's overall efforts had made it "harder than ever before for terrorists and bad actors to acquire nuclear material."

But the administration's budget for aiding global nuclear cleanups has been cut by half; some officials argue that less funding is needed with fewer nations willing to give up nuclear materials. A report Mr. Bunn helped write noted, "The administration is now projecting lower spending year after year for years to come, postponing or canceling a wide range of nuclear security activities that had been included in previous plans."

In a recent report, the Nuclear Threat Initiative, a private advocacy group in Washington that tracks nuclear weapons and materials, warned that many radioactive sources were "poorly secured and vulnerable to theft." The report called the probability of a terrorist's detonating a dirty bomb "much higher than that of an improvised nuclear device."

Ingredients for so-called dirty bombs, which use conventional explosives to spew radioactive material, are still scattered around the globe at thousands of hospitals and other sites that use the highly radioactive substances for industrial imaging and medical treatments. Less than half of the countries that attended the last nuclear summit in 2014 pledged to secure such materials, and they in turn represent less than 15 percent of the 168 nations belonging to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

And while the administration succeeded in getting more than a dozen countries to give up their civilian stockpiles of highly enriched uranium, a main fuel of atomic bombs, the Nuclear Threat Initiative said in another report that some 25 nations still had such materials — enough for thousands of nuclear weapons.

The report called highly enriched uranium "one of the most dangerous materials on the planet," warning that an amount small enough to fit in a five-pound sugar bag could be used to build a nuclear device "with the potential to kill hundreds of thousands of people."

Still, that does not mean Mr. Obama's efforts have failed altogether. He is expected to announce a major achievement soon: the removal of roughly 40 bombs' worth of

highly enriched uranium and separated plutonium from Japan. Some of the uranium was fabricated in pieces the size of squares of chocolate that could be easily slipped into a pocket, a terrorist's dream.

And Ukraine was the site of a success that, in retrospect, looks even bigger than it did four years ago.

On a bitterly cold day in Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, in March 2012, two years before Ukraine descended into crisis, a team of Americans and Ukrainians packed the last shipment of highly enriched uranium into railway cars, ridding the country of more than 500 pounds of nuclear fuel. It would have been enough to build eight or more nuclear bombs, depending on the skill and destructive ambitions of the bomb maker.

"We had vodka," recalled Andrew J. Bienenawski, then a United States Energy Department official central to the elimination. "It was amazing."

Yet there are signs that what began as a global effort to prevent terrorists from obtaining the world's deadliest weapons is fracturing.

In fact, there is a case to be made that even as vulnerable stockpiles have shrunk, the risk of nuclear terrorism has not.

There is evidence that groups like the Islamic State are more interested than ever in nuclear plants, materials and personnel — especially in Belgium, where the attacks last week killed more than 30 people.

The Belgian police discovered last year that Islamic State operatives had taken hours of surveillance video at the home of a senior official at a large nuclear site in Mol, Belgium. The plant in Mol, a northern resort area, holds large stocks of highly enriched uranium.

Laura Holgate, Mr. Obama's top adviser on nuclear terrorism, noted on Tuesday that the United States had worked with Belgium to "reduce the amount of nuclear material" at one key site. Asked about the Islamic State's interest in obtaining nuclear fuel from Belgium, she said, "We don't have any information that a broader plot exists."

Ms. Holgate told reporters that this week's meeting would address the question: "How do you sustain the momentum to the summit after the summit ends?"

The results of previous summit meetings have ranged from treaty ratifications to the establishment of more than a dozen training centers around the globe where guards, scientists, managers and regulators sharpen their skills at preventing atomic terrorism.

Near Beijing, one of the largest training centers opened this month. "It's in our national interest" to help foreigners secure their atomic materials, said Nick Winowich, an engineer at Sandia National Laboratories, one of the American nuclear labs that helped in the center's development.

The biggest wins have been the removal of all highly enriched uranium from 12 countries, including Austria, Chile, Hungary, Libya, Mexico, Turkey and Vietnam. The material was mostly reactor fuel. But officials said terrorists could have turned it into at least 130 nuclear weapons.

Critics of the summit process point to vague communiqués that seem to have done little to drive hard decisions. A sense of summit fatigue now seems to prevail, the critics add, noting that Russia's withdrawal evades some of the biggest security problems.

The Obama administration has also presided over a steady drop in American spending on international nuclear security. Budgets fell from over \$800 million in 2012 to just over \$500 million in 2016. For 2017, the White House has proposed less than \$400 million — half the spending of the high point.

The administration has defended the cuts, saying they reflect the completion of some programs and upgrades and the suspension of cooperative work with Russia after its invasion of the Crimean Peninsula.

"The summit process has achieved some very important objectives," said Kenneth N. Luongo, president of the Partnership for Global Security, a private group that advocates new nuclear safeguards. "But it needed to aim higher. The world is not becoming any easier to deal with. There's still a responsibility to think big."

Spanish Court Says To Try Alleged Islamists, Renews Request For US Help

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

EgyptAir Plane Hijacked In Blow To Struggling Egypt Tourism

By Nour Al Ali

[Bloomberg News](#), March 29, 2016

A passenger falsely claiming he was armed with explosives hijacked an EgyptAir plane carrying 71 other people and forced it to land in Cyprus, casting new doubts on Egypt's ability to revive desperately needed tourism.

The hijacker, an Egyptian national, released most of the other passengers and crew before surrendering to authorities at the airport in Larnaca. None of the people aboard the plane was harmed during the seven-hour ordeal, Cypriot authorities said.

"It's over," the Foreign Ministry said on its Twitter account. Cypriot Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides said the hijacker wore a belt with telephone covers that looked like explosive devices but wasn't carrying actual explosives. President Nicos Anastasiades ruled out terrorism as a motive.

Cyprus's Rik TV said the hijacker had asked that a letter be delivered to his ex-wife, who lives in Cyprus. She was taken to the airport to speak with him, Kasoulides said.

The hijacking dealt a new blow to Egypt's efforts to project an image of stability to tourists and investors five months after a Russian passenger crashed in the Sinai peninsula in a suspected bombing claimed by Islamic State. Militant attacks have surged since 2013, though most have been centered in north Sinai.

"Even if recent developments confirm that this is not a terrorist attack, but rather an asylum-seeker who wants to join his ex-wife, this raises further concerns about security" at Egyptian airports, Kinda Chebib, lead analyst at Euromonitor International, said in e-mailed comments.

Egyptian authorities hired consultancy Control Risks Group to review airport security after the downing of the Russian plane.

The hijacker reportedly asked for a translator and sought political asylum shortly before giving himself up. Kasoulides said the man requested fuel to fly to Turkey and that he asked to speak to a European Union representative.

Egypt's economy has struggled since the 2011 uprising that toppled former President Hosni Mubarak. The pound has slumped in the black market and capital outflows have left businesses starved of dollars to import raw materials. A slight recovery in its crucial tourism industry was cut short by the Russian plane crash.

EgyptAir, one of the oldest airlines in the Middle East and a member of Star Alliance, has incurred cumulative losses of about \$1 billion since the Egyptian revolution began in 2011. The carrier has a fleet of about 80 aircraft with a target to expand to 125 planes.

Hijacking Of Egypt Plane By 'Unstable' Man Ends Peacefully

By Menelaos Hadjicostis And Hamza Hendawi

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

LARNACA, Cyprus (AP) – An Egyptian wearing a fake explosives belt who hijacked a domestic EgyptAir flight and forced it to land in Cyprus on Tuesday surrendered and was taken into custody after releasing all passengers and crew unharmed following an hours-long standoff.

Officials said early on that the hijacking was not an act of terrorism, and later that the man appeared to be psychologically unstable. However, the incident was likely to renew concerns about Egyptian airport security months after a Russian passenger plane was downed over the Sinai Peninsula in a bombing claimed by the Islamic State group.

"From the start, it was clear that this wasn't an act of terrorism, and despite the fact that the individual appeared to be dangerous in terms of his behavior, we understood that

this was a psychologically unstable person," Cyprus' Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides told reporters.

He said the man initially asked to speak with his Cypriot ex-wife, who police brought to the airport.

"After that, he started asking for European Union representatives to assure him about matters that had no logical basis," Kasoulides said.

At one point the hijacker demanded the release of women held in Egyptian prisons, but he then dropped the demand and made others. "His demands made no sense or were too incoherent to be taken seriously," the minister said, adding that the contents of a letter the hijacker wanted to give to his ex-wife "were also incoherent."

Egypt's Interior Ministry identified the hijacker as 58-year-old Seif Eddin Mustafa. It said he has a long criminal record, with charges including forgery, theft and drug possession. He had also served time in prison, it said.

The ministry posted surveillance camera footage on its Facebook page that it said showed Mustafa being thoroughly searched at the airport. It said his handbag contained items which he later used to "give the impression that he is wearing an explosive belt."

Police in Cairo were questioning the hijacker's relatives, Sharif Faisal, the police chief for the industrial suburb of Helwan, told The Associated Press.

Just minutes before the arrest, local TV footage from the airport showed several people disembarking from the Airbus A320 and a man who appeared to be a crew member climbing out of the cockpit window and sliding down the side of the plane. The hijacker had earlier freed most of the passengers but kept on board seven people – four crew members and three passengers.

A Cypriot police official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to brief reporters, said the hijacker walked off the plane and was taken into custody by anti-terrorism police. He said the man wore a belt, but it contained no explosives. Egypt's Civil Aviation Ministry said man was wearing a fake explosives belt.

Flight MS181 took off Tuesday morning from Bourg el-Arab airport just outside the Mediterranean coastal city of Alexandria en route to Cairo with at least 55 passengers, including 26 foreigners, and a seven-member crew. The flight between Alexandria and Cairo normally takes about 30 minutes.

Egyptian officials gave conflicting accounts as the drama unfolded. The Aviation Ministry said in a statement that the hijacker was wearing an explosives belt, which turned out to be untrue.

Egyptian government spokesman Hossam al-Queish identified the hijacker as Ibrahim Samaha, but an Egyptian woman who identified herself as Samaha's wife told a local TV station that her husband is not the hijacker and was on his way to Cairo so he could fly to the U.S. to attend a

conference. She said a photo circulated by Egyptian and regional TV channels purportedly showing the hijacker was not her husband.

The Egyptian Civil Aviation Ministry said the foreigners on board included eight Americans, four Britons, four Dutch, two Belgians, a French national, an Italian, two Greeks and one Syrian. Three other foreigners could not be identified.

The initial group of passengers released by the hijacker was seen calmly walking off the plane down a set of stairs, carrying their hand luggage and boarding a bus. Security was tight at the airport, with police repeatedly pushing back reporters and TV crews working just outside the fence, near where the aircraft stopped. Police also evacuated a nearby beach popular with tourists.

Egyptian passenger Farah el-Dabani told the Dubai-based Al-Arabiya TV network that the hijacker was seated in the back of the aircraft and that it was the crew who told passengers that the plane was being hijacked.

"There was panic at the beginning, but the crew told us to be quiet. They did a good job to keep us all quiet so the hijacker does not do anything rash," she said in a telephone interview.

The incident raised more questions about security at Egyptian airports, five months after the Russian aircraft crashed minutes after it took off from Egypt's Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

All 224 people on board were killed in the crash. Russia later said a bomb brought down the aircraft, and IS claimed responsibility. Russia suspended all air links to Egypt after the revelations about the bombing, dealing a major blow to Egypt's vital tourism industry. Tuesday's hijacking could further postpone the resumption of flights.

Hendawi reported from Cairo. Maggie Michael and Sam Magdy in Cairo contributed to this report.

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

No One Hurt As EgyptAir Flight Is Forced To Cyprus In A Hijacking From The Heart

By Declan Walsh And Nour Youssef
[New York Times](#), March 29, 2016

CAIRO — Getting out of Egypt was never going to be easy for Seif Eldin Mustafa, a fugitive Egyptian convict who has been on the run since he escaped from prison five years ago. But on Tuesday, he resorted to extraordinary measures.

Claiming to be wearing an explosive vest, Mr. Mustafa, 59, commandeered an EgyptAir passenger airliner en route to Cairo from Alexandria, forced it to divert to Cyprus and set in motion a tense standoff lasting hours. He issued an incoherent set of demands that left officials alarmed, puzzled and touched before he gave himself up without hurting anyone.

Mr. Mustafa wanted female inmates released from Egyptian prisons. He demanded to speak with officials from the European Union, ostensibly to obtain political asylum.

And he wanted to see his former wife, who lived in Cyprus.

"Always, there is a woman," the president of Cyprus, Nicos Anastasiades, said in a brief moment of levity in the early stages of the crisis at Larnaca International Airport.

In the end, the crisis ended peacefully, but only after confused scenes, including a hostage leaping from a cockpit window. Mr. Mustafa, who it turned out did not have explosives, walked off the plane with his hands up. The Foreign Ministry of Cyprus described him as "psychologically unstable."

There has been heightened global sensitivity among travelers since last week's devastating Islamic State attacks on Brussels, which began at that city's airport. And the timing could scarcely have been worse for Egypt, whose tourism industry has not recovered from a terrorist bombing in October that brought down a Russian plane, killing 224 people.

That disaster, which has precipitated a currency crisis in recent months, has brought a deep crisis of faith in Egypt's ability to keep its airports and planes secure — fears that were briefly exacerbated early in Tuesday's crisis when Egyptian officials identified the wrong man as the hijacker.

That man, a university professor named Ibrahim Samaha, called a BBC program to clarify that he was, in fact, a passenger on the hijacked plane — not the hijacker.

"We had no idea what was going on," Mr. Samaha said of the flight. "After a while, we realized the altitude was getting higher; then we knew we were heading to Cyprus. At first, the crew told us there was a problem with the plane, and only later did we know it was hijacked."

Egyptian officials took pains to point out that Mr. Mustafa was not linked to the Islamic State. Apparently seeking to deflect criticism of their security procedures, officials released surveillance footage that showed Mr. Mustafa being frisked by security officials as he passed through a security gate before boarding the flight.

In fact, Mr. Mustafa was a desperado of another kind. Egyptian security officials said he had been on the run since 2011, when he was among hundreds of people who escaped prison during the 18-day uprising that ousted President Hosni Mubarak. He had been imprisoned on multiple charges of forgery and fraud, the officials said.

That meant Mr. Mustafa had been unable to leave Egypt to see his former wife, with whom he had lived in Cyprus until the 1990s. Moreover, his sense of confinement had been affecting him recently, neighbors at his home in an impoverished district of Helwan, south of Cairo, said Tuesday.

One neighbor, Nagat Hassan, said that a few days ago, she had overheard Mr. Mustafa speaking on the telephone outside the ground floor, metal-gated home where he lives with a mentally disabled brother and a widowed sister. "He sounded frustrated, and he was saying, 'I really want to leave, but my passport is blacklisted,'" she said.

Early Tuesday, Mr. Mustafa boarded EgyptAir Flight 181, from Alexandria to Cairo. Some 72 people were on board; about half were Egyptian, with the remainder from seven other countries, including Belgium, Greece, Italy and the United States, Egyptian officials said.

Mr. Mustafa looked uneasy, his fellow passengers said. After drinks were served, he pulled open his jacket and showed flight attendants what he said was a suicide vest, and demanded to be taken to Greece, Cyprus or Turkey.

The ultimatum was issued quietly, and the crew tried to reassure passengers who had seen it. "Don't worry, we're in it together," one passenger, Muhammad Gouda, said he was told by an attendant. But most passengers knew nothing of the hijacking until they noticed that, instead of landing in Cairo, they were heading north across the Mediterranean.

Then Mr. Mustafa demanded to see the passports of all of the passengers, and he sorted them by nationality.

At first, after the plane landed at Larnaca, it looked as if the crisis might be resolved quickly. After sending his demands to negotiators on a piece of paper, Mr. Mustafa allowed dozens of passengers to walk free, many carrying their luggage. To those who remained, he spoke of his desire to free female prisoners in Egypt and to "change the government in Egypt," one passenger said.

But alarmed Cypriot officials, noting what the foreign minister, Ioannis Kasoulides, called the "incoherent" nature of Mr. Mustafa's demands, diverted all flights to Paphos, the country's second busiest airport, and deployed armed security personnel around Larnaca. Snipers moved into place.

Inside the plane, at least seven hostages remained — crew members and five Western men selected by their passports: two Scotsmen, an Englishman, a Dutch businessman and an Italian. A surreal atmosphere took hold.

One of the hostages, Huub Helthuis, the Dutch businessman, said he had believed Mr. Mustafa posed a threat, but some of his fellow hostages had not.

Speaking at a Cairo airport, Mr. Helthuis shared a photograph from his cellphone that showed a fellow hostage, who he said was English, grinning as he posed beside Mr. Mustafa, still wearing the belt, inside the plane. The

photograph, which Mr. Helthuis said he took, quickly became a sensation on social media and news sites around the world.

"Everything moved so quickly," Mr. Helthuis said. "You couldn't really think. It was hard to know how seriously to take him."

Outside, Mr. Mustafa's former wife had arrived and helped officials persuade him to surrender. Cypriot officials said the former couple had five children, one a daughter who had died in a car crash.

Then several of the remaining hostages fled, including one who climbed through a cockpit window, dropped onto the tarmac using a makeshift rope and sprinted to safety. Moments later, Mr. Mustafa emerged and surrendered. It was not clear at what point the authorities realized that he did not have explosives.

"It's over," the Cypriot Foreign Ministry announced on Twitter at 2:41 p.m.

Applause erupted in a Cairo airport late Tuesday night as the exhausted passengers and crew finally emerged, many pushing their way through dozens of journalists and television cameras.

"He was crazy, just crazy," a teary flight attendant, clutching a rose, said before being whisked off by relatives. Others said they just wanted to rest.

"We are cooked," said Mohammed Zidan, one of the passengers. "We want to sleep."

Mr. Mustafa was taken into custody in Cyprus and was expected to be formally charged on Wednesday. At his home in Helwan, where the streets are unpaved and littered with trash, neighbors said his actions were motivated by desperation and poverty more than politics.

"His family are just poor, helpless people," said Suhair Hanafi, who runs a small store across the street from his home. "Just like everyone here."

Kareem Fahim contributed reporting from Cairo, Dimitris Bounias from Athens, and Andreas Riris from Nicosia, Cyprus.

EgyptAir Jetliner Hijacked, Lands In Cyprus

Aircraft has 64 people aboard, airline says

By Robert Wall And Tamer El-Ghobashy

[Wall Street Journal](#), March 29, 2016

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

Egyptair Passenger Plane Hijacked, Forced To Cyprus

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

Plane Hijacking Rekindles Concerns About Egyptian Airport Security

By Sudarsan Raghavan

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

CAIRO — There was little doubt that Seif Eldin Mustafa was “unstable,” as authorities described him. On Tuesday morning, the 59-year-old Egyptian national boarded an EgyptAir flight and hijacked it to Cyprus by claiming to wear a suicide belt.

Nearly six hours later, when the hostage standoff ended peacefully, many things remained unclear — except for two: There were no explosives on Mustafa or on the aircraft. And Egypt’s airport security was again drawing concern, potentially delivering a blow to the country’s already battered economy and its efforts to attract more tourists and foreign investors.

Even though Egyptian officials ruled out terrorism as a motive and all the hostages were freed without any reports of injuries, there was an uneasy sense of déjà vu. No one had forgotten how a bomb brought down a Russian passenger plane over Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula in October, an attack claimed by the Islamic State militant group. Since then, Egypt has sought to bolster security at its airports, even hiring international security consultants to build confidence.

So the hijacker’s commandeering of EgyptAir Flight 181 in a fake explosives vest has only set off more alarms. Since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, plane hijackings have become rarer because of increased airport security, tighter passenger screenings and reinforced cockpit doors to prevent a takeover. Yet Mustafa easily diverted the plane, which took off from the Egyptian port of Alexandria en route to Cairo, from its scheduled path.

The Egyptian airliner — an Airbus 320 — was carrying more than 55 passengers and crew members from several nations, including Americans and Europeans. Within minutes, the hijacker was able to force the plane to head north to Larnaca, a port on the southern coast of Cyprus.

Mustafa’s motive remains unclear. Nor is much known about him. Egyptian media reports described him as a 59-year-old who owned an import-export company, has had run-ins with the law and had once been expelled from the law faculty of Alexandria University. None of the reports could be independently verified.

At one point, Cyprus’s state broadcaster said the hijacker asked for the release of political prisoners in Egypt. A spokesman for the Cypriot government earlier speculated that the hijacker may have been driven by a failed relationship — citing a letter he had asked to deliver to a woman, possibly his former wife, who lives on the eastern Mediterranean island.

The television network Sky News Arabia interviewed a woman described as Mustafa’s sister who said that he was

unemployed and that his three children lived with his former wife in Cyprus. The sister said Mustafa had been banned from entering Cyprus for a year and described him as “an incredibly peaceful man.”

After the plane touched down in Larnaca, most of the passengers were allowed to disembark almost immediately. But three foreign passengers, the pilot, the co-pilot, a female flight attendant and an air warden were held hostage for the duration of the standoff.

Even as negotiations continued with the hijacker, officials in Cyprus and Egypt were rejecting any connection to terrorism, apparently out of concern for their tourist-driven economies. Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades said at a news conference that the hijacking was “not something which has to do with terrorism,” even speculating that Mustafa may have been motivated by a relationship with a woman.

At a news conference in Cairo during the standoff, Sherif Fathy, Egypt’s minister of civil aviation, chastised a reporter for asking about concerns involving security at Egyptian airports. Other officials, including the tourism minister, touted Egypt’s airport security, saying all protective measures were taken on Tuesday. Egyptians took to social media to deride such claims.

“An officer on ONTV praising Egypt airport security in context of highjacking tells u why world won’t trust us,” tweeted Timothy Kaldas, an academic, referring to a pan-Arab news channel. “We can’t admit we have problem.”

The hijacking could not have come at a worse time for Egypt. Militant attacks have surged in recent years, driving tourists and foreign investors away as the government struggles to revive the economy. Egypt’s U.S.-backed military is battling an Islamic State affiliate in the northern Sinai.

Terrorists increasingly see airports as vulnerable targets. In February, a bomb smuggled on a Somali airliner leaving Mogadishu detonated in flight, blowing a hole in the fuselage and killing one passenger. The crew managed to safely land the plane. At another Somali airport, militants detonated a bomb in a laptop. And a week ago, suicide attacks claimed by the Islamic State killed more than 30 people at Brussels’s main airport and a subway station.

Despite the increased security, planes remain vulnerable. In February 2014, a man falsely claiming to have a bomb demanded that a Pegasus Airlines plane — traveling from Kharkiv, Ukraine, to Istanbul — be diverted to Sochi, Russia, which was then hosting the Winter Olympics. The pilot landed in Istanbul, telling the hijacker they were in Sochi. The man, who was apparently intoxicated, was arrested. No passengers or crew members were harmed.

Less than two weeks later, the co-pilot of an Ethiopian Airlines flight from Addis Ababa to Rome took command of the aircraft and landed in Geneva, demanding asylum. He was arrested, and no injuries occurred. In March 2015, Andreas Lubitz, the co-pilot of Germanwings Flight 9525, took

control of the plane before crashing it in the French Alps, killing all 150 people aboard.

Inside Flight 181, there were signs that Mustafa was an amateur. He allowed a British passenger to snap a selfie photo with him, which later went viral. In Cairo, Fathy told reporters that some phone calls made by the hijacker while aboard the plane pointed to possible personal and mental problems. He also noted that Mustafa possibly did not possess any explosives. "We're not sure of the suicide belt," Fathy said at the time. "It could be a fake one."

Confusion reigned throughout the standoff. Initially, both Egyptian and Cypriot authorities identified someone else as the hijacker; he turned out to be a passenger. EgyptAir initially said there were 88 passengers aboard. At one point, Cypriot media reported that the hijacker wanted to see his ex-wife and that the woman was said to be on her way to the airport.

About 2 p.m. Egypt time, several events unfolded rapidly, including an escape by an apparent hostage, who slithered down a rope from a cockpit window. The other hostages later walked out of the aircraft, and Mustafa was taken into custody.

"It's over. The #hijacker arrested. #LarnacaAirport #Egyptair," Cyprus's Foreign Ministry tweeted.

Heba Habib in Cairo, Brian Murphy in Washington and Daniela Deane in London contributed to this report.

Why Airline Hijackings Became Relatively Rare

[New York Times](#), March 30, 2016

PARIS — The first airplane hijackings occurred not long after international air travel became commonplace. In those days, most hijackers were seeking refuge or riches, not mass murder or global attention for a radical cause. Terrorist hijackings were a later development, but after reaching a grim apex on Sept. 11, 2001, they have become less and less common.

The motivations of the man arrested in Cyprus on Tuesday after he hijacked an Egyptian airliner remain unclear. But at a time when the most recent threats to commercial air travel have taken the form of bombings, missile strikes or rogue pilots, an attempt to commandeer a flight while sparing the aircraft — and the lives of everyone aboard — came as a surprise to many observers conditioned to expect disaster.

It was not so during the Cold War, when hijackings were often desperate attempts at escape across the Iron Curtain. In 1953, for example, Mira Slovak, a Czechoslovak airline pilot, was flying a DC-3 on a domestic route with 25 passengers on board when he suddenly diverted the plane to Frankfurt and requested political asylum. His daring escape was emulated by dozens of others through the early 1970s,

including many who commandeered American flights to reach Cuba.

Jetliners also became attractive targets for escaped criminals, who used the planes and their passengers as leverage in ransom negotiations. Sometimes they even got away with it.

In the most storied case, a man who became known as D. B. Cooper boarded a plane in Portland, Ore., in 1971, armed with a bomb. After forcing the flight to land in Seattle, he released the passengers in exchange for \$200,000 and a parachute, and ordered the crew to take off again. Once in the air, he leapt from the plane with his bag of cash and was never seen again.

By the mid-1970s, at least 150 planes had been "skyjacked" in the United States alone, and radical groups in the Middle East had turned to hijackings as a way to seize the spotlight. In 1968, hijackers seized an El Al flight to Tel Aviv from Rome and forced it to land in Algiers. They held 22 hostages. After more than a month, the final 12 were released, and only after a boycott by international pilots.

In 1970, Palestinian militants hijacked five planes — four bound for New York, one for London — to demand the release of activists imprisoned by Israel. Three of the planes were forced to land at Dawson's Field, a former British Air Force base in a remote area of Jordan, while a fourth was diverted to Egypt. The crew on the fifth plane — an El Al flight to New York from Amsterdam — overcame the hijackers on board and made an emergency landing in London.

"That was the first major terrorist hijacking attempt that captured the media's attention," said Norman Shanks, a consultant and former manager of airport security at Heathrow Airport near London. "They were not intent on killing people. It was simply a way to get publicity."

It was not until Dawson's Field, Mr. Shanks said, that the international aviation community began to take coordinated action to prevent hijackings. And it was only in the late 1970s that the International Civil Aviation Organization, an arm of the United Nations, began requiring that passengers pass through metal detectors and that hand luggage be X-rayed before boarding.

Those steps were meant mainly to stop people from spiriting a metal weapon like a gun, knife or grenade on board, Mr. Shanks said, "but there was also a misguided belief that we could find bombs this way, too."

After a bomb brought down Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988, airports began to introduce additional screening systems to detect explosives.

Those security measures significantly reduced the number of hijackings but did not eliminate the risk completely. And in many countries, the enhanced screening procedures were used only for international flights, leaving domestic flights more vulnerable.

That weakness was exploited on Sept. 11, 2001, when four domestic United States flights were commandeered by members of Al Qaeda wielding box cutters — which were not prohibited on flights in the United States at the time.

The Sept. 11 attacks prompted a new wave of tighter precautions. Airport security and screening in the United States were centralized under the new Department of Homeland Security. Airlines trained their crews to be more vigilant about violent or unruly passengers and to deal with them more effectively. Cockpit doors were reinforced and kept locked in flight.

Those steps and others have made hijacking a higher-risk proposition over the past 15 years, said Philip Baum, the managing director of Green Light, an aviation security consulting firm in London, and the author of a recently published history of aircraft hijackings and bombings.

“There has definitely been a change of mind-set,” Mr. Baum said. “Since Sept. 11, they now can expect that the response from aircrew and passengers might be far more aggressive.”

Hijackings still occur, however — and the hijackers are not always passengers. In 2000, a Saudi Arabian Airlines flight to London from Jidda was hijacked by two airport guards, both Saudi citizens, who forced the pilots to divert the plane to Baghdad. In 2014, the co-pilot of an Ethiopian Airlines jet locked the captain out of the cockpit during a flight to Rome from Addis Ababa and diverted the plane to Geneva, where he requested asylum.

Analysts say that enough doubt remains about the thoroughness of security at some airports that aircrews cannot confidently call a would-be hijacker’s bluff about having a weapon.

“Today you can hijack an aircraft with just words,” said Mr. Shanks, the former Heathrow security manager. “All it takes is that uncertainty.”

Correction: March 29, 2016

An earlier version of this article referred incorrectly to the DC-3 airliner Mira Slovak flew to Frankfurt in 1953. It was not a jet. Continue reading the main story

Second Assailant Likely Took Part In Brussels Subway Attack, Officials Say

Belgian officials ask U.S. for additional help amid string of missteps in terror investigation

By Julian E. Barnes And Valentina Pop

[Wall Street Journal](#), March 29, 2016

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

FBI Warned Dutch About El Bakraoui Brothers Week Before Brussels Attacks

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

Russia Shows What Happens When Terrorists’ Families Are Targeted

By Andrew E. Kramer

[New York Times](#), March 29, 2016

MOSCOW — Donald J. Trump, the leading Republican presidential candidate, was widely condemned when he called for the United States to “take out the families” of terrorists.

His approach — even after he clarified that he was not talking about killing the relatives — was dismissed by many as immoral and unlawful. Yet, it is the very tactic that Russia has pursued for decades.

It is the signature, though officially unacknowledged, policy behind Moscow’s counterinsurgency and counterterrorism strategies, and Russia’s actions in smashing a Muslim separatist rebellion in the Caucasus provide a laboratory for testing Mr. Trump’s ideas.

The family ties that bind in terrorist groups came into focus last week after the police in Brussels disclosed that two of the three suicide bombers in the attacks there were brothers, Ibrahim and Khalid el-Bakraoui. All told, analysts estimate that a third of the participants in terrorist acts are related to another attacker.

In the conflict that began in Chechnya and has since metastasized into a loosely organized Islamic rebellion throughout the Caucasus region, Russian security services routinely arrest, torture and kill relatives, rights groups say.

The Russian approach, enough to make supporters of waterboarding wince, has by some accounts been grimly effective. Abductions of family members unwound the rebel leadership in Chechnya, for example.

And siblings have a bloody track record here, as elsewhere.

In 2004, Chechen sisters blew themselves up in an airplane and a subway station a week apart. In 2011, the police say, a teenager and his older sister from Ingushetia, another troubled region, helped build a bomb that their brother exploded in the unguarded arrivals hall of Domodedovo Airport in Moscow, killing himself and 36 other people.

In the Russian view, the family is the thread that needs to be pulled to unravel the terrorist group.

“He should understand his relatives will be treated as accomplices,” Kirill V. Kabanov, a member of President Vladimir V. Putin’s human rights council, said of a potential suicide attacker.

“When a person leaves to become a terrorist, he can kill hundreds of innocents,” he said. “Those are the morals we

are talking about. We should understand, the relatives must fight this first. If the relative, before the fact, reported it, he is not guilty. If he did not, he is guilty."

By law, Russian security services have no authority to specifically target relatives. But the intelligence forces seldom let a detail like the lack of a legal basis interfere with their activities.

In Chechnya and neighboring Dagestan, they routinely burn or demolish the houses of people suspected of being insurgents or terrorists. Most strikingly, whole extended families are rounded up in high-profile cases, and are often held until the militant either gives up or is killed.

Maryam Akmedova, from Kabardino-Balkaria region in the North Caucasus, has seen it firsthand. Distressing though it was, she says she understood when Russian prosecutors accused her eldest son of participating in a terrorist attack, as he had never denied his involvement.

But her woes hardly stopped there.

Soon enough, security agents were questioning her younger son, though there was no evidence linking him to the attack his brother was accused of in the city of Nalchik in 2005. Eventually, the younger brother was shot and killed in 2013 by Russian security forces during an attempted arrest under murky circumstances.

"He had no involvement with anything," Ms. Akmedova said in a telephone interview. "They killed him because his brother was in prison."

The most sweeping application of the tactic came during the pacification of Chechnya, after Mr. Putin engineered the recapture of the separatist territory early in his tenure.

Relatives were used as "hooks" to lure in militants. If the militant did not switch sides, the family member disappeared. Chechnya had about 3,000 to 5,000 unresolved disappearances from 2000 to 2005 or so. The policy, executed by the Chechen leader, Ramzan A. Kadyrov, the scion of a prominent Chechen family that itself switched sides, broke the organized resistance.

The Russian security services have also manipulated relatives for various ends, such as to inadvertently pass poisoned food to suspected militants on the run.

The practice, not surprisingly, has spawned dozens of cases in the European Court of Human Rights and widespread criticism of tactics that, while seemingly effective in the short term, have deeply alienated extended families whose members bear grudges to this day.

"There is systematic abuse of the family members of insurgents," Ekaterina Sokirianskaia, an analyst at the International Crisis Group, and an expert on the Caucasus, said in a telephone interview.

"There can be short-term results, but I wouldn't call it success," she said. "You can prevent some episodes of

violence at the moment, but you are radicalizing whole communities."

"When innocent Muslims are targeted for the expediency of security services, this legitimizes the jihadist cause," she said.

Ms. Akmedova explained how the sense of injustice and outrage develops. After her younger son was killed in 2013, she said, the police came by and told her and her son's widow that the grandchildren, despite being in kindergarten and elementary school, would be put on watch lists.

"The children go to kindergarten," Ms. Akmedova, 63, a retired drugstore clerk, said. "They are no different from any other children."

In perhaps the highest-profile operation, Russian security services detained in 2004 several dozen members of the extended family of the Chechen rebel defense minister, Magomed Khambiyev, including the wives of his brothers. Aslanbek Khambiyev, a 19-year-old cousin with no known ties, other than familial, was abducted from a university, beaten semiconscious and shoved from a car in the rebel leader's home village.

"Yes, they detained my relatives," Magomed Khambiyev told the Kommersant newspaper after he surrendered to save their lives. "But they were guilty. Do you understand? Because they were my relatives."

"If I'm a bandit, then they're bandits, too," he explained.

Young Pleads Guilty In ISIS Case

By Mollie Bryant

[Jackson \(MS\) Clarion Ledger](#), March 29, 2016

A 20-year-old woman pleaded guilty Tuesday to conspiring to provide support and personnel to a terrorist organization.

Jaelyn Delshaun Young pleaded guilty in federal court to a charge stemming from an FBI investigation into her alleged plans to join ISIS with her fiancé, Muhammad Dakhalla, 23.

As part of her plea agreement, two additional counts of attempting to provide support to a foreign terrorist organization were dismissed. Young also waived the right to appeal her sentence of up to 20 years in prison and up to a \$250,000 fine as part of the deal.

Young and Dakhalla were arrested last year prior to boarding a flight from Columbus, Mississippi, to Istanbul following months of online contact with undercover FBI employees posing as Islamic State members. The FBI initially made contact with Young after she posted pro-ISIS material on Twitter, including retweets of ISIS propaganda.

Believing she was speaking with ISIS recruiters, Young described herself as skilled in math and chemistry, having worked in an analytical lab, and she hoped to work as a medic for the terrorist organization. Dakhalla aspired to

become a “holy warrior,” Assistant U.S. Attorney Clay Joyner said.

“After her conversion, Young distanced herself from family and friends and felt spending time with non-Muslims would be a bad influence,” prosecutors wrote.

Contact Mollie Bryant at mbryant2@gannett.com or 601-961-7251. Follow @MollieEBryant on Twitter.

Mississippi Woman Pleads Guilty On Charge That She Tried To Join ISIS

By Joshua Berlinger And Catherine E. Shoichet
[CNN](#), March 30, 2016

A Mississippi woman has plead guilty after authorities accused her and her fiance of trying to join ISIS.

Jaelyn Delshaun Young, 20, was charged with conspiring to provide material support to the terror group.

She faces a maximum 20-year prison sentence and fine of up to \$250,000.

Her fiance, Muhammad Oda Dakhllalla, pleaded guilty earlier this month.

The two were arrested at a Mississippi airport in February on their way to Syria, according to court documents.

According to a law enforcement official, Dakhllalla is the son of a local imam and Young is the daughter of a police officer. She recently converted to Islam.

Read more about them

Prosecutors say that the FBI held “undercover interactions” with Young on the internet after identifying her as a Twitter user who supported ISIS in May 2015. She told the FBI that she was planning to leave with a partner for ISIS-held territory.

In one conversation, Young said that Dakhllalla’s family and the community she lived in did not support ISIS.

“I thought they were wrong so I look up the Laws myself and Alhamdulillah [God be praised] Dawlah is correct.”

“Dawlah” is a reference to “ad-Dawlah al-Islamiyah,” which translates to Islamic State, another name the terror group uses.

How ISIS is luring so many Americans to join its ranks

Court documents said that the couple planned to use their wedding and subsequent honeymoon as a cover to travel to Syria.

Authorities also allege that:

– The couple described their skills and asked how they could help the terror group’s efforts. “I am good with computers, education and media,” Dakhllalla allegedly wrote in one message to an undercover FBI employee. “What could I contribute?” Young also allegedly told an undercover FBI agent that her skills would be useful. “I am skilled in math and chemistry and worked at an analytical lab here on my college campus. My partner is very good with things like computer

science/media. We learn very fast and would love to help with giving medical aid.”

– In messages detailed in the complaint, the couple seemed enthusiastic, but also concerned about how training would work once they arrived. “Salaam again,” Dakhllalla allegedly wrote in a message to an FBI employee. “I wanted to ask about the military experience there. Would I be with people that speak English as well or do they put me with everyone at basic training? I am excited about coming ... but I feel I won’t know what all I will be doing.”

Bergen: Will returning Syria fighters strike the United States?

– Young praised the July 16 attacks at military centers in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in which four Marines and a sailor were killed. “The numbers of supporters are growing,” she said in a message, according to the complaint.

Mississippi Woman Pleads Guilty To Trying To Join Islamic State

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

CYBER NEWS

Israeli Firm Helped FBI Hack iPhone

By Katie Bo Williams

[The Hill](#), March 29, 2016

The Israeli mobile forensics firm Cellebrite helped the FBI hack into the iPhone of San Bernardino shooter Syed Rizwan Farook, NBC reports, citing industry sources.

The firm has been rumored to be behind the FBI’s newfound ability to access the device, thanks to a previous and unconfirmed report from an Israeli newspaper.

Neither Cellebrite nor the Department of Justice has confirmed the reports.

The FBI has routinely contracted Cellebrite over the last five years. The company, which publicly boasts of its ability to hack into Apple devices, has received over \$2 million in purchase orders from the agency since 2012.

The DOJ on Monday withdrew its case against Apple, telling a federal court it was able to unlock the device without the tech giant’s help.

“The FBI has now successfully retrieved the data stored on the San Bernardino terrorist’s iPhone and therefore no longer requires the assistance from Apple required by this Court Order,” Justice Department spokeswoman Melanie Newman said in a statement.

“The FBI is currently reviewing the information on the phone, consistent with standard investigatory procedures.”

The FBI had asked the courts to direct Apple to unlock the iPhone, but at the last minute, delayed the first court hearing last week. At the time, authorities said they wanted to test a new method to unlock the phone without Apple's assistance.

That same day, the agency inked a \$15,000 contract with Cellebrite for "information technology software," although the "principle place of performance" is listed as Chicago.

In a motion filed Monday, the DOJ told the court that method proved successful, giving authorities access to the data on the phone used by Syed Rizwan Farook, one of two shooters who killed 14 people in the San Bernardino, Calif., terrorist attack in December.

It remains unclear what method the agency leveraged to access the phone, or what information it has obtained.

"I don't think we're going to go into any details other than what we put in our filing before," a law enforcement official said Monday.

Apple Still In The Dark About How FBI Hacked iPhone

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

WASHINGTON — The FBI's announcement that it mysteriously hacked into an iPhone is a public setback for Apple Inc., as consumers suddenly discover they can't keep their most personal information safe. Meanwhile, Apple remains in the dark about how to restore the security of its flagship product.

The government said it was able to break into an iPhone used by a gunman in a mass shooting in California, but it didn't say how. That puzzled Apple software engineers — and outside experts — about how the FBI broke the digital locks on the phone without Apple's help. It also complicated Apple's job repairing flaws that jeopardize its software.

The Justice Department's announcement that it was dropping a legal fight to compel Apple to help it access the phone also took away any obvious legal avenues Apple might have used to learn how the FBI did it. The Justice Department declined through a spokeswoman to comment Tuesday.

A few clues have emerged. A senior law enforcement official told The Associated Press that the FBI managed to defeat an Apple security feature that threatened to delete the phone's contents if the FBI failed to enter the correct passcode combination after 10 tries. That allowed the government to repeatedly and continuously test passcodes in what's known as a brute-force attack until the right code is entered and the phone is unlocked.

It wasn't clear how the FBI dealt with a related Apple security feature that introduces increasing time delays between guesses. The official spoke on condition of

anonymity because this person was not authorized to discuss the technique publicly.

FBI Director James Comey has said with those features removed, the FBI could break into the phone in 26 minutes.

The FBI hacked into the iPhone used by gunman Syed Farook, who died with his wife in a gun battle with police after they killed 14 people in December in San Bernardino. The iPhone, issued to Farook by his employer, the county health department, was found in a vehicle the day after the shooting.

The FBI is reviewing information from the iPhone, and it is unclear whether anything useful can be found.

Apple said in a statement Monday that the legal case to force its cooperation "should never have been brought," and it promised to increase the security of its products. CEO Tim Cook has said the Cupertino-based company is constantly trying to improve security for its users. Syed Farook

The FBI's announcement — even without revealing precise details — that it had hacked the iPhone was at odds with the government's firm recommendations for nearly two decades that security researchers always work cooperatively and confidentially with software manufacturers before revealing that a product might be susceptible to hackers.

The aim is to ensure that American consumers stay as safe online as possible and prevent premature disclosures that might damage a U.S. company or the economy.

As far back as 2002, the Homeland Security Department ran a working group that included leading industry technology industry executives to advise the president on how to keep confidential discoveries by independent researchers that a company's software could be hacked until it was already fixed. Even now, the Commerce Department has been trying to fine-tune those rules. The next meeting of a conference on the subject is April 8 in Chicago and it's unclear how the FBI's behavior in the current case might influence the government's fragile relationship with technology companies or researchers.

The industry's rules are not legally binding, but the government's top intelligence agency said in 2014 that such vulnerabilities should be reported to companies.

"When federal agencies discover a new vulnerability in commercial and open source software — a so-called 'zero day' vulnerability because the developers of the vulnerable software have had zero days to fix it — it is in the national interest to responsibly disclose the vulnerability rather than to hold it for an investigative or intelligence purpose," the Office of the Director of National Intelligence said in a statement in April 2014.

The statement recommended generally divulging such flaws to manufacturers "unless there is a clear national security or law enforcement need."

Last week a team from Johns Hopkins University said they had found a security bug in Apple's iMessage service that would allow hackers under certain circumstances to

decrypt some text messages. The team reported its findings to Apple in November and published an academic paper after Apple fixed it.

"That's the way the research community handles the situation. And that's appropriate," said Susan Landau, professor of cybersecurity policy at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. She said it was acceptable for the government to find a way to unlock the phone but said it should reveal its method to Apple.

Mobile phones are frequently used to improve cybersecurity, for example, as a place to send a backup code to access a website or authenticate a user.

The chief technologist at the Center for Democracy and Technology, Joseph Lorenzo Hall, said keeping details secret about a flaw affecting millions of iPhone users "is exactly opposite the disclosure practices of the security research community. The FBI and Apple have a common goal here: to keep people safe and secure. This is the FBI prioritizing an investigation over the interests of hundreds of millions of people worldwide."

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

FBI Hacking Of iPhone Raises Questions About Method, Who Helped

[ABC News](#), March 29, 2016

Federal officials announced Monday night they successfully cracked into an iPhone belonging to one of the San Bernardino shooters and no longer needed Apple's help in unlocking the device.

In doing so, authorities succeeded in their goal of breaking into an iPhone used by Syed Farook but did not set any sort of legal precedent that could be used in a future case, making it a sort of lukewarm win for both Apple and federal authorities.

While the legal case has been dropped, the latest twist in the encryption tug-of-war is now raising more questions than the FBI has answered. Who Helped the FBI?

Federal officials revealed the existence of a third party that came forward last week to offer assistance in cracking the iPhone. It's unclear whether this is one hacker or a cyber security firm. How Did They Break Into an iPhone?

The FBI declined to comment on the technical steps taken to get into the iPhone.

"During the past week, to include the weekend, extensive testing of the iPhone was done by highly skilled personnel to ensure that the contents of the phone would remain intact once technical methods were applied. The full exploitation of the phone and follow-up investigative steps are continuing," FBI Assistant Director in Charge David Bowdich said in a statement on Monday night.

Data on iPhones is encrypted and Apple has an auto-erase function making it trickier for a third party to break into a locked phone. Make 10 unsuccessful attempts to open a locked phone using the 4-digit user-created code and the iPhone and all the data it holds is rendered inaccessible. The 4-digit code you enter into your phone initiates a complex calculation that generates a unique key to unlock the data on the phone. No key, no data. The auto-erase function, if triggered, will wipe out all the encryption keys, rendering the data on the iPhone useless. Will the Feds Share the Solution With Apple?

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

The company said in a statement Monday night that it believed the case "should never have been brought."

"From the beginning, we objected to the FBI's demand that Apple build a backdoor into the iPhone because we believed it was wrong and would set a dangerous precedent. As a result of the government's dismissal, neither of these occurred," Apple said. "We will continue to help law enforcement with their investigations, as we have done all along, and we will continue to increase the security of our products as the threats and attacks on our data become more frequent and more sophisticated." What Does This Mean for Future Cases?

The legal precedent authorities were hoping to set didn't happen, essentially punting the issue down the line for future cases that may arise.

"This seemed like the perfect case and that has evaporated but now the question is, will Congress step in?" Mark Bartholomew, a law professor at the University of Buffalo who studies encryption and cyber law, told ABC News. "This is such an important story, so I could see Congress weighing in on this issue. We need a more fine-tuned answer than what we are getting from this case. Congress needs to be precise about what this technology should look like and when consumer interests would trump law enforcement." What Was on the iPhone?

Officials said they "successfully retrieved the data stored" on the device, but it's unclear whether that data will be of any use. Authorities wanted to access Farook's iPhone to see if there was information about who he was communicating with and whether more attacks were planned.

"We promised to explore every investigative avenue in order to learn whether the San Bernardino suspects were working with others, were targeting others, or whether or not they were supported by others," Bowdich said Monday night. "While we continue to explore the contents of the iPhone and other evidence, these questions may not be fully resolved, but I am satisfied that we have access to more answers than we did before and that the investigative process is moving forward."

FBI Won't Say How It Hacked Into San Bernardino Shooter's iPhone

[Christian Science Monitor](#), March 29, 2016

The FBI has successfully hacked into San Bernardino shooter Syed Farook's iPhone without Apple's help, the government said Monday, ending a contentious privacy vs. security case but leaving larger questions unanswered.

Agents were able to use an unknown method provided by an "outside party" to gain access to Mr. Farook's phone, which they hoped would provide more information about planning for the December attacks in California, which killed 14 people. Farook and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, were killed later that day in a police shoot-out. The two were inspired by foreign terrorist attacks, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"I am satisfied that we have access to more answers than we did before," FBI Assistant Director David Bowdich said in a Monday statement. The Department of Justice is now reviewing information on Farook's smartphone.

The government had previously demanded that Apple help unlock the device, which was programmed to erase data after ten incorrect passcode attempts. Tim Cook, Apple's chief executive officer, worried about repercussions for customers' security in the future, had refused. In February, a California judge ordered the company to provide hacking software, and a court hearing was set for last week, until the Justice Department announced that the "outside party" had offered another hacking method.

On Monday, after that method proved successful, government prosecutors asked a federal judge to vacate the court order, removing Apple's legal options for requesting information about the "outside party's" methods.

"We will continue to help law enforcement with their investigations, as we have done all along," Apple said in a statement, repeating its position that the government's legal case "should never have been brought."

The announcement may bolster some tech experts' claims that the government's demand for help and insistence that only Apple could unlock the device, was a bluff all along. National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden told the audience at a conference for Common Cause, a progressive advocacy group, that he suspected the claim was fraudulent. Mr. Snowden cited a report from the American Civil Liberties Union, which suggested the claim was a "power grab" to set security precedents.

Mr. Cook and FBI Director James Comey have both recommended that Congress set guidelines for future privacy vs. security issues.

Under Obama administration policies, the government does not need to disclose security vulnerabilities to tech companies if doing so presents a national security risk. Many tech security experts, however, say that sharing those

loopholes would ultimately help both consumer privacy and national safety.

A poll of The Christian Science Monitor's Passcode influencers showed that 81 percent believed the FBI should share the information with Apple. Doing so would help "fulfill its law enforcement mission," one anonymous expert told the Passcode team. "Fighting crime isn't just about catching criminals after the fact; it's about reasonable measures to prevent avoidable criminality from happening as well."

Apple Wants The FBI To Reveal How It Hacked The San Bernardino Killer's iPhone

By Paresh Dave

[Los Angeles Times](#), March 29, 2016

Apple Inc. refused to give the FBI software the agency desperately wanted. Now Apple is the one that needs the FBI's assistance.

The FBI announced Monday that it managed to unlock an iPhone 5c belonging to one of the San Bernardino shooters without the help of Apple. And the agency has shown no interest in telling Apple how it skirted the phone's security features, leaving the tech giant guessing about a vulnerability that could compromise millions of devices.

"One way or another, Apple needs to figure out the details," said Justin Olsson, product counsel at security software maker AVG Technologies. "The responsible thing for the government to do is privately disclose the vulnerability to Apple so they can continue hardening security on their devices."

But that's not how it's playing out so far. The situation illuminates a process that usually takes place in secret: Governments regularly develop or purchase hacking techniques for law enforcement and counterterrorism efforts, and put them to use without telling affected companies.

What's different in this case is that the world has been watching from the start. After Syed Rizwan Farook and his wife killed 14 people in December, the government publicly sought a court order to compel Apple to unlock Farook's work phone. Apple opposed that order, heightening long-standing tensions between Silicon Valley and law enforcement.

Now that the FBI has dropped its case against Apple, there's a new ethical dilemma: Should tech companies be made aware of flaws in their products, or should law enforcement be able to deploy those bugs as crime-fighting tools?

It's unclear whether the FBI's hacking technique will work on other versions of the iPhone, though a law enforcement official who spoke on the condition of anonymity said its applications were limited.

Some news outlets citing anonymous sources have identified Israeli police technology maker Cellebrite as the

undisclosed third party helping the government, but neither the company nor the FBI have confirmed those reports.

A source who is unauthorized to discuss the case told The Times the FBI was provided with the ability to incorrectly guess more than 10 passwords without permanently rendering the phone's data inaccessible. That allowed the agency to use software to run through potential pass codes until it landed on the correct one. It is not clear what info, if any, was gleaned from the phone.

Attorneys for Apple are researching legal tactics to compel the government to turn over the specifics, but the company had no update on its progress Tuesday.

The FBI could argue that the most crucial information is part of a nondisclosure agreement, solely in the hands of the outside party that assisted the agency, or cannot be released until the investigation is complete.

Many experts agree that the government faces no obvious legal obligation to provide information to Apple. But authorities, like professional security researchers, have recognized that a world in which computers are crucial in commerce and communications shouldn't be riddled with technical security flaws.

Even the White House's cybersecurity coordinator has acknowledged there are times when more people could be harmed by an unfixed security issue than helped by the government covertly using the loophole as part of an investigation.

A secretive White House-led procedure governs whether companies get notified of potential flaws.

Officials involved in the multi-agency deliberations — called the Vulnerabilities Equities Process — consider the risks and rewards of keeping flaws secret, according to federal records. They weigh whether the government could get the information in some other way and how likely it is someone else will discover the same vulnerability.

Federal officials have maintained that they lean toward private disclosure of a newly discovered vulnerability in the majority of cases.

But in some cases, federal agents have apparently benefited from previously unknown technical slip-ups by software developers.

The National Security Agency, though it denies the claim, reportedly took advantage of a flaw in the way websites transmit sensitive data for two years before private researchers uncovered the issue in 2014. Attorneys in two other cases have accused the FBI of using bugs in the Tor Internet browser to identify suspected criminals.

Apple's anxiety is understandable. No tech company wants a major security gap in its products — and most are given months of warning to fix issues before they are made public by the researchers who discover them.

That's why Apple sees the government holding a moral obligation to disclose details of its hacking technique.

"Apple's best chance is to make a compelling case that the disclosure of this exploit is in the interest of national security, as in, if it remains undisclosed and undiscovered, it potentially puts innocent users at risk of data breach," AVG's Olsson said.

Apple stated in court filings that part of the reason its executives feared developing software to circumvent iPhone security features was that once created, it could end up in the wrong hands. That same argument could come into play with the disclosure issue if Apple makes a public plea that the government and the outside group can't properly safeguard the technique. Last year, an Italian company that bought and sold bugs saw its entire database leaked onto the Internet. The security issue could explain why the FBI and the outside party are being so secretive about the process.

There's also the concern that now that an iPhone can be hacked, others will try. The iPhone has been seen as "a tiny little Fort Knox that from the outside has shown very hard to get into," said Kevin Bocek, vice president of security strategy and threat intelligence at Venafi.

The San Bernardino situation changes the dynamics, providing a reason for "cybercriminals and amateur hackers to come out of the woodwork," said Peter Tran, a general manager at RSA's advanced cyber defense group.

Although someone helped the FBI crack the iPhone, probably in exchange for money, other people who stumble upon the same hacking technique could choose to sell to cyberthieves or other governments. An extensive underground online network, concentrated in Eastern Europe, does just that everyday, Bocek said.

Apple generally doesn't reward bug-finders with cash. But given the publicity in this instance, experts said Apple could turn to the black market too.

"It proves once again, that what you don't know, you can buy," said Nikias Bassen, principal mobile security researcher at Zimperium.

paresh.dave@latimes.com

Times staff writers James Queally and Richard Winton contributed to this report.

MORE ON APPLE VS. FBI

FBI vs. Apple: How both sides were winners and losers

FBI unlocks San Bernardino shooter's iPhone and ends legal battle with Apple, for now

Will the FBI share its iPhone-cracking method with police? Probably not

How The FBI Cracked The iPhone Encryption And Averted A Legal Showdown With Apple

[ABC News](#), March 29, 2016

An urgent meeting inside FBI headquarters little more than a week ago is what convinced federal law enforcement

officials that they may be able to abandon a brewing legal fight with tech giant Apple, sources told ABC News today.

In the days after the December 2015 massacre in San Bernardino, California, which killed 14 people and wounded 22 others, the iPhone left behind by one of the shooters, Syed Farook, was secretly flown to the FBI's laboratory in Quantico, Virginia, sources said.

The FBI had been unable to review the phone's contents due to a security feature that – after 10 failed attempts to enter the 4-digit access code – would render the phone's files forever inaccessible.

By last month, the FBI was at an impasse with Apple, which fought a court order telling the company to help authorities bypass the security feature. Apple maintained the U.S. government was asking it to create a "backdoor" into its devices that would endanger the privacy of hundreds of millions of iPhone users around the world.

"It is in our view the software equivalent of cancer," Apple CEO Tim Cook recently told "World News Tonight" anchor David Muir.

But the FBI insisted it had a responsibility to access any data potentially relevant to the deadly terror attack in San Bernardino.

"I don't know whether there is evidence of the identity of another terrorist on the phone, or nothing at all. But we ought to be fired in the FBI if we didn't pursue that lead," FBI Director James Comey told a House panel in February.

As the legal battle played out, the FBI appealed to cyber experts around the world for help.

"We've talked to anybody who will talk with us about it, and I welcome additional suggestions," Comey said during a House hearing four weeks ago.

In response, countless companies and hackers – including what one source familiar with matter called many "hackadoodles" – came forward claiming to have a way into Farook's phone, sources said.

But nothing appeared viable. That is, until a company that the FBI has yet to identify came forward about two weeks ago. After initial contacts with the FBI, company officials flew to Washington to lay out their solution, sources told ABC News.

On Sunday, March 20, in a meeting at FBI headquarters, company officials demonstrated their technology on another iPhone. Convinced it would work, the FBI greenlighted applying it to Farook's phone, sources said.

This past weekend – just days ago – the attempt was made, and "the FBI has now successfully retrieved the data stored on" the phone, according to the Justice Department.

Forensic examiners are now attempting to exploit potential evidence from the phone. It's unclear if anything of investigative value has been found yet.

The FBI has refused to identify the company that offered the solution, with one source citing a "mutual agreement." Nevertheless, Apple did not play a part in finding the solution, company officials said.

As for whether the solution might be shared with Apple, it's a decision that will be made through consultation with multiple federal agencies, sources said.

One federal law enforcement source said it's important to emphasize that the ultimate solution identified in this case was not found despite the lawsuit filed against Apple, but because of it.

The solution was "generated as a result of the media attention," the source said.

At the same time, the source said federal authorities believe the end to the current litigation should not end the national discussion about balancing the interests of security and privacy.

"Our need for public safety and our need for privacy are crashing into each other, and we have to sort that out as a people," Comey said recently. "This world some people imagine where nobody can look at your stuff is a world that will have public safety costs."

FBI Hacked iPhone By Overriding The 10 Passcode Tries: Official

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

WASHINGTON – The FBI's announcement that it mysteriously hacked into an iPhone is a public setback for Apple Inc., as consumers suddenly discover they can't keep their most personal information safe. Meanwhile, Apple remains in the dark about how to restore the security of its flagship product.

The government said it was able to break into an iPhone used by a gunman in a mass shooting in California, but it didn't say how. That puzzled Apple software engineers – and outside experts – about how the FBI broke the digital locks on the phone without Apple's help. It also complicated Apple's job repairing flaws that jeopardize its software.

The Justice Department's announcement that it was dropping a legal fight to compel Apple to help it access the phone also took away any obvious legal avenues Apple might have used to learn how the FBI did it. The Justice Department declined through a spokeswoman to comment Tuesday.

A few clues have emerged. A senior law enforcement official told The Associated Press that the FBI managed to defeat an Apple security feature that threatened to delete the phone's contents if the FBI failed to enter the correct passcode combination after 10 tries. That allowed the government to repeatedly and continuously test passcodes in what's known as a brute-force attack until the right code is entered and the phone is unlocked.

It wasn't clear how the FBI dealt with a related Apple security feature that introduces increasing time delays between guesses. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because this person was not authorized to discuss the technique publicly.

FBI Director James Comey has said with those features removed, the FBI could break into the phone in 26 minutes.

The FBI hacked into the iPhone used by gunman Syed Farook, who died with his wife in a gun battle with police after they killed 14 people in December in San Bernardino. The iPhone, issued to Farook by his employer, the county health department, was found in a vehicle the day after the shooting.

The FBI is reviewing information from the iPhone, and it is unclear whether anything useful can be found.

Apple said in a statement Monday that the legal case to force its co-operation "should never have been brought," and it promised to increase the security of its products. CEO Tim Cook has said the Cupertino-based company is constantly trying to improve security for its users.

The FBI's announcement – even without revealing precise details – that it had hacked the iPhone was at odds with the government's firm recommendations for nearly two decades that security researchers always work co-operatively and confidentially with software manufacturers before revealing that a product might be susceptible to hackers.

The aim is to ensure that American consumers stay as safe online as possible and prevent premature disclosures that might damage a U.S. company or the economy.

As far back as 2002, the Homeland Security Department ran a working group that included leading industry technology industry executives to advise the president on how to keep confidential discoveries by independent researchers that a company's software could be hacked until it was already fixed. Even now, the Commerce Department has been trying to fine-tune those rules. The next meeting of a conference on the subject is April 8 in Chicago and it's unclear how the FBI's behaviour in the current case might influence the government's fragile relationship with technology companies or researchers.

The industry's rules are not legally binding, but the government's top intelligence agency said in 2014 that such vulnerabilities should be reported to companies.

"When federal agencies discover a new vulnerability in commercial and open source software – a so-called 'zero day' vulnerability because the developers of the vulnerable software have had zero days to fix it – it is in the national interest to responsibly disclose the vulnerability rather than to hold it for an investigative or intelligence purpose," the Office of the Director of National Intelligence said in a statement in April 2014.

The statement recommended generally divulging such flaws to manufacturers "unless there is a clear national security or law enforcement need."

Last week a team from Johns Hopkins University said they had found a security bug in Apple's iMessage service that would allow hackers under certain circumstances to decrypt some text messages. The team reported its findings to Apple in November and published an academic paper after Apple fixed it.

"That's the way the research community handles the situation. And that's appropriate," said Susan Landau, professor of cybersecurity policy at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. She said it was acceptable for the government to find a way to unlock the phone but said it should reveal its method to Apple.

Mobile phones are frequently used to improve cybersecurity, for example, as a place to send a backup code to access a website or authenticate a user.

The chief technologist at the Center for Democracy and Technology, Joseph Lorenzo Hall, said keeping details secret about a flaw affecting millions of iPhone users "is exactly opposite the disclosure practices of the security research community. The FBI and Apple have a common goal here: to keep people safe and secure. This is the FBI prioritizing an investigation over the interests of hundreds of millions of people worldwide."

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

The Apple Case May Show That The FBI Lags In Tech Smarts

By Matt Zapotosky

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

The U.S. government's revelation that it had accessed the San Bernardino shooter's iPhone without the help from Apple that it had so desperately sought indicates the FBI was either disguising its technical capabilities, or its agents and employees remain outmatched by tech workers in the private industry, according to current and former bureau officials and legal scholars.

The bureau in recent years has launched a recruiting blitz to attract employees with cyber expertise, and the National Science Foundation has even made scholarship money available to students who study cybersecurity and later work in government. But former FBI officials said the bureau will always face an uphill battle against private firms, which can offer much more money, a less rigorous code of conduct and more opportunities to do creative work.

"We had trouble retaining top talent, that's for sure," said Leo Taddeo, a former FBI special agent in charge of cyber investigations in New York. "The private sector pays better, it has opportunities to do more cutting edge activities in some cases, it has certainly some lifestyle benefits for its employees."

That bureau officials were able to access Syed Rizwan Farook's phone allows the government to avoid — at least for now — a showdown with Apple over the extent U.S. law compels the company to help in a criminal investigation. It also, according to the assistant director in charge of the FBI's Los Angeles Field Office, gives investigators "more answers" about the San Bernardino attack.

Lawyers and those in the tech industry say the FBI's sudden about-face — only a month ago, it was claiming it could not get into Farook's phone without Apple's help — raises questions about whether Justice Department officials intentionally misled the American public. And if officials are taken at their word, the case seems to provide a dramatic example of how far the FBI is lagging behind the tech industry when it comes to some technical capabilities.

"I think the bureau is absolutely in an uphill battle, desperately trying to keep up pace, and they are not," said Ron Hosko, a former assistant director in charge of the FBI's Criminal Division who is now president of the Law Enforcement Legal Defense Fund.

The FBI devotes significant resources both to cyber investigations and its Operational Technology Division, which is responsible for handling digital forensics and technical gadgetry. Its fiscal 2017 budget proposal asked for \$85.1 million more money for cyber (on top of the \$541 million in current spending) and another \$38.3 million for an initiative meant to help investigators beat encryption when appropriate (on top of the \$31 million in current spending.)

Robert Anderson, a former Executive Assistant Director of the bureau's Criminal, Cyber, Response, and Services Branch who now works as a managing director at Navigant, a business consulting firm, said two years ago, the bureau began an "unbelievable nationwide hunt, search and hiring program" for those with computer expertise, and the effort paid off. The bureau, he said, was not lacking in technical know-how.

"It's the best in its 100-plus year history," he said. "It's not even a question."

Joshua Zive, general counsel for the FBI Agents Association, said despite the hiring and spending, the FBI still needs the private sector's cooperation.

"That's an arms race that will always be very difficult for any government agency to win, given that you're going up against the largest and wealthiest companies imaginable," Zive said.

Farook and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, were killed in a shootout with police after they launched an attack that killed 14 people at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, Calif., in December.

The bid to access Farook's phone was meant to further the FBI's investigation, although it was controversial from the start. The Justice Department obtained a court order compelling Apple's assistance under the All Writs Act, a

centuries-old law that gives courts the power to "issue all writs necessary or appropriate in aid of their respective jurisdictions and agreeable to the usages and principles of law."

Federal prosecutors said initially they had no way into the phone without Apple's help. Apple resisted, arguing that the FBI was asking them to make their products less secure and that complying with the government's request would hurt customers' privacy.

Last week, on the eve of a hearing in the case, prosecutors for the first time suggested there might be a way in without Apple, writing in a court filing that "an outside party demonstrated to the FBI a possible method for unlocking Farook's iPhone." The method apparently worked; federal prosecutors wrote in another court filing Tuesday they had "successfully accessed the data stored on Farook's iPhone."

The FBI has not disclosed how it got in — other than to say it no longer needed Apple's help in doing so — and officials there and at the Justice Department did not return phone and email messages seeking comment Tuesday.

Alex Abdo, a staff attorney with the ACLU, said "the speed with which they were able to verify this new technique is a reason to be skeptical" of their previous claims.

"The FBI sat on this phone for two months, then made a deliberate decision to very publicly fight with Apple over the unlocking mechanism, and then made very strong statements about their inability to get in without Apple's help, and on a dime, that all changed," Abdo said. "There's smoke there. Whether's there's fire, we don't know."

FBI and Justice Department officials have bristled at the notion that they misled the public, or that agents were not working hard to access the phone on their own. Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates said at a recent news conference that FBI agents had "been working hard all along" to access the phone, and officials at the Justice Department were "a little surprised" to learn there might be another solution.

FBI Director James B. Comey wrote in a letter to the Wall Street Journal that he was "not embarrassed to admit that all technical creativity does not reside in government."

"Lots of folks came to us with ideas. It looks like one of those ideas may work and that is a very good thing, because the San Bernardino case was not about trying to send a message or set a precedent; it was and is about fully investigating a terrorist attack," Comey wrote.

That the FBI got in without Apple's help leaves unresolved a critical question: can the government use the All Writs Act to compel others to take the steps it wanted Apple to take. That matter, legal experts said, will be left for Congress or another court case.

In the interim, the government will be forced to wrestle with another, difficult choice: whether to tell Apple how it got in, so that Apple might close the vulnerability for all its users.

Read more:

Police say criminals view iPhones as 'another gift from God' because of the encryption

Apple waves the civil liberties flag – but for how long?

FBI director: Victory in the fight with Apple could set a precedent, lead to more requests

Apple's Fight For The iPhone Only The Beginning

By Brett Molina

[USA Today](#), March 29, 2016

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's case against Apple over an encrypted iPhone may be over, but more battles likely await the tech giant.

On Monday, the FBI dropped its lawsuit requiring Apple to bypass a security feature on its smartphones to unlock a device used by one of the killers in the shootings in San Bernardino, Calif.

"This case should never have been brought," said Apple in a statement.

However, this likely won't be the last time Apple fights the government over access to its flagship consumer device. The FBI has about a dozen similar cases where it is seeking access to a smartphone.

"It remains a priority for the government to ensure that law enforcement can obtain crucial digital information to protect national security and public safety, either with cooperation from relevant parties, or through the court system when cooperation fails," said Justice Department spokeswoman Melanie Newman on Monday. "We will continue to pursue all available options for this mission, including seeking the cooperation of manufacturers and relying upon the creativity of both the public and private sectors."

The FBI contends its lawsuit was never about setting a precedent, but gaining access to this lone smartphone.

With this court battle behind them, Apple has more room to focus on its core business: designing and selling consumer electronics. Sales of the main revenue driver, the iPhone, have slowed in recent months following the launch of the iPhone 6S and 6S Plus last fall.

Last week, Apple unveiled the iPhone SE, a smaller version of the smartphone with a 4-inch touchscreen, in an effort to drum up sales. The devices start shipping to consumers March 31.

During its first quarter, sales of the iPhone were up 1% compared to the same time last year. Apple CEO Tim Cook warned the second quarter will show a year-over-year decline in shipments. Apple will report second quarter earnings on April 25.

FBI's Retreat Doesn't Mean Its War With Apple Is Over

[Mashable](#), March 29, 2016

Apple's battle with the FBI in San Bernardino may be over, but the iPhone wars continue.

Even after the FBI gave up on getting a judge to compel Apple to hack the San Bernardino shooter's work-issued iPhone, the tech company is still bogged down in orders to assist authorities in unlocking iOS devices in 14 other cases.

The showdown in San Bernardino—which ended in a poof after the FBI found an unnamed third party to make its desired backdoor, just days before both sides were set to duke it out in court—could still affect those other cases, legal experts said.

When it comes to the central question of whether the government can compel Apple or other private companies to assist it with accessing data on locked devices under the All Writs Act, the FBI's chosen weapon in San Bernardino—that has not changed. The All Writs Act of 1789 is a catchall rule of sorts that allows judges to compel an action so long as it's legal and necessary.

"That question is still ongoing," Scott Vernick, a partner at Fox Rothschild told Mashable. It's just now, the government has managed to "kick the can sufficiently so that it can fight another day."

Vernick, who represents companies in lawsuits focusing on technology, intellectual property, privacy and data security, said that it wasn't clear to him that the government would prevail in California — especially in light of U.S. Magistrate Judge James Orenstein's ruling in Apple's favor in a similar but unrelated case in New York City.

Not moving forward with this case means the government doesn't have another bad precedent or unhelpful order working against it when it comes to future cases.

"Maybe it's just the cynic in me or just confluence, but this all works out neatly for the government," Vernick said. A question of burden

Still, it may be difficult for the government in other All Writs Act cases to argue that only Apple can provide it with access to a locked iPhone, Vernick added.

That was one of the central arguments in the San Bernardino case. The government said repeatedly in its filings that only Apple could help it do the hacking. The government was asking Apple to create its own version of iOS — which Apple dubbed GovtOS — that would allow authorities to brute-force into the locked phone, while also preventing possible auto-wipe behaviors.

The problem, of course, is that the FBI was able to get into the phone — not with Apple's assistance, but with the help of that unnamed third party.

This could be an issue for prosecutors in the other cases, Vernick said.

"The next time [the government] makes this argument, the federal magistrate is going to ask 'really?'"

It's possible that a call for public help might take place in some of those cases, too. Don't expect the government to share how it got into the iPhone with Apple

The big unknown in the San Bernardino case is of course, how the FBI managed to get into the iPhone.

Security experts have hypothesized about how the outside party could have gained access to the phone — but the truth is we just don't know. It could have been hardware based or it could have been a software vulnerability.

We asked Vernick whether Apple could ask the government to detail its method of how it got into the phone.

"They could, sure — now ask me if I think they'll be successful?" Vernick thinks it is very unlikely that the government will share how it accessed the phone without Apple. "Yes, as a practical method and in theory, you can try to get the government to do that. You can try. But it probably won't work because the government will classify the method as a matter of national security."

Still, Vernick admitted what other security experts Mashable has spoken with think, which is that it's possible this method might only work in this specific circumstance on this model of phone and this specific version of software.

Apple (and other companies) will continue to improve their security, which means that the method that worked today won't necessarily work tomorrow. Everyone wins, everyone loses

Looking back on this case and the way it was resolved, it is hard to find a clear winner.

Yes, Apple won the day in this case, but future cases will still go forward. There was an opportunity for additional legal precedent, but because the case was dropped, that isn't happening.

Moreover, one of the side-effects of this brawl was the subtle implication that Apple's security was strong and "FBI-proof." Although the company never hung its hats on those security claims, it most certainly benefited from the way the government positioned it as the only party that could provide access to a locked phone. In light of the FBI's claims that it has gained access to the phone in San Bernardino, Apple's flexed muscles begin to droop.

And for the government, it does survive to fight another day — and in other districts — but the

FBI also has egg on its face in the court of public opinion. Moreover, the responses from other tech companies, and from members of Congress, have shown that the type of support the Department of Justice thought it might have in this case might not exist.

If there is a silver lining in this situation, it may be that the battle will no more swiftly move to the legislature, where many believe this sort of discussion needs to take place. and outside of the courts.

1,000 Locked Devices In Limbo After FBI Quits iPhone Case

By Kevin Johnson And Elizabeth Weise

[USA Today](#), March 29, 2016

SAN FRANCISCO — The government's surprise decision to withdraw its case against Apple over the San Bernardino killer's iPhone adds uncertainty to criminal cases where state and local authorities are confronted with more than 1,000 locked smartphones and other devices, blocking access to potential evidence, according to a survey of more than a dozen jurisdictions.

These locked devices are separate from the most high profile one: the iPhone used by Syed Farook, who with his wife, Tashfeen Malik, carried out the December mass shooting in San Bernardino that left 14 dead. In mid February, a California court had ordered Apple to aid the FBI in sidestepping the security function of that iPhone, an action resisted by Apple out of concerns creating new software would make all iPhones more vulnerable.

Monday afternoon the FBI announced it had been able to unlock the iPhone without Apple's aid and did not need to move forward with its case.

Left unanswered is what Justice's abandoned legal action means for the many other law enforcement agencies seeking Apple's assistance in unlocking encrypted iPhones, iPads and encrypted devices from other manufacturers.

"We were hoping this decision, which could have gone to the Supreme Court, would have been road map and now it's not," said Stewart Baker, a partner in the Washington office of Steptoe & Johnson.

State and local investigators have been blocked from accessing the contents of the more than 1,000 devices because of their inability to bypass security functions similar to those encountered by the FBI in the San Bernardino case. Some of the local cases have been resolved even though possible evidence on the locked devices remained out of investigators' reach.

The data, gathered in part from queries by Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance, indicate one of the largest number of locked phones seized in connection with criminal investigations has been amassed in New York. Vance has accumulated more than 200 blocked devices while the New York Police Department estimated that there are an additional "hundreds" in its possession.

Officials expect the number of cases in which law enforcement seeks to force Apple to assist it overriding its devices' built-in security to increase.

In Manhattan alone, Vance's office says the number of criminal investigations where it has been unable to get data from Apple devices has risen to 205, out of a total 734 Apple devices received by the cyber lab for this borough of New York City between Oct. 2014 and Feb. 2016.

Vance told Congress last month he expects the number of cases in his office to rise dramatically because 94% of Apple devices feature the iOS 8 operating system or higher. Other local prosecutors face similar challenges, he testified.

"The overwhelming majority of criminal investigations stalled by default device encryption will remain so until Congress intervenes," Vance said in a statement Tuesday.

In a statement on Monday, Apple said it would "continue to help law enforcement with their investigations, as we have done all along, and we will continue to increase the security of our products as the threats and attacks on our data become more frequent and more sophisticated."

SECRET METHOD

It is unclear whether the undisclosed technique used to gain access to the phone used by Farook can assist local authorities.

"The government has released so little information that it's very hard to know what this means for other cases. We don't know what types of phones and operating systems this new access technique works on, so we don't know how it will affect other phones or devices," said Kristen Eichensehr, a professor of cyber law at UCLA School of Law in Los Angeles.

But such an undertaking, if it is available, likely would be enormous and extend far beyond New York.

In Houston, the Harris County District Attorney's Office reported that investigators turned up more than 100 encrypted devices last year, and have seized up to 10 per month so far in 2016, spokesman Jeff McShan said.

Of the estimated 800 mobile phones seized by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department each year, up to 20% have some type of encryption that prevents access, said spokesman Robert Tufano. He said Apple is not the only manufacturer with encryption that "prevents us from accessing phones."

"Investigators have just thrown up their hands in many cases, because they know that encryption has put potentially key evidence beyond their reach," NYPD spokesman Peter Donald said.

"We have been working this issue for the past year," said David LaBahn, president of the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, adding that the group is attempting to amass a more comprehensive accounting of blocked phones.

BROOKLYN CASE

The highest profile iPhone case aside from San Bernardino has been in Brooklyn. Government investigators have sought to compel Apple to help gain access to data on the iPhone of a suspect who pleaded guilty in a methamphetamine conspiracy.

The government last week agreed to Apple's motion seeking a delay in the case. On Tuesday the Department of Justice submitted in a letter to the court saying investigators

will provide an update by April 11, but did not specify what the government will do.

In a ruling on that case last month, Judge James Orenstein in New York's Eastern District called the government's use of the All Writs Act too "expansive."

As the government had also used the All Writs Act in the San Bernardino case, law enforcement officials would have liked clarification on whether the Act can be used to force tech companies to help them get into locked devices. The 1789 law says that federal courts can require individuals to comply in cases that aren't covered by existing law.

With the withdrawal of the San Bernardino case, no resolution is possible and it's going to take time for the government to have such a strong case again, said David O'Brien, a senior researcher with the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University.

According to some attorneys, the government's actions have seriously weakened its credibility if it attempts to argue for compelling companies to help it in future cases. The Department of Justice spent a month saying Apple's assistance was the only way it could get into the phone, and then suddenly said it wasn't, said Scott Vernick, head of the data security and privacy practice at Fox Rothschild in Philadelphia.

"Now any other court is going to ask, 'Really? Are you sure you need their help? That's what you asked for last time and apparently you didn't,'" Vernick said.

The Unanswered Questions And Unsettled Issues : All Tech Considered : NPR

[NPR](#), March 29, 2016

The FBI's success in unlocking, without Apple's help, the iPhone of one of the San Bernardino terrorists marks a dramatic end to the heated dispute between the Justice Department and the tech giant about the scope of the government's power to compel a company to weaken its digital security for a criminal investigation.

Below are some of the key takeaways — and mysteries — left in the wake of the case.

What has been settled? The particular case of this specific phone, though we don't know yet what exactly the investigators found inside.

(A quick recap) Because the information on the iPhone used by Syed Rizwan Farook was encrypted and uncrackable, the investigators needed to guess the passcode that locked the phone's contents. The FBI wanted to hook it up to a computer that would figure out the four-digit combination, but the phone's security features required manual password attempts and would have wiped the phone clean after 10 wrong tries. So the FBI got a court order compelling Apple to write special software that would lift those security features, which Apple fought.

After weeks of saying that Apple's special software was the only way to safely get inside the phone (read here why the NSA wasn't an option), the Justice Department last week said a third party proposed a new, undisclosed method — and on Monday, the method was proven successful.

If unlocking this particular iPhone was the goal, "you could argue that this is a success because the FBI got the information much more quickly than they would have through the court system," says Eric Berg, a lawyer at Foley & Lardner and former federal prosecutor who focused on special in electronic surveillance.

But was this iPhone's content the entire goal? The case sets no precedent and another similar dispute is likely.

After years of settling these kinds of government requests behind closed doors, the standoff over the San Bernardino shooter's iPhone escalated the debate over law enforcement's ability to force cooperation from an unwilling third party.

One of the major stakes in this standoff between Apple and the FBI was the ability of the government to force cooperation from an unwilling third party.

The government's court order against Apple relied on a broad 18th-century law called All Writs Act, which has been used to compel assistance from other companies, but the scuttling of the legal case against Apple leaves no case law for how All Writs can be used to bypass digital security.

That means this dispute is likely to be replayed, with Apple or another maker of encrypted devices — or encrypted messaging — as new technologies become a growing element of criminal investigations.

"Unfortunately, this news appears to be just a delay of an inevitable fight over whether the FBI can force Apple to undermine the security of its own products," Alex Abdo, staff lawyer at the American Civil Liberties Union, said in a statement on Monday.

A Justice Department spokeswoman, in her statement on Monday, acknowledged that the government is likely to continue asking tech companies for help:

"It remains a priority for the government to ensure that law enforcement can obtain crucial digital information to protect national security and public safety, either with cooperation from relevant parties, or through the court system when cooperation fails. We will continue to pursue all available options for this mission, including seeking the cooperation of manufacturers and relying upon the creativity of both the public and private sectors."

Can the FBI now get into all iPhones? It depends on what method it used, which we may never find out.

We don't know the details of what method the FBI used to get inside this locked iPhone, and the government may try to keep it classified. "There's not really any requirement for disclosure because they're not involving Apple," says Berg, the former federal prosecutor.

Apple says the FBI has not shared its technique with the company either, and its lawyers have previously said they'd push for such a disclosure.

Whether the technique can be applied to the hundreds of other locked Apple devices seized in other criminal investigations around the country depends on what exactly it entails.

According to iPhone forensics researcher Jonathan Zdziarski, if the method relied on tinkering with the hardware inside the phone (like the memory chip cloning method we described here), that could be re-used on other older devices, like the iPhone 5C at the center of this dispute. But if the method exploits a weakness in the phone's software, Zdziarski says the technique could work on newer devices.

If investigators do want to reapply this tool to other traditional investigations, they'd need a search warrant with probable cause.

FBI Owns Proprietary Rights To Method Used To Crack iPhone « CBS New York

[WCBS-TV New York](#), March 29, 2016

NEW YORK (CBSNewYork/AP) — The FBI now owns the proprietary rights to the method used to crack the San Bernardino gunman's iPhone, a government official told CBS News.

The FBI said Monday it successfully used a mysterious technique without Apple Inc.'s help to hack into Syed Farook's iPhone. Farook, along with his wife, died in a gun battle with police after they killed 14 people in San Bernardino, California, in December. The iPhone was found in a vehicle the day after the shooting; two personal phones were found destroyed so completely that the FBI couldn't recover information from them.

Apple software engineers — and outside experts — are puzzled about how the FBI broke the digital locks on the phone without Apple's help. It also complicated Apple's job repairing flaws that jeopardize its software.

The Justice Department's announcement that it was dropping a legal fight to compel Apple to help it access the phone also took away any obvious legal avenues Apple might have used to learn how the FBI did it. The Justice Department declined through a spokeswoman to comment Tuesday.

It is a closely held secret how the FBI hacked the iPhone, but a few clues have emerged. A senior law enforcement official told The Associated Press that the FBI managed to defeat an Apple security feature that threatened to delete the phone's contents if the FBI failed to enter the correct passcode combination after 10 tries. That allowed the government to guess the correct passcode by trying random combinations until the software accepted the right one.

It wasn't clear how the FBI dealt with a related Apple security feature that deliberately introduces increasing time delays between guesses. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because this person was not authorized to discuss the technique publicly.

According to Ynet, the FBI was "reportedly using the services of the Israeli-based company Cellebrite in its effort to break the protection on a terrorist's locked iPhone, according to experts in the field familiar with the case.

Cellebrite has not responded to the report.

Cellebrite is considered one of the leading companies in the world in the field of digital forensics and has been working with the world's biggest intelligence, defense and law enforcement authorities for many years.

The company provides the FBI with decryption technology as part of a contract signed with the bureau in 2013.

Cellebrite's technology is able to extract valuable information from cellular devices that could be used in criminal and intelligence investigations, even if the phone and the information it contains are locked and secure.

The FBI was reviewing information from the iPhone, and it was unclear whether anything useful would be found.

Apple said in a statement Monday that the legal case to force its cooperation "should never have been brought," and it promised to increase the security of its products. CEO Tim Cook has said the Cupertino-based company is constantly trying to improve security for its users.

The FBI's announcement — even without revealing precise details — that it had hacked the iPhone was at odds with the U.S. government's firm recommendations for nearly two decades that security researchers always work cooperatively and confidentially with software manufacturers before revealing that a product might be susceptible to hackers.

Those guidelines lay out a process about how and when to announce that commercial software might be vulnerable. The aim is to ensure that American consumers stay as safe online as possible and prevent premature disclosures that might damage a U.S. company or the economy.

As far back as 2002, the Homeland Security Department ran a working group that included leading industry technology industry executives to advise the president on how to keep confidential discoveries by independent researchers that a company's software could be hacked until it was already fixed. Even now, the Commerce Department has been trying to fine-tune those rules to protect the digital economy. The next meeting of a conference on the subject is April 8 in Chicago and it's unclear how the FBI's behavior in the current case might influence the government's fragile relationship with technology companies or researchers.

The industry's rules are not legally binding, but the government's top intelligence agency said in 2014 that such vulnerabilities should be reported to companies.

"When federal agencies discover a new vulnerability in commercial and open source software — a so-called 'zero day' vulnerability because the developers of the vulnerable software have had zero days to fix it — it is in the national interest to responsibly disclose the vulnerability rather than to hold it for an investigative or intelligence purpose," the Office of the Director of National Intelligence said in a statement in April 2014.

The statement, which referenced new guidelines by the Obama administration on such disclosures, recommended generally divulging such flaws to manufacturers "unless there is a clear national security or law enforcement need."

Last week a team from Johns Hopkins University said they had found a security bug in Apple's iMessage service that would allow hackers under certain circumstances to decrypt some text messages. The team reported its findings to Apple in November and published an academic paper after Apple fixed it.

"That's the way the research community handles the situation. And that's appropriate," said Susan Landau, professor of cybersecurity policy at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. She said it was acceptable for the government to find a way to unlock the phone but said the government should reveal its method to Apple.

Mobile phones are frequently used to improve cybersecurity in the private sector or federal agencies, for example, as a place to send a backup code to access a website or authenticate a user for a work system.

The chief technologist at the Center for Democracy and Technology, Joseph Lorenzo Hall, said keeping details secret about a flaw affecting millions of iPhone users "is exactly opposite the disclosure practices of the security research community. The FBI and Apple have a common goal here: to keep people safe and secure. This is the FBI prioritizing an investigation over the interests of hundreds of millions of people worldwide."

FBI iPhone Solution May Not Necessarily Crack Other Cases

By Sudhin Thanawala And Bree Fowler

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The FBI's discovery of a way to hack into the phone of one of the San Bernardino killers may not be the master key that allows prosecutors across the country to unlock iPhones in hundreds of more ordinary criminal cases.

The FBI may not quickly share the technique it used with local law enforcement agencies, New York City Police Commissioner William Bratton said Tuesday. And even if it

does, the hack may be too expensive for district attorneys' offices, Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr. has said.

Also, technology experts said it is not at all certain whether the technique can work with other types of iPhones.

While the San Bernardino case involved an extremist attack Dec. 2 that killed 14 people, investigators across the U.S. are seeking access to iPhones in drug cases and other crimes, arguing that encryption features prevent them from gathering valuable information such as the identity of the person a victim last talked to or texted.

"This is really a victims' rights issue," said District Attorney Daniel Conley in Suffolk County, Massachusetts, which includes Boston. "A lot of people view this through a national security lens and that is important, but my job is to serve victims of crime, and a lot of them aren't going to get the opportunity for justice they deserve."

Conley said his office has more than 50 phones it has warrants for but can't crack.

Manhattan officials said they have at least 200 Apple devices inaccessible to prosecutors out of a total of 734 received by a cyber lab between October 2014 and February 2016. The devices were taken during investigations of attempted murder, child sexual abuse, sex trafficking, child pornography, assault, robbery, identity theft and other crimes.

"This isn't just an issue resonating in California or New York. The decision by these companies unilaterally to encrypt these devices and make them warrant-proof is going to have a significant impact on prosecutions around the country," Vance said in a recent interview.

Vance told Congress earlier this month that other district attorneys are facing similar challenges. He cited Harris County, Texas, saying the DA there last year encountered more than 100 encrypted Apple devices in cases including human trafficking, street crime and sexual assault.

Vance said Chicago's Cook County cyber lab received 30 encrypted devices in a recent two-month span, and the Connecticut Division of Scientific Services has encountered 46 encrypted Apple devices.

The Justice Department declined through a spokeswoman to comment Tuesday.

But a law enforcement official said the FBI would continue to aid its local and state partners with gaining evidence in cases — implying that the method used in the San Bernardino case would be shared with them. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to publicly comment.

Vance and other law enforcement officials, though, have called for a federal law governing when a company can be forced to help authorities unlock a phone.

"A workable balance between privacy and public safety can only be set by Congress," he said in a statement Tuesday.

Bratton, too, said the FBI's success in breaking into gunman Syed Farook's iPhone without Apple's help does not do away with the need for a comprehensive solution.

"They may have dealt with this one," he said, "but there will be others coming down the pike very quickly."

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Apple's Encryption Battle With United States Still Alive In Brooklyn

By Dan Levine

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

After The FBI-Apple Fight In California, The Encryption Debate Isn't Going Away

[US News & World Report](#), March 29, 2016

The contentious legal battle between the FBI and Apple over accessing a terrorist's encrypted iPhone ended almost before it began, but the specter of the case still will loom over lawmakers and judges facing decisions about whether there should be limits on privacy software.

The Department of Justice said in a federal court filing in California Monday that it had bypassed encryption on Syed Rizwan Farook's iPhone 5c and requested the court vacate its order compelling Apple to assist it in accessing the device. The two-page filing contained no information about the methods used to bypass encryption on the phone used by Farook, who was fatally shot by authorities along with his wife, Tashfeen Malik, after the pair killed 14 people in San Bernardino, California, late last year.

FBI Director James Comey said during a press conference last week that the agency had received numerous offers of help from the private sector to unlock the device, and declined to comment then on whether officials would share information with Apple should its efforts to access the phone's data prove successful.

Apple, for its part, stated after news of the FBI's hacking success that the case "should never have been brought," but that it "raised issues which deserve a national conversation about our civil liberties, and our collective security and privacy."

The legal battle over the future of encryption now swings in large part to a federal court in Brooklyn, where the Justice Department is appealing a judge's decision denying its request to force Apple to unlock the iPhone of a drug dealer.

The California and New York cases involve different versions of the iPhone and deal with different scales of

alleged crime, but the FBI has cited the same law in both in seeking to compel the tech giant to aid its access to the phones: the 1789 All Writs Act. The act gives courts the power to compel people to obey various legal requirements, but Magistrate Judge James Orenstein in New York ruled compelling Apple to unlock a phone under the legislation would be going too far.

Orenstein also said that a debate over issues involved in the case “must take place among legislators who are equipped to consider the technological and cultural realities of a world their predecessors could not begin to conceive.” And Congress, indeed, is feeling the pressure to address encryption.

Sens. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., and Richard Burr, R-N.C., reportedly have circulated draft legislation dealing with judges’ power to order companies to assist in accessing encrypted data.

Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Texas, and Democratic Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia, meanwhile, have introduced a bill proposing a commission tasked with issuing recommendations on digital security challenges such as encryption.

Still, Alexander Abdo, a staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union, says the government’s move to vacate its court order in California “appears to be just a delay of an inevitable fight over whether the FBI can force Apple to undermine the security of its own products.”

“We would all be more secure if the government ended this reckless effort,” Abdo says.

And while the California case did not set a legal precedent, its apparent resolution draws into question how secure Apple’s encryption is, and possibly provides a path for the government to bypass those digital defenses during future investigations, says Mark Skilton, a professor at the U.K.’s Warwick Business School.

“To some degree it has continued to reinforce the cybersecurity war that is going on with all sides seeking to find ways to break secure systems,” Skilton says. “Companies need to address cybersecurity as a top priority, as we live in an era where we are always connected.”

The FBI Unlocked A Terrorist’s iPhone, But We Still Need To Talk About Encryption

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

TWO LEGITIMATE interests of society were at war with each other in the fight between Apple and the FBI over the contents of a terrorist’s iPhone. After seeking in court to compel Apple’s help in unlocking the phone, the FBI has pulled back, saying it found a way to obtain the data without Apple’s assistance. But the larger conflict over encryption of data and its impact on privacy and security is not yet sorted out and must not be neglected.

On one side, law enforcement authorities in the United States express a valid worry about the prospect of “going dark” — that manufacturers are building products that encrypt data, either on a network or on the device, in ways that are accessible only to a user, and thus off-limits to law enforcement even with a court-approved warrant. They fear that this could provide a digital safe haven to criminals and terrorists.

On the other side, Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook insists that any concession to government intrusion will weaken encryption for all users, at great risk to security and privacy. Mr. Cook sees encrypted data as a safeguard for the 99 percent of law-abiding users against proliferating cybersecurity threats. Many consumers are demanding protection, especially after the Edward Snowden disclosures of government surveillance. Tech companies also argue they’ll be better able to protect free speech for billions of people in unfree societies such as China and Russia if they do not bow to U.S. government demands.

In the confrontation over the San Bernardino, Calif., shooter’s phone, neither side gave ground from these positions. The conflict escalated rapidly without revealing any serious wiggle room. It was not a promising environment in which to make policy.

Apple did suggest during the debate, without endorsing any specific legislation, that perhaps Congress should take up the issue. The company also expressed some openness to the establishment of a national commission of experts to determine whether the twin imperatives of privacy and security can both be met.

Some encryption enthusiasts insist this is a fool’s errand, that any “backdoor” vulnerability handed to government will eventually get into the wild and ruin encryption for all. Perhaps, but if this argument is true, there should be no harm in having it scrubbed and examined by a national commission of the best and brightest minds. Ditto the argument put forward by some in the tech community that law enforcement has many other ways to obtain information these days and is crying wolf when it complains about “going dark.” Finally, a commission might offer Congress suggestions to update federal laws governing communications that date from the analog age.

The FBI’s withdrawal from the court challenge offers a respite that should not be wasted.

DHS Wants Input On Sharing Data For Cyber Insurance

[Federal Times](#), March 29, 2016

The Department of Homeland Security has a mandate to help the private sector — and particularly critical infrastructure — secure itself from cyberattacks but has little authority to actively do so. To meet this mission, DHS is

looking at alternatives to incentivize better security in various industries and is looking at cyber insurance as one of those means.

Federal Register: NPPD Seeks Comments on Cyber Incident Data Repository White Papers

Beyond giving people and organizations a safety net, the National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD) is hoping cyber insurance can act as an incentive for having a better security posture by offering more coverage and lower premiums to organizations that follow best practices and maintain strong cybersecurity.

However, the insurance industry needs more data to establish a baseline. To facilitate, NPPD created the Cyber Incident Data and Analysis Working Group (CIDAWG), a group of insurers, CIOs and CISOs from the private sector to figure out how to collect and use incident data in an anonymous but effective way.

A year after coming together, the group has released three draft whitepapers analyzing the key issues. From the document summaries:

The Value Proposition

Details how a cyber incident data repository could help advance the cause of cyber risk management and, with the right repository data, the kinds of analysis that would be useful to CISOs, CSOs, insurers and other cybersecurity professionals. NPPD seeks comments on the following:

Cyber Incident Data Points and Repository-Support Analysis

Addresses the kinds of prioritized data categories and associated data points that should be shared among repository users to promote new kinds of needed cyber risk analysis. NPPD seeks comments on the following:

Overcoming Perceived Obstacles to Sharing into a Cyber Incident Data Repository

Identifies perceived obstacles to voluntary cyber incident data sharing and offers potential approaches to overcoming those obstacles. NPPD seeks comments on the following:

NPPD and CIDAWG are taking input on all three papers through May 24. Comments can be sent to cyber.security.insurance@hq.dhs.gov.

Hackers Breach Law Firms, Including Cravath, Weil Gotshal

Federal investigators explore whether cybercriminals stole confidential information to be used for insider trading

By Nicole Hong And Robin Sidel

[Wall Street Journal](#), March 29, 2016

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

Russian Cyber Criminal Targets Elite Law Firms

[Business Insurance](#), March 29, 2016

A Russian cyber criminal has targeted nearly 50 elite law firms, including four in Chicago, to collect confidential client information for financial gain.

The mastermind, a broker named "Oleras" living in Ukraine, has been attempting since January to hire hackers to break into the firms' computer systems so he can trade on insider information, according to a Feb. 3 alert from Flashpoint, a New York threat intelligence firm.

Kirkland & Ellis L.L.P., Sidley Austin L.L.P., McDermott Will & Emery and Jenner & Block L.L.P. all were listed on a spreadsheet of potential marks. It named 46 of the country's largest law firms, plus two members of the UK's Magic Circle.

A spokeswoman for Flashpoint said the firm had notified law enforcement and declined to comment further.

The FBI was investigating as of March 4, when it published its own industry alert detailing the threat. The agency's press office did not return a message seeking comment.

Kirkland was aware of the threat, and no client data was accessed, the firm's chief information officer, Dan Nottke, said in an email. The firm subscribes to several security information-sharing services, including ones operated by the FBI and the Financial Services Information Sharing and Analysis Center, the cyber security information clearinghouse for the financial services industry.

Spokesmen for McDermott and Jenner declined to comment. Messages to Sidley seeking comment were not returned.

Law firms have largely trailed their clients in confronting the possibility of hackers accessing their networks for illegal profit. Though they hold vast repositories of confidential information, many firms are slow to adopt up-to-date defenses against malware and spyware, said Jay Kozie, principal at Keno Kozie Associates, a Chicago-based law firm technology consultancy.

"I've always been surprised, frankly, that the law firms have not been more aggressively targeted in the past," he said. "If you've got confidential information about a merger or a patent, it's going to be very valuable."

In this latest scheme, Oleras posted on a cyber criminal forum a plan to infiltrate the law firms' networks, then use keywords to locate drafts of merger agreements, letters of intent, confidentiality agreements and share purchase agreements. The list of targeted law firms also included names, email address and social media accounts for specific employees at the firms.

"Overall, Oleras wanted to know in advance which companies were going to be merged with the help of the stolen law firm documents and subsequently leverage this

information to execute algorithmic insider trading activities,” the Flashpoint alert says, with the money then laundered through front companies in Belize and Cypriot bank accounts.

The broker hoped to recruit a black-hat hacker to handle the job’s technical aspects for \$100,000, plus another 45,000 rubles (about \$564). He offered to split the proceeds of any insider trading 50-50 after the first \$1 million.

On Feb. 22, another Flashpoint alert noted that Oleras had singled out eight lawyers from top firms, including one from Kirkland’s management committee, for a sophisticated phishing attack. The phishing email appeared to originate from an assistant at trade journal Business Worldwide and asked to profile the lawyer for excellence in M&A.

Here’s How Maryland And Virginia Are Luring Cyber Start-ups To The Region

By Aaron Gregg

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

Ten more D.C.-area cybersecurity start-ups are getting seed funding courtesy of state governments, according to announcements by Maryland’s Technology Development Corp. and Virginia’s Mach37 accelerator. Both programs were set up to lure out-of-state start-ups to the region and prevent local acts from leaving.

“We have companies that will move to Maryland not only to get our funding but to be part of the ecosystem here,” said John M. Wasilisin, the new president and chief operating officer of the Technology Development Corp. (Tedco).

The D.C. region is flush with cybersecurity talent but trails other technology hubs when it comes to investment dollars. Tedco tries to help fill the gap by handing out \$100,000 investments of state-appropriated money under terms considered favorable to start-ups. With each investment, the agency has the right to eventually take an equity stake. And there’s no requirement for collateral, so if a company goes belly-up, it doesn’t owe the state anything.

On March 23, Tedco announced that through its cybersecurity fund it had funded four more companies, one of which had been based in Virginia before relocating to Maryland.

Virginia makes similar investments through the state-funded Mach37 accelerator in Herndon, which gives start-ups \$50,000 in exchange for an 8 percent equity stake. After a three-month mentorship program, the start-ups are required to establish an office in Virginia.

The accelerator has yet to pull off a high-profile “exit” — start-up lingo for a lucrative buyout or initial public offering. But after just a few years in operation, managing partner Rick Gordon says he’s aware of alumni companies that are already turning down buyout offers while they pursue larger opportunities.

Last week, the accelerator said six new companies, four from outside the region, are entering the program. One of them, a cyberthreat-detection company called NormShield, originated in Turkey.

Most of the Virginia start-ups are trying new approaches to protect corporate networks. PCPursuit joins the accelerator from Seattle, bringing a technology that shuts employees out of a company’s computer system if they don’t swipe their identification cards at the door. Unblinkr, which makes cybersecurity software specifically for Internet-connected cars, comes to Virginia from Boston.

Beyond the business ideas, the leaders of the Maryland and Virginia programs each say they pay close attention to who is running the start-ups in making their selections, even if they might disagree on what characteristics matter most.

Mach37’s Gordon, the former chief operating officer at Arlington-based LookingGlass Cyber Solutions, says technological genius is much harder to teach than entre-pre-neur-ship.

“Every disruptive innovation starts with a technical founder having a eureka moment,” he said.

Gordon and his team weed out start-up founders who might be uncoachable, but the typical Mach37 inductee is a technologist trying to learn the ropes of the business world.

“We appeal most to technical founders and first-time entrepreneurs,” Gordon said, “people that have never gone and raised venture capital before.”

The new chief at Maryland’s Tedco takes a different approach, favoring business acumen over technology talent.

All Tedco-funded companies have to be rooted in a unique intellectual property, but Wasilisin says solid leadership is his priority when screening applicants. A really good CEO can build a business around technology that is just average, he says, but a crummy team can screw up even the most groundbreaking invention.

“When you’re looking at any company to invest in, the most important thing to look at is the management team, the people,” Wasilisin said. “We look at the jockey more closely than the horse.”

Hacker Sends Anti-Semitic Fliers To Network Printers At Princeton, Many Other Colleges

By Mary Hui

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

PRINCETON, N.J. — A notorious white supremacist computer hacker has claimed responsibility for sending anti-Semitic fliers to networked printers at several universities across the country, a coordinated cyberattack that included the University of Maryland and Princeton among thousands of targets.

Academic departments and administrative offices at schools in California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland and

New Jersey reported receiving the one-page fliers, which included two swastikas, assailed Jews for “mass immigration and degeneracy” and urged the “white man” to join “in the struggle for global white supremacy.” They included a link to the website of the Daily Stormer, a neo-Nazi white supremacist group.

The Anti-Defamation League said in a posting on its website that “colleges around the country, large and small, public and private, continue to receive anti-Semitic fliers blaming Jews for destroying the country.” Oren Segal, director of the Center on Extremism with the ADL, said the scope of the attack was surprising.

“We got a lot of complaints from people who are concerned,” Segal said. “When you see the imagery of swastikas and anti-Semitism in your workplace ... and don’t know where it comes from, it shocked a lot of people and confused people.”

Andrew Auernheimer, 30, a self-proclaimed Internet troll and white supremacist, told The Washington Post that he carried out the attack from his home in Abkhazia, a breakaway region of Georgia, as part of a new effort to distribute his message. He said he was able to print the fliers to at least 20,000 printers across the United States, exploiting vulnerable devices with Internet addresses that are publicly available online.

“The primary motivation of everything I do is the salvation of the white race and preserving our people and securing an existence for white children,” Auernheimer told The Post via Skype, adding that he has plans to similarly exploit other networked devices. “Anything that outputs something. Audio and video devices would be nice, voice over Internet protocol, phones.”

Students and administrators at several schools reacted strongly to the fliers, with the universities condemning the message.

“Princeton regards any actions making the atmosphere intimidating, threatening or hostile to individuals as serious offenses,” Michele Minter, Princeton’s vice provost for institutional equity and inclusion, said in a statement.

Maya Wahrman, a Princeton senior, said she feels fortunate that such anti-Semitic attacks are not commonplace and that the university appears to be taking the issue seriously.

“It’s still scary to think that this is possible in our world, that someone would care so much about hating Jews to hack an elaborate printer system across the country,” Wahrman said. “It reminds me how vulnerable any minority group’s place can be based on shifting politics and populism.”

Dwight K. Hamilton, the vice president for inclusion, diversity and equity at Smith, wrote to the college that “this document and its contents have no place in our community. We reject its hateful message as well as its intention to shock and intimidate. Our work to create an inclusive Smith

community, where each member is safe, valued, and respected, will not be derailed by this cowardly act nor the hateful mindset that drove it. We are not intimidated; we are emboldened in our resolve.”

The fliers appeared anonymously on university printers — and other open-source printers — a way of instantly distributing the hate-filled missives remotely by computer. Officials at Princeton University said they believe someone was able to learn the unique Internet addresses of university printers and sent the document in a coordinated attack; any networked printer is potentially vulnerable to such an effort if a computer user is able to hack into the network or learn their specific addresses.

Investigators are trying to officially identify the source of the message and have contacted the FBI for assistance, according to Min Pullan, a Princeton spokeswoman. Pullan said the university is confident that the attack was the work of a group outside of the university, and the school is working to block any further messages. She did not know how many fliers had been printed.

Andrew Anglin, the publisher of Daily Stormer, told the Daily Princetonian on Friday that the fliers came from Auernheimer. Anglin told The Washington Post that Auernheimer — known by the alias “weev” online — “did this monumental deed.” Anglin called the hacker “a true hero” whom he supports in “all his heroic endeavors.”

“It’s the first time anyone has ever done this in history,” Anglin said in a telephone interview. “He invented this.”

Auernheimer is a contributor to the Daily Stormer; in 2013 he was sentenced to 41 months in prison for breaching AT&T servers but was released in April 2014, after a federal appeals court reversed his conviction.

In a 2014 blog post on the Daily Stormer after his release, “What I Learned from my Time in Prison,” Auernheimer expressed a hatred for Jews and blacks and in an accompanying photo displayed a large swastika tattoo on his chest.

In an article published Friday evening titled “A brief experiment in printing,” Auernheimer boasted of his attack, which he called “mass printer trolling.” He describes how, while chatting in the Daily Stormer online chatroom, he first hit upon the idea of exploiting vulnerable printers in an attack akin to spamming email accounts but with actual paper documents.

“In our chat I asked aloud a simple question: how many printers are there on the open Internet?” he wrote. “It turned out to be upwards of a million devices. That’s a lot of things to print to. The sheer volume of paper one can generate with a single command is impressive.”

Auernheimer’s fliers went to the University of Maryland, University of Massachusetts Amherst, University of California Berkeley, DePaul University, Smith College, Mt. Holyoke College, Northeastern and Princeton, among others.

Auernheimer said that he found open printers on the Internet and was not trying to reach universities specifically.

A Northeastern spokesman confirmed that the fliers were sent to several university campuses last week and said that security experts determined they came from overseas; the school has put in a firewall to block further attacks.

The flier incident may have sparked copycats. University of Massachusetts Amherst spokesman Ed Blaguszewski said that a second flier was sent on Sunday to university offices via networked faxes and printers, and the school plans to ask for help from law enforcement officials to determine the source.

"The university condemns such cowardly and hateful acts," Blaguszewski said in a statement. "Information Technology officials at UMass say they have placed additional blocks on external connections and access to the campus computing network."

Anglin, in praise of the attack, said that one of its most important aspects was "invading the safe spaces that these universities provide for effeminate men and feminists and minorities." Anglin also criticized the universities, which he said "are institutions created by white people for our progeny," for advancing "an ideology of minority victimhood."

Segal, at the Anti-Defamation League, said the fliers are a reminder that such attacks can come from far outside a community and still create fear.

"You can be literally halfway around the world and through networks be able to have that impact, reach people with their hate," Segal said, noting that the world is more interconnected than ever, allowing people to move information at lightning speed. "That same technology allows haters to send their messages in the same way. ... We need to start figuring out ways to mitigate this."

Anglin also attacked the nation's universities for their approach to what he sees as a free speech issue: "There is no threat of violence here and yet they are presenting it as a form of violence that someone has a different opinion."

Some students also have pointed out what they believe is a double standard at Princeton in terms of responding to speech that some consider discriminatory and inflammatory, arguing that the university had a weaker response to incidents involving black students.

Last spring, a group called Urban Congo, a now-defunct student organization made up predominantly of white males, staged a dance that many believed was a racist act of cultural appropriation. In an email to the student body, Christopher Eisgruber, the school's president, criticized the performance as "inexcusably offensive." He also said that the controversies such performances provoke "may be genuinely painful, but they are also fundamental to the life of any great University."

Asanni York, a junior and Black Justice League member, took to Twitter to note that the swift response to the

anti-Semitic fliers appears in contrast to how the university has responded to past incidents of threats against black students, including a bomb and firearm threat against black students after the Black Justice League ended a 33-hour sit-in at the president's office to protest racial injustice.

"I thought controversy was necessary for conversation and growth? Eisgruber said that. Or only when it's aimed at Black students?" York tweeted.

@Princeton I thought controversy was necessary for conversation and growth? Eisgruber said that. Or only when it's aimed at Black students?

— @hur(hood)Marshall @TodaysAsanniDay March 25, 2016

York said in an interview that he supports the university "being proactive and taking steps to protect the students" but also said that he feels the university is being selective in how it approaches incidents of bigotry.

Josh Roberts, president of the student board of the Center for Jewish Life, said in a statement to the Daily Princetonian that many student groups have reached out to the Jewish community on campus to show solidarity: "We are sincerely grateful for all of our peer organizations and friends who are reaching out with support and kindness in the face of hatred."

Protests, which spread and intensified nationally after the uprising at the University of Missouri, yielded in some cases major leadership overhauls and in others heated discussions about how universities should reckon with racially complex histories.

Some argued that the protests by students — such as those at Yale, which included anger at a faculty member's alleged lack of sensitivity after she questioned a warning to avoid Halloween costumes that might be offensive — stifled free speech and had a chilling effect on open discourse in places where argument and debate are central concepts of learning.

The flier incident at Princeton came a week after Eisgruber said in an interview with the Indian Express that Princeton, in upholding its values of open debate and deliberation as an educational institution, would tolerate students holding a commemoration for Osama bin Laden.

"We would and should tolerate that. It would be very disruptive. People would be very angry about the statement. But we would not discipline somebody for making statements of that nature," Eisgruber said in the interview.

Pullan, the Princeton spokeswoman, said there is a significant difference between the anti-Semitic flier attack and someone within the Princeton community speaking.

"This is something that has come from outside, and this is an exploitation of our printers," Pullan said. "It's not a student body or a member of the community speaking, so those two things are not comparable."

Hacker Attacks 1000s Of Printers In Internet Of Things 'Experiment'

[Fortune](#), March 29, 2016

Last Thursday morning, thousands of printers across the country began spontaneously shooting off pages that looked like propaganda out of Nazi Germany. Adorned with swastikas, the printouts were addressed to "white man" and contained anti-Semitic messages as well as an appeal to "join us in the struggle for white supremacy."

They showed up at more than a dozen college campuses across the country, according to tech review site VPNRanks. Students and staff at universities from Princeton to Washington University at St. Louis to the University of California at Berkeley reported finding the offense flyers in the output trays of their printers and fax machines. But some individuals outside of college campuses also reported hate mail "mysteriously" showing up on their printer.

The culprit turned out to be the notorious cyber hacker Andrew Auernheimer, better known as "Weev," who describes himself as a "hacktivist" standing for free speech and "fighting white genocide." Auernheimer owned up to the printer attack in a Storify blog post on Friday, calling his feat "a brief experiment in printing," as well as a prank illustrating the risks with the trend towards connected devices known as the Internet of Things. The stunt serves as "a lesson in how positively hilarious the IoT will be in the future," Auernheimer wrote on Twitter

The hacker, who fled the country after successfully appealing a computer crime conviction in 2014 and now claims to be located somewhere in Eastern Europe, bragged that he just pioneered the first instance of "mass printer trolling." Many of his other tweets denounce Jews, women and "Black Lives Matter" supporters, while several also endorse Donald Trump's presidential campaign.

Auernheimer was able to access and commandeer the printers remotely because they were all hooked up to the Internet via open, unsecured connections. He identified more than a million such printers—many of which were on university campuses, which tend to have large public Internet networks—and estimates that he forced "tens or hundreds of thousands" of them to print his flyer, according to his blog post. "I'm printing to a thousand printers an hour right now," he posted on Twitter on March 24.

Below, see the printer hack play out in the reactions of people on Twitter:

The FBI is working with police and universities to investigate the attack, which some are viewing as a hate crime, according to UC Berkeley's student newspaper The Daily Californian. Auernheimer, however, posted on Twitter that he planned to invoke his First Amendment right to free speech as a legal defense.

MedStar Health Turns Away Patients After Likely 'ransomware' Cyberattack

By John Woodrow Cox

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

MedStar Health patients were being turned away or treated without important computer records Tuesday as the health-care giant worked to restore online systems crippled by a virus.

By Tuesday evening, MedStar staff could read (but not update) thousands of patient records in its central database, though other systems remained dark, a spokeswoman said.

MedStar officials have refused to characterize the attack as "ransomware," a virus that holds systems hostage until victims pay for a key to regain access. But a number of employees reported seeing a pop-up on their computer screens seeking payment in bitcoins, an Internet currency. One woman who works at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center sent The Post an image of the ransom note, which demanded that the \$5 billion health-care provider pay 45 bitcoins — equivalent to about \$19,000 — in exchange for the digital key that would release the data.

"You just have 10 days to send us the Bitcoin," the note read, "after 10 days we will remove your private key and it's impossible to recover your files."

The cyberattack, which is being investigated by the FBI, forced MedStar's 10 hospitals and more than 250 outpatient centers to shut down their computers and email on Monday. The health-care system employs more than 30,000 people and treats hundreds of thousands of patients in the Washington region.

Spokeswoman Ann Nickels said that its facilities, which stretch from Arlington to Baltimore, have operated safely throughout the crisis.

But two nurses said the cyberattack created a chaotic environment in at least one MedStar location, and a doctor at another facility said it had created a "patient safety issue."

At MedStar Washington Hospital Center, one nurse who worked overnight described the situation as difficult. Without access to email and computer systems, the medical staff fell back on seldom-used paper records that had to be faxed or hand-delivered. But this nurse and another told The Post that the paper charts are far less comprehensive than those kept in digital form. They can be missing vital pieces of patient information: complete medical histories, every drug prescribed, allergies to medicine and treatment plans.

Without the sophisticated computer systems, they explained, the health-care facilities were operating without a number of essential safeguards meant to hinder mistakes.

"Those are all in place to prevent human error," the doctor said, "and you lose all that when you lose the computer system."

MedStar spokeswoman Ann Nickels denied that the cyberattack had made that dramatic an impact.

"There's absolutely no indication of that from clinical leaders who are reporting in several times a day," she said. "It's stressful, but I think we all know what we need to do."

Chief medical officer Stephen R. T. Evans said in a statement Tuesday afternoon that "the quality and safety of our patients remains our highest priority, which has not waned throughout this experience."

The nurse, however, said that the challenges were serious.

For example, because lab results were taking so much longer to process, the nurse continued to give one patient a powerful antibiotic — with a number of potentially serious side effects — that should have been discontinued.

"The medication," the nurse said, "should have been stopped eight hours earlier."

The doctor echoed that concern. Speedy lab results, he said, are crucial in determining the best way to effectively treat infections and other ailments. He also criticized MedStar's preparation for the attack and how it communicated with employees afterward.

An emergency room nurse at Washington Hospital Center said ambulances continued to arrive Monday afternoon despite the staff's struggles to remain organized without their computers.

Eventually, she said, ambulances carrying patients with non-life-threatening issues were diverted elsewhere.

Still, problems persisted throughout the evening. The nurse said she noticed a number of paper charts with pages that lacked labels containing each patient's identifying information. Without those labels, she said, documents could be placed on the wrong chart.

"There are a lot of people who have never done paper charting before, so it was a little chaotic for them," she said. "I think the biggest fear that I had when I was working yesterday was the big opportunity for error."

Derek Farwagi, 73, learned of the crisis Tuesday when he arrived at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital for his quarterly appointment with a kidney specialist. A doctor, he said, told him they couldn't access his health records, so his appointment had been canceled.

"It's nuts that they don't have a crisis-management system," Farwagi said. "It's absolutely irresponsible."

The doctor also told him, he said, that "the hackers were demanding a ransom."

A spokesman for the FBI declined to comment on its investigation, which comes just weeks after similar cyberattacks on at least three other medical institutions in California and Kentucky. In one case last month, a hospital in Los Angeles paid hackers \$17,000 in bitcoins to free its system.

In the Washington area, patients with significant medical conditions encountered treatment delays.

Cynthia Decker, who underwent a kidney transplant in December, had an appointment scheduled at MedStar Georgetown on Monday, but she received a call from a nurse practitioner just before she arrived at the facility.

"All the computers are down," she recalled the nurse practitioner saying. "Don't come in."

Her appointment was moved to Tuesday, but MedStar canceled Tuesday morning.

"They're down again," a staffer told her at 8 a.m.

The spouse of a man receiving cancer treatment at one MedStar facility told The Post he has been unable to receive radiation treatment for two days because of the shutdown. The spouse — concerned by MedStar's assertion on Monday that "facilities remain open and functioning" — said that "the individuals most dependent on reliable, safe and uninterrupted treatment (i.e. cancer patients) are in fact currently not receiving at least some of those treatments."

MedStar officials acknowledged treatment delays.

On Monday, they stressed that they that they'd "acted quickly" to contain the virus by shutting down their computer systems and had found "no evidence that information has been stolen."

MedStar Struggles To Work Around Computer Hacking Crisis

[US News & World Report](#), March 29, 2016

For Dr. Stuart Seides, director of the MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute, the first sign of trouble surfaced early Monday when he checked his email as he prepared to leave for the hospital.

"I noticed that I didn't have any emails since the previous evening," Seides told U.S. News Tuesday as the hospital system's computer crisis stretched into its second day. "I get lots of emails every day... That was the first indication that something wasn't quite right."

The problem was a computer virus that shut down the data network of the second largest health system in Maryland, with 30,000 employees, 6,000 affiliated physicians and nearly 50,000 annual admissions at two major hospitals — the nearly 800-bed MedStar Washington Hospital Center and 400-bed MedStar Georgetown University Hospital — and thousands of outpatients at other facilities.

An FBI investigation of the incident is underway, hospital officials say. MedStar has opened command centers in each of its facilities. Doctors and other healthcare personnel are communicating by phone and text, as the system's information technology team scrambles to get its computer network up and running.

"We're making significant progress, we're in the process of bringing some of these systems online," says Ann C.

Nickels, MedStar's assistant vice-president of public relations and communications. The episode doesn't appear to involve a demand for ransom, unlike some other recent hospital. "I do not have any information pertaining to that," Nickels says. "This is a malware issue, a virus."

Doctors and nurses at MedStar Health on Tuesday were practicing medicine "the old fashioned way" – locally rather than remotely, using pens and paper instead of pixels – as the health care system scrambled to bring its computer systems back online.

"Today it seems primitive, but it's the way we've done it for years and years," Seides says. "All systems are go. Patients are being well taken care of, and we won't allow any compromise of quality and safety despite this snafu."

The episode underscored health care's growing reliance on computer networks for everything from billing to clinical care. Information that once was scattered in filing cabinets in doctors' offices, hospitals and outpatient centers is now often consolidated in digital files. "We're all very dependent on computer technology for the things we do," Seides says, "both in communications and clinical-care systems."

While the MedStar networks were compromised, local computers were not. "I can turn on my desktop computer, detached from the network with my Ethernet cable out, and see what's on my computer locally. I can look at Outlook and see what was there yesterday," Seides says. "I can't look at lab studies or images. Anything that's hooked up to the network is not functioning."

Doctors and nurses who are now accustomed to calling up images on any system-enabled computer now have to go to the site where the image was created to view it. For example, Seides says, if a study is done on a patient in the cardiac catheterization lab, "We go down to the lab and we can view it on the local server, but we can't review it at this point remotely."

One challenge when the network is restored, he says, will be to make sure that any information entered into paper records is captured digitally for future use. "We are making every effort not to lose any data on any cases, whether [they're here for] clinical [care] or research. "I don't believe at the end of the day there'll be any permanent data loss."

"It's an inconvenience," he adds, "But we're managing."

MedStar Paralyzed As Hackers Take Aim At Another US Hospital

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – Modern medicine in the Washington area reverted to 1960s-era paper systems when one of the largest hospital chains was crippled by a virus that shuttered its computers for patients and medical staff.

The FBI said it was investigating the paralyzing attack on MedStar Health Inc., which forced records systems offline, prevented patients from booking appointments, and left staff unable to check email messages or even look up phone numbers.

The incident was the latest against U.S. medical providers, coming weeks after a California hospital paid ransom to free its infected systems using the bitcoin currency. A law enforcement official, who declined to be identified because the person was not authorized to discuss an ongoing investigation, said the FBI was assessing whether a similar situation occurred at MedStar.

"We can't do anything at all. There's only one system we use, and now it's just paper," said one MedStar employee who, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity because this person was not authorized to speak with reporters.

There were few signs of the attack's effects easing late Monday, with one employee at Georgetown University Hospital saying systems were still down, and saying some managers had to stay late and come in early because of the disruptions.

Company spokeswoman Ann Nickels said she couldn't say whether it was a ransomware attack. She said patient care was not affected, and hospitals were using a paper backup system.

But when asked whether hackers demanded payment, Nickels said, "I don't have an answer to that," and referred to the company's statement.

MedStar operates 10 hospitals in Maryland and Washington, including the Georgetown hospital. It employs 30,000 staff and has 6,000 affiliated physicians.

Dr. Richard Alcorta, the medical director for Maryland's emergency medical services network, said he suspects it was a ransomware attack based on multiple ransomware attempts on individual hospitals in the state. Alcorta said he was unaware of any ransoms paid by Maryland hospitals or health care systems.

"People view this, I think, as a form of terrorism and are attempting to extort money by attempting to infect them with this type of virus," he said.

Alcorta said his agency first learned of MedStar's problems about 10:30 a.m., when the company's Good Samaritan Hospital in Baltimore called in a request to divert emergency medical services traffic from that facility. He said that was followed by a similar request from Union Memorial, another MedStar hospital in Baltimore. The diversions were lifted as the hospitals' backup systems started operating, he said.

Some staff said they were made aware of the virus earlier, being ordered to shut off their computers entirely by late morning. One Twitter user posted a picture Monday he said showed blacked-out computer screens inside the

emergency room of Washington Hospital Center, a trauma center in Northwest Washington.

Monday's hacking at MedStar comes one month after a Los Angeles hospital paid hackers \$17,000 to regain control of its computer system, which hackers had seized with ransomware using an infected email attachment.

Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center, which is owned by CHA Medical Center of South Korea, paid 40 bitcoins – or about \$420 per coin of the digital currency – to restore normal operations and disclosed the attack publicly. That hack was first noticed Feb. 5, and operations didn't fully recover until 10 days later.

Hospitals are considered critical infrastructure, but unless patient data is affected, there is no requirement to disclose such hackings even if operations are disrupted.

Computer security of the hospital industry is generally regarded as poor, and the federal Health and Human Services Department regularly publishes a list of health care providers that have been hacked with patient information stolen. The agency said Monday it was aware of the MedStar incident.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Two More Healthcare Networks Caught Up In Outbreak Of Hospital Ransomware

By Sean Gallagher, Ars Technica

[Ars Technica](#), March 29, 2016

Hospitals and healthcare providers are increasingly falling victim to crypto-ransomware attacks. While attacks over the past few months have not been highly targeted thus far, they have caused a great deal of disruption. And disruptions at hospitals can have a much more dire impact than at most other organizations vulnerable to malware-based extortion.

This past week, that point was brought home again when multiple US hospitals acknowledged that they had been forced to take systems offline in response to crypto-ransomware infestations. And on Wednesday, security researchers at Cisco Talos Research revealed a new strain of crypto-ransomware designed to attack vulnerable servers that appeared to be primarily focused on targets in the healthcare industry.

The latest disruption came on Monday, when Columbia, Maryland based MedStar Health reported malware had caused a shutdown of some systems at its hospitals in Baltimore.

In a Facebook post, a MedStar spokesperson said, "MedStar Health's IT system was affected by a virus that prevents certain users from logging-in to our system. MedStar acted quickly with a decision to take down all system

interfaces to prevent the virus from spreading throughout the organization. We are working with our IT and Cyber-security partners to fully assess and address the situation."

Ars contacted MedStar for comment, but a spokesperson declined to provide further information, promising an update on Tuesday afternoon. That update was never provided. But an individual familiar with the situation at MedStar's Union Memorial Hospital confirmed in confidence that some sort of ransomware was involved, declining to be identified because MedStar had not authorized to comment.

March has not been a good month for hospital IT. Last week, staff at Methodist Hospital in Henderson, Kentucky paid a ransom to restore the hospital's systems, reportedly of \$17,000—though sources familiar with the episode say the hospital paid much more. And in California, two hospitals operated by Prime Healthcare Management, Inc. were forced to shut down systems. The Prime ransomware attack also caused disruptions of service at several other hospitals and at affiliate care providers as shared systems were taken offline.

The Prime ransomware infection was first discovered on March 18. An individual familiar with Prime's IT systems told Ars that it appeared that the ransomware involved was Locky, which was the same malware that hit Hollywood Presbyterian in February. The Prime disruption also kept some of the company's external service providers from being able to access systems, and it took some of Prime's voice-over-IP phone system offline.

Fred Ortega, a spokesperson for Prime, told Ars that the ransomware infections at Chino Valley Medical Center in Chino, California and Desert Valley Hospital in Victorville were "immediately addressed and contained." He confirmed that the actions taken by Prime's IT staff to contain the malware also caused disruptions at other hospitals

"Our company has not paid any ransom," Ortega told Ars in an e-mail. "Our expert, in-house IT team was able to immediately implement protocols and procedures to contain and mitigate the disruptions. The hospitals remained operational without impacting patient safety, and at no point was patient or employee data compromised. As of (Thursday, March 24) most systems have been brought online."

The Methodist Hospital and Prime Healthcare ransomware attacks came in via "phishing" e-mails. But according to Cisco Talos Research, a number of health providers have been infected recently through Web servers running JBoss.

"This is really one of the first times we've seen ransomware spread by a network vulnerability," Craig Wilson of Talos Research told Ars, "which is why when we saw all these JBoss alerts popping up that it caught our attention."

The malware, called "Samsam" by Talos, uses old, very public exploits right out of JexBoss—an open source vulnerability testing tool for JBoss. Once the malware has a foothold on the server, it spreads to Windows machines on

the same network. "I wouldn't be surprised if this [malware approach] was extended toward WordPress and other content management systems," Wilson said. "This is really just the natural progression of ransomware."

Of the "couple of dozen targets" that Talos is tracking, Wilson said, a significant number of them are healthcare organizations. This is likely not because the attackers set out to target healthcare specifically, but because of the types of applications used by hospitals and healthcare networks. Wilson believes that the ransomware developer simply scanned for vulnerable servers on the Internet, and most of the ones that were discovered were at healthcare organizations.

"A lot of people in the healthcare industry—they set up websites in a kind of fire and forget fashion," Wilson explained. "They hire an IT guy, they get the billing system set up, hook it up to the website and then they never touch it again. That's the perfect environment for this type of malware to thrive in because it's not maintained. They have no full-time security staff and few if any fulltime administrators. As a result, the software just goes unpatched."

Alex Rice, chief technology officer and co-founder of vulnerability disclosure portal provider HackerOne, told Ars that this particular problem isn't unique at all to healthcare. "The reality is that almost every company that is transitioning into becoming an IT company, and every industry that is transitioning into [using more networked information technology], are really unprepared and ill-equipped to deal with the cyber challenges facing them," Rice explained. "It's just that the stakes in healthcare are so much higher—a disruption at a hospital can be life and death." Part of the problem, Rice noted, is that healthcare organizations and medical device manufacturers don't perform penetration testing or other regular risk assessments of their systems with any regularity.

Some healthcare companies have set up private disclosure programs with HackerOne, Rice noted, to help them work with trusted security researchers to uncover problems in their software. And new FDA guidelines are pushing medical device manufacturers to patch long-neglected software. But it will require a significant change in approach from the healthcare industry as a whole to deal with the rise of ransomware and other security threats that are focused on denying access rather than stealing patient data.

Global Majority Backs A Ban On 'Dark Net,' Poll Says

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

NATIONAL SECURITY NEWS

Syria's Assad Says Military Gains Will Speed Up Political Deal

By Vladimir Soldatkin And Dominic Evans

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

Syria's Assad Tries To Polish Image With Palmyra's Recapture

By Zeina Karam

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

BEIRUT (AP) – The recapture of Palmyra in central Syria from Islamic State militants puts government forces at the heart of the fight against the jihadist group – and not just geographically speaking.

For President Bashar Assad, recapturing the historic town represents a strategic political coup through which he hopes to convince the West that the Syrian army is a credible partner in combatting terrorism as it ramps up the fight against Islamic State.

It is an awkward argument that the U.S. has repeatedly rebuffed. Officials in Washington are quick to point out that it was Assad's brutal crackdown on his own people that created the kind of vacuum that allowed extremists like IS to flourish in the first place.

An alliance between the U.S.-led coalition fighting IS – similar to the assistance and training provided to the Iraqi military on the other front in the war – seems out of the question.

But with the international focus now on fighting the Islamic State group – and a partial cease-fire in place to facilitate that – there appears to be tacit U.S. approval for at least this part of Assad's offensive in Syria to continue. If that is seen to develop, it could help the authoritarian ruler survive a ruinous 5-year-old conflict that has seen half the country's population displaced.

The desert town of Palmyra, with its 2,000-year-old ruins, is an archaeological gem and a cherished landmark known endearingly to Syrians as the "Bride of the Desert." It is also a strategic crossroads linking the Syrian capital, Damascus, with the country's east and the border with Iraq.

"It's a fantastic public relations coup," said Thomas Pierret, a lecturer at the University of Edinburgh, describing Palmyra's recapture. The Syrian government recognizes the Western "obsession" with the town's ancient ruins, and "they're exploiting it and it works very well," he said.

Government forces recaptured Palmyra on Sunday, scoring an important victory over Islamic State fighters who had overseen a 10-month reign of terror in the town. It dealt

the extremist group its first major defeat at the hands of government forces in years.

During their stay, the extremists destroyed some of Palmyra's best-known monuments, including two large temples dating back more than 1,800 years and a Roman triumphal arch. The militants also used the ancient Roman amphitheater for public killings, including a video they released showing 25 boys with pistols shooting captured Syrian soldiers, with the colonnades in the background.

The government troops, joined by Iranian-backed militiamen, were supported by massive Russian airpower throughout their three-week offensive. When they swept victoriously into Palmyra, they emphasized the care taken by the army not to harm the archaeological sites.

Syrian officials said Palmyra would become a launching pad for operations against IS strongholds in Raqqa to the north and Deir el-Zour farther east – efforts that are expected to be much more difficult. On Tuesday, Syrian troops battled IS militants around the nearby town of Qaryatain, trying to extend their gains.

Assad said the victory was “new evidence of the effectiveness of the strategy followed by the Syrian army and its allies in the war against terrorism.” Syria's U.N. ambassador, Bashar Ja'afari, offered in an interview with the Lebanon-based Al-Mayadeen to work with the U.S., and said it was time for powers including Washington to join Moscow in working with Damascus.

Unlike in Iraq, the U.S. has long suffered from the lack of reliable or credible partner in Syria. Apart from the Kurds, the Obama administration's attempts to train and partner with Syrian rebels have all ended in failure.

U.S. officials recall that Assad has largely ignored IS gains in Syria in recent years, focusing instead on moderate Syrian rebels he deems a bigger threat. Critics point out that Assad's forces all but handed Palmyra over to the militants in May, as officers hurriedly fled the town in the face of IS advances.

“While there can be no doubting that ISIS' loss of Palmyra represents a substantial strategic blow to their operations in Syria, this is the Assad regime's first major victory against the group-after its presence on its territory for three years,” wrote Charles Lister, a resident fellow with the Middle East Institute, in an article published by the think tank.

Still, the recapture won Assad rare praise from international officials, including the UNESCO chief who welcomed the “liberation” of Palmyra and U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who said he was “encouraged” that Syrian government forces were now in control.

In the last year, the United States has softened demands for Assad's to quickly leave power. But the U.S. doesn't believe that Syria's civil war can truly end with Assad still running the country and has been pushing Russia and

Iran to support a transition process with a timeline for Assad's departure.

Assad's latest Russian-backed offensive hasn't changed that thinking.

On Monday, State Department spokesman John Kirby described the reconquering of Palmyra as a “good thing.” He quickly balanced that assessment by adding that “the best hope for the Syrian people is not an expansion of Bashar Assad's ability to tyrannize the Syrian people. We all know that over the long term, the Syrian army under his command cannot bring peace to Syria.”

Kirby declined to congratulate Assad's government for the military success, and said he didn't think it would prove able to retake other parts of Syria. Assad “is responsible for the civil war that has, in fact, helped grow a group like Daesh,” he said, using an Arabic acronym for the Islamic State group.

U.S. cooperation with the Syrian army is unrealistic in the current context of the Syrian civil war. But Syrian observers say there appears to be a U.S.-Russian understanding that the combined forces of Syrian troops backed by Russia and Syria's Kurds backed by the U.S. is emerging as the best and most realistic fighting force against IS in the next weeks and months.

The victory in Palmyra also puts Assad in a more comfortable position ahead of negotiations that are scheduled to resume in Geneva in mid-April, making it less likely he will accept to engage in meaningful talks on a political transition.

“Now that Assad is this hero, savior of the heritage of humanity, how could you impose upon him a transition that sidelines him eventually?” Pierret said sarcastically.

Lister said having recaptured Palmyra in a widely reported military operation conducted with Russian support, “there is now no reason at all for Bashar Assad to even get close to considering a political transition.”

Follow Zeina Karam at <http://twitter.com/zkaram>

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Moscow's Call Not To Discuss Assad's Fate May Halt Syria Peace Talks: Agency

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

How Russian Special Forces Are Shaping The Fight In Syria

By Thomas Gibbons-Neff

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

The troops that recently recaptured Palmyra, Syria, from the Islamic State included Syrian, Iranian and Hezbollah forces. And on Monday, Russian officials said there was another group that contributed to the victory: Russia's elite special forces, also known as Spetsnaz.

Russian troops are nothing new to the Syrian ground war. Since their arrival in September, the Russians have used naval infantry to secure a key port in Tartus and the perimeter of an airfield in Latakia. But Russian special forces operating on the front — aside from a small number of artillery and tank units — have remained mostly out of the public eye.

Posted by Landscape camo stencils on Tuesday, March 1, 2016

With the seizure of Palmyra, though, that is no longer the case. Russian officials announced Monday that Palmyra was "liberated with participation of Spetsnaz and military advisers." The Islamic State took Palmyra in May and shortly after partially destroyed a number of the city's historic sites.

Russian special forces have come to the forefront of Russia's Syria narrative because the battle for Palmyra plays directly into the anti-Islamic State rhetoric that Russia used as a pretense to initially intervene, said Chris Kozak, a research analyst at the Institute of the Study of War.

Involvement of Russian special forces in Palmyra "looks great," Kozak said. "Whereas their involvement against opposition groups in Aleppo or Latakia doesn't fit the narrative."

It is unclear exactly when Russian special forces began operating in Syria, though prior to Russia's intervention there, Russian troops had long helped advise and train Syrian forces. According to Michael Kofman, an analyst at CNA who focuses on Russian military operations, Russia currently operates several special forces units in Syria, Zaslou, KSO and detachments of reconnaissance teams.

Part of the Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service, Zaslou is a highly secretive detachment often responsible for security in high-threat areas. KSO is Russia's equivalent to the U.S. Joint Special Operations Command and was formed within the past few years.

"Russian special forces are doing a lot of the targeting for Russian airstrikes and a lot of advising for the Syrians," Kofman said, adding that they provide most of the intelligence on the ground for Russian airpower and help run Syrian operations.

Unlike the majority of U.S. special forces that are currently advising Iraqi and Syrian forces from behind the lines at the battalion and brigade levels, Russian special

forces appear to be participating in combat alongside Syrian troops at the tactical level.

The presence of Russian special forces and advisers on the front line has, in turn, helped Syrian troops and President Bashar al-Assad's allies consolidate gains and take ground across the country. According to Kofman, Russian military advisers on the ground, despite the hype surrounding the detachment of Russian aircraft in the country, are the glue that is helping the Syrians fight as a much more capable army.

"It's really hard to make that much of a difference with such few planes even though they have flown at a very high rate," Kofman said.

Russia has played a significant role in Assad's attempts to reverse almost half a decade of losses to opposition groups, Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic State. Yet in recent months, Iranian troops, Hezbollah forces and a slew of militias have also significantly bolstered the fledgling Syrian army as well.

But Russia's involvement in ground operations has not been without its cost. Just days prior to Russia's announcement that Spetsnaz forces helped liberate Palmyra, the Interfax news agency quoted an unnamed Russian official who said a special forces soldier died "heroically," after calling airstrikes onto his own position after he was surrounded by the Islamic State. Following the announcement of the soldier's death, the story went viral.

Much like its intervention in Ukraine, Russia has been slow to announce the deaths of any of troops in Syria — usually acknowledging them months after the deaths occurred. To date, Russia has acknowledged the deaths of seven Russian service members in Syria. According to Kofman, Russia has been more open to announcing deaths in the fight for Palmyra. The deaths, he said, reinforce the image that Russia is primarily operating in Syria to defeat the Islamic State.

Still, there is a limit to the openness. The Russian government has not disclosed the total number of casualties in the fight to retake Palmyra.

In recent weeks, the Islamic State claimed to have killed a number of Russian special forces soldiers. In one instance, a news agency associated with the extremist group posted what appeared to be the gear belonging to a Russian special forces soldier. In that instance, the soldier's gear featured a number of items, including an advanced Russian mine that could have belonged to a special forces soldier. The Islamic State also posted pictures supposedly from that soldier's phone, showing images of the dead soldier and members of his unit. It is unclear whether the equipment and the photos are from the same soldier, as some reports indicate that the soldiers from the unit pictured on the phone belong to a contracting group, not Russian special forces.

Read more:

Syria shows that Russia built an effective military. Now how will Putin use it?

In Syria and Iraq, the Islamic State is in retreat on multiple fronts

Putin announces Russia will pull most of its military from Syria

ISIS Fighters Laid Mines Around Palmyra's Ancient Ruins Before Retreating, Syrians Say

By Rick Gladstone And Hwaida Saad

[New York Times](#), March 29, 2016

The Syrian forces that recaptured the storied city of Palmyra from Islamic State occupiers this past weekend have encountered dozens of mines that the expelled militants laid as booby traps around treasured ancient ruins sites, Syria's state media reported Tuesday.

Accounts of the Palmyra victory published by the official Syrian Arab News Agency also reported that Russia's military, which has helped the Syrian forces regain momentum against insurgents with a six-month bombing campaign, was sending 100 mine clearance engineers and trainers of bomb-sniffing dogs to help rid Palmyra of the mines planted by the Islamic State, also known as ISIS, ISIL and Daesh.

The expulsion of the Islamic State from Palmyra, the ancient "Bride of the Desert" oasis seized by the militant extremist group 10 months ago, is regarded as a turn in the five-year-old war and an enormous propaganda victory for President Bashar al-Assad of Syria and the Russians.

The Palmyra news also has left the United States and other Western and Arab opponents of Mr. Assad in the awkward position of welcoming it while still insisting that the Syrian president's autocracy and suppression of dissent was the underlying cause of the Syria war.

France, one of Mr. Assad's most outspoken detractors, was the latest to react to the recapture of Palmyra. "The advances against Daesh today cannot erase the fact that the regime bears the main responsibility for the conflict and its 270,000 dead over the past five years," a spokesman for France's foreign ministry, Romain Nadal, told Agence France-Presse on Tuesday.

It is unclear how the Palmyra victory by Mr. Assad's forces might affect the diplomacy underway to establish peace negotiations. It came after Secretary of State John Kerry met with his Russian counterpart, Sergey V. Lavrov, and with President Vladimir V. Putin in Moscow last week to discuss Syria and the preservation of a partial cease-fire that has taken hold in some areas. The United Nations special envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, is hoping to convene talks on April 9 in Geneva.

Photographs and video images of Palmyra taken by the Syrian forces showed some horrific damage to parts of the

2,000-year-old ruins, a Unesco World Heritage site, including decapitated statues and busts with smashed faces. But Syria's top antiquities official, Maamoun Abdulkarim, said Monday that 80 percent of the ruins appeared to remain intact.

The Russians, who have been widely criticized by Mr. Assad's opponents and international aid groups for intensive bombing in Syria, have sought to portray the recapture of Palmyra as a triumph of civilization over barbarism. On Sunday, the director general of Unesco, Irina Bokova, said she had been offered help to restore Palmyra, in a personal telephone call from Mr. Putin.

Ms. Bokova, who has described the Islamic State's destruction of Middle East artifacts as an atrocity against humanity, also said she intended to hold a conference of experts on reconstructing Syria's cultural heritage by the end of April.

Foreign news organizations have not been given direct access to Palmyra since the Islamic State retreated. But Syrian activists reached on Tuesday reported that large numbers of displaced civilians from areas thought to have been controlled by the militants were traveling to Azaz, a northwest town near the Turkish border that has become a magnet for hundreds of uprooted Syrians. The activists said many had come from the Palmyra area and from Deir al-Zour farther east.

"We received about 100 families after Daesh allowed them to leave, which is something unusual," said Mohamed al Abdalla, an activist reached in Azaz. "Honestly we weren't expecting people from Palmyra and Deir al-Zour to arrive here."

Rick Gladstone reported from New York, and Hwaida Saad from Beirut, Lebanon.

Iraq Army's Mosul Offensive Stalls In Face Of Fierce Fighting, Desertions

By Campbell Macdiarmid

[USA Today](#), March 29, 2016

MAKHMOUR, Iraq — The Iraqi army soldiers smoked nervously as they described their ordeal. Sent to clear a village of Islamic State fighters, they found themselves pinned down by sniper fire. A few hours later, after 10 comrades were wounded, they withdrew.

"We need to get new uniforms," soldier Ali Basra, 22, said, pointing to torn and blood-spattered fatigues. "But we'll return to take the village."

Last Thursday's mission was supposed to be a simple operation to harden untested Iraqi army soldiers: clear villages held by Islamic State fighters before crossing the Tigris River to retake the larger town of Qayyara, home to an airfield and oil fields. Their longer-term goal is to clear the

way for a future push to reclaim the extremist group's stronghold of Mosul, Iraq's second largest city.

Instead, it proved to be a slog because of heavy rains, tougher-than-expected resistance from the militants and reports of the low morale that has dogged the Iraqi military ever since the Islamic State swept into Iraq in 2014. The stalled operation underscored just how difficult it will be to dislodge the militants from Mosul.

While the U.S.-led coalition supporting the Iraqi forces says the operation is unfolding according to plan, Kurdish fighters question the ability of their Iraqi army partners to free Mosul.

A Iraqi family fleeing the violence in the northern city of Mosul arrives at a Kurdish checkpoint in Makhmur on March 26, 2016. (Photo: Safin Hamed, AFP/Getty Images)

"After the first day, the Iraqi army was unable to take a single meter of (Islamic State) territory successfully," Kurdish Col. Mahdi Younis said at an outpost here, 70 miles south of Mosul. "No one should expect the least success from the Iraqi army. They have no will to fight."

On the desk in Younis' office lay a pile of cellphones taken from Iraqi soldiers stopped at a checkpoint. "Deserters," he said.

Outside in the hallway, 10 men in civilian clothes crouched against a wall. "These are the lions which escaped," joked Kurdish fighter Mohamed Jasem as he watched over them.

Coalition officials said such criticism is premature. "We believe that the Iraqis have performed according to the plan that they've set," said coalition spokesman Col. Steve Warren. "The Iraqi army, we believe, is improving every day."

Michael Knights, an authority on the Iraqi military at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, agreed, calling the Iraqi army's inauspicious start nothing more than a "wobble."

"It is worth remembering that the Peshmerga (Kurdish fighters) were completely driven out of this area in the late winter of last year," Knights said. "Now the Iraqi army is facing the same challenges trying to push forward into the same terrain."

Iraqi soldiers fire mortar shells as they hold a position on the outskirts of Makhmur March 26, 2016. (Photo: Safin Hamed, AFP/Getty Images)

The Iraqi army "had some tough fighting," said Knights. "Give it some time for these units to gain their balance."

When the operation began Thursday, soldiers from the Iraqi army and Sunni tribal fighters advanced to retake three villages held by the Islamic State with air support from the coalition, artillery fire by U.S. Marines and logistical support from the Kurds.

By Saturday, the Iraqi soldiers were bogged down outside the strategic hilltop village of Nassrash, where suicide bombers killed at least seven soldiers. The next day, rain

turned the area's dirt roads into quagmires and cloud cover prevented coalition jets from providing effective support.

Iraqi commanders declined to comment on the operation or allow reporters near the front lines, but many Sunni Arab villagers displaced by the fighting were critical of the mostly Shiite Iraqi army.

"The Iraqi army came to take their revenge on us because of our ethnicity," Sheikh Ahmed Khalaf Hamid said at a processing center holding 2,000 displaced villagers.

He accused Iraqi army units of burning and looting homes, shooting livestock and firing indiscriminately at civilians, possibly killing two of them in the crossfire with the Islamic State.

"The way they treated us was no better than the way ISIS did," Hamid said, using an acronym for the extremist group.

This week, commanders were waiting for the weather improve before advancing.

"Our forces are surrounding Nassrah village," Sheikh Fares, leader of the Sabawi tribesmen fighting alongside the Iraqi Security Forces, said Tuesday. "In the next two days the village will be freed completely, God willing."

Iraqi PM Asks Parliament To Clarify Stance On Corruption-fighting Cabinet

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

Islamic State Claims Central Baghdad Bombing

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

A Wave Of Political Defections Spells New Trouble For Afghanistan

By Erin Cunningham

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

KABUL — Afghanistan's embattled government is facing a new challenge to its rule: former supporters, disillusioned by what they think is its incompetence, who now want fresh elections to remove the president from power.

The discontent comes as the country is confronting a robust Taliban insurgency and an economy crippled by the withdrawal of foreign troops.

Over the past few months, politicians, warlords, former ministers and other powerbrokers have come out against the government, which they say is paralyzed by infighting and unable to govern.

Critics have slammed the administration of President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, who together formed a national unity government after flawed elections in 2014, and they are calling for a snap presidential election to break the deadlock.

The government says it is dedicated to implementing reforms and has made targeting corruption and unemployment priorities. But adding to the urgency is the looming September deadline for launching the mechanism to create a new legitimate government. If that deadline is not met, which is likely, Afghanistan could face a power vacuum that would destabilize the country further.

"If it performed well, people were willing to give the [national unity] government the benefit of the doubt. But it hasn't. It has proved disastrous for this country," said Anwar ul-Haq Ahadi, a former Ghani supporter and onetime finance minister under the previous president, Hamid Karzai.

In January, Ahadi announced the formation of his own opposition movement, the New National Front of Afghanistan, to pressure the government and to call for new elections. Recent polls show a sharp decline in confidence in the government and public institutions.

"Given how weak the government is, if there is any more instability, it is unlikely it will be able to rule" after September, Ahadi said. "They have mismanaged the country and lost their legitimacy. They should go back to the people and ask for a new mandate."

In many ways, the unity government may have been doomed from the start, analysts say. Even its critics say it was undermined by a hastily forged agreement that split power between two archrivals: Abdullah and Ghani.

The deal, brokered by the United States nearly two years ago, called for parliamentary elections and a constitutional assembly to legitimize the government by September this year. The assembly would decide whether to permanently enshrine the chief-executive role as that of prime minister, a more authoritative position.

But so far, none of those steps has been taken. Instead, government squabbling over basic decisions has only hindered reforms.

The stalemate is so bad that the two sides can't even agree on a nominee for defense minister. And Kabul, a city of 4 million people, is still without a mayor because of the deadlock.

"Abdullah and Ghani — they can't work with each other. If one of them says turn right, the other will say turn left," said Safiullah, a 28-year-old fruit vendor in Kabul who, like many Afghans, has only one name.

The two camps maintain separate staffs, which rarely coordinate, current and former officials say. Even senior advisers say they have stopped attending weekly cabinet meetings, where the government's dysfunction is on full display.

"The issues they debate at the cabinet meetings are only minor. They don't address any major issues facing the country," said Ahmad Zia Massoud, Ghani's special representative for reform and good governance.

"This is why I'm reluctant to go," he said of the meetings. "They don't talk about education or the economy. And resentment of the government is high."

Despite his position in the administration, Massoud has joined others in Afghanistan's political elite in criticizing the performance of the unity government.

Ghani's military adviser, Seyyed Hussein Anwari, recently reprimanded the government in public comments to supporters. They had gathered to greet him at the Kabul airport after he returned home from a trip to India on Friday.

"When it comes to campaign promises, I am sure that the two leaders [Ghani and Abdullah] have realized the fact that they have not delivered on their promises," said Anwari, who is chairman of the Islamic Movement Party, according to Afghanistan's Tolo News. "Nothing was achieved in the areas of security, economy, peace, [the] fight against corruption and improving political stability."

Another new opposition leader, Mohammad Umer Daudzai, also served in Ghani's cabinet, and advised him on peace talks and security matters — until a few months ago, when he said he had grown disenchanted by the government's lack of progress.

Afghanistan's economy is sluggish — it grew just 2.5 percent in 2015 — and thousands of Afghans lost their jobs when foreign troops left the country, Daudzai said. But the government has done little beyond raising taxes. He was once hopeful, but now he thinks the government should resign.

"We expected some economic shocks after the drawdown of troops, but we didn't expect it to be this bad," Daudzai said, adding that slow growth and joblessness have been aggravated by rampant corruption. "And there was no remedy — there was no plan to deal with the shocks."

"I was optimistic. I thought the unity government would mean we were more united," he said. "But now we're more divided than we have been in the past 14 years," since the Taliban fell, he said.

In December, Daudzai and other political figures announced what they called the Council for the Protection and Stability of Afghanistan, an opposition alliance that is pushing the government on elections and reforms. The council includes some notorious warlords, but Daudzai believes he lends it some important credibility.

"There is a larger bulk of people like myself, who, for one reason or another, have moved to the opposition," Daudzai said.

"There will be a political vacuum in September" when the agreement expires, he said. "And where will that lead?"

If the September deadline passes, “we will certainly see trouble ahead,” Massoud, the special envoy, said.

Abdullah’s spokesman, Javid Faisal, said the two leaders “are working together with an emphasis on the national interests and well-being of the nation.”

Ahadi, the former finance minister, says his followers don’t want to raise tensions. “But where does this illegitimacy stop?” he said. “We don’t want to create a situation where people take to the streets, but there is a possibility of widespread demonstrations.”

Safiullah, the fruit-seller in Kabul, says he agrees.

“I support early elections, and I pray Afghans will get rid of this government as soon as possible,” he said. If not, “I will be the first to go to the streets and protest.”

Sayed Salahuddin and Mohammad Sharif contributed reporting.

Read more:

These are the 11,000 soldiers who might save Afghanistan

An Afghan girl’s story of abduction and rape is testing an incoherent justice system

Stretched by its fight against Taliban, Afghan army raises recruitment age

Today’s coverage from Post correspondents around the world

U.S. Military Jet Crashes In Afghanistan, Pilot Safe: Pentagon

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

F-16 Fighter Jet Crashes In Afghanistan During Takeoff From Bagram Airfield

By Dan Lamothe

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

An F-16 Fighting Falcon fighter jet crashed Tuesday night in Afghanistan shortly after taking off north of Kabul at Bagram Airfield, but the pilot ejected and has been safely recovered, military officials said.

The incident occurred about 8:30 p.m. in Afghanistan, said Pentagon press secretary Peter Cook. Coalition troops responded and retrieved the pilot and were securing the crash site north of the airfield, said Capt. Bryan Bouchard, an Air Force spokesman on the base. The pilot was under evaluation Tuesday evening at Craig Joint Theater Hospital on the base.

It is not believed that the plane was hit with any kind of enemy fire, Bouchard said. The cause of the crash is under investigation, but it is not believed that there were any

casualties on the ground as a result of the downed aircraft, he said.

The single-man jets typically fly in pairs, providing close air support and aerial reconnaissance for ground troops.

Related stories:

Near-disaster: This F-16 landed after half its wing was sheared off

This fighter jet in Afghanistan might just be the Pentagon’s most decorated

Pakistan Arrests More Than 200 Suspected Militants Following Easter Bombing

By Annie Gowen And Shaiq Hussain

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

LAHORE, Pakistan — Pakistan’s security forces continued a major offensive Tuesday against suspected Islamist terrorists in the eastern province where a suicide bomber killed more than 70 people on Easter, as protesters who support the country’s strict blasphemy laws faced off with police in the country’s capital.

Both developments, though unlinked, highlight the enduring sectarian conflicts that have riven Pakistan and created a context of religious-based tension that pervades much of public life here.

Officials in Punjab province, where Sunday’s attack occurred, said Tuesday that a joint military and police operation had conducted raids since Sunday evening and arrested more than 200 suspected militants. They said they would continue monitoring thousands of religious schools in the region for suspicious activity.

“Action would be taken wherever we found the sleeper cells of terrorists. Terrorists will be eliminated from the Pakistani soil,” Lt. Gen. Asim Bajwa, the spokesman for the armed forces, said at a news conference.

In the capital Islamabad, meanwhile, more than 1,000 protesters seeking a more purely fundamentalist Islamic nation continued to face off with police and security forces in the “Red Zone,” the official area that includes the country’s Parliament and other government buildings. More than 10,000 protesters had marched into the capital on Sunday, torching cars and buildings along the way.

The group is protesting February’s execution of Mumtaz Qadri, a bodyguard who shot and killed a moderate governor in 2011 because the politician had criticized the country’s strict blasphemy laws, which allow for those who criticize Islam to be sentenced to death. Qadri was praised by some fundamentalists as a hero for his actions.

On Tuesday, about 1,400 protesters were massed near the Parliament and vowed they would stay until their voices are heard. Authorities had given them a two-hour deadline to disperse Tuesday evening, but the country’s interior minister later said that if a peaceful compromise couldn’t be reached,

police would remove the protesters from the area Wednesday.

Demonstrators are demanding that Qadri be declared a martyr and his jail cell a shrine, that Islamic law be imposed, and that non-Muslims and minorities be removed from key government posts.

"I have come for the imposition of the Islamic system in the country," said protester Muhammad Jameel, 43, a shopkeeper from Jhelum. "Protest is our right and no law forbids it, and we will continue with our protest as long as our demands are not met."

Hasan Askari Rizvi, a political and defense consultant, said that the country's religious right is trying to assert its political clout out of fear that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has been influenced by secularists and that it has lost the active support of the military.

"On the one hand, they are opposed to the Taliban and support military action against them. On the other hand, they view Mumtaz Qadri as a hero, although he killed an eminent person," he said. "These groups may not engage in suicide bombings or the Taliban-type attacks, but they can be violent to serve their religious cause."

Eventually the military was brought in to contain the protest site.

The two ongoing national events have no causal link, an editorial in the country's English-language Dawn newspaper noted Tuesday, but "both are emblematic about just how broken parts of the state of Pakistan are."

"The perpetrators are all around us, hiding in plain view," the editorial stated.

Pakistan has been plagued by large-scale terrorist attacks since Sept. 11, 2001, and a series of governments have been criticized for not doing enough to address the root causes of violent extremism in the country.

A major assault by Pakistan's military following school shootings in 2014 that left more than 150 dead largely cleared extremists from federally administered tribal areas in the country's northwest, analysts say. But other terrorist groups, including those in Punjab — a stronghold of Sharif — operate virtually unchecked.

"The big military operation is not enough," said Husain Haqqani, a former Pakistani ambassador to the United States and author of the book "Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military."

"They have to go after jihadis all over the country. Any exception will come back to haunt them," he said.

Life in Lahore, the country's cultural hub and second-largest city, began returning to normal Tuesday, as schools and markets that had closed after the bombing reopened.

The hard-line Taliban faction that claimed responsibility for the Easter attack in Lahore released a photo of the alleged suicide bomber.

The bomber, a man identified by the terrorist group Jamaat ul-Ahrar as Salahuddin Khorasani, donned a vest loaded with explosives and ball bearings and blew himself up near a child's amusement park crowded with people Sunday evening, killing at least 70, including 30 children.

The group later claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it had targeted Christians — though in the end, far more Muslims died.

The terrorist group, an offshoot of the Pakistani Taliban, issued a statement saying that Khorasani "has carried out the attack on the eve of Christian festival Easter on March 27, 2016 as per his will. He has gifted his life to Allah."

Police said Tuesday they are awaiting the results of DNA tests to officially identify the suicide bomber.

Hussain reported from Islamabad. Haq Nawaz in Peshawar and Babar Dogar in Lahore contributed to this report.

Pakistan Militant Group Jamaat-ul-Ahrar Threatens Fresh Wave Of Violence

Extremists behind deadly Easter Sunday attacks make warning as government rounds up thousands in dragnet

By Saeed Shah

[Wall Street Journal](#), March 29, 2016

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

NATO Needs To Beef Up Defense Of Baltic Airspace: Top Commander

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

Obama, Turkey's Erdogan To Have Informal Discussion This Week: White House

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

Biden To Host Turkey's Erdogan As Ties With U.S. Show Strains

By Can Sezer And Roberta Rampton

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

Mr. Biden Must Press Mr. Erdogan On His Brutish Behavior Toward The Press

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

TURKISH PRESIDENT Recep Tayyip Erdogan would clearly relish a meeting with President Obama when he comes to Washington for the Nuclear Security Summit on Thursday and Friday, but he shouldn't get one. Instead, he'll be received by Vice President Biden, and while there are regional issues to discuss, we hope Mr. Biden will press the Turkish leader to halt a misguided and destructive campaign against the press.

In recent years, Mr. Erdogan has become ever more autocratic, perhaps assuming that no outsiders would object, because both Europe and the United States need his help in the fight against the Islamic State and control of refu-gee flows. But in the long run, Mr. Erdogan's brutish behavior will be counterproductive.

What he is doing in the prosecution of Can Dundar and Erdem Gul, journalists for the daily newspaper Cumhuriyet, is an affront to all free societies. Mr. Dundar and Mr. Gul, Cumhuriyet's editor and Ankara bureau chief, respectively, face multiple life sentences if convicted on charges of disclosing state secrets, espionage and aiding a terrorist group. The journalists say they are innocent of the charges, which have been leveled to intimidate. What they did that so infuriated Mr. Erdogan was expose weapons transfers by the Turkish secret service to fighters in Syria. The pair were arrested in November and spent 92 days in prison, some of them in solitary confinement, before they were ordered released last month to stand trial.

They vowed to press their innocence in the trial and to use the forum to shine a spotlight on the actions of the state. This is the most essential moment in a democracy, discussing hard truths in the open. But when the proceeding opened Friday, it was abruptly closed to the public and news media, and then postponed until April 1. The government said it was closing the proceeding to protect state secrets, but it is obvious that the authorities want to shield the state from being put on trial over its actions. With the doors closed, there is no way to know if the trial is free and fair.

Mr. Biden visited with Mr. Dundar's family in Istanbul in January, and we think he is well-prepared to stiffen the message in Washington this week. The charges against the journalists should be dropped. They were engaged in journalism, not terrorism. But if Mr. Erdogan insists on the trial going ahead, the doors to the courtroom must be kept open, so all can learn the value of a vigorous free press — which Turkey once had — to hold the state and its president to account.

What Obama Has Gotten Right About The Foreign-policy Establishment

By Katrina Vanden Heuvel

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

As a presidential candidate in 2007, Sen. Barack Obama relished the opportunity to rail against the U.S. foreign policy establishment, which he blamed for leading the country into a quagmire in Iraq. "The conventional thinking in Washington has a way of buying into stories that make political sense even if they don't make practical sense," he declared, adding: "I'm not running for president to conform to Washington's conventional thinking — I'm running to challenge it."

President Obama has since learned how difficult it is to overcome the conventional thinking that has dominated our foreign policy for decades. Though clearly not a pacifist or non-interventionist, Obama has tried to advance a strain of realism that recognizes the limits of U.S. power and adheres to the organizing principle "Don't do stupid stuff." But his presidency has been marked by an uneasy tension between the philosophy he espoused on the campaign trail — one that has led to achievements such as the Iran nuclear deal and the reopening of relations with Cuba — and an establishment view that has contributed to mistakes — including the military intervention in Libya and increased hostilities with Russia. This is, in part, because early on Obama did not (with few exceptions) surround himself with advisers who were committed to a fundamental realignment of U.S. foreign policy. He opted instead to rely primarily on those tethered to the status quo.

With a year left in office, however, there are signs that the "real" Obama may be emerging as something truly unusual in American politics, something I wish we had seen more of during the past seven years: an anti-establishment president. The April issue of the Atlantic features a lengthy dissection of Obama's foreign policy in which the president, in a series of interviews with journalist Jeffrey Goldberg, echoes his criticisms of nearly a decade ago. "There's a playbook in Washington that presidents are supposed to follow," Obama says. "It's a playbook that comes out of the foreign-policy establishment. And the playbook prescribes responses to different events, and these responses tend to be militarized responses. Where America is directly threatened, the playbook works. But the playbook can also be a trap that can lead to bad decisions."

Much of Goldberg's article revolves around Obama's decision not to attack Syria in 2013, in spite of evidence that the Syrian government had used chemical weapons against its people — crossing the president's previously stated "red line." According to the establishment view, Obama's failure to follow through on his threat signaled weakness and dealt a blow to U.S. credibility. Even though Syrian President Bashar al-Assad ultimately surrendered his stockpile of chemical weapons, in a deal brokered by Russia, many establishment figures still insist that Obama should have gone to war.

This "credibility addiction," as Stephen Walt has called it, is so powerful that Obama's critics on this front include

former members of his own national security team — including his would-be successor, Hillary Clinton. “Once the commander in chief draws that red line,” argued former CIA director and defense secretary Leon Panetta, “then I think the credibility of the commander in chief and this nation is at stake if he doesn’t enforce it.” Goldberg reports that after Obama decided not to bomb Syria, Clinton said privately, “If you say you’re going to strike, you have to strike. There’s no choice.”

For Obama, however, averting military action in Syria is a point of pride — and the credibility argument is an object of derision. “Obama generally believes that the Washington foreign-policy establishment, which he secretly disdains, makes a fetish of ‘credibility’ — particularly the sort of credibility purchased with force,” Goldberg writes. Indeed, as the president has reportedly told aides, “Dropping bombs on someone to prove that you’re willing to drop bombs on someone is just about the worst reason to use force.”

And while Obama hasn’t outright rejected the deeply entrenched establishment view that the United States is an “indispensable nation,” he has voiced frustration with “free riders” — or countries that expect the United States to police the world without contributing their “fair share.” On this issue in particular, Obama may have an unexpected ally: Republican front-runner Donald Trump.

While Trump is odiously bellicose in many respects — demonizing Muslims and immigrants, advocating torture and promising to kill the families of terrorists (which is a war crime) — he has also broken with certain foreign policy orthodoxies that have not served the country well. In a recent sit-down with The Post’s editorial board, Trump challenged the wisdom of nation-building and raised fundamental questions about why the United States should bear the cost of solving problems abroad. And in an interview with the New York Times on Friday, Trump reiterated his criticism, saying, “NATO is unfair, economically, to us, to the United States. Because it really helps them more so than the United States, and we pay a disproportionate share.”

One major theme of the presidential race has been anger with “the establishment,” which is usually taken to mean institutions such as Congress and Wall Street. Yet, while there has certainly been a backlash to the political and economic elite, the military-industrial complex and foreign policy establishment are equally in need of reform. To his credit, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) has offered a realist alternative to the conventional thinking, though economic issues are clearly his top priority. But what we really need today — and what Obama can provide in his final year in office — is a serious and sustained challenge to the foreign policy establishment that has failed our country for so long.

Read more from Katrina vanden Heuvel’s archive or follow her on Twitter.

Read more about this topic:

Michael Gerson: On foreign policy, Obama was ‘behind the curve’

Jackson Diehl: The costs of Obama’s Syria policy are apparent to everyone but him

David Ignatius: On foreign policy, Obama shoots at the right target

Katrina vanden Heuvel: Bernie Sanders, foreign policy realist

Exclusive: Iran Missile Tests Were ‘In Defiance Of’ U.N. Resolution – U.S., Allies

By Louis Charbonneau

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

A Grim Warning Against America’s Overuse Of Sanctions

By David Ignatius

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

Economic sanctions have become the “silver bullet” of American foreign policy over the past decade, because they’re cheaper and more effective in compelling adversaries than traditional military power. But Treasury Secretary Jack Lew warns of a “risk of overuse” that could neuter the sanctions weapon and harm America.

Lew made his unusual case against “sanctions overreach” in an interview last week and in a speech prepared for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. His caution against overuse comes as some Republican members of Congress are fighting to maintain U.S. sanctions on the Iranian nuclear program, despite last year’s deal limiting that Iranian threat.

By highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of sanctions, Lew is raising an important question about the nature of American power in the 21st century. Sanctions have clout because U.S. financial markets are the central nervous system of the globalized economy. But if so many sanctions are applied that the U.S. system becomes too complicated and cumbersome for foreigners, they will eventually find ways to do business outside U.S. markets — weakening both our sanctions and our underlying economy. The magic bullet will become a poison pill.

Lew notes that U.S. sanctions against Iran’s nuclear program showed how effective this weapon can be when it’s carefully fashioned as part of a broad coalition. America’s program of so-called “secondary” sanctions didn’t just ban U.S. companies from doing business with Iran; they banned any company operating in Iran from using U.S. banks or other financial institutions. That made Iran a no-go zone for most Western companies.

Contrast the success of this coordinated effort in bringing Iran to the table with five decades of unilateral U.S. sanctions against the Castro regime in Cuba, which Lew rightly notes were “ineffective,” to put it mildly.

Lew’s larger point is that sanctions won’t work if countries don’t get the reward they were promised — in the removal of sanctions — once they accede to U.S. demands.

“Since the goal of sanctions is to pressure bad actors to change their policy, we must be prepared to provide relief from sanctions when we succeed. If we fail to follow through, we undermine our own credibility and damage our ability to use sanctions to drive policy change,” Lew explains in his speech.

Congressional opponents of the nuclear deal with Iran want to keep the U.S. financial system off-limits. This case against “Dollarizing the Ayatollahs” was made by Mark Dubowitz and Jonathan Schanzer in a piece with that headline in the Wall Street Journal on Monday.

Lew counters such arguments in his speech: “By following through on our commitment to provide sanctions relief, we sustain the powerful incentive for other malign actors to change their behavior.”

Lew is also wary of casual escalation — and the assumption that if existing sanctions don’t work, just add more. Russia hasn’t yet been forced by Western sanctions to give back Crimea or keep its commitments to the Minsk process, so some critics want to squeeze harder. Lew counsels patience: If Moscow doesn’t comply, “sanctions will continue, as will the pressure they impose over time.”

As for the Islamic State, today’s leading menace, Lew notes that sanctions have limited effect on a terrorist group that “derives most of its revenues from within.”

U.S. power flows from our unmatched military might, yes. But in a deeper way, it’s a product of the dominance of the U.S. economy. Anything that expands the reach of U.S. markets — such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership in trade, for example — adds to the arsenal of U.S. power. Conversely, U.S. power is limited by measures that drive business away from America, or allow other nations to build a rival financial architecture that’s less encumbered by a smorgasbord of sanctions.

Politicians often call for sanctions as a way of sounding tough, when they don’t want to take riskier measures. But they should recognize, Lew stresses, that sanctions aren’t cost-free. They should be imposed when they can get results, not to make U.S. politicians sound good.

Doctors know that even the most effective drugs can be overused — in ways that ultimately render them ineffective. That’s certainly true with the antibiotics used against infectious diseases. Broad-spectrum antibiotics, which kill good bacteria and bad alike, carry risks. The larger danger is that overuse of targeted antibiotics will create drug-resistant

strains that survive the medical “sanctions.” These hardy, mutant strains can be nearly untreatable.

Doctors are learning not to overprescribe. So, too, should foreign-policy practitioners.

Iran’s Rouhani Calls Off Austria Visit At Last Minute, Citing Security

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

Iran’s Rouhani Suddenly Cancels Trip To Vienna Citing Security

By Kambiz Foroohar

[Bloomberg News](#), March 29, 2016

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani unexpectedly canceled a state visit to Austria this week, citing security reasons, according to a statement by the Austrian Presidency. Iran said the decision about the trip, scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday, was mutual.

Rouhani had been scheduled to meet Austrian President Heinz Fischer and other Austrian leaders, in only his second visit to Europe, after visiting Rome and Paris in January. Fischer said he regretted the cancellation.

“Every nation has to decide for itself about the safety and security of its head of state,” Fischer said in a statement. “The quality of the relations with Iran won’t be touched by this delay and the cooperation in the realm of politics, business, culture and science will be continued in a comprehensive manner.”

Austria’s interior ministry had “no concrete signs of a security threat” and the preparation for Rouhani’s visit had been “completely ordinary and routine,” spokesman Karl-Heinz Grundboeck told the Austrian Press Agency. Even after recent terror attacks in Brussels, there is “no concrete threat situation” in Austria, he said.

Iran’s state-run news agencies and state-run TV didn’t mention security concerns. The visit was postponed “based on mutual agreement in order to allow better planning and coordination from both sides,” official news agency IRNA reported.

The postponement appeared to catch Iranian media by surprise as most had prepared special sections detailing trade links between the two nations.

Neither country provided a new date for the visit.

Obama Faces A Tough Balancing Act Over South China Sea

By Jane Perlez

[New York Times](#), March 29, 2016

BEIJING — When dozens of world leaders gather for a summit meeting in Washington on Thursday, President Obama will meet privately with only one of them: President Xi Jinping of China.

The one-on-one session signals the importance of the relationship, as a rising China seems determined to be the dominant player in Asia, and the United States vows to retain its power in the Pacific.

But relations between the two countries are at their lowest point in 15 years. China's military expansion in the South China Sea may be the most prominent point of friction, but it does not help that China is distracted by a slowing economy and that trade with China has become a cudgel in the American presidential campaign.

Expectations that anything of substance will be accomplished in the 90-minute meeting between Mr. Obama and Mr. Xi are minimal. So it may be surprising that some analysts here and in the United States say it would be relatively easy for the two leaders to ease tensions.

Mr. Xi could pledge not to go any further in militarizing disputed islands, said Shi Yinhong, a professor of international relations at Renmin University in Beijing. In return, he said, the Americans could agree to stop sending their warships and aircraft on "freedom of navigation" patrols into territory claimed by China.

The United States Navy has conducted two such patrols in the past several months, and there is a push in Congress for more.

An American analyst, Douglas H. Paal of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said a show of restraint on the South China Sea by both sides would be helpful.

"Offers of reassurance that restraint on new actions by China will lead to restraint on new significant or permanent military deployments by the U.S." would be a start, he said. Beijing, for example, could agree not to use landfill to build up the Scarborough Shoal, part of the contested Spratly Islands, over which the Philippines lost control to China four years ago.

In China, even though Mr. Xi has orchestrated the South China Sea gambit, some foreign policy experts disagree with his tough stance.

Those who are unhappy with his actions argue that the expansion alienates China's Asian neighbors, pushing them closer to the United States — the opposite of the effect Mr. Xi is trying to achieve through trade and diplomacy.

Some Chinese scholars privately assert that in a gesture toward recognizing the authority of international maritime law, China could more closely set out its claim to the region by defining the so-called nine-dash line.

The nine-dash line is a U-shape line that China has drawn on maps since the late 1940s to mark its claims over most of the South China Sea. The line overlaps territory claimed by countries including the Philippines, Vietnam and

Malaysia. But China has never given the precise coordinates of the line, and the ambiguity gives Beijing plenty of room for maneuver.

Such a move would probably appeal to the United States, Mr. Paal said. Doing so, and acknowledging the primacy of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, would effectively limit China's claims of sovereignty to waters within 12 nautical miles from any land within the lines, freeing up the sea within, American and Chinese experts said.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry quietly proposed doing just that in 2011, a year before Mr. Xi came to power, and then quickly dropped the idea, said Mr. Paal, who served as the director of the American Institute in Taiwan during the administration of George W. Bush.

It is unlikely to happen now.

According to Professor Shi, "The South China Sea is strategic hardball, and it goes to key national interests."

Last week, at a news briefing here about Mr. Xi's trip, Li Baodong, the vice foreign minister, made no attempt to sugarcoat the issue. When it comes to the South China Sea, he said sternly, China "has its own point of view and position."

Under Mr. Xi, China has built artificial islands in disputed parts of the Spratly archipelago, equipping them with runways and ports capable of projecting substantial military power.

In the Paracel Islands, which China has controlled since the early 1970s after pushing out Vietnam, the Chinese military has installed surface-to-air missile batteries and powerful radar facilities.

Those projects strengthen China's hand militarily in the strategic waterway, analysts said, in ways that it has never done before.

Mr. Xi wants "to force Asian maritime neighbors and the United States to accept the new status quo," Professor Shi said.

Chinese schoolchildren are taught that much of the South China Sea has belonged to China since ancient times, making any move seen as reducing Beijing's claim seem a capitulation, Chinese scholars say.

The same day he meets with Mr. Xi, Mr. Obama will tend to the other side of the equation, holding a three-way meeting with the leaders of America's two chief Asian allies, President Park Geun-hye of South Korea and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan.

At the heart of the conversation with the two allies will be the conundrum of North Korea and its expanding nuclear weapons program. North Korea's weapons tests, rocket launches and belligerent threats have persuaded Ms. Park that to defend itself, South Korea needs an American long-range missile-defense system known as Thaad, for Terminal High Altitude Area Defense.

The United States has long wanted to deploy the system there, but South Korea had resisted, unwilling to alienate China, its leading trading partner. China strongly objects to the deployment, which it says would allow United States military radar to penetrate deeper into China, compromising its security.

As discussions over the missile-defense system were moving forward, the front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination, Donald J. Trump, said he would be willing to withdraw American troops from Japan and South Korea, and that he would be open to both countries developing their own nuclear weapons instead of depending on the United States for protection.

The South Korean and Japanese news media have been vocal in condemning the notion, though in China, state-run news outlets have been quiet, largely because Beijing does not like to comment on developments in democratic elections.

But in some important quarters in China, there is probably quiet satisfaction about the idea that those American allies would no longer have the support they have long enjoyed, said Evans J. R. Revere, a former senior State Department specialist on East Asia.

"I strongly suspect China's People's Liberation Army is pleased to know that Trump would be prepared to dismantle the forward-deployed military presence that has kept the region at peace for over a generation," he said.

Follow Jane Perlez on Twitter @JanePerlez.

US: NKorea Threat Compels Security Steps China Won't Like

By Matthew Pennington

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – A senior U.S. diplomat said Tuesday that if North Korea keeps advancing its weapons programs, the U.S. will be compelled to take defensive measures that China will not like.

Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken told a Washington think tank that North Korea is getting closer to having a nuclear-tipped missile that could threaten the continental U.S.

He said while China's influence over the North has diminished, it still has economic leverage.

"If China is looking to assure that we are not required to take additional steps for our own security and that of our partners and allies that it won't like, the best thing it can do is to engage with us in dealing with North Korea," Blinken told the Brookings Institution.

He spoke ahead of a Thursday meeting in Washington between President Barack Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of a global nuclear security summit – weeks after China agreed to new stiff sanctions against North

Korea, in response to its recent nuclear test and rocket launch.

Blinken called for China to take a "lead role" in the implementation of the sanctions.

He said the U.S. is willing to provide to China specifications of a U.S. missile defense system that may be deployed in South Korea to counter the threat of North Korean missiles, to offer assurance it would not undermine China's strategic deterrence.

Both China and Russia oppose the deployment of the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, system that is under discussion between Washington and Seoul. China has expressed concern that a THAAD system placed in South Korea would allow U.S. radar to also cover Chinese territory.

This story has been updated to correct the spelling of Antony Blinken's name.

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

South Korea Says North Korea Fired Short-range Projectile

By Kim Tong-Hyung

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) – North Korea fired a short-range projectile from an area near its eastern coast on Tuesday, South Korean officials said, in what appears to be another weapons test seen as a response to ongoing military drills between Washington and Seoul.

The projectile was fired near the North Korean port city of Wonsan and flew about 200 kilometers (125 miles) before crashing into land northeast of the launch site, South Korean military officials said.

It was unclear whether the projectile was a ballistic missile or an artillery shell, said a Joint Chiefs of Staff official who didn't want to be identified, citing office rules. It was too early to tell whether North Korea used a land target to test the accuracy and range of its weapons or experienced problems after planning a launch into the sea, said an official from Seoul's Defense Ministry, who also didn't want to be named because of department rules.

North Korea has fired a slew of short-range missiles and artillery shells into the sea and has threatened nuclear strikes on Washington and Seoul since the start on March 7 of the annual springtime war games between the United States and South Korea.

North Korea also launched a medium-range ballistic missile into waters off its east coast for the first time since 2014 and touted a new artillery system it says could turn the South Korean capital of Seoul into a “sea of flames.” Experts say the North’s new artillery launchers can fire 300-millimeter shells up to 200 kilometers (125 miles), theoretically reaching Seoul and its surrounding metropolitan area, where nearly half of the 50 million South Koreans live.

North Korea routinely tests short-range missiles and artillery systems but tends to do more launches in times of tension with the outside world. It condemns the annual military drills between Washington and Seoul as a rehearsal for an invasion. Tensions are particularly high this year because the drills are the largest ever and follow a recent North Korean nuclear test and a long-range rocket launch. Washington and Seoul say the drills are defensive in nature and they have no plans to invade North Korea.

This story has been corrected to fix the projectile’s landing site.

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

North Korea Fires Another ‘Projectile’ Amid Threats

By John Bacon And Jane Onyanga-Omara

[USA Today](#), March 29, 2016

North Korea fired a projectile believed to be a short-range missile Tuesday, the nation’s latest rebuke of sanctions and military exercises being conducted by the United States and South Korea.

The launch comes amid increasing tensions with Pyongyang over repeated missile tests, a nuclear test and a long-range rocket launch this year. The moves prompted new sanctions by the U.S., the United Nations and South Korea.

President Obama scheduled a meeting Thursday in Washington with South Korean President Park Geun-Hyewith and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to discuss North Korea’s ramped-up threats.

In Tuesday’s incident, the projectile was fired from the coastal city of Wonsan and traveled more than 120 miles before hitting land, South Korea’s Yonhap News Agency reported, citing the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff.

“Given the trajectory and distance traveled, the military suspects the projectile might be North Korea’s new multiple rocket launcher system,” Yonhap reported. Pyongyang

recently claimed the system allows it to destroy the presidential palace in Seoul “at a moment’s notice.”

Reuters, citing military officials, reported that the projectile appeared to be a short-range missile. The State Department said it was aware of the reports.

“North Korea should refrain from actions and rhetoric that raise tensions in the region and comply with its international obligations and commitments,” State Department spokesperson Pooja Jhunjhunwala told USA TODAY. “U.N. Security Council resolutions require North Korea to suspend all activities related to its ballistic missile program and to abandon its ballistic missile program in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.”

On Saturday, North Korea released a propaganda video called “Last Chance” that depicts a nuclear strike on Washington.

The video was posted to the YouTube channel of D.P.R.K. Today, a North Korean website, and includes a catalog of “humiliating defeats” the U.S. has faced at the hands of Pyongyang, including the capture of the USS Pueblo in 1968.

On March 21, North Korea fired five short-range ballistic missiles from a site near the northeastern city of Hamhung. The missiles flew about 125 miles before landing in waters off North Korea’s east coast, the the Pentagon said.

The launches were an apparent rebuke of the most recent sanctions and joint military exercises underway between the United States and South Korea. The sanctions were issued in response to a nuclear test conducted by the North in January.

North Korea Fires Short-range Missile Along Its Coast

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

Netanyahu To Meet Putin In Moscow On April 21: Israeli Source

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

Nigerian Troops Capture Boko Haram Key Base At Alargano: Army

By Michael Olukayode

[Bloomberg News](#), March 29, 2016

Nigerian troops captured the northeastern town of Alargano, considered the “spiritual” base of the Boko Haram

Islamist group, after a 10-day siege that ended on Monday, a military official said.

"This operation demystified the Boko Haram spiritual power base in Alagamo," Lucky Irabor, commander of counter-insurgency operations in the country's northeast, told reporters on Tuesday in the city of Maiduguri. "Several Boko Haram terrorists were killed along the route."

Boko Haram is in the seventh year of a violent campaign to impose its version of Shariah, or Islamic law, on Africa's most populous country of about 180 million people. Nigeria is almost evenly split between a mainly Muslim north and predominantly Christian south.

France Calls For Urgent Set-up Of Libya Unity Government

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

Children Pay 'Highest Price' As Yemen Falls Apart, U.N. Says

By Nick Cumming

[New York Times](#), March 30, 2016

GENEVA — A yearlong conflict is threatening to cause a humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen, one of the world's poorest countries, the United Nations reported on Tuesday, saying that "children are paying the highest price."

The effects of the conflict and the deteriorating humanitarian conditions have brought Yemen "to the point of collapse," Unicef, the United Nations Children's Fund, said in a report, adding that the country was at risk of becoming a failed state.

At least six children have been killed or maimed in the fighting every day for the past year, Unicef said, calling that "the tip of the iceberg" because that number represented only the cases that had been verified. The toll is almost certainly much higher, the organization said.

For the past year, a Saudi-led coalition has sought to re-establish the government of President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi, which was driven into exile by Houthi rebels and their allies.

Mr. Hadi was able to reach the southern port city of Aden in September, but the front lines have hardly shifted since, despite a costly campaign marked by intensive Saudi-led airstrikes.

The Unicef report was released as the Saudi-backed government and the Houthi rebels prepared for a halt to hostilities scheduled to come into effect at midnight on April 10, and for a round of peace talks, the second this year, scheduled to start in Kuwait eight days later.

As a confidence-building measure in the preparations for the cease-fire, Saudi Arabia announced on Monday that it had released 109 Yemeni prisoners in return for nine Saudis.

Saudi military officials reported this month a drop in fighting along the border with Yemen, but Unicef's representative in Yemen, Julien Harneis, said that fighting around the fiercely contested city of Taiz had intensified in recent days and that heavy airstrikes had continued in the north of the country.

The World Health Organization said last week that more than 6,200 people had been killed and over 30,000 others wounded in the past year. Unicef reported that at least 934 children had been killed in the conflict, 61 percent of them in airstrikes, and that an additional 1,356 had been wounded.

"Children are paying the highest price for a conflict not of their making," Mr. Harneis said in a statement accompanying the report. "Children are not safe anywhere in Yemen."

Unicef said it had verified 51 attacks on schools in the past year, and in comments by telephone from Sana, the capital, Mr. Harneis said the organization had also seen a "massive spike" in the recruitment of children, some as young as 10, by armed groups, particularly the Houthis.

In addition to airstrikes, civilians must contend with hazards posed by unexploded bombs and cluster munitions dropped by the Saudi coalition, and with land mines laid by Houthi forces as they pull back, Mr. Harneis said.

He added that the indirect consequences of the fighting were taking an even bigger toll, most notably on children, citing the widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, health centers, and electricity and water supplies.

Before the conflict, about 40,000 children under 5 died from preventable diseases each year, Unicef said. But it has estimated that around 10,000 more had succumbed to disease in the past year because of a lack of access to clean water or health care.

"That's the catastrophe for me," Mr. Harneis said. "These children would never have died if it were not for this war."

About 600 health centers have closed and 63 have come under attack, Unicef reported, adding that children's vulnerability to disease had increased as a result of a sharp rise in the number suffering from acute malnutrition. In the worst cases, malnutrition kills, but in many others, it results in stunted physical and intellectual growth, Unicef said.

Despite the conflict, United Nations agencies have been able to deliver aid to most parts of the country, vaccinating more than four million children against polio and 1.8 million against measles, but they have been able to address only the most urgent needs.

The United Nations has reported that more than 80 percent of Yemen's population of 24 million needs some form of humanitarian aid, with 19 million lacking access to clean water and 14 million in urgent need of health care.

Unicef has appealed for \$180 million to finance its programs in Yemen in 2016, but so far it has received just 18 percent of that amount, Mr. Harneis said. Continue reading the main story

Yemen's President: A Path To Peace

By Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi

[New York Times](#), March 29, 2016

Aden, Yemen — One year into the intervention here by the Arab coalition led by Saudi Arabia, and backed by the Yemeni National Army, I can tell my people with confidence that we are working hard to restore peace. The Houthi rebels' military position has been weakened, and peace talks will resume next month. A cease-fire is to begin on April 10, leading up to the talks. The Houthis must respect it.

We must now direct our efforts to rebuilding our broken country.

Yemen's war began in the summer of 2014 when the Houthi rebels, joined by soldiers loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, attacked the government's armed forces in Amran. The rebels went on to occupy Sanaa, the capital, and overthrew Yemen's legitimately elected government by force that September.

Before the Houthi-Saleh insurgents escalated their violence, my government had done everything possible to avoid an all-out war, and the country was undergoing a peaceful political transition. That process was derailed just as the country was putting into place the decisions of the National Dialogue Conference, a forum created by Yemenis and backed by the international community. The Houthis themselves were party to the conference discussions until they intensified their violence.

With our country in chaos, we were left with no choice but to call for the assistance of our brothers in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries. Without intervention, Yemen's future might have been that of a largely lawless and feudal country. Because of Yemen's strategically significant location on the Gulf of Aden, the impact of continuing chaos would have been felt far beyond our borders — in the other Gulf countries, Europe and the United States.

Now my government and the coalition have shifted the balance of power on the ground. Nearly 75 percent of the land previously occupied by the Houthi-Saleh forces has been liberated, which is why they decided to participate in serious peace negotiations for the first time. We are already witnessing some results of these peace efforts as fighting along our border with Saudi Arabia has diminished.

My country, which boasts a proud heritage and culture dating back more than a thousand years, deserves a chance to thrive again.

Defeating extremism requires a coherent government that can provide services to its citizens. We are developing a post-conflict economic recovery program to help Yemen heal. But the world must stand by us as we work to rebuild our country. We urgently need international economic assistance. We especially need to provide employment to Yemen's youth and take advantage of their enthusiasm for their country's future.

Some progress has begun. With the help of our Arab and Islamic partners, most of the ministers of the government are back in the temporary capital, Aden, carrying out their duties. We hope that with the help of the United Nations the negotiations in April will lead to the reinstatement of Yemen's peaceful political process and the implementation of the decisions of the National Dialogue Conference, which calls for the formation of a federal state. My government appreciates the United Nations' work in assisting Yemen, and we will continue to support the efforts of Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, the United Nations special envoy.

However, for there to be an agreement in the April talks, the Houthi-Saleh forces must accept United Nations Security Council Resolution 2216, which calls for all parties to abide by the peaceful political process and agree to a durable and lasting agreement that allows the government to begin the work of returning displaced people to their homes and repairing damage.

A final peace agreement must have uncompromising measures to uphold Yemen's security.

We will shut down, once and for all, the terrorist safe havens and again work with the West and Arab partners to rid our territory of the extremists who plot attacks on targets in the United States, Europe, Arab states and elsewhere. Already, in the past two weeks, the government of Yemen started a campaign in Aden against terrorist organizations and militarized extremist groups. The campaign has normalized the security situation in Aden. Now my government is working to bring similar campaigns to other regions.

In addition, it must be made clear to Iran, which seeks to expand its sphere of control through its Houthi proxies, that Yemen will not yield a single inch of territory to outside forces.

I assumed the presidency in 2012 while my country was in a state of political turmoil and plagued by insecurity. Even before then, there were many longstanding unsettled issues. Now we must turn to the urgent task of reconciliation.

In the years before the Houthi-Saleh violence escalated into a civil war, Yemen was making significant progress through clearly defined guidelines laid out by the National Dialogue Conference. Using the same steps and measures,

these guidelines must be adhered to when we address the repercussions of the Houthis-Saleh coup.

Our government extends its hand in a peace that is sustainable and does not compromise Yemen's state-building process. While challenges remain, the country's outlook is brighter today than at any time over the past year.

Violence has diminished, and negotiations are scheduled. Peace is attainable. We see a future in which Yemen is stable and thriving and provides equal opportunity, better living conditions and an equal place in society for all. We must not give up hope.

Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi is the president of Yemen.

NATIONAL NEWS

Obama Joins Fight Against Opioid Abuse

By Laura Ungar

[USA Today](#), March 29, 2016

ATLANTA — Lending his voice to the fight against a drug scourge that kills 28,000 Americans a year, President Obama told nearly 2,000 policy-makers, professionals and parents Tuesday that the nation must provide more treatment for people addicted to opioids and reframe the addiction problem through the lens of public health.

"The most important thing we can do is reduce demand for drugs, and the only way that we reduce demand is by providing treatment and thinking about this as a public health problem and not just a criminal issue," Obama said during a panel discussion at the 2016 National Rx Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit.

"Part of what has made it difficult to emphasize treatment over criminal justice system has to do with the fact that the populations affected in the past were... stereotypically identified as poor and minority," he said. "And as a consequence, the thinking was it is often a character flaw in those individuals who live in those communities....One of the things that's changed...is a recognition that this reaches everybody."

Given its widespread reach, administration officials announced a wide range of actions to fight the epidemic, such as expanding access to drug treatment, bolstering efforts to ensure health coverage for substance abuse and mental health are on par with benefits for other medical services investing in partnerships between law enforcement and communities, and providing guidance on using federal funds to start or expand needle exchanges.

Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, meanwhile, said he will release a report later this year on substance use, addiction and health, similar to the landmark surgeon general's report on smoking released 50 years ago that focused public attention on that issue.

They shared their news at the fifth annual summit, organized by Operation UNITE, an Eastern Kentucky anti-drug organization launched in 2003 by U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers. The summit has grown from an upstart event into the major national gathering on the issue, drawing people from both sides of the political aisle.

"This is a bipartisan issue — actually a non-partisan issue," Rogers, a Republican who represents Kentucky's fifth district, said in an interview. "We're united in the drive to stop this death rage that we're in."

Across the USA, more Americans die every year from drug overdoses than from motor vehicle crashes. In 2014, drug overdoses killed 47,055 people, the highest number on record, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The majority, around 28,000, involved opioids such as prescription painkillers and heroin.

In fact, heroin-related overdose deaths have more than tripled since 2010, totaling 10,500 in 2014.

"Opioids are devastating our communities and they are costing us lives," Murphy said. "We cannot afford that anymore."

New initiatives announced Tuesday attack the problem on several fronts.

One is a \$7 million Department of Justice anti-heroin grant program, which would help law enforcement agencies in hard-hit states investigate the illicit distribution and trafficking of prescription painkillers and heroin. The Office of National Drug Control Policy is also expanding its heroin initiative among regional High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas by adding Ohio and Michigan to several existing regions. That initiative combats heroin by linking law enforcement and public health professionals.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is issuing guidance for the use of federal funds to start or expand needle exchange programs, which allow addicts to trade dirty needles for clean ones. Congress effectively lifted the nation's long-standing ban on federal funding in the omnibus spending package Obama signed last year. Though federal funds still can't be used for the syringes themselves, they can go toward costlier expenses such as staff, vans, substance abuse counseling and referral to treatment.

Other initiatives announced Tuesday aim to give addicts more access to substance abuse treatment.

A rule being finalized by HHS will strengthen substance abuse and mental health services for people enrolled in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program by making sure they offered at "parity" with other types of medical care, benefiting about 24 million people, officials said. Meanwhile, a new task force will work to enforce existing parity protections for coverage people get on the job or through the Affordable Care Act.

Obama said such steps will ensure “Medicaid and Medicare start really taking care of this seriously so that now mental health issues and addiction issues are treated as a disease in the same way” as other medical problems.

Obama also unveiled two new, \$11 million grant programs for states — one to expand medication-assisted treatment and one to buy and distribute the fast-acting overdose rescue drug naloxone and train first responders how to use it. And he announced a proposed HHS rule to double the current patient limit of 100 for qualified doctors who prescribe buprenorphine treatment for opioid addicts.

Also Tuesday, administration officials announced that more than 60 medical schools will require students to take prescriber education in line with CDC guidelines released in mid-March. Those first-ever guidelines urge doctors to avoid prescribing opioid painkillers to patients with chronic pain — except for those undergoing cancer treatment or end-of-life-care — because the risks of these potentially addictive medications outweigh the benefits for most people.

“There’s no quick fix here, but (the guidelines) will help both patients and doctors,” said CDC Director Tom Frieden. “There’s less risk of overdose and death.”

These are the latest of a wave of recent efforts by federal and state policy-makers to fight opioid abuse.

In early February, Obama announced he was seeking an extra \$1.1 billion in the fiscal year 2017 budget request to pay for drug treatment for people addicted to opioids. The biggest chunk of that — \$920 million — would support cooperative agreements with states to expand access to medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorders. States could use the money to expand treatment and make services more affordable, and would receive funds based on the severity of the epidemic there and their strategies to address it.

“The problem we have right now is treatment is greatly under-funded,” Obama said.

This month, the Senate passed a bill that would bolster local drug task forces and target heroin, the synthetic opiate fentanyl and prescription opioid traffickers; enhance treatment and early intervention for addicts and expand access to naloxone. The bill, pushed by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and Sen. Joe Donnelly, D-Ind., must now gain approval in the House.

Diane Hague, director of the Jefferson Alcohol & Drug Abuse Center in Louisville, said she is glad to see the recent federal action surrounding the nation’s opioid epidemic, and heartened by Obama’s concern about the issue. But she added that interest in tackling the ever-present problem of addiction waxes and wanes, to her dismay.

“Why is there not the steady interest to this as there is to cancer?” Hague asked. “Is this (concern) going to continue?”

April Rovero, executive director of the National Coalition Against Prescription Drug Abuse, said she’s hopeful it will. Rovero, of San Ramon, Calif., lost her 21-year-old son, Joseph John Rovero III, to a prescription drug overdose six years ago.

She said “it’s wonderful” that Obama is proposing so many solutions to the scourge that devastated her family. “The only issue is, I would’ve loved to see it five years ago.”

Obama In Atlanta To Address Drug Overdoses

By Jeremy Redmon

[Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#), March 29, 2016

President Barack Obama said more must be done to combat opioid addiction, using a summit in Atlanta on Tuesday to unveil new measures aimed at curbing a drug overdose epidemic raging across Georgia and the rest of the nation.

Speaking at a panel discussion, Obama noted that more people are now killed from opioid overdoses than traffic accidents.

The Democrat touched down at Hartsfield Jackson Atlanta-International Airport at 1:30 p.m. and was greeted by cheers from a gathering of supporters.

US Rep. Hank Johnson followed him off the plane. Obama embraced U.S. Rep. John Lewis and Fulton County Chairman John Eaves, who were waiting on the tarmac.

The president delighted dozens of fans waiting behind a metal gate, walking over to shake hands and make small talk.

“Amazing. He was so genuine. He walked right up to us,” Sajani Patel of Atlanta said excitedly.

The president’s visit to Atlanta is expected to last less than three hours. It could nonetheless tie up the city’s notoriously-bad traffic. He is set to highlight a proposed rule that would allow doctors prescribing buprenorphine for drug addictions to increase the number of patients they see from 100 to 200. Obama will also point out \$94 million in new federal funding to expand medication-assisted treatment at 271 community health centers across the country.

Further, Obama is signing a new memorandum Tuesday, directing the creation of an interagency task force for expanding access to mental health and substance abuse treatment. And he is announcing \$11 million in funding for states to buy a drug overdose prevention medication called naloxone and to train emergency workers how to use it.

“The president has made clear that addressing this epidemic is a priority for his administration, and today’s actions represent further steps to expand access to treatment, prevent overdose deaths and increase community prevention strategies,” the White House said.

Obama will announce the new measures during a panel discussion at the National Rx Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit. The summit is focused on fighting a prescription painkiller and heroin overdose epidemic that killed more than 28,000 people

in 2014, more than any year on record. At least half of those deaths involved prescription drugs.

Georgia is among 14 states that have seen statistically significant increases in the rate of drug overdose deaths, according to the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention. In 2014, 1,206 people died from such overdoses in the Peach State, up from 1,098 the year before, a 9.8 percent increase. Georgia's death rate per 100,000 residents rose by 10.2, from 10.8 to 11.9 during the same timeframe.

Delivering the keynote address at the summit Monday, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack talked about how his adoptive mother struggled with alcohol and prescription drug addictions when he was growing up. The former Iowa governor and former Democratic presidential candidate said his late mother eventually got help from a 30-day treatment program and never drank again for the rest of her life. The experience, he said, taught him drug and alcohol addictions are diseases — not character flaws — that require responses from whole communities. Obama appointed Vilsack this year to lead his "Rural America Opioid Initiative."

Opioid Treatment Too Scant, "Underresourced"

By John Bennett

[Roll Call](#), March 29, 2016

President Barack Obama on Tuesday called America's fight against prescription drug and heroin abuse "underresourced" as he tries to convince Republicans to fund his plan to fight the national epidemic.

Speaking at a summit organized by House Appropriations Chairman Harold Rogers, R-Ky., Obama said the country needs an "an all-hands-on-deck approach."

"The problem that we have" is in many parts of the United States, opioid and heroin treatment programs are "underfunded right now," the president said at the conference in Atlanta. And treatment is "particularly underfunded in some rural areas," where addiction rates are high.

Obama said he came to the summit in hopes it will put public pressure on Congress to act. The idea is to force House and Senate Republicans to approve funding the White House wants this year, much of it for treatment programs.

As Republicans continue raising concerns about what kinds of initiatives Washington should be funding, Obama harked back to a plan he proposed in his fiscal 2017 budget that called for \$1.1 billion in spending next fiscal year to help the federal and state governments fight addiction to prescription painkillers and heroin.

"Until the money comes through," Obama said, "it's just an idea."

Conveniently for Obama, Rogers, who was seated in the front row, helps control the federal pocketbook. Obama

used the occasion to continue a plea for bipartisanship on the issue that figured in his final State of the Union address.

"I hope we can work together this year on bipartisan priorities like criminal justice reform, and helping people who are battling prescription drug abuse and heroin abuse," the president said in January. "We just might surprise the cynics again."

Opioids, a category that includes prescription painkillers and heroin, contributed to nearly 29,000 deaths in 2014, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More than 10,500 fatalities that year stemmed specifically from heroin use, according to the American Society of Addiction Medicine.

As Obama's appearance in Atlanta began, some Republican lawmakers issued statements applauding his efforts. Many were senators from opioid- and heroin-riddled states who voted for a year-end spending bill that contained \$400 million to combat it and another measure this month aimed at expanding treatment.

But other GOP members slammed the president, who they say has done too little to combat the epidemic.

"While the President is addressing his first national drug forum in seven years, unfortunately he's been AWOL regarding the problem of drug overdoses and illegal narcotics in the United States," Rep. John L. Mica, R-Fla., said in a statement.

"Unfortunately, he's also been sending the wrong message," Mica added. "In 2014, President Obama sent a clear message to Americans and our young people about marijuana use, saying, 'I smoked pot as a kid, and I view it as ... not very different from the cigarettes that I smoked ... I don't think it is more dangerous than alcohol.'"

But Obama told the summit that anti-prescription drug and heroin abuse efforts have been "a top priority of ours for some time." The president also is expected to announce a set of administrative actions that will not require congressional approval. A major thrust of the administration and congressional Democrats has been to use federal dollars to help expand treatment for most vulnerable populations.

Obama reiterated some of the themes he has turned to before when pushing for congressional action, with the House due back from a recess period with a Senate-passed anti-opioid bill awaiting action. But his major thrust was arguing for expanded — and better-funded treatment programs.

In the audience Tuesday were individuals who are recovering from opioid and heroin abuse and some of their family members, as well as medical and law enforcement officials. Obama was joined onstage by two recovering addicts and a physician who has treated similar patients, some of whom died of overdoses.

One was Crystal Oertle, a 35-year-old mother of two from Ohio who has been clean for a year, said she was

heartened to hear a sitting U.S. president use the phrase “the disease of addiction.”

Leana Wen, Baltimore City health commissioner, said that too often those with substance abuse problems are told treatment is unavailable. She told a story about one woman who was sent home from a Baltimore hospital and returned shortly after in dire condition due to an overdose. “We were unable to revive her,” Wen said.

The Atlanta summit came several weeks after the Senate passed a bill that would authorize grants to states to expand their treatment programs and increase access to naloxone, an overdose prevention drug.

That legislation, which passed 94-1, also would give the Justice Department additional tools to combat drug trafficking.

Partisan squabbling could sink the Senate’s measure. So, too, could a truncated election-year legislative calendar. For instance, the bill does not contain \$600 million in emergency funds Senate Democrats tried to tack on in response to the tainted water crisis in Flint, Mich.

GOP members in both chambers have questions about how the funds would be spent, and want to dole out any additional funding during the annual appropriations process.

Obama Announces New Measures To Combat Heroin, Painkiller Abuse

By Arian Campo-Flores

[Wall Street Journal](#), March 29, 2016

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

Pres. Obama To Visit Atlanta For Drug Abuse Summit

[WSB-TV Atlanta](#), March 29, 2016

President Barack Obama will be making a stop in Atlanta today to speak at a conference centered on drug abuse.

The fifth annual National Rx Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit will be held at the Westin Peachtree Plaza hotel in downtown Atlanta.

Stay with WSBTV.com and watch Channel 2 Action News as we cover the president’s visit throughout the day.

“We are honored that President Obama will participate in the important discussion of combating prescription drug abuse and the heroin crisis,” said Nancy Hale, President/CEO for Operation UNITE, the Summit’s organizer. “His presence will help focus the nation’s attention on the drug epidemic that is devastating families and communities across the country.”

This follows his visit last year to West Virginia, where he announced a number of new public and private sector actions to address the epidemic, including a Presidential Memorandum on prescriber training and opioid use disorder treatment.

“The abuse of prescription medications and heroin has touched countless lives in our communities. Since 2003, Operation UNITE has risen to the challenge to address the scourge of drug abuse in Southern and Eastern Kentucky,” said Congressman Hal Rogers, co-founder and co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Prescription Drug Abuse.

The 2016 National Rx Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit is the largest national collaboration of federal, state and local professionals, and advocates seeking to address prescription drug abuse, misuse and diversion. This year the Summit has expanded its focus to address the emerging heroin crisis, which has been linked to the prescription drug problem. More than 1,600 people already have registered for the Summit, which started Monday and goes through Thursday.

Break-out sessions will focus on issues such as how drug treatment courts are providing an alternative to incarceration, preventing Hepatitis C and HIV outbreaks, early identification of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome, community responses to heroin, and the use of performance-enhancing drugs and ADHD medication among youth

TRAFFIC IMPACT

Pres. Obama’s visit will likely lead to some traffic tie-ups during the afternoon commute.

Many roads are expected to be closed for his motorcade.

The Georgia Regional Transit Authority emailed its suburban commuter bus patrons on Monday, warning them to anticipate potential delays in the afternoon. GRTA said it would make every effort to adhere to regularly scheduled times, and no Xpress stops are currently expected to be impacted.

PRES. OBAMA’S LAST VISIT

Pres. Obama traveled to Atlanta in March 2015 to speak at the Georgia Tech campus. The president also attended a fundraising event for the Democratic National Committee.

In June 2012 visit to the Peach State, the president caused a stir of excitement when he stopped into historic local landmark The Varsity for lunch.

Amid “Heartbreaking” Stories, Obama Pushes For More Funding To Treat Addiction

By Greg Jaffe

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

ATLANTA — During an emotional and often intensely personal panel discussion, President Obama listened Tuesday as a 35-year-old mother of two described her descent from prescription drugs into heroin addiction.

“It slowly happened,” said Crystal Oertle of Ohio as she sat beside the president. “It is crazy to think of the things I did, but it was necessary for me to function.... I’ve had to steal. I have stolen from department stores to feed my habit. I have

been involved in drug busts a couple of times.” She has now marked a year of recovery.

A Baltimore doctor described her feeling of helplessness as she watched one patient spiral downward and overdose because no treatment options were immediately available. And a 28-year-old father described how he had been in and out of recovery seven times.

The president came to Atlanta to participate in the National Rx Drug Abuse and Heroin Summit at a time when Americans are overdosing from prescription opioids and heroin in record numbers. Obama has made the nation’s heroin and prescription drug epidemic a priority in his second term, and the scourge has been one of the few areas in which the White House has been able to draw bipartisan support from Congress.

Obama spoke of the problem of drug addiction in unusually personal terms. He made reference to his own drug use as a young man, which he described in a memoir before he became a politician. “When I was a kid I was — how would I put it? — not always as responsible as I am today, and in many ways I was lucky because for whatever reason addiction didn’t get its claws in me,” he said.

A few minutes later, he repeated himself: “I was lucky, and I don’t know why,” Obama said.

Even as he promised to fight the drug cartels, Obama was insistent that addiction was a medical problem that requires more help from the government. “This is a straightforward proposition of how do we save lives,” he said. “It doesn’t do us good to talk recovery after people are dead.”

He has proposed \$1.1 billion in new funding to battle heroin addiction — more than double last year’s budget — with the vast majority of that money going to expand access to medications designed to help addicts struggling with severe withdrawal. Drugs like buprenorphine combined with therapy have proven to be the most effective treatment for addicts, but major shortages of physicians trained to administer it make progress difficult, especially in rural areas, Obama said. Today as many as 1 million Americans need treatment for opioid addiction but are unable to get it.

That issue is one of the few for which Obama has been able to muster support, if not funding, from Republican lawmakers. Obama was introduced Tuesday by Republican Rep. Hal Rogers, who played a key role in the summit and whose district in eastern Kentucky coal country has been ravaged by drugs.

The president used his appearance to make the case for a big budget increase to expand treatment for addiction, particularly in rural communities where he traditionally has not won much support.

“The \$1.1 billion is not allocated by Congress,” Obama said of his budget request. “I want to be very clear about that. This is still an area that is grossly under-resourced.”

The White House on Tuesday announced a series of modest measures that don’t require congressional backing and are designed to make treatment more available to those suffering addiction. To address the physician shortfall, the Department of Health and Human Services said it would double the patient limit for doctors prescribing buprenorphine to 200.

“This change has taken far too long,” said Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio), who has called for expanding that cap to 500 patients.

The White House also plans to spend \$94 million to help 271 community health centers increase their services to addicts, a move that could open up treatment to as many as 124,000 new patients. It also would direct \$11 million to help states purchase and distribute naloxone, which is injected to block or reverse an overdose.

The panelists’ stories are “heartbreaking,” Obama said. “And the fact is that for too long we have viewed the problem of drug addiction in our society through the lens of law enforcement.”

In today’s global economy, Obama emphasized that the most effective counter-drug policy is one that prioritizes reducing the demand for drugs at home. “The only way we reduce demand is if we are providing treatment and thinking of this as a public health problem and not just a criminal problem,” he said.

Public health officials have said the current heroin epidemic was triggered by a spike in prescriptions for short-acting opioid pain medications starting a decade ago. “We arrived here on a path that was paved with good intentions,” U.S. Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy said at the summit. “We have to close that gap.”

“The results have been devastating,” Murthy continued. “We have nearly 250 million prescriptions for opioids written every year. That’s enough for every person in America to have a bottle of pills and then some.”

The Food and Drug Administration recently said it would begin requiring new warnings about the risk of addiction for these medications, which are often prescribed after surgery, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has called for a “culture shift for patients and doctors” away from the highly addictive painkillers. Only this month did the CDC issue its first national recommendations on prescription opioids, urging doctors to use more caution and consider alternatives before they prescribe the highly addictive narcotic painkillers.

Obama insisted that real solutions would require more money, as well as a change of approach in communities cross the country.

“Today we are seeing more people killed because of opioid overdose than traffic accidents,” he said. “This is not something that is restricted to a small set of communities. This is affecting everybody.”

Obama: "We Have To Be Honest" About Race In Drug Addiction Debate

By Sarah Ferris

[The Hill](#), March 29, 2016

President Obama on Tuesday suggested that the nation's response to the opioid crisis has lagged because drug addiction until recently was perceived as a "poor and minority" problem.

"I think we have to be honest about this," Obama said as he headlined a national drug abuse summit.

Obama said the US relied more on police officers than doctors to deal with drug abuse until he took office. Part of the reason for the criminal justice-focused approach, the president added, "is that the populations affected were viewed as, or stereotypically identified as, poor and minority."

"As a consequence, the thinking was it is often a character flaw in those individuals who live in those communities, and it's not our problem that they're just being locked up," Obama said. "One of the things that's changed in this opioids debate is a recognition that this reaches everybody."

The Obama administration, as well as Congress, has ramped up its response to opioids this year amid an alarming increase in death rates, particularly among white men.

Deaths from heroin overdoses have more than tripled since 2010, according to federal data. Overdose deaths have increased the fastest in rural – and mostly white – areas, where death rates from overdoses now outpace those in urban – and more minority – areas.

Deaths from drug overdoses have risen sharply among white Americans, particularly men between 25 to 34, though the rate of deaths from overdoses for black or Hispanics has remained largely flat, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Obama stressed that he began the shift away from a criminal justice approach "very early on" in his administration.

"The only way we reduce demand for drugs is if we increase treatment think about this as a public health problem and not just a criminal justice problem," he said.

'Blunt' Obama: Drug Problem Was Ignored When It Was Hurting Minority Communities

By Charlie Spiering

[Breitbart](#), March 29, 2016

Obama explained at the summit that he was going to be "blunt," since his was in his last year of office, and he criticized people for ignoring the problem in the past.

"The populations affected in the past were viewed as — or stereotypically identified as — poor, minority, and as a consequence the thinking was it is often a character flaw in those individuals who live in those communities and it's not our problem that they are just being locked up," Obama said.

He pointed out that the problem had now moved beyond the inner cities, making more people less interested in incarceration as a solution for the problem.

"Lo and behold it turns out that if there is a market for heroin in inner city in Baltimore, it's not going to take long for those drugs to find their way to a wealthy suburb outside of Baltimore," he said.

Obama explained that it was obvious that even High School kids had access to hard drugs, even in wealthy communities, citing his own daughters as an example.

"I now have kids in High School, and I'm well aware that their ability to access legal or illegal substances is very high," he said. "They are just less likely to get in trouble, get thrown in jail, and have a permanent felony record than those kids who live in those inner cities.

During the event, Obama alluded to his own experience with illegal drugs, but said he was "lucky" that he didn't become addicted or arrested as a result.

"In many ways I was lucky because for whatever reason, addiction didn't get its claws in me," he said, admitting that although he was once addicted to cigarettes, it was different than getting addicted to hard drugs.

He expressed concern that the United States was a populace that was "self medicating" as a result of problems in their lives including anxiety, mental health, and the lack of coping skills.

"We have an entire industry that says we're going to help you self-medicate," he said, pointing out that the line between alcohol addiction and harder illegal substances was very thin.

"One of the things that's changed in this opioid debate is the recognition that this reaches everybody," he said. Read More Stories About:

Big Government, Obama, barack obama, Baltimore, Heroin, drug, problems, minority, inner cities

What Official In Recovery Says US Should Do About Heroin Epidem

By Christine Stapleton

[Palm Beach \(FL\) Post](#), March 29, 2016

Just hours before President Obama is scheduled to speak this afternoon at the National RX Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit, top administration officials unveiled new efforts to combat the nation's growing opioid epidemic.

Michael Botticelli, Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, began the morning's session by outlining several objectives: Collaboration between health officials and law enforcement agencies, education for physicians who prescribe opioids and combating stigma.

"There is no silver bullet to ending substance-use disorders or this epidemic," said Botticelli, who himself is in

recovery. “We need an all-hands-on-deck approach to prevention, treatment and law enforcement.”

The audience interrupted Botticelli’s comments several times with applause, including his insistence on early intervention.

“There is a misperception that change can only come when an addict hits bottom or is facing jail,” said Botticelli. “We don’t wait that long to treat people with any other health condition. We need people to seek treatment as early as possible in their disease.”

As Botticelli spoke, a number projected on the screen behind him changed from 6,892 to 6,893 — the number of people who have died of opioid-related overdoses this year. Publishing the number is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s new initiative, called the Life Count Clock, designed to bring awareness to the fact that one person dies every 20 minutes from opioid abuse.

Other initiatives include:

Increased funding by the National Institutes for Health for research for prodrugs, drugs that can only be activated by metabolic processes in the body, such as enzymes produced during digestion.

Efforts by the Food and Drug Administration to review safety labeling on prescription opioids and encourage the development of abuse-deterrent drugs, which lose their effectiveness when they are crushed.

Increasing the number of patients a doctor can treat with buprenorphine from 100 to 200. Those proposals, among others, will be published Wednesday in the Federal Register as part of proposed rulemaking to increase access to medication-assisted treatment with buprenorphine-containing products approved by the FDA for treatment of opioid dependence.

Obama Steps Up US Effort To Fight Abuse Of Heroin And Painkillers

By Mark Landler

[New York Times](#), March 29, 2016

WASHINGTON — President Obama on Tuesday traveled to Atlanta to speak at a meeting of recovering drug addicts, doctors and law enforcement officials, reinforcing his response to the nation’s spiraling prescription painkiller and heroin epidemic.

Mr. Obama announced several mostly modest measures to expand drug treatment centers and to increase the use of naloxone and similar drugs that reverse the effects of overdoses from opioids, which include illegal narcotics like heroin to brand-name painkillers like OxyContin and Percocet.

The last time Mr. Obama traveled outside of Washington to draw attention to the scourge of opioid addiction — to West Virginia in October — his administration

was widely criticized for not doing enough to combat a public health epidemic that has worsened greatly during his presidency.

Since that trip, however, the federal government has published the first national guidelines for prescription painkillers, required new warning labels for certain kinds of opioid painkillers and requested an additional \$1.1 billion to expand treatment facilities and to finance programs to prevent overdoses and to constrain illegal sales of drugs.

“The only thing I would fault them for is that they waited too long to do this,” said Dr. Carl R. Sullivan, the director of addiction services at the West Virginia University School of Medicine. “This has been able to idle along for a long time. People have been almost embarrassed to talk about it.”

In particular, Dr. Sullivan said, the national guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provided a “compass point” for the treatment of patients and the education of medical residents and even practicing doctors. “The situation is so dire that we had to do something,” he said.

Opioids played a part in 28,648 deaths in the United States in 2014, a record number, according to the C.D.C. Opioid painkillers like OxyContin, Percocet and Vicodin are among the most widely prescribed drugs in the country, generating nearly \$2 billion a year in sales.

Part of the issue for the Obama administration in combating those drugs is that the job of regulating doctors’ prescriptions of them has historically fallen to the states. Massachusetts, Vermont and Maine are among states that have moved in recent months to limit the ability of doctors to prescribe these pills. But patient and doctor groups, some funded by the pharmaceutical industry, have fiercely resisted both the state and federal efforts.

In highlighting the dangers of drug addiction, Mr. Obama has spoken in starkly personal terms, referring to it at times almost like a road not traveled. “I did stuff, and I’ve been very honest about it,” the president said before an audience of recovering addicts in Charleston, W.Va., in October. “So when I think about it, there but for the grace of God.”

Obama Wants To Spend More Than \$1 Billion To Fight Opioid Addiction In The US

By Tess Owen

[Vice](#), March 29, 2016

President Barack Obama unveiled a new plan to combat opioid addiction in the United States on Tuesday, emphasizing the importance of making rehab programs available for people of all incomes as a way to stem the recent surge in overdose deaths linked to heroin and prescription painkillers.

Obama's announcement coincided with a speech he delivered at the National Rx Drug Abuse and Heroin Summit in Atlanta. The four-day gathering of politicians, physicians, researchers, counselors and educators has been held annually since 2012, when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) declared opioid addiction a public health crisis. The president joined two recovering opioid addicts and Baltimore's health commissioner on a panel moderated by Dr. Sanjay Gupta, a medical correspondent and practicing neurosurgeon, for a discussion about addiction and treatment.

Obama repeatedly stressed the importance of treating addiction like a public health problem rather than a criminal problem, acknowledging that previous drug epidemics — which were largely seen as a black, Hispanic, or inner-city problems — were heavily policed and dealt with through draconian prison sentences.

"I hope people don't mind me being blunt," Obama said. "Your last year in office, you get a little loose.

"What has made it previously difficult to emphasize treatment over criminal justice is that the problem was identified as poor, minority, and as a consequence, the thinking was, it's often a character flaw in those individuals who live in those communities, and it's not our problem they're just being locked up," he said.

"One of the things that's changed in this opioid debate is that it reaches everybody," he added. "Because it's having an impact on so many people, we're seeing a bipartisan interest in addressing this problem... not just thinking in terms of criminalization or incarceration, which unfortunately has been our response to the disease of addiction."

According to recent data, 28,647 Americans died in the US from opioid overdoses in 2014, including 18,893 deaths linked to prescription painkillers like OxyContin and Vicodin and 10,574 fatalities related to heroin. Research published by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) found that 1.9 million Americans were addicted to prescription painkillers in 2014, and another 586,000 were addicted to heroin.

Congress agreed earlier this year to increase federal spending by \$100 million to fight the opioid epidemic, bringing the total budget for the cause up to \$400 million. The Obama administration is now seeking an additional \$1.1 billion as part of the president's 2017 fiscal budget to expand treatment programs for opioid addiction. The proposal would triple the current funding allocated for opioid addiction.

A key piece of the Obama administration's multi-pronged approach focuses on expanding access to buprenorphine, a medication that suppresses opioid withdrawal symptoms, decreases cravings, and blocks the effects of heroin and other related drugs. At the moment, physicians who are qualified to prescribe the drug are only

limited to 100 patients. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) wants to double that patient limit.

The White House issued a statement on Tuesday ahead of Obama's remarks at the conference in Atlanta noting that HHS funnelled \$94 million into almost 300 community health centers across the country in an effort to make buprenorphine more accessible to opioid addicts.

"It's not enough to provide the architecture and structure for treatment. We need to provide an infrastructure to prevent people from falling into addiction in the first place," Obama said in Atlanta.

A longstanding federal funding ban on needle exchange programs — where intravenous drug users can swap their dirty needles for clean ones to prevent the spread of HIV or hepatitis — was reversed last year. Congress agreed to allocate federal money to staffing and equipping harm-reduction facilities, but stopped short of agreeing to those funds being used for fresh syringes. These programs would be expanded under Obama's new strategy.

On Tuesday, the president also signed a memorandum establishing an inter-agency task force to explore the intersection of mental health and substance abuse. The move signals a retreat by the US government from a view adopted during the decades-long war on drugs that framed addiction as a criminal issue rather than a psychological one. The task force will seek federal parity protections to ensure state Medicaid plans offer the same degree of coverage for mental health and substance abuse as they do for medical and surgical issues.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) will also release \$11 million in funds to states who wish to stock up on and distribute naloxone, a drug that can reverse opioid overdoses. Those funds are also intended to beef up drug overdose training for first responders.

The president noted on Tuesday that doctors have been too willing to prescribe heavy-duty pain meds without considering other options. "I was shocked to learn how little time medical students spend on pain management," Obama also said, "It's not enough to provide the architecture and structure for treatment. We need to provide an infrastructure to prevent people from falling into addiction in the first place.

"We have a healthcare system which too often is a disease-care system," he said. "We don't spend enough time thinking about how to keep people well, healthy and balanced in the first place. We need to rethink our healthcare system."

The president noted that 60 medical schools across the country had vowed to make pain relief a core part of their curriculums.

"We live in a society where we medicate a lot of problems and we self-medicate a lot of problems," he said. "The connection between mental health [and] drug abuse is

powerful. And the line between alcohol, Vicodin and harder, illegal substances isn't that sharp sometimes."

"I was lucky because for whatever reason, addiction didn't get its claws in me, with the exception of cigarettes which is a major addiction but doesn't manifest itself in some of the same ways," he said, referring to a smoking habit that he kicked after reaching the White House. (The president said in 2009 he "constantly" struggles with cigarette cravings, and acknowledged that he has occasionally "fallen off the wagon.")

The president said that federal agents would continue to aggressively pursue drug traffickers, but said the "most important thing we can do is reduce the demand for drugs."

The new bid to fight opioid addiction at the federal level comes two weeks after the CDC issued the first federal guidelines for doctors prescribing opioids, laying out considerations physicians should follow in order to curb rampant abuse of the medications. Data collected by the CDC found that doctors and dentists wrote about 259 million prescriptions for opioid painkillers in 2012 — enough pill bottles to give every American their very own stash. The CDC also found that four in five heroin users became addicted after first using painkillers.

The CDC's bottom line was that physicians should only prescribe opioids in worst-case scenarios, such as end-of-life care. The agency also urged doctors to consider other forms of pain treatment, and recommended that doctors stop testing patients for marijuana use on the grounds that the drug is increasingly regarded as a safer and less addictive alternative to opioids.

On Monday, New York became the first state to require all doctors to send prescriptions to pharmacies electronically, rather than giving their patients a handwritten slip. The so-called e-prescribing is becoming increasingly popular across the country, but New York is the only state that currently mandates it. The new rules are intended to curb painkiller abuse and prevent users from forging paper prescriptions.

Obama Announces New Moves To Fight Opioid And Heroin Abuse Epidemic

By Nadia Kounang
[CNN](#), March 29, 2016

(CNN) The Obama administration is making it easier for doctors to use anti-addiction drugs in the fight against an exploding epidemic of prescription drug and heroin abuse.

It's part of a package of new initiatives announced Tuesday that includes other efforts to expand addiction treatment and increase coverage for mental health and substance abuse services. These initiatives are in addition to the \$1.1 billion he proposed last month.

Overdose deaths from opioids — drugs that include heroin as well as prescription drugs like oxycodone and

hydrocodone — continue to be the leading cause of unintentional death for Americans, rising 14% from 2013 to 2014. Every 19 minutes someone dies from an opioid overdose.

Medication-assisted treatment with drugs like methadone and buprenorphine is a key component of the administration's attack on the opioid epidemic. These drugs are used in conjunction with behavioral treatment to help manage an addict's recovery and ease withdrawal from opioid drugs.

In a call to reporters, Michael Botticelli, director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, said, "Expanding access to medication-assisted treatment for opioid-use disorders has been a top priority for this administration. Research clearly shows that this approach, when combined with behavioral therapies, is more effective at sustaining recovery and preventing overdose."

Some critics are concerned that drugs like methadone or buprenorphine could be diverted, or that their use could lead to further addiction.

However, Caleb Banta-Green says we can't ignore their success. "Buprenorphine and methadone cuts mortality rates (of addicts) in half. ... The fundamental line is that we need to keep people alive," said Banta-Green, a senior research scientist at the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute at the University of Washington.

Expanding treatment

Currently, physicians are limited by law to prescribing buprenorphine to just 100 patients per doctor. The White House is increasing that cap to 200 patients per doctor.

But there's also a limited number of doctors around the country eligible to prescribe the drug, just about 30,000.

Last October, states and private sector groups proposed to double the number of buprenorphine prescribing physicians over the next three years. So far, 2,200 additional physicians have committed to complete training in buprenorphine prescribing, the White House said.

Banta-Green said expanding the number of doctors is key in the fight against an epidemic that is hitting more and more in rural and suburban areas, where access to treatment is limited. "You have to push out care to many more places," he said.

Additional efforts to fight epidemic

In addition to upping the patient limit, the White House also announced an additional \$11 million to go toward state efforts to expand medication-assisted treatment programs, as well as another \$94 million in new funding for treatment services to 271 community health centers across the country.

On top of expanding access to MAT, the White House announced other initiatives:

providing an additional \$11 million to increase access to naloxone, the opioid overdose reversal drug.

establishing a Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Task Force.

ensuring that mental health and substance use benefits are offered as medical and surgical benefits are for those enrolled in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

a \$7 million initiative by the Department of Justice toward policing and investigating heroin distribution.

guidance from the Department of Health and Human Services for federally funded needle exchange programs.

Public health experts said they were pleased to see the White House attention to community health centers and needle exchange programs. "We've seen these programs at the front lines of overdose death, bringing people to drug treatment, and addressing the risk of hepatitis C and HIV," said Daniel Raymond, policy director for the Harm Reduction Coalition, an advocacy group working to mitigate the effects of illegal drug use on people and communities.

Banta-Green said the focus on community health centers was key because they are more likely to be access points for continuous, ongoing addiction care, instead of a hospital or jail.

Obama to speak about opioids

What may have the the most lasting effort, Raymond said, is the President's address at the National Rx Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit in Atlanta on Tuesday. "That sends a powerful signal," said Raymond.

Obama will be taking part in a panel moderated by CNN's chief medical correspondent, Dr. Sanjay Gupta.

Over the past month, federal agencies have been aggressive in implementing new strategies to help fight the epidemic. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued new opioid prescribing guidelines, stating plainly that opioids were not first-line therapies. The Food and Drug Administration issued new requirements that immediate-release, or fast-acting, opioids must carry "black box" warning labels. The FDA is also encouraging abuse-resistant formulations of generic opioids. Generics make up 90% of the market, the FDA said.

Banta-Green says he's been encouraged by the administration's efforts, but he said a key element was missing – guidance and training on how doctors should address these issues with their patients. "This is a lot of attempt to build supply and capacity of services, which is great ... but it is important that we create tools about these difficult conversations for clinicians."

Many hope that Obama's addressing these issues can help change the stigma attached to addiction and treatment.

'Long overdue'

"Coming to the summit, he's coming to an audience of over 1,000 people who are not going to be patting him on the back or paying lip service at all. They are anxious for actions and solutions. I think his willingness to come is more than

symbolic. We should expect a lot more to see in his final year of his administration, and some of it is long overdue," Raymond said.

Raymond likened the fight against the opioid epidemic to pushing a boulder up a hill. "There are signs that we are getting a handle on the prescription opioid problem, but over the past few years the heroin issue has gotten worse. Now that we're taking more action on heroin, now we're seeing illicit fentanyl get worse. The problem is spiraling," he said.

"We had an over-reliance on prescription painkillers. We're going to be paying for the original sins for many years to come. And the problem (that) could have gotten under control earlier is going to be affecting a whole generation," Raymond said.

White House Says U.S. Leadership, Prestige At Stake In Debate Over Pacific Rim Trade Deal

By David Nakamura

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

The Obama administration is fighting back against an anti-free trade mood on the 2016 campaign trail, arguing that the United States' credibility and prestige in Asia is at stake in the debate over a Pacific Rim trade deal that the president has made a top priority in his final year.

"Failure to move forward ... would be a profound setback for American interests in the region," Ben Rhodes, a White House deputy national security adviser, said Tuesday of the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership. "It would be a signal that we do not have staying power and cause countries to hedge on their alignment with the United States."

The administration is running out of time to get the accord ratified by Congress and faces an uphill slog to win approval with the leading presidential candidates in both parties opposed to the deal. Republican front-runner Donald Trump has denounced free trade deals as harmful to American workers and a drag on the U.S. economy. Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton, who supported the TPP as secretary of state under Obama, has come out against the TPP under pressure from the left, including labor unions and her opponent Sen. Bernie Sanders (Vt.), who also opposes it.

But in a conference call with reporters, administration officials warned that China is poised to step into an economic and leadership void if the U.S. falters in the pact with 11 other nations, including Japan, Malaysia, Vietnam and Australia. While Trump and Sanders have called outsourcing and trade imbalances with China detrimental to the United States, White House allies said that the economic competition from China, which is not included in the TPP, is a reason to endorse the deal.

"If one is concerned about China's behavior ... if they are a challenge to U.S. interests, the importance of TPP from

a security and foreign policy perspective cannot be understated,” said retired Lt. Gen. Dan Christman, who was among a group of former military officials who met with White House aides Tuesday to discuss the national security aspects of the trade pact.

Obama aides have said the U.S.-led accord would help establish rules for regional commerce and higher standards for workers and the environment, while integrating the United States more closely with countries that include longtime allies, such as Japan, and rivals, such as Vietnam. The president is scheduled to travel to those two countries in May, and aides said he will emphasize the importance of the deal during his visits to both.

“Should this deal not take place, given the heavy lifting from the other countries, Vietnam in particular, to sign up, this would reflect, in my judgment, an enormous strategic setback,” Christman said.

The White House had hoped Congress would vote on the TPP by summer, but the opposition to free trade deals on the campaign trail has made that time frame unlikely. Republican leaders in Congress, who had largely supported the deal when lawmakers voted last year to grant Obama additional trade promotion authority, have since expressed concerns about portions of the pact, while some rank-and-file GOP members have said they don’t support it.

Administration officials are eying the lame-duck session of Congress after the November elections as the final opportunity to complete the deal during Obama’s tenure.

Higher Taxes In Obama’s Budget Would Cut Deficits: CBO

By David Lawder

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

Justices Seem To Seek Compromise In Birth Control Case

By Mark Sherman

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – A seemingly divided Supreme Court is exploring a possible compromise ruling in the dispute between faith-based groups and the Obama administration over birth control.

The justices on Tuesday directed both sides in the case that was argued last week to file a new round of legal briefs. They’re asked to examine the minimum the groups must do in order to register their objection to paying for contraception. The Obama administration wants to ensure that women covered under the groups’ health plans have access to cost-free birth control.

The court set an April 20 deadline, suggesting that the justices want to resolve the case by late June. A 4-4 tie would leave different rules in place in different parts of the country because lower courts have issued conflicting rulings.

Another option is to leave the issue unsettled until a ninth justice is confirmed to take the place of Justice Antonin Scalia.

The administration devised what it has called a generous moral and financial buffer to spare the not-for-profit colleges, charities and advocacy groups from any involvement in the provision of contraceptives to which they object on religious grounds.

But the groups complain that they remain complicit in the process because they have to object to the contraceptive coverage, triggering the government’s hijacking of their health plans – a description Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Anthony Kennedy used during last week’s arguments.

In the order Tuesday, the court asked both sides to discuss whether contraceptive coverage could be provided without the groups having to object. The court even suggested a way this could happen.

The nonprofit groups could tell their insurance company at the time they arrange for health insurance that they don’t want to include some or all contraceptive coverage, the court said. Armed with that knowledge, the insurer would notify people covered by the health plan that contraceptive coverage would come directly from the insurer, with no money from or involvement by the nonprofit’s health plan.

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Supreme Court Asks For More Info On ObamaCare Birth Control Case

By Peter Sullivan

[The Hill](#), March 29, 2016

The Supreme Court on Tuesday signaled it may be looking for a way out of a controversial ObamaCare birth control case.

The court asked for additional information from both sides on “whether and how” employees of religious nonprofits could get contraceptive coverage through other means that would be less objectionable to their employers.

It indicates that the Court is looking for a new accommodation that would still allow employees to get contraceptive coverage, replacing the system that religious nonprofits are currently challenging.

The order gives an example of a system where employers informed their insurance company of their objection to contraceptive coverage at the time the employer signed up for insurance in the first place, eliminating the need for a separate form.

The Court also asked for “other proposals along similar lines.”

The goal, it said is to address how employees could still get contraceptive coverage “but in a way that does not require any involvement” from the religious employers, meaning they would not have to sign the form that they currently object to.

The Supreme Court appeared to be headed towards a possible 4-4 split on the case at arguments last week, and the order could be seen as a way to avoid that outcome.

The final deadline for submissions from the administration and the challengers is April 20.

At issue is the requirement under the Affordable Care Act that health insurance plans cover contraception at no cost to the patient. The Obama administration has devised an accommodation to that requirement for religious nonprofits such as colleges and hospitals.

Under the accommodation, nonprofits that object to covering contraceptives can sign a two-page form notifying their insurer. The insurer will then separately pay for the contraceptives for employees, which the administration says strikes a good balance: The employer does not have to provide the coverage, but the employees can still get contraceptives.

But a group of religious nonprofits disagree.

They say they are still complicit in their employees getting contraceptive coverage and call that a violation of a 1993 law. That says the government cannot “substantially burden” someone’s exercise of religion unless it is the “least restrictive means” of furthering a “compelling government interest.”

Supreme Court Seeks Alternative Ways To Deal With Contraceptive Coverage

By Robert Barnes

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

The Supreme Court on Tuesday called for additional briefing on alternative ways that employees of religious organizations could receive contraceptive coverage mandated by the Affordable Care Act without involving the organizations themselves.

The new order could mean that the court is deadlocked on the case, which was argued last week. Earlier in the day, it said it had evenly split on a major case involving public employee unions. In the wake of Justice Antonin Scalia’s death last month, the court is left with eight members.

The court was divided last week after arguments in the contraceptive case.

The court’s four liberals seemed to agree that the Obama administration had offered an acceptable compromise for religiously affiliated organizations such as universities, hospitals and charities that want to be freed from the obligation to supply their female employees with no-cost contraceptive coverage, which the organizations say violates their religious beliefs.

The accommodation requires the groups to tell the government they object, then allows the government to work with the groups’ insurers to provide the coverage without the organization’s involvement or financial support.

But the member who could provide a fifth vote, Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, agreed with the court’s other conservatives that it sounded as though the government were “hijacking” the insurance plans to provide contraceptive coverage rather than finding a way to provide the coverage without involving the groups.

In the order, the court directed both sides to file briefs that “address whether and how contraceptive coverage may be obtained by petitioners’ employees through petitioners’ insurance companies, but in a way that does not require any involvement of petitioners beyond their own decision to provide health insurance without contraceptive coverage to their employees.”

The court went into unusual specificity in asking the parties to address how that could happen, and made a suggestion.

It said the groups could contract to provide health insurance for their employees but inform the insurance company that they did not want the plan to include contraceptive coverage that they found objectionable.

Then the insurance company could “separately notify petitioners’ employees that the insurance company will provide cost-free contraceptive coverage, and that such coverage is not paid for by petitioners and is not provided through petitioners’ health plan.”

Under such a plan, the organizations would not have to submit a form to the government or their insurance companies addressing the coverage.

The court added: “The parties may address other proposals along similar lines, avoiding repetition of discussion in prior briefing.”

The briefing should be done by April 20, the court said.

U.S. Top Court Seeks More Information In Contraception Insurance Case

By Lawrence Hurley

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

High Court Order On Contraceptives Hints At Possible Compromise

By Greg Stohr

[Bloomberg Politics](#), March 29, 2016

The U.S. Supreme Court called for additional briefing in a divisive clash over contraceptives and Obamacare, issuing an unusual order that suggests at least one justice may be eyeing a possible compromise.

The order comes less than a week after an argument session hinted at a potential split in the case, which involves the Obama administration's effort to ensure that employees have insurance coverage for birth control even if they work for a religious group that objects.

The court Tuesday asked the two sides to consider an alternative means for the administration to accomplish its goals without violating the rights of the religious groups.

The court asked the two sides to file their briefs by April, signaling the justices want to decide the issue during the term that ends in June. The court has been operating with only eight members after the death of Justice Antonin Scalia, and the contraceptive case could produce a 4-4 deadlock.

The dispute stems from Obamacare's requirement that contraceptive coverage be included in employee and student health plans. The court's four liberal justices suggested last week that the administration had adequately accommodated faith-based employers and universities by letting them opt out and have their insurer provide the required birth-control coverage.

Justice Anthony Kennedy, the potential fifth vote for the administration, appeared skeptical, and the new order may reflect his effort to navigate a middle path.

The order asks the two sides to address "whether and how contraceptive coverage may be obtained" through the groups' insurance plans "but in a way that does not involve any involvement of petitioners beyond their own decision to provide health insurance without contraceptive coverage to their employees."

The lead case is *Zubik v. Burwell*, 14-1418.

Supreme Court Seeks Compromise In 'Contraceptive Mandate' Cases

By Richard Wolf

[USA Today](#), March 29, 2016

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court sought a compromise Tuesday that would let religious non-profit groups avoid any involvement in offering insurance coverage for contraceptives while also ensuring that employees get the coverage.

The justices asked lawyers on both sides in seven cases, which were heard last Wednesday, to submit additional briefs on the subject within the next few weeks.

It was a clear indication that at least one member of the court — most likely Justice Anthony Kennedy — is seeking a way out of yet another 4-4 decision that would set no national precedent. The high court has issued two such divided opinions in the past eight days following Justice Antonin Scalia's death last month.

"The parties are directed to address whether contraceptive coverage could be provided to petitioners' employees, through petitioners' insurance companies, without any such notice from petitioners," the order read.

The cases, including one filed by the Little Sisters of the Poor, test whether religiously-affiliated employers such as charities, hospitals and universities must file a form or write a letter to get out of offering free coverage for birth control. The groups say even that level of involvement violates their religious beliefs.

Read or Share this story: <http://usat.ly/1MQukTT>

Public Employee Unions Dodge A Supreme Court Bullet

By Richard Wolf

[USA Today](#), March 29, 2016

WASHINGTON — Conservatives bent on crippling the power of public employee unions lost their best opportunity in years Tuesday when the Supreme Court deadlocked over a challenge to the fees those unions collect from non-members.

Rather than seeking to reschedule the case for their next term, the justices simply announced they were tied 4-4 — a verdict which leaves intact the decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit upholding the fee collections.

That was a major victory for the unions and the court's four liberal justices following Justice Antonin Scalia's death last month. During oral argument in January, it had appeared almost certain that the court would strike down the requirement in 23 states that teachers and government workers contribute to the cost of collective bargaining, even if they disagree with their unions' demands.

The result would have been the demise of a nearly 40-year-old Supreme Court precedent that allows unions to impose such requirements on non-members. It would have made it harder for unions representing teachers, police and firefighters, and other government workers to maintain their power by affecting their pocketbooks.

Instead, the judicial deadlock allows the California Teachers Association to keep collecting the fees, but it does not have nationwide impact. The 9th Circuit standard applies only to states within its jurisdiction, including Alaska, Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon and Washington as well as

California. And the Supreme Court could accept a similar case for argument when it gets back to full strength.

It was the second time in two weeks that the justices had deadlocked in the wake of Scalia's death, but the first major case to emerge in a tie. And it's an indication that without Scalia, the justices may be equally divided in several other cases before the term ends in June.

Although the court's one-sentence opinion did not break down the vote, oral arguments on the hotly contested labor case made clear that the court's four liberal and four conservative justices were on opposite sides.

The justices could have rescheduled the case for when the court is back to full strength. But that could take a year or more, because Senate Republicans have refused to consider President Obama's nomination of federal appeals court Judge Merrick Garland to replace Scalia.

The case, *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, signified a major threat to public employee unions that represent nearly 36% of government workers — far more than the plummeting average for unions overall. Only 11% of Americans belonged to unions in 2014.

Rebecca Friedrichs, who challenged the California Teachers Association's collection of fees from non-members, speaks to the media after oral arguments at the Supreme Court in January (Photo: Mark Wilson, Getty Images)

If the justices had ruled that the free speech rights of non-members entitled them to contribute nothing to the costs of representation — they already can opt out of financing unions' political activities — more workers likely would have become "free riders." That would have led to a drop in membership and revenue.

"The U.S. Supreme Court today rejected a political ploy to silence public employees like teachers, school bus drivers, cafeteria workers, higher education faculty and other educators," said Lily Eskelsen Garcia, president of the National Education Association. "In *Friedrichs*, the court saw through the political attacks on the workplace rights of teachers, educators and other public employees. This decision recognizes that stripping public employees of their voices in the workplace is not what our country needs."

The 325,000-member teachers union, which spends more on politics than any special interest group in the state, warned in its high court brief that tens of thousands of contracts governing millions of workers nationally could be thrown "into disarray." More than 4.5 million teachers are union members.

The lawsuit was brought by the conservative Center for Individual Rights, which along with the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation has sought to overturn a 1977 Supreme Court decision that allowed public employee unions to collect "fair share" fees from non-members for the costs of collective bargaining.

Pro-union protesters rally in front of the Supreme Court in January, when the justices heard oral arguments in a case challenging public employees union fees. (Photo: Mark Wilson, Getty Images)

Rebecca Friedrichs, an elementary school teacher who was the lead plaintiff, had spent several years as a union officer and found its leadership unwilling to consider her suggestions. She opposed tenure laws that make it harder to fire bad teachers, seniority rules that ignore merit — even salary increases that lead to larger class sizes.

The battle had divided the nation almost equally between states where laws govern collective bargaining for public workers and those where workers can't be forced to join unions or contribute to them.

Defenders of the current system contended that so-called "right to work" laws, in states mostly led by Republicans, lead to inferior education and public services. Average test scores are lower for students in those states on fourth- and eighth-grade math and reading proficiency tests.

A brief filed by 21 states led by Democrats said fair-share fees lead to improved government efficiency and labor peace, because states can negotiate with just one union and strikes are more easily averted.

Moreover, a brief submitted on behalf of public safety unions said a defeat "risks setting in motion a union 'death spiral' — as membership drops, the union will have to increase dues to cover its expenses, which will create further incentives for additional workers to quit the union."

Demonstrators outside the Supreme Court in January, when the justices considered Rebecca Friedrichs' challenge to the California Teachers Association. (Photo: Mark Wilson, Getty Images)

The challengers didn't buy any of those arguments. Mark Mix, president of the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, had said those who oppose their local unions but are forced to pay many hundreds of dollars annually to support them "are not free riders. They're captive passengers."

Michigan and 17 other Republican-led states told the court that all collective bargaining at the government level amounts to lobbying, with taxpayers paying for the results. They blamed union contracts for municipal bankruptcies from Detroit to Stockton, Calif.

The high court's 1977 ruling in *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education* upholding union payments by non-members was unanimous, but the current court had moved away from it in two recent cases.

In 2012, the justices ruled 7-2 that a California public employees union could not impose an additional fee on workers without their assent. In 2014, they ruled 5-4 that Medicaid-funded home-care workers in Illinois did not have to pay dues to public employees unions because they were not typical state workers.

While neither case overruled *Abood*, the trend appeared clear. Justice Samuel Alito wrote in 2014 for the court's conservative majority that except in rare circumstances, "no person in this country may be compelled to subsidize speech by a third party that he or she does not wish to support."

In the end, however, Alito needed Scalia's fifth vote, and the leader of the court's conservative bloc died before he could provide it.

Tied 4-4 After Scalia's Death, High Court Gives Unions A Win

By Sam Hananel

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – In the clearest sign yet of the impact of Justice Antonin Scalia's death, U.S. labor unions scored a major victory Tuesday with a tie vote in a high-profile Supreme Court case they had once seemed all but certain to lose.

The 4-4 split, in a case that sharply divided the court's liberal union supporters and their conservative opponents, demonstrated how much is riding on President Barack Obama's effort to replace Scalia with a judge who could tilt the balance on the high court for years to come. Senate Republicans say they won't consider any nomination until a new president takes office.

The vacancy helped the liberals this time. The deadlocked vote came in a case that considered whether unions representing government employees can collect fees from workers who choose not to join. California teachers backed by a conservative group said being forced to pay union fees violated the free-speech rights of nonmembers who disagree with the union's policy positions.

The split vote left in place an appeals court ruling that upheld the collection of "fair share" fees from nonmembers.

The result was an unlikely reprieve for organized labor. It had seemed virtually certain that the high court would rule 5-4 to overturn a system that's been in place nearly 40 years. But the court now is operating with only eight justices after the Feb. 13 death of Scalia, who had been expected to rule against the unions.

The one-sentence opinion issued Tuesday did not identify how each justice voted. It simply upheld a decision from the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

But it was a blow to conservative groups that have spent years pushing the court to overrule a 1977 precedent that allows unions to collect fees from members and non-members alike to cover the costs of collective bargaining.

Union officials feared a ruling barring the fees would threaten membership and further weaken the clout of unions, which are major supporters of Democratic candidates and

causes. Labor leaders called the lawsuit part of a coordinated effort by conservative groups to weaken labor rights.

The tie vote came amid a political standoff over Obama's nomination of appeals court judge Merrick Garland to fill Scalia's vacant seat. Garland was meeting Tuesday with Republican Illinois Sen. Mark Kirk, his first meeting with a GOP senator.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest said the 4-4 tie rather than a majority ruling "is not what our founders intended."

But conservative groups said the split underscored the risk of replacing Scalia with someone more liberal. Confirming Garland would make the court "a rubber stamp not just for the wishes of powerful labor unions, but also for virtually the entire progressive agenda," said Curt Levey, executive director of the FreedomWorks Foundation.

The union case is just one among a handful of key disputes this term in which Scalia's vote had been expected to tip the balance toward a conservative result. During arguments in the case in January, Scalia and the court's four other conservatives had made it clear they were prepared to deal a blow to the unions.

Since Supreme Court decisions are not final until they're handed down, nothing Scalia did or said in connection with the case before his death mattered in the outcome.

A similar split between the court's liberals and conservatives was evident last week when the justices heard appeals from faith-based groups objecting to an Obama administration effort to ensure their employees and students can get cost-free birth control. The court on Tuesday directed both sides to file a new round of legal briefs exploring a possible compromise, setting an April 20 deadline.

In the union dispute, the high court had twice before raised doubts about the 1977 precedent, *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*. In that case, the court said public workers who choose not to join a union can be required to pay for bargaining costs as long as the fees don't go toward political purposes.

In 2014, a 5-4 majority stopped short of overturning the case, but the court's conservatives seemed to invite another full-on challenge.

The lead plaintiff in the latest case was Rebecca Friedrichs, a public school teacher from Orange County, California, who said she resigned from the California Teachers Association over differences but was still required to pay about \$650 a year to cover bargaining costs.

Union officials have worried that the potential loss of tens of millions of dollars in fees would reduce their power to bargain for higher wages and benefits for government employees. More than 5 million workers in 23 states and Washington, D.C., are required to pay fair-share fees to public-sector unions that represent them in bargaining. Unions say the fees are necessary because the organization

has a legal duty to represent all teachers, even those who are not members of the union.

Associated Press writer Darlene Superville contributed to this report.

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Victory For Unions As Supreme Court, Scalia Gone, Ties 4-4

By Adam Liptak

[New York Times](#), March 29, 2016

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Tuesday handed organized labor a major victory, deadlocking 4 to 4 in a case that had threatened to cripple the ability of public unions to collect fees from workers who chose not to join and did not want to pay for the unions' collective bargaining activities.

It was the starkest illustration yet of how the sudden death of Justice Antonin Scalia last month has blocked the power of the court's four remaining conservatives to move the law to the right.

The case was brought by 10 California public schoolteachers. A ruling in their favor would have affected millions of government workers and weakened public-sector unions, which stood to lose fees both from workers who objected to the positions the unions take and from those who simply chose not to join while benefiting from the unions' efforts on their behalf.

When the case was argued in January, the court's conservative majority seemed ready to say that forcing public workers to support unions they had declined to join violates the First Amendment. Justice Scalia's questions were consistently hostile to the unions.

His death changed the balance of power in this case, and most likely in many others, although 4-4 decisions mean an issue remains open and could return to the court in short order. In the case of Tuesday's ruling, which set no precedent, unions recognized that their victory was only provisional.

For now, the clout of the court's four-member liberal wing has increased significantly. Its members — Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen G. Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan — can create deadlocks, as they did on Tuesday, and they can also sometimes attract the vote of Justice Anthony M. Kennedy to achieve a liberal result.

Should Senate Republicans relent and confirm Judge Merrick B. Garland to the Supreme Court, the power of the court's liberals might only grow.

There have been two deadlocked cases since Justice Scalia died, and there will almost certainly be more by the end of the term in June. But there is no reason to think that ties will dominate the docket.

In recent years, the court has split 5 to 4 about a quarter of the time. In the term that ended last June, there were 19 such cases, and Justice Scalia was in the majority in just six of them.

"On eight-person courts the justices reach far fewer 4-4 decisions than we would expect," said Lee Epstein, a law professor and political scientist at Washington University in St. Louis. "They seem to work hard to minimize them because they're so inefficient. They can hold over cases, cast strategic votes to avoid a decision down the road that may be even worse ideologically, write narrowly, and dump cases on procedural grounds."

Union officials said they were elated by Tuesday's decision, but they remain wary of future efforts to diminish their effectiveness.

"We know the wealthy extremists who pushed this case want to limit the ability for workers to have a voice, curb voting rights and restrict opportunities for women and immigrants," said Mary Kay Henry, president of the Service Employees International Union.

The case was brought by the Center for Individual Rights, a libertarian group that pursued an unusual litigation strategy. Responding to signals from the Supreme Court's more conservative justices, the group asked the lower courts to rule against its clients, a Christian education group and the teachers, so they could file an appeal in the Supreme Court as soon as possible.

Terry Pell, the group's president, said he was disappointed with Tuesday's tie vote. "With the death of Justice Scalia, this outcome was not unexpected," he said. "We believe this case is too significant to let a split decision stand."

"Either compulsory dues are an acceptable exception to the First Amendment or they are not," Mr. Pell said. "A full court needs to decide this question and we expect this case will be reheard when a new justice is confirmed."

Under California law, public employees who choose not to join unions must pay a "fair share service fee," also known as an "agency fee," typically equivalent to members' dues. The fees, the law says, are meant to pay for collective bargaining activities, including "the cost of lobbying activities." More than 20 states have similar laws.

Government workers who are not members of unions have long been able to obtain refunds for the political activities of unions, like campaign spending. The case, *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, No. 14-915,

asked whether such workers must continue to pay for any union activities, including negotiating for better wages and benefits. A majority of the justices seemed inclined to say no.

Relying on a 1977 Supreme Court precedent, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, in San Francisco, upheld the requirement that the objecting teachers pay fees. Tuesday's announcement, saying only that "the judgment is affirmed by an equally divided court," upheld that ruling and set no new precedent.

The unions defending the compulsory fees said the teachers' First Amendment arguments were a ruse. Collective bargaining is different from spending on behalf of a candidate, the unions said. They said the plaintiffs were seeking to reap the benefits of such bargaining without paying their fair share of the cost.

Limiting the power of public unions has long been a goal of conservative groups, and they seemed very close to victory when the case was argued in January.

In 2014, the court stopped just short of overruling a foundational 1977 decision and declaring that government workers who choose not to join unions may not be forced to pay fees in lieu of dues. In the 1977 decision, *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*, the Supreme Court made a distinction between two kinds of compelled payments. Forcing nonmembers to pay for a union's political activities violated the First Amendment, the court said. But it was constitutional, the court added, to require nonmembers to help pay for the union's collective bargaining efforts to prevent freeloading and ensure "labor peace."

After Tuesday's deadlock, some critics of public unions said they would turn to other forums.

"With a divided court, thousands of public servants around the nation must still financially assist a government union that they disagree with," said Trey Kovacs, an analyst with the Competitive Enterprise Institute, a libertarian group. "Now it is up to state legislatures to provide public employees with the freedom to choose whether or not to pay for union representation."

Union officials, too, were looking ahead. "Now it's time for senators to do their job and appoint a successor justice to the highest court in our land," said Eric C. Heins, president of the California Teachers Association.

Mandatory Union Fees Survive As U.S. Supreme Court Deadlocks

By Greg Stohr

[Bloomberg Politics](#), March 29, 2016

The U.S. Supreme Court deadlocked in one of its highest profile cases, issuing a 4-4 ruling that lets more than 20 states continue to require public-sector workers to help fund the unions that represent them.

Union opponents had looked to be on the brink of a watershed victory that would have given workers a First Amendment right to withhold fees. Justice Antonin Scalia's Feb. 13 death changed the dynamic, depriving that side of what probably would have been a fifth vote.

The case, which involved California teachers, could have affected as many as 5 million public-sector workers. The 4-4 split Tuesday leaves intact a 1977 ruling that said public-sector employees can be compelled to pay for representation as long as they don't have to cover the cost of political or ideological activities.

Arguments in January suggested the court's conservative wing was poised to overturn that precedent. Justice Anthony Kennedy, often the court's decisive vote, said that teachers were being forced to subsidize their union even when they disagree on such issues as merit pay and classroom size.

The court's one-sentence order Tuesday didn't reveal who voted on which side or give any reasoning.

The deadlock is the court's second since Scalia's death left the court with a vacancy that may last through the November election. President Barack Obama has nominated federal appeals court Judge Merrick Garland to succeed Scalia, but Senate Republican leaders say they won't hold hearings or put the nomination to a vote. More Deadlocks

The justices may issue a number of 4-4 splits – potentially involving voting rights, abortion, contraceptive coverage and immigration – before their nine-month term ends in late June. Unlike with union fees, 4-4 rulings on abortion and immigration would represent victories for conservatives who won at the lower court level. Deadlocks uphold the lower court ruling without setting a nationwide precedent.

Unions, California Attorney General Kamala Harris and the Obama administration argued that mandatory fees prevent non-members from becoming "free riders" who receive pay raises and other benefits of collective bargaining without paying for the cost. They also argued that the Supreme Court has long given public employers the ability to limit the speech rights of employees to aid in managing the workplace.

Union advocates hailed the high court ruling, even as they acknowledged it didn't necessarily represent a final resolution of the issue.

"Today's decision was one for working people and for working families," Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, told reporters. "What the court did was stop the onslaught of the right wing to just bust unions." 'Political Attack'

"They thought they could use the Supreme Court for political attack and they failed," said Lee Saunders, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Under California law, public workers in what are known as “agency shop” jobs must either become dues-paying union members or pay a fee to support the union’s collective bargaining activities.

A group of teachers led by Rebecca Friedrichs argued that they were being forced to subsidize unions that don’t represent their views or their interests.

For teachers, union dues often exceed \$1,000 a year per employee, though people who don’t want to pay for political activities get a refund of \$350 to \$400, according to the teachers who sued.

Returning Issue?

“Today’s order means Rebecca Friedrichs’ case probably won’t be the one to finally free public servants from being forced to fund the activities of union bosses,” Patrick Semmens, vice president of the National Right to Work Foundation, said in a statement. “But the issue is not going away and could return to the high court soon.”

The justices had made their positions on the subject clear in a closely connected 2014 case. In that decision, the court’s four Democratic appointees defended the 1977 ruling, while the five Republican appointees – including Scalia – expressed skepticism.

Michael Carvin, the lawyer who argued against mandatory fees, said in an interview that Tuesday’s deadlock “was not unexpected after Justice Scalia’s untimely passing.”

Carvin said he planned to file a rehearing petition, which would ask the court not to finalize its ruling immediately and instead to hold the case until the nine-month term that starts in October. That potentially would keep the issue in front of the court until a ninth justice is seated. The high court rarely grants rehearing petitions. Next Justice

The split may give more fuel to both sides in the debate over Garland’s nomination. White House spokesman Josh Earnest said a shorthanded Supreme Court often won’t be able to clear up lower court disagreements.

“It is not what our founders intended,” he told reporters Tuesday. “It certainly isn’t consistent with their notion of federalism when you have federal laws applied in different ways.”

Carrie Severino, chief counsel of the Judicial Crisis Network and an opponent of the Garland nomination, said the Friedrichs decision “demonstrates just how much rides on the next justice confirmed to the Supreme Court.”

The case is Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association, 14-915.

(Adds reaction starting in 10th paragraph.)

Supreme Court Deadlocks Over Public Employee Union Case; Calif. Teachers Must Pay Dues

By Robert Barnes

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it was unable to resolve a major challenge to organized labor, and the result was a defeat for a group of California teachers who claim their free speech rights are violated when they are forced to pay dues to the state’s teachers union.

The court said it was split 4 to 4 on the issue, following the death of Justice Antonin Scalia. It was the most important case yet in which the eight-member court was unable to reach a decision.

At oral argument, the court’s conservatives appeared ready to junk a decades-old precedent that allows unions to collect an “agency fee” from nonmembers to support collective-bargaining activities for members and nonmembers alike.

Organized labor considered it the most vital Supreme Court case of the year, and one of a clutch of politically charged cases that puts the justices in the spotlight as the nation turns its attention to the elections of 2016.

The case involves only public-employee unions — not private workers — but those unions are the strongest segment of an organized labor movement that is increasingly tied to the Democratic Party. At the same time, Republican governors across the nation have become embroiled in high-profile battles with the public-employee unions in their states.

Conservative groups directly asked the court to overturn a 1977 decision, *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*, that favored the unions. That ruling said that states could allow public-employee unions to collect fees from nonmembers to cover the costs of workplace negotiations but not to cover the union’s political activities.

At oral argument, it appeared the groups would get their wish. The conservative justice Scalia had actually been the best hope for unions beyond the four liberal justices. But his questions seemed to make clear that he sided with the challengers.

When the court is evenly split, it affirms the decision of the appeals court that considered it. In this case, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit said it was bound by the *Abood* decision, and turned down the challenge.

Public unions saw the split decision as a victory.

“The U.S. Supreme Court today rejected a political ploy to silence public employees like teachers, school bus drivers, cafeteria workers, higher education faculty and other educators to work together to shape their profession,” said National Education Association President Lily Eskelsen García.

“In Friedrichs, the court saw through the political attacks on the workplace rights of teachers, educators and other public employees. This decision recognizes that stripping public employees of their voices in the workplace is not what our country needs.”

It is unlikely the fight is over. But Tuesday's action makes clear that the outcome will depend on the court's new justice.

The case is *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*.

The Eight-Justice Supreme Court Strikes Again

By Paul Barrett

[Bloomberg News](#), March 29, 2016

In its latest deadlock of the post-Scalia era, the Supreme Court split 4-4 on an issue of vital importance to public-employee unions and their foes. In its inaction, the high court left in place one of its own key pro-union precedents and, more broadly, highlighted the stakes surrounding President Obama's pending nomination to replace Justice Antonin Scalia, who died in February.

Some Supreme Court observers were disappointed by today's irresolution. "The most important labor union controversy to reach the Supreme Court in years sputtered to an end on Tuesday, with a 4-4 split, no explanation, and nothing settled definitely," veteran court analyst Lyle Denniston wrote on *Scotusblog*.

That's all true. Without any elaboration, the justices issued a one-sentence opinion that left intact a 1977 ruling that said public-sector employees may be forced to pay for collective bargaining representation, as long as they don't have to cover the costs of political or ideological union activities. An even split upholds the lower court ruling without setting a national precedent.

"The U.S. Supreme Court today rejected a political ploy to silence public employees like teachers, school bus drivers, cafeteria workers, higher education faculty and other educators to work together to shape their profession," National Education Association President Lily Eskelsen García said in a statement reacting to the non-ruling in *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*.

Had Scalia still been on the bench, he almost certainly would have voted with other conservatives to reduce union influence in the name of protecting the First Amendment right of non-member workers to refrain from supporting officially designated labor representatives. Likewise, were Obama's choice to succeed Scalia, Judge Merrick Garland, participating in the case, it's likely the cautious moderate would have joined the liberal wing to preserve the 1977 precedent.

Today's deadlock is the second since Scalia's death, which created a vacancy that Republican leaders in the Senate vow to keep open at least through the November presidential election by refusing to consider the Garland nomination. In the first, the shorthanded court deadlocked in

a Missouri dispute involving discrimination under a federal equal-credit law.

Lawyers who organized the anti-union challenge to the nearly 40-year-old precedent immediately said they would ask the Supreme Court to reconsider the case during its next nine-month term, beginning in October. By the time the case came up for reargument, a ninth justice could be confirmed and have ascended to the top bench.

As a virtually silent high court communicated today, the identity of that ninth justice will have a profound effect on the outcome of prominent social and economic disputes.

A Supreme Court Absence Is Felt

Roberts's rule of incrementalism loses a free-speech opportunity.

[Wall Street Journal](#), March 29, 2016

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

Supreme Court Hands Victory To Labor Unions In 4-4 Tie

By Lydia Wheeler

[The Hill](#), March 29, 2016

The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued its first major split decision since the death of Justice Antonin Scalia, delivering a victory to unions and further inflaming the debate over President Obama's nominee.

The court divided 4-4 in a case that threatened to roll back state laws requiring some public sector workers to pay union fees. Before Scalia's death, unions had been expected to lose the case, an outcome that could have dealt a heavy blow to their membership.

Instead, the case ended in a tie, upholding a lower court ruling in favor of the California Teachers Association.

Groups on the left and right quickly highlighted the case to try and rally support in the battle over Judge Merrick Garland, Obama's nominee to replace Scalia.

"The Court's 4-4 decision demonstrates just how much rides on the next justice confirmed to the Supreme Court," Carrie Severino, chief counsel and policy director of the conservative Judicial Crisis Network, said in a statement.

"If the Senate confirms Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court, it will be creating a new liberal majority that will dominate the court's decisions for a generation. The Senate should hold the line on letting the people decide what kind of court they want."

Democrats made a similar argument, albeit in reverse. Presidential hopeful Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) said conservatives are just one justice away from being able to dismantle public sector unions.

"Working people in this country need a seat at the bargaining table to fight for higher wages, decent health care,

a secure retirement and a safe working environment,” he said. “Public sector unions are that voice.”

The case — known as *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association* — centered on a California law that allows school districts to require public school teachers, as a condition of employment, to either join the union representing teachers in their district or pay the equivalent of dues to that union — typically 2 percent of a new teacher’s salary.

The justices issued only a short statement Tuesday saying the judgment was affirmed by a divided court. No other explanation was provided.

During oral arguments in January, several justices, including the court’s swing voter Anthony Kennedy, seemed skeptical of the California law, leading many to speculate that the majority would rule against the union.

Giving a hypothetical, Kennedy questioned what would stop California from requiring every state employee to donate 1 percent of his or her salary to the governor’s election campaign.

“No one thinks, realistically, that’s a voluntary decision to give money,” he said at the time. “There’s only one purpose behind that kind of requirement, which is to inflate the governor’s political war chest, just like the only purpose behind this is to, through inadvertence and neglect, inflate the union’s war chest by people who really have not made a voluntary decision to do so.”

A high court ruling against the fee requirement could have sapped the financial power of labor unions by allowing people to “free ride” on union representation without paying fees for it.

To rule in favor of the teachers, the court likely would have had to overturn the decision in a 1977 in a case known as *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*. That ruling upheld in union shop rules in public workplaces.

Overturning long-standing precedent is something the court is typically reluctant to do.

The California Teachers Association (CTA) in a statement called the lawsuit a “political ploy” that aimed to make it harder for working families and the middle class to come together.

“California’s educators will continue to work together to provide quality, safe and healthy schools as we continue to ensure our students get the quality public education they need and deserve. Now it’s time for senators to do their job and appoint a successor justice to the highest court in our land,” CTA’s president Eric Heins said in a statement.

Even before Tuesday’s split decision, the battle lines over Garland’s nomination appeared to have hardened in the Senate.

While some GOP senators have said they are open to meeting with Garland — with Sen. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) becoming the first to do so on Tuesday — the party is holding firm on leaving the court vacancy to the next president.

Democrats have assailed that position, creating an election-year showdown over the court that is playing out in ad campaigns nationwide.

– Updated at 2:15 p.m.

Supreme Court Hands Win To Unions, Splits 4-4 Without Scalia

By Lawrence Hurley

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

Unions Win, But The Court Is Still Hobbled

[New York Times](#), March 29, 2016

In January, the Supreme Court heard arguments in a major labor case whose outcome could affect the lives of millions of Americans. On Tuesday, six weeks after the death of Justice Antonin Scalia, the court’s eight members announced that they were deadlocked in a 4-to-4 vote.

The case, *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, was an effort by conservative anti-union activists to cripple public-sector unions by prohibiting them from charging non-members fees that support collective-bargaining activities. The plaintiffs had claimed that imposing such fees violated their First Amendment rights. Tuesday’s outcome was a temporary victory for unions, because the teachers’ union had won in the federal appeals court and the 4-to-4 vote means the appellate decision stands. But the issue will most likely come before the justices again; the anti-union forces already have several similar lawsuits moving through lower courts.

Since 1977, the Supreme Court has upheld union “fair share” fees as constitutional. The court has, in fact, reaffirmed that ruling many times in the past four decades. But the evenly divided ruling leaves the issue open to reconsideration, without the affirmation of a longstanding precedent a nine-member court can and should give.

After Justice Scalia’s death, top Senate Republicans announced they would not consider any nominee from President Obama. The blockage, they say, is about “letting the people’s voice be heard” in the presidential election. In the meantime, they claim, an eight-member court can get along just fine.

That’s not true. The Supreme Court is the nation’s final arbiter of legal disputes, and while the Constitution does not mandate a certain number of justices, an 1869 federal law set it at nine. A fully staffed court is needed to resolve this issue, as well as many others that could be headed for tie votes. This term alone, major cases involving abortion rights, religious freedom and women’s access to contraceptives, voting rights and Mr. Obama’s actions on immigration are all at risk.

Mitch McConnell, the Senate majority leader, has said his party's attitude is "about a principle, not a person." Yet at the same time he has rejected Mr. Obama's pick, Merrick Garland, chief judge of the federal appeals court for the District of Columbia Circuit, on the grounds that he is opposed by the National Rifle Association. The Washington Post reported on Monday that a longtime lawyer for the N.R.A., Charles Cooper, is a great admirer of Judge Garland, who he once said would be "among President Clinton's very best judicial appointments."

It's no surprise that other Republicans are also struggling to defend their do-nothing stance, and bungling their messages in the process. Senator Charles Grassley of Iowa, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, which decides whether to give Judge Garland a hearing, has been dogged by criticism from his constituents at home. "It's not fair for this man not to get a hearing," one said to him at a town hall meeting on Monday. "It's not right for this country to be short-staffed on the Supreme Court."

Last Friday, Senator Jerry Moran, Republican of Kansas, came under intense fire from Tea Party groups for saying that the Senate should do its job and give Judge Garland a hearing, even though he also promised to vote against Judge Garland before meeting him.

The nation's founders devised a government of checks and balances, not of obstruction and paralysis. Every day that Senate Republicans refuse to give Judge Garland the consideration he is due, they are embarrassing themselves and ignoring the voices of the people.

Rauner Calls Pro-union Supreme Court Ruling 'Tragic'

By Kim Geiger

[Chicago Tribune](#), March 29, 2016

A key piece of Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner's multifront effort to chip away at union influence in Illinois was dealt a blow Tuesday when the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a federal law that allows government employee unions to collect fees from nonmembers.

One of Rauner's first acts after taking over last year was to try to stop such fees from being passed on to unions. The issue ended up in a lawsuit that's pending in federal court in Chicago.

A similar case in California got to the high court first. In a 4-4 split decision, the Supreme Court affirmed a lower court ruling that rejected an Orange County teacher's claim that her free-speech rights were violated by being forced to support the union through about \$650 a year in fees.

The tie vote was a relief to unions, who had been bracing for an unfavorable ruling after oral arguments in January indicated that a majority of the justices were skeptical of the fair-share arrangement. The death of Justice

Antonin Scalia last month left the court without a majority, leading to the split decision.

Asked about the ruling during a school visit in LeRoyin east-central Illinois, Rauner called it a "tragic decision by the court."

"It's a loss for freedom of speech and freedom of political expression in the United States, it's a loss for teachers, I think it's a loss for all government employees," Rauner said. "It was clear that Justice Scalia would have supported freedom of speech and political affiliation and that decision would have gone the other way, but the court was split 4-4 and therefore upheld the lower court."

Unions applauded the Supreme Court's split decision but warned that it was likely not the final word on the issue.

Supreme Court's tie vote upholds public employee fees for unions

David G. Savage

The Supreme Court announced a tie vote today in what labor law experts had called a "life-or-death" case for public employee unions.

The split decision preserves a long-standing rule that requires about half of the nation's teachers, transit workers and other public employees to pay a "fair share..."

The Supreme Court announced a tie vote today in what labor law experts had called a "life-or-death" case for public employee unions.

The split decision preserves a long-standing rule that requires about half of the nation's teachers, transit workers and other public employees to pay a "fair share..." (David G. Savage)

"There's no doubt that these same wealthy special interests will continue their attacks in this venue and others and attempt to use the courts to bring further challenges to the rights of workers," said Anders Lindall, a spokesman for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 31, the largest union for state workers in Illinois.

Illinois is one of about two-dozen states that requires its workers to pay "fair share" fees to public employee unions if they are not union members. The theory is that workers who are not part of a union still benefit from its services, such as negotiating new contracts and handling worker grievances, even if they don't support the union's political agenda. Fair-share fees allow the union to collect money from nonmembers to cover the cost of those services, but those dollars can't be spent on political activities such as campaign contributions.

Last year, Rauner issued an executive order that directed the state to stop passing fair-share fees on to unions, arguing that it's impossible to ensure that the fees aren't used for political activity because the unions directly negotiate with the government.

Chicago Teachers Union sets plans for Friday walkout

Juan Perez Jr.

In addition to early morning pickets at schools, the Chicago Teachers Union plans a full day of teach-ins and rallies at sites around the city during a one-day strike Friday that the union promises will shut down the schools, according to a preliminary schedule issued Monday.

The union exhorted...

In addition to early morning pickets at schools, the Chicago Teachers Union plans a full day of teach-ins and rallies at sites around the city during a one-day strike Friday that the union promises will shut down the schools, according to a preliminary schedule issued Monday.

The union exhorted... (Juan Perez Jr.)

Anticipating legal blowback, Rauner also filed a federal lawsuit seeking to have his decision declared legal and hoping to bring the issue to the Supreme Court.

Rauner also had weighed in on the California case, filing a brief with the Supreme Court in which he contended that public sector union activities in Illinois can't be separated between political and nonpolitical.

"Even those union activities that are confined to collective bargaining have significant political implications," Rauner's lawyers wrote. "Enriched by contributions from members and nonmembers alike, public sector unions in Illinois, whose labor and management sit on the same side of the table, have negotiated wages and benefits that have unrealistically kept going up while the state economy has kept going down. The connection is hardly coincidental."

Rauner's attempt to withhold Illinois workers' fair-share fees was put on hold last year when a judge in St. Clair County ordered the state to keep passing the fees along while the matter continued to play out in court.

When Rauner tried to press the issue in federal court, a judge dismissed him from the case, saying Rauner lacked standing to challenge public unions in his official capacity because he had "no personal interest at stake." Three workers who also were contesting the payments were allowed to proceed with their own complaint, and Rauner on Tuesday said he hopes that case will bring the matter back to the high court.

"Our case is winding its way through the courts and it will get to the Supreme Court probably at some point in the future," Rauner said. "And we will just continue the fight for the freedom of political expression and the right of free speech for government employees. It's a fundamental issue."

kgeiger@tribpub.com

mcgarcia@tribpub.com

Supreme Court Struggles To Deal With 4-4 Split

A pair of developments revealed the new dynamic of a court equally divided between conservatives and liberals

By Jess Bravin

[Wall Street Journal](#), March 29, 2016

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

Garland Holds First Meeting With GOP Senator, Kirk Of IL

By Alan Fram

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – Sen. Mark Kirk became the first Republican senator to meet with Supreme Court nominee Merrick Garland, complimenting President Barack Obama's pick Tuesday as "one of the most eminent jurists in the country" and criticizing GOP leaders' refusal to hold confirmation hearings or a vote on him.

Kirk, who represents Democratic-leaning Illinois, is perhaps the most endangered Senate Republican facing re-election in November. And when it comes to the battle over Obama's pick to fill the court vacancy, Kirk has been an outlier.

He's one of just three Senate Republicans to say the Senate Judiciary Committee should hold hearings on Garland. And he's one of two GOP senators – along with Susan Collins, R-Maine – to say the full chamber should vote on the nominee.

"I think when you just say I'm not going to meet with him and all, that's too closed-minded," Kirk told reporters as he met with Garland.

Republicans, led by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., insist that Obama's successor should fill the Supreme Court vacancy after American voters have a say in November. The death last month of conservative Justice Antonin Scalia created the court opening, and Obama is pressing to make his third appointment to the high court.

"By leading by example, I'm showing what a rational, responsible guy would do that really wants the constitutional process to go forward," Kirk said.

The senator called Garland "one of the most eminent jurists in the country."

Democrats have been insisting that the Senate go through the regular confirmation process for Garland, the chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. With most public opinion polls showing majorities favoring action on Garland, Democrats' goal is to force GOP senators to buckle under pressure or make some of them facing re-election this fall pay the price on Election Day.

At least 13 Senate Republicans have said they'd be willing to meet with the federal judge though many said they would tell him that he won't get a vote.

Earlier this month, Kirk said on a Chicago radio program that the Senate should "man up and cast a vote."

Garland has met with seven Democratic senators.

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Senator Kirk Criticizes Fellow Republicans On Garland Boycott

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

First Senate Republican Meets With Supreme Court Nominee Garland

Sen. Mark Kirk says 'we should do our job' and go through with confirmation process

By Siobhan Hughes

[Wall Street Journal](#), March 29, 2016

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

Kirk Becomes First GOP Senator To Meet With Garland

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

Sen. Mark Kirk became the first Republican senator to meet with Supreme Court nominee Merrick Garland, complimenting President Barack Obama's pick Tuesday as "one of the most eminent jurists in the country" and criticizing GOP leaders' refusal to hold confirmation hearings or a vote on him.

Kirk, who represents Democratic-leaning Illinois, is perhaps the most endangered Senate Republican facing re-election in November. And when it comes to the battle over Obama's pick to fill the court vacancy, Kirk has been an outlier.

He's one of just three Senate Republicans to say the Senate Judiciary Committee should hold hearings on Garland. And he's one of two GOP senators — along with Susan Collins, R-Maine — to say the full chamber should vote on the nominee.

"I think when you just say I'm not going to meet with him and all, that's too closed-minded," Kirk told reporters as he met with Garland.

Republicans, led by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., insist that Obama's successor should fill the Supreme Court vacancy after American voters have a say in November. The death last month of conservative Justice Antonin Scalia created the court opening, and Obama is pressing to make his third appointment to the high court.

"By leading by example, I'm showing what a rational, responsible guy would do that really wants the constitutional process to go forward," Kirk said.

The senator called Garland "one of the most eminent jurists in the country."

Democrats have been insisting that the Senate go through the regular confirmation process for Garland, the chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. With most public opinion polls showing majorities favoring action on Garland, Democrats' goal is to force GOP senators to buckle under pressure or make some of them facing re-election this fall pay the price on Election Day.

At least 13 Senate Republicans have said they'd be willing to meet with the federal judge though many said they would tell him that he won't get a vote.

Earlier this month, Kirk said on a Chicago radio program that the Senate should "man up and cast a vote."

Garland has met with seven Democratic senators.

Associated Press

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Senators Who Won't Meet With Garland Are 'Too Closed-minded,' Says GOP's Kirk

By Mike Debonis

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

The first Republican senator to meet with President Obama's Supreme Court nominee said Tuesday that GOP colleagues who are refusing to meet with Merrick B. Garland are "too closed-minded" and that he could possibly vote to confirm Garland.

Mark Kirk of Illinois made the comments while seated next to Garland in his Capitol Hill office while facing a scrum of several dozen reporters, who were briefly invited inside as the two men began a 25-minute meeting.

Garland did not respond to questions, while Kirk said he was "leading by example" by meeting with the judge.

"I'm showing what a rational, responsible guy would do who really wants the constitutional process to go forward," he said, adding that there is a need for "a rational, adult, open minded consideration of the constitutional process."

Pressed on whether his colleagues who are refusing to consider Garland's nomination are being open-minded and

rational, he said: "I think when you just say, 'I'm not going to meet with him,' that's too closed-minded."

Kirk is the only Republican to have called for an up-or-down vote on Garland before the November elections. He is one of the most ideologically moderate Republican senators and faces a difficult reelection this year in what is a traditionally Democratic state.

Compounding Kirk's dilemma are Garland's Illinois roots, having grown up in the Chicago suburb of Lincolnwood.

The meeting with Kirk is the first in a series of GOP sitdowns that Democrats hope will begin weakening Senate Republicans' resolve to block Garland's confirmation. Led by Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), most Senate Republicans have said they are opposed to confirmation hearings and a vote on Garland's nomination before November, arguing that voters should be able to influence the identity of the next Supreme Court justice.

Kirk said Tuesday that Garland's nomination "shouldn't just be for nothing."

"We should have a long discussion about key issues before the court," Kirk said, noting that he was particularly interested in discussing with Garland to what extent federal racketeering laws might be used to dismantle the illegal drug industry.

After the meeting, he tweeted:

As the first #GOP Senator to meet with #MerrickGarland, I urge my colleagues in the #Senate to do the same. pic.twitter.com/foqEL1WCMn

— Mark Kirk (@SenatorKirk) March 29, 2016

But while Democrats are pleased that Kirk has chosen to break with McConnell and most of his Republican colleagues, they are allowing him any credit for taking that stand.

A spokesman for Kirk's Democratic Senate opponent, Rep. Tammy Duckworth, said Kirk "seems to expect extra credit for doing the bare minimum" and has "done absolutely nothing in the meantime that would make McConnell feel the least bit inconvenienced for his obstruction."

Without a direct call on McConnell to hold hearings and an up-or-down vote, Duckworth spokesman Matt McGrath said, "Illinois families have every right to question Kirk's sincerity and whether this is more election year posturing from a vulnerable candidate."

Kirk has joined GOP colleagues Susan Collins (Maine), Jerry Moran (Kan.) and Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) in calling for confirmation hearings. About a dozen other GOP senators have said they would meet with Garland as a courtesy, but those senators insist such a meeting wouldn't affect their decision to refuse formal hearings or votes.

Democrats this week attempted to increase the pressure to consider Garland by proposing an April timeline for hearings and a May deadline for an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor.

GOP Senator 'Perplexed' By McConnell's Supreme Court Strategy

By Jordain Carney

[The Hill](#), March 29, 2016

Republican Sen. Susan Collins (Maine) said Tuesday she is confused by her party's strategy to block Supreme Court nominee Merrick Garland from getting a hearing.

"I must confess that I'm a bit perplexed by his position," she told WGAN, a local radio station, about Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.). "I'm not quite sure what his thinking is, but it's clearly one that he believes strongly in."

While GOP leaders remain committed to not moving Garland's nomination, Collins warned that if Hillary Clinton becomes the next president, she could nominate a more liberal judge. She also raised alarm at the prospect of GOP front-runner Donald Trump picking the next justice.

"If the [Republican] nominee is, let's say, that it is Mr. Trump, and he becomes the next president, who knows who his nominee would be. He's rather unpredictable," she added.

A small group of Republicans have floated a lame-duck vote on Garland if their party loses the election, but McConnell has tried to shut down speculation, saying it wouldn't happen.

Collins, who is not on the Judiciary Committee, quickly came out in support of giving the president's pick a hearing, arguing the "normal process" should be followed.

"It just seemed to me that there was no basis for saying that no matter who the president nominates we were not going to consider that individual," she said Tuesday.

Her comments put her at direct odds with her party's leadership, as well as most of her Republican colleagues.

While more than a dozen senators have suggested they are open to meeting with Garland, most say they will use a sit-down to reiterate that the court seat should remain empty until next year.

Asked if she was "catching hell" for her position, Collins suggested she wasn't, but added, "Obviously the leader's not real happy with me."

"I'm sure there are some that are unhappy with me, but this is a solemn responsibility," she said.

Collins will meet with Garland next week.

Yellen Says Caution In Raising Rates Is 'Especially Warranted'

By Craig Torres

[Bloomberg News](#), March 29, 2016

Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen said it is appropriate for U.S. central bankers to "proceed cautiously" in raising interest rates because the global economy presents heightened risks.

The speech to the Economic Club of New York made a strong case for running the economy hot to push away from

the zero boundary for the Federal Open Market Committee's target rate.

"I consider it appropriate for the committee to proceed cautiously in adjusting policy," Yellen said Tuesday. "This caution is especially warranted because, with the federal funds rate so low, the FOMC's ability to use conventional monetary policy to respond to economic disturbances is asymmetric."

Fed officials left their benchmark lending rate target unchanged this month at 0.25 percent to 0.5 percent while revising down their median estimate for the number of rate increases that will be warranted this year to two hikes, from four projected in December.

U.S. Treasuries advanced following her remarks, while the dollar weakened and U.S. stocks erased earlier losses. The Standard & Poor's 500 Index was up 0.5 percent to 2,046.90 at 1:52 p.m. in New York, after falling as much as 0.4 percent.

"Yellen has doubled down on the dovishness from the March statement and press conference," said Neil Dutta, head of U.S. economics at Renaissance Macro Research LLC in New York. "Global economic developments are cited very prominently."

Yellen said the FOMC "would still have considerable scope" to ease policy if rates hit zero again, pointing to forward guidance on interest rates and increases in the "size or duration of our holdings of long-term securities."

"While these tools may entail some risks and costs that do not apply to the federal funds rate, we used them effectively to strengthen the recovery from the Great Recession, and we would do so again if needed," she said.

Fed officials' quarterly economic forecasts for the U.S. didn't change much in March, while Yellen stressed in a post-FOMC meeting press conference on March 16 that their sense of risks from global economic and financial developments had mounted.

Yellen mentioned two risks in her New York speech. Growth in China is slowing, she noted, and there is some uncertainty about how the nation will handle the transition from exports to domestic sources of growth. A second risk is the outlook for commodity prices, and oil in particular. Further declines in oil prices could have "adverse" effects on the global economy, she said.

Since the March meeting, Fed officials have seen more evidence that the pace of domestic growth may be slowing. U.S. gross domestic product decelerated to 1.4 percent pace in the fourth quarter, while the Atlanta Fed's GDPNow estimate for the first quarter is 0.6 percent, partly due to slower rates of consumer spending growth.

On the other hand, inflation measures have shown a trend of gradual firming. The personal consumption expenditures price index minus food and energy rose 1.7

percent for the year ended February, the fastest pace in three years.

Yellen said she was confident that inflation would gradually return to the Fed's 2 percent goal over time, while noting that the course of prices was a two-sided risk.

Dallas Fed chief Rob Kaplan, speaking at an event in Austin, Texas, later reiterated the message that the Fed would raise rates gradually, while emphasizing that the central bank should not stay too easy for too long.

"I do think that there are costs to having excessive accommodation. It's not free," he told reporters. "It's important that we move toward removing accommodation, but it has to be based on conditions." Kaplan is not a voting member of the FOMC this year.

Fed Chair Janet Yellen: Central Bank Should Move 'cautiously' In Raising Rates

By Ylan Q. Mui

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen said Tuesday that the central bank should move "cautiously" in raising interest rates in the midst of a weak global economy, though she expressed confidence that the U.S. recovery remains on track.

The Fed raised its benchmark interest rate in December for the first time since the Great Recession, a critical milestone in the nation's economic progress. But after a volatile start to the year that included wild swings in the financial markets, new lows for oil prices and a slowdown in growth abroad, the central bank opted not to raise rates again when officials met in Washington earlier this month.

In her speech before the Economics Club of New York on Tuesday, Yellen said the turmoil means that the Fed will increase rates even more slowly than initially expected.

"Given the risks to the outlook, I consider it appropriate for the [central bank] to proceed cautiously in adjusting policy," she said, according to prepared remarks.

Her comments suggest the Fed is unlikely to be ready to raise rates again by the time officials meet next in late April. Wall Street cheered that prospect, with both the Standard & Poor's 500-stock index and the Dow Jones industrial average shifting positive after trading in the red during the morning. The bond market also rallied, pushing down yields on 10-year Treasuries.

The Fed's decisions help steer the course of the nation's economy: Low interest rates can boost the recovery by encouraging consumers and businesses to spend. Higher rates serve to rein in an overheating economy.

But there is substantial debate within the central bank over the conditions necessary to raise rates again. Just last week, Atlanta Fed President Dennis Lockhart indicated he could support a rate hike in April and described recent

economic data as “positive.” But Fed Gov. Lael Brainard recently called for patience, arguing the central bank should “protect and preserve” the progress made so far.

Yellen said Tuesday that the Fed can respond to faster inflation and a stronger economy by raising rates more quickly. But it has limited ability to support the recovery if it were to falter or if inflation remained low. That’s because the Fed slashed its benchmark interest rates to zero in the depths of the recession, and it is only slightly above that now.

Central banks in Europe, Japan and other countries confronting this problem have pushed their interest rates into negative territory. Notably, Yellen did not broach that option in her speech Tuesday. Instead, she said that the Fed could promise to keep rates low or increase its already massive balance sheet if it needed to provide more stimulus.

Yellen also reiterated her skepticism about the recent uptick in inflation, which has been running below the Fed’s target of 2 percent for several years. Recently, several measures have shown a pickup in the pace of price increases – a development Fed Vice Chair Stanley Fischer said might signal the “first stirrings” of inflation.

But on Tuesday, Yellen said it was “too early to tell.” She noted that inflation data can be volatile and she expects the stronger dollar to weigh on price increases for several months. Yellen also said she was concerned that the financial markets and the public’s inflation expectations had been drifting lower.

Yet she said that would only delay – not derail – the Fed’s ability to meet its target. And the longer it takes for inflation to reach 2 percent, the more accommodative the Fed would have to be.

“My baseline assumption of stable expectation is still justified,” she said. “Nevertheless, the decline in some indicators has heightened the risk that this judgment could be wrong.”

Investors are now betting that the Fed will raise rates only once or twice more this year, compared to the four rate increases that the central bank had previously anticipated. Yellen said market expectations of lower interest rates have helped buffer the U.S. economy from the turbulence overseas.

“Such a stabilizing effect is one consequence of effective communication,” Yellen said Tuesday.

The Fed has emphasized that future moves will depend on the performance of economic data – and that the outlook is particularly cloudy.

“Monetary policy will, as always, respond to the economy’s twists and turns so as to promote, as best as we can in an uncertain economic environment, the employment and inflation goals,” Yellen said.

Janet Yellen Says Fed Still Plans To Raise Interest Rates But Carefully

[New York Times](#), March 30, 2016

Janet L. Yellen, the Federal Reserve chairwoman, said on Tuesday that the United States economy remained on track despite a rough start to the year because the drag from weak growth in other countries was being offset by lower borrowing costs.

Ms. Yellen told the Economic Club of New York that the economy “had proven remarkably resilient,” and that the Fed expected better days ahead. She said the Fed still intended to pursue a careful, patient course toward higher interest rates as the economy improved.

The cautious tone of her remarks, however, suggested no rate increase was likely at the Fed’s next meeting, in April, shifting the eyes of Fed watchers to its subsequent meeting in June.

“I consider it appropriate for the committee to proceed cautiously in adjusting policy,” Ms. Yellen said.

Stocks jumped and bond yields fell in the moments after the publication of Ms. Yellen’s remarks, part of a now-familiar pattern in which markets celebrate signs of economic softness and Fed restraint because that means interest rates will stay lower for longer.

“The Fed chair is clearly in no hurry to undertake the next rate hike, in spite of the generally firmer tone of U.S. domestic data in recent weeks,” Krishna Guha, head of the global policy and central bank strategy team at Evercore ISI, wrote in a note to clients. He said the remarks underscored that Ms. Yellen would rather move too slowly to raise interest rates and rein in the economy than too quickly.

The Fed, which raised its benchmark rate in December for the first time since the financial crisis, continues to debate the timing of a second increase.

The Fed’s policy-making committee indicated after its most recent meeting, this month, that it now expected to raise rates by about half a percentage point this year.

That was half as much as the Fed had predicted at the beginning of the year.

Ms. Yellen attributed the deceleration on Tuesday to a judgment by Fed officials that somewhat lower rates were necessary to maintain steady growth.

“The committee in March did rethink to some extent the policy path that is appropriate to achieve an essentially unchanged outlook,” Ms. Yellen said.

She described a dynamic in which slower growth in other nations, which tends to drag on domestic growth, had been offset by a loosening of financial conditions.

Video Janet Yellen on Global Risks

Speaking at the Economic Club of New York, the Federal Reserve chairwoman, Janet L. Yellen, described

risks to the United States economy, including uncertainties in China and global commodity prices, including oil.

That is the way monetary policy is supposed to work — markets anticipated the Fed's reaction to a weaker economic outlook, providing a jolt of stimulus before the Fed even had a chance to speak. The Fed then confirmed the market's expectations by announcing after its March policy meeting that it expected to raise its benchmark interest rate more slowly.

Ms. Yellen said the reaction showed that markets have internalized the Fed's mantra that its management of interest rates is "data dependent," meaning the Fed's predictions about the likely path of interest rates are contingent on the economy's actual performance.

"This mechanism serves as an important 'automatic stabilizer' for the economy," she said.

While the Fed's assessment of the economy's anticipated performance remains unchanged, Ms. Yellen said officials now saw more risks to that outlook.

Alongside the direct effects of slower global growth, she said she remained concerned about sluggish inflation and about the deterioration of inflation expectations.

The Fed's preferred measure of inflation rose by 1.7 percent through the 12 months that ended in January, a stronger pace than it managed the previous year. But Ms. Yellen said it was "too early to tell if this recent faster pace will prove durable."

Indeed, Fed officials predicted in March that inflation would subside somewhat in the coming months, attributing the higher readings in the latest inflation survey to unusual jumps in the price of some kinds of goods, most notably clothing.

The Fed regards the stability of inflation expectations as a mainstay of effective monetary policy. It wants inflation to be 2 percent a year and it wants people to believe inflation will be 2 percent a year, because expectations help to determine actual inflation.

Market-based measures of inflation expectations, however, are running well below 2 percent, while some survey-based measures also have drifted lower.

Ms. Yellen acknowledged these trends, a change from last year when Fed officials were largely dismissive. But she said the significance was "far from conclusive."

Fed officials continue to regard the decline in market-based measures as a result of pressures unrelated to expectations about inflation. And Ms. Yellen said that survey-based measures historically had fallen hand-in-hand with oil prices.

"Taken together, these results suggest that my baseline assumption of stable expectations is still justified," she said.

"Nevertheless, the decline in some indicators has heightened the risk that this judgment could be wrong," she added. "If so, the return to 2 percent inflation could take

longer than expected and might require a more accommodative stance of monetary policy." Continue reading the main story

Yellen Stresses That Fed Foresees Gradual Pace Of Rate Hikes

By Martin Crutsinger And Charles Sheehan

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

NEW YORK (AP) — Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen said Tuesday that the Fed still envisions a gradual pace of interest rate increases in light of global pressures that could weigh on the U.S. economy.

Yellen didn't specify a timetable for further hikes to follow the Fed's rate increase in December from record lows. She said the risks to the United States appear limited but cautioned that that assessment is subject to "considerable uncertainty."

Speaking to the Economic Club of New York, Yellen said the central bank is monitoring a global economic slump, sharply lower oil prices and stock market turbulence, which she said have hurt some U.S. consumers and key economic sectors such as manufacturing. She said that because foreign economic growth seems to have further weakened this year, the Fed will "proceed cautiously" in raising rates.

In light of Yellen's comments, most economists expect no hike at the Fed's next meeting — April 26-27 — despite remarks last week from other Fed officials that had raised the possibility of a rate increase then.

"Despite a growing chorus of calls from even centrist-leaning officials to resume raising policy rates, Chair Yellen stuck to the dovish script of the March meeting statement," when the Fed expressed concern about global pressures and kept rates unchanged, said Sal Guatieri, senior economist at BMO Capital Markets.

Investors welcomed Yellen's message that the Fed would move slowly in raising rates. Major U.S. stock indexes turned higher after she began her remarks, reversing an early loss, and bond yields dipped.

Yellen noted that the U.S. job market and housing recovery have lifted the economy close to full health despite the risks that remain. She observed that the economy has benefited from low long-term U.S. borrowing rates. Those rates have been held down by money flowing into U.S. bonds from investors, who have scaled back their expectations for the number of Fed rate hikes this year from four to two at most.

The Fed chair said that while stock prices have largely rebounded to roughly where they were when 2016 began, "in other respects economic and financial conditions remain less favorable than they did" in December, when the Fed raised its key rate modestly after keeping it near zero since 2008, when the financial crisis erupted.

Yellen cautioned that the Fed's expectations for rates will remain subject to change to reflect any significant changes in the U.S. or international economic outlook.

"I anticipate that the overall fallout for the U.S. economy from global market developments since the start of the year will most likely be limited, although this assessment is subject to considerable uncertainty," she said.

She said she still thought inflation will rise gradually over the next two to three years to the Fed's target of 2 percent annual increases in prices. Inflation has been running below this level for nearly four years. But Yellen warned that if oil prices began falling again, it could have "adverse spillover effects to the rest of the global economy."

Such expressions of concern about risks, which were sprinkled through her speech, help explain why Yellen seems inclined to keep rates unchanged in the near future.

Responding to a question after her speech, Yellen said the Fed foresees U.S. worker productivity, which has been historically low in recent years, eventually rising but says that assessment is "a source of huge uncertainty." Productivity – the average output produced per hour of work – is needed to boost living standards.

When the Fed met two weeks ago, it signaled the likelihood of just two rate increases this year. That was half the number that Fed officials had envisioned in December. As a result, most economists concluded that no rate increase would likely occur before June.

But comments last week from several of the Fed's regional bank presidents had raised the possibility that the central bank would decide to raise rates in April. One of them, Dennis Lockhart of the Fed's Atlanta regional bank, said in a speech that he thought the strength of the most recent U.S. economic data could justify a rate increase as early as April. The views expressed by Lockhart, who is viewed as a centrist in his approach to interest rates, was echoed by some other Fed regional bank presidents.

Whatever decision the Fed does make in April will hinge on its view of the economy's durability. In the past week, some reports have produced weaker-than-expected readings, including a sharp drop in orders for long-lasting manufactured goods and tepid consumer spending. Those reports have led some economists to downgrade their forecasts for growth in the current January-March quarter from a 2 percent annual rate to a lackluster 1 percent.

The consumer spending report also showed that the Fed's preferred inflation gauge is still signaling that inflation remains well below its target level. For the 12 months that ended in February, inflation rose just 1 percent. "Core" inflation, which excludes the volatile items of food and energy, increased 1.7 percent.

Crutsinger reported from Washington.

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Janet Yellen Says Global Uncertainty Justifies Slower Path Of Rate Increases

Fed chief explains central bank's divergence on economic outlook, fewer expected rate moves

By David Harrison And Michael S. Derby

[Wall Street Journal](#), March 29, 2016

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

Nafta May Have Saved Many Autoworkers' Jobs

By Eduardo Porter

[New York Times](#), March 29, 2016

When Donald Trump threatened to "break" the North American Free Trade Agreement, auto industry workers offered up some of the loudest cheers.

Mr. Trump easily won the Republican primary in Michigan this month. The state, home base for the American auto industry, also delivered an upset victory to Bernie Sanders, the Democratic anti-Nafta standard-bearer.

But the autoworkers' animosity is aiming at the wrong target. There are still more than 800,000 jobs in the American auto sector. And there is a good case to be made that without Nafta, there might not be much left of Detroit at all.

"Without the ability to move lower wage jobs to Mexico we would have lost the whole industry," said Gordon Hanson of the University of California, San Diego, who has been studying the impact of Nafta on industries and workers since its inception more than two decades ago.

Even in the narrowest sense — to protect jobs in car assembly plants — a wall of tariffs against America's southern neighbor would probably do more harm than good.

To be sure, Rust Belt voters drawn to Mr. Trump and Mr. Sanders are not wrong to be angry. Trade and the deals to reduce trade barriers often threaten the livelihood of workers in the industries exposed most directly to foreign competition.

In the home of the once proud Big Three carmakers, which virtually owned the American car market through most of the 20th century, the issue is personal. Nafta put them in direct competition with Mexican workers earning little more than one fifth of their compensation.

The American trade deficit in autos and parts tripled in the two decades after the trade deal struck with Mexico and

Canada took effect in 1994, to about \$130 billion in 2013. The industry lost 350,000 jobs, or about a third of its workers, over the period.

"It was a massive shift in a flagship industry," said Thea Lee, deputy chief of staff of the AFL-CIO.

Workers, she said, were promised one thing but got another. "One thing you need to understand about why working-class people are so cynical about these trade agreements," Ms. Lee said, "is that every time we had these big debates, and they heard these optimistic projections and it never turned out the way they were told it would be."

Still, for all the brickbats thrown at it, the impact of the Nafta trade deal itself was relatively modest, most studies agree. For one thing, the Mexican economy is still tiny compared with that of the United States and its trade surplus has remained relatively small.

China, where workers were even cheaper and which has attracted far more foreign investment in manufacturing, ultimately bumped Mexico out of many American markets after Beijing entered the World Trade Organization in 2001.

Nafta is often blamed for dynamics that are not of its making. The surge of Mexican exports in the 1990s was propelled by a sharp devaluation of the peso, which set off the so-called Tequila Crisis. The wave of immigration from Mexico into the United States, which lasted until 2005, was driven by a decline in government subsidies to farmers and an economic collapse that occurred just as millions of young Mexicans were entering their late teens and were desperate for jobs.

Luis Rubio, who heads the Center of Research for Development in Mexico City — known as CIDAC for its spelling in Spanish — complains that Nafta gets the blame for the whole package of globalization and breakneck technological change that took off more or less at the same time.

"Nafta is also blamed for lots of things that are actually because of competition with China," he told me.

The truth is that autoworkers in Detroit were not just competing with cheap workers in Mexico. They were also competing with American workers in the union-free South, where many car companies set up shop. They were competing with robots and more efficient Japanese and Korean automakers.

Detroit responded by cutting as many costly factory jobs as it could. But value added by the car and car-parts makers in the United States is only slightly lower than it was in 1993.

The integration of production across countries with complementary labor forces — cheaper workers in Mexico to perform many basic tasks, with more highly paid and productive engineers and workers in the United States — turned out to play a central role in reviving the auto industry in North America.

In the final analysis, Nafta might have saved hundreds of thousands of jobs. By offering a low-wage platform, Mexican plants increased the scale of production in North America, allowing domestic and foreign automakers to amortize their large fixed costs. Carmakers and parts suppliers tend to cluster relatively close together. So assembly plants in Mexico help sustain a robust auto-parts industry across North America.

The Honda CR-V assembled in El Salto, Jalisco, for example, uses an American-made motor and transmission. Roughly 70 percent of its content is either American or Canadian, according to government statistics.

This regional integration gave the United States-based auto industry a competitive edge that was critical to its survival. "There was a concern 20 years ago that an auto industry production chain would develop across Asia, including China and Taiwan and Southeast Asia," Professor Hanson said. "Maybe Nafta saved us from that."

Nafta is now at a critical juncture. The Chinese manufacturing behemoth that squeezed Mexico out of so many markets over the past 15 years seems to be losing some of its power.

As China's wages rise, it is offering Mexico another shot at gaining North American market share, perhaps even at achieving Nafta's unfulfilled promise to help Mexico get rich.

Robust North American trade is also critical to the United States. If Mexico achieved significantly higher living standards, Mr. Trump could save the money for his border wall. Already fewer Mexican migrants are coming to the United States than going. Were Mexico richer, the flows back home to Mexico would probably be greater.

And if the real concern is China — another target of Mr. Trump's ire — a truly integrated North American market would help keep it at bay.

The auto industry remains a bright spot.

"Every auto manufacturer is setting up shop in Mexico," said Eugenio Sevilla-Sacasa, vice president for international supply chain operations and cross-border logistics at Ryder, whose trucks cross the border between Mexico and the United States 150,000 times a year. "Ford, GM and Chrysler but also Toyota, Mazda, Honda, Mercedes-Benz, Kia."

And it's no longer just about cars. Mexico is trying to get into the aerospace production chain too. Over the past few years, Bombardier, Cessna and Hawker Beechcraft have set up shop there, among others. Just as Michigan's autoworkers might thank Nafta for keeping China from taking over the global auto industry, aerospace workers might one day have Nafta to thank for keeping the Chinese out too.

"It's exactly the wrong time to blow up Nafta," Professor Hanson argued. "We would be doing China an enormous favor."

Join the conversation on Twitter: @porterduardo.

House Republicans Unveil Puerto Rico Lifeline

Legislation will allow territory to restructure debt, potentially impose losses on creditors

By Nick Timiraos

[Wall Street Journal](#), March 29, 2016

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

Second Federal Judge Grants Legal Discovery Into Clinton Use Of Private Email Server

By Spencer S. Hsu

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

A second federal judge in Washington ruled Tuesday that a conservative legal watchdog group may question the State Department and potentially several top aides to Democratic presidential contender Hillary Clinton about her use of a private email server while she was secretary of state.

In a three-page order, U.S. District Senior Judge Royce C. Lamberth of the District granted the request from Judicial Watch, which has sought public records into talking points used by Obama national security adviser Susan Rice, then-U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, in television appearances after the deadly Sept. 11, 2012 attacks on U.S. facilities in Benghazi, Libya.

Appearing five days later on Sunday morning talk shows, Rice said the assault appeared to have stemmed from a spontaneous protest over an anti-Islam video. U.S. investigators subsequently concluded the attacks were brought by terrorist groups.

"Where there is evidence of government wrong-doing and bad faith, as here, limited discovery is appropriate, even though it is exceedingly rare" in Freedom of Information Act cases, Lamberth wrote.

Lamberth's decision came about five weeks after another federal judge in Washington, U.S. District Judge Emmet G. Sullivan, ruled that current and former top State Department and Clinton aides could be questioned under oath about her email arrangement in a separate Judicial Watch FOIA case. That ruling cleared the way for questioning about whether the officials and aides intentionally thwarted federal open records laws by using or allowing the use of a private email server during Clinton's tenure at state from 2009 to 2013.

Sullivan in that case set an April 12 deadline for Judicial Watch and the government's lawyers to lay out a plan for how they want to proceed, subject to court approval. The Washington-based legal group is seeking public records in that case about the employment arrangement of Huma Abedin, a longtime confidante of Clinton's who served as Clinton's deputy chief of staff.

Judicial Watch subsequently proposed questioning seven current and former officials, including Cheryl D. Mills,

who was Clinton's chief of staff at State; Abedin, a top aide who served as Mills's deputy and who now is vice chairman of Clinton's presidential campaign; and Bryan Pagliano, a Clinton staff member during her 2008 presidential campaign who helped set up the private server.

Others designated for deposition include Undersecretary for Management Patrick F. Kennedy; Stephen D. Mull, executive secretary from June 2009 to October 2012; Lewis A. Lukens, executive director of the executive secretariat from 2008 to 2011; and Donald R. Reid, senior coordinator for security infrastructure in the bureau of diplomatic security.

Lamberth said in his order that after Sullivan decides how to proceed in the Abedin records case, Judicial Watch should submit a proposed discovery plan within 10 days to him in the Rice matter, and the government can respond in another 10 days.

Plaintiffs In Hillary Clinton Records Case Get A New Boost

A conservative group can gather evidence about State Department's handling of Benghazi attack

By Kate O'Keeffe

[Wall Street Journal](#), March 29, 2016

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

US Judge To Allow Further Digging In Clinton Email Lawsuit

By Michael Biesecker

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – A second federal judge says he will allow a conservative legal group to seek more documents and depositions in a lawsuit over access to emails sent or received by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

U.S. District Court Judge Royce C. Lamberth issued an order Tuesday granting limited discovery to Judicial Watch. The group sued in 2014 over whether the State Department properly responded to public records requests related to Clinton's time as the nation's top diplomat.

Lamberth's order follows a similar one signed earlier this month by a different judge in another Judicial Watch case.

The Associated Press first reported last year that the Democratic presidential front-runner relied on a private email server located in the basement of her New York home to handle messages containing sensitive government information.

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved.
This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Second Judge Says Clinton Email Setup May Have Been In 'Bad Faith'

By Jonathan Allen

[Reuters](#), March 29, 2016

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

Hillary Clinton Focuses On Gun Violence In Courting Wisconsin Blacks

By Amy Chozick

[New York Times](#), March 29, 2016

MILWAUKEE — With the Wisconsin primary approaching, Hillary Clinton reached out to one of her most loyal constituencies on Tuesday, speaking passionately to African-American parents about the gun violence and clashes with the police that have plagued their communities.

"The epidemic of gun violence spares no one, but it is concentrated in areas that are short on hope and where we still face the effects of systemic racism," Mrs. Clinton said at the Tabernacle Community Baptist Church in an area of this city where the deaths of young black men to gun violence are particularly prevalent. "We can't go on like this, my friends."

Sitting onstage with mothers who had lost children to clashes with the police or guns, Mrs. Clinton checked off the statistics. "We lose 90 people a day to gun violence, that is 33,000 Americans a year," she said. "If anything else, a disease were killing 33,000 Americans a year, we would come together and say 'How do we deal with this?'"

For all the emotional impact of the event, speaking about gun violence has also proved politically beneficial to Mrs. Clinton. The issues of gun control and criminal justice reform have been central to Mrs. Clinton's campaign, as she relies on the bulwark of support from black voters across the South and in the Midwest. She has consistently criticized Senator Bernie Sanders for his record on gun control measures as a senator representing Vermont.

With Mrs. Clinton's prospects in next Tuesday's primary, where she lost by 18 percentage points to Senator Barack Obama in 2008, appearing dim, the black voters concentrated in Milwaukee can help deliver delegates and cushion a potential loss to Mr. Sanders. She is also looking to shore up her support among blacks ahead of the April 19 New York primary, with a rally scheduled in Harlem on Wednesday.

Milwaukee is 40 percent black, compared to the state's 13.2 percent overall black population, according to census data, and has been the site of recent clashes between the

police and unarmed black men. The local congresswoman, Representative Gwen Moore, has endorsed Mrs. Clinton and appeared with her on Tuesday, calling guns "a scourge in our community."

As Mr. Sanders holds rallies with thousands of supporters, Mrs. Clinton spoke to a small congregation on Tuesday, not far from where Dontre D. Hamilton was fatally shot by a white police officer in 2014. She paraphrased Galatians 6:9, telling churchgoers, some of whom cried and wailed thinking of lost loved ones, "Let us not grow weary of doing good because in due time we will harvest, if we stay focused."

At one point, Annette Nance-Holt, whose 16-year-old son, Blair, was shot on a Chicago bus in 2007, denounced Mr. Sanders for not making gun control a priority.

"That other candidate, on the Democratic side, did not reach out to us," she said. "If you want my vote, you better work for it," Ms. Nance-Holt added, as Mrs. Clinton nodded next to her at the front of the pink-hewed, sunlit church. "I'm not going to give it to you just because you said you're going to give me free college, because my child is dead."

Geneva Reed-Veal, the mother of Sandra Bland, who died in police custody in Texas last year, said ever since she first met Mrs. Clinton in Chicago last year, the former secretary of state had followed up with personal notes, including one at Christmas time that simply read: "I know this is the first holiday without your baby. Thinking of you ..."

"Not only did she follow up, she followed up and followed up," Ms. Reed-Veal said. "People go around and say 'you're being pimped by the secretary,'" she added, slamming Mrs. Clinton's critics. "Who in the heck is going to exploit us?"

G.O.P. Gave Voters A Greater Say, And They Said Donald Trump

[New York Times](#), March 30, 2016

The closer Donald J. Trump draws to winning the Republican presidential nomination over opposition from party leaders, the more his detractors ask: How can this happen?

There's no singular answer.

One part of the explanation lies in the modern evolution of presidential competition, another in the special talents of Mr. Trump, and a third in the contours of the 21st-century Republican Party.

Today, voters across the United States take their influence over presidential nominations for granted. As recently as 1968, however, just 15 states held primaries in which the rank-and-file selected convention delegates.

The eventual Democratic standard-bearer that year, Vice President Hubert Humphrey, didn't enter a single primary. He didn't have to; he enjoyed the support of party leaders who controlled the Chicago convention.

But that acrimonious gathering made clear that voters wanted a greater say, and both parties gave it to them. By 1980, 35 states were holding presidential primaries. Now, nearly every state holds either a primary or a delegate-selection caucus.

As a result, precinct captains in Iowa, New Hampshire or South Carolina have more influence over Republican and Democratic nominations than national party leaders. It opens the door to candidates who can attract grass-roots followings even as they repel party leaders.

The author Alan Ehrenhalt called it "The United States of Ambition," in which candidates nominate themselves with their drive and talent for campaigning. For all the controversy he has ignited, Mr. Trump has displayed plenty of both.

Mr. Trump, a billionaire real estate developer, began preparing to run long before others recognized his seriousness. He has used his personal wealth to bypass fund-raising concerns that constrain his rivals.

He has commanded an outsize share of media attention in a crowded Republican field. And he has used the attention to mine the economic and cultural anxieties of his party's conservative base, especially among working-class white voters.

In theory, a gifted Democratic insurgent could do the same thing. In reality, the era of polarization makes it easier for Republican renegades to flourish, because the party base is more ideologically intense and culturally homogeneous.

Once dispersed throughout both parties, liberals now almost exclusively flock to the Democrats, and conservatives to the Republicans. But there are significantly more conservatives.

For the same reason right-leaning talk-radio shows draw larger audiences than left-leaning programs, Republican primaries are pulled further toward ideological extremes. On the touchstone issue of immigration, Mr. Trump has capitalized by proposing to build a wall on the southern border and send Mexico the bill.

As the nation grows more ethnically diverse, Republicans remain overwhelmingly white. Nine of every 10 votes Mitt Romney received in 2012, exit polls showed, came from whites. Nearly half came from whites without college degrees, the Americans feeling most aggrieved by recent economic and cultural trends.

Mr. Trump has topped the Republican field by making himself their champion. Within the more diverse Democratic base, there's no single constituency of a comparable size to lift an iconoclast to the nomination.

In 2012, for example, Mr. Obama received slightly fewer than one-fourth of his votes from African-Americans; an additional 14 percent came from Hispanics. White liberals accounted for slightly more than one-fourth of his support, whites under 30 just 10 percent.

That's why Senator Bernie Sanders, the self-described "democratic socialist" from Vermont, faces an uphill fight for the Democratic nomination. He enjoys a strong following among white liberals and young voters, but there aren't enough of them to topple a candidate, like Hillary Clinton, who dominates among nonwhites.

Mrs. Clinton holds one additional advantage: support from hundreds of so-called superdelegates, party leaders who are free to back the candidate they consider strongest, whatever primary voters say.

A generation ago, Democratic officials created superdelegates as a hedge in close contests if they found the rank-and-file's choice unsuitable. Fortunately for Mr. Trump, Republicans haven't done the same. Continue reading the main story

All Three Republican Presidential Candidates Back Away From Pledge To Support Eventual Nominee

By Jose A. Delreal And Sean Sullivan

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

JANESVILLE, Wis. — None of the three remaining Republican presidential candidates would guarantee Tuesday night that they would support the eventual GOP nominee for president, departing from previous vows to do so and injecting new turmoil into an already tumultuous contest.

Mogul Donald Trump, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz and Ohio Gov. John Kasich were each given a chance to during a CNN town hall in Milwaukee to definitively state they would support the nominee. All three declined to renew their pledge. As recently as March 3, in a Fox News debate, all three said they would support the nominee.

"No, I don't anymore," Trump told CNN's Anderson Cooper, when asked if he remains committed to the pledge. Trump said that he would instead wait to see who emerges as the nominee before promising his support, recanting the pledge he previously signed with the Republican Party.

"I have been treated very unfairly," Trump added.

Trump and his team have braced for the possibility of a contested convention in recent weeks, as opposing forces have set their sights on denying him the nomination by preventing him from crossing the necessary delegate threshold.

Trump said Tuesday that he believes establishment Republicans and the Republican National Committee in particular have not treated him with respect.

"I'm the front-runner by a lot. I'm beating Ted Cruz by millions of votes," he said. "This was not going to happen with the Republican Party. People who have never voted before, Democrats and independents are pouring in and voting for me."

Cruz was asked three times by Cooper whether he would support the nominee.

"I'm not in the habit of supporting someone who attacks my wife and attacks my family," Cruz said, making reference to Trump.

When Cooper followed up, Cruz replied: "Let me tell you my solution to that: Donald is not going to be the GOP nominee."

Cooper pressed him a third time. Cruz responded: "I gave you my answer."

Kasich said he would have to "see what happens" in the race before he could answer the question.

Trump pointed to strategic maneuvering in Louisiana that could result in Cruz capturing more delegates from the state despite the fact that Trump won the statewide vote.

"I call it bad politics. When somebody goes in and wins the election and goes in and gets less delegates than the guy that lost, I don't think that's right," he said.

"I'll see who it is," Trump added. "I'm not looking to hurt anybody. I love the Republican Party."

Sullivan reported from Waukesha, Wis.

Trump, Cruz Revoke Vows To Support Eventual Republican Nominee

By Stephen Dinan

[Washington Times](#), March 29, 2016

GOP presidential front-runner Donald Trump said Tuesday he's revoking his vow to support the party's eventual nominee and said he's freeing Sen. Ted Cruz from his own promise to back Republicans' candidate.

"He doesn't have to support me. I really don't believe I need his support," Mr. Trump said in a town hall from Wisconsin hosted by CNN.

Minutes earlier, Mr. Cruz had declined to stand by the firm pledge he, Mr. Trump and the rest of the GOP field took last year to back the eventual winner of the primary.

Pressed by host Anderson Cooper, Mr. Cruz said things have changed, and said his goal is now to make sure he doesn't have to face that choice.

"The answer to that is to beat him at the ballot box," Mr. Cruz said.

The relationship between the two men has deteriorated dramatically since last year, when pundits said Mr. Cruz appeared to be striking up a "bromance" with the billionaire businessman.

Mr. Cruz said Mr. Trump ruined that when he said in recent days he would go after Mr. Cruz's wife in retaliation for an anti-Trump super political action committee's ad featuring a racy picture of his wife, Melania, a former model.

"I'm not an easy person to tick off, but when you go after my wife, when you go after my daughters, that does it," Mr. Cruz said.

He accused Mr. Trump of being behind a thinly sourced story last week in the National Enquirer tabloid that reported Mr. Cruz had engaged in affairs with a handful of women. The story aggregated rumors, and the only named source was Roger Stone, an adviser to Mr. Trump, who said: "These stories have been swirling around Cruz for some time. I believe where there is smoke there is fire."

CNN was hosting all three remaining presidential candidates ahead of Wisconsin's primary next week.

Mr. Trump leads the race for the nomination, but analysts say it's questionable whether he'll be able to collect the delegates needed to win on a first ballot at the July convention in Cleveland.

Ohio Gov. John Kasich, the third candidate in the race, is mathematically eliminated from any chance of winning before the convention, while Mr. Cruz would have to win 85 percent of all available remaining delegates.

Mr. Cruz said he believes that's possible, but also said if they go to a convention, Mr. Kasich cannot be chosen because he hasn't met the threshold of winning at least eight states — one of the requirements in the current rules.

For his part, Mr. Trump seemed to stumble Tuesday when he said education and health care are two of the top three functions of the federal government, along with national security.

That stance is at odds with many conservatives who say neither of those appears in the Constitution and both should be left to the states to handle.

Pressed by Mr. Cooper, Mr. Trump tried to clarify, saying both health care and education are part of "the concept of the country," and the federal government should lead in those areas. But he said he wants private companies to be the major force in health and would end the Common Core education standards the Obama administration has pressed on the states.

Trump Takes Back Pledge To Support GOP Nominee

By Kyle Cheney

[Politico](#), March 29, 2016

Donald Trump has rescinded his pledge to support the Republican nominee for president.

"We'll see who it is," he said Tuesday during a CNN town hall.

He said he had been treated "unfairly" by the Republican National Committee and the GOP establishment. He said he was unsure whether the Republican establishment was plotting to take the nomination away from him during the convention in Cleveland.

He also said he didn't need Cruz to promise to support him should Trump win the nomination.

"I'm not asking for his support," Trump said.

All Three GOP Candidates Break Pledge To Support GOP Nominee

By Gregory Krieg

[CNN](#), March 29, 2016

(CNN)Donald Trump, Ted Cruz and John Kasich all stepped back from their earlier pledge to support the eventual Republican nominee during Tuesday night's CNN town hall.

Cruz Says Kasich Wouldn't Make Ballot At Contested Convention

By Kyle Cheney

[Politico](#), March 29, 2016

Ted Cruz said Tuesday that if there were a contested Republican convention, an obscure rule adopted at the 2012 GOP convention would block John Kasich from competing in a floor fight for the GOP presidential nomination.

The rule, drafted and imposed by forces loyal to Mitt Romney, requires that any candidate eligible for the nomination win a majority of delegates from at least eight states or U.S. territories. Kasich is unlikely to approach that threshold ahead of the convention.

"It's against the rules for Kasich to be on the ballot," Cruz said. "Only two candidates meet that threshold."

Cruz has not actually hit the threshold either, having won majority support in just five states. But he has a chance in a handful of upcoming states that seem poised to back him in upcoming primaries.

The decision by Cruz to cite the obscure rule was unusual, in part because he rails against the GOP establishment that drove its adoption in 2012. At the time, the rule was meant to block Ron Paul from contesting Romney at the convention in Tampa. The rule effectively dismissed the votes of several state delegations that supported Paul. Some Republican activists consider it a target for elimination.

A committee of delegates to the 2016 convention — which has yet to be formed — will ultimately decide whether to reimpose the 2012 threshold, adopt a new one or scrap it altogether.

Cruz Says Backlash From Plan To Patrol Muslim Neighborhoods Is 'badge Of Pride'

By Rebecca Savransky

[The Hill](#), March 29, 2016

Republican presidential candidate Ted Cruz said Tuesday he stands by his proposal to secure and patrol Muslim neighborhoods in the wake of the Brussels terror attacks, despite the backlash he's received.

"You are right that after I called for increased vigilance protecting us, that Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and New York's Mayor Bill de Blasio all attacked me," he told Anderson Cooper during a CNN town hall.

"I wear that as a badge of pride. I'm not going to apologize to anyone."

Cruz said there was a successful program in New York that served a similar purpose. Even when Cooper pushed back on that point, saying the commander who oversaw the program testified that it didn't lead to any investigations, Cruz continued to defend it.

"In New York, this was a successful program," Cruz said.

"It was set up under Mayor Michael Bloomberg to monitor and to work cooperatively with the Muslim community to prevent radicalization and to stop radical Islamic terrorist plots before it occurred."

But Cruz said when de Blasio got elected, he gave into political correctness and shut it down.

"If you want to stop radical Islamic terrorism, the answer isn't to go hang out in random neighborhoods, it is instead to focus on communities where radicalization is a risk."

He said America should not make the same mistakes as Europe, emphasizing that the country should have law enforcement actively engaging to stop radicalization.

Cooper continued to press Cruz on what his proposal would actually look like.

Cruz said his call to patrol and monitor Muslim neighborhoods means that "we target the enemy."

Cruz also hit on President Obama for his response to the Brussels terror attacks. He said Obama then went on television on lectured about Islamophobia.

"Enough is enough, how about a president that actually stands up and defends this country," Cruz said Tuesday.

"What I believe we should do is we need a commander in chief who's actually focused on keeping this country safe."

Police Charge Trump Campaign Manager With Battery

By Steve Peoples And Terry Spencer

[Associated Press](#), March 29, 2016

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Florida police have charged Donald Trump's campaign manager with simple battery in connection with an incident earlier in the month involving a reporter.

After examining the evidence, Jupiter, Florida, police determined that probable cause existed to charge Corey Lewandowski, who has served as Trump's top political aide for his entire presidential run. Police on Tuesday morning issued Lewandowski a notice to appear before a judge on May 4 for the misdemeanor charge, which carries up to a year in jail.

A surveillance video released by the police appears to show Lewandowski grabbing Michelle Fields, who worked for Breitbart News at the time, as she tried to ask Trump a question during a March 8 campaign event.

The Trump campaign said Lewandowski “is absolutely innocent of this charge” in a statement released Tuesday. “He will enter a plea of not guilty and looks forward to his day in court,” said the statement. “He is completely confident that he will be exonerated.”

Trump himself called Lewandowski “a very decent man” on Twitter: “Look at the tapes – nothing there!”

The New York businessman’s rivals seized on the news, which comes a week before a high-profile contest in Wisconsin and in the midst of a messy Republican primary season.

Texas Sen. Ted Cruz said the incident is “the consequence of the culture of the Trump campaign – the abusive culture when you have a campaign that is built on personal insults, on attacks and now physical violence.”

“That has no place in a political campaign, it has no place in our democracy, Cruz told reporters as he campaigned in Wisconsin, suggesting that “it helps clarify for the voters what the Trump campaign is all about.”

Cruz’s top aide, Rick Tyler, resigned in February for spreading a story that falsely alleged former rival Marco Rubio insulted the Bible.

“If he worked for John Kasich he would be fired,” said John Weaver, a senior adviser to Ohio Gov. John Kasich. “Campaigns though always reflect the values of the candidate. I know ours does.”

It’s unclear what impact, if any, the news will have on Trump’s march toward his party’s presidential nomination, although critics cast it as another example for why the brash billionaire would struggle to attract women in a prospective general election matchup against Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton.

The GOP front-runner is trying to score a victory in next Tuesday’s Wisconsin primary election that could give him an insurmountable delegate advantage. Cruz, appears to be within striking distance in Wisconsin, but has little mathematical chance of earning the delegate majority before the Republican Party’s national convention in July.

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker formally endorsed Cruz shortly before news of Lewandowski’s charge surfaced.

The incident fueled fresh attacks by anti-Trump groups, who have already been attacking the billionaire for failing to quell violence at his rallies.

Our Principles PAC has been airing an ad featuring news clips of violence at Trump rallies and playing audio of the GOP front-runner saying of a protester, “I’d like to punch him in the face.”

The same ad includes images of Fields’ bruised arm and a Fox News interview in which she says that Trump’s campaign wasn’t telling the truth about what happened to her.

“The police in Jupiter, Florida have clearly seen what Donald Trump refuses to acknowledge: his campaign manager battered a woman and caused serious bruising,”

said Our Principles PAC leader Katie Packer. “In any job in America this would be grounds for firing. Instead Donald Trump has praised him.”

In the days after the alleged assault, Trump told CNN that the incident was probably “made up.” Campaign spokeswoman Hope Hicks went further at the time, charging in a statement that “not a single camera or reporter of more than 100 in attendance captured the alleged incident.”

“Lewandowski grabbed Fields’ left arm with his right hand causing her to turn and step back,” reads the police report. Fields showed police her left forearm which “appeared to show a grabbing-type injury,” according to the investigating officer.

Lewandowski has retained a Florida attorney who said Tuesday there would be no further comment.

The charge, a first-degree misdemeanor, carries a potential sentence of up to 1 year in prison or up to a \$1,000 fine, according to Florida statutes.

Peoples reported in Washington. AP writers Jack Gillum and Chad Day in Washington, Scott Bauer in Milwaukee, Wisc. and Kathleen Ronayne in Concord, N.H. contributed to this report.

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2016 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Trump Campaign Manager Charged With Battery In Florida

By David A. Fahrenthold And Wesley Lowery
[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

The campaign manager for Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump was charged with battery by police in Florida on Tuesday for allegedly grabbing and yanking the arm of a Breitbart News reporter who was trying to ask Trump a question.

Corey Lewandowski, 42, faces one misdemeanor count of battery. He voluntarily went to police headquarters in Jupiter, Fla., and signed paperwork that ordered him to appear in court on May 4.

The charge stems from an incident on March 8, on a night when Trump won Republican primaries in three states and held a news conference at one of his golf courses in Jupiter. The Breitbart reporter, Michelle Fields, said Lewandowski grabbed her forcefully as she sought to interview Trump afterward, as he left the room at his golf club. The incident was witnessed, and described in print, by Washington Post reporter Ben Terris.

Afterward, however, both Lewandowski and Trump both rejected Fields's account. Lewandowski tweeted that Fields was "totally delusional" and wrote that he "never touched you."

But on Tuesday, a court affidavit written by Marc Bujnowski of the Jupiter Police said that was untrue.

The affidavit cited a security-camera tape from Trump's own club — which was also made public Tuesday. More clearly than past videos of the incident, it appeared to show Lewandowski reaching out to grab the reporter.

"Lewandowski . . . grabbed Fields' left arm with his right hand, causing her to turn and step back," Bujnowski wrote in an affidavit describing the incident. The affidavit continued: "Probable cause exists to charge Corey Lewandowski . . . with (1) count of Simple Battery."

In a tweet shortly after the release of the video, Trump stood by his campaign manager, calling him a "very decent man."

"Look at tapes — nothing there!" Trump concluded.

Trump's campaign put out a statement defending Lewandowski on Tuesday. It gave no indication that he would be suspended or otherwise removed from his duties as campaign manager.

"Mr. Lewandowski is absolutely innocent of this charge. He will enter a plea of not guilty and looks forward to his day in court," campaign spokeswoman Hope Hicks said in a statement. "He is completely confident that he will be exonerated."

Hicks said that Lewandowski will be represented by Florida attorneys Scott Richardson and Kendall Coffee.

Shortly after Lewandowski turned himself in, a dispute erupted over whether he had been "arrested." The Trump campaign insisted in a statement that Lewandowski "was not arrested," although a police report distributed to news outlets said his arrest occurred at 8:10 a.m.

A spokesman for the Jupiter Police Department said Lewandowski was informed that he would be charged and voluntarily went to police headquarters, where he signed a form at 8:10 a.m. Tuesday to acknowledge his May 4 court date.

"He came in by himself, without us picking him up, and signed his notice to appear, said Officer Joseph Beinlich, a department spokesman. He added that because Lewandowski faces a misdemeanor charge, no booking photo was taken.

Under Florida law, battery is committed when a person "actually and intentionally touches or strikes another person against the will of the other."

It was not clear from the Trump campaign's statement whether its contention was still that Lewandowski never touched Fields.

In the days after the incident, Trump's campaign said it believed Fields was grabbed by another man in Trump's entourage — possibly a security official.

Trump, asked about it after a Republican debate, told CNN that he believed Fields had fabricated the story.

"This was, in my opinion, made up," Trump told CNN then. "Everybody said nothing happened. Perhaps she made the story up. I think that's what happened."

In a previously unpublished interview with The Washington Post — conducted last Wednesday, before charges were filed, at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach — Lewandowski continued to assert that he never made contact with Fields.

He said it was wrong to believe that he had cleared Fields away from Trump's path because he believed she would ask him an uncomfortable question.

"Just the premise that Breitbart is going to ask Mr. Trump a question that he can't handle, and I'm so concerned what this question might be — on its face, that is just an egregious notion," Lewandowski said.

A reporter pointed out that Terris, the Post reporter, saw the incident unfold.

"I don't know. I don't know what Ben did or didn't see. I have no idea, but I'm not calling into question anything other than the fact that I don't know him. He and I have never met," Lewandowski said. "I don't know Ben, and I don't know [Fields], and I've never met her."

Also Tuesday, a spokeswoman for Trump's chief rival in the GOP presidential race, Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.), issued a statement condemning Trump's campaign.

"Unfortunately, this abusive behavior seems to be part of the culture of the Trump campaign. Personal attacks, verbal attacks, and now physical attacks have no place in politics or anywhere else in our society," spokeswoman Catherine Frazier said.

Callum Borchers, Jose A. DelReal, Karen Tumulty and Sean Sullivan contributed to this report.

Campaign Manager For Donald Trump Is Charged With Battery

By Maggie Haberman And Steve Eder

[New York Times](#), March 29, 2016

Donald J. Trump's presidential campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, was charged with simple battery Tuesday for grabbing a former female reporter for Breitbart News as she tried to ask the candidate a question, according to the police in Jupiter, Fla.

The formal charges stem from a March 8 encounter that dominated headlines for days and became an unwanted distraction for Mr. Trump's campaign after his successful victories in Super Tuesday contests.

A spokeswoman for Mr. Trump, Hope Hicks, insisted that Mr. Lewandowski was “not arrested” over the allegations that he grabbed the reporter, Michelle Fields, after a news conference at Trump National Golf Club in Jupiter. Instead, she said he “was issued a notice to appear and was given a court date.”

According to the “arrest/notice to appear” paperwork from the Jupiter Police Department, Mr. Lewandowski was charged with one count of simple battery after the police took statements from Ms. Fields and a Washington Post reporter, Ben Terris, who said he witnessed the grabbing incident.

Ms. Fields said after the news conference that she had been trying to question Mr. Trump about judges and affirmative action when Mr. Lewandowski grabbed her roughly. She posted on Twitter a picture of purplish, finger-shaped bruises on her arm.

Mr. Lewandowski denied touching her and called her “delusional.”

But according to the police report, security video from the Trump golf club showed Mr. Lewandowski grabbing her and pulling her away from the candidate.

Indeed, a series of still photographs captured from security cameras at the golf club, released Tuesday by the Jupiter police, appears to corroborate Ms. Fields’s version of events: Mr. Lewandowski can be seen reaching for and then grabbing her arm, tugging at her clothing as he pulls her; he then walks ahead of her, close behind Mr. Trump. It all takes less than four seconds.

Mr. Lewandowski is known as a combative and sometimes divisive figure in Mr. Trump’s orbit. He has been known to scream and curse at reporters with regularity, putting some on a “blacklist” for coverage he considers unfavorable. And more recently, he was seen wandering into the crowd at a Trump rally in Arizona to confront a protester, grabbing the man by the back of his collar and pulling him.

Ms. Hicks, in her statement: said, “Mr. Lewandowski was issued a notice to appear and was given a court date. He was not arrested. Mr. Lewandowski is absolutely innocent of this charge. He will enter a plea of not guilty and looks forward to his day in court. He is completely confident that he will be exonerated.”

She directed questions to his lawyers, Scott Richardson and Kendall Coffey, both based in Florida. Mr. Lewandowski is expected to appear in court on May 4.

Trump Campaign Manager Charged With Battery Against Journalist: Report

By Ben Brody

[Bloomberg Politics](#), March 29, 2016

Donald Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski was charged Tuesday with misdemeanor battery following an

incident with a former Breitbart reporter, according to the Palm Beach Post.

Lewandowski turned himself in to authorities in Jupiter, Florida, according to the newspaper, which cited the police.

The reporter, Michelle Fields, said Lewandowski grabbed her on the arm and pulled her when she tried to question the Republican presidential front-runner after a campaign event in Jupiter on March 8, an account backed up by a Washington Post reporter who was present. Fields later resigned from her news outlet.

“Mr. Lewandowski is absolutely innocent of this charge. He will enter a plea of not guilty and looks forward to his day in court. He is completely confident that he will be exonerated,” the Trump campaign said in a statement.

After Fields first made the allegation, Lewandowski called her “totally delusional.” Newly released surveillance footage appears to corroborate the story, the Palm Beach Post said.

—With assistance from Michael C. Bender.

Trump Campaign Manager Denies Allegation Of Assault

Reporter alleged Corey Lewandowski pulled her arm at campaign event

By Beth Reinhard

[Wall Street Journal](#), March 29, 2016

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

Trump Solicits Audience Sympathy For His Campaign Manager

By Katie Glueck

[Politico](#), March 29, 2016

JANESVILLE, Wisc. — Donald Trump defended his embattled campaign manager Tuesday afternoon, relying on sympathetic supporters at a rally here to try to dampen the controversy surrounding the misdemeanor battery charge filed earlier in the day against Corey Lewandowski.

After spending the first 40 minutes of an appearance here attacking Governor Scott Walker and Ted Cruz, Trump got a question about the need to restore discipline in schools.

“We have to get discipline back in the country,” he said, recognizing the opportunity to address the story dominating the current news cycle—and the likelihood that many audience members would be familiar with it.

“You probably saw what happened with my campaign manager,” said Trump, alluding to the charge filed Tuesday morning against Lewandowski by Michelle Fields, a former Breitbart reporter who Lewandowski allegedly grabbed on her arm last month as she approached Trump after a press conference in Jupiter, Fla.

"Fortunately, I have a taping system," Trump said. "I'm rich, so I have tapes. Did anybody see the tapes? What did you think?"

The audience responded as Trump knew they would: "Nothing," they shouted. Trump paused as a woman near the stage recited her understanding of the alleged altercation after having watched the video several times.

Trump, of course, concurred, offering points that in his view undercut Fields' story that Lewandowski had almost thrown her to the ground. As casually as he brought up the topic, Trump was clearly prepared, pulling out a note and quoting Fields' statement that Lewandowski "grabbed [her] tightly by the arm and yanked [her] down."

"If somebody squeezed your arm or hurt you, wouldn't you start screaming or something?" Trump asked. "At first I said, 'Oh this is terrible.' And then I saw the tape.

"She bolts into the picture, she hits me on the arm and then he goes by and maybe he touched her a little bit," Trump continued. "It was almost like he was trying to keep her off me, like he was trying to help her."

Trump made it clear he would not be firing or disciplining Lewandowski, as Cruz and John Kasich have called for him to do.

"The easiest thing: 'Corey, you're fired!' I can't do that," Trump said. "I can't destroy a man for that."

Mr. Trump's Defense Of His Campaign Manager Shows His Lack Of Judgement

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS are sometimes derided for their stage management, but they can offer moments of clarity about the character of a candidate. The charging of Donald Trump's campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, with simple battery, a misdemeanor, is one such moment.

How did Mr. Trump react when one of his key campaign aides apparently manhandled a reporter and then denied having done so? Instead of the rigorous fact-finding and dispassionate thinking that should be prerequisites for the Oval Office, there was denial and doubling down.

Police in Jupiter, Fla., charged Mr. Lewandowski on Tuesday in connection with a much-publicized March 8 incident involving Michelle Fields, then a reporter for Breitbart News. Ms. Fields said she was trying to ask Mr. Trump a question when she was roughly grabbed and yanked down by Mr. Lewandowski. She had bruises on her arm, and her account was corroborated by Post reporter Ben Terris.

A mature and respectful campaign would have responded with an acknowledgment and apology, which likely would have ended the matter. Instead, Mr. Lewandowski called Ms. Fields "totally delusional," tweeting, "I never touched you. As a matter of fact, I have never even met you." For his part, Mr. Trump made a show of backing Mr.

Lewandowski, making sure Mr. Lewandowski was onstage during his victory speech at the Mar-a-Lago resort after the March 15 primaries.

Even after Jupiter police investigated the complaint filed by Ms. Fields, brought the misdemeanor charge and posted a video showing Mr. Lewandowski with his hands on Ms. Fields, Mr. Trump refused to back down. "Wow," he tweeted Tuesday, "Corey Lewandowski, my campaign manager and a very decent man, was just charged with assaulting a reporter. Look at tapes — nothing there!" Mr. Lewandowski says he will plead not guilty.

We second Mr. Trump's advice: Do look at the tapes. That Mr. Trump sees nothing wrong confirms the troubling lack of judgment that he has demonstrated repeatedly. The brazen willingness to overlook fact and evidence, and the ease with which he countenances the smearing of a victim — these are not compatible with a presidential temperament.

'Abusive Culture' In Trump Campaign Led To Campaign Manager's Battery Charge, Cruz Says

By Sean Sullivan

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

MILWAUKEE — Republican presidential candidate Ted Cruz on March 29 upbraided Donald Trump for what he called an "abusive culture" in the mogul's campaign after Trump's campaign manager was charged with battery.

"It's a very sad development," Cruz told reporters outside a restaurant here. "This the consequence of the culture of the Trump campaign. The abusive culture. When you have a campaign that is built on personal insults, on attacks, and now physical violence. That has no place in a political campaign."

The Texas senator said the charge Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski faces — stemming from allegedly grabbing and yanking the arm of a reporter — helps "clarify for the voters what the Trump campaign is all about."

Cruz sought a contrast with Trump, asserting that he is trying to focus on a "positive, optimistic, conservative agenda."

Earlier in the day, Cruz reiterated his desire for a one-on-one debate with Trump. Trump has swatted down the idea on social media.

Polls Find Trump Benefits From Mayhem At His Rallies, At Least For Now

By David Lightman

[McClatchy](#), March 29, 2016

Protesters are a boost to Donald Trump's campaign for the Republican presidential nomination.

But should he become the nominee, his insulting, tough-guy ways of dealing with those who disrupt his rallies may be a big liability.

Mayhem has become commonplace in, around and as a postscript to the billionaire businessman's public events. Tuesday, police in Florida charged Corey Lewandowski, Trump's campaign manager, with simple battery, a misdemeanor. Police say he grabbed the arm of Breitbart News reporter Michelle Fields as she tried to ask Trump a question March 8, apparently causing an injury.

A campaign statement said he would plead not guilty and was "completely confident that he will be exonerated." He is scheduled to appear before a judge May 4.

Trump regularly reacts to uprisings at his rallies by telling agitators to "go home to mommy" or "get a job." After a fight erupted at an event last fall, he later suggested of the protester, "Maybe he should have been roughed up." He said after another incident that he'd like to punch a protester.

So far, all this has helped him in some key states. "It reinforces the narrative among his core supporters," said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

The protests have become routine since the week before a series of crucial March 15 primaries, a day when five big states were voting. On March 9, a man was arrested at a Fayetteville, North Carolina, rally, accused of punching a protester. Two days later, Trump's St. Louis speech was interrupted six times, and that evening he canceled his Chicago appearance because of safety concerns.

Isn't this more exciting than listening to a long, boring speech?

Donald Trump to his St. Louis rally as protesters disrupted his speech March 11

On March 12 and 13, Monmouth asked Republicans in Florida and Ohio, two of the March 15 primary states, whether the Chicago turmoil made them more or less likely to back Trump. Most said it made no difference, but among those in Florida with an opinion, twice as many people said it made them more likely to back Trump rather than less. His lead increased in the state, though it was not clear whether it was directly related to the protests.

In Ohio, where Gov. John Kasich was on his way to a big win, slightly more people said they were now inclined to back Trump.

Nationally, Trump's handling of the protests doesn't bother most Republicans. Since March 9, he's won five of seven states, losing only Ohio and the Utah caucus, which Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas won. Quinnipiac found that 60 percent of Republican respondents said he was not responsible for any violence. Ninety percent said the protesters were responsible.

The protests have continued. On March 19, demonstrators blocked traffic leading to a Phoenix, Arizona, suburb as Trump prepared to host a rally.

Monday night, six people were arrested protesting a planned Trump stop in Janesville, Wisconsin. About 60 people sat in the lobby of the hotel where Trump was to appear Tuesday, a week before Wisconsin's primary.

Trump and Cruz are in a virtual tie in the latest Wisconsin polls. While it's hard to pinpoint why Trump's support in the state has slipped in recent weeks, "Republican voters won't support someone who incites violence from the podium," said Rory Cooper, adviser to #NeverTrump SuperPAC, which backs Cruz in Wisconsin.

"Being attacked by the Republican establishment and the media has been helping him for months," said Carter Wrenn, a Republican commentator based in Raleigh, North Carolina.

The trouble with all this fist-clenching in a general election is that people usually want a more judicious temperament.

We feel a moral obligation to protest Trump's events to show our rejection of the racist, dehumanizing politics he promotes.

Christine Neumann-Ortiz, executive director of Voces de la Frontera, Wisconsin's largest immigrant rights organization. In an age where people are already on edge fearing violence, the notion of having their president encouraging such behavior could hamper Trump once he has to reach beyond his core supporters. A Quinnipiac poll found that nearly 2 of 3 independents thought Trump was responsible for the violence. So did 38 percent of Republicans and 88 percent of Democrats.

"No way that can help him," said Tim Malloy, assistant director of the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute. "Any way you look at it, that's not a good number."

Cruz Statistically Even With Trump In Head-to-head Poll

By Lisa Hagen

[The Hill](#), March 29, 2016

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump continues to lead the GOP field in a three-way race, but his lead evaporates in a head-to-head matchup against GOP rival Ted Cruz, according to a new national poll released Tuesday.

The Public Policy Polling survey found that in a three-way race Trump has 42 percent support, with Cruz at 32 percent and John Kasich in third with 22 percent.

But in a head-to-head race, Trump has 46 percent and Cruz 44 percent — within the margin of error.

The poll found that 51 percent of Kasich supporters would flip to Cruz if the Ohio governor were removed, with 23 percent going to Trump.

"The Republican race nationally would be a toss up if it was just Trump and Cruz," Dean Debnam, President of Public Policy Polling, said in a statement.

"But as long as Kasich stays in there splitting the anti-Trump vote, Trump continues to be in a good position."

On the Democratic side, Hillary Clinton has 54 percent support with Bernie Sanders at 36 percent.

The survey also found that 84 percent are committed to vote for Clinton, while 61 percent say they will definitely vote for Sanders.

The survey also found that a majority of Republican primary voters — 58 percent — are comfortable with Trump winning the GOP nomination. He leads both Cruz and Kasich in this area.

Trump also has the highest favorability rating of the GOP hopefuls, with 51 percent favorable to 40 percent unfavorable.

GOP primary voters would not be comfortable with a nominee who isn't currently running for president, the poll found.

Forty-two percent say they'd be comfortable with House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) as nominee, while only 28 percent said they'd be comfortable with 2012 GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney.

The poll was conducted from March 24-26 and surveyed 505 GOP primary voters and 422 Democratic primary voters via phone and online.

The margin of error was 4.4 percentage points among GOP voters and 4.8 percentage points among Democratic voters.

Donald Trump Vs. Ted Cruz Creates A Headache For Talk Radio Hosts

By Nick Corasaniti

[New York Times](#), March 29, 2016

Even Michael Savage had had enough.

As the insults and innuendos over candidates' wives and tabloid reports of suspected affairs dominated the back and forth between Senator Ted Cruz and Donald J. Trump, Mr. Savage, one of the country's most popular conservative radio hosts and an ardent supporter of Mr. Trump, drew a red line last week.

"I've supported Trump and probably still will, but if he won't disavow this guy Pecker and this story, I may withdraw my support," he said on the air on Friday. He was referring to David J. Pecker, the owner of The National Enquirer, which published the allegations of sexual affairs against Mr. Cruz, adding, "I am not going to support anyone who engages in assassination by innuendo."

But by Monday, Mr. Trump and Mr. Savage reconciled in a mostly fawning interview, with no apology from Mr. Trump, who nevertheless called The Enquirer's allegation that Mr. Cruz had affairs "garbage."

The momentary rupture, however brief, was emblematic. As the fractures in the Republican Party grow deeper by the day over the candidacy of Mr. Trump, conservative talk radio is having its own identity crisis.

Long a powerful and potent agitator of right-wing politics, conservative radio hosts are one of the few forces that can sway the opinions of the Trump electorate. And with Mr. Trump and Mr. Cruz now tearing each other — and the party — apart, the biggest names in the field are delicately navigating how to address Mr. Trump's latest provocations without alienating listeners.

"Talk radio has a really unique way of being able to penetrate its way into Republican primary politics around the country," said Doug Heye, a Republican strategist and deputy chief of staff for former Representative Eric Cantor. If leading conservative hosts were to unite in opposition to Mr. Trump, Mr. Heye said, "In theory, it could absolutely hurt him, in part because that's where a lot of his supporters are."

Conservative talk radio is just as divided and conflicted on Mr. Trump as the Republican electorate. Some advocate, some criticize. And some try to stay neutral — but that is no longer easy.

In December, Rush Limbaugh took issue with Mr. Trump's harsh words about Mr. Cruz and criticisms Mr. Trump made of Justice Antonin Scalia, saying, "If you're a conservative voter in the Republican primary, these two things have got to raise some red flags for you people."

Later, in February, Mr. Limbaugh heaped praise on Mr. Cruz, saying, "If conservatism is the dominating factor in how you vote, there is no other choice for you in this campaign than Ted Cruz," he said, before dropping the highest of Republican compliments: "This is the closest in our lifetimes we have ever been to Ronald Reagan."

But just two days later, Mr. Limbaugh found himself explaining to callers that he still had a "no-endorsement policy" in presidential primaries and that his laudatory statements about Mr. Cruz were just observations. "It doesn't mean that Trump is no good," he said, repeatedly pointing to the candidate's wide appeal.

At the same time, Mr. Limbaugh has found himself taking heat for providing too much cover for Mr. Trump, excusing some of his bombast for "striking a nerve in the country."

Others have gone much further in their praise of Mr. Cruz. Mark Levin and Glenn Beck endorsed the Texas senator, and have been critical of Mr. Trump. Mr. Levin has told him to "cut the crap" with his attacks on Mr. Cruz. Of Mr. Trump's opposition to trade deals, he said, "I've never heard such stupid talk in my life."

Glenn Beck has made it his mission to stop Mr. Trump, saying he is not a true conservative, nor a true Christian.

"No Christian says, 'I want that guy, that guy is the guy for me,'" Mr. Beck said on air about Mr. Trump and his supporters. "Nobody, nobody."

Part of the conservative radio divide reflects how Mr. Cruz was the darling of the far right wing of the Republican Party before Mr. Trump's unexpected political rise. A frequent guest on talk radio, the Texas senator earned celebrity status for his effort to shut down the government, and was showered in effusive praise when he was the first to jump into the race. Mr. Limbaugh called his presidential announcement speech "dazzling" and "masterful."

But Mr. Trump's candidacy forced a realignment. Mr. Savage routinely has Mr. Trump on his show and decries Mr. Cruz as "an insider." He sees Mr. Trump as galvanizing disaffected voters who have both powered his strong ratings for decades and have been ignored by previous Republican nominees.

"He's speaking to the demographic of the electorate that has been ignored and castigated," Mr. Savage said in an interview. "That's what I see."

Sean Hannity has not publicly staked out a side, and has said that both Mr. Trump and Mr. Cruz are conservative choices. He tries to have both on his show as often as he can.

"Who am I to come in and tell them to vote for this person?" Mr. Hannity asked in an interview, referring to his audience. "I don't think I serve them well that way."

But he warned that any effort to deny Mr. Trump the nomination if he comes close to the 1,237 majority of delegates would be the downfall of the Republican Party.

"If they try to steal this nomination or disenfranchise the voters, it would be the end of the Republican Party. I guarantee you, it's over," he said.

"If it's Trump" who is denied the nomination, "Trump supporters are walking. If it's Cruz, Cruz supporters are walking. And they're not coming back. And I'll walk with them," Mr. Hannity said.

Laura Ingraham, who also said she would not be endorsing a candidate, shared a similar point of view in an interview, calling the stop-Trump effort "a little juvenile."

"There are a lot of purists out there who, if they don't get everything checked off on their little bucket list," then they say "take your pail and go home," she said. "Come to the real world."

Mr. Beck, however, sees it differently, calling Mr. Trump "a clown."

Disagreement among conservative radio hosts is nothing new. But the searing divisions of this contest pose particular challenges to the hosts as they seek to hold on to their listeners — and address their grievances — in such a fractured climate.

"The rule of talk radio is always, 'Don't get ahead of your listener,'" said Rick Tyler, a political analyst on MSNBC and former communications director for the Cruz campaign. "You can educate the listener and you can bring them along."

But Mr. Beck argued that it was the opinion and principles of the host that drew the audience.

"Our principles are our only things that have kept us going and going on our air," Mr. Beck said. "And if you abandon your principles for interest, you're done."

But in Mr. Trump, Mr. Beck and Mr. Levin may have found a candidate who has beaten them at their own game. The Manhattan businessman has found a way around traditional media, as his rallies and news conferences are often carried live on cable networks and occasionally on broadcast television.

And the hosts who rely on access to the candidate seem mindful of his ability to circumvent mainstream media, cozying up to Mr. Trump to maintain a relationship.

As Mr. Savage said as he closed his interview with Mr. Trump on Monday: "People are going to say I was too nice to you today."

Stands On Social Issues Tear At The Two Main Conservative Bases

By James Hohmann

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

The ideological rifts breaking apart the Republican Party have moved into the states, where business leaders and evangelicals who have long coexisted in the GOP are suddenly at war over social issues such as gay rights and religious freedom.

The escalating feud has been evident in recent days in Georgia and North Carolina, where Republican governors have taken opposite approaches to dealing with these two vocal constituencies.

Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal, facing pressure from corporate heavyweights such as Delta Airlines and Disney, vetoed a bill that would have allowed pastors and faith-based groups to deny services to same-sex couples. The decision by Deal, who is not running for reelection, has drawn fire from leading evangelical activists, who have accused him of being a traitor to their cause.

North Carolina's Pat McCrory, meanwhile, who is up for reelection in November, is facing criticism from corporate interests and praise from social conservatives following his decision to sign a bill enacting broad limits to prevent municipalities from creating new LGBT protections.

The legislative battles, which have played out in state capitals across the country, underscore the unusual level of disarray in a party that traditionally strives for order. Rather than unifying around a message and strategy to win back the White House and retain congressional majorities, the GOP is

largely collapsing amid factional warfare. There is seemingly no issue where Republicans agree — with bitter disputes raging over trade, foreign policy, entitlements and social issues.

The focal point of the struggle is the GOP's presidential front-runner, Donald Trump, the populist billionaire who has amassed a wide delegate lead despite opposition from all corners of the party establishment and a string of policy views that run counter to GOP orthodoxy.

Trump's rise has muddled the ideological waters for the camps that have long made up the bulk of the GOP coalition — the three-legged stool built by Ronald Reagan in the 1980s consisting of fiscal conservatives, national security hawks and social conservatives. He has railed against free-trade deals backed by big business and blasted an interventionist foreign policy embraced by GOP hawks.

But the state-level battles between businesses and evangelicals demonstrate that the Republican Party's troubles go beyond the concerns over Trump — pointing to a potentially irreconcilable divide between core elements of the GOP base.

Each side remains influential. Evangelical leaders can mobilize large numbers of activists and voters in key states and congressional districts. Corporations, meanwhile, operating in a post-Citizens United world of unlimited political spending, have the ability to put enormous pressure on policymakers.

"You are talking about two portions of the Republican Party who don't fundamentally understand one another. That's the bad news," said Gregg Keller, the former executive director of the American Conservative Union. "The worse news is that they think that they do. What that leads to is further misunderstanding on top of disagreement."

The anger among evangelicals was especially raw this week after Deal's veto.

"The devil has gone down to Georgia again, but this time it was in the form of big business and cowardly politicians," said Tony Perkins, president of the evangelical Family Research Council.

The state fights gained momentum in response to deep anger among social conservatives over the Supreme Court's decision last June to legalize gay marriage nationwide. Evangelical activists began pushing measures they describe as promoting "religious liberty" — aimed at protecting people such as wedding cake bakers or photographers who object to same-sex marriage from being legally compelled to participate in ceremonies. But these protections are often written broadly, with critics arguing they allow discrimination against the LGBT community in other ways, such as in employment and providing charitable services.

The focus on gay marriage ran counter to recommendations in a post-2012 election autopsy report published by the Republican National Committee. The report

urged the party to move away from social issues as a way to expand the GOP's reach beyond core conservatives.

Many Republican elites, including executives at big companies, feel like gay marriage is settled law and do not think special measures are needed to protect religious conservatives.

"Generally, in the past, big business wanted to keep out of social issues," said David Boaz, a longtime leader at the libertarian Cato Institute. "The corporate world has moved more to the cultural left. The religious right is feeling more and more embattled, isolated, and that makes them even angrier about things like this veto in Georgia."

Corporate leaders have found success on a number of fronts.

Exactly one year ago, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence (R) signed into law a controversial religious freedom bill. Then, under pressure from businesses and the NCAA, which was holding the Final Four last year in Indianapolis, he pushed the legislature a week later to pass an amendment in order to clarify that businesses and service providers could not use the legislation as a justification to discriminate based on a client's sexual orientation.

In Arizona, then-Gov. Jan Brewer (R) vetoed a religious liberty bill in 2014 under pressure from the business community. Her move angered social conservatives, but it ensured that the state could continue to host last year's Super Bowl.

In Arkansas, Republican Gov. Asa Hutchinson refused to sign a religious freedom bill that passed the legislature last year after Walmart publicly opposed it. He later signed a watered-down compromise bill, which basically reiterates existing federal law.

South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard (R) recently vetoed legislation that would require students to use the bathroom or locker room of their biological sex at birth.

Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam, very much from the business wing of the party, expressed concern about a bill similar to what passed in North Carolina, and has pigeonholed it — at least for now.

Ralph Reed, the chairman of the Faith & Freedom Coalition, argued that there does not need to be an "inherent conflict" between the faith community and the business community.

"The notion that this is a Manichean choice between money and morality is largely a myth," he said. "The faith community needs to be clearer about what its objectives are, and some in the business community need to stop mischaracterizing what the legislation actually does."

The new North Carolina law showed how, in some places, evangelicals have found a way to win, at least in the short term.

The law was passed quickly during a special legislative session, reversing civil rights protections for gay and

transgender people that had been enacted in the city of Charlotte. The measure made North Carolina the first state to require transgender individuals to use the restroom that corresponds with the gender on their birth certificate. But the language also included broad limits on local anti-discrimination ordinances.

The new law has drawn loud protests from the business community and editorial pages. The National Basketball Association has threatened to move next year's all-star game, scheduled to take place in Charlotte.

But the law has fired up evangelicals McCrory will need to boost his reelection chances this November.

"We can't bow down to economic threats that risk the protection of our citizens and go against common sense and morality," said the Rev. Franklin Graham, son of renowned evangelist Billy Graham.

The campaign in North Carolina could hinge on how evangelicals and business leaders respond.

The state's attorney general, Roy Cooper, a Democrat vying to unseat McCrory, on Tuesday called the law a "national embarrassment" and said he would not defend it in court.

The feuding will likely unfold in additional states over the coming weeks and months.

In Mississippi, the legislature could vote as early as this week on a "First Amendment Defense Act," which is aimed at undercutting same-sex marriage.

Missouri's legislature will likely vote soon to put a religious freedom measure on the ballot later this year, either in the general election or a special election. The Republicans are trying to craft something that will not draw the ire of the business lobby.

Gregg Keller, the Missouri-based GOP operative who was tasked with outreach to conservative activists on Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker's presidential campaign last year, said the business wing should recognize that religious conservatives will not go away.

"One of the largest cultural imperatives that helped lead to the rise of Christianity was the view of the sexually licentious nature of the Roman Empire," he said. "This is not a bug of evangelical Christianity; this is a feature. This is a hill on which evangelical Christians are going to be willing to die."

He added: "The business community has caught the bull by the horns on this one."

Nev. Candidate Says Reid Urged Him To Quit, Because 'a Muslim Cannot Win This Race.'

By David A. Farenthold

[Washington Post](#), March 29, 2016

A Muslim Democrat running for a U.S. House seat in Nevada says that — in a private meeting last year — Senate Minority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.) had encouraged him

to end his campaign by saying, "a Muslim cannot win this race."

"He said, 'You should not run for this office,'" said Jesse Sbaih, an immigrant from Jordan who is now a trial lawyer. This race for the House, in a district that includes a swath of suburban Las Vegas, is his first run for political office.

A spokeswoman for Reid, however, denied that Reid had said those words.

Sbaih said it happened after he had entered the House race. He met with Reid in August in a meeting room at the Paris Las Vegas Hotel.

Sbaih said he had sought the meeting in order to win Reid's support — a key factor in Nevada, where Reid is the unquestioned power broker of Democratic politics. But Reid would not give it, Sbaih said, and cited Sbaih's religion as one reason why.

"I did not feel that this was an issue. They made it an issue. My campaign is about me being an American," Sbaih said. He said he had not faced this kind of opposition based on his religion before: "I just turned 40. Been in this country for 29 years. And it's just absolutely shocking that this occurred."

A spokeswoman for Reid confirmed that the meeting took place. However, she categorically denied that Reid had cited Sbaih's religion as a reason he would not succeed.

"Senator Reid did not say that," said Kristen Orthman, a spokeswoman in Reid's Senate office. "Jesse Sbaih is a liar and that's why he is going to lose."

Sbaih's assertion could shake up one of the most competitive House races in the country — a race made possible, in a way, by Reid himself.

Reid is retiring from the Senate, after 30 years. Rep. Joe Heck (R), who holds the suburban Las Vegas seat now, is running to replace him. That has left the seat open: the Cook Political Report rates it as a "Republican toss-up," a swing seat vital to both parties.

On the Republican side, several plausible candidates have already filed to run. On the Democratic side, however, the race was slow to start: late in the summer, Sbaih was the best-funded and best-known candidate who had declared.

Sbaih is an ally of Sen. Bernie Sanders (Vt.), who is running, in part, on his own remarkable life story. Sbaih's parents immigrated from Jordan to Virginia when he was 11, and he helped support the family by washing dishes in an Italian restaurant as a teen.

Now, Sbaih said, his run for office is a way to repay the country for the way it welcomed his family.

"I've always felt: The more America gave me, the more I wanted to give back," Sbaih said in an interview with [The Washington Post](#).

But, Sbaih said, he was rebuffed when he sought to gain Reid's support.

First, he said, he met with a political consultant connected to Reid, Rebecca Lambe. At a coffee shop, Sbaih said, Lambe brought up his religion and his Arab heritage: "She said, basically, you're gonna have a problem winning, as a Muslim, as an Arab."

Lambe disputed that account in an email message to The Post on Monday.

"It's not what I said," Lambe said. "As we would with any candidate, we explored his background, profession, religion, the fact he'd never run before, stance on issues and limited support ...to more fully understand the path and potential attacks from the other side."

Sbaih said he did not record that meeting with Lambe, or the one he had with Reid a few weeks later.

To bolster his account, Sbaih supplied both emails and text messages from the time, in which he tells another Reid ally that he is "profoundly disheartened and saddened that the Democratic Party is refusing to accept a candidate like me because of my religion and ethnicity."

In the exchanges of text message and emails provided by Sbaih, however, Reid's allies do not say explicitly that Sbaih's race or religion is a hindrance, nor do they confirm that Reid himself had said so.

Orthman, Reid's spokeswoman, said that Reid had told Sbaih he should run for another office — instead of jumping straight into a highly competitive House race.

"We never said he shouldn't run for elected office. It was that, to run for a congressional seat, your first time, you're going to lose. And you need more experience," said Orthman.

Both sides agree that Sbaih pressed on, continuing his campaign for the House.

A few weeks later, Sbaih said, an aide in Reid's Senate office offered him a chance to apply for a position on the Election Assistance Commission — a federal job. Sbaih said he declined.

Sbaih is still in the House race, but now is facing competition from another Democrat: Jacky Rosen. Rosen, the president of a Las Vegas-area synagogue, is also making her first run for office.

She was recruited by Reid himself, according to Jon Ralston, Nevada's best-known political reporter.

"She's been a community leader for years here," Orthman said, explaining why Reid had recruited a political novice, after criticizing Sbaih for his own lack of experience. "Jesse's new to the scene."

House Candidate: Reid Told Me Not To Run Because I'm Muslim

By Jordain Carney

[The Hill](#), March 29, 2016

A Democratic House candidate running in Nevada says Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) told him he shouldn't run because he is Muslim.

"On August 27th, I was told by Harry Reid: 'Let me be blunt, you are not going to be able to win because you are a Muslim,'" Jesse Sbaih wrote in an email to supporters Tuesday which was also posted on the Daily Kos.

He added that an adviser to Reid also told him he would "have a problem winning, because you are a Muslim."

Sbaih, a lawyer and immigrant from Jordan, is running for Nevada's 3rd District. His accusations were first reported by The Washington Post.

Reid's staffers quickly denied the outgoing Senate Democratic leader made the comment, while acknowledging he met with Sbaih in August.

"They met, but Senator Reid never said that," Kristen Orthman, a spokeswoman for Reid told The Hill. "Jesse is using Senator Reid's name to seek his 15 minutes of fame."

While Reid did say he thought Sbaih couldn't win, she said it wasn't because of his religion.

"There were a number of different factors," she added, including that he wasn't well known in the district and had never run for political office before.

Orthman stressed that Sbaih was unable to provide direct evidence to support his allegations to the Post or The Associated Press.

The Post also reported that an aide for Reid's office later suggested he should apply for a position on the Election Assistance Commission.

Sbaih, in the email to supporters, said it was an attempt to "muscle me out of the race and to DC. I respectfully declined the offer."

Orthman rejected his characterization. As part of the August meeting, she said Reid encouraged him to run for a state government office or apply for an important commission.

"He himself asked us to look out for opportunities to be involved," she said, noting that they encouraged a handful of others to apply for the commission.

Sbaih suggested in the email to supporters that since he turned down the federal job, he's been "hindered from hiring staff and regular Democratic donors have been told that they should not support our campaign."

Sbaih also defended his decision to go public with the allegations approximately seven months after the meeting took place, telling the AP that it wasn't related to publicity or trying to raise money for his campaign.

"We will win because people know, like they knew with John Kennedy, that a person is more than where they were born, who they pray to, or the color of their skin," he wrote in the email to supporters, referring to skepticism about Kennedy's candidacy at the time because he was Catholic.

Posts on the campaign's Facebook page Tuesday about the allegations urged supporters to donate.

Iranian Miniskirts, Bags Of Cash Raise Doubts Over Controls At HSBC

Monitor finds lapses in bank's efforts to prevent money laundering and evasion of sanctions following 2012 settlement with Justice Department

By Ese Erheriene And Margot Patrick

[Wall Street Journal](#), March 29, 2016

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

Funds Flow To Venture Firms

Endowments and pensions help raise \$13 billion this year, the most since 2000

By Rolfe Winkler

[Wall Street Journal](#), March 29, 2016

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