

Office of Information Governance and Privacy

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
500 12th St., SW
Washington, D.C. 20536



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

March 03, 2023

Mehreen Rasheed
American Oversight
1030 15th Street, NW
Suite B255
Washington, DC 20005

RE: ICE FOIA Case Number 2020-ICFO-26639

Dear Ms. Rasheed:

This letter is the final response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), dated March 05, 2020. You have requested all email communications (including emails, complete email chains, email attachments, calendar invitations, and calendar invitation attachments) between (a) the Acting Director Matthew T. Albence or anyone serving as White House Liaison or agency point of contact for the coronavirus task force, and (b) the Executive Office of the President officials (see request for details). ICE has considered your request under the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552.

A search of the ICE Director's Office for records responsive to your request produced 1,188 pages that are responsive to your request. After review of those documents, ICE have determined that the majority of the pages originated from another agency and those pages were referred for their review and direct respond to you. Other pages were marked duplicates and non-responsive to your request. Portions of the remaining the 325 pages will be withheld pursuant to Exemptions (b)(5), (b)(6), (b)(7)(c) and (b)(7)(e) of the FOIA as described below.

ICE has applied FOIA Exemptions to protect from disclosure

ICE has applied Exemption 5 to protect from disclosure intra-agency documents that contain the recommendations, opinions, and conclusions of agency employees. The disclosure of these communications would discourage the expression of candid opinions and inhibit the free and frank exchange of information and opinions among agency personnel on important agency decision-making by having a chilling effect on the agency's deliberative process.

FOIA Exemption 5 protects from disclosure those inter- or intra-agency documents that are normally privileged in the civil discovery context. The three most frequently invoked privileges

www.ice.gov

are the deliberative process privilege, the attorney work-product privilege, and the attorney-client privilege. After carefully reviewing the responsive documents, I have determined that portions of the responsive documents qualify for protection under the deliberative process privilege, the attorney-client privilege, and the attorney work-product privilege. The deliberative process privilege protects the integrity of the deliberative or decision-making processes within the agency by exempting from mandatory disclosure opinions, conclusions, and recommendations included within inter-agency or intra-agency memoranda or letters. The release of this internal information would discourage the expression of candid opinions and inhibit the free and frank exchange of information among agency personnel. The attorney work-product privilege protects documents and other memoranda prepared by an attorney in contemplation of litigation. The attorney-client privilege protects confidential communications between an attorney and his client relating to a legal matter for which the client has sought professional advice. It applies to facts divulged by a client to his attorney, and encompasses any opinions given by an attorney to his client based upon, and thus reflecting, those facts, as well as communications between attorneys that reflect client-supplied information. The attorney-client privilege is not limited to the context of litigation.

ICE has applied FOIA Exemptions 6 and 7(C) to protect from disclosure the names, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers of DHS employees contained within the documents.

FOIA Exemption 6 exempts from disclosure personnel or medical files and similar files the release of which would cause a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. This requires a balancing of the public's right to disclosure against the individual's right to privacy. The privacy interests of the individuals in the records you have requested outweigh any minimal public interest in disclosure of the information. Any private interest you may have in that information does not factor into the aforementioned balancing test.

FOIA Exemption 7(C) protects records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes that could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. This exemption takes particular note of the strong interests of individuals, whether they are suspects, witnesses, or investigators, in not being unwarrantably associated with alleged criminal activity. That interest extends to persons who are not only the subjects of the investigation, but those who may have their privacy invaded by having their identities and information about them revealed in connection with an investigation. Based upon the traditional recognition of strong privacy interest in law enforcement records, categorical withholding of information that identifies third parties in law enforcement records is ordinarily appropriate. As such, I have determined that the privacy interest in the identities of individuals in the records you have requested clearly outweigh any minimal public interest in disclosure of the information. Please note that any private interest you may have in that information does not factor into this determination.

ICE has applied FOIA Exemption 7(E) to protect from disclosure internal agency case numbers contained within the document.

FOIA Exemption 7(E) protects records compiled for law enforcement purposes, the release of which would disclose techniques and/or procedures for law enforcement investigations or

prosecutions or would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions if such disclosure could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law. I have determined that disclosure of certain law enforcement sensitive information contained within the responsive records could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law. Additionally, the techniques and procedures at issue are not well known to the public.

You have a right to appeal the above withholding determination. Should you wish to do so, you must send your appeal and a copy of this letter, within 90 days of the date of this letter following the procedures outlined in the DHS FOIA regulations at 6 C.F.R. Part 5 § 5.8. You may submit your appeal electronically at GILDFOIAAppeals@ice.dhs.gov or via regular mail to:

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Office of the Principal Legal Advisor
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
500 12th Street, S.W., Mail Stop 5900
Washington, D.C. 20536-5900

Your envelope and letter should be marked "FOIA Appeal." Copies of the FOIA and DHS regulations are available at www.dhs.gov/foia.

Provisions of FOIA allow DHS to charge for processing fees, up to \$25, unless you seek a waiver of fees. In this instance, because the cost is below the \$25 minimum, there is no charge.

If you need any further assistance or would like to discuss any aspect of your request, please contact the FOIA office and refer to FOIA case number **2020-ICFO-26639**. You may send an e-mail to ice-foia@ice.dhs.gov, call toll free (866) 633-1182, or you may contact our FOIA Public Liaison, Fernando Pineiro Jr., in the same manner. Additionally, you have a right to seek dispute resolution services from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) which mediates disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies as a non-exclusive alternative to litigation. If you are requesting access to your own records (which is considered a Privacy Act request), you should know that OGIS does not have the authority to handle requests made under the Privacy Act of 1974. You may contact OGIS as follows: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001, e-mail at ogis@nara.gov; telephone at 202-741-5770; toll free at 1-877-684-6448; or facsimile at 202-741-5769.

Sincerely,

Angela M. Flores

(A)Supervisory Paralegal Specialist

Enclosure(s): 325 page(s)

From: Albence, Matthew
Sent: 31 Jan 2020 04:03:35 +0000
To: AS2KTC; Benner, Derek N; Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Subject: RE: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

(b)(6);
(b)(7)(C)

(b)(5)

Thanks.

Matt

Sent with BlackBerry Work
(www.blackberry.com)

From: AS2KTC (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Date: Thursday, Jan 30, 2020, 9:00 PM
To: Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, Albence, Matthew
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6);
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>,
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov>
Subject: Re: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

(b)(5); (b)(7)(E)

From: Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2020 9:56:13 PM
To: AS2KTC (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) Albence, Matthew (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>;
Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

Sir, ICE response attached

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Date: Thursday, Jan 30, 2020, 9:48 PM

To: JIOC-ICE (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Cc: Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, Kelly, Christopher S

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Subject: RE: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

Sir,

In response to this tasking:

- ICE would defer to CBP on operational impacts as it relates to land border crossings as CBP has first contact with an overwhelming number of Chinese nationals that enter ICE custody. Specifically, of ICE's FY20 YTD book ins (1,354) of Chinese nationals, 87% (1,179) were apprehended by CBP either at a POE (by OFO) or illegally between POEs (by USBP). In instances where neither of the aforementioned apply, ICE through the ICE Health Services Corps has established a rigorous screening process for all aliens arrested by ICE or transferred into ICE custody.
- On January 22, 2020, ICE Health Services Corps (IHSC) announced a health advisory regarding the novel (new) coronavirus. IHSC Clinical Services Division developed an interim reference for how to address coronavirus within our health care system. The document includes a summary of the situation to date, as well as recommendations (see attached for additional details):
 - during intake medical screening;
 - during sick call examination or other clinical encounter with a detainee who presents with, or complains of, respiratory illness;
 - for detainees with recent relevant travel history and symptoms of respiratory illness; and
 - for infectious disease public health actions.

IHSC's interim guidance and can add that ICE is confident with ICE's ability of cohorting detainees exposed to infectious disease. During peak months of last year's SWB influx, ICE had more than 5,000 medically quarantined detainees across 40+

facilities at any given time due to exposure to influenza, mumps, varicella (chickenpox), and shingles.

- Given the current state of affairs and fluidity regarding the Coronavirus, ICE AD1 has ordered a suspension of Chinese removals pending stability in China related to this outbreak. As ERO is reliant on commercial carriers for removals to China, any removals would also be impacted by changes to flight schedules in response to the virus outbreak.

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Chief of Staff
Office of the Deputy Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Desk: 202-732-(b)(6);
Cellular: 617-201-(b)(6);

From: JIOC-ICE

Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2020 8:23 PM

To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Subject: RE: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

Sir

The ICE due out from the call was what operational concerns or issues does ICE foresee regarding contact of personnel in custody who had travel to the area of concern in China. Such as what procedures may be required at facilities for employees, detainee, visitors. Additionally, what operational concerns or issues does ICE foresee for enforcement actions that may encounter affected or symptomatic suspects who crossed at a land POE or illegally entered the US as they may not have papers to prove travel or lie about their travel.

CBP, TSA and Medical had most of the call discussing air POE, but concern was if air is limited what operational concerns or issues are we guessing we may encounter including our employees and detainees.

Needs a response in writing no later than 9:45pm tonight as he has to brief the Secretary at 10:00pm

V/r,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Section Chief

Joint Intelligence Operations Center
ICE | Homeland Security Investigations

Office 202.732.(b)(6); Mobile 202.607.(b)(6);
UNCLASS (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2020 6:59 PM

To: JIOC-ICE (b)(6); @ice.dhs.gov>

Subject: FW: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Chief of Staff

Office of the Deputy Director

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Desk: 202-732.(b)(6);

Cellular: 617-201.(b)(6);

From: Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Date: Thursday, Jan 30, 2020, 6:52 PM

To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Subject: FW: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

From: NOC.CWO (b)(6); @hq.dhs.gov>

Date: Thursday, Jan 30, 2020, 6:36 PM

To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @tsa.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @tsa.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @fema.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @fema.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(HSI) (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, MORGAN, MARK A (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @cbp.dhs.gov>, (b)(6);

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @cbp.dhs.gov>, Albence, Matthew (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>,

Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); @uscg.dhs.gov

(b)(6); @uscg.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @uscg.mil>, (b)(6);

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @HQ.DHS.GOV>,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov>

Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov>, NOC.SWO.Restricted

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov>, NOC.NDD (b)(6); @hq.dhs.gov>, NOC.CWO

(b)(6); @hq.dhs.gov>

Subject: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

Here are the details for the (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) conference. In light of the short notice, request confirm receipt:

Date: **30 Jan 2020**

Time: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Clearance Level: **Top Secret**

Dialing Information:

From a **DHS C-LAN, Grey line or White House CMS phone:**

(b)(7)(E)

- You will be connected to conference with a security announcement
- Please stand by for the conference to begin

From a **vIPer, STE or Secure Wireless Device:**

• Dial: (b)(7)(E)

• Wait for the call to go secure

• After you hear “Please enter your conference code now”, enter (b)(7)(E)

• You will be connected to conference with a security announcement

• Please stand by for the conference to begin

Please call the NOC Communications Watch Officer if you have any problems joining the conference or request additional assistance. Thank you.

Very respectfully,

**Communications Watch Officer
US Department of Homeland Security
National Operations Center**

Office: 202-282-(b)(6);

Email: (b)(6); @hq.dhs.gov



National Security Council Press Guidance

Novel Coronavirus

1.28.20 (v1)

Top Lines

- The President has been briefed on the newly confirmed cases in the United States and continues to get updates on a regular basis.
- The U.S. Government's actions to proactively and aggressively detect and contain the virus have minimized the-risk in America.
- As medical screening continues and through our work with public health partners across the country and around the world, we will identify more cases in the United States.
- Again, based on what we know right now, the immediate risk to America is low.
- Last year, President Trump implemented the National Biodefense Strategy to improve speed of action in situations like this, and we are seeing that strategy pay dividends now.
- CDC is accessing additional funding for the most urgent and immediate needs including surge support for ports of entry, enhanced laboratory capacity, and technical assistance.
- The President's top priority is the safety of the American people.
- The CDC are providing continuous updates to the White House on any potential cases of novel coronavirus in the United States and their efforts to mitigate risk.
- The CDC have been proactively preparing for the introduction of the novel coronavirus in the United States for weeks.
- When it comes to public health, this is what the CDC do. They protect the American people.
- Outbreaks like this – when a new virus is emerging to infect people – are always concerning, but we are well prepared.

Charter Flight

- The U.S. Government is relocating 220 U.S. Citizens from Wuhan back to the United States.
- The personnel departed Wuhan, China by charter flight January 28th 2020.
- All passengers were screened for symptoms multiple times by both U.S. and Chinese authorities prior to boarding.
- Medical professionals will continuously monitor the health of all passengers throughout the flight.
- All passengers will briefly disembark during a refueling stop in Anchorage, AK, where they will be rescreened for symptoms, monitored by medical professionals, and kept separated from the public.
- Upon arrival in California, all passengers will be subject to CDC screening, health observation, and monitoring requirements.
- Our goal is to complete the process in a manner that safeguards the health and safety of all passengers.
- We thank all passengers and their families for their cooperation and understanding

Flight Cancellation Rumors

- The White House did not call the airlines and hasn't asked for a suspension of flights between the U.S. and China.

What CDC are Doing

- CDC have an aggressive response that enables them to identify potential cases early and make sure that they are properly handled.
- They have a layered response to protect the American public.
 - Airport screening – facilitates early diagnosis
 - Educating the public and medical community – facilitated detection of potential cases within the United States
- CDC have activated its Emergency Operations Center and begun using public health measures, including enhanced entry screening, as part of our aggressive public health response strategy.

Questions about China's Response

- As the President said, China has been working to contain the Coronavirus and we have offered our assistance
- The United States appreciates China's efforts and continued coordination with public health officials across the globe.

Status of New Confirmed Cases

- The total number of infections in the U.S. is 5 patients in four states, AZ, CA, IL and WA.
- All of the infections were traced to Wuhan, China.
- It is likely that we will continue to see more cases in the United States in the coming days and weeks, including some limited person-to-person transmission.

Elevated Warnings

- As reflected in the U.S. Department of State and CDC travel advisories, the U.S. Government strongly advises Americans avoid non-essential travel to China and not to travel to Hubei Province.

Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) s.gov>
Subject: FW: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

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Date: Thursday, Jan 30, 2020, 9:48 PM
To: JIOC-ICE (b)(6); @ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, Kelly, Christopher S
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(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Chief of Staff
Office of the Deputy Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Desk: 202-731-(b)(6);
Cellular: 617-201-(b)(6);

From: JIOC-ICE

Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2020 8:23 PM

To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>

Cc: JIOC-ICE (b)(6);@ice.dhs.gov>

Subject: RE: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

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V/r,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Section Chief
Joint Intelligence Operations Center
ICE | Homeland Security Investigations
Office (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
UNCLASS: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2020 6:59 PM
To: JIOC-ICE (b)(6); @ice.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Chief of Staff
Office of the Deputy Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Desk: 202-732-(b)(6);
Cellular: 617-201-(b)(6);

From: Benner, Derek (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Date: Thursday, Jan 30, 2020, 6:52 PM
To: Weindorf, Eric J (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

From: NOC.CWO (b)(6); @hq.dhs.gov>
Date: Thursday, Jan 30, 2020, 6:36 PM
To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @tsa.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @tsa.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @fema.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @fema.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov>
(HSI) (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, MORGAN, MARK A (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @cbp.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @cbp.dhs.gov>, Albence, Matthew (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); @uscg.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); @uscg.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @uscg.mil>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @HQ.DHS.GOV>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov>, NOC.SWO.Restricted (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov>, NOC.NDD (b)(6); @hq.dhs.gov>, NOC.CWO (b)(6); @hq.dhs.gov>
Subject: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

Here are the details for the 1900 ET conference. In light of the short notice, request confirm receipt:

Date: **30 Jan 2020**

Time: **1900 – 1945 ET**

Clearance Level: **Top Secret**

Dialing Information:

From a **DHS C-LAN, Grey line or White House CMS phone:**

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Please call the NOC Communications Watch Officer if you have any problems joining the conference or request additional assistance. Thank you.

Very respectfully,

Communications Watch Officer
US Department of Homeland Security
National Operations Center
Office: 202-282-(b)(6);
Email: (b)(6); @hq.dhs.gov

From: Benner, Derek N
Sent: 31 Jan 2020 11:36:58 +0000
To: AS2KTC; Albence, Matthew; Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Subject: RE: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

Yes Sir we can make that adjustment and I will confirm implementation timeline

From: AS2KTC (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Date: Thursday, Jan 30, 2020, 10:51 PM
To: Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, Albence, Matthew (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, ALFONSO-ROYALS, ANGELICA (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Subject: Re: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

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(b)(5); (b)(7)(E)

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(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

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To: JIOC-ICE (b)(6); @ice.dhs.gov>

Cc: Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, Kelly, Christopher S

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, Baker, Jeremy (b)(6); @ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Subject: RE: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

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In response to this tasking:

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 - during intake medical screening;
 - during sick call examination or other clinical encounter with a detainee who presents with, or complains of, respiratory illness;
 - for detainees with recent relevant travel history and symptoms of respiratory illness; and
 - for infectious disease public health actions.

IHSC's interim guidance and can add that ICE is confident with ICE's ability of cohorting detainees exposed to infectious disease. During peak months of last year's SWB influx, ICE had more than 5,000 medically quarantined detainees across 40+ facilities at any given time due to exposure to influenza, mumps, varicella (chickenpox), and shingles.

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(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Chief of Staff
Office of the Deputy Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Desk: 202-732-(b)(6);
Cellular: 617-201-(b)(6);

From: JIOC-ICE

Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2020 8:23 PM

To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Subject: RE: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

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Needs a response in writing no later than 9:45pm tonight as he has to brief the Secretary at 10:00pm

V/r,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Section Chief
Joint Intelligence Operations Center
ICE | Homeland Security Investigations
Office 202.732.(b)(6); Mobile 202.607.(b)(6);
UNCLASS: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2020 6:59 PM

To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Subject: FW: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Chief of Staff
Office of the Deputy Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Desk: 202-732 (b)(6);
Cellular: 617-201 (b)(6);

From: Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Date: Thursday, Jan 30, 2020, 6:52 PM

To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Subject: FW: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

From: NOC.CWO (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Date: Thursday, Jan 30, 2020, 6:36 PM

To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @tsa.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @tsa.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @fema.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @fema.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(HSI (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, MORGAN, MARK A (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @cbp.dhs.gov> (b)(6);
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @cbp.dhs.gov>, Albence, Matthew (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>,
Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); @uscg.dhs.gov
(b)(6); @uscg.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @uscg.mil>, Tomney,
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @HQ.DHS.GOV>,
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov>

Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) NOC.SWO.Restricted
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C), NOC.NDD (b)(6); (b)(7)(C), NOC.CWO

Subject: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

Here are the details for the 1900 ET conference. In light of the short notice, request confirm receipt:

Date: **30 Jan 2020**

Time: **1900 – 1945 ET**

Clearance Level: **Top Secret**

Dialing Information:

From a **DHS C-LAN, Grey line or White House CMS phone:**

- Dial (b)(7)(E)

- Pin# (b)(7)(E)
- You will be connected to conference with a security announcement
- Please stand by for the conference to begin

From a vIPer, STE or Secure Wireless Device:

- Dial: (b)(7)(E)
- Wait for the call to go secure
- After you hear “Please enter your conference code now”, enter (b)(7)(E)
- You will be connected to conference with a security announcement
- Please stand by for the conference to begin

Please call the NOC Communications Watch Officer if you have any problems joining the conference or request additional assistance. Thank you.

Very respectfully,

**Communications Watch Officer
US Department of Homeland Security
National Operations Center**

Office: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Email:

From: AS2KTC
Sent: 31 Jan 2020 04:04:43 +0000
To: Albence, Matthew; Benner, Derek N; Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) ALFONSO-ROYALS, ANGELICA
Subject: Re: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

Thx Matt.

From: Albence, Matthew (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2020 11:03:35 PM
To: AS2KTC (b)(6); (b)(7)(C); Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>; Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>; (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>; ALFONSO-ROYALS, ANGELICA <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)>
Subject: RE: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

Ken:

(b)(5); (b)(7)(E)

Thanks.

Matt

Sent with BlackBerry Work
(www.blackberry.com)

From: AS2KTC (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Date: Thursday, Jan 30, 2020, 9:00 PM
To: Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, Albence, Matthew (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, ALFONSO-ROYALS, ANGELICA <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)>
Subject: Re: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

(b)(5); (b)(7)(E)

Ken

From: Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2020 9:56:13 PM
To: AS2KTC (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)>; Albence, Matthew (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>; Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>; (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: AS2 Coronavirus Top Secret Conference Call 1900-1945 ET 30 Jan

Sir, ICE response attached

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>
Date: Thursday, Jan 30, 2020, 9:48 PM
To: JIOC-ICE (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>, Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>
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Cellular: 617-201-(b)(6);

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To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>

Cc: JIOC-ICE (b)(6); e.dhs.gov>

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(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Section Chief

Joint Intelligence Operations Center

ICE | Homeland Security Investigations

Office 202.732 (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) Mobile 202.607 (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

UNCLASS (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov

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Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2020 6:59 PM

To: JIOC-ICE (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

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(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Chief of Staff

Office of the Deputy Director

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

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(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @tsa.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @fema.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

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(HSI) (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, MORGAN, MARK A (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @cbp.dhs.gov> (b)(6);

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @cbp.dhs.gov>, Albence, Matthew (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>,

Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @uscg.dhs.gov

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @uscg.dhs.gov (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @uscg.mil> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Christopher (b)(6); (b)(7)(C), Havranek, John (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Zemek, Alex (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Cc: RASCHER, MALLORY (b)(6); (b)(7)(C), NOC.SWO.Restricted
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C), NOC.NDD (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) NOC.CWO
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Communications Watch Officer
US Department of Homeland Security
National Operations Center
Office: 202-282-8101
Email: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)



Interim Reference Sheet on Novel Coronavirus, Wuhan, China

ICE Health Service Corps

Version 1.0, January 22, 2020 4:30 pm EST

Situation Summary

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is closely monitoring an outbreak caused by a novel (new) coronavirus (2019-nCoV) first identified in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The situation is evolving. For the most current information, check the CDC information page at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> frequently for updates.

While most of the people identified with 2019-nCoV have association with Wuhan City, there have been a few people identified with 2019-nCoV in other countries in Asia. On January 21, 2020, the CDC announced that an individual was identified in the U.S. with confirmed 2019-nCoV with recent travel from Wuhan City.

CDC interim guidance for health care professionals, including clinical criteria, is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/clinical-criteria.html>

ICE Health Service Corps Recommendations

Note: recommendations will be updated if and as necessary to address the evolving public health situation.

1. During intake medical screening:

- a. Ask Chinese national detainees if they have traveled from or through China in the past 14 days
- b. If yes → ask detainee if they have been in Wuhan City in the past 14 days (i.e., recent relevant travel history)
- c. If yes → for IHSC-staffed medical clinics, add note in electronic health record “yellow sticky note” area that states, “*Intake travel history includes Wuhan City, China. The last reported day in Wuhan City was mm/dd/yyyy*”
- d. For detainees with recent, relevant travel history, and symptoms of respiratory illness → refer to #3 below
- e. For detainees with recent, relevant travel history, and no symptoms of respiratory illness → observe for 14 days; house in a single cell room if available. If a single cell room is not available, staff should accommodate social distancing to the extent feasible

- i. If detainee is housed in a facility without ICE Health Service Corps medical staffing, medical staff should notify their assigned ICE Health Service Corps Field Medical Coordinator
 - ii. Request a medical hold in following usual protocols stating that “the detainee is under observation through mm/dd/yyyy due to recent travel from or through Wuhan, China.” Release the medical hold at the completion of the 14-day observation period
 - iii. If an asymptomatic detainee under observation with a relevant recent travel history must be released in the U.S., notify the local health department including of the intended address and telephone number
- 2. ***During sick call, physical examinations, or other clinical encounter in which a detainee presents with or complains of respiratory illness, or is observed with signs of respiratory illness:***
 - a. Ask the detainee if they have traveled from or through China in the past 14 days
 - b. If yes → ask detainee if they have been in Wuhan City in the past 14 days
 - c. If yes → refer to #3 below
- 3. ***For detainees with recent relevant travel history and symptoms of respiratory illness:***
 - a. Place a tight-fitting surgical mask on the detainee
 - b. Promptly consult with a medical provider, preferably the Clinical Director or designee
 - c. Place the detainee in a private medical housing room, ideally in an airborne infection isolation room if available. If no single occupancy medical housing unit room is available, placement in other areas of the facility may be utilized to house the ill detainee separately from the general detention population
 - d. Implement airborne and contact precautions, including use of eye protection
 - e. Call the local and/or state health department for notification and to request guidance on medical evaluation and testing; currently, all testing is only available through coordination between the local health department and the CDC
 - f. If the detainee is referred to a local hospital, call the hospital in advance to notify of the recent relevant travel history and respiratory symptoms
 - g. Promptly notify the facility’s staff responsible for infection prevention and control (e.g., in ICE Health Service Corps facilities, notify the Infection Prevention Officer, or the Facility Healthcare Program Manager if the facility does not have an Infection Prevention Officer position); if the Infection Prevention Officer or Facility Healthcare Program Manager is not available, IHSC staff should notify the Infection Prevention Group at (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov
 - h. Facilities without ICE Health Service Corps medical staffing should notify their assigned Field Medical Coordinator
 - i. ICE Health Service Corps Infection Prevention Officers, Facility Healthcare Program Managers, Field Medical Coordinators, or designees should notify the Regional Infection Prevention Supervisory Nurse immediately. Detainees in

isolation for respiratory illness and relevant recent travel history should wear a tight-fitting surgical mask when outside of the room under airborne and contact precautions

4. Infectious disease public health actions:

- a. Implement cohorting with restricted movement for detainees housed with the ill detainee or who have been in close contact¹ with the ill detainee for the duration of the most recent incubation period (14 days from the most recent symptom onset)
- b. Monitor cohorted detainees daily to observe for fever and symptoms of respiratory illness
- c. Refer exposed detainees with new onset respiratory illness to a medical provider for evaluation
- d. Report cohorting through routine ICE Health Service Corps cohort reporting protocols
- e. Recommend to ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations that cohorted detainees not be transferred or transported
- f. If a cohorted detainee must be released in the U.S., notify the local health department including of the intended address and telephone numbers
- g. Discontinue cohorting when:
 - i. The index patient receives an alternate diagnosis that excludes 2019-nCoV, or
 - ii. A 14-day incubation period completes with no new cases

¹Per CDC 2019-nCoV guidance (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/clinical-criteria.html>), a close contact is currently defined as:

a) being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters), or within the room or care area, of a novel coronavirus case for a prolonged period of time while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment or PPE (e.g., gowns, gloves, NIOSH-certified disposable N95 respirator, eye protection); close contact can include caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area or room with a novel coronavirus case.— or —

b) having direct contact with infectious secretions of a novel coronavirus case (e.g., being coughed on) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.

See CDC's [Interim Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients Under Investigation for 2019 Novel Coronavirus](#). Data to inform the definition of close contact are limited. Considerations when assessing close contact include the duration of exposure (e.g., longer exposure time likely increases exposure risk) and the clinical symptoms of the person with novel coronavirus (e.g., coughing likely increases exposure risk as does exposure to a severely ill patient). Special consideration should be given to those exposed in health care settings.

POCs for questions:

ICE Health Service Corps Staff: PHSP Unit Chief and Regional Infection Prevention Supervisory Nurses

Facilities without ICE Health Service Corps Medical Staffing: Assigned Field Medical Coordinators

Public health agencies: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov

From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 21 Jan 2020 02:57:55 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: JIOC-ICE
Subject: FW: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Update): Novel Coronavirus - Far East (NOC 0051-20)

UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

This information is being provided for senior DHS and Component leaders. It is meant to increase senior leader situational awareness and is not for public release.

Update (2138 ET, 20 Jan 20): The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to closely monitor the outbreak of a novel coronavirus (nCoV) in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. China's National Health Commission has also confirmed human-to-human transmission of this virus within China. Chinese officials are reporting a total of 224 cases of pneumonia caused by nCoV in China, including 217 confirmed cases (198 in Wuhan, 5 in Beijing, and 14 in Guangdong) and 7 suspected cases. Outside of China confirmed cases have been reported in Japan (1), Thailand (2), and South Korea (1).

With the confirmation of human-to-human transmission and continued concerns over the extent of the spread of nCoV, CDC has requested moving to 100% enhanced health screening and funneling of all passengers from Wuhan to five U.S. air ports of entry—Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL), Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD), Los Angeles (LAX), San Francisco (SFO) and New York (JFK).

CWMD will provide support through our enhanced entry screening agreements at ATL, LAX, and potentially JFK. CBP is providing targeting support, physical space, and reachback to Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS) datasets.

Distribution: DHS HQ Leadership and Senior Staff, DHS Component Leadership, DHS Component Operations Centers, and White House Situation Room.

Update (2255 ET, 19 Jan 20): The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is closely monitoring an outbreak caused by a novel (new) coronavirus (nCoV) in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. Chinese authorities identified the new coronavirus in two new cities in China, Beijing and Shenzhen. According to CDC over a 130 new cases have been reported, raising the total there to almost 200. The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued interim laboratory testing guidance for suspected human cases of nCoV. Canada has initiated screening at four airports, and CDC is reaching out to verify the process being implemented.

CBP and CDC have implemented Tier I enhanced health screening for travelers entering the United States on direct or connecting flights from Wuhan at three U.S. airports—John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), San Francisco International Airport (SFO) and Los Angeles International Airport (LAX).

With the additional case counts and raising concerns over the extent of the spread of nCoV, CDC anticipates moving to Tier II enhanced health screening. This will include adding screening capabilities at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) and Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD). CDC will be requesting additional support from DHS to accomplish Tier II screening capability. This support will include a request to activate CWMD enhanced entry screening contracts at ATL, LAX, and potentially JFK. It will also include CBP's targeting support, help finding physical space, and reachback to Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS) datasets as previously requested.

Federal interagency coordination has been initiated through National Security Council (NSC) channels.

Distribution: DHS HQ Leadership and Senior Staff, DHS Component Leadership, DHS Component Operations Centers, and White House Situation Room.

Overview (0718 ET, 17 Jan 20): China's health officials confirmed that a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is responsible for a cluster of unidentified atypical viral pneumonia cases recently reported in the country. No human-to-human transmission has been observed. To date, China has reported 41 confirmed cases including two deaths. The majority of cases have been associated with the South China Seafood Market in Wuhan, the capital and largest city of Hubei Province. CDC has requested CBP support.

Report: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will begin active surveillance at three major international airports located in the United States (JFK, LAX, SFO). These public health screenings may begin as soon as today, 17 Jan. The active surveillance will involve CDC staff conducting a sign and symptom check on every international traveler that appears to have traveled from or visited the Wuhan Region in China. CDC will conduct active surveillance on all passengers originating from Wuhan City that travel to the United States. CDC will determine, based on health declarations, questions, and temperatures if any passenger requires further medical attention.

The National Targeting Center (NTC) will identify passengers arriving on indirect and direct flights from Wuhan, China. Public Health Lookouts (1-day) will be placed on passengers arriving on indirect flights.

The DHS Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office (CWMD) is working to rapidly train additional personnel at JFK and LAX and exploring options to establish capability at SFO. CDC has indicated they might need additional CBP support at SFO.

The possibility of funneling passengers to 5 or 6 airports (to include Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas and Washington Dulles) is also under consideration. DHS CWMD is actively engaged in strategic communications efforts and will stay closely aligned with CBP, OLA, OPA, and other relevant DHS partners.

Source: DHS CWMD, NBIC, CBP, TSA, Media.

Coordination:

OPS-NOC: The Office of Operations Coordination National Operations Center is actively engaging partner organizations across the Homeland Security Enterprise for additional information and will provide updates as warranted.

CETC: Current and Emerging Threat Center is actively engaging IE and IC partners for additional information and will report as warranted.

Distribution: DHS HQ Leadership and Senior Staff, CWMD, CBP, TSA.

V/R

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Joint Intelligence Operations Center
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th Street, SW (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Washington, D.C. 20536

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @dhs.sgov.gov

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @dhs.ic.gov

Desk: 202-732-(b)(6);
Cell: 202-302-(b)(7)(C)

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UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 20 Jan 2020 04:11:10 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: JIOC-ICE
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Update): Novel Coronavirus - U.S. (NOC 0051-20)

UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

This information is being provided for senior DHS and Component leaders. It is meant to increase senior leader situational awareness and is not for public release.

Update (2255 ET, 19 Jan 20): The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is closely monitoring an outbreak caused by a novel (new) coronavirus (nCoV) in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. Chinese authorities identified the new coronavirus in two new cities in China, Beijing and Shenzhen. According to CDC over a 130 new cases have been reported, raising the total there to almost 200. The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued interim laboratory testing guidance for suspected human cases of nCoV. Canada has initiated screening at four airports, and CDC is reaching out to verify the process being implemented.

CBP and CDC have implemented Tier I enhanced health screening for travelers entering the United States on direct or connecting flights from Wuhan at three U.S. airports—John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), San Francisco International Airport (SFO) and Los Angeles International Airport (LAX).

With the additional case counts and raising concerns over the extent of the spread of nCoV, CDC anticipates moving to Tier II enhanced health screening. This will include adding screening capabilities at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) and Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD). CDC will be requesting additional support from DHS to accomplish Tier II screening capability. This support will include a request to activate CWMD enhanced entry screening contracts at ATL, LAX, and potentially JFK. It will also include CBP's targeting support, help finding physical space, and reachback to Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS) datasets as previously requested.

Federal interagency coordination has been initiated through National Security Council (NSC) channels.

Distribution: DHS HQ Leadership and Senior Staff, DHS Component Leadership, DHS Component Operations Centers, and White House Situation Room..

Overview (0718 ET, 17 Jan 20): China's health officials confirmed that a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is responsible for a cluster of unidentified atypical viral pneumonia cases recently reported in the country. No human-to-human transmission has been observed. To date, China has reported 41 confirmed cases including two

deaths. The majority of cases have been associated with the South China Seafood Market in Wuhan, the capital and largest city of Hubei Province. CDC has requested CBP support.

Report: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will begin active surveillance at three major international airports located in the United States (JFK, LAX, SFO). These public health screenings may begin as soon as today, 17 Jan. The active surveillance will involve CDC staff conducting a sign and symptom check on every international traveler that appears to have traveled from or visited the Wuhan Region in China. CDC will conduct active surveillance on all passengers originating from Wuhan City that travel to the United States. CDC will determine, based on health declarations, questions, and temperatures if any passenger requires further medical attention.

The National Targeting Center (NTC) will identify passengers arriving on indirect and direct flights from Wuhan, China. Public Health Lookouts (1-day) will be placed on passengers arriving on indirect flights.

The DHS Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office (CWMD) is working to rapidly train additional personnel at JFK and LAX and exploring options to establish capability at SFO. CDC has indicated they might need additional CBP support at SFO. The possibility of funneling passengers to 5 or 6 airports (to include Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas and Washington Dulles) is also under consideration. DHS CWMD is actively engaged in strategic communications efforts and will stay closely aligned with CBP, OLA, OPA, and other relevant DHS partners.

Source: DHS CWMD, NBIC, CBP, TSA, Media.

Coordination:

OPS-NOC: The Office of Operations Coordination National Operations Center is actively engaging partner organizations across the Homeland Security Enterprise for additional information and will provide updates as warranted.

CETC: Current and Emerging Threat Center is actively engaging IE and IC partners for additional information and will report as warranted.

Distribution: DHS HQ Leadership and Senior Staff, CWMD, CBP, TSA.

V/r,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Reserve Watch Officer
Joint Intelligence Operations Center (JIOC)
Office of Intelligence
500 12th St SW Washington, DC 20536
24hr Watch #: 202-733-(b)(6);
Email: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov

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Page 034

Withheld pursuant to exemption
Referred to Another Agency/Component
of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: Benner, Derek N
Sent: 3 Feb 2020 14:14:34 +0000
To: Albence, Matthew; Kelly, Christopher S
Subject: FW: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): DHS CAT Activation for the Novel Coronavirus - Today, 2 Feb 2020 at 1500 ET - Worldwide (Awareness NOC 0051-20)

What do you think of a virtual CAT?

From: Cronen, C M (b)(6): [REDACTED]@ice.dhs.gov>
Date: Sunday, Feb 02, 2020, 4:55 PM
To: Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) [REDACTED]@ice.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): DHS CAT Activation for the Novel Coronavirus - Today, 2 Feb 2020 at 1500 ET - Worldwide (Awareness NOC 0051-20)

Afternoon sir,

I am the designated backup ICE CAT director for the month of February. Since the permanent CAT Director for the month of February has since retired, I am now the ICE CAT Director representative for February. As such, I report to aD1, usually through the DD.

Since January 21, 2020, EMU working with HSI and ERO's (Domestic and International Operations) as well as Health and ICE Safety and Occupational Health and have been replying to RFIs from the NOC via the JIOC. The last update reflected there are no employees, contractors, or detainees who have contracted the virus. The only facilities at this time that are affected are the Department of State in China.

ERO's Immigrant Health Service Corps has ongoing screening protocols for all immigrants place into ERO custody.

On Friday, HSI International Operations has secured 15 cartons of M95 masks for ICE employees in the effected region. ERO and HSI have tasked the field for status of their office's personal protection equipment (PPE) which is due Monday. A meeting is being scheduled through ICE Safety and Occupational Health to ensure any purchases of new PPE is through approved vendors.

(b)(5)

cmc

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Sent: Sunday, February 2, 2020 4:10 PM

To: Cronen, C M (b)(6); @ice.dhs.gov>

Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>; (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>; (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>;

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>; (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>; (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>; (b)(6);

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>; (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>; (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>;

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>; (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Subject: FW: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): DHS CAT Activation for the Novel Coronavirus - Today, 2 Feb 2020 at 1500 ET - Worldwide (Awareness NOC 0051-20)

Good afternoon AD Cronen,

At 14:52 ET 02 FEB 20, DHS stated they were going to stand up a CAT at 1500 ET today to as an augmented response to the mitigation and incident management of the Novel Coronavirus. This is a 24/7 CAT for the duration of the outbreak. The new times for the RFIs are 0000 ET and 1200 ET, to meet the production times for placemats due at 0600 and 1800 ET starting 0600 ET 3 FEB 20. This makes sense for DHS to stand up a CAT because the NOC is overwhelmed based on the data from CBP, TSA, FEMA etc. because of their responsibility for screening of visitors or denying entry at a border, functional equivalent of a border or to provide national assistance as FEMA does.

The COA I recommend for ICE (b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C); (b)(5)

If this meets with your intent I will speak with DC Sanders and request the JIOC send out the new times for reporting to the programs ASAP.

V/R

(b)(6);
(b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Supervisory Special Agent
Acting Unit Chief
Emergency Management Unit
Office of Intelligence
Washington, DC 20536
202-732-(b)(6); (D)
210-304-(b)(7)(C)
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Sent: Sunday, February 2, 2020 3:31 PM
To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov; (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov; (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): DHS CAT Activation for the Novel Coronavirus - Today, 2 Feb 2020 at 1500 ET - Worldwide (Awareness NOC 0051-20)

I received an email chain this weekend (courtesy of DAD Mayoral, who is stopping by on Monday morning) and downchain DD Benner indicated "time to get EMU up and running" or words to that effect. (b)(5)

Let's get ready to initiate.

(b)(6);
Deputy Assistant Director
Intelligence

Sent with BlackBerry Work and quite possibly microphone dictated, so please pardon any transcription errors.

From: JIOC-ICE (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Date: Sunday, Feb 02, 2020, 2:58 PM
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: JIOC-ICE (b)(6); @ice.dhs.gov>
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): DHS CAT Activation for the Novel Coronavirus - Today, 2 Feb 2020 at 1500 ET - Worldwide (Awareness NOC 0051-20)

UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Overview: The DHS Crisis Action Team (CAT) will activate today, 2 Feb 2020 at 1500 ET as an augmented response to the mitigation and incident management of the Novel Coronavirus.

Report: The DHS CAT will operate 24/7 and will be preparing an Executive Summary/Placemat at 0600 and 1800 ET as well as a Corona Actions Report (CAR) at 0600 ET daily. The first Placemat will be issued at 0600 on 3 Feb.

Reporting times for the RFIs associated with DHS CAR production (NOC 0051-20-004 and NOC 0051-20-008) are changed to 0000 ET and 1200 ET daily. Reporting requirements for inputs remain the same, but we anticipate requiring specific information regarding quarantine implementation.

Please forward all related information to (b)(6); [redacted]@hq.dhs.gov, cc to (b)(6); [redacted]@hq.dhs.gov until further notice. DHS CAT phone numbers are 202-282-(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) [redacted] and the NOC primary number 202-282-(b)(6); [redacted]

Source: DHS NOC

Distribution: DHS HQ Leadership and Senior Staff, DHS Component Leadership and Operations Centers, White House Situation Room, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and State and Local Mission Partners.

V/R

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) [redacted]
Joint Intelligence Operations Center
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th Street, SW - 10th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20536
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) [redacted]@ice.dhs.gov
[redacted]@dhs.sgov.gov
(b)(6); [redacted]@dhs.ic.gov
Desk: 202-731-(b)(6);
Cell: 202-302-(b)(7)(C) [redacted]

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UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 2 Feb 2020 19:58:41 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: JIOC-ICE
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): DHS CAT Activation for the Novel Coronavirus - Today, 2 Feb 2020 at 1500 ET - Worldwide (Awareness NOC 0051-20)

UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Overview: The DHS Crisis Action Team (CAT) will activate today, 2 Feb 2020 at 1500 ET as an augmented response to the mitigation and incident management of the Novel Coronavirus.

Report: The DHS CAT will operate 24/7 and will be preparing an Executive Summary/Placemat at 0600 and 1800 ET as well as a Corona Actions Report (CAR) at 0600 ET daily. The first Placemat will be issued at 0600 on 3 Feb. Reporting times for the RFIs associated with DHS CAR production (NOC 0051-20-004 and NOC 0051-20-008) are changed to 0000 ET and 1200 ET daily. Reporting requirements for inputs remain the same, but we anticipate requiring specific information regarding quarantine implementation.

Please forward all related information to (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov, cc to (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov until further notice. DHS CAT phone numbers are 202-282-(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) and the NOC primary number 202-282-(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Source: DHS NOC

Distribution: DHS HQ Leadership and Senior Staff, DHS Component Leadership and Operations Centers, White House Situation Room, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and State and Local Mission Partners.

V/R

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Joint Intelligence Operations Center
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th Street, SW - 10th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20536

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov
dhs.sgov.gov

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) s@dhs.ic.gov
Desk: 202-731-(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Cell: 202-302-(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

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UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Sent: 28 Jan 2020 21:22:53 +0000
To: Albence, Matthew
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Subject: FW: NSC DC Today (1/27)

Matt -

Here is the email string. (b)(6); is going to have our exec sec follow up with DHS to let them know AS2 indicated we weren't needed there today and ensure our participation is not required tomorrow.

We've got it.

(b)(6)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

202-344 (b)(6);
(b)(7)(C)

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Date: Monday, Jan 27, 2020, 10:33 PM
To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(b)(6); @ice.dhs.gov>, Kelly, Christopher S <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: NSC DC Today (1/27)

Copy. Thx.

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Deputy Chief of Staff
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
405.305 (b)(6);
(b)(7)(C)

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Date: Monday, Jan 27, 2020, 10:32 PM
To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(b)(6); @ice.dhs.gov>, Kelly, Christopher S <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: NSC DC Today (1/27)

He's available and will attend.

Thx

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Chief of Staff
Office of the Deputy Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Desk: 202-731-(b)(6);
Cellular: 617-201-(b)(6);

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Date: Monday, Jan 27, 2020, 10:17 PM

To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); @ice.dhs.gov>, Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Subject: FW: NSC DC Today (1/27)

(b)(6);
(b)(7)(C)

AD1 would like A-DD to attend this. Please confirm availability so I can advise DHS.
Thx.

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Deputy Chief of Staff
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
405.30 (b)(6);
(b)(7)(C)

From: Blackwell, Juliana (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Date: Monday, Jan 27, 2020, 9:19 PM

To: Benz, Kellie (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>,
Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Cc: Gillus, Allison (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Subject: RE: NSC DC Today (1/27)

There will be another DC tomorrow from 230-4pm. Is the Acting Director available?

From: Benz, Kellie (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Sent: Monday, January 27, 2020 12:29 PM

To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>; Kelly, Christopher S

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Cc: Gillus, Allison (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) Blackwell, Juliana

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Subject: RE: NSC DC Today (1/27)

Great, thank you. It is unlikely the NSC will approve an additional participant from ICE because Acting Director Albence will be one of AS2's +3 (the NSC has also requested participants from CBP and FEMA).

ESEC submits WAVES directly to the NSC, so if you could fill out the attached form with Acting Director Albence's information, we will go ahead and submit to the White House.

Kellie Benz

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2020 12:20 PM
To: Benz, Kellie (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) Kelly, Christopher S
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: Gillus, Allisor (b)(6); (b)(7)(C); Blackwell, Juliana
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Subject: RE: NSC DC Today (1/27)

(b)(6);

Acting Director Albence will attend.

Is he authorized a plus 1? If so, I will accompany. If not, please advise.

Do we need to complete Waves forms?

Thanks.

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Deputy Chief of Staff
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
405.305 (b)(6);
(b)(7)(C)

From: Benz, Kellie (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Date: Monday, Jan 27, 2020, 12:12 PM
To: Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: Gillus, Allison (b)(6); (b)(7)(C); Blackwell, Juliana (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Subject: NSC DC Today (1/27)

Good afternoon,

There is a NSC Deputies Committee meeting on Coronavirus today, January 27 from 2:30-3:30 pm in the White House Situation Room. DHS participation is requested to include ICE.

We are looking to see who from ICE would be available to attend with AS2 today.

Thank you,
Kellie

Kellie Benz
Office of the Executive Secretary
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

From: Albence, Matthew
Sent: 28 Jan 2020 21:33:33 +0000
To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Cc:
Subject: RE: NSC DC Today (1/27)

10-4. He was just in here

Sent with BlackBerry Work
(www.blackberry.com)

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>
Date: Tuesday, Jan 28, 2020, 4:22 PM
To: Albence, Matthew <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: NSC DC Today (1/27)

Matt -

Here is the email string. Austin is going to have our exec sec follow up with DHS to let them know AS2 indicated we weren't needed there today and ensure our participation is not required tomorrow.

We've got it.

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

202-344 (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>
Date: Monday, Jan 27, 2020, 10:33 PM
To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>, Kelly, Christopher <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: NSC DC Today (1/27)

Copy. Thx.

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Deputy Chief of Staff
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
405.305 (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Date: Monday, Jan 27, 2020, 10:32 PM
To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: NSC DC Today (1/27)

He's available and will attend.

Thx

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Chief of Staff
Office of the Deputy Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Desk: 202-732-(b)(6);
Cellular: 617-201-(b)(6);

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Date: Monday, Jan 27, 2020, 10:17 PM
To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: NSC DC Today (1/27)

(b)(6);

AD1 would like A-DD to attend this. Please confirm availability so I can advise DHS.
Thx.

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Deputy Chief of Staff
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
405.305 (b)(6);

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @HQ.DHS.GOV>
Date: Monday, Jan 27, 2020, 9:19 PM
To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>, Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: NSC DC Today (1/27)

There will be another DC tomorrow from 230-4pm. Is the Acting Director available?

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2020 12:29 PM
To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>; Kelly, Christopher S
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @HQ.DHS.GOV>
Subject: RE: NSC DC Today (1/27)

Great, thank you. It is unlikely the NSC will approve an additional participant from ICE because Acting Director Albence will be one of AS2's +3 (the NSC has also requested participants from CBP and FEMA).

ESEC submits WAVES directly to the NSC, so if you could fill out the attached form with Acting Director Albence's information, we will go ahead and submit to the White House.

(b)(6);
(O) 202-447-(b)(6); (C) 202-809-(b)(6);

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2020 12:20 PM
To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov>; Kelly, Christopher S
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @HQ.DHS.GOV>
Subject: RE: NSC DC Today (1/27)

(b)(6);
(b)(7)(C)

Acting Director Albence will attend.

Is he authorized a plus 1? If so, I will accompany. If not, please advise.

Do we need to complete Waves forms?

Thanks.

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Deputy Chief of Staff
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
405.305 (b)(6);

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov>
Date: Monday, Jan 27, 2020, 12:12 PM

To: Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @hq.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @HQ.DHS.GOV>
Subject: NSC DC Today (1/27)

Good afternoon,

There is a NSC Deputies Committee meeting on Coronavirus today, January 27 from 2:30-3:30 pm in the White House Situation Room. DHS participation is requested to include ICE.

We are looking to see who from ICE would be available to attend with AS2 today.

Thank you,

(b)(6);
(b)(7)(C)

(b)(6);
Office of the Executive Secretary
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
(O) 202-447-(b)(6) (C) 202-805-(b)(6)



28 January 2020

DHS Daily Operations Summary

This report highlights significant operational actions and events involving U.S. Department of Homeland Security Components.

NATIONAL ALERT LEVELS

NTAS	Bulletin		Alert		
Bulletin – Iranian Terrorism Threats to the U.S. Homeland, expires 18 March 2020.					
MARSEC	1	2	3		
USCG and maritime industry partners maintain minimum appropriate security measures.					
Fire Preparation	1	2	3	4	5
The 10 geographic areas can accomplish fire management objectives using local resources with little or no national support.					
COGCON	4	3	2	1	
Executive branch government employees are at their normal work locations.					

Green: Normal **Yellow:** Elevated **Red:** Extreme

EVENTS, INCIDENTS AND EMERGING THREATS

Office of Operations Coordination, National Operations Center (NOC)

Emerging Threats

- **Novel Coronavirus – Worldwide:** As of 27 January, CDC reports 110 people have been under investigation in 26 states (cumulative statistic); 32 of the 110 have been confirmed negative. There have five confirmed positives in the United States. DOS issued a Level 3 Travel Advisory (reconsider travel) for all of China. The advisory for Wuhan Province is Level 4 (do not travel). In addition to the DOS Level 3 Travel Advisory, CDC also raised its travel notice to Level 3 (avoid nonessential travel) for all of China. Level 3 is the CDC's highest travel notice level. China has approved landing permits for the scheduled DOS Consulate – Wuhan evacuation flight.

Monitored

- **Suspicious Device - Anchorage, AK:** FPS personnel responded to the Anchorage New Federal Building in Anchorage, after reports of a possible IED. The Anchorage Police Department Bomb Squad confirmed the device to be a functioning incendiary device. The device was received in a package in the mail by the District Court's Clerk. There are no reports of injuries currently.



28 January 2020

Special Events

- **2020 State of the Union Address - Washington, D.C.:** The annual State of the Union Address will be delivered on 4 February in the House Chamber of the U.S. Capitol. This event has been designated as a National Special Security Event. POTUS will address the 116th Congress and the Supreme Court of the United States in his annual address as mandated by the Constitution.
- **Super Bowl LIV Miami Gardens, FL:** On 2 February, the NFL's Super Bowl LIV will be played at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens. This event has been assigned a Special Event Assessment Rating.

OPERATIONS

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Office of Field Operations (OFO)

Significant Seizures

- **Laredo, TX:** On 26 January, CBP officers assigned to the Laredo Port of Entry (POE) detained a Mexican national and a U.S. citizen (driver) and seized 111.54 kg of methamphetamine, 1.16 kg of fentanyl, and a vehicle. The vehicle was referred to secondary due to a computer-generated alert. In secondary, a CBP canine alerted and officers discovered the contraband comingled among items in the trailer. HSI responded; the U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO) declined prosecution due to lack of knowledge. The driver was assessed a \$15,000 USD penalty and released; the passenger was processed for removal.
- **Calexico, CA:** On 26 January, CBP officers assigned to the Calexico POE arrested two U.S. citizens and seized 58.12 kg of methamphetamine and a vehicle. The vehicle was referred to secondary due to a computer-generated alert. In secondary, an inspection revealed anomalies and a CBP canine alerted. A physical inspection led to the discovery of 32 packages of methamphetamine concealed in the floor under the rear seat. HSI responded; the USAO accepted prosecution on both subjects.
- **Nogales, AZ:** On 27 January, CBP officers assigned to the Nogales POE arrested a U.S. citizen and seized 12.60 kg of heroin, 23.22 kg of methamphetamine, 1.12 kg of fentanyl, and a vehicle. The vehicle was referred to secondary due to officer observations. In secondary, an inspection revealed anomalies and a CBP canine alerted. A physical inspection led to the discovery of 55 packages of contraband concealed in the quarter panels and spare tire. HSI responded; the USAO accepted prosecution.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

Known or Suspected Terrorist (KST)

- **Saudi Arabia:** On 27 January, HSI Jeddah reported an encounter with a Filipino national, an associate of a KST. On 20 January, the subject applied for a U.S. non-immigrant visa at the U.S. consulate in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The subject was found to have derogatory information and was confirmed to be an associate of a KST. HSI Jeddah determined the subject was inadmissible to the United States.

Significant Arrest

- **Mexico:** On 27 January, HSI Tijuana reported the arrest of a Mexican national for organized crime and kidnapping. The subject is the assumed leader of a major transnational criminal organization, responsible for coordinating kidnappings, extortion, homicides, and for the increased violence in Baja



28 January 2020

California. HSI Tijuana coordinated all investigative and apprehension efforts with Mexico's Policia Federal Ministerial.

Significant Seizures

- **Bogota, Colombia:** On 27 January, HSI Bogota reported the arrests of three Mexican nationals and the seizure of approximately 182 kg of cocaine. The Colombian National Police executed an inspection on a business jet, its crew, and passengers that resulted in the seizure of the cocaine and the detention of the aircraft. This seizure is in furtherance of a joint investigation of an air smuggling operation that was to depart from Bogota en route to Tapachula, Mexico.
- **Guatemala:** On 27 January, HSI Guatemala City reported the seizure of approximately 1,500 kg of cocaine. A transnational criminal organization, investigated by HSI Brownsville, landed an aircraft onto a clandestine airfield in Guatemala, resulting in the seizure of the narcotics, an aircraft, seven vehicles, and various firearms.
- **San Diego, CA:** On 27 January, HSI Oceanside reported the seizure of \$300,000 USD and the arrest of a U.S. citizen for violations of state law concerning possession of over \$100,000 in drug proceeds. CBP/USBP San Clemente Station conducted a traffic stop in northern San Diego County and discovered the money concealed within the vehicle. HSI Oceanside responded, arrested the subject and seized currency wrappings and two cell phones. The remaining evidence was retained by USBP.

Enforcement Removal Operations (ERO)

Significant Arrest

- **New York, NY:** On 27 January, ERO New York reported the arrest of a Polish national for an immigration law violation. The subject has an Interpol Diffusion Notice and is wanted by the Government of Poland for extortion and robbery. ERO New York arrested the subject in Brooklyn, NY; he will remain in ICE custody pending removal.

U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)

Marine Safety

- **Tennessee River at Scottsboro, AL:** On 27 January, USCG Sector Ohio Valley received a report of an ongoing dock fire at a recreational marina in Scottsboro. The fire spread to multiple vessels, preventing occupants from reaching land and resulting in multiple people in the water. USCG Sector Ohio Valley issued an Urgent Marine Information Broadcast and USCG Marine Safety Unit Nashville deployed. A total of 36 vessels were involved in the fire; there were eight confirmed fatalities. The incident was classified as a Major Marine Casualty. The investigation is pending.

U.S. Secret Service (USSS)

Protective Intelligence

- **Washington, D.C.:** On 24 January, a subject drove his vehicle to the White House Complex and approached USSS Uniformed Division (UD) officers. During the interaction, officers observed ammunition in his vehicle. UD officers arrested the subject for having unregistered ammunition and transported him to the Metropolitan Police Department. Agents from the Washington Field Office



28 January 2020

interviewed the subject, who stated that he was unaware of Washington D.C. gun laws and negligently left the ammunition in his vehicle. The subject appeared in D.C. Superior Court and was released. He is scheduled to appear in court again on 11 March.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

- **Miami, FL:** On 27 January, a subject, born in Costa Rica, appeared at the Kendall Field Office for a scheduled appointment. Routine record checks revealed an outstanding arrest warrant for robbery/theft. FPS was notified; the subject was apprehended without incident.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

- National Watch Center: Steady State.
- FEMA Regions: All at Steady State.
- Monitoring:
 - Soaking rainfall and snow conditions across the Northwest.
 - Snow possible across parts of the Central/Southern Plains.
 - Lake effect snow and North-Central Appalachians snow showers.

Media Highlights

- **Novel Coronavirus**
 - The new coronavirus, originating from Wuhan, China, is not spreading in the United States, health officials said in a news conference Monday. The City of San Francisco, CA has activated its emergency operations center as a precaution. (*ABC News, Social Media*)
 - The U.S. government is increasing staff to conduct screenings at 20 airports that handle almost all passengers traveling into the country from China. Additionally, CBP officers are working with the CDC at five airports to try and prevent the spread of the coronavirus. (*KPRC2/WGRZ*)
 - U.S. Forces Korea is cautioning Americans in South Korea to take precautionary measures after a case of the new coronavirus strain was found near two military bases. The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed that the country found a fourth case on Monday. (*Newsweek*)
- **Southwest Border**
 - **Mexico:** The National Institute of Migration repatriated 240 Hondurans to Honduras on Monday because the migrants were a part of an illegal caravan. (*Regeneracion*)
- **Cybersecurity**
 - Sweeping cyberattacks targeting governments and other organizations in Europe and the Middle East are believed to be the work of hackers acting in the interests of the Turkish government, according to three senior Western security officials. The hackers have attacked at least 30 organizations, including government ministries, embassies, and security services as well as companies and other groups. The cyberattacks included officials and institutions in at least Iraq, Cyprus, Greece, and Albania. The hackers used a technique known as Domain Name System (DNS) hijacking, which redirects visitors to imposter websites, such as a fake email service, and capture passwords and other text entered there. (*Reuters*)



National Security Council Press Guidance

Novel Coronavirus

1.26.20 (v1)

Top Lines

- The President has been briefed on the newly confirmed cases in the United States and continues to get updates on a regular basis.
- The U.S. Government's actions to proactively and aggressively detect and contain the virus have minimized the-risk in America.
- As medical screening continues and through our work with public health partners across the country and around the world, we may identify more cases.
- Again, based on what we know right now, the immediate risk to America is low.
- Last year, President Trump implemented the National Biodefense Strategy to improve speed of action in situations like this, and we are seeing that strategy pay dividends now.
- CDC is accessing additional funding for the most urgent and immediate needs including surge support for ports of entry, enhanced laboratory capacity, and technical assistance.
- The President's top priority is the safety of the American people.
- The CDC are providing continuous updates to the White House on any potential cases of novel coronavirus in the United States and their efforts to mitigate risk.
- The CDC have been proactively preparing for the introduction of the novel coronavirus in the United States for weeks.
- When it comes to public health, this is what the CDC do. They protect the American people.
- Outbreaks like this – when a new virus is emerging to infect people – are always concerning, but we are well prepared.

What CDC are Doing

- CDC have an aggressive response that enables them to identify potential cases early and make sure that they are properly handled.
- They have a layered response to protect the American public.
 - Airport screening – facilitates early diagnosis
 - Educating the public and medical community
- CDC have activated its Emergency Operations Center and begun using public health measures, including enhanced entry screening, as part of our aggressive public health response strategy.

Wuhan: Ordered Departure

- The Department of State is making arrangements to relocate its personnel stationed at the U.S. Consulate General in Wuhan to the United States.
 - Refer questions to the following alert: <https://china.usembassy-china.org.cn/health-alert-update-novel-coronavirus-in-china-6/>
- The health and safety of U.S. citizens, including the employees of U.S. Consulate General Wuhan, continues to be our top priority.
- The full range of consular services, including American Citizen Services and visa processing, remain available at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing and U.S. consulates in Chengdu, Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Shenyang.
- We strongly encourage U.S. citizens in China to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program ([STEP.state.gov](https://step.state.gov)) in order to receive the latest updates on health, security, and any possible U.S. government plans to assist travelers.

Questions about China's Response

- As the President said, China has been working very hard to contain the Coronavirus.
- The United States appreciates China's efforts and continued coordination with public health officials across the globe.

Status of New Confirmed Cases

- Last week CDC reported the first and second infections with 2019-nCoV in the United States.
- Today CDC is reporting 3 additional infections of 2019-nCoV.
- This brings the total number of infections in the U.S. to 5 patients in four states, AZ, CA, IL and WA.
- It's likely that we will continue to see more cases in the United States in the coming days and weeks, including some person-to-person transmission.

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Sent: 27 Jan 2020 22:44:38 +0000
To: Albence, Matthew; Benner, Derek N
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) Lucero, Enrique M
Subject: FW: ASAP - Coronavirus Info

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Sent: Monday, January 27, 2020 5:20 PM
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(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>; Archambeault, Gregory J (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
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02/12/2020 – SEA
02/14/2020 (*Hong Kong*) – NYC

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Sent: Monday, January 27, 2020 2:10 PM
To: Archambeault, Gregory J (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
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Importance: High

Greg – we need to cancel today's removal to Beijing, China.

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Thanks,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Chief of Staff

ICE/ERO

Removal Division

Desk (202) 732-(b)(6);

Cell (602) 723-(b)(7)(C)

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Sent: Monday, January 27, 2020 12:36 PM

To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Cc: #ERO CHIEFS OF STAFF (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

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(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(a)Deputy Chief of Staff
Office of the Executive Associate Director
Enforcement & Removal Operations
Immigration & Customs Enforcement
U.S Department of Homeland Security
202.732.(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) | 830.734.(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

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Including OPLA and OPR in case they have travel planned.

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(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Deputy Chief of Staff

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

405.305 (b)(6);
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Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C); Lucero, Enrique M; Kelly, Christopher (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
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Yes, at least until we get a better handle on what the situation will be over there.

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2020 5:45 PM
To: Albence, Matthew (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>; Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
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Deputy Chief of Staff

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

405.305 (b)(6);



22 January 2020

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Executive branch government employees are at their normal work locations.					

Green: Normal **Yellow:** Elevated **Red:** Extreme

OPERATIONS

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

Rescue

- **Hauppauge, NY:** On 21 January, HSI Long Island reported the rescue of a Brazilian national, victim of human trafficking. The rescue is part of an HSI San Juan investigation into sex trafficking. HSI Long Island rescued the victim at a hotel in Hauppauge.

Significant Arrests

- **Ojinaga, Mexico:** On 21 January, HSI Ciudad Juarez reported the arrest of a Mexican national for violations of foreign law concerning homicide. HSI Ciudad Juarez, the Mexican Federal Police, and Mexico's Attorney General's Office arrested the subject in Ojinaga. The subject is suspected of being one of three subjects involved in the ambush and murder of two Mexican Federal Police Officers.
- **Orlando, FL:** On 21 January, HSI Orlando reported the arrest of a lawful permanent resident, originally from the United Kingdom, for fraud and misuse of visa, permits, and other documents. HSI Orlando identified that the subject produced fraudulent documentation and used it in more than 100 immigrant petitions for alien workers. HSI Orlando arrested the subject at the Orlando International Airport as he attempted to depart the United States.



22 January 2020

- **New Jersey and Pennsylvania:** On 21 January, HSI Philadelphia reported the arrests of four U.S. citizens for conspiracy in the aid of racketeering. HSI Philadelphia and the Reading Police Department (RPD) initiated an investigation into several subjects, who were operating a sex trafficking organization at a boarding house in Reading, PA. The subjects of this investigation are members of the Sevens Street Gang. Three of the subjects were arrested at their residences in New Brunswick, NJ; the fourth was arrested at a probation office in Reading, PA.

Significant Seizure

- **Memphis, TN:** On 21 January, HSI Memphis reported the seizure of Iranian pottery (circa 1200- 900 BC). On 18 November, CBP seized a parcel at a mail hub in Memphis. CBP, in coordination with HSI Memphis, sent photos of the item to subject matter experts (SME). SMEs determined it to be genuine antique pottery from Iran. HSI Memphis made inquiries and determined the pottery was prohibited for import to the United States without a specific license. No arrests were reported.

Enforcement Removal Operations (ERO)

Significant Arrests/Removals

- **El Salvador:** On 21 January, ICE ERO Miami reported the removal of a Salvadoran national to El Salvador, via ICE Air Operations charter aircraft. The subject is wanted by the government of El Salvador for aggravated homicide.
- **Taiwan:** On 20 January, ICE ERO Los Angeles reported the removal of a Taiwan national, with a final order of removal, to Taiwan, via commercial aircraft. The subject is wanted by the Government of Taiwan for fraud.

U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)

Law Enforcement

- **Offshore of Zihuatanejo, Mexico:** On 21 January, Coast Guard Cutter (CGC) MUNRO's unmanned aircraft system (UAS) detected a go-fast vessel (GFV) approximately 300 nautical miles southwest of Zihuatanejo. CGC MUNRO diverted to intercept (b)(7)(E).
(b)(7)(E)
(b)(7)(E) A law enforcement boarding yielded positive drug scan tests for cocaine. CGC MUNRO was authorized to embark all five crewmembers (3-Mexico and 2-Ecuador) as detainees. CGC MUNRO seized 29 bales of cocaine, with an estimated weight of 1,120 kg. (b)(7)(E)
(b)(7)(E) Disposition of the detainees and cocaine is pending.

U.S. Secret Service (USSS)

Protective Intelligence

- **Washington, D.C.:** On 20 January, USSS Uniformed Division officers arrested a subject for unlawful entry, after he attempted to walk through a vehicle checkpoint near the White House Complex. A search of his bag revealed several medicine containers. Prior to his arrest, the subject stated that he was on a leave of absence from Ithaca College because he was experiencing manic episodes and is in treatment for psychosis. Agents from the Washington Field Office responded to conduct an interview. The subject



22 January 2020

invoked his Miranda Rights and refused to be interviewed. The subject remains in custody at the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Police Department and is awaiting his initial appearance in District Court.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

- National Watch Center: Steady State.
- FEMA Regions: All at Steady State.
- Monitoring:
 - Winter weather advisory for much of the Mississippi Valley.
 - Flood warnings for portions of Montana.
 - Freeze warnings and wind chill advisories in effect across Florida.

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)

- **Nationwide:** On 21 January, CISA participated in the AS2 video teleconference regarding the first confirmed case of Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in the United States. CISA alerted all regions about the Travel Notice from CDC and advised regional personnel that enhanced health screening will take place at points of entry, including Chicago's O'Hare and Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson international airports. CISA continues to engage partners to obtain additional information for sharing with stakeholders and regional personnel.
- **Greenville, SC:** On 21 January, the Greenville Water Utility reported that a ransomware attack infected and shut down its administrative systems. There was no report of any impact to operations. CISA confirmed the incident and advised them to report it to the local FBI field office. CISA Threat Hunting transmitted information on ransomware best practices and mitigation strategies to the water utility; the Senior Duty Officer for the Cyber Desk notified the Multi-State Information Sharing Analysis Center of the incident. The Integrated Operations Coordination Center (IOCC) released a Senior Leadership Note to inform local and regional leadership of the incident. CISA is in the early stages of investigating this incident and will report as events develop.
- **Charlotte, NC:** On 21 January, the FBI notified CISA that the Emotet (an advanced, modular banking Trojan that primarily functions as a downloader or dropper of other banking Trojans) campaign has resumed and the FBI and other .gov domains are experiencing increased targeting. CyWatch provided a list of affected entities and requested CISA assistance in notifying targeted entities. CISA is coordinating victim notifications with the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center, who routinely monitors for weekly Emotet indicators and notifies agencies. The IOCC released a Senior Leadership Note to inform local and regional leadership of the incident.

Media Highlights

- Other
 - **China:** A new virus in the Far East has killed at least nine people and is "mutating and adapting," Chinese health officials said Wednesday. Chinese authorities reported that the number of cases of the novel coronavirus had risen to 440 and that all of the deaths occurred in Hubei province. Another 2,197 cases of close contact with patients has been confirmed, and there was evidence of "respiratory transmission" of the virus. (*Sky News/Social Media*)



22 January 2020

- **Washington:** A man in Washington state is infected and is the first confirmed case of the coronavirus in the United States, officials with the CDC confirmed Tuesday. The man is a resident of Snohomish County and experienced symptoms after returning from a trip to the area around Wuhan, China. (*New York Times*)

From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 22 Jan 2020 04:50:09 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: #ICE JIOC Management
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Update): Novel Coronavirus - Far East (NOC 0051-20)

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This information is being provided for senior DHS and Component leaders. It is meant to increase senior leader situational awareness and is not for public release.

Update (2247 ET, 21 Jan 20): The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is closely monitoring the outbreak of novel coronavirus (nCoV) in Wuhan City, Hubei Province. Chinese authorities have confirmed over 300 human infections, with six reported deaths, and confirmed cases across multiple provinces in Mainland China. The World Health Organization (WHO) is reporting possible sustained human-to-human transmission and will convene an emergency panel meeting this week to discuss nCoV spread beyond China.

CDC has confirmed the first case in the United States of nCoV. This case was a Chinese citizen who returned to the U.S. on January 15 from Wuhan and began to experience symptoms on January 16, with no known contacts to seafood/animal markets while in China. CDC is actively coordinating with state and local health departments on the response.

With the first confirmed U.S. case and continued concerns over the extent of the spread of nCoV, CDC is expanding enhanced health screening of passengers from Wuhan to five U.S. air ports of entry—Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL), Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD), Los Angeles (LAX), San Francisco (SFO) and New York (JFK). CDC expects these five airports to be operational on January 24.

CWMD will provide support through our enhanced entry screening agreements at ATL, and potentially LAX and JFK. CBP is providing targeting support, physical space, and reachback to Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS) datasets.

Distribution: DHS HQ Leadership and Senior Staff, DHS Component Leadership, DHS Component Operations Centers, and White House Situation Room.

Update (2138 ET, 20 Jan 20): The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to closely monitor the outbreak of a novel coronavirus (nCoV) in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. China's National Health Commission has also confirmed human-to-human transmission of this virus within China. Chinese officials are reporting a total of 224 cases of pneumonia caused by nCoV in China, including 217 confirmed cases (198 in Wuhan, 5 in Beijing, and 14 in Guangdong) and 7 suspected cases. Outside of China confirmed cases have been reported in Japan (1), Thailand (2), and South Korea (1).

With the confirmation of human-to-human transmission and continued concerns over the extent of the spread of nCoV, CDC has requested moving to 100% enhanced health screening and funneling of all passengers from Wuhan to five U.S. air ports of entry—Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL), Chicago O’Hare International Airport (ORD), Los Angeles (LAX), San Francisco (SFO) and New York (JFK).

CWMD will provide support through our enhanced entry screening agreements at ATL, LAX, and potentially JFK. CBP is providing targeting support, physical space, and reachback to Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS) datasets.

Distribution: DHS HQ Leadership and Senior Staff, DHS Component Leadership, DHS Component Operations Centers, and White House Situation Room.

Update (2255 ET, 19 Jan 20): The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is closely monitoring an outbreak caused by a novel (new) coronavirus (nCoV) in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. Chinese authorities identified the new coronavirus in two new cities in China, Beijing and Shenzhen. According to CDC over a 130 new cases have been reported, raising the total there to almost 200. The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued interim laboratory testing guidance for suspected human cases of nCoV. Canada has initiated screening at four airports, and CDC is reaching out to verify the process being implemented.

CBP and CDC have implemented Tier I enhanced health screening for travelers entering the United States on direct or connecting flights from Wuhan at three U.S. airports—John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), San Francisco International Airport (SFO) and Los Angeles International Airport (LAX).

With the additional case counts and raising concerns over the extent of the spread of nCoV, CDC anticipates moving to Tier II enhanced health screening. This will include adding screening capabilities at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) and Chicago O’Hare International Airport (ORD). CDC will be requesting additional support from DHS to accomplish Tier II screening capability. This support will include a request to activate CWMD enhanced entry screening contracts at ATL, LAX, and potentially JFK. It will also include CBP’s targeting support, help finding physical space, and reachback to Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS) datasets as previously requested.

Federal interagency coordination has been initiated through National Security Council (NSC) channels.

Distribution: DHS HQ Leadership and Senior Staff, DHS Component Leadership, DHS Component Operations Centers, and White House Situation Room.

Overview (0718 ET, 17 Jan 20): China’s health officials confirmed that a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is responsible for a cluster of unidentified atypical viral pneumonia cases recently reported in the country. No human-to-human transmission has been observed. To date, China has reported 41 confirmed cases including two deaths. The majority of cases have been

associated with the South China Seafood Market in Wuhan, the capital and largest city of Hubei Province. CDC has requested CBP support.

Report: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will begin active surveillance at three major international airports located in the United States (JFK, LAX, SFO). These public health screenings may begin as soon as today, 17 Jan. The active surveillance will involve CDC staff conducting a sign and symptom check on every international traveler that appears to have traveled from or visited the Wuhan Region in China. CDC will conduct active surveillance on all passengers originating from Wuhan City that travel to the United States. CDC will determine, based on health declarations, questions, and temperatures if any passenger requires further medical attention.

The National Targeting Center (NTC) will identify passengers arriving on indirect and direct flights from Wuhan, China. Public Health Lookouts (1-day) will be placed on passengers arriving on indirect flights.

The DHS Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office (CWMD) is working to rapidly train additional personnel at JFK and LAX and exploring options to establish capability at SFO.

CDC has indicated they might need additional CBP support at SFO. The possibility of funneling passengers to 5 or 6 airports (to include Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas and Washington Dulles) is also under consideration. DHS CWMD is actively engaged in strategic communications efforts and will stay closely aligned with CBP, OLA, OPA, and other relevant DHS partners.

Source: DHS CWMD, NBIC, CBP, TSA, Media.

Coordination:

OPS-NOC: The Office of Operations Coordination National Operations Center is actively engaging partner organizations across the Homeland Security Enterprise for additional information and will provide updates as warranted.

CETC: Current and Emerging Threat Center is actively engaging IE and IC partners for additional information and will report as warranted.

Distribution: DHS HQ Leadership and Senior Staff, CWMD, CBP, TSA.

V/r,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Section Chief

Joint Intelligence Operations Center

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

500 12th Street, SW - 10th Floor

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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 29 Feb 2020 12:59:02 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: #ICE JIOC Management
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

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The following is the COVID-19 Snapshot as of 0600, 29 February 2020.

Snapshot	
WHO Reports (<i>WHO Dashboard, 0600 ET 29 Feb</i>):	
• Worldwide Confirmed Cases:	85,402 (+1708)
• Worldwide Confirmed Deaths:	2,924 (+63)
• AMCIIT Deaths (outside U.S.):	1 (Wuhan, China)
• Countries reporting cases:	54 (+1)
CDC Reports (<i>CDC Morning Update, 0940 ET 28 Feb</i>):	
• Total U.S. Domestic Cases:	62 (+2)
• Confirmed – travel related to China:	12 (n/c)
• Confirmed – person-to-person spread:	2 (n/c)
• Confirmed – unknown nexus:	1 (n/c)
• Repatriated from Diamond Princess:	44 (+2)
• Repatriated from Wuhan, China:	3 (n/c)
US-based Quarantine (<i>HHS SLB, 1700 ET 28 Feb</i>):	
332 (n/c)	
DHS Screening Actions (<i>11 Airports</i>) (<i>CWMD and CDC, 0539 ET 29 Feb</i>):	
• Total CBP Referred to CWMD:	51,903 (+776)
• CWMD Cleared (no further screening):	21,775 (+134)
• CWMD Referred for Self-Monitoring:	30,055 (+642)
• CWMD Referred to CDC:	73 (n/c)
• Quarantined by CDC:	16 (n/c)
• CDC Hospitalized:	0 (n/c)
• CDC Completed Quarantine:	13 (n/c)
• CDC Currently Quarantined:	3 (n/c)
• CDC Cleared (no Quarantine):	55 (+4)
• Pending CDC Disposition Status:	2 (-4)

Distribution: NOC DHS Component Actions Report Recipients, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and White House

V/r,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Section Chief

Joint Intelligence Operations Center

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

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From: Kelly, Christopher S
Sent: 28 Feb 2020 21:56:31 +0000
To: Albence, Matthew
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Subject: FW: DHS Morning Briefing (2-28-20)

Sent with BlackBerry Work
(www.blackberry.com)

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>
Date: Friday, Feb 28, 2020, 4:51 PM
To: Kelly, Christopher S <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)@ice.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: DHS Morning Briefing (2-28-20)

Chris – please see below on the “school” cases. Thanks.

Colorado (3 Cases)

But immigration rights activists said three incidents occurred in Colorado in the past week involving fathers detained before or after dropping off their children, USA Today reported Thursday.

Case #1 Synopsis:

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

The enforcement action (b)(7)(E) and the arrest encounter was the result of a traffic stop. An ES was submitted for awareness as ERO officers may have been videotaped by bystanders during the arrest.

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C); (b)(7)(E); (b)(7)(A)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C); (b)(7)(E); (b)(7)(A)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(E)

Case #2 and #3 Synopsis:

ERO and OPA were not given specifics about the remaining cases, but DEN ERO was able to provide the following:

We had two cases that “fit” the narrative that the NGOs are trying to push:

- The first case the father dropped off his child at Maxwell Elementary School in Denver, Colorado (b)(7)(E)

(b)(7)(E)

(b)(7)(E)

This was case A (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

- The second case the father dropped off his child at North Star Elementary, 8740 N Star dr. Thornton, CO and the officers made the stop **6.1 miles** away in Henderson, Colorado at the intersection of E 88th Ave and E 89th Ave near the Mile High Flea Market. A (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(7)(E)

(b)(5)

Illinois, Chicago (1 Case)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Synopsis: (b)(7)(E)

(b)(7)(E) It notes the arrest was the result of a traffic stop. The I-213 does not indicate if there were other passengers in the vehicle at the time of the arrest.

(b)(6);
(b)(7)(C)

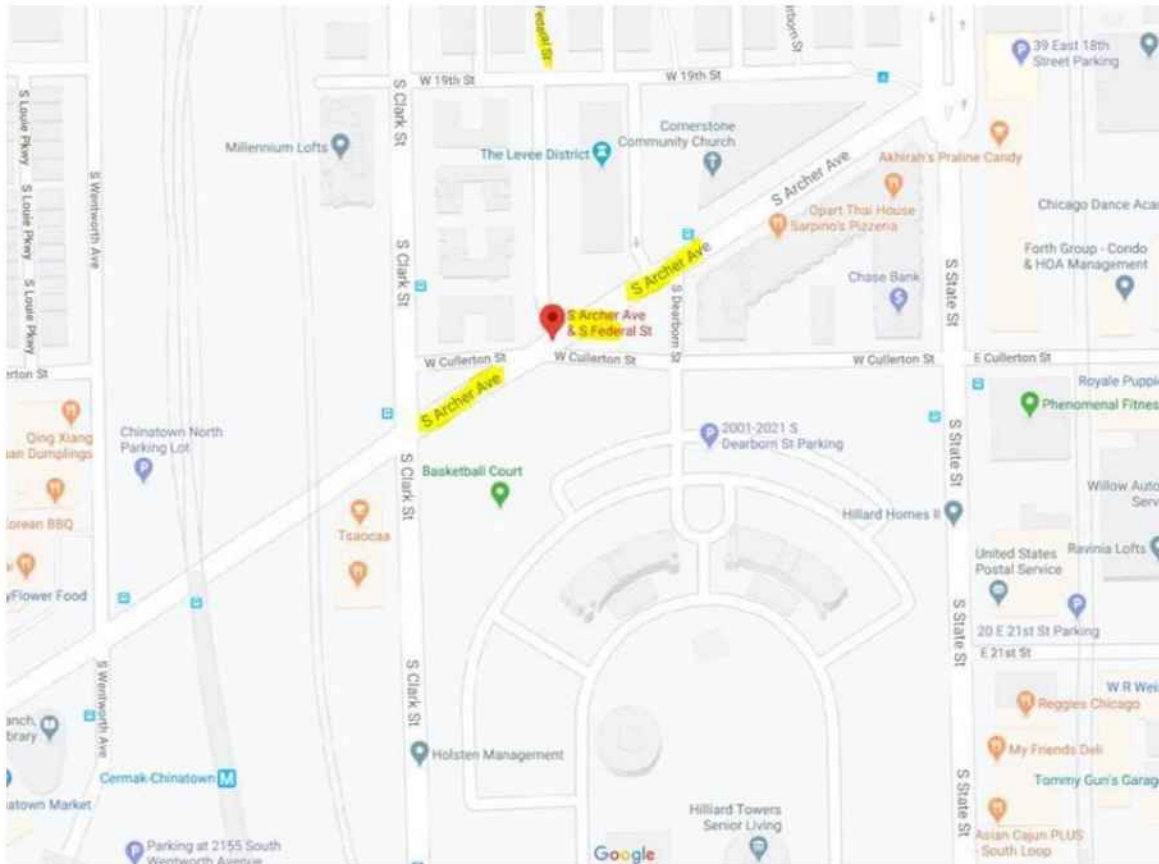
was booked into ICE custody on Feb. 14 at 1413 hrs. and remains in ICE custody.

I-213

METHOD OF LOCATION/ APPREHENSION:

United States (US) Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO), Mobile Criminal Apprehension Team (MCAT) arrested (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) (b)(6) on 02/12/2020 at approximately 0800 hours without incident. The location of arrest was near Archer and federal, Chicago, Illinois. Consent to enter was not needed arrest was made pursuant to a vehicle stop (b)(7)(E)

Subject was then placed in handcuffs, checked for fit, and transported to Broadview ICE office for processing.



Oregon (1 Case)

ICE spokeswoman (b)(6); defended its Portland arrest, saying (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) was a Mexican citizen in the U.S. illegally and was previously convicted for a hit and run 2004 and larceny in 2008. "The location of (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) traffic stop and subsequent arrest did not occur at a known marked school bus stop or a location that was previously known to the officers, (b)(6); said in a statement.

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Synopsis: (b)(7)(E) the arrest encounter was the result of a traffic stop, it does not appear that officers were aware of the

location of the bus stop, (b)(7)(E)

(b)(7)(E)

(b)(6); was booked into ICE custody on Feb. 19 at 1823 and was released from ICE custody on Feb. 26 on OREC.

I-213

On 02/19/2020, Portland fugitive operations was attempting to locate SUBJECT (b)(6);

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) King City, OR. At

approximately 0630 a male of the same approximate height and weight as SUBJECT was

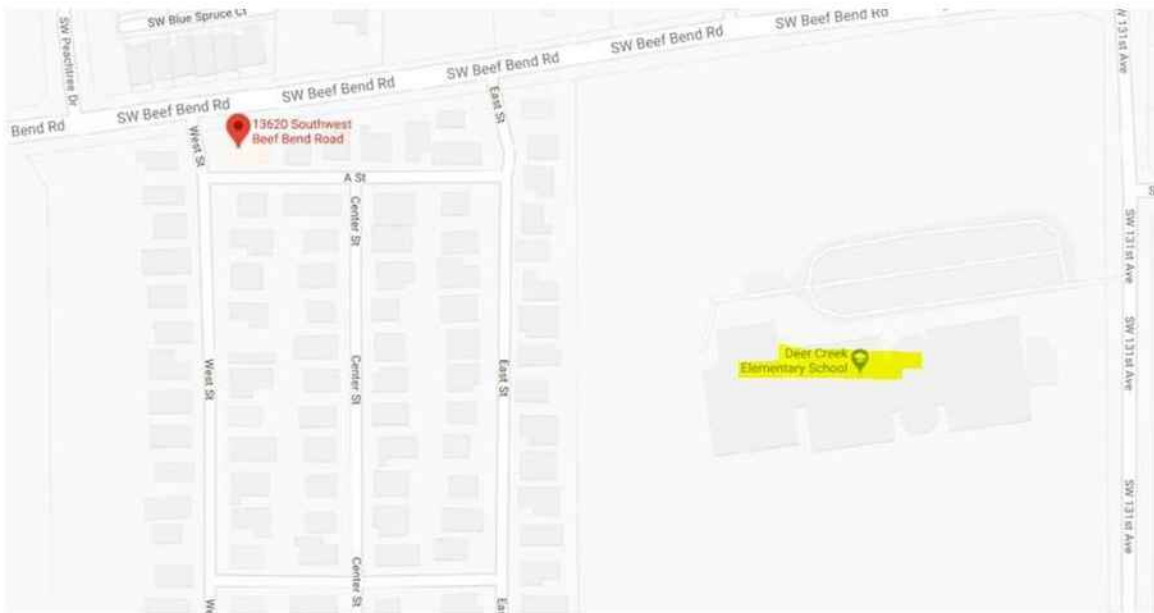
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C); (b)(7)(E)

I asked the driver for identification and he stated that he left it at his house. I asked SUBJECT for his name and he identified himself as (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) I asked subject to exit the vehicle and identified myself as an ICE officer. I asked SUBJECT if he was lawfully present in the United States and he stated that he was not. I informed SUBJECT that he was under arrest and placed him in handcuffs.

I asked SUBJECT who his passenger was and he stated it was his minor daughter (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) SUBJECT stated he was taking her to her bus stop for school and motioned towards a bus that was approximately 100 feet away. SUBJECT asked if he could give her lunch money and let her board the bus. At SUBJECTS request I retrieved a 5 dollar bill from his pocket and gave it to his daughter and she boarded the school bus. I asked SUBJECT if there would be anyone at home when his daughter returned from school and he stated that his wife was at home.

SUBJECT was transported to Portland without incident.

Note: Although the traffic stop / arrest encounter was ½ mile from an elementary school there is no indication the minor child attended this school or was going to this school. The traffic stop was near a school bus stop, but no indication that was previously known to officers or marked as a school bus stop.



Philly (1 Case)

...as well as a woman after she dropped off her child at a school in South Philadelphia this month, according to CBS affiliate KOIN in Oregon and The Philadelphia Inquirer.

Synopsis: (b)(7)(E) Based on the below narrative there was a minor child identified (b)(7)(E) and they walked across the street to an “unmarked building” and the arrest encounter began when the Subject left the “unmarked building” without the minor child and was waiting at a bus stop. Officers approached on foot and walked subject around the building to a more discrete location away from the bus stop.

I searched the location on google maps and it appears the residence (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) where I’m assuming the minor child was dropped off given Subject was on-foot (b)(7)(E)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) was booked into ICE custody on Feb. 11 at 0900 and was released from ICE custody the same day @ 1350 hrs. on OSUP/ATD.

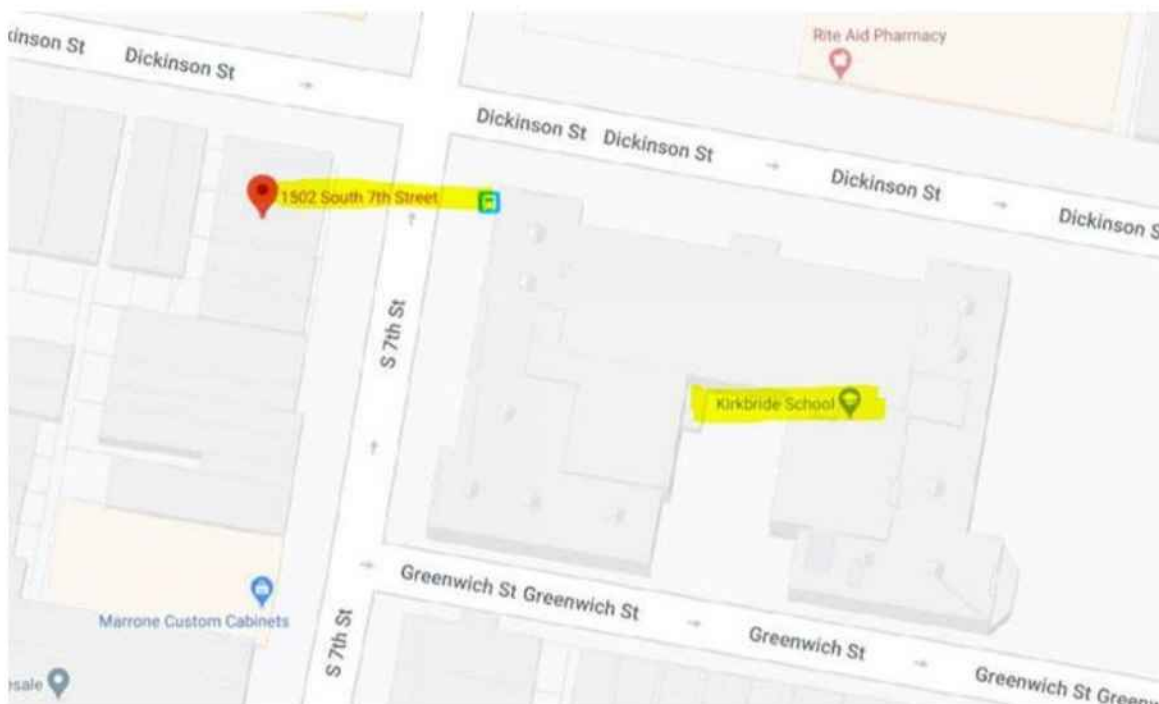
I-213

On February 11, 2020, Philadelphia Deportation Officers (DO) (b)(6); and (DO) (b)(6); of the Philadelphia ICE/ERO Fugitive Operations Unit were conducting a (b)(6); (b)(7)(C); (b)(7)(F) (b)(6); Philadelphia, PA 19147. DO (b)(6); and DO (b)(6); arrived on scene around 08:15 hours. Investigation efforts revealed this as the last known address of (b)(7)(E)

(b)(7)(E) (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

At approximately 08:20 hours, a Hispanic female matching the physical description and file photos of (b)(6); (b)(7)(C); (b)(7)(E)

a minor child. Officers watched as the female subject walked into an unmarked building across the street. Approximately 5 minutes later, the subject exited the building but the child was not present. Officers observed her exit the building and walk to the corner where it appeared she was waiting at a bus stop. Officers who were in plain clothes approached the subject and identified themselves as ICE officers and presented badges and credentials. Officers walked with the subject around the building to a more discreet location away from the bus stop. A brief field interview was conducted with the subject who was positively identified (b)(7)(E). At this time (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) admitted she had no documents permitting her to legally reside in the United States. Officers explained to (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) that she had an outstanding Order of Removal and had failed to depart the U.S. as instructed by an Immigration Judge (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) advised officers that she had a 4 year-old daughter and also claimed to be 4 months pregnant. Officers advised (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) that she would have to be processed at the Philadelphia ERO Field Office but she would be released due to childcare concerns and her alleged pregnancy.



From: Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2020 8:36 AM
To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: DHS Morning Briefing (2-28-20)

(b)(6) Matt:

For Matt's upcoming hearing, can we please get a paper on facial recognition (I believe this was done for a Congressional and can probably just be dusted off). Also (b)(6) I know Matt has information on the Philly school case. Can we get details on the Colorado cases referenced in the articles?

Thanks!

From: DHS Daily <dhs@techmis.com>
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2020 6:00 AM
To: noreply@techmis.com
Subject: DHS Morning Briefing (2-28-20)



DHS MORNING BRIEFING

Prepared for the Office of Public Affairs (OPA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
By TechMIS
www.TechMIS.com

[Mobile User Copy](#)

TO: Homeland Security Secretary & Staff
DATE: Friday, February 28, 2020 6:00 AM ET

Top News

[Trump Blocked From Building Mexico Wall With Trident Submarine Base Funds \(Bloomberg\)](#)

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[House Armed Services chairman working on bill to restore Pentagon funding taken for border wall \(The Hill\)](#)

[House Democrats to introduce bill clawing back border wall funds \(Reuters\)](#)

[DHS deploys dozens of Border Patrol agents to do USCIS job of reviewing asylum claims \(Washington Examiner\)](#)

[Venezuelans seeking asylum present unique challenge to Trump administration \(Washington Post\)](#)

[Border Patrol Prepared for Migrants Arriving with Coronavirus, Says Incoming Deputy Chief \(Breitbart\)](#)

[Pence taps career health official to coordinate White House coronavirus response \(The Hill\)](#)

[Trump taps Pence to head up coronavirus outbreak response \(CBS News\)](#)

[Health expert tapped for coronavirus task force will report to Pence \(CNN\)](#)

[Pence, tapped to lead coronavirus response, vows US 'ready for anything' \(FOX News\)](#)

[Mike Pence's crisis manager skills put to the test in new role leading coronavirus response \(USA Today\)](#)

[Coronavirus Combat Plans Drawn Up by U.S. Courts \(Bloomberg\)](#)

[U.S. says ramping up efforts to guard against coronavirus, mulls sweeping powers \(Reuters\)](#)

[CDC director says coronavirus threat in US remains low, but warns there will be new cases \(FOX News\)](#)

[Mixed messages, test delays hamper U.S. coronavirus response \(Reuters\)](#)

[In scramble to stop virus, testing raises tough questions \(San Francisco Chronicle\)](#)

[States ask people potentially exposed to COVID-19 to self-quarantine \(Breitbart\)](#)

[Stocks plunge on coronavirus fears even as U.S. ramps up fight against spread \(Reuters\)](#)

[\[NY\] Feds, NY governor still in talks on Global Entry ban \(AP\)](#)

[\[NY\] Cuomo May Sue Trump Over Delay in N.Y. Traffic-Congestion Plan \(Bloomberg\)](#)

[\[DC\] Daughter of alleged Mexico drug kingpin 'El Mencho' arrested trying to see brother in U.S. court in Washington \(Washington Post\)](#)

[\[DC\] Daughter of alleged Mexican drug kingpin El Mencho arrested \(CBS News\)](#)

[\[DC\] Cartel boss' daughter arrested attending brother's trial \(San Francisco Chronicle\)](#)

[\[IL\] Debate over Illinois' noncitizen prisoner release policy focuses on money, safety \(Washington Examiner\)](#)

[\[CA\] 1st coronavirus case of unknown origin in US was hospitalized for days before being tested: officials \(FOX News\)](#)

[\[CA\] Some California health workers held in isolation, quarantine after exposure to coronavirus patient, officials say \(FOX News\)](#)

[\[CA\] California Governor Gavin Newsom Says State Is Monitoring 8,400 Coronavirus Cases \(Daily Caller\)](#)

[\[CA\] Man Held in Wyoming in California Cemetery Killings \(US News & World Report\)](#)

[\[HI\] Kaua'i Councilmember Arrested In Drug Sweep \(Hawaii Public Radio\)](#)

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[Immigration agents accused of targeting parents taking their kids to school \(USA Today\)](#)

[\[MD\] Gov. Hogan opposed to ending ICE's warrantless access to driver's license database \(Washington Post\)](#)

[\[MD\] ICE has run facial-recognition searches on millions of Md. drivers \(Washington Post\)](#)

[\[MD\] ICE has run facial-recognition searches on millions of Maryland drivers \(Washington Examiner\)](#)

[\[CA\] SF man deported to Chad may return home soon, but ICE plans to detain him again \(San Francisco Chronicle\)](#)

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[Trump Considers Making Illegal Aliens Pay for Their Deportation Appeals \(Breitbart\)](#)

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[President Trump's immigration crackdown inundates Supreme Court \(USA Today\)](#)

[Trump Administration to Strip Citizenship from Foreign-Born Terrorists, Criminals \(Breitbart\)](#)

[Justice Department creates office to strip citizenship from some naturalized immigrants \(Chicago Tribune\)](#)

[Court decision could speed up visas for US military interpreters \(Public Radio International\)](#)

[Why a Top Trump Aide Said 'We Are Desperate' for More Immigrants \(New York Times\)](#)

[Cuccinelli: Trump's 'Public Charge' Ensures New Immigrants No Longer Burden American Taxpayers \(Breitbart\)](#)

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[1,155 Chinese Nationals Apprehended After Illegally Entering U.S. in FY2020 \(Breitbart\)](#)

[\[AZ\] Native American leader denounces destruction of sacred sites for border wall construction \(The Hill\)](#)

[\[AZ\] CBP agents discover another cross-border tunnel in Arizona \(Breitbart\)](#)

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[Surveillance fight emerges as intelligence flashpoint \(The Hill\)](#)

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[NSA spent \\$100M on phone surveillance program that prompted two unique FBI leads \(Washington Examiner\)](#)

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[Vexed by how to contain virus, countries take tough steps \(AP\)](#)

[U.S. spy agencies monitor coronavirus spread, concerns about India: sources \(Reuters\)](#)

[\[TN\] Justice Dept. charges professor with hiding ties to China \(San Francisco Chronicle\)](#)

[\[OK\] Chinese scientist sentenced to prison in US for technology theft \(Breitbart\)](#)

[\[Mexico\] Mexico Welcomes Cruise Ship Rejected in Jamaica for Coronavirus Fears \(Breitbart\)](#)

[\[Mexico\] MSC cruise ship docks in Mexico following coronavirus scare; company says ill crew member diagnosed with flu \(FOX News\)](#)

[\[Denmark\] Denmark sees first coronavirus case in man returning from Italy vacation \(FOX News\)](#)

[\[Turkey\] President Erdogan's options narrow as Russia presses Syrian crisis to Turkey's doorstep \(Reuters\)](#)

[\[Turkey\] US envoy says Russia faceoff shows Turkey its true ally \(Breitbart\)](#)

[\[Syria\] Turkey-Russia Tensions Soar After Dozens Die in Syria Strike \(Bloomberg\)](#)

[\[Syria\] Fears of escalation after 33 Turkish troops killed in Syria's Idlib \(Breitbart\)](#)

[\[Syria\] Turkey suffers mass casualties in Syria airstrike \(The Hill\)](#)

[\[Syria\] 29 Turkish soldiers killed in northeast Syria air strike \(San Francisco Chronicle\)](#)

[\[Syria\] Russia sends warships to Syria, blames Ankara for killing of Turkish troops \(New York Times\)](#)

[\[Syria\] Russia sends warships to Syria, blames Ankara for killing of Turkish troops \(Reuters\)](#)

[\[Syria\] U.S. Senator Graham Calls for No-Fly Zone in Syria's Idlib \(US News & World Report\)](#)

[\[Saudi Arabia\] Saudi Arabia Bans Travel to Mecca, Medina over Coronavirus \(Breitbart\)](#)

[\[Syria\] NATO Envoys to Meet to Discuss Syria at Turkey's Request \(New York Times\)](#)

[\[Iran\] U.S. Maintains Pressure on Iran, Stalling Diplomacy While Expecting Attacks \(New York Times\)](#)

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[\[China\] The Cybersecurity 202: Huawei official accuses U.S. of targeting the telecom to hurt China \(Washington Post\)](#)

[\[China\] Congress approves \\$1B for rural telecom companies to ditch Huawei \(Politico\)](#)

[\[China\] Senate unanimously approves bill to ban purchase of Huawei equipment with federal funds \(The Hill\)](#)

[\[China\] With West divided, Huawei plans first European 5G factory in France \(Reuters\)](#)

[\[China\] Virus Disrupts China's Shipping, and World Ports Feel Impact \(New York Times\)](#)

[\[China\] As The Coronavirus Spreads, Most Of America's Medicine Still Comes From China \(Daily Caller\)](#)

[\[China\] Navy: Chinese warship fired laser at U.S. aircraft \(Breitbart\)](#)

[\[China\] US accuses China of using laser against Navy patrol plane \(The Hill\)](#)

[\[China\] Chinese destroyer fires laser at US jet, US Navy says \(CNN\)](#)

[\[South Korea\] U.S., South Korea Cancel Military Exercises Amid Coronavirus Spike \(US News & World Report\)](#)

[\[South Korea\] US and South Korea postpone joint military exercise as coronavirus spreads \(Washington Examiner\)](#)

Presidential Tweets

Editorial Note: The DHS Daily Briefing is a collection of news articles related to Department's mission. The inclusion of particular stories is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse the political viewpoints or affiliations included in news coverage.

Top News

Trump Blocked From Building Mexico Wall With Trident Submarine Base Funds (Bloomberg)

[Bloomberg](#) [2/27/2020 10:17 PM, Peter Blumberg, 197K]

The Trump administration was barred by a court from diverting \$89 million to build the Mexico border wall from a construction project at a submarine base in Washington state.

Thursday's ruling by a federal judge in Seattle was the latest setback to President Donald Trump's multibillion-dollar plan to bolster barriers along the U.S. southern border.

The funds at issue were earmarked for construction of a pier at the Bangor naval base, home to the Pacific Fleet's Trident ballistic subs. It's one of 127 congressionally-approved military projects totaling \$3.6 billion that the administration planned to defund to pay for 11 border wall projects, according to the lawsuit filed by Washington state.

"It is difficult for this court to imagine much, if anything, that could be more important to the state of Washington than that the nuclear-powered submarines carrying nuclear warheads are secure when traveling through its waters," U.S. District Judge Barbara Rothstein wrote in her decision.

Washington state Attorney General Bob Ferguson said he looks forward to "this \$89 million being used the way Congress intended -- to support a military construction project in Washington state."

Federal judge blocks administration from diverting some funds for border wall (CNN)

[CNN](#) [2/27/2020 7:40 PM, Priscilla Alvarez, 5551K]

A federal judge in Washington state on Thursday blocked the Trump administration from diverting millions of dollars in funding from a project at a base in the state to border wall construction, delivering a partial blow to President Donald Trump.

The lawsuit relates to Trump's national emergency declaration, which allowed the administration to dip into Pentagon funds, including redirecting money intended for military construction projects to the wall.

A slew of states and organizations have sued the administration over the declaration. Thursday's ruling is specific to one of the projects targeted to have its funds redirected.

The construction project at the center of the lawsuit is at the Naval Submarine Base Bangor, otherwise known as the Bangor Project. The Defense Department identified the project, along with more than 100 others, to shore up funds for 11 border barrier projects.

Bangor, according to the judge's ruling, is "home to the United States Pacific Fleet of Trident Ballistic Missile Submarines, nuclear powered submarines that carry nuclear warheads."

Judge Barbara Jacobs Rothstein acknowledged its importance in Thursday's ruling.

"It is difficult for this Court to imagine much, if anything, that could be more important to the State of Washington than that the nuclear-powered submarines carrying nuclear warheads are secure when traveling through its waters," Rothstein wrote. "The potentially disastrous results of unsecure nuclear weapons within the State's boundaries are so obvious that they do not need to be elaborated on here."

Rothstein barred the administration from dipping into the nearly \$90 million allocated for the project, but didn't halt the use of military construction funds for the wall altogether.

Judge rules Trump can't use Washington military funds for border wall (Washington Times)

[Washington Times](#) [2/27/2020 2:22 PM, Stephen Dinan, 482K]

A federal judge in Seattle subtracted nearly \$90 million from President Trump's border wall plans after ruling Thursday that his emergency declaration and siphoning of money from the Pentagon was illegal.

Washington state had challenged Mr. Trump's move, and pointed to a \$88.96 million project in the state that was delayed by the shift of funding.

Judge Barbara Jacobs Rothstein sided with the state, saying Congress tried to ban Mr. Trump from moving money around to build his wall, yet he did it anyway.

"It can hardly be denied that the public has a strong interest both in the integrity of this country's borders and in ensuring that the armed forces are well-supported while deploying the missions," she wrote. "However, doing so cannot be done at the expense of our laws."

Her decision appears to buck the Supreme Court, which cleared a number of other hurdles courts had erected, and ruled Mr. Trump could spend the money while the cases are being argued.

Judge Rothstein, a Carter appointee, said the high court's ruling "is not necessarily" controlling over her case, because it involves a different plaintiff with different arguments, though the money and the wall construction are the same.

The \$88.96 million is a fraction of the \$6.1 billion Mr. Trump moved from Pentagon accounts last year toward wall-building as part of his emergency declaration.

Mr. Trump made the move after Congress passed, and he signed, a spending bill giving him just \$1.375 billion for construction. The law also sought to try to prevent him from shifting money from within accounts.

But the administration argued that didn't apply to the 1970s-era National Emergencies Act, which Mr. Trump cited as his authority for moving the money.

Judge Rothstein rejected that, saying wall-building is a domestic duty of Homeland Security, and the border isn't a war zone. She said Mr. Trump may have had power to shift money for actual military purposes but the wall doesn't qualify since it's domestic.

"Simply put, the southern border is not a militarized zone; it is the responsibility of the Department of Homeland Security to ensure that the border is secure—a law enforcement function explicitly outside the purview of the Department of Defense," she wrote.

House Armed Services chairman working on bill to restore Pentagon funding taken for border wall (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [2/27/2020 4:22 PM, Rebecca Kheel, 1762K]

The chairman of the House Armed Services Committee is working on a bill to "claw back" the \$3.8 billion the Pentagon is redirecting from weapons programs to President Trump's border wall, he said Thursday.

"I think we can absolutely pass a bill that says we appropriated this money for these purposes in the FY20 bill, you have taken it out of all these purposes and put it here, put it back," Chairman Adam Smith (D-Wash.) told reporters.

"Time is of the essence, and I am right now working with leadership and others to try to get a piece of legislation to the floor as quickly as is possible," Smith added. "They robbed the bank, and they are now running away with the money. We need to stop them before they get too far."

On Wednesday, Senate Democrats introduced their own bill to reverse the Pentagon's shifting of funds to the wall.

Earlier this month, the Pentagon notified Congress it was taking \$3.8 billion from

several programs and putting the money in its counter-drug fund to be used for Trump's wall on the U.S.-Mexico border.

Among the programs that are losing money to the wall are the F-35 fighter jet, MQ-9 reaper drone, the P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol plane, the C-130J transport plane, the landing helicopter assault ship replacement, the expeditionary fast transport ship and unspecified equipment for the National Guard and reserves.

Smith said the bill he is working on would be separate from the annual defense policy bill, which he said would be "too late." Lawmakers are expected to consider the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) in the spring.

Smith said it's "possible" Republicans could support a bill to force the Pentagon to put the money back, but that he "wouldn't bet the mortgage on it."

Specifically, Smith said he's talking over bill language with the staff of Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), the ranking member on the Armed Services Committee.

On Wednesday, at a hearing with Defense Secretary Mark Esper and Joint Chief of Staff Chairman Gen. Mark Milley, Thornberry blasted the Trump administration for "substituting the judgment of the administration for the judgment of Congress."

"I'm afraid that the result of this will be greater restrictions on the department's ability to move money around to meet changing needs, and the country will suffer as a result," Thornberry said.

After the hearing, Thornberry told reporters he would "look at a variety of options" to respond to the transfer, including restricting the Pentagon's ability to reprogram funding.

Last year's House-passed NDAA would have limited the Pentagon's transfer authorities, but those restrictions were taken out of the final bill signed into law amid opposition from Republicans.

Asked Thursday about trying to restrict the Pentagon reprogramming authorities again, Smith said he was "not as clear on" whether he will take that path.

House Democrats to introduce bill clawing back border wall funds (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [2/27/2020 4:55 PM, Mike Stone, 5304K]

Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives are working on new legislation that would "claw back" funds the White House took from the Pentagon's budget to fund construction of a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border, the chairman of the House Armed Services committee said on Thursday.

The legislation would aim to restore \$3.8 billion back to the Pentagon's weapons procurement and National Guard budgets.

"They robbed the bank and now they are running away with the money," Democratic

Representative Adam Smith, who chairs the committee, told reporters.

The Trump administration has vowed to build at least 400 miles (640 km) of wall along the border by November 2020. In his 2016 election campaign, Trump said Mexico would pay for the wall. The Mexican government has consistently refused to do so.

The bill is being discussed with the staff of top Republican on the Armed Services Committee, Representative Mac Thornberry, Smith said. Smith hoped to get it to the House floor as soon as possible.

The legislation would target the fiscal 2021 budget reprogramming that took money from the National Guard, and weapons procurement including the Lockheed Martin Corp (LMT.N) F-35 fighter jet program, Lockheed C-130 transport aircraft, Boeing Co (BA.N) P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, Bell Boeing V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft, and shipbuilding.

While it might be approved in the House, the bill looks unlikely to be passed in the Senate, controlled by Trump's Republicans.

DHS deploys dozens of Border Patrol agents to do USCIS job of reviewing asylum claims (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [2/27/2020 12:19 PM, Anna Giaritelli, 570K]

Seventy-five Border Patrol agents have been pulled from the field to instead do the jobs of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services officers and decide whether asylum seekers' initial claims are legitimate.

Acting U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Mark Morgan revealed in a House appropriations subcommittee hearing Thursday that the administration has agents working in other capacities even as the number of people presenting at ports of entry to claim asylum has declined since last summer. Morgan confirmed that in addition to the 75 Border Patrol agents, another 16 port of entry officers who normally work screening vehicles and pedestrian crossers at ports of entry are reviewing asylum claims.

"It's a balancing act because, you're right, I am pulling critical resources, you know from the lines to do this. But again, as we do that balancing, in the end we see it's a positive net gain for us on the front end because we're alleviating the backlog and other conditions," Morgan told the House appropriations subcommittee on homeland security. Morgan said the program is not meant to be permanent and that more asylum officers should be hired.

The Washington Examiner first reported last May that DHS planned to implement a plan that would give federal law enforcement on the border the authority to conduct interviews with asylum seekers who fear returning to their home countries.

To supplement U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services officers who normally interview migrants who claim a credible fear of returning to a home country, Border

Patrol agents on the southern border were trained how to conduct "credible fear interviews," which immigrants must pass to go on to claim asylum. Agents conduct the interviews shortly after apprehending people who have illegally crossed from Mexico to the United States or among people who have sought asylum at a port of entry crossing.

DHS's plan was to essentially deputize law enforcement to carry out citizenship officers' jobs in order to reduce the number of people who have passed that stage and are waiting on asylum decisions. Those decisions usually take two to five years due to the nearly 1 million immigration cases waiting to be decided by fewer than 500 immigration judges nationwide.

Immigrant families who surrender to Border Patrol agents are taken to a station and interviewed there about their background. Those in custody are not to be held longer than 72 hours. While in Border Patrol custody, an immigrant can claim a "credible fear" of returning to his or her home country during the general interview with an agent.

The agent would then notify U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services of the claim and a representative would hear and decide a person's claim, likely after the person in custody has been transferred from Border Patrol to Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody. Families who have been found by a USCIS officer to have a credible fear of return cannot be held by ICE for more than 20 days and will be released into the U.S. and told to show up for their asylum claim adjudication years down the road.

Venezuelans seeking asylum present unique challenge to Trump administration (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [2/27/2020 6:59 AM, Arelis Hernández, 12625K]

Having fled political persecution in Venezuela, Brantly Flores and his teenage daughter, Branyerly, crossed the Rio Grande in 2019, asking the U.S. government for asylum. Like tens of thousands of others, they were turned back across the border into Mexico to await a court hearing.

The father and daughter spent seven months living in Mexico under the "Remain in Mexico" policy, and after they were summoned to a U.S. courtroom in late January, they were shocked when the immigration judge issued a ruling: Flores was granted protection and was allowed to enter the United States.

His youngest daughter was not. Branyerly, alone and penniless, returned across the Rio Grande, to Matamoros.

"It's hard to understand how my victory in winning protection could result in my daughter's being placed back in danger," Flores said in an interview from his new home in Tennessee. "I cannot live knowing I can't protect my baby girl."

Amid the Trump administration's policies to close off the border to Latin American asylum seekers, the U.S. government is still separating families as they attempt to

cross into the United States. As the Flores family's situation shows, the administration is struggling with how to handle an increasing number of Venezuelans appearing at the border.

While most asylum seekers are sent back to Mexico or are flown to Guatemala to seek refuge there — policies that have been effective at causing border crossings to wane — Venezuelans present a dilemma for the U.S. government. While the Trump administration publicly sympathizes with the opposition to the oil-rich country's socialist leader, Nicolás Maduro, it is also making it more difficult for the country's political refugees to seek help within the United States as part of its broader policies of restricting immigration.

President Trump called opposition leader Juan Guaidó Venezuela's "true and legitimate president" as he stood in the gallery during his State of the Union address. While promising support for the "righteous struggle for freedom" of Venezuelans, the U.S. government has been turning away asylum seekers who arrive at the southwest border and ignoring pleas from Guaidó for the U.S. to grant humanitarian protections to his compatriots fleeing Maduro's government, such as temporary protective status.

Trump is "caught between two different narratives," said Geoff Ramsey, assistant director for Venezuela at the Washington Office on Latin America, a nongovernmental organization that promotes human rights and social justice. "We hear a lot of talk about solidarity, but it seems this solidarity ends when Venezuelans leave their border."

Venezuelans have been the top nationality filing what are known as affirmative asylum applications since 2017, meaning they sought asylum at their first opportunity, whether at the border or while visiting the United States on a visa. Jessica Bolter, of the Migration Policy Institute, said a majority of the Venezuelans who have similarly filed for asylum do so after arriving legally.

But between 2017 and 2018, the number of asylum applications Venezuelans have filed after they were arrested in the interior or at the border jumped from 412 to more than 5,000. In fiscal year 2018, several dozen Venezuelans were apprehended at the border, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection data. Months later, that number swelled to 2,202 — a sign, experts say, of Venezuela's deteriorating political climate.

"As the more vulnerable populations and those with less means are migrating, fewer visas are available now that consular services closed down in March 2019," Bolter said. "People are fleeing direct political persecution and the lack of basic human necessities that come from the failure of the state."

CBP officials said they cannot comment on individual cases for privacy reasons. The Justice Department's Executive Office for Immigration Review referred inquiries about the Flores family to an immigration court manual that shows judges have discretion in separating cases. Administration officials declined to comment on the specifics of the family's case.

Branyerly's arrival in Mexico coincided with one of the administration's latest transit bans, which barred certain asylum seekers arriving after July 16 from making claims if they had not already sought protection in another country on their way to the United States border.

The teenager arrived 11 days after the rule went into effect. Immigration advocates challenged the policy in federal court, but the U.S. Supreme Court has allowed the administration to implement it while courts review it.

Flores was a longtime manager for a private company that operated Caracas' metro system, which was later nationalized under the socialist Venezuelan government. He declined a promotion that came with a caveat: To execute the ruling party's agenda and recruit employees to join the civil militia.

His supervisors later learned that he supported the opposition, and on the way home one day in May 2018, he was kidnapped, beaten and tortured. Days later, he fled the country. His two older daughters and wife joined him in Tennessee on travel visas that July, and they petitioned for asylum upon arrival.

But Branyerly's travel visa had expired. The recent high school graduate stayed behind in Venezuela, hiding in a friend's home for a year. Her father said he had hoped his attackers had forgotten about him and Branyerly would be safe. When she received threatening phone calls, Flores immediately boarded a flight to Venezuela to retrieve his daughter.

Together, they flew to Panama and on to Mexico City, but they were unable to get past immigration. They entered Mexico a week later via another city. The pair reached the U.S. border in late July 2019, crossed the river, surrendered to Border Patrol officials and asked for asylum. Both were sent back to Mexico to wait their court hearings.

Branyerly went to each hearing with her father. They obtained a lawyer. They brought evidence and were hoping it would be enough to allow them to rejoin their waiting family.

The judge granted Flores protection because he was able to establish that a return to Venezuela likely would lead to his torture — a high standard that is rarely reached in asylum cases.

Branyerly's petition was separated from her father's, and the judge concluded that the 18-year-old was not in the same danger, according to their lawyer, Jodi Goodwin. She was sent back to Mexico.

"We couldn't believe it. We were in complete shock," Branyerly said in an interview from Matamoros. "I walked off the bridge numb and dazed and just sobbed. Then, a stranger from Cuba helped me find a hotel, because I had no money."

Goodwin, who has several Venezuelan clients, filed an appeal and exhausted other

avenues to try to win relief for Branyerly. Goodwin has taken the teenager to the Gateway International Bridge between Brownsville and Matamoros three times to request parole, which has been denied each time.

“Her life is in the same danger” in Mexico, Goodwin said, noting that Trump could easily stop the “Remain in Mexico” program and ease the situation for Venezuelan refugees.

Gunfire in Matamoros has kept Branyerly barricaded in an apartment with another Venezuelan family that has taken her in. She said she spends most of her days sleeping because it is the easiest way for her to pass the time.

Branyerly fills the hours in between with phone calls to her mother and remembering her vacations to the United States. When things were normal in Venezuela, she said, the teen planned to study veterinary medicine.

“I had no idea that the U.S. would treat me this way,” Branyerly said. “I’m just a kid, and I didn’t come to ruin your country.”

On Wednesday, Goodwin took Branyerly to the bridge yet again. She was denied. The lawyer pressed CBP officials at the port to arrest the young woman, because Goodwin would prefer that Branyerly be in U.S. custody than spend another night in Mexico.

“At this point, detention is safer,” Goodwin said.

Border Patrol Prepared for Migrants Arriving with Coronavirus, Says Incoming Deputy Chief (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [2/27/2020 1:00 PM, Bob Price, 1973K]

Incoming Border Patrol Deputy Chief Raul Ortiz told Breitbart Texas his agents are better prepared to deal with the threat of the Coronavirus than any other law enforcement agency. Agents in the field confirmed they are prepared with training, personal protection equipment, and detection and processing protocols.

“I think our (agents) are probably more prepared or better prepared than any law enforcement agency out there,” U.S. Border Patrol Incoming Deputy Chief Raul L. Ortiz told Breitbart Texas in a recent phone interview. “We have instituted some safeguards. We are in the process of running the table-top exercises to make sure that we are prepared.”

Ortiz most recently served as the Del Rio Sector Chief Patrol agent before being appointed by CBP Commissioner Mark Morgan to the number two spot at Border Patrol headquarters.

The chief explained the agency’s history in dealing with these types of outbreaks in the past, including SARS and the Avian flu.

“We recognize that, right now, there’s not a huge risk,” he explained, “but potentially,

there could be. What we are trying to do is work with our local medical facilities. We have protocols to isolate people that show symptoms — any type of symptoms.”

Ortiz said agents routinely deal with contagious diseases. “From 2014 on, we’ve had incidences where we’ve had to isolate entire stations because they became susceptible to the flu, scabies, and on and on.”

Border Patrol Agent Chris Cabrera, in his capacity as spokesman for the National Border Patrol Council and Local 3307 (in the Rio Grande Valley Sector) told Breitbart Texas in a phone interview on Tuesday that he is pleased with the planning and preparation coming from CBP headquarters and management.

“In McAllen, we have always had plenty of personal protection equipment including respirators, gloves, eye protection, and hand sanitizer,” Cabrera stated. “We now have a room filled with this equipment that is ready to be handed out if it becomes necessary.”

He explained his agents follow specific protocols to isolate migrants they apprehend who came from China and those who are traveling with them. They also monitor the migrants for any symptoms and immediately move them to hospitals for treatment if necessary.

Breitbart Texas Border Security Analyst Jaeson Jones spoke with agents in other stations who confirmed the availability of N95 masks and other protective gear that are stockpiled in their local stations and ready for use.

“They are using infectious disease protocols,” Jones said the agents told him. “Any Chinese citizens apprehended are isolated and tested.”

The agents told Jones they are also asking migrants from other nations if they have been in contact with Chinese nationals while they were trafficked through Mexico or anywhere along their route.

Responding to an inquiry from Breitbart Texas, CBP officials said:

CBP continues to facilitate CDC’s enhanced health screening at U.S. ports of entry. Consistent with CBP’S procedures, and in accordance with the Presidential Proclamation, individuals encountered by CBP with a nexus to China within 14 days of the encounter or with symptoms of illness are referred to CDC or local health officials for additional health screening.

Consistent with existing CBP procedures, individuals apprehended by U.S. Border Patrol between the ports of entry with symptoms of illness are referred to CDC or local health officials for additional health screening. Additionally, all persons in U.S. Border Patrol custody who meet the CDC’s coronavirus travel history and enhanced screening guidelines are being referred to CDC for additional screening.

The agency said specific data on individuals who may have been referred to CDC or deemed inadmissible under the travel restriction is “not available due to operational

sensitivities and because the information continues to change rapidly.”

“CBP has issued guidance to all employees that outlines the current comprehensive use of Personal Protective Equipment (provided for employees) including guidance regarding wearing masks in the appropriate circumstances (using a risk-based approach),” officials concluded. The agency would not provide a copy of the guidance stating the document is for internal use and “cannot be shared.”

Pence taps career health official to coordinate White House coronavirus response (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [2/27/2020 12:52 AM, Brett Samuels, 1762K]

Vice President Pence on Thursday tapped longtime health official and ambassador-at-large Debbie Birx to serve as the White House coronavirus response coordinator.

Birx has worked for decades in the medical field, largely focusing on combating and preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS. The staffing move is likely intended to appease calls from many lawmakers for the Trump administration to appoint a “czar” to oversee the federal response to the coronavirus.

“She has deep experience in coordinating across agencies,” Pence’s office said in announcing Birx’s new role. “She has worked from the research bench to the clinic, but understands the primary focus must always be to reach the individuals most in need. She will bring her infectious disease, immunologic, vaccine research and interagency coordinating capacity to this position.

Birx currently serves as the ambassador-at-large for the State Department coordinating the U.S. efforts to combat HIV/AIDS. An Obama-era appointee, she has held that role since 2014.

She has in the past served as a physician in the U.S. Army and as director of the U.S. Military HIV Research Program at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. She spent nearly a decade as the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Division of Global HIV/AIDS.

Birx will be part of the White House’s coronavirus task force and will be supported by the National Security Council. But she will report to Pence, who on Wednesday night was tasked with overseeing the federal government’s response to coronavirus.

Her appointment may soothe some concerns of the many Democrats who took issue with Pence being given significant authority over the coronavirus response despite a lack of public health expertise and his own struggles containing an HIV outbreak during his time as governor of Indiana.

The White House announced later Thursday that three more officials would join the coronavirus task force: Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, National Economic Council Director Larry Kudlow and Surgeon General Jerome Adams.

The inclusion of Mnuchin and Kudlow in particular are a nod to Trump’s fixation on

the potential economic ramifications of the virus. The stock market has plunged in recent days amid fears over the spread of the disease, even as Kudlow asserted it was to "airtight" in its containment in the U.S.

The White House has in the last 24 hours sought to project a unified front in its handling of the coronavirus amid criticism from Democrats and Republicans alike that it had not taken adequate steps to prepare for a possible outbreak.

Officials on Wednesday announced an additional case in the U.S., bringing the total number of cases to 60. That figure includes 42 individuals who were repatriated from the Diamond Princess cruise ship.

The administration proposed \$2.5 billion in additional funding to address the disease, though the final number is likely to be significantly higher following a push from lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

Trump taps Pence to head up coronavirus outbreak response (CBS News)

[CBS News](#) [2/26/2020 10:57 AM, Kathryn Watson, 2394K]

President Trump announced Wednesday night that he's placing Vice President Mike Pence in charge of efforts to tackle the coronavirus, as the administration seeks to reassure the public and the markets amid the global coronavirus outbreak. The president, speaking for only the second time from the White House press briefing room, tried to instill confidence that his administration is on top of the health epidemic.

Speaking to reporters while flanked by Pence, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, and other officials on his coronavirus task force, the president said the risk to Americans from the virus is "very low," even as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) warns Americans to prepare for disruptions of their normal lives and the spread of the virus is a matter of if, not when. Mr. Trump appeared to disagree with that assessment.

"I don't think it's inevitable. It probably will. It possibly will. It could be at a very small level or it could be at a larger level. Whatever happens, we're totally prepared," the president told reporters.

Minutes after the president ended his press conference, the CDC announced a confirmed case of the virus in California in someone "who reportedly did not have relevant history or exposure to another known patient with COVID-19," the official name for the virus that experts believe originated in China.

Azar is remaining the head of the president's coronavirus task force, but Pence said the administration will add personnel to the White House to address the outbreak, and work closely with Congress to address the situation.

Democrats and some Republicans are suggesting the \$2.5 billion in funding the president has requested from Congress isn't enough. Mr. Trump, who said \$2.5 billion is a "lot," said his administration is willing to spend "whatever's appropriate" to

address the outbreak.

Part of that funding is going towards developing a vaccine, which is still at least 12 to 18 months away, Dr. Andrew Fauci of the National Institutes of Health told reporters. Senators had offered similar estimates after a briefing on Capitol Hill on Tuesday.

"We can't rely on a vaccine over the next several months to a year," Fauci said.

Earlier in the day, Azar said in a congressional briefing that he couldn't guarantee price controls when a vaccine is developed, sparking concerns about affordability even when a vaccine is available to the general public.

The president, when asked, said schools should be preparing for the virus to spread.

Mr. Trump has blamed news outlets and Democrats of stoking panic, as stocks suffered three days of steep losses on fears about the virus' impact. Pelosi criticized the president's response to the virus as underwhelming, and Mr. Trump took the opportunity Wednesday night to hit back at the speaker, calling her incompetent and suggesting she isn't capable of managing her own district.

"She's trying to create a panic, and there's no reason to panic," Mr. Trump said.

Mr. Trump appeared to express confidence in Chinese President Xi Jinping, saying the Chinese leader is working "very hard" to combat the outbreak. The president's own top officials, like economic adviser Larry Kudlow, have expressed they don't think China is being transparent enough with its information, and is blocking U.S. health officials from entering the country.

The president highlighted his administration's efforts to screen people coming from high-risk areas, and temporary ban on non-citizens coming to the U.S. from China. That action, Mr. Trump said, is critical.

"Had I not made a decision very early on not to take people from a certain area, we wouldn't be talking this way," Mr. Trump said. "We'd be talking about many more people being infected. I took a lot of heat. Some people called me racist because I made a decision so early. And we had never done that as a country before, let alone early. So, it was a bold decision. Turned out to be a good decision."

The administration has been inconsistent in its statements about the virus, which started last last year in China. There are now tens of thousands of cases worldwide and a handful in the United States.

The pieces of information about the virus coming from the administration have, at times, been inconsistent.

Kudlow asserted Tuesday on CNBC that "we have contained this ... I won't say airtight, but pretty close to airtight." And Acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf, was caught making inaccurate statements about the coronavirus during a hearing Tuesday.

On Capitol Hill, Democrats and Republicans alike have expressed frustration with administration officials about inconsistencies in the information they're providing. GOP Senator John Kennedy grew testy with Wolf, who incorrectly stated what the coronavirus mortality rate is, compared to the flu virus. Wolf also testified that the U.S. is "several months" away from a vaccine for the coronavirus, but the CDC said the timeline is closer to 12 to 18 months.

"You're head of Homeland Security, sir. Your job is to keep us safe," Kennedy told Wolf after he couldn't answer how many coronavirus cases are expected in the United States.

Health expert tapped for coronavirus task force will report to Pence (CNN)

[CNN](#) [2/27/2020 11:58 AM, Nikki Carvajal and Kaitlan Collins, 5551K]

Vice President Mike Pence's office announced Thursday that Ambassador Deborah Birx, a physician and public health expert, will serve as the White House's "coronavirus response coordinator."

Birx will likely be coordinating with the other health professionals on the novel coronavirus, essentially taking on what appears to be a coronavirus "czar" role on the public health level, while Pence, who is not a health expert, oversees the administration's overall preparation and response.

Pence's office also announced three other new task force members: Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams and National Economic Council Director Larry Kudlow.

The announcement about Birx's new role follows some back-and-forth within the White House over the potential appointment of a coronavirus czar.

CNN previously reported that President Donald Trump had privately expressed frustration over Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar's lack of communication on key issues as the head of the White House coronavirus task force. And during a news conference Wednesday, the President announced that Pence would be the White House's point man. Trump also said Pence would be adding a State Department specialist to the team.

But toward the end of the news conference, Azar maintained that he is still chairman of the task force, adding that he was "delighted" to have Pence "helping" him.

The comment led to questions as to who was in charge of the administration's response to contain the virus.

And in Pence's Thursday announcement, Birx's chain of command muddled the waters further.

"She will be detailed to the Office of the Vice President and will report to Vice President Mike Pence. She will also join the Task Force led by Health and Human

Services Secretary Alex Azar. She will be supported by the National Security Council staff," the statement said.

Birx has been serving as an ambassador-at-Large and as United States Global AIDS coordinator since 2014. According to the vice president's office, she has "developed and patented vaccines, including leading one of the most influential HIV vaccine trials in history."

She also rose to the rank of colonel within the Defense Department, working as a physician, researcher and supervisor before retiring from military service.

Speaking at the Conservative Political Action Conference outside Washington Thursday afternoon, Pence offered reassurances about the administration's efforts to contain the coronavirus.

"President Trump has no higher priority than the health, safety and well-being of Americans," Pence said, adding that Trump had taken "unprecedented action" since the outbreak of the virus and touting the President's decision to shut down travel from affected areas.

Pence also said Trump had directed him "to lead a whole of government approach" to the infectious disease.

"This is not the time for partisanship. The American people expect us to work together and I promise you this president, this administration is going to meet with leaders of both parties," he pledged to the conservative audience.

Pence, tapped to lead coronavirus response, vows US 'ready for anything' (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [2/27/2020 1:31 PM, Andrew O'Reilly, 8943K] Video: [HERE](#)

Vice President Pence, on the heels of being named to lead the U.S. response to the coronavirus outbreak, on Thursday vowed that the federal government is prepared to confront any potential health crisis -- while also declaring "this is not the time for partisanship," in a bid to contain the political infighting surrounding that response.

"We're ready. We're ready for anything," Pence said, echoing President Trump's remarks a day earlier.

Speaking at the Conservative Political Action Conference outside Washington, Pence attempted to assuage mounting concerns over the virus while calling for political unity as the country seeks to halt the spread of the outbreak that has already killed at least 2,800 people worldwide and infected around 82,000.

"We're all in this together. This is not the time for partisanship," Pence said. "The American people expect us to work together."

Pence added: "I promise you this administration will work with leaders in both parties, on the state and local level. This president will always put the health and

safety of America first.”

Trump and Democratic leaders in both the House and Senate have been bickering over the response to the coronavirus, with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., saying on Monday that Trump’s proposed \$2.5 billion request to tackle the outbreak was “long overdue and completely inadequate to the scale of this emergency.”

Trump fired back on Wednesday by calling Pelosi “incompetent” and accused her of using the virus for political point-scoring.

“She’s trying to create a panic and there is no reason to panic,” Trump said. “All they are trying to is get a political advantage, but this shouldn’t be a political thing.”

Trump has faced increased criticism from Democratic lawmakers and some health professionals that he is not doing enough to meet the mounting threat of the coronavirus.

On Capitol Hill, senior lawmakers called for a bipartisan spending package that would give federal, state and local officials more resources. Congress in recent years took a similar approach with the opioid epidemic, pumping out federal dollars for treatment and prevention. Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer of New York unveiled an \$8.5 billion coronavirus proposal.

“With no plan to deal with the potential public and global health crisis related to the novel coronavirus, the Trump administration made an emergency supplemental appropriations request on Monday,” Schumer said in a statement Wednesday. “It was too little and too late — only \$1.25 billion in new funding. For context, Congress appropriated more than \$6B for the Pandemic Flu in 2006 and more than \$7B for H1N1 flu in 2009.”

Schumer’s \$8.5 billion plan is more than triple Trump’s request. It includes \$4.5 billion for the Department of Health and Human Services to work to contain the outbreak in the U.S., \$1 billion to develop and manufacture a vaccine, \$1 billion to help other countries battle the coronavirus, and \$2 billion to reimburse states for costs incurred in tackling the outbreak.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Tuesday warned the American public to prepare for an outbreak of the disease, which has spawned more than 82,000 cases around the world -- mainly in China.

The coronavirus, which causes a disease officially known as COVID-19, has not yet hit the U.S. as hard as it has hit many Asian countries, though U.S. authorities recently confirmed the first American coronavirus case that had no link to international travel in California, indicating the disease is now spreading in at least one American community. Other areas of the country are also currently testing suspected cases of coronavirus.

Mike Pence's crisis manager skills put to the test in new role leading coronavirus response (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [2/27/2020 6:08 PM, Michael Collins and Nicholas Wu, 5611K]

President Donald Trump's decision to put Mike Pence in charge of the administration's coronavirus response will test the vice president's ability to manage a rapidly growing crisis as stock prices plunge and critics charge the administration isn't doing enough.

As the Trump administration staffs up and prepares for a potentially broader coronavirus outbreak, one challenge that awaits Pence will be coordinating a response for a president who is prone to second-guessing the advice of experts and has proposed deep cuts to key agencies in charge of public health.

During a news conference Wednesday to announce Pence's appointment, Trump contradicted a warning from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that the spread of the virus in the United States is inevitable.

"I don't think it's inevitable," Trump said. "I think that we're doing a really good job in terms of maintaining borders" and making sure people coming in the country are checked.

Trump's decision to put Pence in charge is a good sign of how the administration is prioritizing its response, said Ned Price, who served as spokesman for the National Security Council in the Obama administration during its response to the Ebola outbreak.

But having Pence coordinate the effort is "not an appropriate substitute" for someone who could devote their full attention to the issue, such as Ebola "czar" Ronald Klain had been appointed to do for the Obama administration, Price said.

"He still has all of his official duties to carry out, and unless he's going to take a sabbatical from his role as the vice president, I think it's substituting one problem for another," Price said, noting Pence had spoken at the Conservative Political Action Conference on the same day as his first meeting with the coronavirus response task force .

Trump signaled confidence in Pence's ability to coordinate the administration's response when he announced the appointment Wednesday.

"He's got a certain talent for this," Trump said as Pence stood at his side, along with officials from the CDC and other agencies.

Some question whether Pence is the right choice, arguing that a health care professional would be better positioned to monitor and react to a virus that already has spawned more than 80,000 cases around the world, including 60 in the U.S.

Top health officials like Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar and National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony Fauci are "highly qualified" to handle the crisis, said John Holdren, who was the senior science

and technology adviser to President Barack Obama.

"I just have to wonder whether President Trump will ever be listening," Holdren said.

Asha George, who heads a bipartisan group of former government officials who analyze the U.S.'s capacity to defend against biological threats, applauded Trump's decision to put Pence in charge of the coronavirus response.

Multiple agencies are involved in such an effort, which can make a coordinated response difficult, said George, executive director of the Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense.

"You need somebody with enough power and authority to direct everybody and make sure everybody is doing what they're supposed to be doing," she said.

The vice president "carries a lot of weight and is pretty much the only person short of the president who can get this sort of thing done, especially in the midst of a response, as we are now," she said.

Pence announced Thursday that he has tapped Debbie Birx, who is in charge of U.S. efforts to fight HIV and AIDS, to help manage the response to the coronavirus threat. The administration also added three new members to its coronavirus task force: Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, Surgeon General Jerome Adams, and National Economic Council Director Larry Kudlow.

Pence's selection of Birx could ease concerns of some lawmakers who called for the Trump administration to put someone with expertise in charge of the federal response.

"Debbie Birx is a highly qualified public health expert who is kind of battle tested," said Tom Frieden, who served as director of the CDC and commissioner of the New York City Health Department. "She's a veteran and has extensive experience with the CDC and other parts of the U.S. government. I think that's a good choice."

Proposed budget cuts

Trump's budgets have routinely proposed to cut funding for the agencies like the CDC and the NIH that are now on the front lines of the fight against the virus.

At the news briefing Wednesday, Trump said the coronavirus threat did not make him question those previously proposed cuts.

"We know all the people. We know all the good people," Trump said, adding, "we can get them back very quickly" if staff are cut.

Price told USA TODAY top officials on the National Security Council who were tasked with biodefense readiness had been sacked or departed the administration, with their positions since unfilled.

"There's not a point person on the NSC really responsible for these issues," he said. "President Trump dismissed the senior director and his team responsible for pandemics and preparedness."

George said those cuts and recent efforts by the administration to purge employees whom it considers disloyal to the president could make it more challenging to battle the coronavirus.

"I'm sure people are concerned," she said. "They are worried about their jobs. They have seen other people come and go based on their performance. It's a tough challenge for anyone there. ... I think it adds additional stress."

'Gutted out' agencies

Juliette Kayyem, who had served as the Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs in the Department of Homeland Security under the Obama administration, helping coordinate the response to the H1N1 outbreak, said she was concerned by the number of acting officials rather than appointed officials.

Kayyem called DHS's current state "gutted out," with "acting (officials) in almost every major position."

She pointed to acting DHS Secretary Chad Wolf's rocky testimony before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee as "reflective of an agency that is ill-prepared to provide the states and localities that are going to be on the front line with the information, standards, and policies that are going to have to be directed."

Under questioning from Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., Wolf appeared not to know some basic statistics about the virus, misstating its fatality rate and not knowing how many cases had come from cruise ships.

"You're supposed to keep us safe. And the American people deserve some straight answers on the coronavirus. And I'm not getting them from you," Kennedy told Wolf.

What Kayyem also saw as a breakdown in the response process were some of the political interventions of lawmakers in the response to the virus.

Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala., had called Trump to ask him and successfully asked him not to quarantine virus patients from the Diamond Princess cruise ship in Alabama, something Kayyem said should not have happened.

"A senator doesn't have operational control over what a state or local jurisdiction does," she said. "But I think the fact that the President was responsive is just proof that all these mechanisms (for intergovernmental cooperation) have fallen apart."

Coronavirus Combat Plans Drawn Up by U.S. Courts (Bloomberg)

[Bloomberg](#) [2/27/2020 5:28 PM, Madison Alder, 25K]

The Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts has drawn up plans for dealing with the

spreading coronavirus, with an eye toward maintaining “essential elements of prevention and maintaining essential services” in the event of an outbreak, according to a statement provided by the agency to Bloomberg Law.

The AO distributed guidance to the nation’s courts on Thursday as stock markets dropped and contagion fears spread in the U.S. The move comes less than 24 hours after President Donald Trump designated Vice President Mike Pence to helm the administration’s response to the virus.

The administrative office plan provides for the expanded use of teleworking and employment of what it called “social distancing measures,” including use of flexible work hours, substituting teleconferencing for face-to-face meetings, and promoting three-foot separation between individuals. It also encouraged monitoring and following all CDC and Transportation Security Administration travel notices.

The coronavirus outbreak, which started in China, has spread globally. More than 82,400 cases have been reported worldwide, with a death toll of 2,800, Bloomberg News reported.

U.S. authorities are expanding the number of people being tested for infection, adding travelers from other nations with reported outbreaks and people with as yet unexplained severe respiratory illnesses. California, the site of the first known infection not associated with previous outbreaks is monitoring 8,400 people for signs of exposure after traveling to China, Governor Gavin Newsom has said.

In the nation’s courts, the administrative office said, it is emphasizing the regular, routine cleaning of workplace surfaces, hand washing and “good respiratory etiquette.”

Each court is also free to establish “a pandemic/infectious disease emergency response team to tailor activities to their particular circuit or district,” the agency said. There are more than 100 federal courts operating at multiple levels from trial to supreme across the U.S.

U.S. says ramping up efforts to guard against coronavirus, mulls sweeping powers (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [2/27/2020 3:12 PM, Sined Carew and Ted Hesson, 5304K]

U.S. stocks plummeted on Thursday as fears about the effect of the coronavirus outbreak on economic growth flared even as U.S. officials pledged that they were stepping up efforts to safeguard Americans from the virus’ spread.

A day after President Donald Trump told Americans that the risk from coronavirus remained “very low,” the S&P 500 .SPX logged its fastest correction in history in a sixth straight day of declines.

The broad market average is now down as much as 12.3% from its record intraday high. The Dow .DJI has fallen as much as 12.9% and the Nasdaq .IXIC has lost as much as 13%.

Two U.S. officials told Reuters the Trump administration was considering invoking special powers to rapidly expand domestic production of protective masks and clothing to help combat the coronavirus in the United States.

During an interagency call on Wednesday, officials from Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) discussed the possibility of invoking the Defense Production Act for the manufacture of “personal protective equipment” that can be worn by healthcare workers to prevent infection, according to a DHS official.

A White House official confirmed that the administration was exploring the use of the law to spur manufacturing of protective gear. Both officials requested anonymity to discuss the issue.

Director Robert Redfield told lawmakers the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has revised its criteria for who should be tested for the coronavirus and was shipping more test kits to states.

California only has about 200 test kits, an “inadequate” number, but has been in “constant contact with federal agencies” who have promised to send a fresh supply in coming days, Governor Gavin Newsom told a news briefing earlier.

Quick confirmation of coronavirus cases is crucial to rapid response by local health authorities, and states previously reported that some test kits provided by CDC were producing inconclusive results.

HHS Secretary Alex Azar told a House of Representatives committee on Thursday that at least 40 public health labs should now be able to test specimens for coronavirus and that could more than double as soon as Friday.

Some state and local public health workers have expressed doubts about how quickly the country will be able to scale up its testing capability, however.

Scott Becker, the CEO of the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL), said his group had worked with the CDC and the Food and Drug Administration to develop a way to quickly increase testing capacity but these tests will still have to be validated by states, which could take several days.

“If quality control goes well as expected by the end of next week, upwards of 40 labs will have testing capabilities in addition to the 12 we have,” Becker told Reuters.

The number of confirmed U.S. cases is still relatively small at 60, most of them repatriated American passengers from the Diamond Princess cruise ship docked in Japan.

POLITICS

Funding to combat the health crisis has become a political issue in an election year.

Trump, a Republican, is seeking \$2.5 billion from Congress to boost the government's response. Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer has called for \$8.5 billion.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said he expected the divided U.S. Congress would make an urgent bipartisan effort to come up with legislation to fund the fight.

"I hope they can work expeditiously so the full Senate would be able to take up the legislation within the next two weeks," said McConnell, speaking on the Senate floor.

China, where the coronavirus started, has borne the brunt of the outbreak, recording nearly 80,000 infections and more than 2,700 deaths. The virus has spread to another 44 countries, where around 3,500 cases and 54 deaths have been reported.

But with new infections reported around the world now surpassing those in mainland China, World Health Organization Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said even rich nations should prepare for surprises.

"No country should assume it won't get cases, that would be a fatal mistake, quite literally," Tedros said.

Various treatments are being tested for the virus, which can lead to pneumonia, but a vaccine may take up to 18 months to develop, health officials have said.

Trump has been increasingly alarmed by the reaction of the markets, which he considers a barometer of the economy's health and sees as important to his re-election in November.

On Wednesday he blamed Democrats competing to be their party's nominee to run against him as well as two cable TV news channels, CNN and MSNBC, for spooking investors.

On Thursday, Democrats went on the offensive.

"I'm worried this administration is not prepared for the global outbreak," U.S. Representative Bill Pascrell told HHS's Azar, citing Trump's tweets focused on the stock market.

CDC director says coronavirus threat in US remains low, but warns there will be new cases (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [2/27/2020 4:14 PM, Andrew O'Reilly, 8943K] Video: [HERE](#)

The director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention told a congressional subcommittee on Wednesday that the risk of contracting the coronavirus in the United States remains low, but warned that the country will most likely see more cases as the outbreak spreads globally.

Robert Redfield, the CDC director, told the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on

Asia and the Pacific that the federal government was doing everything in its power to prevent the spread of the virus, but he warned that more steps may be taken to battle the outbreak – noting that quarantines and travel restrictions could still be implemented.

“Our goal is to keep Americans safe and slow the introduction of this new virus in the United States,” Redfield said. “We have an aggressive containment strategy that has really worked up to this time.”

Redfield noted that the government’s current approach to tackling the virus is early diagnostic tracking, isolation and contact tracing.

Redfield also addressed reports of xenophobia against people of Asian descent, saying that it has “no role in public health.”

“Stigma is the enemy of public health in all its forms,” he said.

Redfield also expressed his displeasure about people going out and buying masks to protect themselves for the virus, saying that it is not necessary at the time to do that and seeing people stocking up on the masks “really displeases” him.

“These masks really need to be prioritized for health care practitioners or people who have the virus and are quarantined at home.”

The hearing on Capitol Hill occurred just hours after a northern California woman became the first person in the U.S. to contract the coronavirus despite having no known connection to travel abroad or other known causes.

The woman lives in Solano County, home to the Travis Air Force Base where dozens of people infected in China or on cruise ships have been treated. But Sonia Angell, director of the California Department of Public Health, said there was no evidence the woman had any connection to the base.

All of the 59 other cases in the U.S. had traveled from abroad or had been in close contact with those who traveled. Health officials have been on high alert for so-called community spread.

Earlier U.S. cases included 14 in people who traveled back from outbreak areas in China, or their spouses; three people who were evacuated from the central China city of Wuhan; and 42 American passengers on the Diamond Princess cruise ship who were evacuated by the federal government to the U.S. from where the ship was docked in Japan.

The outbreak, which began in China, has infected tens of thousands of people in more than three dozen countries, with the vast majority in mainland China.

The new virus is a member of the coronavirus family that can cause colds or more serious illnesses such as SARS and MERS.

The virus can cause fever, coughing, wheezing and pneumonia. Health officials think it spreads mainly from droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how the flu spreads.

Redfield advised people to take steps to avoid infection with coronavirus or other respiratory infections like colds or the flu, including washing hands with soap and water, staying home from school and work when feeling ill, and avoiding close contact with people who are sick.

"We do believe we will see new cases and we do believe that we will see new community cases," Redfield said.

Mixed messages, test delays hamper U.S. coronavirus response (Reuters)
[Reuters](#) [2/27/2020 5:12 PM, Julie Steenhuysen, Andrew Hay, and Brad Brooks, 5304K]

Even as U.S. officials warn of an inevitable outbreak of coronavirus in the United States, and are alerting Americans to take precautions, some health agencies charged with protecting the public appear unprepared to deal with the threat.

Barely more than a handful of public health departments across the country are able to test for the novel virus, which began in China and has spread to at least 44 countries. The federal government has less than 10% of the protective masks required to protect healthcare workers and the public. And Washington still does not have adequate funding in place to support health departments' efforts, though more money is on the way.

Conflicting messaging from the White House and top U.S. officials regarding the severity of the threat has only added to the uncertainty.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) this week for the first time advised American businesses, schools, hospitals and families to prepare for domestic acceleration of the virus, which has infected more than 80,000 people worldwide and killed nearly 3,000.

President Donald Trump on Wednesday assured Americans that the risk of coronavirus transmission in the United States was "very low." Despite an explosion of cases in China over the past two months, the Trump administration only this week put in a request for \$2.5 billion to aid in the response, an amount both Republicans and Democrats have said is too small.

Critics of the federal response say the United States squandered precious weeks by focusing too narrowly on keeping the coronavirus from crossing U.S. borders rather than marshalling resources to prepare American communities for a widespread domestic outbreak that officials now say was inevitable.

"This has been a realistic risk for a month, and the signal to trigger that kind of preparedness has only been going out in the last few days in an explicit way," said Jeremy Konyndyk, a senior policy fellow at the Center for Global Development in

Washington. "That's a huge problem."

FEW BEING TESTED

There are 60 confirmed U.S. cases of the novel coronavirus, which causes the disease known as Covid-19, U.S. health officials said on Wednesday. But experts admit they have no way of knowing the true figure because access to testing at present is severely limited.

So far, the U.S. strategy has focused almost exclusively on testing infected travelers, using a test that looks for genetic material from the virus in saliva or mucus. As of February 23, fewer than 500 people from 43 states had been or are being tested for the virus.

Currently, just seven state and local health departments have the ability to screen for the virus, the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) said on Wednesday. CDC-developed tests issued three weeks ago were producing inaccurate results in some labs, so new tests had to be made and cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), leaving many labs with no local testing capability, the group said.

The CDC and FDA have worked out a fix that will allow 40 more public health labs to do testing by the end of next week, the APHL's Chief Executive Scott Becker told Reuters.

In the meantime, the burden has fallen largely on the CDC, which does testing for most of the country on its campus in Atlanta.

"Unfortunately, we are now in the bottom tier in countries capable of doing population-based testing," said Dr. Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota.

U.S. patients typically wait 24 to 48 hours to find out whether they have tested positive and need to be quarantined, health officials said, during which time those who are infected can spread the virus to others.

The CDC's test is restricted solely for use by public health labs, but if the virus begins spreading widely in the United States, hospitals will need to be able to do the tests themselves, public health experts say. Such testing is typically done using kits produced by commercial companies. Several privately developed tests are in the works, but none have yet won approval from the FDA.

Some health experts also fault the narrow testing criteria that the United States is using to screen for potential infections. Currently, individuals with flu-like symptoms are only tested for the coronavirus if they have traveled to a country where the virus is spreading. This has raised concerns that there are far more cases in the United States than are currently recorded.

"If the majority of testing is all around airports or travelers, we won't know whether

it's circulating in communities," said Dr. Tom Inglesby, director of the Center for Health Security of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Those worries were reinforced on Wednesday when the CDC confirmed the first U.S. case of coronavirus in a California patient with no apparent travel history. The University of California Davis said in a statement the patient was transferred to the hospital with severe pneumonia and the hospital requested testing. But since the patient didn't fit the CDC's criteria, those tests were delayed by several days.

On Thursday, CDC said it is broadening those criteria to allow testing when the virus is suspected.

MASKS IN SHORT SUPPLY

Around 15 state health departments contacted by Reuters raised concerns about challenges they would face in the event of community spread, including worries about not having enough personal protective gear to safeguard frontline medical workers.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on Tuesday estimated that the United States would need 300 million face masks to protect healthcare workers and the public from people infected with the virus. The country has fewer than 20 million of the kind of masks needed to protect healthcare workers in the Strategic National Stockpile, a government repository of medical supplies needed to address public health emergencies.

"There is a real concern the availability of this equipment may be limited, in part because of the public buying it in a panic when they don't need it," said Matt Zavadsky, head of the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians.

President Donald Trump's administration is considering invoking special powers through a law called the Defense Production Act to quickly expand domestic manufacturing of protective masks and clothing to combat the coronavirus in the United States, two U.S. officials told Reuters.

With no Covid-19 vaccine or proven anti-viral medicine available, states are planning to isolate sick people in their homes, both to slow community spread and reduce pressure on hospitals, according to the CDC.

Their ability to track a rapidly expanding web of patients who test positive, and all the people with whom they have had contact, is of major concern, according to chief epidemiologists in several states.

Health departments in some states have purchased disease surveillance software to help them with that task. The state of Washington's system, for instance, tracks patients and people they have had contact with, and asks them about their condition. If someone reports symptoms that merit hospitalization, the patient and doctors are informed of that.

The CDC said in a news conference on Tuesday that transmission of the virus could be slowed by the closure of schools and businesses and the cancellations of concerts and other mass gatherings.

But exactly who would make those decisions or how they would be enforced isn't clear and could vary widely throughout the nation.

In Texas, for example, such decisions may be made by local officials, said Chris Van Deus, a spokesman with the Texas health department.

"Texas is a home rule state so the buck really stops with county judges and mayors," Van Deus said.

Another concern is a flood of patients into health systems that are already overburdened in many parts of the country, particularly during winter flu season.

Washington state is considering temporary drive-through care facilities to stop potential coronavirus carriers entering healthcare facilities, mindful that hospitals can amplify outbreaks, as was the case with the viruses that cause MERS and SARS.

New Mexico is working with healthcare systems to turn outpatient facilities into care units if needed, said State Epidemiologist Michael Landen.

"The biggest challenge is getting a consistent message to the public with respect to their options with dealing with this virus," Landen said.

In scramble to stop virus, testing raises tough questions (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [2/27/2020 5:21 PM, Mike Stobbe and Adam Geller, AP, 1670K]

Health officials confronted tough questions and doubts Thursday about testing to intercept the fast-spreading virus, with scrutiny focused on a four-day delay in screening an infected California woman despite her doctors' early calls to do so.

The questions are global: not just who, when and how to test for the illness, but how to make sure that working test kits get out to the labs that need them. All those issues apparently came in to play in the treatment of the woman in northern California, a case officials say may be the first community-spread instance of the disease in the U.S.

"This was a clear gap in our preparedness, and the virus went right through the gap," said Dr. Ali Khan, dean of the University of Nebraska College of Public Health.

In the wake of the latest California case, U.S. health officials on Thursday expanded their criteria for who should get tested, and took steps to increase testing.

The debate over testing has taken on added urgency as the number of cases worldwide climbed past 82,000, including 2,800 reported deaths. The rapid spread

pushed officials in Saudi Arabia to cut travel to Islam's holiest sites, triggered tougher penalties in South Korea for people who break quarantines and ratcheted up pressure on investors as U.S. stock markets extended their week-long plunge. The Dow Jones Industrial Average sank nearly 1,200 points Thursday, its worst one-day drop since 2011.

With the illness rippling across 47 nations in every continent but Antarctica, public health officials emphasized the need for rapid intervention.

"Aggressive early measures can prevent transmission before the virus gets a foothold," World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said. He cited a study in China of more than 320,000 test samples that enabled health officials to zero in on the 0.14 percent that screened positive for COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus.

But catching the disease early will require countries to invest in rapid diagnostics, said Dr. Gagandeep Kang, a microbiologist who heads the Translational Health Science And Technology Institute in India.

Test kits used by the World Health Organization cost less than \$5 each, said Michael Ryan, the group's emergencies programs director. But that figure does not include the expense of medical staff and validation screening, and making such investments effective goes well beyond the expense involved.

"As we can see from the new sparks on Italy, Iran, Korea, is that early identification of cases is crucial. There, the first persons with infection were missed," said Marion Koopmans of the Erasmus Medical Center in the Netherlands.

Doctors at the University of California Davis Medical Center were mindful of the need for early identification when the hospital admitted a female patient on a ventilator and showing symptoms of a viral infection on Feb. 19. They asked federal officials to test her for the new coronavirus, but were told she did not fit federal testing criteria, according to an email hospital officials sent to their employees. The test was not done until four days later, on Feb. 23, and the results did not come back until Wednesday, a full week after she was admitted.

Part of the problem is that the number of people being tested in the U.S. has been limited to those who, in addition to showing symptoms, have a history of travel to countries affected by the disease or contact with those who have done so, said Lauren Sauer, director of operations at Johns Hopkins University's Office of Critical Event Preparedness and Response.

"In the U.S., people are sticking pretty closely to that definition," Sauer said. But the increasing cases on other continents "are demonstrating we need to do a better job than just where the outbreak originated."

On Thursday, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated its testing criteria on its website — a move that had been in the works for days, according to a federal official familiar with the change.

The CDC will continue to advise testing people who have traveled to certain outbreak areas and have fever and certain other symptoms. But now testing is also appropriate if such symptoms exist and flu and other respiratory illnesses have been ruled out and no source of exposure has been identified.

As part of that, CDC has expanded the list of countries that are red flags for testing to include not only China but Iran, Italy, South Korea and Japan.

Last month, the CDC said it had developed a test kit that could be sent to state and big city public health labs, so they could broaden testing to more people. Early this month, the agency got authorization to begin distribution of the kit to government public health labs in the 50 states and some cities and counties.

But most of the kits proved to be faulty, providing inconclusive results to test samples that should have tested positive. The problem was blamed on one of three reagents used in the testing. CDC said it was trying to manufacture new reagents, but gave no firm timetable for when that would occur.

Only about a half dozen state and local public health labs had fully functional kits as of early this week.

As weeks passed, the problem became more and more frustrating, said Scott Becker, the chief executive of the Association of Public Health Laboratories.

On Monday, Becker's organization sent a letter to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, basically asking permission for state labs to develop their own tests. On Wednesday, FDA officials responded that labs would be allowed to rely on the two other reagents, meaning that as many as 40 state and local labs could be up and running with their tests in the next few days, Becker said.

The California case, and remarks by Italian officials that they were rethinking how to classify people who test positive for the illness but show no symptoms, highlighted the questions that surround large-scale screening for the disease.

The test being used by U.S. health officials takes just four to six hours to perform once it's in a lab. But up to now, those tests have been sent to federal testing centers, often significantly extending the time to get results.

"Testing protocols have been a point of frustration," California Gov. Gavin Newsom said Thursday. He said federal officials had assured their state counterparts that capacity to test will be growing "exponentially" in the next few days, but he wasn't more specific.

Federal official likely limited testing early on because of concerns about a deluge of false positives, which could panic communities and become counterproductive, said Khan, a former top disease investigator for the CDC.

But he suggested that a tiered testing system might be the answer, in which a

positive test would have to be verified by another lab before a case is diagnosed and counted.

The challenge is complicated by a slowness to distribute test kits.

Newsom said Thursday the state had just 200 testing kits on hand and “that’s simply inadequate.” He said he spoke to CDC officials and they assured him they were working to make testing more broadly available in California.

In Italy, where an outbreak has depressed tourism and fueled panic, officials said Thursday they would change their reporting and testing practices in ways that could lower the country’s reported caseload.

Italian authorities plan from now on to distinguish between people who test positive for the virus and patients showing symptoms, since the majority of the people in Italy with confirmed infections aren’t actually sick. They said they would follow urging by the WHO and hold off on certifying cases screened only at a regional level, until they can be confirmed by national officials.

“The cases that emerge from the regions are still considered suspect and unconfirmed,” said Walter Ricciardi, a WHO adviser to the Italian government.

But U.S. experts said the crisis requires more rapid testing, and a willingness by officials to revise their criteria. Sauer pointed to a case in Canada, where officials zeroed in on a traveler from Iran with COVID-19 soon after that country announced its first cases.

“Let our really smart doctors do what they do really well,” Khan said. “If they are really suspicious that a pneumonia or influenza-like illness does not quite look like an influenza-like illness, allow them to test!”

States ask people potentially exposed to COVID-19 to self-quarantine (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [2/27/2020 5:43 PM, UPI, 1973K]

City and state health departments have asked hundreds of Americans to “self-quarantine” to protect against community spread of the novel coronavirus, as fears of the potential pandemic reaching the United States continue to grow.

In New York state, health officials acknowledged that more than 700 residents have been asked to remain in isolation, either because they have traveled to China since the start of the outbreak there, or because they have had close contact with someone who has.

Many already were released from quarantine, which typically lasts for 14 days, provided they remained symptom free and didn’t test positive for the virus.

As many as 8,400 people in California also have been asked to take similar measures, while health officials in Ohio have confirmed that 175 state residents have

done so.

Many of those on self-quarantine in California arrived on domestic flights, although their travel itineraries may have included China or they may have been exposed to other passengers who traveled there.

In California, the self-quarantine measures have been complicated by the shortage of test kits capable of confirming COVID-19, according to Gov. Gavin Newsom. He said Thursday that the state has 200 test kits, a number he called “inadequate” to assess all the suspected cases.

The governor added that state public health officials have been in “constant contact with federal agencies” and new kits should arrive by early next week. Earlier this week, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed that the test kits it shipped out to states were flawed and needed to be replaced.

So far, 33 people in California have tested positive for the virus, but five have since left the state. On Wednesday, health officials there reported the first known case of the virus in the United States of unknown origin — meaning the person had no history of travel to an area with a reported outbreak and was not exposed to another known infected person.

On Monday, health officials in Massachusetts indicated that they were monitoring 231 people in self-quarantine.

“When we look at this current COVID-19 situation, we don’t speculate on how or when it will spread, so the most important thing I can tell people today is that we at the Department of Public Health are prepared,” State Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel told WBUR radio.

“We are prepared to address what comes our way. People should live their lives normally and go about their normal activities.”

Several other states, including Illinois and Wisconsin have asked residents to self-isolate, but are not releasing figures to protect their privacy and limit potential panic.

The self-quarantine measures are in accordance with policy recommendations by the CDC and the State Department. Both agencies have overseen quarantines for Americans evacuated from Wuhan, China — epicenter for the outbreak — and the Diamond Prince cruise ship, where an outbreak occurred.

In fact, COVID-19 marks the first time the United States has had to implement quarantines in more than 50 years — since smallpox in the 1960s.

According to the CDC’s guidance, updated Thursday, agency teams are working with the Department of Homeland Security at 11 airports across the country to which all flights from China are being directed so that travelers returning to the United States can be screened.

Passengers with suspected COVID-19 are referred to their local health departments for oversight of self-monitoring.

CDC also has been working with other U.S. government agencies, including the Department of Defense, Health and Human Services and the State Department, to “safely evacuate” U.S. citizens, residents and their families from international locations where there is “substantial, sustained transmission of COVID-19,” including roughly 600 from Wuhan and more than 300 from the Diamond Princess cruise ship.

All of these evacuees have been housed on military bases and monitored for symptoms of the virus for the recommended 14-day quarantine period.

Stocks plunge on coronavirus fears even as U.S. ramps up fight against spread (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [2/28/2020 1:07 AM, Sinéad Carew, Ted Hesson, 23673K]

U.S. stocks plummeted on Thursday as fears about the effect of the coronavirus outbreak on economic growth flared even as U.S. officials pledged that they were stepping up efforts to safeguard Americans from the virus' spread.

A day after President Donald Trump told Americans that the risk from coronavirus remained “very low,” the S&P 500 .SPX logged its fastest drop of at least 10% in history in a sixth straight day of declines. The broad market average has lost 12% since hitting a record close on Feb. 19.

The Dow .DJI has fallen as much as 12.9% and the Nasdaq .IXIC has lost as much as 13%.

Two U.S. officials told Reuters the Trump administration was considering invoking special powers to rapidly expand domestic production of protective masks and clothing to help combat the coronavirus in the United States.

During an interagency call on Wednesday, officials from Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) discussed the possibility of invoking the Defense Production Act for the manufacture of “personal protective equipment” that can be worn by healthcare workers to prevent infection, according to a DHS official.

A White House official confirmed that the administration was exploring the use of the law to spur manufacturing of protective gear. Both officials requested anonymity to discuss the issue.

Amid a flurry of sometimes contradictory messages from Washington, HHS Secretary Alex Azar late on Thursday proclaimed that “everyday Americans don’t need to be worried” about coronavirus. He was quick to add, “But that can change.”

During a White House ceremony celebrating Black History Month, Trump countered congressional Democrats’ charges that administration preparations were lagging. “Fortunately we made the early moves,” Trump said. “It’s working out very

professionally. We're doing a tremendous job.”

Robert Redfield, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), told lawmakers the agency revised its criteria for who should be tested for the coronavirus and was shipping more test kits to states.

Redfield also said CDC is investigating how long this virus can survive on surfaces, remaining infectious.

California only has about 200 test kits, an “inadequate” number, but has been in “constant contact with federal agencies” who have promised to send a fresh supply in coming days, Governor Gavin Newsom told a news briefing earlier.

Quick confirmation of coronavirus cases is crucial to rapid response by local health authorities, and states previously reported that some test kits provided by CDC were producing inconclusive results.

Azar told a House of Representatives committee on Thursday that at least 40 public health labs should now be able to test specimens for coronavirus and that could more than double as soon as Friday.

Some state and local public health workers have expressed doubts about how quickly the country will be able to scale up its testing capability, however.

Scott Becker, the CEO of the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL), said his group had worked with the CDC and the Food and Drug Administration to develop a way to quickly increase testing capacity but these tests will still have to be validated by states, which could take several days.

“If quality control goes well as expected by the end of next week, upwards of 40 labs will have testing capabilities in addition to the 12 we have,” Becker told Reuters.

The number of confirmed U.S. cases is still relatively small at 60, most of them repatriated American passengers from the Diamond Princess cruise ship docked in Japan.

POLITICS

Funding to combat the health crisis has become a political issue in an election year. Trump, a Republican, is seeking \$2.5 billion from Congress to boost the government’s response. Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer called for \$8.5 billion.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Republican, said he hoped a bipartisan effort could produce a deal on funding within the next two weeks.

China, where the coronavirus started, has borne the brunt of the outbreak, recording nearly 80,000 infections and more than 2,700 deaths. The virus has spread to another 44 countries, where around 3,500 cases and 54 deaths have been reported.

But with new infections reported around the world now surpassing those in mainland China, World Health Organization Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said even rich nations should prepare for surprises.

“No country should assume it won’t get cases, that would be a fatal mistake, quite literally,” Tedros said.

Various treatments are being tested for the virus, which can lead to pneumonia, but a vaccine may take up to 18 months to develop, health officials have said.

Trump has been increasingly alarmed by market reaction, which he considers a barometer of the economy’s health and sees as important to his re-election in November.

[NY] Feds, NY governor still in talks on Global Entry ban (AP)

[AP](#) [2/27/2020 7:01 PM, Marina Villeneuve, 1670K]

Federal and state officials have yet to find a compromise to allow New Yorkers back into federal trusted travelers programs even as a Department of Homeland Security official said that the governor’s latest offer looks “promising.”

Department of Homeland Security Acting Secretary Chad Wolf said Thursday his agency is in talks with the governor’s office about Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s proposal to allow federal immigration and border officials to access state Department of Motor Vehicles data without social security numbers.

“We believe this proposal could lead to a solution for New York,” he said in a statement.

President Donald Trump’s administration announced this month that it will no longer allow New Yorkers to enroll or re-enroll in programs that let them skip long security lines at airports. New York state has sued to reverse the ban, arguing the Department of Homeland Security’s move is meant to punish the state for enacting a law that lets immigrants in the country illegally get driver’s licenses and bars federal immigration agents from state motor vehicle records.

Trump administration officials have said the decision was necessary because New York’s new law had endangered public safety.

Despite Wolf’s statement Thursday, it’s unclear just how state and federal officials will resolve the conflict

Cuomo’s spokesman Richard Azzopardi has said the Trump administration rejected the governor’s idea when Cuomo proposed it privately weeks ago.

[NY] Cuomo May Sue Trump Over Delay in N.Y. Traffic-Congestion Plan (Bloomberg)

[Bloomberg](#) [2/27/2020 4:30 PM, Henry Goldman, 6400K]

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo says he may sue the federal government over its failure to approve a plan to ease traffic in Manhattan by charging motorists fees during periods of high congestion, if evidence shows the hold-up is politically motivated.

"The Federal Highway Administration has to be careful because blatant political use of government is certainly unethical, and in some situations it's illegal," Cuomo said during a news conference at his Manhattan office Thursday. "I have no problem suing the federal government, especially if they did something illegal."

The White House press office didn't respond to requests for a response to the governor's comments.

The plan, targeting traffic in midtown Manhattan, is crucial to raise about \$1.5 billion in annual revenue, enough to finance \$15 billion in municipal bonds to make mass-transit improvements. The program -- set to launch in January -- must be approved by the administration because it involves some federal roads.

Cuomo said the Metropolitan Transportation Authority continues to move forward on the plan, but the agency has not yet appointed a panel that would determine pricing policies and technical issues.

Cuomo described the decision on the congestion-pricing plan as part of a Trump administration push to hurt New York. He also cited the administration's recent suspension of New Yorkers' applications to enroll in the Department of Homeland Security's "trusted traveler" program, which speeds airport entry when citizens arrive at an airport from abroad.

[DC] Daughter of alleged Mexico drug kingpin 'El Mencho' arrested trying to see brother in U.S. court in Washington (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [2/27/2020 3:35 PM, Spencer S. Hsu and Mary Beth Sheridan, 12625K]

The daughter of the alleged head of Mexico's Jalisco New Generation drug cartel was arrested unexpectedly at a federal court in Washington, D.C., after she arrived Wednesday to attend a bond hearing for her brother, another alleged top cartel figure, people familiar with the matter said.

The apprehension of Jessica Johana Oseguera Cervantes came as she was apparently unaware of a Feb. 13 indictment and subsequent warrant for her arrest before being taken into custody by security officers, said the people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the two cases.

The indictment, unsealed Thursday, charges her with five counts of violating a U.S. ban on transacting with designated drug trafficking entities and individuals. She

pleaded not guilty at a hearing before U.S. Magistrate Judge G. Michael Harvey following her brother's hearing Wednesday afternoon.

Her capture came less than one week after authorities announced the extradition of her brother Rubén Oseguera González — known as “El Menchito” — which U.S. and Mexican officials had been awaiting for months since his arrest by Mexico's army in 2015 on drug-trafficking charges.

The siblings are alleged to have been involved in the operations of their father, one of the most important figures on the U.S. list of alleged traffickers, Nemesio Ruben Oseguera Cervantes, according to court documents. Known as “El Mencho,” the elder Oseguera Cervantes leads one of Mexico's most powerful drug organizations, according to U.S. authorities, and his pursuit is being led by the same prosecutors who netted the conviction last year of Sinaloa cartel leader Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán Loera.

“These charges are false, and we are certain a jury will quickly exonerate Jessica,” said Steven McCool, a U.S.-based attorney for the younger Oseguera Cervantes.

An attorney for the other sibling did not respond to requests for comment.

Spokespeople for the Drug Enforcement Administration and U.S. Marshals Service referred questions to the Justice Department, which declined immediate comment Thursday afternoon.

Oseguera González, 30, pleaded not guilty last week to charges of distributing cocaine and methamphetamine and using a firearm to facilitate drug trafficking. At a hearing Wednesday, Harvey ordered him to remain detained.

He has insisted he is not guilty, and is not even the son of the renowned trafficker.

“In these past five years, I've demonstrated my innocence, having been absolved in every single case against me,” he said in a letter published in December by the news magazine Proceso.

Oseguera Cervantes faces a bond hearing Monday. Her arrest warrant was issued on Feb. 16 for money laundering, family attorney Victor Beltrán García told the Mexican daily El Universal, which first reported the arrest.

He said she had been found not guilty of a similar charge by a court in Guadalajara, Mexico, the paper reported.

The judge ruled “that the woman has her businesses, she pays taxes and there was no evidence that she was involved in operations with money obtained illegally, and much less from organized crime,” Beltrán García told the paper. He said the matter was resolved last year.

He said the U.S. and Mexican governments “make up lies” about the woman.

It is unclear how much value her arrest may hold for U.S. law enforcement authorities, but her seizure highlights an escalating pressure campaign by the Justice Department in narco-trafficking cases.

El Menchito's handover last week was part of a surge of extraditions that have occurred since a visit in early December to Mexico by U.S. Attorney General William P. Barr, who expressed concern over the response to soaring violence by the government of Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

El Menchito is perhaps the best-known of about 40 other alleged organized-crime figures sent to the United States since Barr's Dec. 5 trip, officials say. But close watchers of cartels say American authorities have long been most eager to bring to the United States alleged former Los Zetas cartel leaders Miguel Angel Trevino Morales and Oscar Omar Trevino Morales, otherwise known as "Z-40" and "Z-42," respectively.

Both were captured in recent years and jailed in Mexico but remain under indictment in the United States, which offered \$5 million in reward for each's capture.

While Los Zetas achieved notoriety through brazen use of brutality and violence, it has since been decimated and fractured, with rivals such as El Mencho seeking to take its place, U.S. officials said.

U.S. authorities in October 2018 announced 15 indictments, large State Department rewards and sanctions on leaders of the group, which they ranked among the world's five most dangerous transnational criminal organizations, responsible for trafficking many tons of cocaine, methamphetamine and fentanyl-laced heroin into the country.

El Mencho and El Menchito's indictments were unsealed at the time, when the DEA estimated that their cartel had influence in three-quarters of Mexican states and illicit businesses in North America, Europe, Asia and Australia.

The U.S. Treasury Department has targeted cartel leaders, family members, operatives and businesses seeking to disrupt their finances, alleging their funds are overwhelmingly generated from drug sales in the United States.

[DC] Daughter of alleged Mexican drug kingpin El Mencho arrested (CBS News)

[CBS News](#) [2/27/2020 9:38 PM, Anders Triay, 2394K]

The daughter of alleged Mexican drug kingpin Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes, known as "El Mencho," has been arrested in Washington D.C. on drug trafficking charges, a U.S. official told CBS News. Oseguera Cervantes, allegedly the head of the Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generacion, is considered the "number one priority for DEA," Matthew Donahue, the DEA's top agent in Mexico, told CBS News in September.

Jessica Johanna Oseguera Gonzalez, who is known as "La Negra," was arrested Wednesday at the federal courthouse when she went to see her brother, Ruben

Oseguera Gonzalez, who is known as "El Menchito." Ruben Oseguera Gonzalez was extradited from Mexico last week and charged with drug trafficking.

A U.S. official told CBS News Oseguera Gonzalez entered the U.S. legally, and Border Patrol agents were apparently unaware she was under indictment.

She was charged with engaging in transactions or dealings in properties with businesses blacklisted by the Treasury Department that allegedly provided financial support to Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generacion, or CJNG. Oseguera Gonzalez pleaded not guilty.

Her father is believed to be hiding in Mexico. His cartel is responsible for at least one-third of the drugs entering the U.S. by land and sea, CBS News' Adriana Diaz reported in September. According to the Department of Justice, the cartel has trafficked "tons" of cocaine, methamphetamine and fentanyl-laced heroin.

There is a \$10 million bounty for Oseguera Cervantes.

[DC] Cartel boss' daughter arrested attending brother's trial (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [2/27/2020 5:45 PM, Ashraf Khalil, AP, 1670K]

U.S. authorities have arrested the daughter of a fugitive Mexican drug kingpin, who was in Washington to attend her brother's trial.

Jessica Johanna Oseguera was arrested at the D.C. federal courthouse Wednesday, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press. The person wasn't authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity. After her arrest, she was presented with a secret sealed indictment from Feb. 13.

Jessica Oseguera is being charged with doing business with five business entities that have been declared off-limits by the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Asset Control for "providing material support to the international narcotics trafficking activities" to the cartel, according to a Justice Department statement.

Her brother, Ruben Oseguera, 30, has pleaded not guilty to multiple charges relating to conspiracy to distribute narcotics. If convicted, he faces at least 15 years in prison. His trial begins on Friday.

Their father, Nemesio Oseguera, Alias, "El Mencho," is the reputed head of the Jalisco New Generation drug cartel, a large and very violent drug-dealing gang. He remains a fugitive, with the U.S. government offering \$10 million for information leading to his arrest.

A dual U.S.-Mexican citizen, Jessica Oseguera remains in U.S. custody and faces a detention hearing on Tuesday, March 2.

[IL] Debate over Illinois' noncitizen prisoner release policy focuses on money, safety (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [2/27/2020 2:00 PM, Greg Bishop, 570K]

The Illinois Department of Corrections policy of not holding undocumented immigrants upon release from Illinois prisons could be compounded by a U.S. appeals court ruling on Wednesday that allows U.S. President Donald Trump's administration to withhold federal funds from states and cities with sanctuary policies.

Illinois lawmakers passed the Trust Act in 2017. It prohibits state and local law enforcement from cooperating with federal immigration officials to detain undocumented immigrants for possible deportation solely based on immigration status.

Proponents, such as state Rep. Elizabeth Hernandez, D-Chicago, said it was designed to protect immigrant communities.

"The Trust Act is really to allow folks to live their everyday lives to place some protections where they can go to work, they can go to the grocery store, they can take their kids to the doctors or to school," Hernandez said. "And so it refrains from ICE using our law enforcement to do their job."

On Tuesday, IDOC officials said because of the Illinois Trust Act they decided last month to no longer hold noncitizens for local sheriffs to house and transfer to federal immigration officials. The federal government pays for those housing costs, which brings in money for law enforcement agencies with federal contracts. A group of sheriffs said that puts the public in danger.

Hernandez, D-Chicago, said the sheriffs were just concerned about money.

"I think that they're worried about is a revenue stream that comes their way, that's the bottom line," Hernandez said. "And it's on the back of individuals who have already done their time."

Kankakee County Sheriff Mike Downey said Wednesday his office gets around \$12 million from the federal government to house certain detainees. About \$7 million, he said, is to hold fugitives for the U.S. Marshall. About \$5 million comes from the federal government to house ICE detainees, at \$90 per bed, per day. And while the lack of cooperation from IDOC could have a financial impact on his office, Downey said he was concerned with public safety.

Sangamon County Sheriff Jack Campbell agreed.

"This is not a political decision," Campbell said. "This is we want to keep our communities safe and I think we'll be safer if we cooperate with ICE and let these people's immigration cases be heard."

While Sangamon County doesn't have any state prisons, Campbell said the spillover was a concern.

"We have one in Taylorville, we have one in Lincoln," Campbell said. "These people could actually be released and make their way into Sangamon County and that's my job – to protect the people here."

State Rep. Allen Skillicorn, R-East Dundee, said the issue was more alarming after a U.S. appeals court ruled the Trump administration can withhold money from states and cities with sanctuary policies.

"There are crimes happening right now because of these misguided policies and we can't forget if the federal government cuts off these grants it's going to be a huge crush to our budget, but also it's going to put law enforcement officers in danger," Skillicorn said.

Supporters of the Trust Act have said it was meant to ensure undocumented immigrants don't live in constant fear of being deported.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker's office said Tuesday that Illinois will be a buffer between the federal government and immigrants.

"As Donald Trump continues to advance policies that tear apart families and terrorize children, the Pritzker administration is committed to using every tool at our disposal to protect immigrant families in Illinois," said Jordan Abudayyeh, a spokeswoman for the governor. "The governor's office is working closely with the Department of Corrections to review current policies, build on the progress made under the bipartisan Illinois Trust Act that was signed into law in 2017, and ensure the protection of immigrant families and all Illinois communities. As this work moves forward, the Department of Corrections will pause the majority of its interactions with ICE. The governor has made it abundantly clear that Illinois will be a firewall against the president's attacks on immigrant communities."

[CA] 1st coronavirus case of unknown origin in US was hospitalized for days before being tested: officials (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [2/27/2020 3:11 PM, Madeline Farber, 8943K] Video: [HERE](#)

A Northern California woman who is the nation's first coronavirus case of unknown origin was hospitalized for days before she was tested for the novel virus, according to the hospital where she initially sought treatment before being transferred to UC Davis Medical Center.

The woman was first treated at NorthBay VacaValley Hospital, which is under the NorthBay Healthcare Group. In a statement provided to Fox News, Aimee Brewer, the president of NorthBay Healthcare Group, said the patient "at no time fit the existing CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] criteria for COVID-19, and therefore a test was not immediately administered."

In a press conference on Thursday, California Gov. Gavin Newsom also remarked on the case, saying the state was tracking potential contacts of the patient. Officials also said that there was no evidence of a link between the patient and evacuees

from the Diamond Princess cruise ship who were taken to Travis Air Force Base in Solano County.

Overall, California is currently monitoring 8,400 people for suspected coronavirus, he said.

“Everybody in this country is rightfully anxious about this moment but I think they should know we are meeting this moment with the kind of urgency that is necessary and I don’t want to overextend the anxiety that people naturally face,” Newsom added.

The woman was transferred after her condition worsened over a three-day stay, ultimately “prompting our physicians to seek transfer to UC Davis where a higher level of monitoring and care could be delivered. The patient was transported via ambulance,” said Brewer in the statement.

Hospital officials then “launched a meticulous tracing of anyone in our Vacaville hospital who may have had any contact with that patient,” she continued. “From [the] patient’s arrival in the emergency department, until the transfer to UC Davis Medical Center, we promptly identified these employees. Those that met the moderate or high-risk categories were asked to stay home and monitor themselves for any sign of COVID-19. Our approach is the same as we regularly manage other diseases that require airborne precautions and monitoring.”

Brewer assured that both NorthBay Medical Center and NorthBay VacaValley Hospital “are operating under normal operations under normal operations and are meeting the needs of our patients.”

“We continue to work very closely with county and state public health officials, UC Davis, as well as the CDC, and thank them for their coordination and assistance,” added Brewer. “We are very proud of our health care team who provided excellent care to this patient while in our hospital and proud of all who responded in the last two days to manage possible employee exposures.”

The first case of community transmission of the virus in the U.S. comes after federal health officials this week warned that community spread of the novel coronavirus is seemingly inevitable, with one CDC official saying it’s no longer “a question of if, but when, and how many people in this country will have severe illness.”

To date, there have been 60 cases of the virus, which includes people who’ve been repatriated to the U.S. Worldwide, some 83,000 people have been sickened, while more than 2,800 have died, according to Thursday estimates.

[CA] Some California health workers held in isolation, quarantine after exposure to coronavirus patient, officials say (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [2/27/2020 9:22 PM, Louis Casiano, 8943K]

Dozens of health workers in Solano County, Calif., are under isolation and some will be quarantined after being exposed to a patient who recently tested positive for the

coronavirus, officials said Thursday.

The patient, who has not been publicly identified, is the first known person to contract the illness without traveling abroad or coming into close contact with an infected individual. She visited health centers, potentially exposing a number of workers at two hospitals -- NorthBay VacaValley Hospital in Vacaville and the UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento, according to officials.

They didn't say how many workers were impacted but said it was under 100 people.

"There were multiple health care personnel who were exposed to the individual," Dr. Bela Matyas, the county public health officer, said at a news conference Thursday. "At both hospitals we are at present aggressively evaluating everyone who may have had contact with this patient. They are being identified and their risk for exposure is being assessed."

Efforts are being made to identify all the workers who may have been exposed. A spokesman for NorthBay Health Care said the number of health care workers impacted was "a moving target."

The announcement comes hours after county health officials declared a local emergency and activated its Department Operations Center to identify and screen those potentially exposed to the coronavirus, known as COVID-19.

Officials called the virus a public health threat but cautioned that the risk to the public in Solano County remains low.

"The ability for us to address this exists," Matyas said. "I think that we can weather this just as we have weathered other similar events in the past."

The patient was brought to the NorthBay VacaValley Hospital earlier this month with flu-like symptoms and stayed for three days. She didn't fit the federal health criteria to be tested for the virus, officials said Thursday.

She was later transferred to UC Davis Medical Center where she was administered a test at the request of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and was found to have contracted the coronavirus.

Doctors at the hospital asked the CDC to test the woman on Feb. 19 but were not given approval until Sunday.

Meanwhile, at the University of California campus in Davis, three students who live together in a dormitory hall are being monitored for potential infection, the university said. One student showed signs of the virus and was removed from the campus.

"As an additional precautionary measure, daily disinfection practices are being implemented within all Student Housing and Dining Services properties," the school said in a statement.

Additionally, students seeking care at the school's wellness center are being asked about recent travel and contact with anyone possibly infected.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom said Thursday that more than 8,000 California residents were being monitored for the virus.

Some 82,000 people have been sicked by the coronavirus worldwide and more than 2,700 have died. Most of the cases are in China where the virus was first reported and has prompted tough measures to keep it from spreading.

[CA] California Governor Gavin Newsom Says State Is Monitoring 8,400 Coronavirus Cases (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [2/27/2020 2:45 PM, Marlo Safi, 566K]

Democratic California Governor Gavin Newsom said Thursday the state is monitoring at least 8,400 people for Coronavirus, CNBC reported.

"This is a fluid situation right now and I want to emphasize the risk to the American public remains low," said Dr. Sonia Y. Angell, California Department of Public Health Director and State Health Officer during a press conference according to CNBC. "There have been a limited number of confirmed cases to date."

The announcement comes a day after a suspected case was reported to have been caused through "community spread," making the person the first in the U.S. to contract the virus without having traveled to affected areas or having exposure to others who had the coronavirus, according to NPR.

The suspected case was left undiagnosed for days because a request for testing wasn't initially granted, officials at UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento said according to NPR.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned Americans on Tuesday to prepare for the "expectation that this might be bad," as the coronavirus continues to spread worldwide, with Italy emerging as the focal point of the virus in Europe, while Iran scrambles to combat the spread as confirmed cases in the country grow.

Former Homeland Security adviser Fran Townsend told CBS "What people haven't talked about is people can be totally asymptomatic... you can be infected with the coronavirus and have no symptoms and that means you can infect others and not even know you have it."

[CA] Man Held in Wyoming in California Cemetery Killings (US News & World Report)

[US News & World Report](#) [2/27/2020 7:24 PM, Stefanie Dazio and Mead Gruver, AP, 3020K]

A man wanted for killing three people in a Southern California cemetery was arrested Thursday during a traffic stop in Wyoming, authorities said.

Jose Luis Torres Garcia was taken into custody in Cheyenne, Wyoming, according

to the Riverside County Sheriff's Department in California. Officials also said they discovered 15 pounds (6.80 kilograms) of marijuana in the vehicle.

The Wyoming Highway Patrol pulled over and arrested Garcia after spotting a GMC Yukon on Interstate 80 east of Cheyenne, patrol spokesman Sgt. Jeremy Beck said. Riverside authorities had earlier asked law enforcement and the public to look for the Yukon.

The three men — Jaime Covarrubias Espindola, 50; Jose Maria Aguilar-Espejel, 38 and Rodrigo Aguilar-Espejel, 28 — were killed at the same time in Perris, which is east of Los Angeles. Their bodies were found Feb. 17 at the Perris Valley Cemetery.

Riverside Sheriff Chad Bianco has said Garcia, 33, acted alone and knew the three victims. They were discovered near the grave of a man who died in Mexico. Officials have not said whether a relationship existed between the person buried there and the victims.

Riverside authorities had put out a warrant for Garcia's arrest on Feb. 20, saying he was "armed and very dangerous." Officials have said they did not know Garcia's motive in the slayings.

The sheriff has said Garcia has ties to San Jose, California, and Mexico. He has been deported twice. But authorities had not yet determined his current immigration status last week. There were already two misdemeanor warrants out for his arrest regarding other cases.

It was not immediately clear if Garcia had an attorney who could speak on his behalf.

[HI] Kaua'i Councilmember Arrested In Drug Sweep (Hawaii Public Radio)

[Hawaii Public Radio](#) [2/27/2020 4:43 PM, Staff, 9K]

Kaua'i County councilmember Arthur Brun was among 12 individuals arrested by Kaua'i Police and federal law enforcement agencies today as part of an islandwide drug sweep.

According to a press release, the Kaua'i Police Department began an investigation into a drug trafficking ring that was responsible for selling methamphetamine on the island. Due to the size and scope of the investigation, KPD partnered with federal agencies including: the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Homeland Security, U.S. Attorney's Office of Hawaii, the FBI, U.S. Postal Service, and the U.S. Marshals.

"The suspects under indictment today were identified as part of a major drug trafficking organization that has been supplying a significant amount of methamphetamine throughout the community," said Todd Raybuck, Kauai Police chief.

Raybuck says the suspects are facing felony charges under a federal indictment of conspiring to distribute methamphetamine and other crimes.

A KPD spokesperson says Brun is still in custody, and has not been released.

A press conference is scheduled for tomorrow with more information on the drug sweep.

Brun was previously arrested for hitting a police officer while fleeing a traffic stop last October. He was scheduled for trial on March 16 on those charges. Brun was being charged with assaulting a police officer and failure to stop a motor vehicle, both are Class C felonies.

Earlier this month, Brun was also involved in a traffic incident that injured a 49-year-old man and a 6-year-old boy. Brun was driving a Hyundai Genesis north on Kapaa Bypass Road when he crossed the center line, hitting a pick-up truck heading south. Brun was cited for crossing a double yellow line and driving without insurance.

[HI] County Official in Hawaii Charged in Federal Meth Probe (US News & World Report)

[US News & World Report](#) [2/27/2020 5:36 PM, Caleb Jones, AP, 3020K]

Law enforcement officials in Hawaii are charging a Kauai councilman and 11 others with crimes including conspiracy to distribute large amounts of methamphetamine.

In a statement released Thursday, the Kauai police department said they worked with federal agencies to secure a federal indictment against Kauai County Councilmember Arthur Brun and 11 other people.

The suspects are part of "a major drug trafficking organization that has been supplying a significant amount of methamphetamine throughout the community," Police Chief Todd Raybuck said in a statement. He said they face felony charges of conspiring to distribute methamphetamine and other crimes.

Officials did not name the 11 others that are being charged. The indictment was not immediately available Thursday, officials said.

Kauai police and federal law enforcement agencies including the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Homeland Security and others scheduled a news conference Friday to discuss the charges.

A spokeswoman for the U.S. Department of Justice was unable to confirm if Brun had an attorney. A spokeswoman for the Kauai police department was also unsure if Brun had a lawyer. A call to Kauai mayor's office seeking further details on Brun's status with the county was not immediately returned.

Brun did not immediately respond to an email and did not answer his office phone number on Thursday.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

ICE accused of targeting undocumented parents taking their kids to school: reports (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [2/27/2020 5:54 PM, Justine Coleman, 1762K]

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is being accused of targeting undocumented parents when they take their kids to school.

Officers have said they go after undocumented adults with criminal records and not specific schools. But immigration rights activists said three incidents occurred in Colorado in the past week involving fathers detained before or after dropping off their children, USA Today reported Thursday.

In addition, ICE detained a father in Portland, Ore., after he got his children on the school bus last week, as well as a woman after she dropped off her child at a school in South Philadelphia this month, according to CBS affiliate KOIN in Oregon and The Philadelphia Inquirer.

ICE spokeswoman Tanya Roman defended its Portland arrest, saying Tomas Galvan-Rodriguez was a Mexican citizen in the U.S. illegally and was previously convicted for a hit and run 2004 and larceny in 2008.

"The location of Galvan-Rodriguez's traffic stop and subsequent arrest did not occur at a known marked school bus stop or a location that was previously known to the officers," Roman said in a statement.

ICE says it has a "sensitive location" policy forbidding them from making arrests in schools, hospitals, churches, funerals and weddings, but a school bus stop is legal if there are no children present.

The American Friends Service Committee of Colorado called the incidents a "cruel tactic" that "violates the spirit of the sensitive locations policies."

"The point of the sensitive locations policy is to protect the safety of children and community members from the trauma of witnessing enforcement," Jordan Garcia, a spokesman for the group, told USA Today.

ICE said that 86 percent of its arrests last year involved people either with a previous criminal conviction or pending criminal charges besides the immigration violations. ICE officers have said they prefer detaining people in courthouses or jails because of the lack of weapons and risk to the public.

"Let me be very clear, ICE does not conduct patrols, raids, or sweeps looking for illegal aliens. Individuals and groups making such accusations are doing nothing but fearmongering and in turn, putting the public and our officers at risk," John Fabbriatore, acting field office director in Denver, said in a statement obtained by The Hill.

"Our officers are professionals who uphold the law as written by Congress," Fabbriatore said. "If anyone has an issue with the law, they need to take it to their Congressional representative and stop directing their frustrations with the law at federal employees."

Immigration agents accused of targeting parents taking their kids to school (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [2/27/2020 5:19 PM, Trevor Hughes, 5611K]

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents are drawing more criticism for detaining parents taking their kids to school, although officials said they primarily target undocumented adults with criminal records, not specific parents or schools in general.

Immigrant rights activists said there were three incidents in Colorado in the past week in which fathers were stopped before or after dropping their kids off. School officials at a district outside Portland, Oregon, said ICE agents arrested a father last week shortly after his kids got on the school bus. This month, ICE agents detained a mother after she dropped her child off at a South Philadelphia school.

ICE has a "sensitive location" policy generally barring agents from detaining people at schools, hospitals, churches, funerals and weddings. The policy bars them from detaining people at school bus stops but only if children are present. Activists said the ICE detentions scare families and shatter communities.

"The Colorado Field Office's use of this cruel tactic targeting families violates the spirit of the sensitive locations policies, which include schools," said Jordan Garcia, a spokesman for the American Friends Service Committee of Colorado. "The point of the sensitive locations policy is to protect the safety of children and community members from the trauma of witnessing enforcement."

ICE officials said they simply enforce U.S. law as written by Congress and anyone with concerns should take them up with their elected officials. Last year, 86% of the people arrested by ICE had either a previous criminal conviction or pending criminal charges, in addition to being suspected of immigration violations, the agency said.

"We will and do stop vehicles that are traveling, and we have probable cause that they are the person we have targeted," the Denver ICE office said in a statement. "We are not targeting fathers specifically or schools generally. We do target criminal aliens, there is no shortage of them here."

Activists said the enforcement is part of a larger effort by the Trump administration to scare undocumented residents into leaving the country voluntarily. What it actually does is drive them underground, tears apart families and ruins communities, activists said.

"The trauma that ICE creates with this intimidation and surveillance of principally neighborhoods of color is intergenerational," said Wendolyne Omana, an activist in southwestern Colorado where ICE stopped a father on the way to school with his

kids. "Many adolescents lose their desire to live and to love life after watching their parents be detained."

The names of the detainees were not released by activists, and it is unclear why they were targeted.

The Colorado detentions come amidst a backdrop of an increasingly bitter fight between the Trump administration and liberal states and local governments that refuse to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement. The Justice Department sued New Jersey and Washington state for creating "sanctuary" policies, and Attorney General Bill Barr warned he might prosecute officials who refuse to help ICE.

President Donald Trump has long argued for stricter immigration enforcement and stronger borders. At a campaign rally in Colorado last week, he referred to a Mexican national who is accused of stabbing a Denver-area county judge during a robbery. The suspect had been detained by law enforcement in Colorado three times before the stabbing, but each time was released from jail without ICE being given what it called adequate notification that he was in custody. He was deported in 1999 but returned to the USA illegally and used a different name, ICE said.

ICE officers said they prefer to detain people at courthouses and jails because the suspect has already been screened for weapons and is away from the general public, limiting risk.

"Our officers do their jobs professionally, humanely, and treat those they encounter with dignity and respect," the Denver ICE office said. "These actions serve to make our communities and our country safer. It is unconscionable when those who have ideological or political beliefs that differ from the law, misdirect their attacks on ICE officers who are charged with upholding laws passed by Congress."

[MD] Gov. Hogan opposed to ending ICE's warrantless access to driver's license database (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [2/27/2020 7:09 PM, Erin Cox, 12625K]

Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan is opposed to cutting off warrantless access for immigration authorities to the photos and personal data of 7 million Maryland residents, including approximately 275,000 undocumented immigrants.

In his first response to a Washington Post report that federal authorities have run facial-recognition searches on millions of state residents without seeking state or court permission, the Republican governor said he will not support pending legislation that would curtail Immigration and Customs Enforcement's access to the data.

"The governor opposes any legislation that would hinder cooperation with federal law enforcement or make Maryland a sanctuary state," Hogan spokesman Michael Ricci said in a statement.

Federal law enforcement's broad access to driver's license data has sparked concern among privacy groups and immigrant advocates, who say that Maryland has granted federal investigators far more leeway than other states and that ICE has targeted immigrants who were encouraged to apply for special licenses the state offers undocumented residents.

State lawmakers have pressed the Hogan administration for at least two years to explain the extent of facial-recognition access for immigration authorities, which appears to date back at least to a pilot agreement signed with the FBI in December 2011, when Democrat Martin O'Malley was governor.

Ricci did not answer questions Thursday about whether that agreement has been reviewed or updated over the past seven years, a period during which facial-recognition technology has rapidly changed.

The longevity of the cooperation stunned some immigrants rights advocates, who pushed Maryland in 2013 to become the first East Coast state to create licenses for people who could not provide proof of legal status. Federal authorities already had access to the photos, addresses and other personal data of Maryland drivers; that database eventually included information on 275,000 undocumented immigrants.

Del. Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk (D-Prince George's) said Thursday that she was "distracted" to learn she had pushed a policy that ultimately identified undocumented immigrants and provided their home addresses to authorities.

"It breaks your heart," she said, her voice shaking with emotion. "We didn't know. . . . We would have gotten it right in the beginning if we knew."

The Democrats who control both chambers of the Maryland General Assembly delved more deeply into the revelations Thursday, holding a pair of hearings on legislation that would require ICE to obtain a warrant before searching the database.

In written testimony, the Hogan administration warned that thwarting federal immigration enforcement could provoke retaliation from the Trump administration, which has threatened to punish states for "sanctuary policies" and earlier this month imposed restrictions in New York.

At one hearing, Rockville resident Maribel Cortez recounted how immigration authorities knocked on her door three weeks ago and said they were arresting her husband of 21 years, based on information gleaned from his driver's license.

She and Jose Santos Quintero, who immigrated from El Salvador separately decades ago, have five children. They have never had other encounters with immigration or criminal law enforcement authorities, Cortez said.

"They came to the house," she told state lawmakers through an interpreter. "They took him. The kids that were there, they didn't give the kids any explanation. And it wasn't until they finally were detaining him and taking him to the car that they were telling him they were arresting him because of a license."

Cortez, 42, wiped away tears as she described how hard it has been for their children, ages 8, 10, 15, 18 and 20. “The kids are very distraught,” she said in an interview. “For their whole lives, they’ve had their father in their lives. And now it’s very difficult for them.”

She said Santos Quintero remains detained in a Howard County facility. The couple’s lawyers, she said, have not been provided any other explanation for his arrest.

House Speaker Adrienne A. Jones (D-Baltimore County) said she found it “disturbing” that ICE had “unfettered access to run facial-recognition searches.” She pledged to “demand answers and carefully consider our options to protect the rights and safety of every Maryland resident.”

A top Maryland law enforcement official said ICE officials had logged nearly 100 sessions in the state’s driver’s license database since 2018. Each session could have included multiple searches of the Maryland Image Repository System database.

For years, ICE has tapped similar databases in other states while trying to match a photo to a person’s identity. But in those states, ICE agents had to ask a state official to run the search. Records show that any law enforcement officials with access to the National Crime Information Center, an electronic clearinghouse of crime data, can search Maryland’s DMV records without prior approval or notification.

“That’s terrifying to me,” Sen. William C. Smith Jr. (D-Montgomery) said during the hearing of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, which he chairs.

“Regardless of your immigration status, someone could go in and search all of our data, our addresses and our information,” Smith said. “If you’re a sheriff in Arizona with NCIC access, you could search, just ‘cause, just for funsies.”

At the same hearing, Sen. Justin D. Ready (R-Carroll) said he never supported creating licenses for undocumented immigrants and questioned what immigrants expected when they shared information with the government.

“We didn’t force them to give it up,” Ready said. “In my opinion, it’s kind of a trade-off.”

[MD] ICE has run facial-recognition searches on millions of Md. drivers (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [2/26/2020 10:55 AM, Drew Harwell and Erin Cox, 12625K] U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials have been permitted to run facial-recognition searches on millions of Maryland driver’s license photos without first seeking state or court approval, state officials said — access that goes far beyond what other states allow and that alarms immigration activists in a state that grants special driver’s licenses to undocumented immigrants.

More than 275,000 such licenses have been issued statewide since 2013, when the state became the first on the East Coast to defy federal guidelines and allow undocumented immigrants to obtain a license without having to provide proof of legal status. The technology now under scrutiny could let an ICE official run a photograph of an unknown person through the system and see if any potentially undocumented immigrants are returned as a match.

“It’s a betrayal of immigrants’ trust for the [state] to turn around and let ICE run warrantless searches on their faces,” said Harrison Rudolph, a senior associate at Georgetown University Law School’s Center on Privacy and Technology. “It’s a bait-and-switch. ... ICE is using biometric information in the shadows, without government notice or public approval, to hunt down the most vulnerable people.”

A top Maryland law enforcement official told state lawmakers in November that ICE officials had logged nearly 100 sessions in the state’s driver’s license database since 2018, according to a previously unpublicized letter obtained by The Washington Post. Each session could have included multiple searches of the Maryland Image Repository System database, which includes the photos, names, addresses and other personal information of approximately 7 million drivers statewide.

The battle to grant driver’s licenses to undocumented immigrants spanned more than a decade in Maryland and is viewed by immigrant rights advocates as a capstone victory. In 2013, Maryland lawmakers voted to create the licenses despite federal laws requiring proof of immigration status on state-issued identification cards, following arguments from advocates that the change would boost road safety by requiring driver-safety tests and insurance coverage.

But immigrant rights groups now say ICE has used that legal protection to target undocumented immigrants who consented to offering their information and sat for a photograph.

“Having a license was something that was won and past, but now it’s opened up this vulnerability,” said Lydia Walther-Rodriguez, the Baltimore-area director for CASA, an immigration rights group. “After the victory occurred, there was a lot of trust that was given to the state. Now it’s the state’s responsibility to ensure that trust is not lost.”

ICE has for years tapped the driver’s license databases of states such as Utah, Vermont and Washington while attempting to match a photo to a person’s identity, as The Post first reported last year. But in those cases, ICE agents had to request a state official run the search. Maryland records show that ICE officials across the country can independently search without outside approval.

“They have a wide-open door to be able to search through anything in this database,” said Maryland Sen. Clarence K. Lam (D-Howard), who spent years pressing the state officials to explain the extent of the program. “They’ve not been forthcoming in their willingness to [stop it] or coming up with solutions.”

It was unclear Wednesday how this arrangement originated or when the ICE searches began in Maryland. Lam said he gleaned from meetings with agency officials that it started with a memorandum of understanding around 2012, raising the possibility that lawmakers who intended to champion the rights of undocumented immigrants created licenses for them that were readily searchable by federal immigration authorities. The driver's license data is recorded by the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration and included in a broader database, alongside jail mug shots, that is maintained by the state agency that runs Maryland's prisons.

Kevin Combs, the chief information officer for Maryland's Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services who wrote the November letter, provided no further details in the letter about who was given access to the database, the reasons for the searches or who was identified. Republican Gov. Larry Hogan's office declined to offer more details on Wednesday after The Post obtained Combs's letter.

ICE spokeswoman Dani Bennett said that the agency would not discuss specific law enforcement tactics or techniques and that its investigative activities are in compliance with federal law. ICE's facial-recognition searches, she added, are not "routinely" used for civil immigration enforcement and are instead primarily used by special agents investigating child exploitation or cybercrime.

The searches, Rudolph said, could affect everyone, not just immigrants, because of the searches' potential for misidentification that could lead ICE officials to pursue the wrong person. Some facial-recognition algorithms were shown to be up to 100 times more likely to misidentify people if they were Asian or black, a federal study found last year. The searches' accuracy is also highly dependent on database size and image quality.

"If you're a U.S. citizen and thinking ICE facial-recognition searches don't affect you, you're wrong," he added. "With face recognition, the question is not whether you are an immigrant, but whether an error-prone technology thinks you look like an immigrant."

Walther-Rodriguez, the Baltimore-area director for CASA, said her group grew suspicious after raids and detentions in recent months and questioned how the immigrants had been found. In many of the detentions, she said, immigrants had recently acquired state driver's licenses. One man detained three weeks ago in Rockville said he was told by the arresting officer that he was found through Maryland's MVA system.

The group now says ICE's open access to MVA photos and other data was a main reason for the detentions. Many immigrants, she said, pursued a driver's license because they thought it was the right thing to do as they drove to work or dropped off children at school and now feel panicked and deceived by how their data has been used.

The 2013 bill's sponsor, former state senator Victor R. Ramirez (D-Prince George's), heralded the change by saying at the time that Maryland would no longer "drive people underground." Fifteen states issue such licenses. But the ICE searches, he

said, threatened to deeply undermine the program by forcing a chilling effect on undocumented immigrants, who may seek instead to ignore the requirements for driver licensing, insurance and education.

“People are not going out and getting a driver’s license if they feel like ICE is going to pay them a visit and come to their house,” Ramirez said. “It goes in the face of why we passed it.”

Maryland offers law enforcement broad access to driver data. But the Maryland governor’s office and the General Assembly do not appear to have considered the specific issue of facial-recognition search, Rudolph said.

Del. Dana Stein (D-Baltimore County) said that when he introduced a bill in 2018 to outlaw data sharing with ICE, state officials said it was not possible at the time to distinguish between ICE searches and those of other federal law enforcement agencies.

The Maryland General Assembly scheduled hearings Thursday on two bills that would require ICE to get a warrant before it can scan Marylanders’ photos. The Hogan administration said Wednesday it took no position on cutting off ICE access but warned lawmakers that the state currently had “no means by which to control or monitor the access” that the database granted to other federal agencies.

A similar but more sweeping New York law provoked retaliation from the Trump administration earlier this month — and a warning that other states would also be punished for “sanctuary” policies that thwart federal immigration enforcement. The administration said it would kick out approximately 175,000 New Yorkers from the Global Entry and Trusted Traveler Programs by the end of the year. It would also delay export of used vehicles, because the administration could not access car registration records.

The threat has loomed over the proposal to cut off ICE access in Maryland, home to one of the nation’s top automotive ports, the Port of Baltimore. But Stein said the law he and Lam co-sponsored is narrowly crafted to only affect ICE searches in hopes that it won’t spark the same federal retribution.

“We don’t want to do anything that impedes criminal law enforcement investigations,” Stein said. “It’s unfair for individuals who have been law-abiding — even though they are technically undocumented — who have built families and built businesses to be picked up and deported without any notice just because they got a driver’s license. It’s bad public policy.”

Twenty states allow FBI agents to scan driver’s license photographs, and the agency has run more than 390,000 facial-recognition searches of state DMV rolls and other local databases since 2011, the Government Accountability Office said last year.

But Maryland, Rudolph said, appears to be the only state where ICE officials anywhere in the country can run a search as long as they have access to the National Crime Information Center, a widely available law-enforcement database

maintained by the FBI, which he called “an unprecedented level of access for federal agents — including ICE deportation agents.”

Maryland does not describe itself as a sanctuary state, which generally means a jurisdiction refuses to cooperate with federal authorities on civil immigration enforcement. But several of its most populous jurisdictions, including Montgomery and Prince George’s counties, and the city of Baltimore, have publicly restricted cooperation with ICE. More than 4 percent of the state’s residents, or approximately 275,000 people, are undocumented immigrants, according to Pew Research Center estimates last year.

Sens. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) and Cory Booker (D-N.J.) introduced a bill this month that would suspend the federal government’s use of facial-recognition technology until Congress passes regulations governing its use. San Francisco and other cities have banned local public agencies from running facial-recognition searches.

A Maryland state senator also introduced similar legislation to create a state-level moratorium “until there are statutory safeguards in place to allow the use of facial recognition services in ways that are beneficial and not harmful.”

[MD] ICE has run facial-recognition searches on millions of Maryland drivers (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [2/27/2020 11:06 AM, Anthony Leonardi, 570K]

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was granted permission to access millions of photographs from Maryland driver’s licenses.

The agency is using facial recognition technology to examine driver’s licenses issued in Maryland, without obtaining court or state approval. The Washington Post reports that 275,000 licenses were issued to state residents since the state’s defiance of federal immigration guidelines in 2013. And per state law, illegal immigrants are allowed to apply for licenses without providing proof of insurance. The technology would potentially allow ICE to identify illegal immigrants who have obtained licenses.

A Maryland law enforcement official told state representatives in November 2019 that ICE conducted approximately 100 sessions of searches in the state’s driver’s license database since 2018. The searches give the government agency access to information from 7 million drivers, including names, addresses, and other personal information.

Some immigration advocate groups have criticized the agency’s moves to counter illegal immigration.

“Having a license was something that was won and past, but now it’s opened up this vulnerability,” said Lydia Walther-Rodriguez, the Baltimore-area director for immigration rights group CASA. “After the victory occurred, there was a lot of trust that was given to the state. Now it’s the state’s responsibility to ensure that trust is not lost.”

"It's a bait-and-switch. ... ICE is using biometric information in the shadows, without government notice or public approval, to hunt down the most vulnerable people," said Harrison Rudolph, a senior associate at Georgetown University Law School's Center on Privacy and Technology.

Reports indicate its unclear when the federal agency began its searches into Maryland. Democratic state Sen. Clarence Lam, however, said he suspected the efforts began during the Obama administration in 2012.

Other agencies can examine driver's license information, though states typically give permission. Twenty states permit the FBI, for example, to run searches on hundreds of thousands of people since 2011, according to the Government Accountability Office.

[CA] SF man deported to Chad may return home soon, but ICE plans to detain him again (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [2/27/2020 7:00 AM, Staff, 337K]

A gay man deported to Chad last fall is expected to return to the U.S. soon — a small victory for the 31-year-old San Francisco resident who has sought asylum for more than a decade.

But officials with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement said they plan to detain Oumar Yaide as soon as he lands at the airport, his attorney said.

It's the latest twist in a unique and complex case that has mobilized local residents and angered Bay Area politicians who have called for his return.

"They do intend to re-detain him when he gets here," said Sean McMahon, Yaide's attorney. "They didn't give me a specific reason, but it's not that unexpected. We're trying to make plans to stop them from doing that."

McMahon said that officials are still finalizing details for Yaide's return but that he expects him to travel to the U.S. in the coming days.

Since Yaide is awaiting a decision on a motion to reopen his case, authorities will likely keep him in detention until a judge rules on the motion, McMahon said.

ICE on Wednesday said it does not comment on pending litigation.

Officials deported Yaide in November, three months after agents detained him in his home in the Mission District.

But in December, a federal judge ordered the Department of Homeland Security to bring him back — a rare move that showed the agency violated Yaide's due process rights when it deported him, his attorneys said.

Attorneys pushed for Yaide's return for weeks, though U.S. District Judge Charles Breyer ruled that he be returned right away.

Of particular concern is the fact that Yaide is gay — Chad criminalized homosexuality in late 2016. He's kept a low profile in his home country, bouncing around between residences in order to stay safe, according to McMahon, who doesn't know where he's living.

Breyer granted Yaide a temporary restraining order on Dec. 18 requiring the government to return him to the U.S. as he awaits a court decision that may determine whether officials will reopen his case.

Yaide immigrated to the U.S. in 2009. He petitioned for asylum as a member of the Gorane ethnic group and said he was at risk of persecution in his home country because his family expressed anti-government views.

An immigration judge denied his petition for asylum in September 2014. The Board of Immigration Appeals and the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco denied his appeals, most recently in December 2018.

ICE arrested Yaide in August after agents showed up at his apartment in the Mission District claiming to look for someone else, his attorney said. They took him to the Yuba County Jail in Marysville, where he was detained for about three months.

McMahon filed a motion to reopen Yaide's case in October, requesting that the court allow him to present a new basis for asylum. Yaide had not come out as gay when he originally petitioned for asylum in 2009. Returning to Chad would put him in grave danger, his attorney argued.

But with the motion to reopen pending, authorities pulled Yaide out of Yuba on Dec. 1, transferring him to the Sacramento airport without notifying McMahon, he said. Friends found out he was no longer in the jail and notified McMahon.

The next day, Pangea Legal Services attorneys petitioned the court and requested a temporary restraining order in a last-minute effort to halt Yaide's deportation.

They had no idea where Yaide was but hoped he was still in the U.S., McMahon said. ICE had said the court did not have jurisdiction over the matter because Yaide was no longer in custody when attorneys filed their petition.

A judge sided with attorneys and granted the order, halting Yaide's deportation until oral arguments could be made in a formal hearing before Breyer on Dec. 4.

But Yaide was already in Chad. He had been in Homeland Security custody — out of the country on an airplane — when attorneys petitioned on his behalf, McMahon said.

They moved forward with the hearing, and Breyer issued a decision Dec. 18 ordering Homeland Security to bring Yaide back.

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a resolution this month calling on

the government to return him home. Advocates delivered a petition to Sen. Dianne Feinstein's office last month containing nearly 30,000 signatures in support of Yaide's return.

McMahon said it may take a while for a judge to rule in his case.

"It doesn't make sense to make him wait in immigration custody," he said.

Citizenship and Immigration Services

Immigrants Could Face Nearly \$1,000 Charge to Appeal Deportation Orders (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [2/27/2020 7:32 PM, Vanessa Swales, 23673K]

Immigrants who hope to challenge their deportation orders could be charged nearly \$1,000 to go to court under a proposed new regulation unveiled on Thursday, a nearly tenfold increase that immigration lawyers warn could make deportation appeals much more difficult to pursue.

The new fee schedule is the latest in a series of moves by the Trump administration to speed up deportations and discourage the arrival of immigrants. Under the same proposal, the administration wants to require asylum seekers to pay a \$50 fee to have their cases heard in court; historically, the asylum process has been available to people fleeing persecution regardless of their ability to pay.

In proposing the new fees, the Executive Office for Immigration Review, an arm of the Justice Department, said asking immigrants to pay a greater share of costs would help make sure that court resources were available and would also assure "that U.S. taxpayers do not bear a disproportionate burden in funding the immigration system."

The proposed fees are now open to public comment for a 30-day period. The fees were last increased in 1986, the agency said, and applicants would continue to be able to apply for waivers if they are unable to pay.

But lawyers representing immigrants said the proposed fees, especially those for asylum applicants, could violate the United States' legal obligation to provide immigrants fleeing dangerous conditions to a full and fair hearing.

"I think that new proposed regulation is absolutely outrageous and will have draconian consequences on the ability of noncitizens in removal proceedings to be able to navigate and access the system that Congress put in place for the proceedings," said Trina Realmuto, directing attorney at the American Immigration Council.

The proposed fee for asylum seekers is inconsistent with the concept of welcoming individuals fleeing persecution and torture and amounts to "putting a price tag" on asylum, Ms. Realmuto said.

Another branch of the government, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, has also proposed a sharp increase in fees for immigrants and visa applicants. Fees for permanent residence permits, known as green cards, would jump to \$2,750 from \$990, and the cost for naturalization of new citizens would increase to \$1,170 from \$445.

Again and again, the Trump administration has made it more expensive to be an immigrant. The price of bonds for release from immigration detention have gone up for many. And on Monday, a rule went into effect that makes it difficult for immigrants to pursue permanent legal status if they have used public benefits, such as Medicaid and food stamps.

Lawyers who work in immigration courts said many of their clients are already deeply worried they will be unable to afford to fight deportation orders, even when they may have substantial justification for staying in the country.

"There's just been a sense of panic," said Matt Adams, legal director for the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project. "For many of our clients, it basically is an insurmountable obstacle."

Immigrants who would be hit hardest by the hike are those in immigration detention, Mr. Adams said. Many were the primary breadwinners in their family before being locked up, and they may not even have the chance to file an appeal, he said.

"It's undermining the very idea of a fair hearing," he said. "It's like, 'You can get a fair hearing, if you have enough money to pay for it.'"

Trump Considers Making Illegal Aliens Pay for Their Deportation Appeals (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [2/27/2020 4:45 PM, John Binder, 1973K]

President Trump's administration is reviewing a plan to make illegal aliens ordered deported by a federal immigration judge pay for their own appeals to those decisions, rather than the current process that forces American taxpayers to subsidize the costs.

A new regulation being weighed by the Trump administration would increase the fees that illegal aliens would have to pay to appeal their deportation orders by federal immigration judges. Currently, American taxpayers subsidize the cost of those appeals to the sum of \$44.4 million a year.

Fees for illegal aliens to appeal their deportation orders, or reopen their cases, currently cost them about \$100 to \$110. Under the new regulation — which would be the first update to the fee amounts since 1986 — the cost to appeal deportation orders would run anywhere from \$305 to \$975.

The increase in fees would ensure that illegal aliens, not American taxpayers, are covering the costs for their requests to appeal their deportation orders.

In cases where an illegal alien is specifically appealing a deportation order by a federal immigration judge, American taxpayers are forced to subsidize about \$28 million a year in costs. In other cases where illegal aliens are requesting their deportation orders be cancelled, the process costs American taxpayers nearly \$8 million a year.

Trump administration looks to triple fees for some immigration court filings (CNN)

[CNN](#) [2/27/2020 1:51 PM, Priscilla Alvarez, 5551K]

The Trump administration introduced a proposal that would triple some fees for immigration court filings.

The move would make it more expensive to file certain forms like those to appeal rulings and, as a result, likely pose a challenge to immigrants seeking relief. Increased fees might also deter immigrants from appealing their deportation cases.

For example, a form to appeal a decision of an immigration judge costs \$110. The administration proposes an increase that would make that form \$975.

Two forms for those applying for cancellation of removal are also included in the list of proposed fee changes --from \$100 to more than \$300. In some cases, an individual may be able to apply for a fee waiver, according to the text of the rule.

Last November, the administration also proposed a charge on asylum applications -- the first time the US government has charged for the form -- as well as an 83% fee increase for the naturalization form.

The latest proposed changes come from the Justice Department's Executive Office for Immigration Review. The office, which oversees the nation's immigration courts, determined that an updated assessment of the costs for processing forms and motions, as well as the relevant fees, was necessary, according to the rule.

"The fees have remained static, not accounting for inflation or any other intervening changes in EOIR's processing costs," it reads.

The proposed rule will be published Friday in the Federal Register and will not take effect until after a public comment period and additional changes.

Trump Administration Proposes Fee Hikes For Those Appealing Deportation Orders (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [2/27/2020 2:13 PM, Jason Hopkins, 566K]

The Trump administration is looking to make deportation orders much more expensive for foreign nationals to reverse by dramatically hiking appeal fees.

The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) announced a proposed rule Thursday to aggressively raise the price tag for appealing a deportation order, with fee hikes ranging in price depending on the type of appeal. One proposal seeks to raise the cost of appealing an immigration judge's decision by nearly nine times the

current cost.

The proposed rule change is the Trump administration's latest move to escalate enforcement of U.S. immigration laws.

It already costs \$100 to \$110 to appeal a deportation order handed down by the U.S. immigration court system, depending on the appeal. For example, it costs \$110 to file an EOIR-26 to appeal a deportation order by an immigration judge. Under the proposed rule change, this fee would rise to \$975.

The other new appeal fees range from \$305 to \$705. The proposed rule, however, would not affect an alien's ability to submit fee waiver requests or add any new fees.

The Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR) said the fee hikes were needed given rising operating costs.

"The activity-based cost analysis demonstrates that EOIR's processing costs consistently exceed the assessed fees for these EOIR applications for relief, appeals, and motions. Although EOIR is an appropriated agency, EOIR has determined that it is necessary to update the fees charged for these EOIR forms and motions to more accurately reflect the costs for EOIR's adjudications of these matters," the proposal read.

"EOIR's calculation of fees accordingly factors in both the public interest in ensuring that the immigration courts are accessible to aliens seeking relief and the public interest in ensuring that U.S. taxpayers do not bear a disproportionate burden in funding the immigration system," it continued.

The last time the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) updated their prices was over three decades ago in 1986.

President Trump's immigration crackdown inundates Supreme Court (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [2/27/2020 5:00 AM, Richard Wolf, 5611K]

President Donald Trump's three-year crackdown on immigration has led to a surge in lawsuits reaching the Supreme Court, where a rebuilt conservative majority increasingly is paying dividends for him.

In the past year, the justices have let the administration deter poor immigrants, deny asylum seekers and redirect military funds to build a wall along the southern border. Federal officials' efforts to force cooperation from states and cities could be next.

The high court has heard arguments in six immigration cases since its term began in October, including Trump's plan to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that has helped nearly 700,000 undocumented immigrants work without fear of deportation. Two additional cases will be argued next week, including an effort to speed the removal of migrants without federal court hearings.

"The Trump administration has made immigration its number-one issue. I'm not surprised it would trickle up to the Supreme Court," says Karen Tumlin, an immigrant rights attorney who founded the Justice Action Center.

The glut of cases comes as the president makes his approach to immigration central to his re-election campaign. For a court that tries valiantly to avoid politics, its rulings could become fodder in that effort.

Since 2017, much of the legal action on immigration has occurred in federal district and circuit courts, where judges often upheld challenges to administration policies mounted by immigrant rights groups. The Justice Department has used the Supreme Court to block many of those rulings, particularly when district court judges have issued nationwide injunctions.

"There's been a massive onslaught by groups opposed to immigration enforcement. As a result, a handful of federal district courts have distorted immigration law," says Christopher Hajec, director of litigation at the conservative Immigration Reform Law Institute. "If the Supreme Court is catching on to that, then it stands to reason that they're going to side more often with the administration."

It hasn't been a clean sweep. It took three versions before the justices in 2018 upheld Trump's ban on travel from five predominantly Muslim countries. Chief Justice John Roberts cast the deciding vote last year that blocked the Commerce Department from adding a citizenship question to the 2020 census. Associate Justice Neil Gorsuch, a Trump nominee, helped to strike down as vague a law subjecting noncitizens who commit violent crimes to deportation.

The next major signal will come this spring on DACA, a program created by President Barack Obama in 2012 to help young, undocumented immigrants brought to the country as children. During oral argument in November, the court's conservative justices appeared to believe the administration had ample policy reasons to end it.

"I assume that was a very considered decision," Associate Justice Brett Kavanaugh, Trump's other high court nominee, said.

String of victories

Many of the president's recent victories at the Supreme Court simply block lower court rulings while legal battles continue, but they usually break down along ideological lines:

- The court ruled 5-4 last month that the administration can block thousands of immigrants from gaining permanent legal status, or green cards, if they are likely to need public assistance.

Another 5-4 ruling last week extending the restriction to Illinois prompted an angry dissent from Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor and a retort from Trump, traveling in India, that both she and Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg should recuse

themselves from cases involving him.

- In September, the court let the administration deny asylum to migrants at the southern border who have not sought protection from another country en route. Sotomayor and Ginsburg dissented.
- In July, the justices approved, 5-4, the use of \$2.5 billion in military funding to begin building a portion of the president's long-sought wall along the nation's southern border.

"I am certainly troubled by the uptick in stays that are getting issued by the Supreme Court," Tumlin says. "It sends shock waves through the immigrant rights community."

Pending is the administration's challenge to a California sanctuary law limiting state and local cooperation with federal immigration authorities. Other policies designed to limit asylum seekers also may reach the high court next term.

If the justices agree to hear the administration's appeals and reverse the lower courts in those cases, "there would be a real undermining of the court's legitimacy," says Cecillia Wang, deputy legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union, which is opposing Trump in many of the cases.

When the court returned from its winter break last week, it faced three more immigration cases in a seven-day span, including one to be heard Monday testing the Trump administration's effort to speed the removal of thousands of migrants without granting federal court hearings.

The California-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit, which has drawn Trump's ire for its actions on immigration, ruled last year that efforts to remove asylum seekers under such "expedited removal" procedures violated their constitutional rights. The Justice Department argues that extending the streamlined process could add years of court wrangling.

After losing the case, the administration in July expanded the expedited removal system to incorporate asylum seekers apprehended anywhere in the country who have not been continuously present in the United States for two years.

A court divided

Immigration is one of several issues that consistently divides the high court.

When the justices ruled last March against noncitizens with criminal records, it was the first decision of the term to break down along strict ideological lines. Associate Justice Samuel Alito wrote the opinion and was joined by four conservatives. Associate Justice Stephen Breyer issued a stinging dissent on behalf of the liberals.

The year before, the justices ruled 5-3 that detained noncitizens lack the right to periodic bond hearings. And when the travel ban against majority-Muslim countries

was upheld, it was by a 5-4 vote.

In a related case this week touching on border security, the court ruled 5-4 along ideological lines that the family of a Mexican teen shot and killed from across the border by a U.S. Border Patrol agent cannot sue for damages. The court's conservatives reasoned that the boy lacked constitutional rights he would have had in Texas.

A motivating factor for conservative justices has been the practice of local, federal district court judges issuing nationwide injunctions. In many cases, the Justice Department has taken the unusual step of seeking Supreme Court action before lower-court appeals have run their course.

But the president has been his own worst enemy at times.

Late in 2018, after a federal judge blocked his effort to cut off asylum for migrants who enter the country illegally – and before the case went to an appeals court – Roberts joined the court's liberals in refusing to intercede.

It probably didn't help that Trump had blasted District Court Judge Jon Tigar as an "Obama judge" after his initial ruling, later upheld in a 2-1 appeals court opinion written by Circuit Court Judge Jay Bybee, who was appointed by President George W. Bush.

"We do not have Obama judges or Trump judges, Bush judges or Clinton judges," Roberts said in a rare rebuke of the president. "What we have is an extraordinary group of dedicated judges doing their level best to do equal right to those appearing before them."

Trump Administration to Strip Citizenship from Foreign-Born Terrorists, Criminals (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [2/26/2020 5:09 PM, Nate Church, 1973K]

President Donald Trump's administration announced a new Justice Department unit focused on revoking U.S. citizenship obtained through fraud.

The new section will function as another arm of the Department of Justice's Office of Immigration Litigation. Its purpose will be the denaturalization of those who obtained citizenship "procured by concealment of a material fact or by willful misrepresentation." Specifically, they will target those who neglected to disclose previous terrorist or criminal activities or affiliations on their "N-400" naturalization form.

Part 12 of the N-400 asks pointed questions about prior affiliations and activities. It includes questions about far-ranging potential involvement in anti-American interests: from Nazi, communist, and totalitarian loyalties, to involvement in torture, murder, and weapons trade. Those who were granted citizenship from lying in whole or in part on the N-400 will face a reckoning.

“When a terrorist or sex offender becomes a U.S. citizen under false pretenses, it is an affront to our system — and it is especially offensive to those who fall victim to these criminals,” Assistant Attorney General Jody Hunt said. “The new Denaturalization Section will further the Department’s efforts to pursue those who unlawfully obtained citizenship status and ensure that they are held accountable for their fraudulent conduct.”

The need for the team comes primarily from a marked increase in such cases due to the efforts of fraud investigations by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Obama-era “Operation Janus,” which uncovered hundreds of thousands of immigration cases in which paper fingerprint information was not entered in the central database.

Recent cases that would now fall under this section’s purview include an Egyptian al-Qaeda recruiter, an Osama Bin Laden collaborator, a Bosnian soldier convicted of war crimes, and a serial sexual abuser. The team will focus exclusively on those who both committed such crimes before coming to the U.S., and then lied about their past during the immigration process.

Justice Department creates office to strip citizenship from some naturalized immigrants (Chicago Tribune)

[Chicago Tribune](#) [2/27/2020 10:01 AM, Katie Benner, 1293K]

The Justice Department said Wednesday that it had created an official section in its immigration office to strip citizenship rights from naturalized immigrants, a move that gives more heft to the Trump administration’s broad efforts to remove from the country immigrants who have committed crimes.

The Denaturalization Section “underscores the department’s commitment to bring justice to terrorists, war criminals, sex offenders and other fraudsters who illegally obtained naturalization,” Joseph H. Hunt, head of the Justice Department’s civil division, said in a statement.

“The Denaturalization Section will further the department’s efforts to pursue those who unlawfully obtained citizenship status and ensure that they are held accountable for their fraudulent conduct,” Hunt said.

The move promises to further expand a practice that was once used infrequently, but that the Trump administration has increasingly turned to as part of its immigration crackdown. It has raised alarms among some department lawyers who fear denaturalization lawsuits could be used against immigrants who have not committed serious crimes.

Critics say that the administration’s desire to prioritize denaturalizations underscores the idea that naturalized citizens have fewer rights than those born in the United States, and that immigrants should not assume that they cannot be deported even if they go through the naturalization process.

The new section will replace the team of immigration lawyers who have been asked

to focus on cases that revoke citizenship from those who have been convicted of terrorism, war crimes, human rights violations and sex offenses.

The department has not announced who will lead the office, but several department officials and lawyers expected Timothy Belsan, who has taken the lead on the department's denaturalization work, to assume that role. Belsan helped to revoke the citizenship rights of a Yugoslavian-born convicted war criminal who omitted from her naturalization application the fact that she had executed unarmed civilians during the 1990s Balkan conflicts.

The Justice Department under President Barack Obama also pursued denaturalizations, and it targeted people who had lied on their applications and committed other crimes.

But denaturalizations have ramped up under the Trump administration: Of the 228 denaturalization cases that the department has filed since 2008, about 40% of them were filed since 2017, according to official department numbers.

And over the past three years, denaturalization case referrals to the department have increased 600%.

From the earliest days of the Trump administration, officials including Stephen Miller, the White House aide who has driven much of President Donald Trump's immigration policy, said denaturalization could be used as part of a broad pushback on immigration.

Some Justice Department immigration lawyers have expressed worries that denaturalizations could be broadly used to strip citizenship, according to two lawyers who spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of retribution.

They cite the fact that the department can pursue denaturalization lawsuits against people who commit fraud, as it did against four people who lied about being related to become U.S. citizens. Fraud can be broadly defined, and include smaller infractions like misstatements on the citizenship application.

But a Justice Department official said the new section would prioritize people who have committed serious violations of law.

When the department announced the new section, it cited successful denaturalization cases including a naturalized citizen who had recruited for al-Qaida in the United States and one who had sexually abused a 7-year-old family member.

Court decision could speed up visas for US military interpreters (Public Radio International)

[Public Radio International](#) [2/27/2020 4:15 PM, Monica Campbell, 105K]

Audio: [HERE](#)

For over a decade, Mohammad has worked alongside US troops in his home country of Afghanistan working as an interpreter and, most recently, helping the US

train Afghan security forces. For over a decade, he has waited for the US to grant him a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV).

The US offers the visas to Afghans and Iraqis if the work they do on behalf of the US government leads to threats against them from groups like the Taliban. Under the Trump administration, processing times for these visas have grown lengthier, and fewer are being issued. At least 15,000 SIV applications are pending. In the meantime, people like Mohammad live in fear.

Mohammad, who asked to use only his middle name, lives where he works, in the compound where the local security forces train. He only visits his wife and six children in secret, going to his village undetected and hoping to avoid Taliban checkpoints along the way.

Despite risking his life for the US, his visa application continues to be delayed. He told The World he felt abandoned.

"It's a shame that we are still left behind. Why? Why are there delays?" he said via Skype from Kabul.

Hearing about these delays angers many US officials and military members who worked closely with local interpreters. "These are guys that we trusted," said David Smyth, an Army Special Forces Major who served in Afghanistan and Iraq. He didn't know Mohammad, but the work that people like him did was crucial, he said. "These guys are really honestly trusted with their lives and they frequently have put themselves in harm's way. I know in my case, on multiple occasions, my life was saved by my interpreter."

A US federal court decision may provide Mohammad some relief. On Feb. 5, the US District Court for the District of Columbia gave the US government 30 days to propose a plan to expedite processing for all SIV applications that have been pending for more than nine months, the benchmark time period set by Congress to process the visas. That court-ordered deadline is next week.

A spokesperson for the State Department, which oversees the visa program, said in a statement to The World: "We take these threats very seriously, and we are committed to providing efficient and secure SIV processing while maintaining national security as our highest priority." The spokesperson also added that more resources are being dedicated to SIV processing, but declined to provide specifics about that expansion.

The class-action lawsuit was brought by the International Refugee Assistance Project, or IRAP, a New York-based legal services group that has lobbied Congress for years to increase the annual number of SIVs it grants and speed up processing times.

"Government data shows that it still takes several years to process the average application," said Betsy Fischer, IRAP's director of strategy.

Until a decision is made on Mohammad's case, he still risks his life daily for the United States. He also worries that as Afghanistan enters peace talks, combined with a drawdown of US troops, the Taliban may become more empowered and target people like him who supported the US military.

"We are imprisoned," Mohammad said. "You know, we feel more American than the real Americans. We helped them. We served the American lives. Our future has no future here. We do not see it here, and we can't make it here."

Why a Top Trump Aide Said 'We Are Desperate' for More Immigrants (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [2/27/2020 5:00 AM, Jeanna Smialek and Zolan Kanno-Youngs, 23673K]

At a private event last week, Mick Mulvaney, the acting White House chief of staff, stated a reality that economists treat as conventional wisdom but that the Trump administration routinely ignores: The United States needs immigration to fuel future economic growth.

"We are desperate, desperate for more people," Mr. Mulvaney told a crowd in England, according to an audio recording provided to The New York Times. "We are running out of people to fuel the economic growth." He said the country needed "more immigrants" but wanted them in a "legal" fashion.

Mr. Mulvaney's sentiments are at odds with the approach and language embraced by President Trump and White House officials including Stephen Miller, a senior aide who is a driving force behind the administration's immigration policies.

The White House has been trying to crack down on undocumented entries and family-based immigration into the United States, and its measures are slowing the flow of refugees. While the administration has said that it wants to foster high-skilled immigration, Mr. Trump has described the country as "full."

But growth in the native-born work force is rapidly slowing as the population ages and people have fewer children, so immigrants will probably be needed to drive the economy. They have already been a crucial source of new workers, accounting for about half of the labor force's expansion over the past two decades.

The foreign-born population has been expanding only tepidly during Mr. Trump's tenure. That slowdown could have long-lasting and profound repercussions, economists warn.

"Immigration, while a sensitive topic, has been a key part of work force growth in the United States," Robert S. Kaplan, the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, said in an interview. Immigrants "have been additive to the U.S. economy" and "they've helped us to grow faster."

Gross domestic product growth comes from two basic ingredients: population and productivity gains. To produce more goods and services, businesses need either

more workers or better efficiency.

Productivity improvement has been weak in America over the past decade. While some economists hope that will change as companies embrace nascent technologies in robotics and machine learning, others believe that most economy-altering innovations may be behind us — think cars, washing machines and refrigerators. Future gains could be consistently mediocre.

If that's the case, the United States' economic fate will hinge on population growth.

Work force expansion will almost certainly not come naturally. Fertility has dropped since the baby boom of the late 1940s to mid-1960s, and has plunged recently. The expected number of births per 100 women in America has dropped to just 173, based on data from the National Vital Statistics System. That is nowhere near the rate the population would need to replace itself — a little more than two births per woman.

But America's immigrant population has been growing more slowly, a phenomenon exacerbated by Trump administration policies including strict enforcement and travel restrictions on many countries with substantial Muslim populations.

The United States added only 595,000 total immigrants last year, the fewest since the 1980s, according to an analysis by the Brookings Institution demographer William H. Frey based on Census Bureau data. That contributed to the lowest year in overall population growth since 1918.

Undocumented immigration has been declining since about 2007. While conclusive data is sparse, estimates by the Pew Research Center suggest the trend has continued under the Trump administration.

Legal immigration has also been slowing, and that is poised to persist. A report released this week by the National Foundation for American Policy projected a 30 percent plunge in legal immigration by 2021 and a 35 percent dip in average annual growth of the U.S. labor force.

That “will take place without any change in the law by Congress but as a result of policies that include the broadened version of the public charge rule, the travel ban and lower admission of refugees,” according to the report. The so-called public charge rule can curb visa and green card eligibility for people who are deemed likely to tap public programs.

“The Trump administration's reduction in legal immigration will mean slower growth in the labor force and a lower rate of economic growth,” the report stated.

Economists at Moody's Analytics have estimated that if immigration consistently dropped to 500,000 a year and stayed there — down from previously normal levels of around one million a year — the nation's total gross domestic product would be about \$700 billion smaller by 2030.

Proponents of restraining immigration, particularly among low-skill workers, often argue that newcomers can supplant American workers or depress their wages, even if they help the economy as a whole. Companies have to compete less to hire when there are more workers around. But the evidence supporting that argument is limited.

In one study, the Harvard economist George Borjas examined how a group of Cubans who went to Miami in 1980 affected the local labor market. He found that native-born workers who had dropped out of high school took a wage hit when the newcomers arrived. But that research has been the subject of a fierce debate over data choices — several different economists have argued that with a different design, the pay effects disappear.

Other research, by Giovanni Peri at the University of California, Davis, suggests that lower-skill immigrants complement their American counterparts, actually lifting wages. Immigrants are more entrepreneurial, other studies have found, and at higher education levels, they contribute a big share of the United States' science, technology and math work force.

Whatever competition immigrants do pose is probably even more limited now, when the unemployment rate is at its lowest in half a century and businesses have about 1.1 job openings for every available worker.

"It's very hard to think that in this situation you would displace anyone," Mr. Peri said. "A little bit more immigration would alleviate and help this problem, allowing the economy to grow a little faster and generating more consumption."

In Chester County, Pa., which produces more than 60 percent of the country's mushrooms, immigration is top of mind. Harvesting is difficult work: It requires laboring from early in the day in growing houses, bending and stretching to twist the produce from its trays. In recent years, there have been too few people to complete the task even at higher pay rates, so companies have planted less and have even allowed crops to go unpicked.

"As an industry, they are not able to produce at the levels they would like, and at the demand that's being requested," said Guy Ciarrocchi, the head of the Chester County Chamber of Business and Industry. The local unemployment rate comes in under 3 percent, so other opportunities are plentiful.

"You can make a very nice living in mushrooms, but it's hard work," said Lori Harrison, the communications director at the American Mushroom Institute, an industry group. Farms have avoided building new houses to expand amid labor shortages, she said. "If you put the capital into it, but don't have anyone to harvest the mushrooms, then you're out."

Mr. Ciarrocchi and his chamber colleagues regularly talk to their legislators about the shortage in the local work force, which extends to other industries. They see immigration as one part of the answer.

“Build the wall, that’s fine,” he said. “But at the same time, we should be able to talk to — whether it’s mushroom farmers or engineers or doctors — whatever the economic needs may be.”

Near-term labor shortages like Chester County’s offer a hint of problems that could arise if the work force expands more slowly amid muted immigration. As the population ages, more people will depend on Social Security, Medicare and other public programs while a shrinking share of the population punches the clock and pays the taxes needed to fund them.

“The U.S. economy, I think, will undergo a transition in which growth will slow down, society will age, and the economic dynamism will slow,” Mr. Peri said, adding that the nation’s debt burden would increase. “That’s the direction that the U.S. is going to be headed toward if fertility doesn’t change and immigration is still constrained.”

Cuccinelli: Trump’s ‘Public Charge’ Ensures New Immigrants No Longer Burden American Taxpayers (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [2/26/2020 4:31 PM, John Binder, 1973K]

President Trump’s newly implemented “Public Charge” rule ensures that American taxpayers are no longer burdened by a massive inflow of legal immigrants who cannot support themselves, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Acting Deputy Secretary Ken Cuccinelli says.

In an exclusive interview with SiriusXM Patriot’s Breitbart News Daily, Cuccinelli said Trump’s initiative to more effectively regulate legal immigration to the U.S. now requires that legal immigrants prove their ability to support themselves financially before they are given permanent residence.

“[The rule] basically says that if you want to stay here as a longterm legal immigrant, you have to be able to take care of yourself or make arrangements to be financially independent ... and not become a public charge,” Cuccinelli said.

“What it means is that people who apply today and after for a green card ... we will filter through their ability to stand on their own two feet economically, whether it’s earning their own way or whether they have family that supports them who commit to doing so ... to make sure that the American taxpayers aren’t going to be bearing the burden of new immigrants,” Cuccinelli continued.

The rule, as Breitbart News reported, will keep legal immigrants known to be a public charge to American taxpayers from permanently resettling in the U.S. This means legal immigrants in the country taking Supplemental Security Income (SSI), food stamps, and certain taxpayer-funded housing programs will be less likely to secure a green card.

Cuccinelli said that while elected Democrats now oppose certifying that legal immigrants are self-sufficient — so as not to force American taxpayers to foot the bill for their welfare — they supported the plan in the late 1990s.

"The law we're working from was passed in 1996 and signed by Bill Clinton. Steny Hoyer voted for it, Chuck Schumer voted for it ... and no administration prior to the Trump administration had actually put a rule in place to actually implement these [regulations] in any meaningful way," Cuccinelli said.

Cuccinelli said DHS is "ready to roll" in terms of implementing the Public Charge rule and that there is "still more to come" on reforms to the legal immigration system, as 1.2 million legal immigrants continue to be admitted to the U.S. on green cards every year.

Currently, there is an estimated record high of 44.5 million foreign-born residents living in the U.S. This is nearly quadruple the immigrant population in 2000. The vast majority of those arriving in the country every year are low-skilled legal immigrants who compete against working and middle-class Americans for jobs.

[Editorial note: consult source link for audio]

Customs and Border Protection

Border chief: Wall cuts illegal crossings 80% (Washington Times)

[Washington Times](#) [2/27/2020 5:31 AM, Stephen Dinan, 482K]

A 20-mile section of new border wall built near El Paso, Texas, cut illegal crossings by more than 80%, the government's top border official told Congress on Thursday.

Mark Morgan, acting commissioner of Customs and Border Protection, said the key is not just the border wall but the entire system being built, with roads and lighting and, in some cases, multiple layers of fencing.

He said that's giving agents more time to get to spots where breakthroughs happen, and when they can respond they can make arrests or force people to retreat back into Mexico.

"We've seen apprehensions and illegal entries and gotaways all being reduced by over 80% in that 20-mile stretch," Mr. Morgan told the House Appropriations Committee.

President Trump's wall-building campaign is among the most divisive moves of his administration, and has dominated this week's series of hearings as Homeland Security officials defend their 2021 budget.

Democrats pointed to reports that even the new designs can be cut through using tools available at a hardware store, and questioned the value of the tens of billions of dollars Mr. Trump wants to spend.

Mr. Morgan said the wall isn't only about blocking people, it's about shaping their activities, delaying and funneling them into place where agents are able to respond.

"It's not that it's impenetrable. But it does deny and impede long enough for Border

Patrol agents to actually get there to do the apprehension and interdiction. And it works.”

Mr. Trump’s budget asks for \$2 billion in wall-building money for next year, in addition to about \$10 billion he’s siphoned from the Pentagon’s accounts into wall-building this year and last.

As of the beginning of February, CBP had built 109 miles of wall.

Of that, about 55 miles replaced dilapidated fencing or old designs, while another 53 miles went to areas where there were previously vehicle barriers, but no wall. One mile had been built in a location where there was no barrier at all.

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Florida Democrat, was incensed over some of the construction in Arizona, where she said border officials were trying to “blow up mountains” she said were sacred to the Tohono O’odham, a Native American nation with a history dating back well before there was a U.S.-Mexico border.

She also accused CBP of ruining the fragile desert landscape of saguaro cactus, the iconic symbol of the southwestern desert — though she repeatedly mispronounced the cactus’s name, using a hard “g” instead of the correct “w” sound.

“Some of the cactuses that were destroyed here were around even before the border existed,” she said.

Mr. Morgan insisted CBP had followed the law in consulting with the Tohono O’odham by holding meetings, and he vehemently objected to the description of “blowing up” their heritage.

“I don’t believe that is what I consider we’re doing,” he said.

Ms. Wasserman Schultz, not to be deterred, said border wall construction teams have already unearthed grave sites.

“I’m sure you wouldn’t like it if the federal government blew up your great grandmother’s grave, which is what you’re doing here,” she said.

Mr. Morgan did manage to assuage the worries of another Democrat, Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger, who seized on a recent report that members of the Border Patrol’s tactical team, known as BORTAC, were being deployed to sanctuary cities to help U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement track down illegal immigrants in the communities.

Mr. Morgan said that was a misunderstanding.

He said 100 CBP agents and officers have volunteered to be loaned to ICE, but it’s not a full deployment of BORTAC teams. Instead, “just a handful” of agents who are on BORTAC teams volunteered to be part of the effort, which is split 50-50 between Border Patrol agents and port of entry officers.

He also rebutted suggestions they would be deployed with full military-style tactical gear, saying they'll be indistinguishable from the ICE deportation officers they'll be working with.

"We're going to look like them, dress like them and follow their auspices," he said.

Dangerous criminals from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras are hiding in migrant caravans, official says (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [2/27/2020 1:14 PM, Greg Norman, 8943K]

Gang members from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have been hiding amongst the migrant caravans heading to the United States – and have been committing crimes in Mexico along the way, intelligence officials are warning.

Gissell Pérez Artiga, an El Salvador-based representative of the multinational Joint Border Intelligence Group – which the U.S. State Department says includes American personnel – made the assertion during an ongoing security conference in Mexico City, according to the El Universal newspaper.

"We have collaboration agreements with the U.S., Guatemala, and Honduras and it has been possible to identify these people at the border, they camouflage themselves among the victims of human trafficking, the migrants, for they can continue committing crime in the United States and now in Mexico," the newspaper quoted her as saying.

Pérez Artiga added that MS-13 and 18th Street gang members have been identified as being amongst some of two dozen migrant caravans that have left Central America since 2018.

She reportedly said the intelligence group is now working with countries to detain and deport the criminals so they can face the Salvadoran, Guatemalan and Honduran justice systems.

José Antonio Almendáriz Rivas, a Salvadoran lawmaker who also spoke at the same conference, offered an apology to Mexico for the behavior of some of the migrants in the caravans.

"I apologize to our Mexican brothers because the migrants, in those large numbers that left El Salvador, caused you and continue to cause problems for you here," El Universal quoted him as saying.

Fox News reported last year that at least 25 people affiliated with the MS-13 gang were deported from Mexico after they were revealed to be concealed within a migrant caravan of 1,600 Central American migrants just across the U.S. border.

Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador constitute Central America's so-called Northern Triangle countries that have been responsible for most of the migrants arriving at the United States' Southwest border in recent years.

1,155 Chinese Nationals Apprehended After Illegally Entering U.S. in FY2020 (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [2/27/2020 4:49 PM, Bob Price, 1973K]

U.S. Border Patrol agents apprehended 1,155 Chinese migrants this fiscal year after they illegally entered from Mexico, Canada, or coastal boundaries. More than 95 percent came over the southwestern border between October 1, 2019, and January 31, 2020.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials responded to an inquiry from Breitbart Texas and reported that Border Patrol agents apprehended 1,155 Chinese nationals who illegally crossed into the United States. Of those, 1,114 were apprehended after crossing between ports of entry in the nine Border Patrol sectors making up the southwestern border with Mexico. Of the remaining, 17 were apprehended after illegally crossing the Canadian border and 24 were apprehended along coastal boundaries.

Breitbart Texas investigated the matter after Border Patrol agents in the Rio Grande Valley, Laredo, and Del Rio Sectors commented on the increasing numbers of Chinese migrants appearing in their sectors.

During Fiscal Year 2019, which ended on September 30, CBP reports show that Border Patrol agents apprehended 2,134 Chinese migrants after they illegally entered the U.S. The 1,155 apprehended during the first four months of FY2020 represents more than half of the total arrested during the entire previous year. In FY19, agents arrested 2,060 along the southwestern border, 47 along the northern border, and 27 along coastal boundaries.

Breitbart Texas asked Dr. Peter Hotez, Dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston if the Chinese migrants represent a public health threat amid Coronavirus concerns. Dr. Hotez downplayed any threat due to the incubation period of the virus, currently estimated to be up to 14 days, according to the CDC. He did not believe the migrants posed a significant threat at this time.

However, Border Patrol Agent Chris Cabrera, in his capacity as spokesman for the National Border Patrol Council and Local 3307 (in the Rio Grande Valley Sector), told Breitbart Texas that some Chinese migrants arrive at the U.S. border within five to eight days after leaving their homeland. He also said some take as long as two months to complete their journey.

CBP officials responded to the issue of Chinese migrants as a public health threat, stating, "This fiscal year, the U.S. Border Patrol's Rio Grande Valley Sector, has seen an increase in the number of Chinese nationals being apprehended, but the significance of that increase should not be overstated."

The official reported that migrants from more than 148 countries have been arrested so far this fiscal year after they illegally entered the U.S.

"During the peak of the humanitarian crisis (May 2019), we were apprehending

around 3 Chinese nationals per day,” the CBP official stated. “ This year we are seeing approximately 5 per day.”

CBP says that operationally, this is a very manageable number and represents an extremely small percentage of the overall daily apprehension totals. So far this year, Border Patrol agents apprehended 130,976 migrants who illegally crossed the southwest border into the U.S., according to CBP’s Southwest Border Migration Report. Chinese migrants make up 1,114 of that total (less than one percent).

“Although we haven’t encountered any issues to date, we do have measures in place to identify individuals with signs of illness who may be potentially infected with a communicable disease,” CBP officials stated.

Agent Cabrera explained some of the protocols put in place for Chinese migrants. He said agents follow specific protocols to isolate migrants they apprehend who came from China and those who are traveling with them. They also monitor the migrants for any symptoms and immediately move them to hospitals for treatment if necessary.

Mexican cartels engaged in global migrant smuggling likely do not follow isolation or health monitoring protocols. Breitbart Texas has frequently reported on the smuggling of Chinese migrants. There does not appear to be a way to reliably determine if migrants from countries other than China are transported with or warehoused in Mexico with Chinese nationals.

In January, Laredo Sector Border Patrol agents found 63 migrants locked inside a tractor-trailer about 60 miles north of the Mexican border. The migrants came to the U.S. from eight countries, including China.

Also in January, Yuma Sector agents apprehended a group of 10 Chinese migrants locked in the toolbox of a pickup truck. A few weeks earlier, 11 more were found locked in a moving truck in California.

In November, Breitbart News witnessed the apprehension of three more Chinese nationals after they crossed the Rio Grande and were picked up by a human smuggler in Texas.

Before crossing the border into the U.S., cartel smugglers frequently move migrants in packed tractor-trailers, crowded box trucks, and other means of conveyance. They are warehoused in crowded stash houses in Mexico and the United States.

In September 2019, Rio Grande Valley Sector Border Patrol agents teamed up with the Hidalgo County Sheriff’s Office to raid a stash house holding nine Chinese nationals, Breitbart Texas reported.

[AZ] Native American leader denounces destruction of sacred sites for border wall construction (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [2/27/2020 6:08 AM, Rafael Bernal, 1762K]

The head of the Native American Tohono O'odham tribe from Arizona on Wednesday denounced the federal government for blasting and bulldozing through culturally important archeological sites in its rush to build the southwest border wall.

Tohono O'odham Chairman Ned Norris Jr. told the House Natural Resources Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States that Customs and Border Protection (CBP) contractors tore through tribal sites listed by the National Park Service, despite complaints from the tribe.

"This disrespect for our sacred sites and their desecration at the hands of our federal government is deeply painful. These sites are not only sacred to the Nation; they are a part of our shared cultural heritage as United States citizens," Norris told the panel.

Subcommittee Democrats also panned the administration for the destruction of sacred and archaeological sites during wall construction at Quitobaquito Springs and Monument Hill, two locations in Arizona's Sonoran Desert along the U.S.-Mexico border.

"I want to be clear: When sacred cultural sites are destroyed in international conflict, it is considered a war crime," said the subcommittee's chairman, Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.).

"Earlier this year, we saw President Trump repeatedly threaten to destroy sacred sites in Iran, to the condemnation of many, including myself, in this country. Well, today, as we speak, this White House is doing just that on American soil," added Gallego.

Democrats also derided the administration because no CBP officials responded to the committee's call to testify.

CBP did not respond to a request for comment on this story.

A former environmental compliance contractor for CBP, Steve Hodapp, told the panel the agency exceeds its statutory requirements when working on areas of possible environmental or archaeological impact.

"CBP is concerned about potential impacts of its activities on cultural resources of concern to the Tohono O'odham Nation and has taken and continues to take all possible steps to minimize the impact of its activities on tribal cultural resources consistent with its border security responsibilities," said Hodapp in his testimony. "In fact, according to the tribal historic preservation officer, CBP has conducted more extensive archeological surveys on the Tohono O'odham Nation lands than anyone else."

Adding to the complexity of the Quitobaquito Springs and Monument Hill locations is that they're not on the Tohono O'odham reservation, despite their importance to the

tribe.

"We're on this reservation not because we wanted to be on this reservation, but our ancestral lands extended well beyond what they are today," said Norris. "They are still within the ancestral lands of the O'odham."

The border is under Department of Homeland Security jurisdiction, and the Trump administration has issued waivers on environmental and historical preservation laws, cutting red tape for CBP to move forward on construction.

"It's hard to see the blasting you showed on the video today because I know in my heart and what our elders have told us and what we have learned that that area was home to our ancestors," said Norris. "Blasting and doing what we saw today has totally disturbed, totally forever damaged our people."

CBP has touted its damage mitigation efforts, both environmental and cultural, in border wall construction.

And Hodapp said the Tohono O'odham had failed to make the case that Monument Hill is significant to them until recently, complicating CBP's task of seeking tribal consultation.

"Only the Tohono O'odham Nation can provide an explanation regarding why there has been no comment on the cultural significance of Monument Hill prior to the most recent solicitation for comment in May of 2019," said Hodapp.

Norris scoffed at Hodapp's remarks, saying the border wall work began without a "nation-to-nation consultation."

"I didn't learn about the blasting until the day they started," said Norris.

Rep. Paul Gosar (Ariz.) — the only GOP member to participate in the hearing — said the wall would make the region, including the Tohono O'odham reservation, safer and cleaner.

Gosar said the committee's "reckless political hearing" was not about preservation of sacred sites but opposition to Trump's signature policy.

"I get it. You don't want the wall. You don't want to work with [the] Trump administration in building the wall. In fact, you offer no alternatives in securing the border," said Gosar.

"Despite your inaction, the wall is being built, President Trump is doing what he promised to do, and no one, no one should be shocked about that outcome," added Gosar.

The administration's witness at the hearing, Interior Department Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget Scott Cameron, said the wall would also help avoid trash left behind by migrants crossing through the area as

well as damage from vehicles used to run illegal drugs from Mexico into the United States.

Rep. Deb Haaland (D-N.M.), one of the two first Native American women elected to Congress, said the hearing should focus only on the cultural heritage of the Tohono O'odham.

"That's all. That's what we're here to defend," she said.

"A sacred site that has been blasted, it can never be made whole again. I want you to understand that. You want to know why? Because ancestors put those things in the ground with care and love and tradition and prayers. Those can never be regained again," Haaland told Cameron.

"The damage that this administration is doing to this area is irreparable. It's irreparable. And you didn't even ask. Nobody asked permission of these people to do any of that, and it's shameful. It's immoral," added Haaland.

[AZ] CBP agents discover another cross-border tunnel in Arizona (Breitbart)
[Breitbart](#) [2/27/2020 11:57 PM, UPI, 1973K]

U.S. Border Patrol agents have discovered another illegal cross-border tunnel with Mexico, United States Customs and Border Protection said Thursday.

The unfinished, hand-dug tunnel runs beneath the streets of Nogales, Ariz., and is the third to be discovered in the Tucson Sector since December, according to information from CBP.

Agents with the Tucson Sector and Mexico's Guardia Nacional located the tunnel's entrance Tuesday in the floor of Grand Avenue drainage system in Mexico, CBP said in a press release.

The tunnel runs approximately 15 to 20 feet underground and is around 30 feet long but was left uncompleted about 580 yards west of the Dennis DeConcin Crossing at the Nogales Port of Entry.

126th illicit cross-border tunnel discovered in the #Tucson Sector. The tunnel was found by #BorderPatrol agents and Mexican law enforcement under the streets of Ambos Nogales. #Partnerships @CBP [image link]— CBP Arizona (@CBPArizona) February 27, 2020

"U.S. Authorities will continuously monitor the area until they remediate the tunnel," CBP said in a statement.

It is the 126th tunnel discovered in the Tucson Sector since 1990, it said.

"U.S. Border Patrol regularly works with the government of Mexico, and binational cooperation with Mexican law enforcement plays a vital role in border security," CBP said. "Efforts such as tunnel sweeps aim to disrupt smuggling organizations and

prevent the smuggling of narcotics and humans across the border.”

News of the tunnel follows agents discovering the longest-ever cross-border tunnel in the San Diego Sector of California at 4,309 feet, more than three-quarters of a mile.

In early December, agents discovered two tunnels near Nogales in less than a week, one which was completed.

[AZ] Border Patrol discovers new smuggling tunnel in southern US (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [2/27/2020 1:54 PM, Quinn Owen, 2182K] Video: [HERE](#)

Border Patrol agents in southern Arizona have uncovered another illegal tunnel running under the U.S.-Mexico border, the latest in a series of discoveries and the result of renewed efforts targeting underground smuggling routes.

The tunnel, according to Customs and Border Protection, ran about 30 feet into Nogales, Arizona. No arrests were immediately made in connection with the tunnel, a CBP official confirmed to ABC News.

It's the third time since December that agents have thwarted a suspected underground smuggling route in the area, according to Border Patrol.

Similar tunnels used for drug trafficking have recently been found across the southern U.S. border as part of regularly coordinating investigations with Mexican authorities.

Tensions between the U.S. and Mexico have been heightened over the past year as Trump administration officials push for further cooperation to secure the southern border, including petitioning for more resources into the border wall.

Mexican government officials in early 2019 were reluctant to accept the administration's Migrant Protection Protocols, also known as the "Remain in Mexico" policy. The protocols have exposed tens of thousands of Central American asylum seekers to the dangers of Mexican-border towns while they await their immigration court hearings.

Despite the pushback, the Department of Homeland Security expanded the program across the southern border, while front-line Border Patrol agents face on-going security challenges. Those efforts require careful communication and long-standing ties with Mexico's military, according to multiple Border Patrol officials.

Last month, federal authorities in San Diego discovered the longest cross-border tunnel on record. It extended more than 14 football fields and included lighting fixtures, cabling and an elevator, according to CBP.

Customs officials have seen a spike in hard narcotics trafficking primarily of Fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid linked to a rise in overdose deaths in recent

years.

At the same time, Border Patrol seized far less marijuana in recent years, according to the latest CBP data. The reduction is a likely result of U.S. states legalizing medicinal and recreational cannabis use, an agency official said.

The tunnel discovered in Nogales this week was less sophisticated, allowing only enough space for one person to crawl through at a time, according to the official.

Arizona Border Patrol agents said the newly discovered was built in connection with an extensive sewage system that runs under Nogales' sister city on the Mexican side of the border, making it more challenging to detect the illicit passage way.

After an investigation, authorities filled the passage with concrete.

[AZ] Another Large Cross-Border Drug Tunnel Discovered in Nogales (AP)

[AP](#) [2/27/2020 10:53 PM, Staff, 3020K]

The U.S. Border Patrol is investigating the discovery of another large cross-border drug tunnel beneath the streets of Nogales.

The incomplete tunnel is located about 580 yards west of the Dennis DeConcini Crossing at the Nogales Port of Entry.

Authorities say the tunnel is hand-dug with no shoring, ventilation or lighting.

The tunnel runs about 20 feet underground at its deepest point and extends about 30 feet from beginning to end.

It's the fourth cross-border tunnel documented by Border Patrol agents in the Tucson Sector since last October and the 126th tunnel discovered overall since 1990.

Secret Service

[NY] Counterfeit bills plague Owego, police investigating (WBNG)

[WBNG](#) [2/27/2020 1:45 PM, Staff, 11K, Neutral, Secondary]

Authorities are investigating fake dollar bills circulating the village of Owego.

The Owego Police Department says it has identified three suspects responsible for distributing fake \$10 and \$20 bills. Police have made no arrests in the investigation.

Authorities believe the fake bills come from outside the village.

The police department says the fake money has the word "replica" on them and can be easily identified as counterfeit.

In a separate incident, the Delhi Police Department has told 12 News it has made an arrest into an investigation of fake \$50 bills being distributed in the town on Feb. 24.

Delhi Police say 23-year-old Shakiea J. Goodwin of Brooklyn, N.Y. was charged with two counts of criminal possession of a forged instrument in the 1st degree.

They say Goodwin is accused of passing the counterfeit money to pay a towing bill on a vehicle that was impounded by police a week earlier.

The Owego Police Department has told 12 News that the incident in the town of Delhi is likely unrelated to the incident in the village of Owego.

12 News has reached out to local businesses in the village of Owego that have been affected by the counterfeit bills.

[NY] Counterfeit \$100 Bills Floating Around Hudson Valley (Hudson Valley Post)

[Hudson Valley Post](#) [2/27/2020 8:00 AM, Staff, Neutral, Secondary]

Merchants in Putnam County need to be vigilant about cash transactions after a rash of counterfeit \$100 bills has made its way through the area, Sheriff Robert L. Langley, Jr. announced.

In a statement, the Putnam County Sheriff's Department said it is actively investigating cases in which counterfeit \$100 bills are being used to make smaller purchases at convenience stores, drug stores, and eateries. It did not say how many of the fake of Benjamins they've found in circulation at this time.

By using the counterfeit bills in cash transactions, suspects are receiving change in smaller, legal currency and leaving their victims short financially.

Businesses are reminded to check currency used during a cash transaction for its authenticity by using the proper tools that are commercially available, the Sheriff's Department said. If any person or business feels as though they have been duped in this ongoing scheme, they are asked to contact their local law enforcement agency.

[NY] Man headed to prison for drug, counterfeit money possession (Post Star)

[Post Star](#) [2/27/2020 7:15 AM, Staff, 48K, Positive, Secondary]

A Queens man who was arrested last September for possessing drugs and counterfeit money in Queensbury is headed to prison for up to 10 years.

Kefim D. Baptiste, 38, was arrested Sept. 6 near the Adirondack Welcome Center on the Northway just before Exit 18 in Queensbury. He was found to be in possession of cocaine, marijuana and counterfeit \$100 bills.

Baptiste pleaded guilty in Warren County Court to felony counts of first-degree criminal possession of a forged instrument and third-degree criminal possession, and was sentenced to 10 years in state prison to be followed by 3 years on parole.

He has a lengthy criminal record that includes at least one prior felony conviction, which required a lengthier prison sentence for subsequent felonies. Warren County

Judge John Hall recommended he be allowed to participate in the state's Willard Correctional drug treatment program.

[PA] Hopewell man held for court on drug charges (Bedford Gazette)

[Bedford Gazette](#) [2/27/2020 5:00 AM, Will DeShong, Positive, Secondary]

A Hopewell man had drug possession charges bound to the Court of Common Pleas during a preliminary hearing in central court on Wednesday.

Joshua M. Jays, 31, was charged with possession of a controlled substance and drug paraphernalia on Nov. 12 after state police found a vehicle he was driving abandoned along the side of Route 56 in Bedford Township.

Tpr. John Romeo testified that the vehicle was found idling along the road near the intersection with Interstate 99 about 11 p.m. Oct. 7.

Romeo said troopers requested a tow of the vehicle because it was left running and unsecured for about 20 minutes. Romeo said before the vehicle was towed, an inventory search was conducted for valuables, such as cellphones or jewelry.

When police opened the door, they found counterfeit money in plain view. Police opened a case on the passenger seat to check for valuables and found hypodermic needles.

A search warrant was requested and later issued for the vehicle and police found suspected methamphetamine, glassine baggies, straws and spoons with suspected drug residue.

Police determined the vehicle belonged to Jays' mother. Jays was contacted by police on Oct. 17 through a separate investigation and admitted that the drugs and paraphernalia in the vehicle belonged to him, Romeo said.

Public defender Karen Hickey questioned why police opened the case on the passenger seat and why police suspected there may have been valuables inside it. Romeo said the case was large enough to hold cash.

District Judge Brian Baker bound the charges to the Court of Common Pleas. Bail was set at \$5,000 unsecured.

[VA] Cops confiscate counterfeit cash (Galax Gazette)

[Galax Gazette](#) [2/27/2020 6:02 PM, Ethan Campbell, Neutral, Secondary]

A Hillsville woman was arrested Monday after trying to use fake currency at two local businesses.

Investigators with the Hillsville Police Department responded at 1:45 p.m. on Feb. 24 to Food Lion, located at 125 S. Main Street, for a report of a woman attempting to use a counterfeit \$100 bill.

At the scene, police arrested Brandi Edmonds, 30, whose last known address was

Hillsville.

After further investigation ensued, it was discovered that Edmonds had first attempted to use the counterfeit currency next door at the Family Dollar Store.

"The cashier recognized that the bill was counterfeit, and would not accept it," the report said. "Edmonds left and went next door to the Food Lion, where she tried to pass the bill there."

Upon Edmonds' arrest, police discovered two counterfeit \$100 bills in her possession.

Edmonds was charged with two Class 4 felonies under Virginia code 18.2-170, for two counts of attempting to employ a counterfeit or forged bank note. She was transported to the New River Valley Regional Jail and held with a \$1,000 secured bond.

Investigator Alan Gravley with the Hillsville Police Department explained, "These are almost identical to the bills we have seen recently. They have smaller, red Oriental writing on the back. One of the bills we seized from Edmonds had the Oriental writing almost completely rubbed off, and on the second bill, the writing had been marked over with a black marker."

He continued, "All the bills have had the same serial number."

Gravley confirmed that in the past two weeks, six different local businesses have reported encountering counterfeit currency. "Some of the cashiers were able to keep the bills and turn them in to us, and sometimes the shoppers held onto them."

In some cases, a counterfeit detection pen will instantly identify the bill as being fake, he said. "In other cases, I have seen where the pen will not leave any kind of mark on the bill. This is due to a suspected coating on the bill as an attempt to avoid detection. All legitimate currency will show a mark with the pen that has no discoloration. Most all other counterfeit currency will show a secondary color when marked with the pen, usually a brown or black color. In very few cases, such as this, counterfeiters will put a coating on the bill to so that it cannot be marked."

Gravley urged business owners to remain aware when receiving any type of currency, and to always thoroughly inspect bills, as well as to use detection pens whenever possible.

[WV] 68-year-old Huntington, WV, woman indicted in connection with large-scale fraud operation (Clarksburg Exponent Telegram)

[Clarksburg Exponent Telegram](#) [2/27/2020 11:05 AM, Staff, 12K, Positive, Secondary]

A 68-year-old woman is facing a multi-count federal indictment for an alleged role in a fraud operation that has spanned several states and multiple countries.

Patricia Dudding, of Huntington, has been charged with conspiracy to commit money laundering, bank fraud and unlawful money transactions in a 12-count indictment, according to Southern West Virginia U.S. Attorney Mike Stuart.

The indictment alleges Dudding acted as a money mule for a Nigerian scammer known as "Lucas," according to Stuart, adding that many of the scam victims are elderly individuals.

A money mule is someone who transfers illegally acquired money on behalf of or at the direction of another party, Stuart said. Criminal enterprises recruit mules to move money electronically through bank accounts, move physical currency or assist in the movement of money through a variety of other methods. Money mules add layers to the money trail from a victim to a criminal and launder money illegally to aid a criminal actor.

"Egregious. This is the largest elder fraud scheme ever prosecuted in the history of West Virginia and our work continues," Stuart said. "Elder fraud is a diabolical crime that preys on the vulnerabilities of some of the most vulnerable among us. ...

"The stories of the victims are tragic. Our goal is to hold those responsible accountable and to do our best to make victims of these despicable crimes whole. This investigation is ongoing."

According to Stuart, the locations of victims in the scam span 20 states in the U.S. alone, and victims have also been found in five other countries.

The indictment alleges that Dudding used over \$100,000 of victim funds for her personal benefit over the course of the scheme, including nearly \$42,000 in cash withdrawals.

The total loss contributed to the fraudulent scheme is \$3.2 million, according to Stuart.

The investigation was conducted by the United States Secret Service, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation — Office of Inspector General and the South Charleston Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Kathleen Robeson is handling the matter.

If convicted on all counts, Dudding faces up to 20 years in prison, Stuart said. The investigation is ongoing and could result in additional federal and state charges in the future.

[FL] Lu Jing: 2nd Chinese woman charged in connection to investigations at Mar-a-Lago appeals conviction (WPTV TV Channel 5)

[WPTV TV Channel 5](#) [2/27/2020 12:47 PM, Erik Altmann, 44K, Neutral, Secondary]

The Chinese woman convicted for resisting arrest without violence after allegedly taking photos of Mar-a-Lago has filed an appeal in her case.

Lu Jing, 56, was accused of trespassing at President Trump's club in Palm Beach in December after authorities claim staff told her to leave the property.

A jury did not convict her for trespassing but did find her guilty on one count of resisting arrest without violence. Jing is serving six months in jail.

Court filings indicate she wants the appellate court to review a decision allowing prosecutors to dismiss two potential jurors during jury selection, as well as "all adverse rulings" during the trial.

Jing is the second Chinese national charged in connection to investigations at Mar-a-Lago in the last year.

Yujing Zhang was sentenced this past November for trespassing and lying to the Secret Service. She's currently in ICE custody at the Glades County Detention Center awaiting deportation.

A hearing date for Jing's appeal has not been scheduled.

[LA] Drug investigation leads to multiple arrests, authorities say (Daily Comet)
[Daily Comet](#) [2/27/2020 6:02 PM, Staff, 2K, Positive, Secondary]

Several people were arrested on drug and weapons charges Wednesday in the Village East subdivision in Houma, authorities said.

Michael Joseph Steward, 23, Sade Nicole Williams, 27, Bryon Jaquad Ross, 20, Malik O'Keef Pharr, 22, Nehru Alfred Davis, 19, and Raquwon Richard, 19, were each charged during the investigation, the Terrebonne Parish Sheriff's Office said.

A juvenile was also taken into custody, authorities said.

Narcotics agents were patrolling the Village East subdivision Wednesday evening when they saw "suspicious activity" that resulted in a search warrant, the Sheriff's Office said. Agents seized 21 grams of marijuana, about 8.84 grams of heroin, assorted pills, paraphernalia, two stolen .40-caliber pistols, three digital scales, \$2,510 in cash and \$400 in counterfeit money.

The suspects were booked into the Terrebonne Parish jail to await a bond hearing.

[IA] Spencer Police Department Warns of Counterfeit Money (KICD AM 1240)
[KICD AM 1240](#) [2/27/2020 5:09 PM, Staff, Neutral, Secondary]

The Spencer Police Department is warning residents after multiple instances of counterfeit money have been reported in town.

Police Chief Mark Warburton tells KICD News at least eight different businesses reported receiving counterfeit twenty dollar bills over the past weekend.

Chief Warburton says an investigation has revealed all of the bills have the same serial number and contain a stamp saying "Prop Copy" on the back.

Residents are urged to inspect their money and report any suspicious activity to the Spencer Police Department.

[NE] Bogus \$50 Bills Passed In Sidney (The Western Nebraska Observer)

[The Western Nebraska Observer](#) [2/27/2020 3:46 PM, Daria Anderson-Faden, Neutral, Secondary]

Sidney convenience stores have been hit with fake \$50 bills recently. As of Tuesday, three of the bills have been passed off.

Usually the perpetrator tries to catch the business when it is very busy and people are standing in line. It is done very quickly and the attendant doesn't use the bank pen to analyze the bogus bills due to the hectic time.

According to Sidney Police Chief Joe Aikens, investigators have video of the individual they suspect passed the bill and it is not a traveler – it is a local person. He said he is confident that the police would arrest someone soon.

Aikens explained that the bank pens work to check out any and all bills, not just larger denominations. In addition, he said it was quite obvious that the bill was not real once you really looked at it.

Sidney police must notify the Secret Service of the counterfeit bills.

While none of the funny money has been reported in the Kimball area, it is recommended that businesses use caution when accepting cash and contact law enforcement if a bill looks suspicious.

[OK] Ardmore police searching for counterfeiting suspects (KXII-TV 12)

[KXII-TV 12](#) [2/27/2020 1:03 PM, Staff, 14K, Neutral, Secondary]

The Ardmore Police Department is asking for the public's help to identify two men they say used counterfeit bills at businesses in Ardmore and southern Oklahoma.

An Ardmore business told police the two men had purchased almost \$700 worth of goods using fake \$100 and later returned the items for real money at the same store.

The suspects are described as being between 25 and 35 years old and 5-foot 9-inches tall to 6-foot 3-inches tall.

Police say one of the suspects had a short goatee, a mustache and wavy hair.

The two men were wearing darker clothing and seen driving a late model black GMC or Chevy full-size SUV.

Police say shortly after the incident, the same suspects targeted another store in Purcell.

Anyone with information is asked to call the Ardmore Police Department at 580-233-1212. Tips can remain anonymous.

[CA] Police seek woman who scammed Girl Scouts with counterfeit bills in Redondo Beach (Daily Breeze)

[Daily Breeze](#) [2/27/2020 7:30 PM, David Rosenfeld, 28K, Neutral, Secondary]

After a woman passed two counterfeit \$100 bills to a pair of Girl Scouts outside a Vons grocery store in Redondo Beach, the mothers of the two girls and a police investigator are asking the same question: Who would scam a pair of Girl Scouts?

Turns out, it's not uncommon, according to Tammie Scott, volunteer service unit manager for the Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles, which covers the area of North Redondo and Hermosa Beach.

"Unfortunately, people find that they think we are easy targets," Scott said. "It seems like every year it happens."

Last year, Scott said someone passed off a fake \$20 bill, and in years past, Girl Scouts have received counterfeit hundreds. Some of the incidents occurred at the same Vons, Scott said.

"If nothing else, we are advised not to take the large bills," Scott said. "We certainly have had our share of counterfeit hundreds."

Sachi Saunt, 14, and Caitlin Kakuk, 15, both freshman at Redondo Union High School, were selling Girl Scout cookies outside the Vons market on Inglewood and Marine avenues, in Redondo Beach, Sunday, Feb. 23, when a woman walked up with a small dog on a leash.

The girls, who have been involved in Scouts for the past 10 years, have gotten older now, so mothers Tammy Saunt and Marita Kakuk stood back and let the girls handle themselves.

The unidentified woman, who appeared to be in her mid-30s, held her hand over her mouth as she spoke, but the girls could see that she was missing her teeth, according to the mothers. The woman bought eight boxes of cookies with a \$100 bill then went into the store. About a half hour later she came out and bought two more boxes with another \$100 bill.

"I didn't notice anything until she said that woman just gave us two \$100 bills," Tammy Saunt said. "That's when I said, 'Let me see that.'"

The bills didn't feel right, she said, and when Saunt took them to the bank her suspicions were confirmed: the bills were counterfeit. Police took the bills into custody and recently released a photograph of a person of interest who matched the description of the woman who approached the girls.

"It's a shame if it was done deliberately to take advantage of these Girl Scouts," said

Sgt. Mike Strosnider, who is investigating the case. "It's just a shame."

Strosnider advised anyone who recognizes the woman to call Redondo Beach Police: 310-379-2477.

"Counterfeit is actually more prevalent than people think," said Strosnider, who added that he would contact the U.S. Secret Service to report the case and see if they could track the bills to a source.

The girls, meanwhile, are out \$200, which comes out of their pocket. The families are planning a fundraiser, possibly at the Comedy and Magic Club, to help cover the costs.

"The thing that hits them the hardest," Scott said, "is that people are stealing from them, which is really hard for kids who are doing their best and seeing the good in people."

Coast Guard

[GA] Overturned Cargo Ship Soon To Be Sliced Up And Removed From Georgia Sound (NPR)

[NPR](#) [2/27/2020 4:19 PM, Molly Samuel, 4112K]

The view from the mainland in coastal Georgia is mostly miles of salt marsh and barrier islands, shore birds hunting in the mud, shrimp boats traveling the Intracoastal Waterway.

Since September, from the coastal city of Brunswick, the view has also featured the Golden Ray.

The cargo ship capsized as it was leaving the Port of Brunswick, heading for Baltimore with 4,200 new cars on board. The cause is still under investigation.

Now, crews are beginning work to eventually remove the ship, but getting rid of such a giant wreck is complicated.

From Brunswick, the 656-ft. Golden Ray is a big dark hump near the horizon. From nearby bridges and islands, the red, white and blue ship is even more visible. It's resting on its side offshore, partially submerged.

"You just can't get away from it," said Susan Inman, coastkeeper with the local environmental organization, Altamaha Riverkeeper.

It's just really big, which means getting it out of the St. Simons Sound is a big job.

The plan to dismantle the wreck is to use a giant chain to slice the cargo ship into eight segments, lift those giant pieces up out of the water, then take them away on a barge.

At a recent community meeting, curious residents like Bill Bulfer were generally impressed.

"This is going to be cool," he said. "I'm into equipment and cranes, and all that kind of stuff. This is going to be awesome. I'm going to go out in my boat and watch it."

This wreck is unprecedented in the United States, according to the U.S. Coast Guard, which is coordinating the recovery. That's why it's still there after almost six months, the agency said.

As wild as the plan to slice the ship like a gigantic, semi-submerged loaf of bread might sound, it has been done before in other places with car carriers, and also on part of the Russian submarine, Kursk.

"It's not all that unusual," said Richard Burke, professor of marine engineering and naval architecture at the Maritime College of the State University of New York.

Every wreck is different with its own set of challenges. With the Golden Ray, "there are a number of things you have to worry about," he said. "First of all, the ship has — now the remains of — 4,200 vehicles."

So it's not just getting the ship itself out of the sound, it's also all the cars, with their fuel and batteries and oil.

Other things that make things complicated include that the ship is on its side, and that there are strong tides and currents in the area, according to the salvage company removing the wreck.

Workers are building a barrier around the Golden Ray that's meant to soak up oil and catch debris — and cars — once the actual slicing starts.

"My main concern is the biggest part of this operation is coming up," said Inman. She said she's worried that cutting the ship into big pieces is going to make a mess near sensitive coastal ecosystems.

And the original salvage company working on the Golden Ray is now suing the Coast Guard in federal court. It claims it was a violation of federal law that it lost the contract to remove the wreck, and that the current plan is environmentally risky.

Still, at least so far, it could have been worse, said Doug Haymans, director of Georgia's Coastal Resources Division. "For a disaster of this nature, we're very fortunate," he said.

All the ship's crew members were rescued.

There was an oil spill, but most of the ship's fuel was removed from its tanks.

"We could have had 300,000 gallons on our shorelines and we've had nowhere near that," Haymans said.

The company working to remove the Golden Ray will begin slicing up the ship once the environmental barrier is installed, in about a month. The goal is to have it out of the St. Simons Sound before peak hurricane season this summer.

CISA/Cybersecurity

Creepy Facial Recognition Company Clearview Admits Entire Client List Stolen (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [2/27/2020 10:46 AM, Lucas Nolan, 1973K]

Facial recognition company Clearview AI, which works with hundreds of law enforcement agencies, has stated that the firm's entire client list has been stolen, including how many users each client has, and how many searches they have completed using the service.

The Daily Beast reports that facial recognition firm Clearview AI has revealed that an intruder "gained unauthorized access" to its customer list, the number of user accounts the customer had set up, and the number of searches that customers have conducted using the service. Hoan Ton-That, the founder and CEO of Clearview AI, made headlines recently after stating that he has a First Amendment right to scrape through billions of photos online to add to his company's database of three billion pictures.

Clearview AI has developed a system that allows users to upload a photo of a person to the app and see public photos of that person, along with links to where those photos appeared. The system scrapes information from Facebook, YouTube, and millions of other websites.

Clearview AI's facial surveillance systems have been licensed to over 600 law enforcement agencies from the FBI to the Department of Homeland Security and regular local police departments. The system operates with almost no oversight, is reportedly exempt from biometric data laws, and has been marketed widely to law enforcement agencies.

Clearview AI has revealed to its customers via a notification that the company's servers were not breached during the "unauthorized access" and there was "no compromise of Clearview's systems or network." The firm claims to have fixed the vulnerability and claims that the intruder did not obtain any law-enforcement agencies' actual search histories.

Tor Ekeland, an attorney for Clearview AI stated: "Security is Clearview's top priority. Unfortunately, data breaches are part of life in the 21st century. Our servers were never accessed. We patched the flaw, and continue to work to strengthen our security."

David Forscey, the managing director of the no-profit Aspen Cybersecurity Group, commented on the breach stating: "If you're a law-enforcement agency, it's a big

deal, because you depend on Clearview as a service provider to have good security, and it seems like they don't."

Clearview AI has billions of our photos. Its entire client list was just stolen (CNN)

[CNN](#) [2/26/2020 1:24 PM, Jordan Valinsky, 5551K]

Clearview AI, a startup that compiles billions of photos for facial recognition technology, said it lost its entire client list to hackers.

The company said it has patched the unspecified flaw that allowed the breach to happen.

In a statement, Clearview AI's attorney Tor Ekeland said that while security is the company's top priority, "unfortunately, data breaches are a part of life. Our servers were never accessed." He added that the company continues to strengthen its security procedures and that the flaw has been patched.

Clearview AI continues "to work to strengthen our security," Ekeland said.

In a notification sent to customers obtained by Daily Beast, Clearview AI said that an intruder "gained unauthorized access" to its customer list, which includes police forces, law enforcement agencies and banks. The company said that the person didn't obtain any search histories conducted by customers, which include some police forces.

The company claims to have scraped more than 3 billion photos from the internet, including photos from popular social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

The firm garnered controversy in January after a New York Times investigation revealed that Clearview AI's technology allowed law enforcement agencies to use its technology to match photos of unknown faces to people's online images. The company also retains those photos in its database even after internet users delete them from the platforms or make their accounts private.

That prompted cease-and-desist letters from tech giants Twitter (TWTR), Google (GOOGL) and Facebook (FB). Some states, such as New Jersey, even enacted a statewide ban on law enforcement agencies using Clearview while it investigates the software.

In an interview with CNN Business earlier this month, Clearview AI founder and CEO Hoan Ton-That downplayed concerns about his technology. He said he wants to build a "great American company" with "the best of intentions." He said he wouldn't sell his product to Iran, Russia or China and claimed the technology is saving kids and solving crimes.

[NC] U.S. election security chief visiting North Carolina city (AP)

[AP](#) [2/27/2020 4:36 AM, Staff, 337K]

Days before the primary, North Carolina is getting visited by the nation's homeland security chief to talk about election security this year.

Acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf planned a visit to Charlotte to meet on Thursday with local and state election officials.

The State Board of Elections said Wolf was to tour a Mecklenburg County elections warehouse before a news conference with state elections Executive Director Karen Brinson Bell and Mecklenburg director Michael Dickerson.

Election security is getting renewed attention as this year's election approaches and with Russia's interference in the 2016 presidential race. The nation's intelligence chiefs warn that Russia, Iran, China and North Korea remain threats to interfere.

North Carolina voters on Tuesday will choose party nominees for scores of statewide, federal and legislative positions.

Separately, some counties are using new voting or tabulation machines after their old touchscreen machines are no longer approved for use.

[GA] Probe of alleged 2018 attempt to hack Georgia voter-registration system turned over to state AG (CNN)

[CNN](#) [2/27/2020 10:20 PM, Devon M. Sayers, 5551K]

The investigation into allegations that someone tried to hack Georgia's voter-registration system in 2018 has been completed by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and sent to the state's attorney general, a spokesperson for the department said.

The investigation into the Georgia Democratic Party in connection with what then-Secretary of State Brian Kemp's office characterized as an attempted hack was announced two days before the November 2018 gubernatorial election in which Kemp was the Republican candidate. The Democratic Party said it had only passed along security concerns to a private cybersecurity firm, which in turn shared its concerns with Kemp's office. The attorney general's office declined to comment on the investigation.

Kemp did not recuse himself from his election oversight responsibilities during the campaign, a move some Democrats and advocacy groups called a conflict of interest. His office was also accused of voter suppression by the Democratic candidate for governor, Stacey Abrams. Kemp denied those allegations.

Two days before the election, Kemp's spokesperson in the secretary of state's office said in a statement, "I can confirm that the Democratic Party of Georgia is under investigation for possible cybercrimes." The office offered no evidence of the alleged crimes, nor has it done so since. Kemp won the election by nearly 55,000 votes out of the nearly 4 million cast in the race, less than 1.5 percentage points.

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation told CNN that its investigation was completed and was forwarded to Republican state Attorney General Christopher Carr's office in November.

Carr's office confirmed to CNN that it had received the investigation and declined to comment on the probe.

The Democratic Party of Georgia told CNN on Monday that it has "cooperated fully with the GBI, supplying them with witnesses and documents."

The statement added that the party had not received any subpoenas as part of the investigation.

"The last time (the state Democratic Party) had contact with the GBI, it assured us that (the party) was not under investigation. Given the absence of any follow-up, we have assumed the investigation was closed," said Maggie Chambers, a spokeswoman for the state Democratic Party.

Earlier this week, the US House Oversight and Government Reform Committee's Democratic majority staff released a memo that said the state of Georgia had failed to produce any evidence to the committee that backed up Kemp's assertion of a failed attempt to hack the state voter-registration system. It also said the state had withheld internal emails on the topic.

The committee began its investigation based on reports that voters had "faced unprecedented challenges" and "significant barriers" to participating. The memo said the state was withholding more than 1,400 documents regarding the investigation, an action the committee called "stonewalling."

CNN has reached out to Kemp's office for comment.

Georgia's current secretary of state, Republican Brad Raffensperger, said he's confident in the security of Georgia's new voting system, featuring a paper backup, which was rolled out after the 2018 election.

"Throughout the process of implementing Georgia's paper-ballot voting system, we have worked with federal security agencies and the top minds in elections and cyber security to secure the vote in Georgia," Raffensperger said in a statement provided by his office.

CNN obtained a series of emails back in November that the secretary of state's office said led it to accuse the Georgia Democratic Party of hacking its voter registration system. The emails refer to findings by a voter who said he had discovered potential vulnerabilities in the state's voter information page and its online registration system.

The voter took his concerns to the Georgia Democratic Party's voter protection hotline to alert authorities, according to his lawyer, David Cross. At the time, Cross

told CNN that the voter was not affiliated with any political party and did not want to speak to any media. He also said the voter has some software background but is not a hacker.

The voter was looking up his own registration information on the state's My Voter Page when he discovered he could access other people's information too, Cross told CNN. The system, the voter found, doesn't verify who's making the query and, for that reason, it appeared to him that voters' private information could be accessed and voter registrations could even be edited by anyone on the site.

The voter went over his concerns with Cross, who has battled with Kemp over similar issues before, including a 2016 lawsuit that alleged cybersecurity vulnerabilities in Georgia's voting system. Unclear on the implications of what the voter had found, Cross brought in a cybersecurity firm to look at the website. While that firm couldn't verify the vulnerability either, it too saw a potential for concern, Cross told CNN.

"If (the voter) had never contacted the Democratic Party," Cross said, "no one would be talking about the Democratic Party. It's only because (he) alerted them that Kemp draws it back to them."

The state begins early voting on Monday for its presidential primary election, scheduled for March 24.

Terrorism Investigations

[WI] Milwaukee Gunman Identified as Molson Coors Electrician Anthony Ferrill (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [2/27/2020 2:17 PM, AWR Hawkins, 1973K]

The gunman who killed five innocents at Molson Coors, then took his own life, was identified by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel as Anthony Ferrill.

He was a long-time electrician for the brewery.

The Sentinel reports that Ferrill "served in the U.S. Coast Guard from 1987 to 1991 and was honorably discharged, according to Rick Flowers of Milwaukee County Veterans' Services."

Ferrill was allegedly involved into an ongoing "dispute" that resulted in violence on Wednesday. A coworker "who asked not to be identified for fear of being disciplined said Ferrill believed he was being discriminated against because he was African American, and that he frequently argued with at least one of the victims."

[WI] Shooter at Milwaukee Molson Coors had a long-running dispute with a co-worker, law enforcement source says (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [2/27/2020 7:12 PM, Gina Barton, Annysa Johnson, Rick Barrett, and John Diedrich, 5611K]

The man who opened fire at the Molson Coors plant Wednesday, killing five co-

workers and himself, had been involved in a long-running dispute with a co-worker that boiled over, according to law enforcement and brewery sources who spoke to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

Anthony N. Ferrill, 51, had worked as an electrician for more than 20 years, about 17 of them at Molson Coors, according to multiple sources and online employment records.

A co-worker who asked not to be identified for fear of being disciplined said that Ferrill believed he was being discriminated against because he was African-American and that he frequently argued with at least one of the victims, a fellow electrician.

The co-worker said Ferrill often watched movies on his phone during the day, which the other electrician took issue with, and that the two accused each other of going into each other's offices and stealing tools or tampering with computer equipment.

About a year ago, the employee said, Ferrill started saying he believed brewery workers were coming into his home, bugging his computer and moving chairs around.

"I was, are you serious, Anthony? What? We all kind of joked about it, saying we should maybe get him an aluminum hat. Things just started getting weird. But he was dead serious about it," the co-worker said.

But another co-worker, Keith Giese, said Ferrill seemed fine when he saw him earlier this week.

"I never had a clue. I talked to him a couple of days ago and he seemed fine to me," Giese said. "I had no idea that there was a problem, that somebody could snap like that."

As word spread Thursday that Ferrill was the shooter, co-workers and neighbors echoed that surprise.

"He was a very good electrician, a very good worker and I couldn't say anything bad about the guy," said Phillip Rauch Sr., who retired in April after working with Ferrill for 15 years. "Every time I worked with him, he was always in a good mood."

Ferrill was a licensed industrial journeyman electrician and a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in Milwaukee. He served in the U.S. Coast Guard from 1987 to 1991 and was honorably discharged, according to Rick Flowers of Milwaukee County Veterans' Services.

Neighbors shocked

Police continued to occupy Ferrill's home Thursday; detectives and officers occasionally emerged with items.

Police tape still surrounded the house, which has a play set in the backyard, as neighbors struggled to reconcile the helpful man they knew with the heinous act authorities say Ferrill committed.

Neighbor Erna Roenspies said Ferrill sometimes helped her around the house, especially after her husband of 60 years died three years ago. She last saw Ferrill about a week ago when he came to help her with a faulty hot water heater.

"He was like my son," Roenspies said Thursday. "He was a person who would help anyone in the neighborhood. This, it's a shocker. I still don't believe it."

She said Ferrill was a gun collector, putting them together in his home. He told her it was his hobby.

"I said, 'I hate guns. I don't want to see them,'" she said. And she said she never did.

Elizabeth LaPine has lived in the neighborhood for 11 years. She said she once saw what she believed to be a gun safe delivered to the home.

"I knew he was interested in guns," LaPine said.

She said it was hard to believe Ferrill was the shooter.

"I would never believe it ... that he could do something like that," LaPine said. "He didn't give me the impression that there was anything wrong. It didn't seem like there was anything different."

Ferrill had a Doberman pinscher named Lucas, LaPine said.

Like others who live in the neighborhood, LaPine said Ferrill looked out for his home and his neighbors.

"He had given me his phone number about a year ago," LaPine said. "He said 'If you see anybody messing around the house or anything like that ... give me a call.' "

[WI] Neighbors: Brewery gunman a 'gentleman'; no motive yet known (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [2/27/2020 9:10 PM, Gretchen Ehlke and Todd Richmond, AP, 337K]

A Milwaukee electrician who police identified Thursday as the man who fatally shot five co-workers at one of the nation's largest breweries enjoyed building guns, according to neighbors.

Authorities said 51-year-old Anthony Ferrill opened fire at the Molson Coors Brewing Co. complex on Wednesday, killing five male employees before turning his gun on himself. His motive remains a mystery; police say the case is still under investigation. They also haven't released details about how the shooting unfolded.

Milwaukee police Chief Alfonso Morales said during a news conference that the victims were all from the Milwaukee area. He identified them as Jesus Valle Jr., 33, of Milwaukee; Gennady Levshetz, 61, of Mequon; Trevor Wetselaar, 33, of Milwaukee; Dana Walk, 57, of Delafield; and Dale Hudson, 60, of Waukesha.

Ferrill's neighbors said he was a married father of two adult children and one younger daughter. They said he had worked at the brewery for about 15 years as an electrician. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported he served in the U.S. Coast Guard from 1987 to 1991 and was honorably discharged.

His brother, Benjamin Ferrill, of The Colony, Texas, told The Associated Press: "It's a tragic loss to everybody. We're still trying to digest it."

Erna Roenspies, who lived next door to Ferrill, described him as a nice guy and helpful neighbor who enjoyed building guns with mail-order parts.

Several years ago Ferrill slipped off or fell off a ladder at the brewery and hurt his shoulder, forcing him to miss work. He told Roenspies that "spies" from the brewery were lurking in the neighborhood, watching his activities to make sure he wasn't faking the injury. Once he pointed out the spies' car to her, she said. The spying "irritated" him, she said.

Still, Roenspies, 82, said Ferrill was a "gentleman" who checked up on her to make sure she was all right.

"I considered him a son," she said. "He wasn't violent. He wasn't a drunk. He was a gentleman. I just can't believe it."

Another neighbor, Elizabeth LaPine, described Ferrill as a quiet person who walked his Doberman pinscher every day, and would sometimes throw a ball around for his dog in the street. She said she lived across the street from Ferrill for 11 years.

"It's heartbreaking," she said.

LaPine said Ferrill had several cars and always kept them shiny. She said that the last time she saw Ferrill was Sunday, and he had polished up his burgundy Chrysler, which she called his "Sunday car," and took it for a ride.

The shooting happened at an 82-acre (33-hectare) complex that includes a mix of corporate offices and brewing facilities and employs more than 1,000 people. It's widely known in the Milwaukee area as "Miller Valley," a reference to the Miller Brewing Co. that is now part of Molson Coors.

Molson Coors CEO Gavin Hattersley said the victims all worked together as electricians and machinists in the complex's powerhouse.

"They were a part of the fabric of our company and community and we will miss them deeply," Hattersley said.

Hudson's Facebook page states that he was married and attended Elkhorn Area High School. A woman who answered the phone at his home had no comment.

Walk's Facebook page states that he attended Kettle Moraine High School and contains photos of fishing and sailing.

Wetselaar's LinkedIn page says he graduated from UW-Madison and he worked as an engine room operator with Miller Coors since 2018. Before that he served as a nuclear reactor operator in the U.S. Navy.

Levshetz's obituary identified him as married with two children and two grandchildren. It said he would be remembered as a "kind, caring, and giving person who always put his family's needs before his own."

A woman who answered a call to a possible listing for Valle said she was his sister. She declined to give her name, but said he leaves behind a wife and two small children. She was crying and the sounds of others crying in the background could be heard. She declined further comment.

The Molson Coors complex features a 160-year-old brewery, a packaging center that fills thousands of cans and bottles every minute and a distribution center the size of five football fields. A massive red Miller sign that towers over it is a well-known symbol in a city where beer and brewing are intertwined with local history.

National Security News

Surveillance fight emerges as intelligence flashpoint (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [2/27/2020 6:00 AM, Jordain Carney, 1762K]

A shadowy court linked to the surveillance of a Trump campaign adviser is throwing a curveball into the debate over whether to extend expiring intelligence programs.

GOP lawmakers, as well as some House Democrats, want to use a mid-March deadline on reauthorizing provisions of the USA Freedom Act to also reform the court created by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA).

The FISA process has emerged as a flashpoint for President Trump and his top allies after Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz in December found 17 "significant errors or omissions" in the surveillance warrant applications for campaign adviser Carter Page, dating back to 2016.

Those tensions boiled over — and found bipartisan support — Wednesday, when House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.) had to postpone consideration of a bill reauthorizing some of the intelligence provisions after Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.) threatened to force votes on several FISA-related amendments.

Because Republicans on the committee also support FISA reforms, Lofgren likely would have been able to get at least some of her changes added to the legislation

being put forth by Nadler.

A Democratic aide told The Hill that Republicans and Democrats on the committee were expected to get behind Lofgren's amendments.

The FISA process has long faced bipartisan skepticism. Libertarian-minded GOP senators, as well as progressive lawmakers, argue it doesn't provide enough transparency for individuals being targeted by the government for surveillance.

That concern found a broader audience among Republicans, who are typically supportive of surveillance, following the Horowitz report.

Horowitz offered a damning assessment of the warrant application process to surveil Page, and the ability of officials to mislead the court, that lawmakers say raises questions about broader abuse of the FISA process.

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), the chairman of the Senate Homeland Security Committee, told The Hill that Horowitz had uncovered a "massive" and "shocking" abuse.

"It needs to be addressed. I think it will be addressed or I don't think it will pass," Johnson said. "So I think people need to take that very seriously."

Sen. Ben Sasse (R-Neb.) acknowledged during a December hearing with Horowitz that the inspector general's findings had added credence to concerns raised for years by his more surveillance reform-minded colleagues in the Senate.

"Mike Lee has warned me for 4½ years the potential for abuse in this space is terrible, and I constantly defended the integrity and the professionalism of the bureau and of the department that you couldn't have something like this happen," Sasse said at the hearing, referring to the Republican senator from Utah.

But congressional leadership in both chambers has shown little interest in trying to make broader FISA reforms as part of the USA Freedom Act debate. Lawmakers are now facing a tight timeline to craft a deal on a topic that is deeply divisive, with some already floating a short-term extension of the intelligence authorities.

The legislation from Sens. Richard Burr (R-N.C.) and Mark Warner (D-Va.) would extend two of three expiring surveillance provisions without making broader FISA changes.

The draft bill yanked by Nadler on Wednesday, the result of collaboration between the House Judiciary and Intelligence committees, would increase the role of an outside lawyer to counter the government and ramp up reporting by the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board to try to increase transparency on how FISA is being used.

"The committees have worked collaboratively with each other and outside stakeholders to reauthorize necessary FISA provisions that are crucial to national

security and make significant reforms to enhance civil liberties and privacy protections,” a House Intelligence Committee official told The Hill. “The draft bill does both, implementing a variety of progressive reforms while ensuring we can continue to protect our national security.”

“We’re going to continue to work with all parties towards that goal,” the official said.

But progressives as well as Republicans argued the House measure didn’t touch on the broader privacy and transparency concerns about the surveillance court.

Attorney General William Barr told Senate Republicans during a closed-door lunch this week that he would use his own rulemaking authority to enact changes to the court that don’t require congressional approval. Those changes have the backing of Senate Republicans, who described them as being along the lines of the corrective actions Horowitz recommended in his report.

“He went over his recommendations and some internal reforms about FISA warrant applications and surveillance technology being used ... that I think are consistent with what Horowitz is recommending,” Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) said about Barr’s pitch.

Among Horowitz’s recommendations were urging the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the FBI to revise the FISA process to ensure that the DOJ office responsible for representing the administration before the court can obtain “all relevant and accurate information.” Horowitz also recommended the Justice Department and FBI evaluate which “Sensitive Investigative Matters,” cases that involve public officials or candidates, should require the notification of a senior DOJ official.

Graham is planning to do a deep dive into the FISA process, including the Page warrant and the start of the FBI’s investigation into Russia’s election meddling and the Trump campaign.

That includes starting closed-door depositions next week, according to Graham, with the plan being to eventually work up to public hearings. In addition to more than 20 current officials, Graham says he wants to bring former FBI Director James Comey, former Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein and former Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates before his committee.

Graham said the Senate could take up FISA-related legislation separate from the USA Freedom Act debate, but in the meantime he wants to “find out what happened” with the Page application.

“You start at the bottom and work your way up. Try to find out people who were in charge of the investigation day-to-day,” he added.

But it’s unclear if internal DOJ reforms, the promise of an investigation and potential legislation down the road will be enough to win over both libertarian-minded GOP senators and Trump’s House allies who are clamoring to use the surveillance reauthorization fight to enact broader FISA reforms.

“Three provisions of FISA are set to expire on March 15th. Congress should not reauthorize them without substantially reforming FISA. Our intelligence-gathering agencies need to focus on foreign agents and terrorists, and should not be spying on U.S. citizens,” Lee said in a tweet on Wednesday.

He made a “long case” during the closed-door lunch with Barr about making additional statutory changes to the FISA process, including strengthening outside representation for individuals targeted by the surveillance applications.

Rep. Doug Collins (Ga.), the top Republican on the House Judiciary Committee, added that the expiring intelligence authorities should not be reauthorized without addressing broader FISA reforms.

“The status quo is unacceptable,” he said. “We must reform our FISA system in order to restore the American people’s confidence in our law enforcement and intelligence communities and ensure what happened to Carter Page and the Trump campaign never happens again.”

Former impeachment managers clash over surveillance bill (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [2/27/2020 4:54 PM, Olivia Beavers and Emily Birnbaum, 1762K]

Just one month after arguing on a united front for President Trump’s removal from office, three former House impeachment managers are locked in a fierce battle over a controversial government surveillance bill.

Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.), a senior member on the House Judiciary Committee, threw plans to reauthorize some intelligence provisions in the USA Freedom Act into a tailspin Wednesday after she threatened to hold votes on several surveillance-related amendments.

The move not only forced Chairman Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.) to postpone consideration of the broader legislation, which he negotiated for months with House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) and Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), it also pitted the two chairmen against a former teammate from the weeks-long Democratic effort to carefully lay out a case against Trump during the Senate impeachment trial.

The back and forth comes amid a debate over whether to pass a reauthorization bill that could glide through the Senate or one heavy with reforms that might fail to garner enough support for passage in the upper chamber.

A group of House Democrats and Republicans want to fold in amendments to reform the court associated with the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) following a government watchdog’s assessment last year that found 17 “significant errors and omissions” by law enforcement officials in their efforts to obtain a wiretap on former Trump campaign adviser Carter Page.

Lofgren, who dismissed the notion that there was a personal rift between her and the

two Democratic chairmen, is pushing to introduce legislation that would create more oversight over the court and significantly curtail the amount of sensitive information the government is allowed to collect on Americans. She felt Nadler and Schiff's bill did not go far enough to achieve that.

"This is about policy," Lofgren told The Hill in a phone interview, noting that she attended a reception for impeachment managers with Nadler and Schiff on Wednesday night, just hours after the showdown over the surveillance provisions.

"I'm pursuing a policy that I think is consistent with the Constitution and serves the American people," she continued, adding that doing so "is not new for me."

While Lofgren has pushed for similar privacy-focused reforms since the George W. Bush administration, the intra-party dispute is also the latest sign that the partisan impeachment process that brought the managers together is quickly fading in the rearview mirror.

Lofgren's FISA amendments upset the chairmen's hopes of moving forward a clean bill. The future of the controversial government surveillance provisions is now in limbo with a mid-March deadline approaching.

And despite the claims of amicable relations, some Judiciary sources described a lingering rivalry between the two, citing this tug of war over surveillance policy as the latest example.

Lofgren and Nadler battled one another in 2017 when they were in competition for the top Democratic spot on the Judiciary Committee, after Rep. John Conyers Jr. (D-Mich.) resigned from Congress amid allegations of sexual misconduct.

Asked about progress in the FISA negotiations, Pelosi acknowledged the delay over key sticking points but also expressed hope that a compromise is possible before the programs expire March 15.

"I was there for some of the FISA revisions in the past," Pelosi said Thursday at her weekly press conference. "The goal is to have the right balance between civil liberties and national security. I think the bill that was put together in the Judiciary Committee, working with the Intelligence Committee, does that. There are others who would like to see some other provisions, we're just working through that now, with respect for everyone's point of view."

Lofgren, a close Pelosi ally, declined to comment on whether she's held discussions with the Speaker about the FISA fight. But Lofgren noted that she and Pelosi are very close.

The bill that Nadler pulled Wednesday would increase the role of an outside lawyer to counter the government and ramp up reporting by the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board to try to increase transparency on how FISA is used.

It also would officially revoke the government's authority to collect phone records

from millions of Americans, a program first disclosed by former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden in 2013 that was later shuttered amid technical difficulties and questions of effectiveness. A newly unclassified government report found the program cost more than \$100 million and yielded only a single substantive investigation.

A House Intelligence Committee official argued the legislation includes strong reforms and new protections.

"The committees have worked collaboratively with each other and outside stakeholders to reauthorize necessary FISA provisions that are crucial to national security and make significant reforms to enhance civil liberties and privacy protections," the official said Wednesday in a statement. "The draft bill does both, implementing a variety of progressive reforms while ensuring we can continue to protect our national security."

A Democratic aide separately described Lofgren's provisions as working like "poison pills" to kill the bill.

Lofgren's amendments, which she reduced from seven to five after negotiations with House Judiciary and Intelligence committee staff, would add an outside advocate for every FISA case in which an American is targeted and make it illegal for the government to collect a U.S. citizen's geolocation data and web browsing history.

But Democrats aren't the only ones clashing over surveillance. Republicans are debating whether they should have a clean reauthorization bill or overhaul it to include new protections like the ones promoted by Lofgren.

Trump has told congressional allies that he will not accept a clean reauthorization bill, as Attorney General William Barr and GOP leadership are said to support — a position that is at odds with what Barr is said to have told senators behind closed doors on Tuesday.

Libertarian Republicans like Sens. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) and Mike Lee (R-Utah) are pushing for more protections for U.S. citizens.

"FISA warrants shouldn't be issued on Americans and any information gathered by the FISA court shouldn't be used against Americans. It's for foreign intelligence. This is a big reform. ... I think it will get bipartisan support. I've talked to the president about it," Paul said Thursday.

A vocal group of Republicans has been calling for FISA reform, arguing there must be stronger protections in place, particularly in order to prevent a presidential campaign from being surveilled by U.S. intelligence agencies.

Federal officials suspected Page of working as an unregistered foreign agent for Russia during the 2016 presidential election, particularly after he made a trip to the Kremlin in July of that year — when questions were already swirling about the campaign's ties to Moscow.

An extensive review by Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz did not find evidence to suggest political bias impacted the FBI's decision to open the counterintelligence probe and that the FBI had an "authorized purpose" for the inquiry, but he did find that multiple mistakes were made throughout the process.

Rep. Doug Collins (Ga.), the top Republican on the Judiciary Committee, has accused the Democrats' bill of failing to "address the serious issues in our FISA system, as highlighted by Inspector General Horowitz."

"I'm not at all surprised that all Republicans, and apparently even some Democrats, agree," Collins said in a statement.

Democrats like Lofgren say now is the time to seize the opportunity to make reforms, while the FISA process is facing bipartisan scrutiny.

Lofgren defended her amendments, describing a scenario in which she was left in the dark about revisions to the bill that Judiciary and Intelligence vowed to make.

"We were not included in any negotiations or discussion," Lofgren told The Hill. "We got the text of the bill the same time everybody else did on the 24th, [and it] did not include the policy issues that I thought were important."

NSA spent \$100M on phone surveillance program that prompted two unique FBI leads (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [2/27/2020 11:52 AM, Madison Dibble, 570K]

A multimillion-dollar cellphone surveillance program that sifted through the metadata from millions of individual phone numbers yielded just two unique leads over a five-year period.

According to a newly declassified study, the National Security Agency spent \$100 million on a highly invasive cellphone surveillance system. With that investment, the agency yielded only one significant FBI investigation from 2015 to 2019.

The NSA's cellphone surveillance was first revealed to the public after former NSA contractor Edward Snowden leaked information about the program to the media. After Snowden's leaks in 2013, the federal government advocated for the program as a necessary tool to prevent future terrorist attacks, but many questioned whether that was true.

The study, which was produced by the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board and briefed to Congress on Tuesday, showed that only one of two unique leads yielded a prolonged investigation. The other unique lead was vetted and deemed unworthy of additional inspection.

"Based on one report, FBI vetted an individual, but, after vetting, determined that no further action was warranted," the report noted. "The second report provided unique information about a telephone number, previously known to U.S. authorities, which

led to the opening of a foreign intelligence investigation.”

Additional information about the one prolonged investigation was not made available to the public. In total, 15 investigations were aided by the program, but 13 investigations were already being conducted when information from the surveillance program was uncovered.

Investigations into the Pulse nightclub shooting and a machete attack in Ohio were aided by the program, but it is not clear that either of those incidents relied on unique information from the NSA that the FBI didn’t already possess.

The NSA halted its use of the surveillance system in 2019 after reports that the program was not functioning properly. One error led to millions of calls and text to be purged from the system after the agency realized it did not have the authority to view the messages the program had obtained.

The agency received its power to collect cellphone metadata with the USA Freedom Act of 2015. The act must be renewed by Congress by March 15, something the Trump administration supports.

In a briefing to Congress, Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board Chairman Adam Klein lauded the administration’s decision to shut down the program after years of problems.

“It shows a lot of judgment to acknowledge that something that consumed a lot of resources and time did not yield the value anticipated,” Klein said. “We want agencies to be able to reflect on their collection capabilities and wind them down where appropriate. That’s the best way to ensure civil liberties and privacy are balanced with operational needs.”

Klein also said the system is gradually becoming outdated. He noted that a lot of correspondence takes place on encrypted chatting apps rather than via phone calls or texts.

New developments suggest coronavirus incubation could be longer than 14 days, as global infections rise (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [2/22/2020 9:27 PM, Anna Fifield, Simon Denyer, Chico Harlan, Miriam Berger, and Marisa Lati, 12625K]

There are some indications that the incubation period for the coronavirus could be longer than 14 days, with patients testing positive after much longer quarantine periods, researchers said. The rush to understand the virus came as infections rose in South Korea, Japan, Iran and Italy. The head of the World Health Organization warned that the window for stopping the epidemic was narrowing. Here’s what we know:

Chinese leader Xi Jinping has been advised that the situation in Wuhan “remains grim and complex.” Amid an alarming surge in cases with no clear link to China, infectious disease experts say they believe the flu-like illness may soon be a

pandemic and impossible to contain.

South Korea and Japan both reported a sharp spike in cases, with the number of cases in South Korea rising to at least 556. A sixth person died in Iran from the virus, while Italy has at least 76 confirmed cases, making it the largest hot spot in Europe.

Nine South Korean tourists who recently toured Israel and the occupied West Bank tested positive for coronavirus Saturday. Israeli and Palestinian authorities are urging anyone who may have come in contact with them to report and self-isolate.

China on Sunday local time reported 648 new cases and 97 additional deaths. There continues to be a great deal of skepticism about China's numbers as the criteria for diagnosing coronavirus keep changing.

Thousands of Russian-linked social-media accounts are leading a disinformation campaign to cause alarm about the outbreak, the AFP reported.

BEIJING — Scientists were studying a case in China that suggested the incubation period for coronavirus could be longer than 14 days, potentially casting doubt on current quarantine criteria even as the epidemic moved into new regions.

The potential for a longer incubation period was linked to a patient in China's Hubei Province, where the virus was first detected in December. A 70-year-old man was infected with coronavirus, but did not show symptoms until 27 days later, the local government reported.

South Korea and Japan both reported a sharp spike in cases Saturday, while an additional 97 people died of the virus in China, and a sixth person died in Iran. Italian authorities Saturday said the country was seeing a sudden rise in coronavirus cases, with at least 58 confirmed in the past two days — an outbreak that represents the largest across Europe.

Meanwhile, scientists in China reported indications that the virus might be transmissible through urine.

Almost 78,000 people worldwide have been diagnosed with the coronavirus, with the vast majority of cases located in mainland China, according to the World Health Organization. Roughly 1,400 cases have been tallied outside China.

WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said Saturday that WHO experts were due to arrive that day in Wuhan, China, the center of the coronavirus outbreak. The team has visited three Chinese provinces this week, Tedros said in a speech in Geneva.

Outside China, Tedros said that the WHO is concerned about the number of cases without a clear epidemiological link, such as recent travel to China or contact with a person known to be infected.

The organization also has been sending medical supplies to Africa and training the

continent's health-care workers to prepare them for the virus's possible arrival there, Tedros said. The only confirmed case of the coronavirus in Africa is in Egypt.

"Our biggest concern continues to be the potential for covid-19 to spread in countries with weaker health systems," Tedros said.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping, who has not visited Wuhan since the outbreak began, was briefed that the situation in the city and in surrounding Hubei province "remains grim and complex," according to a report by the official Xinhua News Agency published Saturday.

"The nationwide inflection point of the epidemic has not yet arrived," the report said after a meeting of Communist Party leaders.

China's National Health Commission reported Sunday local time that 648 new cases of coronavirus were diagnosed Saturday, taking the total to nearly 77,000. The rate of infection outside Hubei appears to have slowed markedly, although there has been a great deal of confusion about the statistics this week as officials have repeatedly changed the criteria for confirming cases.

Authorities discovered Friday that a 70-year-old man in Hubei was confirmed as infected after 27 days in isolation, while a man in Jiangxi province tested positive after 14 days of centralized quarantine and five days of isolation at home. On Thursday, authorities reported that a man in Hubei had tested positive for coronavirus after what appeared to be a 38-day incubation period with no symptoms.

The United States is also struggling with domestic fallout from its responses to the virus. The Californian city of Costa Mesa has sued the federal government over its plan to transfer quarantined coronavirus patients from the Travis Air Force Base near Sacramento to the former Fairview Developmental Center as early as this weekend. The city said that the area in question is surrounded by residential neighborhoods and that placing patients with a highly contagious disease so close by could pose a risk to public health.

A federal judge granted Costa Mesa's request Friday, temporarily blocking the transfer of up to 50 patients. The restraining order prohibits state and federal government authorities from transporting anyone infected with coronavirus or who has been exposed to the disease to Costa Mesa before a hearing at 2 p.m. Monday at the Santa Ana federal courthouse, according to the Los Angeles Times.

The State Department, meanwhile, is battling thousands of Russian-linked social-media accounts promoting baseless theories that the United States created the coronavirus outbreak, according to the AFP. The accounts post "almost near identical" messages at similar times in five languages, the report says.

U.S. officials said they discovered the disinformation campaign in mid-January.

"Russia's intent is to sow discord and undermine U.S. institutions and alliances from within, including through covert and coercive malign influence campaigns," Philip

Reeker, the acting assistant secretary of state for Europe and Eurasia, told the AFP.

Misinformation about the coronavirus outbreak has proliferated — mostly on social media — since the first cases were reported in December.

Coronavirus cases in South Korea skyrocket; cases triple in Japan

The State Department on Saturday heightened its travel advisories from Level 1 to Level 2 for South Korea and Japan, urging Americans to “exercise increased caution” when traveling to those countries due to the rising number of coronavirus cases there. Older adults and people with chronic conditions, who might be at higher risk of contracting the virus, should consider postponing unnecessary travel to those countries, the department said.

The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) reported Sunday that 123 additional cases of the coronavirus had been detected, taking the total to 556. This makes it the worst-affected country outside China.

“Apart from the Diamond Princess cruise ship, [South] Korea now has the most cases outside China, and we’re working closely with the government to fully understand the transmission dynamics that led to this increase,” Tedros said.

Nearly two-thirds of the new cases have been traced to existing clusters at a church in the southern city of Daegu and a hospital in nearby Cheongdo County, according to the KCDC.

More than half of South Korea’s cases are connected to the Daegu branch of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus the Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony.

Since members of the church attended a funeral at nearby Cheongdo Daenam hospital, at least 111 coronavirus cases have been reported there, including two patients who died of the virus.

The mass infection at the hospital is centered on its locked psychiatric ward, where a confined environment could have aggravated transmissions, said Jung Eun-Kyeong, director of the KCDC.

A 57-year-old patient at Daenam hospital died of the coronavirus, state-affiliated Yonhap News Agency reported early Sunday local time. The man is the fourth person to die of the virus in South Korea, according to Yonhap’s report, which The Washington Post could not immediately verify independently.

In Japan, the number of coronavirus cases rose to 121 on Saturday, more than tripling in a week. That number excludes the 634 people on board the Diamond Princess who contracted the virus.

One of the latest cases was a teacher in her 60s at a public junior high school east of Tokyo, who complained of nausea while working. The mayor of Chiba city said the school will be closed until Wednesday, public broadcaster NHK reported.

The teacher had not traveled abroad in the past two weeks and has no record of having been in contact with a known infected person, underlining the fact that the virus is now spreading almost invisibly throughout the country, experts say.

Italy and Iran impose new measures to contain sudden spike

As numbers suddenly rose in Italy, the government has scrambled to contain the new outbreak, asking some 50,000 people to stay indoors and suspending all public events — including religious ceremonies and school — in 10 small towns to the south of Milan.

Until a few days ago, Italy had seen only three confirmed infections, including a pair of Chinese tourists.

“There is quite an evident contagion, a very strong one,” said Giulio Gallera, health chief of the northern Lombardy region, which has seen the majority of the cases.

Italian officials Friday attributed the country’s first death to the coronavirus, and Saturday said that a 77-year-old woman had also tested positive for the virus after being found dead in her home. But Italian authorities said the woman suffered from other health conditions, and were unsure if it was the virus that had killed her.

The cases in Italy appeared concentrated in the prosperous Lombardy region, which includes the country’s financial hub, Milan, and other areas nearby.

According to Italian media reports, one of the first people to come down with the virus was a 38-year-old who’d had dinner with somebody who had just come back from China. But some three weeks passed between that dinner and the time the man came down with a fever. In between, he ran a half-marathon, played soccer and traveled to several towns, according to La Repubblica, a major Italian daily.

Meanwhile, the number of confirmed cases of the virus in Iran has risen to 29.

The outbreak there has been centered on the holy Shiite city of Qom, where on Wednesday authorities suspended schools and religious gatherings as a precaution. On Saturday, Iranian authorities also closed schools in the capital, Tehran, and issued a temporary ban on cinemas and art-related events across the country, state-run Fars News Agency reported.

Other countries in the region have also reacted with alarm, particularly after Lebanon’s first coronavirus case Friday was found to be a woman who had just traveled from Qom.

In the past few days, Iraq and Kuwait suspended direct flights to Iran, while Iraq temporarily halted new visas for Iranian nationals and, along with Turkey, imposed restrictions on travelers who had recently arrived from Iran. Kuwait Airways said Saturday that it would be chartering special flights to evacuate citizens from Mashhad, Iran.

As fears mounted, Israel announced Saturday that nine South Koreans who had recently returned home from a tour in Israel tested positive for the virus. Israeli and Palestinian authorities on Saturday urged anyone who may have interacted with the group visiting from Feb. 8 to 15 to self-quarantine as they work to trace who may have had contact with the tourists, who visited major cities including Jerusalem.

Israel's ambassador to China, Zvi Heifetz, was among those who self-quarantined, the Jerusalem Post reported, citing Israel's foreign ministry. Heifetz took the same flight to Seoul as the South Korean tourists and is quarantined in Beijing, the report says.

Roughly 200 students and teachers who came into contact with the South Koreans have also self-quarantined, according to the Times of Israel.

A spokeswoman for Israel's Population and Immigration Authority said Saturday that all non-Israeli citizens arriving on a direct flight from Seoul to Tel Aviv that evening would be denied entry. Israel's Health Ministry has ordered Israelis returning from South Korea to self-quarantine.

Efforts to clear the Diamond Princess cruise ship continue
Meanwhile, tests are continuing on the crew members on board the Diamond Princess. At least 74 crew members have so far been found to have the virus.

All of the passengers have now been tested and almost all have left the ship, either to go home if they tested negative, to local hospitals or government facilities if they have the virus, or back to their home countries.

Some passengers were asked to stay on board to serve an additional quarantine if their cabin mate contracted the virus, but they are also disembarking Saturday to serve out the rest of their quarantine in a government facility, local media reported.

More than 200 port calls in Japan by international cruise ships have been canceled since the beginning of February due to the coronavirus outbreak, a Kyodo News survey showed Saturday, with the lost revenue from passengers coming ashore dealing another blow to Japan's weak economy.

American woman in Malaysia declared free of coronavirus

The 83-year-old woman who tested positive for the coronavirus when she arrived at Kuala Lumpur airport after disembarking in Cambodia from the MS Westerdam cruise ship has recovered, Malaysia health authorities said Saturday.

The woman "is showing good improvement and signs of recovery, however, she is still being monitored and managed in hospital for a slight cough," Malaysia's director general of health, Noor Hisham Abdullah, said in a statement.

The woman repeatedly tested negative while on board the ship and when she disembarked in Sihanoukville, then twice tested positive while transiting in Kuala Lumpur airport on Feb. 15. That set off a global scramble to track the hundreds of

other passengers who had also disembarked then boarded planes bound for home.

The woman was taken to a hospital and given antiviral treatment and supplementary oxygen, and she showed improvement after 72 hours of treatment initiation, Abdullah said. Two more tests, conducted 24 hours apart, both came back negative for coronavirus.

But the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cast doubt on whether the woman was ever infected, saying she “never had coronavirus to our knowledge.”

Cambodia’s Ministry of Health had previously cleared the 747 crew members who were still on board the Westerdam and the 781 passengers who were still in the country of coronavirus infection.

Chinese scientists isolate coronavirus strains in urine
Separately, scientists in China are continuing to study how the virus is transmitted.

A research team led by renowned Chinese pulmonologist Zhong Nanshan had isolated live coronavirus strains in urine samples from infected patients, Zhao Jincun, a respiratory expert at the State Key Laboratory, told reporters in Guangdong on Saturday.

The team of scientists had previously said the virus, in addition to being carried in respiratory droplets, appeared to be transmissible through fecal matter, underscoring the need to practice good hand washing as a preventive measure.

Zhao did not directly say that the virus could be transmitted through urine, simply noting that the strains had been isolated and that this had implications for public health control. They are continuing to work on isolating the virus and on a cure, the Guangzhou Daily reported.

But he said people should pay more attention to personal and family hygiene to prevent the spread of the virus and recommended frequently washing hands, closing the toilet lid before flushing and making sure bathroom drains are not blocked.

Europe Struggles to Contain Coronavirus Across Porous Borders (Bloomberg)

[Bloomberg](#) [2/27/2020 2:13 PM, Naomi Kresge, 6400K]

Europe wrestled with how to halt the advance of the coronavirus across the region’s porous borders, with Greece and Germany beginning tighter checks on people entering the country.

Germany is monitoring transport links by air, sea and land and will ask international travelers arriving on trains and buses to fill in landing cards stating where else they’ve traveled, Interior Minister Horst Seehofer said in a press conference in Berlin.

“The situation has clearly deteriorated,” he said. “The term ‘beginning of an epidemic’ means that the number of cases will increase.”

As of Thursday, at least 16 people across the region had died from the disease, mostly in Italy. A compilation of national tallies shows that the number of people who have been infected by the virus is inching toward 600.

In Germany, an additional 14 cases were reported in the district of Heinsberg in North Rhine-Westphalia on Thursday evening. All of the affected were sent home in quarantine as treatment was not necessary, the state's health ministry said in a statement.

Countries across the world are struggling to put measures in place to contain the outbreak that has claimed 2,800 lives. In the U.S., President Donald Trump named Vice President Mike Pence to lead the government's preparations, while Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called for all schools to close from Monday, keeping 13 million students across the country at home for at least a month.

In Europe, the free movement of people may have contributed to the spread of the disease, with many of the region's cases showing links to Italy or Italians. The outbreak in Italy was initially linked to a 38-year-old man who sought treatment at a hospital in the Lombardy region, which remains in a virtual lockdown.

In Greece, where the first case -- reported Wednesday -- involved a person who had recently returned from a trip to northern Italy, two new coronavirus cases were identified, prompting authorities to cancel carnival events and announce tighter border controls.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said more checks would be made at the country's land and sea borders. Greece will boost coast guard patrols, in particular in the eastern Aegean Sea, largely because of undocumented immigrants from Iran and Afghanistan, Mitsotakis said. Iran has reported 26 deaths from the virus.

Still, European authorities maintained that closing borders completely isn't an appropriate way to contain the outbreak. In Portugal, where there have so far been no confirmed cases, Prime Minister Antonio Costa told reporters that "until now, there are no situations that would justify closing any border."

Porous Borders

Across the region, events have been canceled and businesses are beginning to see the chilling effects of the constraints imposed by the spread of the virus. Seehofer said German officials will tomorrow assess the feasibility of the ITB tourism trade fair taking place in Berlin next week.

"We must look at how many people are coming from China and other affected nations and then make a recommendation," he said.

Italy, Germany and France have reported the most number of cases in Europe.

In Lombardy, Governor Attilio Fontana said in a Facebook video late Wednesday

that one of his staff tested positive for the virus, and that although he remains healthy, he's putting himself in isolation. He closed the video by putting on a face mask.

Vexed by how to contain virus, countries take tough steps (AP)

[AP](#) [2/27/2020 7:300 AM, Matt Sedensky and Jon Gambrell, 337K]

Saudi Arabia cut travel to Islam's holiest sites, South Korea toughened penalties for those breaking quarantines and airports across Latin America looked for signs of sick passengers Thursday as a new virus troubled a mushrooming swath of the globe.

With the illness pushing its way into a sixth continent and the number of sick and dead rising, the crisis gave way to political and diplomatic rows, concern that bordered on panic in some quarters, and a sense that no part of the world was immune to the disease's spread.

"Viruses don't know borders and they don't stop at them," said Roberto Speranza, the health minister in Italy, where northern towns were on army-guarded lockdowns and supermarket shelves were bare.

As growing parts of Europe and the Middle East saw infections and a first case was found in South America, air routes were halted and border control toughened. But for an illness transmitted so easily, with its tentacles reaching into so many parts of the world, leaders puzzled over how to keep the virus from proliferating seemed willing to try anything to keep their people — and economies — safe.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called for schools across the country to close for weeks, a decision that impacted 12.8 million students.

"The most important thing is to prevent infections," said Norinobu Sawada, vice principal of Koizumi primary school, "so there aren't many other options."

In South Korea, the hardest-hit country outside China, four Busan markets known for colorful silks and a dizzying array of other wares were shuttered while the country's military sent hundreds of its doctors and soldiers to aid in treatment and quarantines.

In Iran, the front line of Mideast infections, officials loosened rules barring the import of many foreign-made items to allow in sanitizers, face masks and other necessities, and removed overhead handles on Tehran's subways to eliminate another source of germs. Peru put specialists on round-the-clock shifts at its biggest airport, Argentina took the temperature of some new arrivals and El Salvador added bans for travelers from Italy and South Korea.

The holy city of Mecca, which able-bodied Muslims are called to visit at least once in their lives, and the Prophet Muhammad's mosque in Medina were cut off to potentially millions of pilgrims, with Saudi Arabia making the extraordinary decision to stop the spread of the virus.

With the monarchy offering no firm date for the lifting of the restrictions, it posed the possibility of affecting those planning to make their hajj, a ritual beginning at the end of July this year.

“We ask God Almighty to spare all humanity from all harm,” the country said in announcing the decision.

Disease has been a constant concern surrounding the hajj, with cholera outbreaks in the 19th century killing tens of thousands making the trip. More recently, another coronavirus that caused Middle East respiratory syndrome, or MERS, prompted increased public health measures, but no outbreak resulted.

COVID-19’s westward creep — including a case in California in the United States that does not appear linked to overseas travel — had some countries warning their people to obey measures intended to keep a single case from blossoming into a cluster that could paralyze a community.

A man originally from Wuhan, the Chinese city at the center of the global outbreak, who contracted the virus was charged alongside his wife in Singapore for allegedly lying about their whereabouts as officials tried to stem further infections. In Colombia, which has yet to report any cases, officials reminded residents they could be jailed for up to eight years if they violate containment measures. And in South Korea, the National Assembly passed a law strengthening the punishment for those violating self-isolation, more than tripling the fine and adding the possibility of a year in prison.

“It came later than it should have,” said Lee Hae-shik, spokesman for the ruling Democratic Party, calling for further non-partisan cooperation to address the outbreak.

Countries’ efforts to contain the virus opened up diplomatic scuffles. South Korea fought prohibitions keeping its citizens out of 40 countries, calling them excessive and unnecessary. China warned Russia to stop discriminatory measures against its people, including monitoring on public transit. Iran used the crisis to rail against the U.S., which it accused of “a conspiracy” that was sowing fear.

The global count of those sickened by the virus hovered around 82,000, with 433 new cases reported Thursday in China and another 505 in South Korea, where the military called off joint drills planned with American troops. Iran’s caseload surged by more than 100 cases.

Even the furthest reaches of the globe were touched by the epidemic, with a woman testing positive in Tromsø, the fjord-dotted Norwegian city with panoramas of snow-capped mountains. Health officials said the woman had traveled to China.

Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Contributing to this report were Tong-hyung Kim and Hyung-jin Kim in Seoul, South Korea; Jan M. Olsen in Copenhagen, Denmark; and Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo.

U.S. spy agencies monitor coronavirus spread, concerns about India: sources (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [2/27/2020 5:12 PM, Mark Hosenball, 5304K]

U.S. intelligence agencies are monitoring the global spread of coronavirus and the ability of governments to respond, sources familiar with the matter said on Thursday, warning that there were concerns about how India would cope with a widespread outbreak.

While there are only a few known cases in India, one source said the country's available countermeasures and the potential for the virus to spread given India's dense population was a focus of serious concern.

U.S. intelligence agencies are also focusing on Iran, where the country's deputy health minister has fallen ill during a worsening outbreak. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Tuesday the United States was "deeply concerned" Tehran may have covered up details about the spread of coronavirus.

A U.S. government source said Iran's response was considered ineffective because the government only has minimal capabilities to respond to the outbreak.

Another source said U.S. agencies were also concerned about the weak ability of governments in some developing countries to respond to an outbreak.

The U.S. House of Representatives Intelligence Committee has received a briefing on the virus from the spy agencies.

"The Committee has received a briefing from the IC (intelligence community) on coronavirus, and continues to receive updates on the outbreak on a daily basis," an official of the House Intelligence Committee told Reuters.

"Addressing the threat has both national security and economic dimensions, requiring a concerted government-wide effort and the IC is playing an important role in monitoring the spread of the outbreak, and the worldwide response," the official added.

A source familiar with the activities of the Senate Intelligence Committee, led by Republican Senator Richard Burr and Democratic Senator Mark Warner, said the panel was receiving daily updates.

The role of U.S. intelligence agencies in responding to the coronavirus epidemic at this point principally involves monitoring the spread of the illness around the world and assessing the responses of governments.

They are working closely with health agencies, such as the U.S. Center for Disease Control, in sharing information they collect and targeting further intelligence gathering.

One source said U.S. agencies would use a wide range of intelligence tools, ranging

from undercover informants to electronic eavesdropping tools, to track the virus' impact.

[TN] Justice Dept. charges professor with hiding ties to China (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [2/27/2020 6:33 PM, Eric Tucker, AP, 1670K]

A professor at the University of Tennessee has been arrested on charges that he hid his relationship with a Chinese university while receiving research grants from the federal government, the Justice Department said Thursday.

Anming Hu, an associate professor in the department of mechanical, aerospace and biomedical engineering at the university's flagship Knoxville campus, was charged with three counts of wire fraud and three counts of making false statements.

After the indictment was announced, the university said Hu had been suspended and that school officials had cooperated.

"University leadership is fully committed to adherence to grant procedures and the protection of intellectual property," the school said in a statement.

The arrest is part of a broader Justice Department crackdown against university researchers who conceal their ties to Chinese institutions, with a Harvard chemistry professor recently arrested on similar charges. Federal officials have also asserted that Beijing is intent on stealing intellectual property from America's colleges and universities, and have actively been warning schools to be on alert against espionage attempts.

Prosecutors say Hu defrauded the National Aeronautics and Space Administration by failing to disclose the fact that he was also a professor at the Beijing University of Technology in China. Under federal law, NASA cannot fund or give grant money to Chinese-owned companies or universities.

According to the indictment, as the University of Tennessee last December was preparing a proposal on Hu's behalf for a NASA-funded project, Hu provided false assurances to the school that he was not part of any business collaboration involving China.

In addition, prosecutors say, a curriculum vitae that Hu submitted when he applied for a tenured faculty position with the university omitted any affiliation with the Beijing university.

"This is just the latest case involving professors or researchers concealing their affiliations with China from their American employers and the U.S. government," Assistant Attorney General John Demers, the Justice Department's top national security official, said in a statement. "We will not tolerate it."

A federal defender assigned to represent Hu declined to comment.

[OK] Chinese scientist sentenced to prison in US for technology theft (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [2/27/2020 5:23 PM, AFP, 1973K]

A Chinese scientist was sentenced to two years in prison on Thursday for stealing next-generation battery technology from the American petroleum company where he worked.

Hongjin Tan, 36, a Chinese national and permanent legal resident of the United States, was arrested in December 2018 and pleaded guilty in November of last year to stealing trade secrets.

US District Court Judge Gregory Frizzell of the Northern District of Oklahoma sentenced Tan to 24 months in federal prison and ordered him to pay \$150,000 in restitution to his former employer.

The market value of the next-generation battery technology Tan was accused of stealing was more than \$1 billion, the Justice Department said in a statement.

"This investigation and prosecution uncovered another instance of China's persistent attempts to steal American intellectual property," assistant attorney general John Demers said.

FBI special agent Melissa Godbold said "American companies invest heavily in advanced research and cutting-edge technology.

"Trade secret theft is detrimental to our national security and free-market economy," Godbold said. "It takes profits away from companies and jobs away from hard-working Americans."

Tan worked as an associate scientist for the US petroleum company from June 2017 until his arrest, the Justice Department said.

The department did not name the company but a LinkedIn page for Hongjin Tan identifies him as a staff scientist with the disruptive technologies team at Phillips 66 in Oklahoma.

He previously worked as a research assistant and visiting scientist at the California Institute of Technology, where he earned his doctorate.

[Mexico] Mexico Welcomes Cruise Ship Rejected in Jamaica for Coronavirus Fears (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [2/27/2020 11:25 AM, Ildefonso Ortiz and Brandon Darby, 1973K]

Mexico's federal government welcomed an Italian cruise ship that was rejected in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands amid fears of a possible Coronavirus case. The ship docked in Cozumel where health officials are expected to check passengers before disembarking.

"We cannot discriminate," said in Spanish Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez

Obrador during his daily morning press conference. "If there is any case detected it will be dealt with. We have information that there is no possibility of that, but anyways we cannot be inhumane."

The ship MSC Meraviglia, with approximately 4,500 passengers and 1,500 crew, recently sailed out of Miami. However, according to Milenio this week, the ship had not been allowed to dock in Jamaica or the Caymans after one passenger became ill and was suspected of carrying Coronavirus (Covid-19). That has since been denied by the cruise liner who claims that the passenger suffered from Type -A Flu and is making a recovery.

As of Thursday morning, the ship remains docked in Cozumel with passengers not allowed to disembark as health officials prepared the screening and interview process, local newspaper NotiCaribe reported.

Currently, Mexico does not have any confirmed cases of Coronavirus, however, on Wednesday evening, the Health Secretariat released an update claiming there was one suspicious case in Mexico City. Tests are pending in that case. Mexico has disclosed 18 suspicious cases that were all eventually cleared.

[Mexico] MSC cruise ship docks in Mexico following coronavirus scare; company says ill crew member diagnosed with flu (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [2/27/2020 9:37 AM, Janine Puhak, 8943K]

After being turned away from two ports in the Caribbean over coronavirus fears, the MSC Cruises' Meraviglia ship has arrived in Mexico and will dock in the port of Cozumel.

The Meraviglia, which is carrying over 6,000 people, was denied entry at permission to dock in Ocho Rios, Jamaica and Georgetown, Cayman Islands on Tuesday after it was reported that a crew member from the Philippines was ill. Local authorities feared the man may be sick with the COVID-19 coronavirus.

The Meraviglia reached the West Coast of Cozumel on Wednesday night around 9:30 p.m. ET, a spokesperson for MSC Cruises told Fox News on Thursday. The ship has berthed at Cozumel and currently awaits health officials, who will board and complete customary checks.

The ship departed Miami on Sunday and was scheduled to complete a 15-day cruise of Jamaica, the Cayman Islands, Mexico, Bahamas, Belize and Honduras, returning to Miami on March 8, per an itinerary.

The Meraviglia ship is said to be carrying over 4,500 passengers and 1,600 crew members.

Following the ship's double denials in the Caribbean, MSC said in a Wednesday statement that the crew member was ultimately diagnosed with the common seasonal flu, not the coronavirus. The man remains in stable condition and has nearly recovered after receiving anti-viral treatment and medication.

"Out of precaution, he was isolated from other crew members and guests from the moment that he showed symptoms and will remain so until he is fully recovered. No other cases of type A influenza have been reported on board MSC Meraviglia," the cruise line said. "Moreover, no cases of COVID-19 virus (coronavirus) have been reported on board MSC Meraviglia or any other ship in MSC Cruises' fleet."

MSC also claimed that the sick crew member and all passengers on the ship had passed a health screening before embarking on the ship over the weekend.

The cruise company further apologized to its guests for the missed stops in Ocho Rios and Georgetown.

It remains unclear exactly if and when those aboard the Meraviglia will be allowed to disembark in Cozumel, Reuters reports. Mexico's Health Ministry said that the MSC cruise ship was granted "free pratique" (permission) to enter the Cozumel port after it was determined that the vessel posed no risk of spreading disease.

As of Thursday morning, the coronavirus had infected more than 82,000 people globally, while the death toll has risen to at least 2,800.

[Denmark] Denmark sees first coronavirus case in man returning from Italy vacation (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [2/27/2020 10:24 AM, Madeline Farber, 8943K] Video: [HERE](#)
Denmark has officially confirmed its first case of the novel coronavirus.

A man returning from a ski trip in northern Italy tested positive, the Danish Health Authority said in a statement, according to Bloomberg.

The man, who was not identified, returned home on Monday from the trip and began experiencing symptoms of the virus — reported to include fever, cough and shortness of breath — on Wednesday. His wife and son, who also went on the ski trip, tested negative. All three are now quarantined in their home.

Danish health officials said the risk of coronavirus to the public is low.

The news comes as Italy — namely the Lombardy and Veneto regions — has seen an outbreak of the virus. As of late Wednesday, there were 447 cases in the country. At least 12 people have died.

Other countries have also reported their first cases of the novel virus in recent days. On Thursday, the World Health Organization (WHO) said seven other countries had reported cases of coronavirus for the first time, including Brazil, Georgia, Greece, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, and Romania.

"My message to each of these countries is, this is your window of opportunity. If you act aggressively now, you can contain this virus, you can prevent people from getting sick. You can save lives. My advice to these countries is to move swiftly,"

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

Worldwide, some 82,000 people have been sickened, while more than 2,800 have died, according to Thursday estimates.

[Turkey] President Erdogan's options narrow as Russia presses Syrian crisis to Turkey's doorstep (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [2/27/2020 11:54 AM, Jonathan Spicer and Khalil Ashawi, 5304K]

With nearly one million displaced Syrians massing near the Turkish border in the face of a Syrian government military offensive, President Tayyip Erdogan's options are narrowing.

He feels blindsided by Russia's push into Syria's Idlib region and the risk of full-blown conflict is growing, but Turkey's Erdogan remains hopeful a deal with Moscow may offer a way out of the crisis, according to Turkish government officials and other sources.

Erdogan has repeatedly warned that Turkey, which backs rebels in Syria's northwest province, would push Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's troops away from territory taken in the recent months if they didn't pull back by the end of February.

But as Saturday's deadline has drawn closer, the Russia-backed Syrian offensive has continued to gain ground and a third round of talks between Ankara and Moscow this week were not expected to quickly break the deadlock.

Turkish government and Syrian opposition military officials, diplomats and analysts said while a full-scale Turkish-backed military operation is still a possibility, depending on how hard Russia bargains, Erdogan is more likely at this late stage to agree a deal with Moscow that has him withdraw some of Turkey's military presence in exchange for a role in deciding Syria's future. They added that Erdogan has been taken aback by what Turkey views as Russian President Vladimir Putin's uncompromising stance in the field and in discussions.

A Turkish official told Reuters: "Turkey and Russia can still reach a compromise." But, "if there is no agreement and attacks on Turkish soldiers continue, the Idlib offensive will begin," referring to a direct Turkish military effort to retake territory.

Erdogan's office did not respond to a request for comment. He and aides have publicly said they want to solve the problem with Russia, but that Turkey's resolve should not be tested and it will not abandon observation posts in Idlib, some of which have been surrounded by Syrian forces.

Erdogan's decision will help define one of the worst humanitarian disasters so far this century, in which an estimated 900,000 Syrians – about half of whom are children – have been uprooted as they have fled the bombing of their towns and villages in recent months. In December, Moscow and Damascus, reinforced by Iran-backed fighters, launched the operation into the last big territory in northwest Syria held by opposition forces as they seek to end on Assad's terms nine years of a

bloody proxy that has resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of Syrians.

As Russian-backed Syrian government forces have pushed northwest, displaced Syrians have amassed along Turkey's closed southern border sleeping in tents or outside, with at least several children having died in freezing weather in recent months. "The bombing comes at us from everywhere... We no longer have any guarantor, not Turkey nor anyone else," said Mohamad Atouf, 31, sheltering with his wife and four children in an empty hut near the border town of Azaz.

Erdogan faces the competing demands of the welfare of the displaced Syrians and his support at home, where there is little appetite for adding to the 3.7 million Syrian refugees already in Turkey.

Turkey, which has sent thousands of troops and equipment into the region to support the rebels, has seen about 20 troops killed so far in February. Hundreds more troops stationed in the observation posts have been surrounded by Syrian government forces that have stormed across Idlib under cover of unrelenting Russian air strikes.

Fighting has raged in recent days and late Thursday Russian state television said Turkish military specialists targeted Russian planes with shoulder-fired missiles. Ankara didn't immediately publicly respond to the claim.

Faced with Russian air supremacy in Idlib, Erdogan's most likely action would be striking a ceasefire deal with Putin in which the Turkish leader walks back repeated threats of an offensive but saves face with a role in deciding Syria's future and in managing the migrant crisis, according to the government officials, diplomats and analysts.

Turkey, which opposes Assad and has supported some of the rebel fighters trying to topple him, hopes to re-impose the map of a 2018 Sochi agreement that called for a demilitarization zone around the Idlib region, but analysts said it would settle for a smaller zone of influence containing the displaced Syrians.

Syrian government forces have now taken about half of Idlib province and Assad has vowed to take back "every inch" of Syria.

Turkey remains hopeful of a deal. Erdogan had wanted Russian, German and French counterparts to meet on March 5 to discuss Idlib, but on Thursday the Kremlin said Putin had no plans for a meeting on that date. Germany and France have condemned the humanitarian crisis and urged an end to the conflict.

A separate Turkish official said a final resolution was unlikely until March 6, when leaders have floated but not confirmed a Turkey-Russia-Iran summit on Idlib.

The Kremlin did not immediately comment on prospects of a ceasefire. Vladimir Frolov, a former senior Russian diplomat, said Russia's position is full control of Syria by Assad with potentially a narrow strip in Idlib along the Turkish border controlled in part by Erdogan and policed by Russia. Though Turkey is unlikely to accept that, said analysts, diplomats and officials in Ankara.

“Turkey has no good options from now on,” said Sinan Ulgen, a former Turkish diplomat and currently chairman of the Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies, an Istanbul-based think tank. “This is why if there isn’t a ceasefire soon, Turkey will fight.”

On Wednesday, Erdogan restated his plans to push Syrian government forces away from its military observation posts in northwest Syria’s Idlib region by end-February.

Rebels backed by Turkey said on Thursday they recaptured the strategic town on Saraqeb.

While disputed by some, taking Saraqeb marks the first major reversal by Turkey-backed Syrian rebels and allowed them to re-gain a portion of the main north-south highway linking Syria’s main cities.

But Assad’s forces have continued to make advances elsewhere in the province in recent weeks, taking numerous other villages and towns in the south of Idlib province.

A Turkish offensive that would face Russia’s air dominance would pose huge risks for Turkey. While its military is the second largest in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Turkey would likely rely on artillery units near the border because it lacks U.S.-made surface-to-air defenses after Ankara opted last year to buy Russian-made S-400s.

NATO members could supply Turkey with equipment and intelligence but not intervene on Syrian soil, diplomats and Turkish officials said. NATO did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

[Turkey] US envoy says Russia faceoff shows Turkey its true ally (Breitbart)
[Breitbart](#) [2/27/2020 4:39 PM, Staff, 1973K]

The United States called Thursday on Turkey to learn from clashes in Syria who its true friends are and drop its purchase from Russia of a major missile defense system.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday called an urgent meeting after at least nine Turkish troops were killed in an air strike in Syria’s Idlib region.

Russia is backing a devastating offensive by President Bashar al-Assad’s regime in Idlib against rebel groups backed by Ankara.

Kay Bailey Hutchison, the US ambassador to NATO, said the Turks should see “who is their reliable partner and who isn’t.”

Turkey, a member of the Western alliance, defiantly began receiving deliveries last year of Russia’s S-400 missile system despite US warnings and eviction from the F-16 fighter-jet program.

“I hope that President Erdogan will see that we are the ally of their past and their future and they need to drop the S-400,” Hutchison told reporters in Washington.

“They see what Russia is, they see what they’re doing now, and if they are attacking Turkish troops, then that should outweigh everything else that is happening between Turkey and Russia,” she said.

Russia and Turkey agreed in 2018 to create a demilitarized zone in Idlib in an accord that has since fallen through.

The US says the S-400 system will hurt NATO by allowing Russia to improve its tracking of Western aircraft.

Turkey insists it will set up the S-400 in areas not frequented by US jets and it has not yet put the system into operation, giving Washington hope that Ankara may still change its mind.

[Syria] Turkey-Russia Tensions Soar After Dozens Die in Syria Strike (Bloomberg)

[Bloomberg](#) [2/28/2020 3:33 AM, Onur Ant, Selcan Hacaoglu, and Stepan Kravchenko, 6400K] Video [HERE](#)

Tensions soared between Turkey and Russia after an airstrike in Syria killed at least 33 Turkish soldiers, prompting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to turn to traditional allies in the West for military support.

Russia denied involvement, saying the Turkish troops had been “within the ranks of terrorist” groups that came under fire from Syrian government forces. When it was clear there were Turkish casualties, Russia “took exhaustive measures for a complete cessation of fire” by the Syrian military, the Defense Ministry in Moscow said Friday.

Erdogan, who has been careful so far not to publicly blame Russia, held a six-hour crisis meeting with his top security officials after the biggest single-day loss of Turkish troops in decades, vowing to strike back against Syrian government forces. NATO agreed to meet on Turkey’s request for consultations Friday. Raising pressure on the European Union, Turkish officials warned Thursday’s attack could lead them to allow more refugees from Syria across its borders to the continent.

Neither the U.S. nor Europe has shown any inclination to back Turkey militarily in Syria, where Erdogan is supporting the last major rebel outpost in the northwestern Idlib province against the government. The strike there also wounded 32 Turkish soldiers.

The Kremlin so far has been cool to Erdogan’s repeated appeals for talks with President Vladimir Putin. Russia accuses Turkey of backing terrorists in Syria and has stepped up air operations in support of Syrian government forces seeking to retake Idlib.

Turkey's benchmark Borsa Istanbul 100 Index plunged 10% in early trade, the most since June 2013, with the Syria tensions adding to a broader market selloff worldwide over the potential impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

Turkish NTV on Friday showed pictures of Syrian refugees apparently walking toward the border with Europe.

As the tensions rose, two Russian warships carrying Kalibr cruise missiles were sailing through the Dardanelles for a previously planned deployment off Syria, the official Tass news service reported, citing a statement from Russia's Black Sea fleet.

Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar and top military commanders flew to an operation center on the Syrian border, signaling a major counter-offensive against Syrian forces. Turkish troops along the 911-kilometer (566-mile) Syrian border were placed on alert and there was intense air activity along the frontier, NTV television reported.

"Assad and regime forces will pay a heavy price for this heinous attack," Turkey's Vice President Fuat Oktay said Friday.

Turkish military action against the Syrian government would risk drawing "even more countries into this conflict, which would be unacceptable," said Vladimir Dzhubarov, first deputy chairman of the Foreign Affairs committee in the upper house of Russia's parliament. "I hope our troops won't allow any hasty steps and Turkey won't cross the line beyond which direct military conflict could result," he said.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg "urged all parties to deescalate this dangerous situation" in a phone call with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu on Friday, according to an emailed statement. Envoys to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization will meet in Brussels to discuss the Syria situation.

Erdogan had earlier threatened to push back Syrian regime forces from Idlib -- where Turkish soldiers were helping enforce a tenuous cease-fire -- if they didn't withdraw by the end of February. His government reached out to the U.S. and Europe for assistance in stopping a major Syrian offensive on the province, where 51 Turkish soldiers have been killed so far this month.

Western capitals have shown little inclination to get involved.

Erdogan has acknowledged that his request for the U.S. to deploy Patriot missiles to deter Russian warplanes isn't likely to be fulfilled, and it was unclear whether other NATO allies could meet Turkey's request for missile-defense systems. Turkey's ties with its NATO allies have been strained over its purchase of an advanced Russian missile-defense system last year.

Turkish soldiers have been stationed at a dozen outposts in Idlib since a 2017 agreement with Russia and Iran to monitor a combat-free zone. In recent weeks, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces have intensified attacks on rebel positions

in the province, encircling some Turkish troops. Thursday's airstrike came after Turkey-backed forces recaptured the town of Saraqib, where at least one Turkish outpost is located.

"Erdogan backed himself into a corner by demanding Syrian forces withdraw," and he could resolve the situation without losing face by agreeing on new demarcation lines with Russia, said Elena Suponina, a Middle East expert based in Moscow. "It's a game of chicken. Since Erdogan started it, he should be the first one to stop," she said.

[Syria] Fears of escalation after 33 Turkish troops killed in Syria's Idlib (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [2/28/2020 3:37 AM, AFP, 1973K]

Turkey warned on Friday it was opening the gates for refugees to flee to Europe after an air strike blamed on Damascus killed 33 Turkish soldiers in Syria.

The international community voiced fears of a rapidly-rising risk of escalation after the attack by Russian-backed Syrian forces in the province of Idlib, where President Bashar al-Assad is waging a bloody campaign to oust rebels from their last holdout.

The deadly bombardment has added to weeks of growing tensions between rebel supporter and NATO member Ankara and Damascus ally Moscow.

Adding to the tensions, Moscow announced that two of its warships were transitting Friday through the Bosphorus Strait in Istanbul in plain sight of the city

The UN has repeatedly warned that the fighting in Idlib could potentially create the most serious humanitarian crisis since the start of the civil war start in 2011.

But Russian vetoes, often backed by China, have chronically crippled UN action in Syria.

Turkey retaliated to Thursday's strike by hitting Damascus regime targets "from the air and ground," President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's communications director Fahrettin Altun said.

The United States condemned the Syrian action, and NATO said it would hold urgent talks on the crisis on Friday.

In a move that could have major repercussions for Turkey's neighbours to the west, Ankara said it would open the way for refugees to go to Europe.

"We will no longer keep the doors closed for refugees who want to go to Europe," an official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

– Risk of 'bloodbath' –

Turkey also called on the international community to establish a no-fly zone over

Idlib, where regime forces have since December clawed back chunks of the region, forcing close to one million people to flee their homes and shelters amid bitter cold.

The United Nations said Monday that the latest fighting was coming “dangerously close” to encampments of the displaced, risking an imminent “bloodbath”.

Turkey, which is already home to around 3.6 million Syrian refugees, fears more people arriving in the country where there is growing popular discontent against their presence.

In a series of tweets, Altun accused Assad of “conducting ethnic cleansing” and seeking to drive millions of Syrians out of Idlib.

“These people will try to escape to Turkey and Europe. Already hosting close to 4 million refugees, we do not have the capacity and resources to allow entry to another million,” he wrote.

Groups of migrants have already moved towards western Turkey seeking to reach Greece, Turkey’s private DHA news agency reported.

– ‘Dangerous situation’ –

The international community voiced alarm over the latest violence in Idlib.

“Without urgent action, the risk of even greater escalation grows by the hour,” UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said in a statement, reiterating Secretary General Antonio Guterres’s call for an immediate ceasefire.

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg urged de-escalation by all parties of “this dangerous situation” and condemned the “indiscriminate air strikes”, in a phone call with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu.

A US State Department spokesperson said Washington stood by its NATO ally and continues to call “for an immediate end to this despicable offensive by the Assad regime, Russia and Iranian-backed forces”.

Under a 2018 deal with Russia meant to bring calm to Idlib, Turkey has 12 observation posts in the Idlib region — but several have come under fire from Assad’s forces.

In its first response to the Turkish deaths, Russia’s defence ministry said the troops were among “terrorist groups” and that they had not communicated their presence in the area.

Thursday’s attack brings to 53 the number of Turkish security personnel killed in Idlib so far this month.

– More civilians killed –

Elsewhere, jihadists and Turkish-backed rebels on Thursday re-entered Saraqeb, a key Idlib crossroads town they had lost earlier in February, reversing one of the main gains of the government's devastating offensive.

The counter-offensive could, however, be short-lived as Russian-backed Syrian troops continued to chip away at other parts of the rebel bastion, capturing 20 localities.

Seven civilians, including three children, were killed in regime and Russian bombardment of Idlib, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, adding to more than 400 such deaths since December.

State news agency SANA acknowledged there were "fierce clashes" between the army and "terrorist groups on the Saraqeb front".

An AFP correspondent accompanied the rebels into Saraqeb, where he found a ghost town of bombed out buildings.

The counter-attack temporarily reverses one of the key gains of the government since its offensive against the country's last rebel enclave in December.

The cash-strapped government had been keen to fully secure the M5, a highway that connects Syria's four main cities and passes through Saraqeb.

The Syrian Observatory said the air strikes were carried out by Russia, heavily criticised by the West for the high civilian death toll from its bombing campaign.

State media accused the "terrorists" of launching car bombings and other suicide attacks against government forces attempting to retake the town.

It said the army had inflicted heavy losses on the attackers, despite the military support it said they had received from Turkey.

Some 950,000 civilians have fled the government offensive, raising fears in Ankara of a new influx of refugees.

More than half a million of those displaced since December are children, tens of thousands of whom are sleeping rough in northern Syria's harsh winter.

Erdogan had vowed on Wednesday that Ankara would not take the "smallest step back" in the standoff with Damascus and Moscow over Idlib.

[Syria] Turkey suffers mass casualties in Syria airstrike (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [2/27/2020 6:30 PM, John Bowden, 1762K]

Turkish forces suffered heavy casualties on Thursday when dozens of troops were hit by an airstrike in northeastern Syria apparently ordered by the Syrian government.

The New York Times reported Thursday that at least 22 Turkish soldiers were killed in an airstrike on a Turkish observation post in Syria, with one Syrian aid agency telling the Times that the number of fatalities could be as high as 34.

A convoy resupplying the post was attacked, Turkish officials told the Times, before the post was hit by the airstrike. No Syrian forces on either side of the conflict were injured in the attack, according to the newspaper.

Turkish forces have launched a military offensive in previously Kurdish-held areas of northeastern Syria, where the Turkish government is attempting to resettle more than 1 million Syrian refugees who fled the waning Syrian civil war.

Kurdish and Syrian rebel groups operating in the area have reportedly called for assistance from Syria's government amid the offensive, resulting in Syrian forces circling Turkish military, according to the news source.

Thursday's offensive occurred in the war-torn Idlib Province, which has seen many families aligned with the rebel forces arrive as refugees throughout the course of the war. The area has become the last remaining stronghold of Syrian rebel forces.

[Syria] 29 Turkish soldiers killed in northeast Syria air strike (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [2/27/2020 10:21 PM, Bassem Mroue and Andrew Wilks, AP, 337K]

An air strike by Syrian government forces killed 29 Turkish soldiers in northeast Syria, a Turkish official said Friday, marking the largest death toll for Turkey in a single day since it first intervened in Syria in 2016.

The deaths were a serious escalation in the direct conflict between Turkish and Russia-backed Syrian forces that has been waged since early February.

Rahmi Dogan, the governor of Turkey's Hatay province bordering Syria's Idlib region, said 29 troops were killed and others were seriously wounded in the attack late Thursday. He said 39 injured were being treated in Turkish hospitals.

Three Turkish soldiers were killed earlier Thursday in Idlib. At least 50 have now been killed in Idlib since the start of February.

U.N. Secretary-General reiterated his call for an immediate cease-fire and expressed serious concern about the risk to civilians from escalating military actions," U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

"Without urgent action, the risk of even greater escalation grows by the hour," Dujarric said.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was holding an emergency security meeting in Ankara, state-run Anadolu news agency reported. Meanwhile Turkish Foreign Minister Mevut Cavusoglu spoke to NATO Secretary General Jens

Stoltenberg by telephone.

Erdogan's spokesman Ibrahim Kalin, who plays a senior role in foreign affairs, also spoke to U.S. National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien.

The air strike came after a Russian delegation spent two days in Ankara for talks with Turkish officials on the situation in Idlib, where a Syrian government offensive has sent hundreds of thousands of civilians fleeing towards the Turkish border.

The offensive has also engulfed many of the 12 military observation posts Turkey has in Idlib.

Fahrettin Altun, Erdogan's communications director, said "all known" Syrian government targets were under attack by Turkish air and land forces in response to the deaths.

Turkish television news channels aired black-and-white footage of air strikes on Syrian targets.

Omer Celik, spokesman for Erdogan's ruling party, said NATO should stand by Turkey's side. Ankara recently called for U.S. Patriot missiles to be deployed to defend its forces in Syria.

In a message seemingly aimed at Europe, he added: "Our refugee policy is the same but there's a situation there, we're no longer able to hold refugees."

Turkey hosts some 3.6 million Syrians and under a 2016 deal with the European Union agreed to step up efforts to halt the flow of refugees to Europe. Since then Erdogan has repeatedly threatened to "open the gates" in several disputes with European states.

Angry crowds gathered outside the Russian consulate in Istanbul, Anadolu said. Standing in front of a line of riot police and a water cannon, they chanted "Murderer Russia, murderer Putin."

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said at least 34 Turkish soldiers were killed in air strikes on Idlib on Thursday. It said the attacks occurred in an area between the villages of al-Bara and Baliun near the Jabal al-Zawiya region in the southern Idlib countryside. The Britain-based Observatory monitors the Syria war through a network of activists on the ground.

The air strike came after Turkey-backed Syrian opposition fighters retook a strategic northwestern town from government forces on Thursday, opposition activists said, cutting a key highway just days after the government reopened it for the first time since 2012.

Despite losing the town of Saraqeb, Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces made major gains to the south. Assad now controls almost the entire southern part of Idlib province after capturing more than 20 villages Thursday, state media and opposition

activists said. It's part of a weekslong campaign backed by Russian air power into Syria's last rebel stronghold.

Violence in Idlib province also left three more Turkish soldiers dead, according to Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, raising the number of Turkish troops killed in Syria this month to 21. Thousands of Turkish soldiers are deployed inside rebel-controlled areas of Idlib province, which is dominated by al-Qaida-linked militants.

Turkey's U.N. Ambassador Feridun Sinirlioglu told the Security Council on Thursday that Turkey was committed to upholding a fragile cease-fire agreement that Turkey and Russia reached on Idlib in 2018.

The Syrian government troops' "deliberate attacks on our forces has been a turning point. We are now determined more than ever to preserve Idlib's de-escalation status."

Syria's Defense Ministry said insurgents were using Turkey-supplied portable surface-to-air missiles to attack Syrian and Russian aircraft. It did not elaborate. Earlier this month, Turkish-backed opposition fighters shot down two helicopter gunships belonging to the Syrian military.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitoring group, said opposition fighters seized the town of Saraqeb after intense bombardment by Turkish troops. Turkey and Russia support opposite sides in Syria's brutal civil war, with Ankara backing the opposition and Moscow backing Assad.

Saraqeb's loss is a big setback for Assad. It sits on the strategic M5 highway linking the northern city of Aleppo with the capital, Damascus. Syrian troops recaptured the last rebel-controlled section of the M5 earlier this month. Officials had hailed the reopening of the motorway as a major victory in the nine-year conflict.

The Syrian government's military campaign to recapture Idlib province has triggered a humanitarian catastrophe and the war's largest single wave of displacement. According to the United Nations, almost 950,000 civilians have been displaced since early December, and more than 300 have been killed. Most have fled farther north to safer areas near the Turkish border, overwhelming camps already crowded with refugees in cold winter weather.

From inside Saraqeb, activist Taher al-Omar said the town is now under opposition control. He posted a video with a fighter saying the government forces "ran away like rats."

The Observatory said more than 60 fighters were killed on both sides since Wednesday, adding that government forces launched a counteroffensive later Thursday under the cover of Russian airstrikes to try retake the town.

Syrian state media reported intense clashes near Saraqeb, saying insurgents sent

suicide car bombs and that Turkish forces bombarded the area. It said a small group of insurgents reached the highway to score a “propaganda stunt,” adding that “Syrian troops are dealing with them.”

State TV later Thursday confirmed that insurgents have cut the highway, adding that fighting is ongoing in the area.

The Observatory also reported on the more than 20 villages captured Thursday by the government. It added that Syrian troops have now besieged another Turkish observation post in an area known as Sheer Maghar.

The government-controlled Syrian Central Military Media said government forces advancing from northern parts of Hama province met Thursday with forces moving from southern Idlib, bringing wide areas under Syrian army control.

If government forces now turn north, they can eventually reach another major highway known as the M4 that links Syria’s coastal region with the country’s west. Assad has vowed to retake all of Syria.

Assad’s forces have captured dozens of villages over the past few days, including major rebel strongholds.

However, Erdogan said Thursday that, “The situation in Idlib has turned in our favor.”

[Syria] Russia sends warships to Syria, blames Ankara for killing of Turkish troops (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [2/28/2020 4:27 AM, Staff, 23673K]

Russia on Friday said it was sending two warships armed with cruise missiles to waters off the Syrian coast and blamed Ankara for the killing of 33 Turkish soldiers in Syria’s Idlib region the previous day.

The killing of the Turkish soldiers on Thursday and the wounding of 32 others, announced by the governor in Turkey’s Hatay province bordering Syria, raised the Turkish military death toll in the region to 54 this month.

Turkey has sent thousands of troops and heavy military hardware into Syria and Erdogan has warned that Turkey will launch a full-scale offensive to repel Syrian forces unless they pull back from Turkish observation posts in the region.

Though trying to coordinate their efforts on Syria, Russia backs Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, while Turkey backs rebel forces opposing Assad.

Responding to Thursday’s killings, a senior Turkish official said on Friday that Ankara would no longer stop Syrian refugees from reaching Europe. Turkey blamed an air strike by Syrian government forces for the deaths.

Russia’s Defence Ministry was cited by the RIA news agency on Friday however as saying that the Turkish troops had been hit by artillery fire from Syrian government

forces who were trying to repel an offensive by rebel forces.

It was quoted as saying that Ankara had failed to notify Moscow of the presence of Turkish troops in the area hit by shelling despite being in regular communication with the Russian military.

The Turkish troops had been deployed directly alongside anti-government rebels, the ministry was cited as saying. But according to information provided by Turkey there were no Turkish troops in the area and Russia said that Turkish forces “shouldn’t have been there.”

Russian war planes did not carry out any air strikes in the area at the time of the incident and Moscow did everything it could to help once it learnt of the Turkish troop presence, the ministry was cited as saying.

That included ensuring Syrian forces stopped shelling to allow Turkey to evacuate its dead and wounded.

Separately, and as tensions between Ankara and Damascus rose, Russia’s Black Sea Fleet was cited by the Interfax news agency on Friday as saying it was sending two warships equipped with Kalibr cruise missiles to waters off the Syrian coast.

[Syria] Russia sends warships to Syria, blames Ankara for killing of Turkish troops (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [2/28/2020 4:15 AM, Anton Kolodyazhnyy, Tom Balmforth, 3020K]

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[Syria] U.S. Senator Graham Calls for No-Fly Zone in Syria's Idlib (US News & World Report)

[US News & World Report](#) [2/27/2020 4:57 PM, Humeyra Pamuk, Reuters, 3020K] U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham on Thursday called for the establishment of a no-fly zone over Syria's Idlib and called on President Donald Trump to help stop the killing of civilians there by Syrian government forces backed by Russia and Iran.

"The world is sitting on its hands and watching the destruction of Idlib by Assad, Iran, and the Russians," Graham, a Republican and an ally of Trump, said in a statement. "I am confident if the world, led by the United States, pushed back against Iran, Russia, and Assad that they would stand down, paving the way for political negotiations to end this war in Syria."

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces have pushed hard in recent months to retake the last large rebel-held region in northwestern Syria after nine years of war that has displaced millions and killed hundreds of thousands.

Turkey has sent thousands of troops and heavy military hardware into Idlib province in an incursion to back the rebels against the offensive and have come under multiple attacks by Syrian government forces backed by Moscow.

Late on Thursday, Governor of Turkish southern province of Hatay bordering Syria, said 22 soldiers were killed in an air strike by Syrian government forces in Idlib. But war monitor Syrian Observatory said at least 34 Turkish soldiers were killed.

Kay Bailey Hutchison, U.S. Ambassador to NATO, responding to the latest incident in a briefing, said she hoped that Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan would see who Ankara's reliable ally is, alluding to the United States.

"I hope President Erdogan will see that we are the ally of their past and their future," she said. "They see what Russia is, they see what they're doing now," she told reporters in a briefing. She repeated Washington's call on Ankara to walk away from the purchase of the Russian missile defense system.

Turkey and the United States have been at loggerheads over Ankara's decision to buy the Russian S-400 systems. Washington has threatened to impose sanctions on its NATO ally Turkey if Ankara refused to drop the weapons.

[Saudi Arabia] Saudi Arabia Bans Travel to Mecca, Medina over Coronavirus (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [2/27/2020 10:41 AM, Frances Martel, 1973K]

The government of Saudi Arabia banned travel to the holiest cities in Islam, Mecca and Medina, on Thursday and banned all tourist visas to people from nations affected by the Chinese coronavirus.

Saudi Arabia has expressed concern over the potential of a coronavirus outbreak within its borders as it has become surrounded by Middle Eastern countries with confirmed cases. Egypt, Oman, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Iran, and Iraq have all documented cases. Iran's situation is the most alarming, as the country has not publicly confirmed a "patient zero" – the first person in the country to have it – and not traced the outbreak's origin, so it is spreading in public uncontrolled.

Saudi Arabia attracts millions of Muslim tourists and pilgrims as it is home to the religion's holiest sites. On Thursday, it announced that it had limited entry of Muslims for the Umrah, a religious pilgrimage to the holy sites that can take place at any time of year. It is separate from the mandatory pilgrimage, the Hajj, which can only take place during the last month of the Islamic calendar.

Al-Arabiya, a Saudi outlet, listed 20 countries whose citizens were banned from entering the country, including Taiwan. Hong Kong and Macau, autonomous Chinese communities, joined China on the list. Among the other nations listed were Indonesia, Malaysia, Italy, Iran, Japan, Singapore, and Afghanistan.

Riyadh also independently banned travel to Mecca and Medina from any foreign country, according to al-Arabiya.

"The extraordinary decision by Saudi Arabia prevents foreigners from reaching the holy city of Mecca and the Kaaba, the cube-shaped structure the world's 1.8 billion Muslims pray towards five times a day. It also said travel was suspended to Prophet Muhammad's mosque in Medina," al-Arabiya noted. The publication noted that Mecca had been home to several disease outbreaks throughout history, as so many people from around the world assembled there annually.

"The earliest recorded outbreak came in 632 as pilgrims fought off malaria. A cholera outbreak in 1821 killed an estimated 20,000 pilgrims. Another cholera outbreak in 1865 killed 15,000 pilgrims and then spread worldwide," the outlet recalled.

“Saudi Arabia renews its support for all international measures to limit the spread of this virus and urges its citizens to exercise caution before travelling to countries experiencing coronavirus outbreaks,” the Saudi foreign ministry said. “We ask God Almighty to spare all humanity from all harm.”

The Saudi government appears concerned that the ongoing coronavirus outbreak will affect the Hajj, which will occur somewhat early this year in late July.

The decision prompted disappointment from Jakarta, where the Indonesian foreign minister urged Saudi Arabia to reconsider its ban on tourist visas for the country on the basis that it has not documented any cases of the virus. Indonesian health authorities alarmed the world this week, however, after a Japanese man returned from the country and tested positive for the virus in Tokyo. Following the revelation, Indonesian officials insisted that he had not tested positive while in Indonesia and, more bafflingly, that he had not tested positive for “COVID-19,” but for “Sars-CoV-2.” The World Health Organization (WHO), in a bid to distance the virus from its Chinese origins, named it “Sars-CoV-2;” “COVID-19” is the name of the disease that the virus causes.

“Indonesia’s Ambassador [to Saudi Arabia] Agus Maftuh Abegebriel is currently approaching the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia so Indonesia’s Umrah pilgrims who have already obtained Umrah visas to enter Saudi Arabian territory, with the consideration that Indonesia is not among the countries contaminated by the coronavirus [that causes] COVID-19,” Jakarta’s embassy in Riyadh said in a statement. The decision reported affects about 200 people. Saudi officials have not issued any remarks on their decision regarding Indonesia’s petition.

The novel coronavirus outbreak originated in Wuhan, China, and has infected nearly 85,000 people, most in China, as of Thursday. In the Middle East, Iran has the highest death rate and most potential to become an epidemic hotspot. According to Iranian officials, doctors have documented 245 cases and 26 deaths – a mortality rate of about 14 percent, much higher than the two-percent average around the world. Iran has documented more deaths from coronavirus than any other nation besides China.

The coronavirus, like its related viruses the common cold and SARS, causes respiratory infections. Some patients are asymptomatic or exhibit only mild symptoms. Others progress to pneumonia and death.

In Iran, experts believe the high death rate is a product of poor testing methods in which Iranian health officials only have access to severe cases that end up in hospitals. Iranian health officials have not implemented routine testing of everyone in affected regions the way China has, or even testing at points of entry like the United States.

Iran has repeatedly insisted it has the outbreak under control. In response to an Iranian lawmaker accusing the government about lying about the number of cases and hiding as many as 50 deaths this week, Health Ministry official Iraj Harirchi said,

“this number is false. This is not the time for political confrontations.”

Harirchi announced a day after that statement that he himself had tested positive for coronavirus. Rumors also began circulating Thursday that Iranian Vice President Masoumeh Ebtekar has also tested positive.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani announced on Wednesday that the nation had begun manufacturing homemade coronavirus testing kits and that it would soon distribute “hundreds of thousands and even millions of these kits” in domestic hospitals. Rouhani did not specify what technology Iran was using in those kits or how it engineered them compared to testing kits used by China or the WHO.

[Syria] NATO Envoys to Meet to Discuss Syria at Turkey’s Request (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [2/28/2020 4:06 AM, Tuvan Gumrukcu and by John Chalmers, 23673K]

NATO ambassadors will meet in Brussels at Turkey’s request on Friday to hold consultations about developments in Syria, the alliance said after the killing of 33 Turkish soldiers in a Syrian air strike in the Idlib region.

“The North Atlantic Council, which includes the ambassadors of all 29 NATO Allies, will meet on Friday 28 February, following a request by Turkey to hold consultations under article 4 of NATO’s founding Washington Treaty on the situation in Syria,” NATO said in a statement.

Under article 4 of the Treaty, any ally can request consultations whenever, in the opinion of any of them, their territorial integrity, political independence or security is threatened.

A NATO official said the alliance ambassadors would meet at around 10 a.m. (0900 GMT).

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu spoke to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg by phone late on Thursday.

NATO said that Stoltenberg would hold a news conference at around 11:45 a.m. (1045 GMT) after the envoys’ meeting.

A senior Turkish official said Ankara would no longer stop Syrian refugees from reaching Europe.

The pro-government Demiroren news agency reported that some 300 migrants, including women and children, were walking northwest toward Turkey’s border with Greece.

The threat to open the way for refugees to Europe would, if executed, reverse a pledge Turkey made to the European Union in 2016 and could quickly draw Western

powers into the standoff over Idlib and stalled negotiations between Ankara and Moscow.

[Iran] U.S. Maintains Pressure on Iran, Stalling Diplomacy While Expecting Attacks (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [2/27/2020 1:03 PM, Lara Jakes, Edward Wong, and Julian E. Barnes 23673K]

The United States and Iran may have pulled back from the brink of war, but they have refused to stand down since the American drone strike in January that killed Maj. Gen. Qassim Suleimani, commander of Tehran's elite Quds Force.

Instead, the two adversaries have needled each other with increasing pressure. The Trump administration has imposed new sanctions against Iran, while Tehran has flouted Washington's warnings by shipping weapons to Shiite allies in the Middle East. Iranian-backed militias continue to attack bases in Iraq where Americans are deployed.

The stalemate could last for another year at least, officials and experts say. As Iran grapples with a severe coronavirus outbreak and occasional protests, its leaders are signaling it will wait out the American presidential election in November to decide whether to open new nuclear negotiations with world powers. In the meantime, Congress wants to clip President Trump's authority to strike Iran.

With Secretary of State Mike Pompeo scheduled to brief the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Friday about the administration's next steps, here is a look at where things stand.

The administration is sticking with 'maximum pressure.'

Mr. Pompeo will be asked about the decision to kill General Suleimani in a Jan. 3 strike in Baghdad after an Iranian-backed militia had protested at the American Embassy. But Congress appeared unconvinced of the urgency of the strike: Both the House and Senate have since voted to restrain Mr. Trump's war powers against Iran.

Over the last two months, the Trump administration has imposed more sanctions against Iran's oil exports, metals, manufacturing and textile industries, as well as against some of the country's military commanders, senior officials in its government and officials involved in its elections and nuclear program. On Wednesday, the State Department added the leader of the Iranian-backed Kataib Hezbollah militia in Iraq and Syria to its list of foreign terrorists.

The sanctions are the main tool being wielded by the Trump administration in its push for new limits to Tehran's nuclear and military programs.

But the American campaign could backfire if the sanctions so weaken Iran's economy that its citizens become more dependent on the government for a lifeline, experts say.

“It’s been very effective in damaging Iran’s economy,” said Hussein Ibish, a scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington. “But you have to ask, ‘To what end?’”

Mr. Pompeo insists it is, but continuing violence exposes the challenges to the policy.

The strike on General Suleimani “provided the Iranians with a deep knowledge that our notion of deterrence is real,” Mr. Pompeo said in Saudi Arabia last week.

General Suleimani’s death was the climax of tit-for-tat violence that began on Dec. 27, when an American interpreter was killed and others wounded in a rocket attack on an Iraqi base carried out by militias supported by Iran. The Pentagon responded by bombing militia members in Iraq and Syria. That led to the riot outside the American Embassy in Baghdad on Dec. 31.

Iran retaliated to General Suleimani’s death by firing missiles at American troops at two Iraqi military bases on Jan. 8. Nobody was killed, but more than 100 troops have reported brain injuries.

Iranian-backed militias have since resumed attacks on the American Embassy and Iraqi bases where U.S. troops are stationed. And Iran was caught this month shipping anti-aircraft missiles to Houthi rebels in Yemen.

One senior Iraqi official said the rocket attacks on compounds hosting Americans have become increasingly worrisome. Some rockets are landing closer to frequently-populated facilities, and Iraqi security forces have found nearby staging platforms equipped to launch up to 36 rockets at a time.

In recent months, Mr. Trump has deployed thousands of additional troops to the region.

Are American allies on board?

European allies and other world powers have opposed the sanctions against Iran — particularly the oil embargo — while Arab Gulf States have supported them. But both sides are now united over worries that the American pressure campaign will end any hope of negotiating a new nuclear agreement.

In Europe, officials do not believe the maximum pressure campaign has curbed Iran’s pursuit of a nuclear weapon.

One European diplomat said many Europeans remain concerned that the Trump administration is pursuing regime change — even though American officials insist that is not the goal. That diplomat added that, while the government in Tehran seemed shaken by the recent events, including the accidental downing of a Ukrainian airliner and the protests that followed, it is not likely to fall.

Nor do diplomats expect Iran to step back from its support for proxy militias or halt covert attacks. Arab states have warned of widening violence in the region if Tehran feels pushed too hard by the United States.

Anti-American sentiments in Iraq are already on the rise, an American official said. A Middle East diplomat also predicted that Iran will carry out more attacks — similar to those against key oil fields in Saudi Arabia or oil tankers around the Strait of Hormuz — to test the Trump administration.

Even Senator Lindsey Graham, Republican of South Carolina and an Iran hawk, has recognized that the Trump administration is offering nothing to entice Iran to come to the negotiating table. Mr. Graham has told people he is working on potential inducements for Washington to offer Tehran.

New nuclear negotiations are unlikely soon.

Two senior Middle Eastern officials who speak to the Trump administration regularly on Iran said they do not expect Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran, to agree to start new negotiations with the United States soon. Instead, they said, he will wait to see the outcome of the American presidential election in November before deciding on a new strategy.

Mr. Trump said he wants to strike a new deal with Iran that is more expansive than the 2015 nuclear treaty that the Obama administration brokered with world powers and Tehran — and from which Mr. Trump withdrew the United States in 2018. Trump administration officials say they are looking not only for tougher restrictions on Iran's nuclear program, but also for limits on its ballistic missile efforts and its support for regional militias.

Foreign diplomats said Mr. Pompeo wants future negotiations to include more parties — adding Israel, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to the talks that were previously held among Britain, France, Germany, China, Russia, the United States and the European Union.

As a way around the American sanctions, European officials are creating a barter system to continue trade with Iran and, in turn, keep the 2015 nuclear deal alive, even though Iran has violated the boundaries of the agreement since Mr. Trump's withdrawal from it. In January, Britain, France and Germany put Iran on notice that it would reimpose international sanctions if Tehran did not comply with the deal.

At a meeting on Wednesday of the deal's remaining signers, Iranian diplomats said they were eager to salvage the agreement.

Is it regime change or regime 'disruption'?

Senior State Department officials have told foreign diplomats that Iran's leaders are "finished," and that Tehran is running out of money, according to Western officials.

Brian H. Hook, the State Department's special representative on Iran, said Tehran is

facing its “worst financial crisis and its worst political unrest in its 40-year history.”

Last week, Mr. Hook seized on rigged parliamentary elections in Iran as the latest opportunity to encourage domestic opposition, which flared last fall against the government.

However, “I don’t think we’re under any delusions that the regime will collapse tomorrow,” said Mark Dubowitz, chief executive of Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a Washington think tank that consults closely with the Trump administration on Iran policy. “We think there will be continued instability inside Iran, because these protests will break out with greater potency and frequency.”

Last year, on “Intelligence Matters,” a podcast hosted by Michael J. Morrell, a former acting C.I.A. director, Mr. Pompeo defined the goal of the pressure campaign as creating conditions to turn the opinion of Iranians against their government.

“Essentially, he admitted their policy is regime change,” Mr. Morrell said.

American intelligence officials who brief Congress have said that the Iranian government remains stable, even if under pressure.

“I think the administration, in candor, does not even have a strategy for what would replace the regime,” said Rep. Ro Khanna, Democrat of California and a member of the House Armed Services Committee. He called the American pressure campaign “purely punitive.”

And even if the 80-year-old Ayatollah Khamenei left power, diplomats and experts said, his replacement might be even less inclined to pursue diplomacy with the United States.

“The people have no say in the matter,” said Haleh Esfandiari, founding director of the Middle East Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center. “Nor is the selection of a moderate cleric as successor likely.”

[Iran] Iran Vice President Is One of 7 Officials to Contract Coronavirus (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [2/27/2020 5:07 PM, Farnaz Fassihi and Rick Gladstone, 23673K]

A senior figure in Iran’s government, who sits just a few seats away from President Hassan Rouhani at cabinet meetings, has fallen ill with coronavirus, making her Iran’s seventh official to test positive, including one prominent cleric who has died.

Vice President Masoumeh Ebtekar, Mr. Rouhani’s deputy for women’s affairs and the highest-ranking woman in the government, has a confirmed coronavirus infection and is quarantined at home, her deputy said Thursday.

The disclosure came a day after a cabinet meeting in which she was in close contact with other government leaders, including Mr. Rouhani. A photo posted by a BBC Persia reporter on Twitter showed she had been sitting a few yards from the

president.

Ms. Ebtekar, one of four vice presidents, was known to Americans as “Mary” during the Tehran hostage crisis four decades ago, when, as a young revolutionary, she was a spokeswoman for the captors of the 52 Americans held at the United States Embassy.

Iran now appears to have the highest number of government officials infected by the coronavirus, which was first officially reported in the holy Iranian city of Qom on Feb. 19. The disease is believed to have spread to the country from China, which has maintained close economic relations with the Tehran government despite American sanctions.

A regional crossroads, Iran also appears to be a primary source of the infections that have spread to neighbors.

At least 245 people have been infected in Iran, with 26 deaths, Health Ministry officials said Thursday, most of them in Qom, a destination for Shiite pilgrims.

But health experts estimate the number of infections is far higher, possibly over a thousand, because the country’s fatality rate of about 20 percent seems so high. The World Health Organization has said the fatality rate is about 2 percent.

Cases surfacing in recent days in Bahrain, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Oman, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan and Kuwait all have afflicted people who had visited Iran. There were unconfirmed reports Thursday that Austria’s foreign minister, Alexander Schallenberg, was being tested for a coronavirus infection after returning home from Iran and showing symptoms.

Besides Ms. Ebtekar, the other Iranian officials infected include: Mojtaba Zolnour, a member of Parliament from Qom and head of Parliament’s national security and foreign policy committee; Mahmoud Sadeghi, an outspoken member of Parliament from Tehran; Iraj Harirchi, the deputy health minister who had been leading the effort to contain the coronavirus; Morteza Rahmanzadeh, the mayor of a Tehran district; Dr. Mohamad Reza Ghadir, head of coronavirus management in Qom and director of the city’s state medical university, and Hadi Khosroshahi, a prominent cleric and former ambassador to the Vatican.

Mr. Khosroshahi, 81, died, Iran’s official media reported. Elham Sheikhi, a professional athlete and member of the women’s national soccer team in her early 20s, also died after contracting the illness.

Despite earlier claims by the Iranian authorities that the coronavirus risk is under control and that its extent has been exaggerated by enemy propaganda to sow panic, they canceled Friday Prayers in Tehran and 22 other cities, and ordered schools and universities closed until the end of the Iranian year on March 21. All cultural and sports events will remain shut down for another week, the Ministry of Culture said.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman, Seyed Abbas Mousavi, said Iran would receive 20,000 coronavirus test kits from China on Friday, transported via Mahan Air, an Iranian carrier that is still flying between China and Iran.

And a Health Ministry spokesman, Kianoush Jahanpur, said the number of laboratories testing for coronavirus had increased to seven from two, and would total 22 by the end of next week. "This level of laboratory capacity is unique compared to similar on par countries, and it will suffice our needs," he said in a social media posting.

In a further sign that the authorities are taking the contagion threat more seriously, Iranian state media reported that Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, had met with top medical officials on Thursday, wished them success in this "difficult and momentous task," and expressed hope that "the malicious virus will be uprooted as soon as possible."

Ali Ebrazeh, a deputy health official in Qom, said the city was prepared to create a field hospital and that the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps and army would erect hospitals there if the number of patients increases.

"If health precautions are not followed in Qom, we will end up needing 2-3,000 more hospital beds," Mr. Ebrazeh was quoted by BBC Persia as saying.

The coronavirus hit Iran as the country of 80 million is suffering its most serious economic problems in many years, at least partly attributable to American sanctions that have choked Iran's ability to sell oil and conduct international banking.

The mixed messaging from the Iranian government on the coronavirus could further worsen its credibility problems inside the country, where anger has simmered over a deadly crackdown on economic protests in November and an attempt to cover up the accidental downing of Ukrainian jetliner last month in Tehran.

"The government appears unable to grasp the scope or severity of the coronavirus outbreak," the Eurasia Group, a political risk consultancy, said in an emailed advisory to clients this week.

The advisory, written by Henry Rome, the group's Iran specialist, and Scott Rosenstein, its global health adviser, said Mr. Khamenei and his subordinates "are probably unwilling to take decisive steps that could unsettle a population already under extreme pressure from U.S. sanctions."

[Iran] Iranian Vice President Tests Positive for Coronavirus (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [2/27/2020 4:33 PM, John Hayward, 1973K]

According to Iranian state media, the rapidly-spreading coronavirus epidemic claimed Vice President for Women and Family Affairs Masoumeh Ebtekar as a new patient on Thursday, the first member of President Hassan Rouhani's cabinet to test positive for the disease.

Al-Arabiya News reported on Thursday that several other high-ranking Iranian officials have taken ill, and one former ambassador has been killed by the coronavirus:

Earlier today, the chairman of the Iranian parliament's national security and foreign affairs committee Mojtaba Zolnour announced in a video that he had also been infected with the disease.

Two other Iranian officials – Member of Parliament Mahmoud Sadeghi and Deputy Health Minister Iraj Haririchi – have also previously confirmed that they have been infected with the disease.

State media also reported on Thursday that Iranian cleric Hadi Khosroshahi died from coronavirus in Qom.

Khosroshahi served as Iran's ambassador to the Vatican following the 1979 revolution.

Ebtekar attended a cabinet meeting on Wednesday at which Rouhani was also present. Evidently no one at the meeting was wearing a protective mask.

Ebtekar is one of about a dozen vice presidents in the Iranian government. Raised in Philadelphia and fluent in English, she is best known outside of her country as "Screaming Mary" or "Mother Mary," the very hostile English-language spokesperson for the Iranian terrorists who took 52 Americans hostage for 444 days during the Iranian Islamic revolution of 1979.

At the cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Rouhani said the Iranian regime will continue to "only quarantine individuals," but not entire cities such as Qom, the center of the Iranian outbreak and the location of a Shiite shrine that is still attracting pilgrims.

Rouhani said he has received "promising" reports from the Iranian health ministry, which claimed "at least 10 percent" of the patients hospitalized or monitored for the coronavirus are being discharged every day. Iran has thus far reported 139 infections and 19 fatalities.

"We will definitely be victorious against this virus in the next few weeks," Deputy Health Minister Iraj Haririchi said in the videotaped message he issued on Tuesday to announce he has contracted the coronavirus. Haririchi said he has "isolated" himself to contain the infection.

The day before he announced he was sick, Haririchi gave a bizarre press conference in which he dismissed quarantines as a "Stone Age" approach and denied his government is covering up the true extent of the epidemic. Haririchi was visibly sick during this tirade.

Iranian doctors speaking anonymously have told foreign media they were threatened by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and told to keep quiet about the real coronavirus statistics, which they say are much worse than the numbers

published by the regime. One of the doctors predicted Iran's situation could become "many times worse than in China."

The head of a medical university in Qom publicly stated that doctors have been ordered not to disclose coronavirus statistics to the public. Most testing has been routed through Iran, a cumbersome process that jeopardizes patients, but gives the regime the power to control how many cases are divulged to the public and the outside world.

Health experts have noted that Iran's claimed mortality rate from the coronavirus is up to ten times higher than the rate reported by other countries, which suggests that either a large number of mild infections are not being detected by Iranian doctors – a grim possibility from the standpoint of controlling the epidemic, since it would mean many contagious Iranians have not been detected – or the government is lying about the total number of infections while admitting to deaths that cannot easily be concealed.

[Iran] Iran coronavirus deaths jump to 26, top officials infected (Breitbart)
[Breitbart](#) [2/27/2020 1:00 PM, Staff, 1973K]

The coronavirus epidemic in Iran has cost 26 lives, the health ministry announced Thursday, with a vice president becoming the latest top official to be infected as the spread appeared to accelerate.

Health ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour told a news conference that the tally of infections had risen to 245 with 106 more cases confirmed — the highest number for a single day since Iran announced its first infections on February 19.

The Islamic republic has the highest death toll from the virus outside China, where COVID-19 first emerged.

Among the latest coronavirus sufferers is one of Iran's seven vice presidents, Massoumeh Ebtekar, who oversees women's affairs.

Ebtekar, a former spokeswoman for students who took 52 Americans hostage at the US embassy in Tehran in 1979, is being treated at home and members of her team have been tested, state news agency IRNA reported.

Mojtaba Zolnour, head of parliament's national security and foreign affairs committee, also contracted the virus, appearing in a video posted by Fars news agency saying he was in self-quarantine.

The cleric is a deputy for the Shiite holy city of Qom in central Iran where the country's first cases were detected.

According to media reports, among the deceased in Qom on Thursday was theologian Hadi Khorroshahi, who in 1981 was named Iran's first ambassador to the Vatican.

The announcement by Zolnour comes two days after another top official, deputy health minister Iraj Harirchi, head of the government's coronavirus task force, said he too had contracted the virus.

Must 'not gather'

On Wednesday, Iranian authorities announced domestic travel restrictions for people with confirmed or suspected infections.

They also placed curbs on access to major Shiite pilgrimage sites, including the Imam Reza shrine in second city Mashhad and the Fatima Masumeh shrine in Qom.

Visitors to the shrines will be allowed to visit on condition they are provided "with hand-washing liquids, proper (health) information, masks", Health Minister Saeed Namaki said.

They must "not gather together in groups but just pray and leave", he said.

In a rare move, authorities announced the cancellation of the main Friday weekly prayers in Tehran, Qom and Mashhad as well as in the capitals of 22 of Iran's 31 provinces and other infected areas.

School closures have been extended in affected areas and universities are to remain closed for another week starting from Saturday.

"All of these decisions are temporary and if the situation changes, we might intensify or ease them," Namaki said.

In a message of thanks to doctors and nurses, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said he hoped their efforts would help "eradicate this sinister virus soon".

International health experts have expressed concern about Iran's handling of the outbreak. But Tehran insists the situation has been "improving".

[Afghanistan] U.S.-Taliban Deal Brings Shaky Hope for Peace in Two-Decade War (Bloomberg)

[Bloomberg](#) [2/28/2020 12:00 AM, Eltaf Najafizada and Nick Wadhams, 6400K]

The U.S. is ready to take its biggest step toward ending the two-decade war in Afghanistan on Saturday with the signing of a peace deal with the Taliban, the fundamentalist Islamic group ousted by American forces after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

The accord to be signed in Qatar rests on a simple exchange: The U.S. will start withdrawing some of its 13,000 troops in the country in exchange for a Taliban pledge to cut ties with all terrorists and prevent Afghan territories from becoming militant havens. The Taliban must also begin talks with negotiators from the Afghan government, opposition and civil society for a lasting cease-fire and, the U.S. hopes, an eventual political deal.

It's an enormous gamble born of President Donald Trump's desire to end what he called "endless wars," and bring American troops home. A conflict that started over the Taliban's refusal to hand over al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden has since become America's longest conflict, taking the lives of more than 2,400 U.S. soldiers and costing taxpayers an estimated \$900 billion.

The accord is being greeted with a mix of hope and fear by Afghans exhausted by the endless war but fearful that the Taliban will recapture control and reimpose draconian rule that limits freedom and bars women from education and public life.

Despite the U.S. efforts, the Taliban is now at its strongest since being forced from power a generation ago. It contests or controls about half the country, while opium production is soaring and civilian casualties are near their highest since data started being tracked a decade ago.

The United Nations estimates that more than 100,000 Afghans have been wounded or killed in the past ten years alone. Even as Taliban and U.S.-backed Afghan forces have fought to a stalemate, Islamic State terrorists gained a foothold in the country long known as the "graveyard of empires."

"Everyone is tired of war," said Masood Mahfuz, 42, whose brother was killed in a Taliban bombing three years ago. "We are thirsty for peace. The only way is to make peace with the Taliban and forget the past."

U.S. military commanders long ago assessed that the war would be unwinnable absent the presence of tens of thousands of more troops and a broad political accord. Trump, who railed against the Afghan war before becoming a presidential candidate, authorized peace talks overseen by Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad to start in September 2018.

"This is the best chance yet I've seen in 15 years to move the peace process forward," said Andrew Wilder, the vice president for Asia Programs at the U.S. Institute of Peace who spent more than 10 years overseeing humanitarian programs in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

But the deal being signed -- after a seven-day reduction in violence by both sides -- raises hard questions about whether the U.S. departure will really lead to Taliban-Afghan talks, what the future of women's rights will be and whether the country can move on from decades of conflict.

The agreement comes as the Afghan government is in turmoil. The results of the country's September election, announced this month, are disputed. President Ashraf Ghani claimed victory while his rival, Abdullah Abdullah, rejected the results as hopelessly flawed.

Yet, under pressure from the U.S., Ghani agreed to postpone his inauguration as the signing goes ahead.

The next milestone is supposed to be talks in Oslo, perhaps as early as mid-March, where the Taliban and Afghan government negotiators are to sit down across the table from each other. But the Taliban have repeatedly refused to talk with Ghani's government, calling it a U.S. puppet. And Afghan leaders, divided themselves, refuse to recognize the Taliban's Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

So while the U.S.-Taliban negotiations may have been fraught so far, the hardest part lies ahead.

For ordinary Afghan citizens, the doubts linger: Have the talks so far merely been a ruse by the Taliban, which will move to expand its authority once the Americans depart? Why would the fundamentalist group stop fighting now, with the Afghan government under such pressure? The distrust may be too deep to bridge.

"A peace deal with the Taliban is a waste of time," said Said Khaleda Ahmadi, 29, who works in the government. "They must be killed and rooted out wherever they are."

Skeptics inside Afghanistan argue that restrictions on women remain severe in areas controlled by the Taliban. Women are whipped for speaking to male strangers and girls, in many cases, still can't go to school. Underage girls are married off to much older men.

"First, the U.S. tells us 'we are behind you' but on the other hand they say 'get united and carry the burden on your own shoulders,'" said Mahboba Saraj, a board member of Kabul-based Afghan Women's Network. "We don't know what they mean by saying that. Will they leave us behind?"

Women's Rights

The U.S. has made clear its priorities focus on counterterrorism. Pressed by reporters at a briefing on Feb. 25, Secretary of State Michael Pompeo underscored that any political deal must be worked out by Afghan negotiators, with the U.S. in an observer role. He declined to say how the U.S. might seek to protect the rights of women and other vulnerable groups.

"The United States effort is to let the Afghans lead this process, and they'll come up with a resolution that is, I'm sure, uniquely theirs, just like every nation across the world does," Pompeo said.

Wilder, of the U.S. Institute of Peace, said he is realistic about the difficulties ahead.

"One of the critical areas is that we not view the U.S.-Taliban agreement as a 'Mission Accomplished' moment," Wilder said. "Signing the agreement is going to be the beginning of the process, not the end."

[Russia] Homeland Security secretary says Russian influence continues ahead of Super Tuesday (CNN)

[CNN](#) [2/27/2020 9:47 PM, Geneva Sands, 5551K]

Acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf warned of Russia's ongoing influence campaign ahead of Super Tuesday's Democratic presidential primaries, but said there is no current "credible threat" to election infrastructure.

"Russia has an ongoing influence campaign to sow discord or distrust in our American democracy," Wolf told CNN on Thursday while visiting a Mecklenburg County Board of Elections facility in North Carolina.

The Department of Homeland Security has said it's warning state and local officials about fake information, fake news and misinformation campaigns put out by Russia this primary season.

"We're trying to provide as much information not only to state and local election officials, but to the voters themselves," Wolf said. "I keep saying that federal government, we don't run elections. We try to push as much information, tools, resources, to the local elections officials."

DHS is standing up a "cyber situational awareness room" ahead of Tuesday, Wolf told local officials in North Carolina. State and local election officials will have access to this room to share information in real time and communicate any potential issues.

The department's cybersecurity agency has been working with state and election officials in all 50 states -- more than 2,300 jurisdictions -- ahead of the 2020 elections in "sharp contrast to 2016," when DHS was in "contact with few to none," Wolf said.

Wolf denied that other nation-states are looking to influence the upcoming election, but said that "others are looking at what Russia did in 2016" and he expects that "others will perhaps do that as well."

The acting secretary said the department's primary focus is on making sure that election infrastructure is not interfered with, so when people vote, they know it's "counted correctly."

Wolf declined to comment on evidence of Russia's influence, but said, "We do see them having that continuous misinformation campaign out there that we saw in 2016, saw in 2018 and beyond. We're going to continue to plan for the worst."

"Our heightened sense of security is up," he told CNN.

During the news conference, Wolf called on voters to be aware of inaccuracies on social media and that they are "getting their information straight from the source."

When asked how they will inform the public if there is a credible threat, Wolf said the department would provide intelligence to state and local election authorities.

"DHS, the federal government, doesn't run our elections. Each individual state runs

their elections, and they're going to make decisions that are best for them," Wolf said. "We want to make sure there's not a gap or a lack of information."

[China] The Cybersecurity 202: Huawei official accuses U.S. of targeting the telecom to hurt China (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [2/27/2020 7:31 AM, Joseph Marks, 12625K]

The battle over Huawei is taking place face-to-face here as officials from the U.S. government got a chance to debate directly with the Chinese telecom.

After spending months trading jabs through the media – and in court – both sides now get to make their case to a tech-savvy audience about whether or not the future of telecommunications should be built with Chinese technology.

Huawei's Chief Security Officer Andy Purdy, in an interview on the sidelines of the RSA conference, insisted that the company is independent of Beijing – and that U.S. concerns are just a cover to smack China over trade and other issues.

"The U.S. is really pissed off at China on a number of issues and they want to hurt Huawei to hurt China," Purdy told me. "They're very afraid of the competition between China and the U.S., so they're focusing on hurting Huawei."

Purdy, a former Department of Homeland Security official, squared off against one of the Pentagon's top cybersecurity executives during a panel discussion. He called the U.S. ban on Huawei gear from many telecom networks dangerously misguided, and said the block on American companies from selling it components would end up hurting the businesses more than Huawei.

Katie Arrington, the Pentagon's top cybersecurity contracting official, shot back that Huawei presents such a huge risk of Chinese hacking that there's no way "in good conscience" she could let it anywhere near military systems.

"The recommendation was made to take Huawei out for very specific reason," she told a crowd of hundreds of security pros. "It's a 'have to do' because the risk is so high."

The conference comes at a tense moment for U.S. officials who've been sounding alarms for more than a year that Huawei can't be trusted not to spy for the Chinese government but have failed to convince key allies including the United Kingdom, which is allowing Huawei to build parts of its next-generation 5G wireless networks.

So it's no surprise there were numerous testy exchanges onstage. At one point, Arrington even slammed the quality of Huawei's technology, saying "their programmers are where Microsoft was 25 years ago...not incredibly robust." When Purdy scoffed, she said, "It's your job Andy, I get it. That's who you work for."

Huawei's offensive continued offstage at the conference considered a must-go for the 40,000 technology pros who gather annually. Purdy told me he spent a good part of the week walking the conference floor urging government and industry leaders not

to rush to judgment on Huawei.

“When you see the level of hostility in this toxic environment, you see people not thinking [things] through,” he said of Washington’s moves against Huawei. “[Huawei] is going to be stronger because of this and America’s going to be weaker and...that’s frustrating to me.”

Purdy is also pitching a transparency initiative in which Huawei and its competitors would publicly demonstrate their cybersecurity protections. He hopes that will quell fears that the company will be a backdoor for Chinese spying.

He’s reaching out to think tanks and industry groups that might host the initiative he said. And if he doesn’t get any takers, Huawei plans to run a public transparency program on its own where it displays its cybersecurity protections for anyone who wants to look at them, he said. That event will likely take place sometime in April – around the same time the White House is planning a 5G summit with global technology leaders as part of its efforts to combat the Chinese firm.

Officials from throughout government, meanwhile, lashed out at Huawei throughout the week, warning there’s still time to halt it from winning 5G contracts across Europe and with other U.S. allies. That’s despite the fact that France, Germany and Canada seem primed to follow the U.K.’s lead by allowing Huawei to build portions of their 5G networks.

“We haven’t necessarily seen contracts cut yet, so I think there’s still an opportunity to work with our partners,” Chris Krebs, DHS’s top cybersecurity official said. “We need to continue to push for a global market of trusted componentry in 5G technology.”

The Justice Department’s national security chief John Demers charged that some allies are overlooking Huawei’s cybersecurity problems because they’re seduced by the low prices of its 5G services, which are subsidized by the Chinese government.

“Foreign countries have been less convinced,” he said. “But...the choice for a foreign country whether or not to use Huawei equipment...is not a security choice alone. It’s a political choice and an economic choice. And it’s one that we’re trying to win on security grounds and that’s what makes it challenging for us.”

[China] Congress approves \$1B for rural telecom companies to ditch Huawei (Politico)

[Politico](#) [2/27/2020 4:01 PM, John Hendel, 2003K]

The Senate unanimously voted Thursday to pay rural telecom carriers \$1 billion to rip and replace any gear in their networks from Chinese telecommunications giants Huawei and ZTE.

The Senate action sends the legislation to President Donald Trump for his signature. Top administration figures have indicated general support for the funding, which would mark yet another victory in the president’s efforts to exclude Huawei from

telecom networks in the U.S.

The administration has alleged that Huawei is an arm of China's communist government — something it denies — and would pose a national security threat if allowed to help build the 5G networks of the U.S. or its global allies. The new legislation is aimed at ensuring Huawei's gear also vanishes from existing, slower networks.

The House unanimously passed the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act in December following bipartisan consensus on the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Senate Commerce Chairman Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) had sought to move the measure by unanimous consent in his chamber shortly afterward only to face a block from Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah), who worried over how lawmakers would pay for this funding.

As POLITICO reported earlier this month, Lee dropped his objections, paving the way for today's sign-off.

Dozens of small U.S. carriers have Huawei and ZTE equipment embedded in their networks. Many bought the equipment years ago, largely due to the gear's low cost.

Huawei has warned that the legislation would probably spell layoffs among its U.S. operations.

[China] Senate unanimously approves bill to ban purchase of Huawei equipment with federal funds (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [2/27/2020 4:38 PM, Maggie Miller, 1762K]

The Senate unanimously approved legislation on Thursday that would ban the use of federal funds to purchase telecommunications equipment from companies deemed a national security threat, such as Chinese group Huawei.

The bipartisan Secure and Trusted Telecommunications Networks Act, which the House passed in December, bans the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) from giving funds to U.S. telecom groups to purchase equipment from companies deemed threats.

The bill would require the FCC to establish a \$1 billion fund to help smaller telecom providers to rip out and replace equipment from such companies, and to compile a list of firms seen as posing a threat to telecom networks.

The bill is primarily sponsored by House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-N.J.), ranking member Greg Walden (R-Ore.), and Reps. Doris Matsui (D-Calif.) and Brett Guthrie (R-Ky.).

Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Roger Wicker (R-Miss.), whose panel has jurisdiction over the bill, praised its passage.

"Telecommunications equipment from certain foreign adversaries poses a significant

threat to our national security, economic prosperity, and the future of U.S. leadership in advanced wireless technology,” Wicker said in a statement. “By establishing a ‘rip and replace’ program, this legislation will provide meaningful safeguards for our communications networks and more secure connections for Americans.”

The legislation, if signed into law by President Trump, would have a major effect on rural telecom providers. The Rural Wireless Association estimated in a 2018 filing to the FCC that around 25 percent of its member companies use equipment from either Huawei or Chinese group ZTE.

The bill’s passage comes after months of bipartisan pressure to take steps against Huawei, the largest 5G equipment provider in the world. Its critics cite concerns around a 2017 Chinese intelligence law that requires Chinese companies and individuals to participate in state-backed intelligence-gathering.

The Department of Commerce last year added Huawei to its entity list of groups that American companies are forbidden to do business with, though Huawei’s full inclusion on the list has been delayed multiple times.

The FCC also took steps against the company in November, when it designated Huawei as a national security threat and banned telecom groups from using FCC funds to buy equipment from Huawei.

Huawei pushed back against the FCC for these moves, announcing in December that it was suing the agency.

The Trump administration has also made moving away from Huawei a key priority, pressuring allied companies into doing the same.

The United Kingdom made the decision earlier this year to allow the use of Huawei in peripheral 5G networks, but not more secure networks, a move that many on Capitol Hill warned could endanger intelligence sharing between the U.S. and the U.K.

[China] With West divided, Huawei plans first European 5G factory in France (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [2/27/2020 10:55 AM, Mathieu Rosemain, 5304K]

Huawei will build its first European manufacturing plant in France, the chairman said on Thursday, as the Chinese telecom giant seeks to ease worldwide concerns stoked by U.S. charges that Beijing could use its equipment for spying.

Liang Hua said Huawei [HWT.UL], the world’s biggest producer of telecoms equipment, would invest 200 million euros (\$217 million) in the first phase of setting up the mobile base station plant. He said it would create 500 jobs.

Huawei, which denies its equipment poses a security risk, is at the center of a storm pitting the United States against China over 5G, the next generation mobile technology. Europe has become a major battleground.

"This site will supply the entire European market, not just France's," Liang told a news conference. "Our group's activities are worldwide and for this we need a global industrial footprint."

5G technology is expected to deliver a huge leap in the speed and capacity of communications and an exponential spike in connections between the billions of devices, from smart fridges to driverless cars, that are expected to run on 5G networks.

It was not immediately clear whether Huawei's decision had the blessing of French President Emmanuel Macron, who has courted foreign investors but also led warnings about Chinese encroachment into the European Union's economy.

Liang said Huawei had outlined the group's plan's to the French government. "This is not a charm offensive," he said.

Macron's office declined to comment.

EARLY STAGES

The United States has repeatedly warned European allies against allowing the Chinese firm into the continent's 5G infrastructure. But European capitals are divided over how to deal with Huawei.

France has yet to start rolling out its 5G networks but the top French mobile operator, state-controlled Orange (ORAN.PA), has already chosen Huawei's European rivals, Nokia (NOKIA.HE) and Ericsson (ERICB.ST).

Smaller operators Bouygues Telecom (BOUY.PA) and Altice Europe's SFR (ATCA.AS), whose existing networks rely heavily on Huawei, are urging Paris to clarify its position on Huawei.

France says it will not discriminate against any vendor but requires all suppliers to be screened so they can secure a green light from the cybersecurity agency, which is examining Huawei equipment. Sources close to the French telecoms industry say they fear Huawei will be barred in practice even if no formal ban is announced.

Neighboring Germany is also struggling to reach consensus on the way forward. Chancellor Angela Merkel's ruling conservatives back tougher rules on foreign vendors but have stopped short of an outright ban on Huawei.

Britain has defied the United States by allowing "high-risk vendors" such as Huawei into non-sensitive parts of its 5G network but not what it describes as "core" components. Washington has pressed London to reconsider.

The mobile base stations that will be manufactured in France are not considered core to 5G network infrastructure.

Huawei accuses the United States of seeking to frustrate its growth because no U.S. company can offer the same range of technology at a competitive price.

The French plant will be Huawei's second manufacturing facility outside China. It has a plant making smart phones in India but only has assembly plants elsewhere. The plant in France will generate 1 billion euros a year in sales.

[China] Virus Disrupts China's Shipping, and World Ports Feel Impact (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [2/27/2020 7:02 PM, Keith Bradsher and Niraj Chokshi, 23673K]

Some docks in China are clogged with arriving shipping containers or iron ore. Warehouses overflow with goods that cannot be exported for lack of trucks. And many factories are idle because components are not reaching them.

As Beijing tries to jump-start an economy hobbled by its coronavirus epidemic, one of the biggest obstacles lies in the country's half-paralyzed logistics industry. China has some of the world's biggest and newest seaports and airports, but using them has become a lot harder because of roadblocks, quarantines and factory closings.

Global shipping has been one of the biggest casualties. More tonnage of container ships is idled around the world now than during the global financial crisis, according to Alphaliner, a shipping data service.

Daily charter rates for tankers and bulk freighters have plummeted more than 70 percent since early January as China buys less oil, iron ore and coal, said Tim Huxley, the chief executive of Mandarin Shipping, a Hong Kong-based freighter shipping line.

Ports and their customs offices are operating fairly smoothly, said several freight forwarders, who are essentially travel agents for cargo shipments. The difficulties lie in getting goods to and from the docks.

The slowdown in China is already being felt in the United States.

In January, container volume dropped 2.7 percent at American ports, according to Panjiva, a research unit of S&P Global Market Intelligence. And officials say they expect much bigger declines as the crisis goes on.

"The overall economic impact of these types of emergencies is often in the tens of billions of dollars," said Cary Davis, an official with the American Association of Port Authorities. "Due to the coronavirus outbreak, cargo volumes at U.S. ports might be down by 20 percent or more on a year-on-year basis compared to 2019."

Chinese government agencies have announced a series of measures in the last few days aimed at getting the country's trucking fleet and ports humming again. But no one can say how quickly activity will return to normal.

Places like Jiangxi Province and the metropolis of Chongqing this week ordered the

removal of most of the countless roadblocks and checkpoints erected by towns and cities to keep infected travelers out. Shanghai agreed on Tuesday to let trucks enter and leave the city with few health checks, even as people arriving in cars and buses remain subject to lengthy scrutiny and, in some cases, 14-day quarantines.

Some factories still have goods that they produced and never shipped in January, before the Lunar New Year holiday that turned into a monthlong nationwide shutdown. "There is a backlog of factory production to be shipped once factories reopen, and there is insufficient trucking capacity," said Brian Wu, the chairman of the Hong Kong Association of Freight Forwarding and Logistics.

Seaport cranes and other equipment seem to be operating normally in China, although a shortage of trucks has made it hard for some ports to distribute goods once they have been unloaded. "We don't see any abnormal situation in the ports — most of the ports and for that matter the customs, are working at full capacity," Mr. Wu said.

About three-fifths of China's trucking capacity is working again, A.P. Moller-Maersk Group of Denmark, the world's largest shipping line, said in a statement Thursday. The company said three of China's biggest coastal ports — Shanghai, Ningbo and Xingang — were clogged with refrigerated containers full of imported vegetables, fruit and frozen meat.

Maersk has responded with a \$1,000-per-container fee for electricity to prevent spoilage before trucks can be found to ship the food inland.

With many factories operating at a fraction of capacity, and with trucks not delivering a lot of finished goods, container-shipping lines have been canceling many sailings. "If there's nothing coming to the dock, there's no reason for the ships to come," said Simon Heaney, senior manager for container shipping at Drewry, a maritime research firm in London.

The disruption is evident across the Pacific.

The Port of Los Angeles, which handles more containers in a year than any other in the Western Hemisphere, expects in the first three months of the year its biggest decline in volume since the financial crisis, according to its executive director, Gene Seroka.

Ship operators have canceled about 40 sailings to the port from Feb. 11 to April 1, a drop of about 25 percent from the typical volume after the Lunar New Year, Mr. Seroka said. Overall container volume at the port is expected to be down 15 percent in the first quarter compared with the same period last year.

At the same time, exports and empty containers are piling up, he said. And even though an eventual recovery should lead to a rebound in imports from China, it will not restore all of the shipments that have been canceled.

"Once a ship sails or is cut, it doesn't come back again," Mr. Seroka said.

Shipping lines have also had trouble replacing crews globally after long voyages. About one-seventh of the sailors aboard the world's commercial vessels have Chinese passports.

"It's a nightmare to get people from one part of the world to another to join ships," said Arthur Bowring, a Hong Kong shipping consultant.

Air cargo operations have been differently affected. The cancellation of flights in and out of China has been so extensive that freight forwarders have had a very hard time finding any space at all on planes for their shipments.

"The airline says, 'I am sorry, I can't pick it up,'" said Lin Zhenglong, the chief executive of the Nippon K&H Logistics Company in Tokyo.

[China] As The Coronavirus Spreads, Most Of America's Medicine Still Comes From China (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [2/27/2020 1:30 PM, Hayden Daniel, 566K]

The coronavirus has rapidly spread across the globe, including 60 confirmed cases in the U.S., but the vast majority of the more than 80,000 cases are still localized in China.

China possesses a stranglehold on the production of the medicines that fill U.S. pharmacies, and it manufactures a large share of the drugs used by Americans to fight influenza.

This presents the risk that life-saving drugs could be cut off from the U.S. if the coronavirus causes an economic shutdown in China.

There's also the possibility that Americans might receive tainted influenza medicine.

In 2018, 95% of U.S. imports of ibuprofen, 91% of hydrocortisone imports, 70% of acetaminophen imports, 40 to 45% of penicillin imports and 40% of heparin imports came from China, according to Politico.

Eighty percent of the Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients - the part of the medication that leads to intended effects - used in creating America's drug supply come from overseas, primarily China and India, according to Senate Finance Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley in an August 2019 letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar and acting Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Norman Sharpless.

Grassley also warned that the FDA "Only inspected one in five registered human drug manufacturing facilities abroad last year."

Tainted drugs from overseas have slipped past the FDA on numerous occasions.

One-hundred forty-nine Americans died from a tainted blood thinner produced in

China in 2008.

Another batch of tainted blood thinner was discovered in 2016.

The FDA issued a recall of the Chinese-produced blood pressure medicine Valsartan in 2018 after it was found to contain dangerous carcinogens.

Rosemary Gibson, testifying at a hearing of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, warned that China's dominance in the manufacturing of pharmaceutical drugs could pose serious security risks to the U.S. "When you control the supply of medicines, you control the world. We are losing control over the supply of our medicines, and when we lose control over supply, we lose control over price," Gibson said in the hearing.

"China will be the price setter and we will be the price taker. The national security risks are pronounced. China could withhold supply. It could put lethal contaminants in medicine or not provide medicine at all."

Former military officials have also noted the security risk posed by China's near-monopoly.

"Basically, we've outsourced our entire industry to China. That is a strategic vulnerability," retired Brig.

Gen. John Adams told NBC. "The national security risks of increased Chinese dominance of the global API market cannot be overstated," acting Deputy Assistant Director of Healthcare Operations at the Defense Health Agency also told NBC. Oseltamivir, also known as Tamiflu, is one of the most popular anti-influenza medications in the U.S. Tamiflu is produced from the acid extracted from the star anise plant.

The star anise plant is primarily grown and harvested in four provinces in southwestern China.

Rapivab, Relenza and Xofluza, other anti-influenza drugs, are also mostly produced in China.

Republican Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley introduced a bill Thursday that will guarantee the U.S.'s medical supply chain in the event of a larger outbreak.

"The coronavirus outbreak in China has highlighted severe and longstanding weaknesses in our medical supply chain. This is more than unfortunate; it's a danger to public health. Our health officials need to know the extent of our reliance on Chinese production so they can take all necessary action to protect Americans," Hawley told the Daily Caller.

The bill is intended to help secure the U.S. medical product supply chain by requiring that manufacturers report imminent or forecasted shortages of life-saving or life-sustaining medical devices to the FDA, just as they currently do for pharmaceutical

drugs.

"This legislation will give us the information we need to better secure our supply chain and ensure that Americans have uninterrupted access to life-saving drugs and medical devices," Hawley continued.

Almost 2,800 people have died from the coronavirus, all but 52 in China.

The virus has spread to 44 countries so far, according to the New York Times.

There are currently 60 confirmed cases in the U.S. The State Department and the Center for Disease Control have issued threat level three travel warnings for both China and South Korea.

Threat level three discourages any non-essential travel to the designated countries.

President Donald Trump held a press conference Wednesday on the coronavirus and appointed Vice President Mike Pence as the leader of a task force charged with combatting the virus.

Trump described the current threat level of the disease as "Low" in the U.S. His statement echoed that of Azar in a Tuesday press briefing, where the HHS secretary described the virus as "Contained," but warned that more cases are expected as borders can't be closed off entirely.

"It could be at a small level or a larger level. Whatever happens we're totally prepared. We have the best people in the world," Trump said of the potential U.S. outbreak.

"You see that from the study. We have the best prepared people, the best people in the world. Congress is willing to give us much more than we're even asking for. That's nice for a change. But we are totally ready, willing and able. It's a term we use. Ready, willing and able. It's going to be very well-under control."

Trump also acknowledged that the \$2.5 billion in funding for the task force may be inadequate, but asserted that the amount was sufficient for the time being.

Some Republicans have suggested \$4.5 billion while Democrats have called for up to \$8.5 billion.

With the outbreak of the coronavirus, China's dominance of drug production could also affect America's health.

If China is forced to implement a larger quarantine, one big enough to significantly impact economic activity in the country, the U.S. could be cut off from its largest supply of drugs, limiting the amount of influenza medications available.

[China] Navy: Chinese warship fired laser at U.S. aircraft (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [2/28/2020 1:59 AM, UPI, 1973K]

A Chinese warship fired a weapons-grade laser at a U.S. naval patrol aircraft in international airspace last week, the U.S. Navy said Thursday, chastising the Asian nation's actions as "unsafe and unprofessional."

Navy officials in Hawaii said a Chinese navy destroyer 161 targeted a U.S. Navy P-8A Poseidon aircraft while it was flying some 380 miles west of Guam over international waters on Feb. 17.

"The laser, which was not visible to the naked eye, was captured by a sensor onboard the P-8A," Pacific Fleet said in a statement. "Weapons-grade lasers could potentially cause serious harm to aircrew and mariners, as well as ship and aircraft systems."

The lasering violates the multilateral 2014 Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea and was inconsistent with a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two countries' defense departments on behavior for safety of air and maritime encounters, Pacific Fleet said.

"U.S. Navy aircraft routinely fly in the Philippine Sea and have done so for many years," Pacific Fleet said. "U.S. Navy aircraft and ships will continue to fly, sail and operate anywhere international law allows."

The incident comes amid heightened tensions between Washington and Beijing, as both Defense and State officials have warned about China's encroaching military and technological presence.

Earlier this month while speaking at a security conference in Munich, Germany, Defense Secretary Mark Esper warned that China's expansion of its military and technology capabilities pose a threat not only to the United States and other countries but to the international system that they are governed by.

"The PRC seeks to undermine and subvert this system, the same one that allowed them to rise and become what they are today," Esper said.

And Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has described the Chinese Communist Party as "the central threat of our times" and has been urging countries not to partner with Chinese companies Huawei or ZTE on developing their next generation of wireless technology, commonly referred to as 5G, as it poses "massive" security and privacy risks.

"With 5G capabilities, the CCP could use Huawei or ZTE's access to steal private or proprietary information or use 'kill switches' to disrupt critical future applications like electrical grids and telesurgery centers. And one only needs to look at the CCP's extensive human rights abuses in Xinjiang ... to see how it is using technology for mass repression," he wrote in an op-ed published by Politico referring to China repressing some 1 million of its Muslim citizens.

The United States has also recently openly condemned China for its suppression of ongoing pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong and over its treatment of Uighur and other Muslim minority groups.

[China] US accuses China of using laser against Navy patrol plane (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [2/27/2020 7:15 PM, Ellen Mitchell, 1762K]

The Navy said Thursday that a Chinese warship fired a military grade laser at a U.S. surveillance aircraft flying over the Pacific Ocean last week, calling the action “unsafe and unprofessional.”

The Navy P-8A surveillance aircraft was flying above international waters about 380 miles west of Guam on Feb. 17 when the laser was fired from a Chinese navy destroyer, according to a statement from U.S. Pacific Fleet.

The service said such acts “violate the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES), a multilateral agreement reached at the 2014 Western Pacific Naval Symposium to reduce the chance of an incident at sea.”

The Chinese destroyer’s actions were also inconsistent with a Memorandum of Understanding between the Defense Department and the People’s Republic of China Ministry of National Defense over rules of behavior for safety of air and maritime encounters.

The weapons-grade laser — which could potentially cause serious harm to service members as well as ship and aircraft systems — was not visible to the naked eye and was captured by a sensor onboard the U.S. aircraft.

The Pentagon has recorded more than 20 incidents since 2017 where lasers — believed to be Chinese — have been used to target U.S. aircraft in the Pacific and Africa.

The laser attacks most often happen in and around the East China Sea around busy shipping routes near disputed island chains.

In April 2018 personnel at the Chinese military base in Djibouti used lasers to interfere with U.S. military aircraft, which the Pentagon called “very serious incidents.”

The Navy maintains that it will continue to routinely fly its aircraft in the Philippine Sea as it has done for years.

“U.S. Navy aircraft and ships will continue to fly, sail and operate anywhere international law allows.”

[China] Chinese destroyer fires laser at US jet, US Navy says (CNN)

[CNN](#) [2/28/2020 4:55 AM, Ryan Browne, 5551K]

The US Navy said Thursday that a Chinese military warship fired a military grade laser at US Navy P-8 surveillance aircraft last week while it was flying over the

Pacific Ocean, an action that the US Navy called "unsafe and unprofessional."

The People's Republic of China "navy destroyer's actions were unsafe and unprofessional," US Pacific Fleet said in a statement Thursday.

"Weapons-grade lasers could potentially cause serious harm to aircrew and mariners, as well as ship and aircraft systems," the statement added.

Military-grade laser beams, occasionally known as "dazzlers," emit a powerful beam of light that can travel great distances and be used to illuminate aircraft cockpits, temporarily blinding pilots.

Defense officials told CNN that a formal diplomatic protests known as a *démarche* is expected to be issued.

The incident comes amid ongoing tensions between the US and Chinese militaries.

The Pentagon has repeatedly said that China represents an increasingly serious threat to regional security, saying that major Chinese investments in its military are aimed at achieving regional dominance.

"Over time, we have watched them seize and militarize islands in the South China Sea, and rapidly modernize their armed forces, while seeking to use emerging technologies to alter the landscape of power and reshape the world in their favor ... and often at the expense of others," US Defense Secretary Mark Esper said earlier this month.

The US has similarly issued such diplomatic protests in the past due to what the US said was Chinese military forces using lasers against US aircraft.

One such incident took place in the East African nation of Djibouti where both the US and China maintain military bases. US officials in 2018 accused Chinese forces stationed in Djibouti of injuring US pilots with a laser that was fired at a US C-130J aircraft.

[South Korea] U.S., South Korea Cancel Military Exercises Amid Coronavirus Spike (US News & World Report)

[US News & World Report](#) [2/27/2020 9:09 AM, Paul D. Shinkman, 3020K]

The US and South Korea took the significant step late Wednesday of canceling exercises between the two countries' militaries amid the worsening fallout from the coronavirus on the Korean Peninsula.

"The decision to postpone the combined training was not taken lightly," U.S. Forces-Korea said in a statement Wednesday night, adding that the alliance between the two nations remains "ironclad and unbreakable."

The headquarters overseeing U.S. operations on the peninsula did not say when the exercises could resume.

The news that the allies would cancel the exercises – considered among their most potent tools to deter North Korean aggression in the region – comes amid reports of a spike of 505 new cases of coronavirus in South Korea, bringing the number of people known to carry the virus there up to more than 1,700. Troops in South Korea are currently operating under a "high" risk level as a result of the virus, which causes a disease health officials call COVID-19.

The top clergyman overseeing Catholic services to U.S. service members also announced in a letter late Wednesday that he had canceled the celebration of Mass for troops based in Asia as a way to help contain the spread of the virus, pointing to virtual services as an alternative.

"Just as the church has always stood by those suffering under persecution, so also in this time of a new plague, she wants to be near to her daughters and sons," Timothy P. Broglio, archbishop for the Military Services, wrote in the letter.

U.S. Forces-Korea also reported Tuesday that the first U.S. service member worldwide was confirmed to have contracted the virus – a soldier based at a U.S. facility in southeastern South Korea. Health officials there were tracing his activity in recent weeks to determine who else might have become infected.

South Korea's top generals were the first to suggest the suspension of exercises, U.S. Forces-Korea said in a statement, and their U.S. counterparts agreed.

"The containment efforts for COVID-19 and the safety of the ROK and U.S. service members were prioritized in making this decision," the U.S. headquarters said, using an acronym for South Korea's official name, the Republic of Korea.

The U.S. headquarters has limited the extent to which service members in South Korea and civilian contractors can travel on and off base, including restricting their attending non-essential events with more than 20 people.

The idea of canceling the exercises wrought widespread concern last year when President Donald Trump ordered their suspension as a concession to the North Korean regime of Kim Jong Un.

[South Korea] US and South Korea postpone joint military exercise as coronavirus spreads (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [2/27/2020 9:09 AM, Jamie McIntyre, 570K]

As South Korea reported more than 500 new cases of the COVID-19 virus, the U.S. and South Korean militaries announced they would postpone a joint exercise that would have brought troops from both countries in close contact in what's known as a "command post" exercise.

The move was anticipated and requested yesterday by Gen. Park Hanki, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff of the Republic of Korea, and agreed to by U.S. Korea Commander Gen. Robert Abrams.

"In light of the ROK government's declaration of the highest alert level 'severe' on COVID-19, the ROK-US Alliance made the decision to postpone the combined command post training for the ROK-US Combined Forces Command until further notice," said a statement issued by U.S. Forces Korea.

Wednesday saw another 505 cases of infection reported in South Korea and the passage of a law by the country's National Assembly increasing fines for violators of self-isolation and adding the possibility of a year in prison.

"Despite the postponement of combined training, the ROK-US alliance remains committed to providing a credible military deterrence and maintaining a robust combined defense posture to protect the ROK against any threat," the U.S. military statement said.

Presidential Tweets

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet1](#) [2/27/2020 8:53 PM] "Anti-Trump Network @CNN doing whatever it can to stoke a national Coronavirus panic. The far left Network pretty much ignoring anyone who they interview who doesn't blame President Trump." @trish_regan @FoxNews Media refuses to discuss the great job our professionals are doing!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet2](#) [2/27/2020 9:32 PM] Do Nothing Democrats were busy wasting their time on the Impeachment Hoax, & anything they could do to make the Republican Party look bad, while I was busy calling early boarder & flight closings, putting us way ahead in our battle with the Coronavirus. Dems called it very wrong!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet3](#) [2/27/2020 9:39 PM] Congratulations and thank you to our great Vice President & all of the many professionals doing such a fine job at CDC & all other agencies on the Coronavirus situation. Only a very small number in U.S., & China numbers look to be going down. All countries working well together!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet4](#) [2/27/2020 10:16 PM] Word is that Mini Mike Bloomberg performed so poorly in the two debates, that he is thinking about dropping out of the Democrat Primary. The fact is, he was not true to himself, and the public was able to quickly figure him out. Not a good experience for Mini Mike!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet5](#) [2/27/2020 10:41 PM] "Diagnosis positive: @CNN is infected with Trump Derangement Syndrome. I'm calling out CNN for irresponsibly politicizing what should be a unifying battle against a virus that doesn't choose sides." @trish_regan @FoxNews Like I say, they are Fake News!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet6](#) [2/27/2020 11:37 PM] So nice! [Editorial note: consult retweet at source link]

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet7](#) [2/28/2020 12:05 AM] So, the Coronavirus, which started in China and spread to various countries throughout the world, but very slowly in the U.S. because President Trump closed our border, and ended flights, VERY EARLY, is now being blamed, by the Do Nothing Democrats, to be the fault of "Trump".

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet8](#) [2/28/2020 12:43 AM] The Do Nothing Democrats were busy wasting time on the Immigration Hoax, & anything else they could do to make the Republican Party look bad, while I was busy calling early BORDER & FLIGHT closings, putting us way ahead in our battle with Coronavirus. Dems called it VERY wrong!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet9](#) [2/28/2020 1:13 AM] "Federal Court Deals Major Blow To Sanctuary Cities." @FoxNews In other words, there will be no more Federal Tax Dollars to States & Cities that will not cooperate with Federal Law Enforcement (ICE). This is BIG NEWS! Funds will be cut off immediately. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!

{End of Report} [RETURN TO TOP](#)

From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 28 Feb 2020 13:31:03 +0000
To: #Security and Resilience daily report
Subject: (U//LES) ICE Weekly Security and Resiliency Report for February 21 – 28, 2020

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ICE - Security and Resilience Monitoring
Weekly Situational Awareness and Emergency Preparedness Activity Report
Prepared by HSI Office of Intelligence (JIOC)
February 21 – 28, 2020
(Updates in Blue)

1. (U) **Significant NSSE/SEAR Events/Other Special Events**
 - (U) No Significant Activity
2. (U) **National Capital Region**
 - (U) No Significant Activity
3. (U) **Terrorism, Extreme Violence, and Travel Warnings**
 - (U) **Iran/Italy: CDC Issues Travel Warning for Italy and Iran Amid COVID-19 Spread – On 25 February 2020, the CDC raised its travel advisories for Italy and Iran to Level 2. According to the CDC, both Italy and Iran were experiencing “sustained community spread of respiratory illness (COVID-19).” [News Link](#) (Source: CDC)**
 - (U) **Nairobi, Kenya: U.S. Embassy in Kenya Issues Security Alert Warning of Possible Terror Attack Targeting Major Nairobi Hotel – On 27 February 2020, the U.S. Embassy in Kenya issued a security alert warning that terrorist groups may be plotting an attack against a major hotel in Nairobi. The alert states that the exact hotel has not been identified, but it is believed to be a hotel popular with tourists and business travelers. The embassy said to exercise increased vigilance when visiting or staying at hotels in the Nairobi area. [News Link](#) (Source: NOC Media Monitoring)**

- (U) **South Korea: CDC Issues Travel Warning for South Korea Amid COVID-19 Spread** - On 25 February 2020, the CDC issued a Level 3 travel warning for South Korea, citing “widespread community transmission” of the virus. The CDC recommended travelers avoid nonessential travel to the country. U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) raised the risk level for COVID-19 to high for USFK peninsula-wide. [News Link](#) (Source: CDC)
- (U) **Istanbul, Turkey: 13 Suspected Terrorist Arrested in Raid** – On 25 February 2020, Turkish police have detained 13 suspects, including 10 foreign nationals, allegedly linked to the Islamic State (ISIS) militant group in Istanbul, according to security sources. Police raided seven different locations and detained 13 suspects, including nine Syrians and an Iraqi national. Digital materials, and organizational documents were seized during the search. [News Link](#) (Source: NOC Media Monitoring)
- (U) **Saakow, Somalia: U.S. Airstrike Kills two Al-Shabaab Members** – On 25 February 2020, A U.S. airstrike in Somalia killed two al-Shabaab members, including a leader who had a role in "planning and directing terrorist operations," such as a January attack on Manda Bay, Kenya, that killed three Americans. "The two terrorists were identified as senior al-Shabaab leaders, who were in charge of planning and directing terrorist operations on the Kenyan border region. [News Link](#) (Source: NOC Media Monitoring)
- (U) **Worthing, United Kingdom: Authorities Arrest Suspect Following Counter Terrorism Investigation** – On 24 February 2020, A 20-year-old suspect was detained in Worthing following a counter terrorism investigation. He was arrested on suspicion of being involved in the commission, preparation, or instigation of an act of terrorism and currently remains in police custody." This arrest forms part of a pre-planned operation by the Counter Terrorism Policing South East, working alongside colleagues at Sussex Police. [News Link](#) (Source: NOC Media Monitoring)
- (U) **Germany: German Authorities Investigate Vehicle Ramming Attack in Volksmarsen** - On 24 February 2020, German Police reported that multiple people were injured after a vehicle deliberately drove into a crowd watching a carnival parade in Volksmarsen, Germany. According to Department of State (DoS) reporting, approximately 30 individuals have been injured with 10 in serious condition. The suspect has been described as a 29-year-old male German national from the Volksmarsen region. German police say the driver has been detained, and noted the suspect’s actions were premeditated. While the Ministry of Hessen has not ruled out labeling this incident as a terror attack, DoS notes there is no known political or ideological motivation at this time. (Source: DoS/CETC)
- (U) **Yemen: Al-Qaeda Confirms Death of AQAP Leader Qassim Al-Raymi** – On 23 February 2020, Al-Qaeda confirmed the death of Qassim al-Raymi, the leader of Islamist group al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). The U.S. President announced earlier this month that the U.S. had killed al-Raymi in a

counterterrorism operation in Yemen. The U.S. regards AQAP as one of the deadliest branches of the al Qaeda network founded by Osama bin Laden. [News Link](#) (Source: NOC Media Monitoring)

4. (U) Significant Weather and Geologic Activity

- (U) **Mississippi: 450 Homes Damaged Due to Flooding** – On 25 February 2020, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), reported that approximately 450 homes were damaged due to recent flooding in Hinds and Madison counties. The Pearl River at Jackson was at 29.85 feet, as of 8:15 a.m. local time on 24 February 2020. Water has receded, and river levels are expected to continue to fall throughout the week. (Source: NOC Media Monitoring)

5. (U) Pandemics and Health Related Issues

- (U) **DHS National Operations Center Reporting:**
- (U) On 24 February 2020, the White House announced it will ask Congress for "at least \$2.5 billion" in additional funding to fight the coronavirus. The request will be for one lump sum to allow the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services "maximum flexibility,". The funding will aim to accelerate vaccine development, support preparedness and response activities, and procure equipment and supplies. (Source: DHS Operational Summary)
- (U) On 25 February 2020, the U.S. military confirmed that one of its soldiers, based in South Korea, tested positive for COVID-19, the first U.S. service member infected. A U.S. military statement said that the 23-year-old man is in self-quarantine at his off-base residence. The statement added that the soldier was originally based in Camp Carroll near the southeastern city of Daegu, where most of South Korea's virus cases were clustered, and visited Camp Walker on 24 February 2020. (Source: DHS Operational Summary)
- (U) **Open Source Reporting:**
- (U) On 27 February 2020, CDC officials released a statement advising that a California patient is being treated for the novel coronavirus, being the first U.S. case of unknown origin. The patient didn't have any relevant travel history nor exposure to another known patient. It may be the first U.S. case of "community spread" of the virus. (Source: NOC Media Monitoring)
- (U) On 27 February 2020, Japan announced Thursday the closure of schools nationwide to help control the spread of COVID-19. The Japanese Prime Minister said he asked all elementary, middle, and high schools to remain closed until spring holidays begin in late March. The measure comes amid growing concern about the rise in the number of untraceable cases in northern Japan and elsewhere. Japan

now has more than 890 cases, including 705 from a quarantined cruise ship. [News Link](#) (Source: NOC Media Monitoring)

- (U) On 24 February 2020, Italy reported that a seventh person has died of COVID-19 in northern Italy, bringing the number of confirmed cases in Italy to more than 220. 11 towns encompassing 50,000 inhabitants have been put on lockdown by the Italian government. This lockdown will remain for 14 days, according to media reports. There are some 500 police officers in the Lombardy region controlling 43 access points. Those who break the lockdown could be jailed for up to three months. [News Link](#) (Source: NOC Media Monitoring)
- (U) As of 24 February 2020, 50 people have died in the Iranian city of Qom from COVID-19 this month, Iran's official ILNA news agency reported on 24 February 2020. An official from Qom was quoted saying that more than 250 people are in quarantine in the city. The official said the 50 deaths date as far back as 13 February 2020. Jordan has banned the entry of travelers for Iran due to the outbreak. (Source: NOC Media Monitoring)
- (U) On 25 February 2020, San Francisco declared a state of emergency amid concerns over an outbreak of COVID-19 cases. The new state of emergency will allow city officials to assemble resources and personnel to expedite emergency planning measures, and boost the ability to deploy a rapid response to a potential coronavirus case in the city. The declaration is effective immediately for seven days, and will be voted on by the board of supervisors on 3 March 2020. [News Link](#) (Source: NOC Media Monitoring)
- (U) On 25 February 2020, A Brazilian government test has confirmed the first case of a fast-spreading new coronavirus in Latin America, after a Sao Paulo hospital flagged the possible infection of a 61-year-old who had visited Italy. The person familiar with the matter spoke on the condition of anonymity because Brazil's government had not yet announced the test results, ahead of a planned news conference. [News Link](#) (Source: NOC Media Monitoring)
- (U) Other U.S. Government Reporting:
- (U) On 27 February 2020, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirmed 59 cases of coronavirus in the U.S. as the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in Bethesda, MD, received a potential vaccine for clinical trials. (Source: CDC)

6. (U) Cyber Activity

- (U) CISA – On 17 February 2020, the DHS Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) is actively monitoring Mardi Gras celebrations. Regional

personnel are on site assisting state and local authorities to identify, assess, and monitor risk to critical infrastructure. CISA will monitor this event, and alert senior leadership of any significant physical, cyber, or communication incidents. (Source: CISA)

- (U) **Grayson County, TX; County Systems Offline After Cyber Attack – On 25 February 2020, Grayson County experienced a Ransomware Attack that resulted in the county taking systems offline. Seven computers were infected and were immediately removed from the network. There was no impact to Emergency and Public Safety services. CISA reached out to Grayson County to aid; no assistance has been requested. (Source: CISA)**
 - (U) **Reading, MA: Reading Municipal Light Department Target of Ransomware Attack – On 25 February 2020, the Reading Municipal Light Department (RMLD), a municipal electric utility company, was the target of a ransomware security breach. The IT team is working with an outside consultant to assess and isolate the problem and ensure the technology infrastructure is swept of immediate threats. [News Link](#) (Source: DHS Operational Summary)**
 - (U) **TSA – On 25 February 2020, The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has banned employee use of TikTok for the agency's social media engagement as the U.S. questions whether the China-owned app poses a threat to national security. A small number of TSA employees have previously used TikTok on their personal devices to create videos for use in TSA's social media outreach, but that practice has since been discontinued. The agency said that while employees have posted from their own devices, it has not had an official TikTok account. [News Link](#) (Source: NOC Media Monitoring)**
7. (U) **Infrastructure Protection (Accidents, Suspicious Activity, and Technical Failures):**
- (U) **Jakarta: Indonesian Authorities call for calm after Radiation Found at Housing Complex near Jakarta – On 17 February 2020, The Nuclear Energy Regulatory Agency (Bapeten) issued a statement telling residents to stay away from a piece of land in Serpong, 43 km south of Jakarta, because it was contaminated. Bapeten said it had discovered an elevated level of radioactive isotope Caesium-137 during a routine test for radioactivity in the area at the end of last month, causing alarm among some locals and raising questions about its source. [News Link](#)**
8. (U) **Fire Activity**
- (U) No Significant Activity
9. (U) **Other Significant Activity**
- (U//FOUO) **Border Enforcement:**

- (U) No Significant Activity
- (U//FOUO) **Migrant Crisis:**
- (U//FOUO) **On 25 February 2020, a group of 76 migrants were intercepted by Mexican authorities in the municipality of Cintalapa. After receiving an anonymous tip, police intercepted two vehicles. Authorities arrested a driver and passenger of the truck carrying the migrants, as well as five more people who were traveling in another vehicle that was acting as an escort. Seventy-five of the migrants were from Guatemala, and one was from El Salvador.**

V/r

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Section Chief

Joint Intelligence Operations Center

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

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Desk/STE: 202-732 (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

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@dhs.sgov.gov



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From: Lucero, Enrique M
Sent: 3 Mar 2020 23:59:16 +0000
To: Albence, Matthew; Benner, Derek N
Cc: Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(b)(6); Johnson, Tae D
Subject: FW: If a National Emergency is declared
Attachments: Declaration of a National Emergency with Respect to the 2009 H1N1 Influenza Pandemic _ The White House.html
Importance: High

Planning ahead for the possibility of a declaration of a national emergency being issued for COVID-19. If at all possible (b)(5)

(b)(5) Not sure if that can even be included but food for thought.

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, March 3, 2020 5:08 PM
To: Lucero, Enrique M (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov> (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: If a National Emergency is declared
Importance: High

Good afternoon (b)(6);

You asked "If a national emergency is declared because of corona virus are BUEs allowed to conduct union business?"

A national emergency is a national crisis or a situation where circumstances threaten the country and call for an immediate response. A national emergency is also a situation in which a government is empowered to perform actions or impose policies that it would normally not be permitted to undertake. Presidents in recent history have exercised their power to declare national emergencies under the National Emergencies Act (NEA) of 1976.

The NEA allows the executive branch to declare a national emergency, but the president must cite the specific emergency powers he is activating to make the declaration under existing statutes (e.g., *See the attached Declaration of a National Emergency with Respect to the 2009 H1N1 Influenza Pandemic*). There are hundreds of provisions of federal law that delegate the president extraordinary authority in time of national emergency. Under the powers delegated by such statutes, the President may seize property, organize and control the means of production, seize commodities, assign military forces abroad, institute martial law, seize and control all transportation and communication, regulate the operation of private enterprise, restrict travel, and, in a variety of ways, control the lives of United States citizens.

Accordingly, if the use of official time by BUEs prohibits or interferes with the Agency in carrying out its mission during the emergency, then the Agency may implement a blanket prohibition on the use of official time. The circumstances which would require the issuance of a blanket prohibition on official time is a very high standard and generally there is no blanket probation on the use of official time. During the October 24, 2009 DECLARATION OF A NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO THE 2009

H1N1 INFLUENZA PANDEMIC, there was no blanket prohibition of the use of official time for union representational duties at ICE. As a general concept, supervisors must examine how does the use of official time prohibit or interfere with Agency in carrying out its mission during the emergency.

In the event of an emergency, and if the specific circumstances warrant, the United States Code, 5 USC § 7106 (a)(2)(d) would provide DHS and ICE with the legal authority to prohibit BUEs from using official time to conduct union business (i.e., use of official time for representational purposes). 5 U.S.C. § 7106. Management rights – state: “(a) Subject to subsection (b) of this section, nothing in this chapter shall affect the authority of any management official of any agency— (2) in accordance with applicable laws— (D) to take whatever actions may be necessary to carry out the agency mission during emergencies.”

To sum up, if the use of official time by BUEs prohibits or interferes with the Agency in carrying out its mission during the emergency, then Agency may implement a blanket prohibition on the use of official time (very high standard). With respect to union officials that are not on block time, managers may assign duties if there is an immediate need for their services. With respect to Council officials, on 100% Block Time, there would need to be an emergency to assign Council representatives official duties.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Respectfully,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Chief, Labor Relations Section
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
Department of Homeland Security
500 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20536

(b)(6); @ice.dhs.gov

Office: 202-732-(b)(6);

iPhone: 202-27-(b)(7)(C)

From: Lucero, Enrique M (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2020 4:11 PM

To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov>

Subject: If a National Emergency is declared

Hi (b)(6);

If a national emergency is declared because of corona virus are BUEs allowed to conduct union business?

Thx,

(b)(6);
(b)(7)(C)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 24, 2009

DECLARATION OF A NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO THE 2009 H1N1 INFLUENZA PANDEMIC

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA A PROCLAMATION

On April 26, 2009, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (the "Secretary") first declared a public health emergency under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act, 42 U.S.C. 247d, in response to the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus. The Secretary has renewed that declaration twice, on July 24, 2009, and October 1, 2009. In addition, by rapidly identifying the virus, implementing public health measures, providing guidance for health professionals and the general public, and developing an effective vaccine, we have taken proactive steps to reduce the impact of the pandemic and protect the health of our citizens. As a Nation, we have prepared at all levels of government, and as individuals and communities, taking unprecedented steps to counter the emerging pandemic. Nevertheless, the 2009 H1N1 pandemic continues to evolve. The rates of illness continue to rise rapidly within many communities across the Nation, and the potential exists for the pandemic to overburden health care resources in some localities. Thus, in recognition of the continuing progression of the pandemic, and in further preparation as a Nation, we are taking additional steps to facilitate our response.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including sections 201 and 301 of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) and consistent with section 1135 of the Social Security Act (SSA), as amended (42 U.S.C. 1320b-5), do hereby find and proclaim that, given that the rapid increase in illness across the Nation may overburden health care resources and that the temporary waiver of certain standard Federal requirements may be warranted in order to enable U.S. health care facilities to implement emergency operations plans, the 2009 H1N1 influenza

pandemic in the United States constitutes a national emergency. Accordingly, I hereby declare that the Secretary may exercise the authority under section 1135 of the SSA to temporarily waive or modify certain requirements of the Medicare, Medicaid, and State Children's Health Insurance programs and of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act Privacy Rule throughout the duration of the public health emergency declared in response to the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic. In exercising this authority, the Secretary shall provide certification and advance written notice to the Congress as required by section 1135(d) of the SSA (42 U.S.C. 1320b-5(d)).

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-third day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fourth.

BARACK OBAMA
#



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DHS Crisis Action Team (CAT) Events of the Day
COVID-19
Tuesday, 3 Mar 20
(all times Eastern)

0000 Component Actions Report (CAR) inputs due
0400 CAT Shift Change
0700 NOC Incident Report published
0700 CAT Placemat published
0700 CAT Events of the Day published
0815 SOC / IMT / Task Force Operational Coordination Call (HHS led)
1000 AS1 Committee on Homeland Security (CHS) Hearing
1200 CAR inputs due
1200 CAT Shift Change
1230 NICCL Call COVID-19
1615 AS2 White House Coronavirus Task Force Principals Meeting
1700 HHS SLB published
2000 CAT Shift Change

Prepared by the Office of Operations Coordination

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DHS INTERNAL ONLY – NOT FOR RELEASE WITHOUT DHS APPROVAL

From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 1 Mar 2020 12:23:11 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: #ICE JIOC Management
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

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The following is the COVID-19 Snapshot as of 0600 ET, 1 March 2020.

Snapshot	
WHO Reports (<i>WHO Dashboard, 0600 ET 1 Mar</i>): 59 (+2) Countries reporting cases	
• Worldwide Confirmed Cases:	86,927 (+1525)
• Worldwide Confirmed Deaths:	2,976 (+52)
• AMCIIT Deaths (outside U.S.):	1 (Wuhan, China)
CDC Reports (<i>CDC Update, 1600 ET 29 Feb</i>):	
• Total U.S. Domestic Cases:	66 (+4)
• Confirmed – deaths:	1 (+1)
• Confirmed – travel related to China:	12 (n/c)
• Confirmed – person-to-person spread:	2 (n/c)
• Confirmed – unknown nexus:	1 (n/c)
• Presumptive Cases:	3 (+3) (presumptive U.S. cases (i.e., positive by CDC test performed in state lab, pending confirmation at CDC)
• Repatriated from Diamond Princess:	44 (n/c)
• Repatriated from Wuhan, China:	3 (n/c)
US-based Quarantine (<i>HHS SLB, 1700 ET 28 Feb</i>): 332 (n/c)	
DHS Screening Actions (<i>11 Airports</i>) (<i>CWMD and CDC, 0537 ET 1 Mar</i>):	
• Total CBP Referred to CWMD:	52,471 (+568)
• CWMD Cleared (no further screening):	22,062 (+287)
• CWMD Referred for Self-Monitoring:	30,335 (+280)
• CWMD Referred to CDC:	74 (+1)
• Quarantined by CDC:	16 (n/c)
• CDC Hospitalized:	0 (n/c)
• CDC Completed Quarantine:	13 (n/c)
• CDC Currently Quarantined:	3 (n/c)
• CDC Cleared (no Quarantine):	56 (+1)
• Pending CDC Disposition Status:	2 (n/c)

Distribution: NOC DHS Component Actions Report Recipients, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and White House

V/r,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Section Chief

Joint Intelligence Operations Center

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

500 12th Street, SW (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Washington, D.C. 20536

Desk/STE: 202-732-(b)(6);

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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 8 Mar 2020 15:04:31 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: JIOC-ICE
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 - Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

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Overview: Kansas, Missouri, and Vermont report first presumptive positive cases of COVID-19. This increases confirmed and presumptive COVID-19 cases in States to 30 (+3).

Report: The case in Kansas (KS) is located in Johnson County and the patient is currently in home isolation, following the guidance of the CDC. Kansas Health continues to work with the local health department and CDC to identify and contact people who may have come into contact with the individual while they were infectious, and will monitor them for fever and respiratory symptoms. The patient is a female under the age of 50 years old.

This case in Missouri (MO) is a female in her twenties from St. Louis County, who recently traveled to Italy. She is now in isolation at home with family members who have also been in isolation. Local health department officials are identifying close contacts to monitor symptoms.

The case in Vermont (VT) is an adult patient and is currently hospitalized and in an airborne infection isolation room. Health officials are investigating the person's travel and possible exposure history and are conducting contact tracing for anyone who has been in close contact.

Source: Media and KS, MO, and VT Web Sites.

Distribution: NOC DHS Component Actions Report Recipients, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and the White House Situation Room.

Regards,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

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Washington, D.C. 20536
Desk 202-731- (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 23 Feb 2020 14:20:40 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

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The following is the COVID-19 Snapshot as of 0700, 23 Feb 20.

Snapshot
WHO Reports (as of 0400 ET 23 Feb): - Worldwide Confirmed Cases: 78, 810 (+1016) - Worldwide Confirmed Deaths: 2, 462 (+103) - AMCIT Deaths (outside U.S.): 1 (Wuhan, China)
HHS Reports (as of 0910 ET 22 Feb): - U.S. Domestic Confirmed Cases: 17 (n/c) <i>Confirmed cases are located in medical facilities throughout the U.S.</i> - U.S. Domestic Unconfirmed Cases: 30 (-1) <i>Includes 30 presumptive positive cases repatriated from C/S DIAMOND PRINCESS who are in medical facilities throughout the U.S.</i>
U.S.-based Quarantine (as of 2000 ET 21 Feb): 332 (-94) <i>*Includes evacuees released from Ashland (-57), March ARB (-1), and Travis AFB (-36) on 21 Feb.</i>
DHS Screening Actions (11 Airports) (as of 0553 ET 23 Feb): - Total CBP Referred to CWMD: 47, 985 (+610) - CWMD Cleared (no further screening): 20, 917 (+160) - CWMD Referred for Self-Monitoring: 27, 003 (+450) - CWMD Referred to CDC: 65 (n/c) - CDC Referred to Quarantine: 16 (n/c) - CDC Hospitalized: 0 (n/c) - CDC Referred to Self-Monitor: 0 (n/c) - CDC Cleared: 49 (+1) - Pending Disposition Status: 0 (-1)

Distribution: NOC DHS Component Actions Report Recipients, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and White House

V/r

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Joint Intelligence Operations Center (JIOC)
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th Street, SW - (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 8 Mar 2020 09:34:31 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: JIOC-ICE
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 - Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

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Update (0525 ET, 8 Mar): USCG Sector LA/LB reports the Coronavirus test results for the 79 y/o female sick passenger is negative. The next course of action is to disembark the 4,523 passengers currently onboard CARNIVAL PANORAMA today (8 Mar) and embark the 4,620 passengers who were previously awaiting to board. There are 1,439 crewmembers currently on board.

The CDC requested COVID-19 screening of one passenger onboard who posted on social media that he was experiencing elevated temperatures. Initial tests by the ship's medical officer did not substantiate the passenger's complaint.

Overview (2030 ET, 7 Mar): USCG Sector Los Angeles/Long Beach (LA/LB) reports a 79 y/o female passenger on the Cruise Ship (CS) CARNIVAL PANORAMA (Panama Flagged) is exhibiting symptoms of bronchial pneumonia. The passenger was transferred from the ship docked in Long Beach Harbor to a local hospital for medical evaluation.

Report: CBP initially notified CG Sector LA/LB of a passenger (AMCIT) onboard CARNIVAL PANORAMA who was exhibiting symptoms of bronchial pneumonia. The passenger was reportedly experiencing symptoms of illness prior to embarking the CS. Initial reports stated the Center for Disease Control (CDC) cleared the passenger of Coronavirus; however, it was later determined the passenger had not yet been confirmed to be negative for Coronavirus, and the CDC required testing. Two diagnostic influenza tests were taken at the hospital and both results were negative. Additionally, she did not have a fever but was having trouble breathing. The Coronavirus test results are expected to be available at 2100 ET.

While there was no CDC requirement for the Captain of the Port to put an order on the vessel, the CDC did require CBP to restrict passengers from disembarking the vessel until the patient is cleared. Additionally, passengers who were supposed to embark the CS today have not been allowed to embark. The Long Beach Police Department is exercising crowd control near the vessel. Passengers not allowed to disembark have been posting concerns to social media regarding the situation. This incident has garnered local media attention.

CS CARNIVAL PANORAMA remains docked in Long Beach Harbor. The total number of passengers and crew is unknown at this time, but the CS is certificated to hold a maximum of 5,097 passengers.

Source: USCG Sector LA/LB and Media Sources.

Distribution: NOC DHS Component Actions Report Recipients, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and the White House.

V/r,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Criminal Research Specialist
Joint Intelligence Operations Center (JIOC)
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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 8 Mar 2020 07:27:47 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: JIOC-ICE
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 - Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

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Overview: USCG Sector San Francisco reports a passenger onboard the CS GRAND PRINCESS has been sick with bacterial pneumonia since 2 Mar. CG Sector San Francisco is planning courses of action to medevac the sick passenger.

Report: At approximately 2209 ET (7 Mar), CG Sector San Francisco was notified that a passenger (a 62 y/o male) on GRAND PRINCESS was sick from bacterial pneumonia. This passenger is one of the 46 persons that was tested for COVID-19 on 5 Mar; his test result was negative. During the morning of 7 Mar, he reported to the CS's clinic with an incarcerated hernia and his condition worsened throughout the day. The CG District 11 Duty Flight Surgeon recommended a medical evacuation within 24 hours but did not specify an air or sea medevac.

Coast Guard Cutter TERN has a mission scheduled this morning (8 Mar) to transport Center for Disease Control (CDC) personnel to the CS GRAND PRINCESS. A plan was proposed to conduct the sick passenger's medevac during the return trip from the CS. It is undetermined whether a Patient Isolation Unit (PIU) will be required during the medevac. The passenger is currently on oxygen, taking antibiotics, and in stable condition. There is no request for an escort from the CS to accompany the passenger.

Source: USCG Sector San Francisco.

Distribution: NOC DHS Component Actions Report Recipients, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and the White House.

Sincerely

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

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Joint Intelligence Operations Center (JIOC)
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JWICS (b)(6); [redacted]@dhs.ic.gov
UNCLASS: (b)(6); [redacted]@ice.dhs.gov



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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 8 Mar 2020 01:34:09 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: JIOC-ICE
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 - Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Overview: USCG Sector Los Angeles/Long Beach (LA/LB) reports a 79 y/o female passenger on the Cruise Ship (CS) CARNIVAL PANORAMA (Panama Flagged) is exhibiting symptoms of bronchial pneumonia. The passenger was transferred from the ship docked in Long Beach Harbor to a local hospital for medical evaluation.

Report: CBP initially notified CG Sector LA/LB of a passenger (AMCIT) onboard CARNIVAL PANORAMA who was exhibiting symptoms of bronchial pneumonia. The passenger was reportedly experiencing symptoms of illness prior to embarking the CS. Initial reports stated the Center for Disease Control (CDC) cleared the passenger of Coronavirus; however, it was later determined the passenger had not yet been confirmed to be negative for Coronavirus, and the CDC required testing. Two diagnostic influenza tests were taken at the hospital and both results were negative. Additionally, she did not have a fever but was having trouble breathing. The Coronavirus test results are expected to be available at 2100 ET.

While there was no CDC requirement for the Captain of the Port to put an order on the vessel, the CDC did require CBP to restrict passengers from disembarking the vessel until the patient is cleared. Additionally, passengers who were supposed to embark the CS today have not been allowed to embark. The Long Beach Police Department is exercising crowd control near the vessel. Passengers not allowed to disembark have been posting concerns to social media regarding the situation. This incident has garnered local media attention.

CS CARNIVAL PANORAMA remains docked in Long Beach Harbor. The total number of passengers and crew is unknown at this time, but the CS is certificated to hold a maximum of 5,097 passengers.

Source: USCG Sector LA/LB and Media Sources.

Distribution: NOC DHS Component Actions Report Recipients, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and the White House.

Respectfully,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Criminal Analyst
Joint Intelligence Operations Center

HSI Office of Intelligence
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Washington, D.C.

202-732 (b)(6); (watch)

JIOC: (b)(6); @ice.dhs.gov

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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 22 Feb 2020 14:33:35 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: JIOC-ICE
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

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The following is the COVID-19 Snapshot as of 0700, 22 Feb 20.

Snapshot

WHO Reports (as of 0400 ET 22 Feb):

- Worldwide Confirmed Cases: **77,794 (+1,027)**
- Worldwide Confirmed Deaths: **2,359 (+112)**
- AMCIT Deaths (outside U.S.): **1** (Wuhan, China)

HHS Reports (as of 2000 ET 21 Feb):

- U.S. Domestic Confirmed Cases: **17 (+2)**
Confirmed cases are located in medical facilities throughout the U.S.
- U.S. Domestic Unconfirmed Cases: **30 (-1)**
Includes 30 presumptive positive cases repatriated from C/S DIAMOND PRINCESS who are in medical facilities throughout the U.S.

U.S.-based Quarantine (as of 2000 ET 21 Feb): **332 (-94)**
**Includes evacuees released from Ashland (-57), March ARB (-1), and Travis AFB (-36) on 21 Feb.*

DHS Screening Actions (11 Airports) (as of 0555 ET 22 Feb):

- Total CBP Referred to CWMD: **47,375 (+894)**
- CWMD Cleared (no further screening): **20,757 (+192)**
- CWMD Referred for Self-Monitoring: **26,553 (+701)**
- CWMD Referred to CDC: **65 (+1)**
 - CDC Referred to Quarantine: **16 (n/c)**
 - CDC Hospitalized: **0 (n/c)**
 - CDC Referred to Self-Monitor: **0 (n/c)**
 - CDC Cleared: **48 (n/c)**
 - Pending Disposition Status: **1 (+1)**

Distribution: NOC DHS Component Actions Report Recipients, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and White House

V/r,

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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 9 Mar 2020 06:06:42 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: JIOC-ICE
Subject: FW: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 - Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Overview: USCG Sector San Juan reports a 68 y/o female sick passenger disembarked the Cruise Ship (CS) COSTA LUMINOSA at the Port of San Juan (PR) and was later evaluated by hospital staff as potentially displaying symptoms of COVID-19. The female passenger was accompanied by her asymptomatic husband; both Italian nationals.

Report: The couple arrived in the United States via Miami, FL on 24 Feb, and embarked aboard CS COSTA LUMINOSA (Italy Flagged) on 4 Mar in Port Everglades, FL. On 4 Mar, the wife was seen by the CS's medical staff and diagnosed with pneumonia. On 8 Mar, the wife was also diagnosed with a right lung infection. The wife, accompanied by her husband, was admitted to a hospital in San Juan where she was again diagnosed by hospital staff as having a right lung infection. Later in the day (8 Mar) when seen by additional hospital staff, the patient was diagnosed as having symptoms consistent with COVID-19. The patient was then placed in isolation at the hospital. The CDC was notified and has begun arrangements to have the subject tested for COVID-19. CDC estimates that it may take up to five days to receive the test results.

CS COSTA LUMINOSA did not notify the USCG or the San Juan Port Authority of a sick passenger onboard until the vessel had arrived in the Port of San Juan and the passenger had been transferred to the hospital. CS COSTA LUMINOSA departed San Juan on 8 Mar and is proceeding to Antigua then on to Italy. USCG San Juan notified the authorities in Antigua of the situation.

No USCG personnel were at any time closer than 500 feet to the CS. CG Sector San Juan notified CBP of the incident, but it is not known if CBP has interacted with the two individuals.

Source: USCG Sector San Juan.

Distribution: NOC DHS Component Actions Report Recipients, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and the White House.

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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 7 Mar 2020 18:15:15 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 - Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Overview: USCG Sector San Francisco reports the passenger experiencing symptoms of a heart attack onboard the C/S GRAND PRINCESS was safely transferred to EMS ashore via boat transfer.

Report: This morning U.S. Coast Guard Cutter TERN successfully transferred the passenger and her husband to shore via a boat transfer. EMS ashore met the patient and further transferred her a local medical facility for further treatment and evaluation. The patient and her husband had no symptoms of COVID-19.

Source: USCG Sector San Francisco and D11.

Distribution: NOC DHS Component Actions Report Recipients, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and the White House Situation Room.

V/R

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public or other personnel who do not have a valid "need-to-know" without prior approval of an authorized DHS official. No portion of this report should be furnished to the media, either in written or verbal form.

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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 17 Feb 2020 18:48:20 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 - Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

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Overview: HHS reports both Cruise Ship DIAMOND PRINCESS evacuation flights continued on to Omaha, NE where they brought 13 evacuees for quarantine and treatment at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC).

Report: The flight from Travis AFB brought six evacuees, and the flight from Lackland AFB brought seven. HHS reports there are nine COVID-19 positive cases at UNMC, and five positive cases at Travis AFB in a hospital; these five are asymptomatic.

Source: HHS.

Distribution: NOC DHS Component Actions Report Recipients, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and the White House.

V/R

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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 17 Feb 2020 13:19:02 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: JIOC-ICE
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 - Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

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The following is the COVID-19 Snapshot as of 0800, 17 Feb 20.

Snapshot

WHO Reports (as of 0000 ET 17 Feb):

- Worldwide Confirmed Cases: **71,329 (+19,472)**
- Worldwide Confirmed Deaths: **1,775 (+106)**
- U.S. Domestic Confirmed Cases: **15 (n/c)**
- AMCIT Deaths (outside U.S.): **1** (Wuhan, China)

U.S.-based Quarantine (as of 0800 ET 17 Feb): **945 (+328)**
(Incl 328 passengers repatriated via DOS flights on 17 Feb)

DHS Screening Actions (11 Airports) (as of 0640 ET 17 Feb):

- Total CBP Referred to CWMD: **43,263 (+1,077)**
- CWMD Cleared (no further screening): **19,372 (+613)**
- CWMD Referred for Self-Monitoring: **23,836 (+464)**
- CWMD Referred to CDC: **55 (n/c)**

DHS personnel and families in China: 31 (n/c)

- Mainland China: **7** employees
- Hong Kong: **24 (n/c)** employees and dependents

Distribution: NOC DHS Component Actions Report Recipients, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and the White House.

V/R

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-



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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 16 Feb 2020 14:44:55 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: #ICE JIOC Management
Subject: (U//FOUO) NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

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Overview: The two evacuation aircraft for Cruise Ship DIAMOND PRINCESS have landed at Haneda Airport, Japan, and are expected to depart between 1100 and 1115 ET this morning. DOS reports as of 0500 ET this morning, 328 U.S. citizens and 10 non-U.S. citizen family members from DIAMOND PRINCESS had requested evacuation. HHS continues to evaluate the health of prospective evacuees to determine fitness for boarding, clearing 314 for travel. These evacuees will begin a new 14-day quarantine upon arrival in the U.S.

Report: One of the chartered Kalitta Air Boeing 747-400s will transport approximately 166 of the evacuees to Travis AFB (near San Francisco, CA), with a planned arrival time of 2045 ET tonight. The second is now expected to transport approximately 148 evacuees directly to Lackland AFB (San Antonio, TX), with an arrival time of 0010 ET 17 Feb. DOS reports there are now 335 confirmed COVID-19 cases on the DIAMOND PRINCESS, including 59 U.S. citizens. Hong Kong, the Philippines, Australia, Canada, and Italy also plan to arrange charter flights to evacuate citizens from the DIAMOND PRINCESS.

Source: Department of State, HHS

Distribution: DHS HQ and Senior Staff, DHS Component Leaders and Operations Centers, White House Situation Room, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and State and Local Mission Partners.

Regards,

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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 7 Mar 2020 08:21:30 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: #ICE JIOC Management
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 - Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Overview: USCG Sector San Francisco reports a passenger onboard the CS GRAND PRINCESS was experiencing symptoms of a heart attack and is planning to be medevacked off the CS to a medical facility in Richmond, CA.

Report: At approximately 2241 ET (6 Mar), CG Sector San Francisco was notified that one of the passengers (a 76 y/o female) on GRAND PRINCESS was experiencing symptoms of a heart attack. The passenger has no symptoms of COVID-19. The USCG flight surgeon discussed the issue with the GRAND PRINCESS medical officer and recommended the passenger be medevacked from the CS within 24 hours. Representatives from the Center for Disease Control concurred with the flight surgeon's recommendation and advised that the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) protocols be utilized during the medevac.

USCG District 11 (D11) has assumed Search and Rescue Mission Coordinator from Sector San Francisco. D11 is looking at the possibility of utilizing the 129th Rescue Wing Air National Guard out of Moffett Federal Air Field to conduct the medevac at first light today (7 Mar). The passenger will be medevacked to a medical facility in Richmond, CA. The GRAND PRINCESS remains approximately 35 miles off the coast of San Francisco with 3,493 people onboard (2,383 passengers and 1,110 crew members).

Source: USCG Sector San Francisco and D11.

Distribution: NOC DHS Component Actions Report Recipients, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and the White House.

V/r,

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Section Chief

Joint Intelligence Operations Center

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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 16 Feb 2020 12:10:39 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: #ICE JIOC Management
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

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The following is the COVID-19 Snapshot as of 0700, 16 Feb 20.

Snapshot
• WHO Reports (as of 0400 ET 16 Feb): ◦ Worldwide Confirmed Cases: 51,857 (+1,277) ◦ Worldwide Confirmed Deaths: 1,669 (+212) ◦ U.S. Domestic Confirmed Cases: 15 (n/c) • Johns Hopkins Reported Worldwide Cases (as of 0400 ET 16 Feb): 69,264 • HHS reports (as of 1700 ET 14 Feb) ◦ 617 (n/c) under quarantine in U.S. ◦ 1 AMCI death (died in Wuhan, China) • DHS CWMD enhanced screening at 11 airports (as of 0559 ET 16 Feb): 23,434 (+1,162) • DHS personnel and families in China: 31 (n/c) ◦ Mainland China: 7 employees ◦ Hong Kong: 24 (n/c) employees and dependents

Distribution: NOC DHS Component Actions Report Recipients, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and White House

Regards,

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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 15 Feb 2020 13:57:17 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: #ICE JIOC Management
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

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Overview: World Health Organization (WHO) reports worldwide confirmed cases 50,820 (+1,570). Worldwide deaths: 1,457 (+74). US Cases: 15 (n/c), 1 AMCIT death in China. HHS reports 617 AMCITS in quarantine. DHS CWMD provided enhanced screening to 22,242 passengers.

Report: DOS has arranged for two Kalitta Air charter Boeing 747s to land at Haneda, Japan to evacuate the remaining AMCITS from the Cruise Ship DIAMOND PRINCESS in Yokohama. The flights are scheduled to depart Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport at 0715 and 0730 ET 16 Feb, and arrive Travis AFB (near San Francisco, CA) at 1430 and 1445 ET on 17 Feb, after boarding the evacuees in Haden. One of the flights is scheduled to continue on to Lackland AFB (San Antonio, TX); times TBD. Some passengers will be housed at or near Travis AFB and some at or near Lackland AFB. HHS has deployed two 35-person Disaster Medical Assistance Teams to support. A DOS task force will stand up on 16 Feb to manage the evacuation. .

A senior French government official announced the first COVID-19 death in Europe today. The government official reported the 80-year-old patient had been hospitalized since 25 Jan. The patient was a Chinese tourist from the province of Hubei and had a lung infection caused by the COVID-19. He arrived in France on 16 Jan, then was hospitalized on 25 Jan under strict isolation measures.

Distribution: NOC DHS Component Actions Report Recipients, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and White House

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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 15 Feb 2020 16:28:23 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: #ICE JIOC Management
Subject: (U//FOUO) NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

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Overview: The Malaysian Health Ministry issued a statement indicating an American passenger who had been on the Cruise Ship (C/S) WESTERDAM has tested positive for the new COVID-19.

Report: The 83-year-old woman took a flight to Malaysia on Friday from Cambodia. Her husband had tested negative. Holland America reports C/S WESTERDAM has been pierside in Sihanoukville, Cambodia since Thursday morning, with 236 guests and 747 crew still on board as of 0900 ET this morning. The remainder of the guests departed Sihanoukville via charter flights to Phnom Penh, Cambodia and onward yesterday and today.

C/S WESTERDAM had been on a 14-day cruise that departed Hong Kong 1 Feb, and was scheduled to end today in Yokohama, Japan. There were originally 1,455 guests and 802 crew on board for the cruise, which was refused port entry by Japan and other countries over concerns of possible COVID-19. According to Holland America, the Cambodian Health Ministry announced on Thursday afternoon that the 20 samples that had been taken onboard WESTERDAM were all confirmed as negative for COVID-19 by the Pasteur Laboratory in Phnom Penh.

After the negative test results, Cambodian authorities granted clearance to WESTERDAM to begin disembarkation of guests on Friday morning. Holland America expected that a full disembarkation would take a few days, given the charter flight schedule.

The NOC coordinated with DOS who related the American woman, along with other Americans from the cruise ship, were evacuated on a charter flight to Kuala Lumpur, where the woman tested positive for COVID-19. The other Americans are being held by Malaysian Customs officials and not allowed on follow-on flights.

Source: Department of State, Holland America Inc, Malaysian Health Ministry

Distribution: DHS HQ and Senior Staff, DHS Component Leaders and Operations Centers, White House Situation Room, Federal Interagency Operations Centers, and State and Local Mission Partners.

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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 6 Feb 2020 05:08:26 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: #ICE JIOC Management
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): Novel Coronavirus - Worldwide (Awareness NOC 0051-20)

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This information is being provided for senior DHS and Component leaders. It is meant to increase senior leader situational awareness and is not for public release.

Overview: The cruise ship ANTHEM OF THE SEAS notified the USCG that 17 Chinese national passengers have been quarantined on the ship after one of them exhibited a fever, cough, and cold over the past 48 hours. CDC and USCG are working with Royal Caribbean to explore options for testing the passenger for possible coronavirus prior to the ship's scheduled arrival in port Friday morning.

Report: As of 2323 ET 5 Feb, the ship was located 470 miles southwest of Bayonne, NJ and 300 miles west-southwest of the NC Outer Banks. The cruise ship expects to near the Port of NY/NJ on Thursday night, with scheduled arrival at the Bayonne, NJ terminal at 0600 ET Friday. The Chinese nationals arrived in the U.S. on 25 and 26 Jan, and were cleared by CDC prior to embarking the cruise ship in Bayonne on 27 Jan for an 11-day Southern Caribbean cruise. The specific locations in China of the Chinese nationals before travel to the US are not yet known. There are also two Chinese national crewmembers aboard who are not quarantined.

CDC medical staff have been in contact with the medical staff on the cruise ship. CDC cannot determine with certainty whether or not the passenger has the coronavirus without a sample. CDC has raised the possibility of USCG support in obtaining a sample from the sick passenger before the ship arrives for lab testing in Atlanta, GA. USCG Sector New York has drafted a Denial of Entry Order if needed. Sector New York has notified Royal Caribbean of the possibility of a Denial of Entry, pending CDC assessment. There are 3600 passengers and 1600 crew members aboard.

There is no media interest at this time; however, there is a potential of high media interest due to the number of passengers and crew members on board.

Source: USCG National Command Center

Coordination:

OPS-NOC: The Office of Operations Coordination National Operations Center is actively engaging the USCG National Command Center.

CETC: The Current and Emerging Threat Center is actively engaging IE and IC partners for additional information and will report as warranted.

USCG: Provided initial reporting via a Critical Information Communications (CIC) conference call.

Distribution: DHS HQ Leadership and Senior Staff, DHS Component Leadership and Operations Centers, White House Situation Room

V/r,

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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 7 Feb 2020 21:51:58 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote;#ICE JIOC Management
Cc: JIOC-ICE
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): Novel Coronavirus - Worldwide (Awareness NOC 0051-20)

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This information is being provided for senior DHS and Component leaders. It is meant to increase senior leader situational awareness and is not for public release.

Update (1606 ET, 7 Feb 20): The Cruise Ship ANTHEM OF THE SEAS has screened and released all passengers. Updated information also identified 27 Chinese nationals on board vice 17 in initial reports.

Update (1245 ET, 6 Feb 20): The individual, who exhibited a fever, cough, and cold, is no longer ill, and the Cruise Ship ANTHEM OF THE SEAS will be permitted to dock in Bayonne, NJ, on 7 Feb. CDC, in coordination with state health officials and Royal Caribbean Cruise Line medical staff, consider this individual as a “medium risk” and not a Person Under Investigation for 2019-nCoV infection. The individual was reportedly not in Hubei, and had no known contact with anyone infected with 2019-nCoV. CDC does not anticipate sending any samples from this individual for further testing for 2019-nCoV infection. The remaining Chinese-national passengers/crew are considered “low risk” by CDC. The vessel will be permitted to enter port and dock in Bayonne, NJ, and all passengers will be allowed to disembark with no additional medical screenings required.

Overview (0000 ET, 6 Feb 20): The cruise ship ANTHEM OF THE SEAS notified the USCG that 17 Chinese national passengers have been quarantined on the ship after one of them exhibited a fever, cough, and cold over the past 48 hours. CDC and USCG are working with Royal Caribbean to explore options for testing the passenger for possible coronavirus prior to the ship’s scheduled arrival in port Friday morning.

Report: As of 2323 ET 5 Feb, the ship was located 470 miles southwest of Bayonne, NJ and 300 miles west-southwest of the NC Outer Banks. The cruise ship expects to near the Port of NY/NJ on Thursday night, with scheduled arrival at the Bayonne, NJ terminal at 0600 ET Friday. The Chinese nationals arrived in the U.S. on 25 and 26 Jan, and were cleared by CDC prior to embarking the cruise ship in Bayonne on 27 Jan for an 11-day Southern Caribbean cruise. The specific locations in China of the Chinese nationals before travel to the US are not yet known. There are also two Chinese national crewmembers aboard who are not quarantined.

CDC medical staff have been in contact with the medical staff on the cruise ship. CDC cannot determine with certainty whether or not the passenger has the coronavirus without a sample.

CDC has raised the possibility of USCG support in obtaining a sample from the sick passenger before the ship arrives for lab testing in Atlanta, GA. USCG Sector New York has drafted a Denial of Entry Order if needed. Sector New York has notified Royal Caribbean of the

possibility of a Denial of Entry, pending CDC assessment. There are 3600 passengers and 1600 crew members aboard.

There is no media interest at this time; however, there is a potential of high media interest due to the number of passengers and crew members on board.

Source: USCG National Command Center

Coordination:

OPS-NOC: The Office of Operations Coordination National Operations Center is actively engaging the USCG National Command Center.

CETC: The Current and Emerging Threat Center is actively engaging IE and IC partners for additional information and will report as warranted.

USCG: Provided initial reporting via a Critical Information Communications (CIC) conference call.

Distribution: DHS HQ Leadership and Senior Staff, DHS Component Leadership and Operations Centers, White House Situation Room

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Washington, DC 20536

202-732 (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) 202-819 (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 11 Feb 2020 06:35:58 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: #ICE JIOC Management
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): Novel Coronavirus - Worldwide (Awareness NOC 0051-20)

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This information is being provided to senior DHS and Component leaders. It is meant to increase senior leader situational awareness and is not for public release.

Update (0130 ET, 11 Feb): CBP SITROOM reports there are four CBP employees assigned with six family members in Hong Kong.

Overview (2200 ET, 10 Feb): The Department of State has issued an Authorized Departure for non-emergency personnel and family members from Consulate Hong Kong.

Report: Effective 10 Feb 20, State Department approved the Authorized Departure (AD) from Consulate General Hong Kong of eligible family members (EFMs) and non-emergency personnel. The current Travel Advisory for Hong Kong is Level 2 (encourages all American citizens to exercise increased caution due to the novel coronavirus). The safe haven for EFMs is the United States. Dept of State employees safe have is Washington D.C. Other agency employees may be evacuated to their agency headquarters location. DHS has three ICE employees with 10 family members, and USSS has one employee with one family member assigned to Consulate Hong Kong.

Source: Dept of State

Coordination:

OPS-NOC: The Office of Operations Coordination National Operations Center is actively engaging partner organizations across the Homeland Security Enterprise for additional information and will provide updates as warranted.

CETC: Current and Emerging Threat Center is actively engaging IE and IC partners for additional information and will report as warranted.

Distribution: NOC DHS Component Actions Report Recipients, DOD Ops Centers, HHS Ops Center, CDC EOC, DOT Ops Center, DOS Ops Centers, USDA Ops Center, and White House.

V/r

V/r,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Section Chief

Joint Intelligence Operations Center

Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th Street, SW - (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Washington, D.C. 20536
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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 11 Feb 2020 03:52:03 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): Novel Coronavirus - Worldwide
(Awareness NOC 0051-20)

UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

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Overview: The Department of State has issued an Authorized Departure for non-emergency personnel and family members from Consulate Hong Kong.

Report: Effective 10 Feb 20, State Department approved the Authorized Departure (AD) from Consulate General Hong Kong of eligible family members (EFMs) and non-emergency personnel. The current Travel Advisory for Hong Kong is Level 2 (encourages all American citizens to exercise increased caution due to the novel coronavirus). The safe haven for EFMs is the United States. Dept of State employees safe have is Washington D.C. Other agency employees may be evacuated to their agency headquarters location. DHS has three ICE employees with 10 family members, and USSS has one employee with one family member assigned to Consulate Hong Kong.

Source: Dept of State

Coordination:

OPS-NOC: The Office of Operations Coordination National Operations Center is actively engaging partner organizations across the Homeland Security Enterprise for additional information and will provide updates as warranted.

CETC: Current and Emerging Threat Center is actively engaging IE and IC partners for additional information and will report as warranted.

Distribution: NOC DHS Component Actions Report Recipients, DOD Ops Centers, HHS Ops Center, CDC EOC, DOT Ops Center, DOS Ops Centers, USDA Ops Center, and White House.

V/R

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Criminal Analyst
Joint Intelligence Operations Center (JIOC)
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Desk/STE: 202-732-(b)(6);
Fax: 202-732-3133

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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 6 Feb 2020 17:51:57 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote;#ICE JIOC Management
Cc: JIOC-ICE
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): Novel Coronavirus - Worldwide (Awareness NOC 0051-20)

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Update (1245 ET, 6 Feb 20): The individual, who exhibited a fever, cough, and cold, is no longer ill, and the Cruise Ship ANTHEM OF THE SEAS will be permitted to dock in Bayonne, NJ, on 7 Feb. CDC, in coordination with state health officials and Royal Caribbean Cruise Line medical staff, consider this individual as a “medium risk” and not a Person Under Investigation for 2019-nCoV infection. The individual was reportedly not in Hubei, and had no known contact with anyone infected with 2019-nCoV. CDC does not anticipate sending any samples from this individual for further testing for 2019-nCoV infection. The remaining Chinese-national passengers/crew are considered “low risk” by CDC. The vessel will be permitted to enter port and dock in Bayonne, NJ, and all passengers will be allowed to disembark with no additional medical screenings required.

Overview (0000 ET, 6 Feb 20): The cruise ship ANTHEM OF THE SEAS notified the USCG that 17 Chinese national passengers have been quarantined on the ship after one of them exhibited a fever, cough, and cold over the past 48 hours. CDC and USCG are working with Royal Caribbean to explore options for testing the passenger for possible coronavirus prior to the ship’s scheduled arrival in port Friday morning.

Report: As of 2323 ET 5 Feb, the ship was located 470 miles southwest of Bayonne, NJ and 300 miles west-southwest of the NC Outer Banks. The cruise ship expects to near the Port of NY/NJ on Thursday night, with scheduled arrival at the Bayonne, NJ terminal at 0600 ET Friday. The Chinese nationals arrived in the U.S. on 25 and 26 Jan, and were cleared by CDC prior to embarking the cruise ship in Bayonne on 27 Jan for an 11-day Southern Caribbean cruise. The specific locations in China of the Chinese nationals before travel to the US are not yet known. There are also two Chinese national crewmembers aboard who are not quarantined.

CDC medical staff have been in contact with the medical staff on the cruise ship. CDC cannot determine with certainty whether or not the passenger has the coronavirus without a sample. CDC has raised the possibility of USCG support in obtaining a sample from the sick passenger before the ship arrives for lab testing in Atlanta, GA. USCG Sector New York has drafted a Denial of Entry Order if needed. Sector New

York has notified Royal Caribbean of the possibility of a Denial of Entry, pending CDC assessment. There are 3600 passengers and 1600 crew members aboard.

There is no media interest at this time; however, there is a potential of high media interest due to the number of passengers and crew members on board.

Source: USCG National Command Center

Coordination:

OPS-NOC: The Office of Operations Coordination National Operations Center is actively engaging the USCG National Command Center.

CETC: The Current and Emerging Threat Center is actively engaging IE and IC partners for additional information and will report as warranted.

USCG: Provided initial reporting via a Critical Information Communications (CIC) conference call.

Distribution: DHS HQ Leadership and Senior Staff, DHS Component Leadership and Operations Centers, White House Situation Room

V/r,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Section Chief / Supervisory Criminal Analyst

Watch Operations

Joint Intelligence Operations Center (JIOC)

ICE | Homeland Security Investigations

Desk Line: 202-732-(b)(6);

Government Cell: 202-903-(b)(6);

JIOC Ring All: 202-732-(b)(6);

UNCLASS: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov



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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 5 Mar 2020 01:30:10 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: #ICE JIOC Management;Cronen, C M;Macam, Lisa M;Villanueva, Raymond;JIOC-ICE
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 - Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

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Overview: CDC confirms a DHS contract medical screener at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) has tested positive for COVID-19. There is media attention.

Report: The 26-year-old American Medical Response (AMR) employee contracted by CWMD to support passenger screening began to experience flu-like symptoms (general weakness, stuffy nose, and cough) on Sat, 29 Feb. The screener was evaluated at her Primary Care Physician on Sun, 1 Mar. On the evening of Mon, 2 Mar, the screener was contacted by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACOPH), advising her test results indicated “preliminary positive” for COVID-19. The screener was instructed to remain home along with her family, and perform symptom and temperature monitoring. Subsequently, a sample was submitted to CDC and confirmed as COVID-19.

Because the last shift the screener worked was 21 Feb, and the screener was asymptomatic at that time, LACOPH decided not to conduct “contact investigation”. There had been no positive COVID-19 hits at LAX during her screening shifts. AMR is aware of the events, and took a statement from the screener validating PPE was properly worn during screening as required, and that the screener did not come into contact with any symptomatic travelers during worked shifts.

Since the last shift worked at LAX on 21 Feb, the screener has worked four shifts which were classroom-based (24, 25, 26, and 27 Feb). This training occurred at AMR Los Angeles - Orange County HQ where there was no interaction with the public and/or non-employee personnel.

CWMD reports steps have been taken to ensure co-workers are notified. AMR has compiled a list of all employees that had direct contact with the screener during shifts at LAX, employees working out of HQ, and the employees in attendance during the classroom-based training. All appropriate contact tracing and surveillance of co-workers is underway. CDC direction regarding quarantine/isolation will be followed. Otherwise, co-workers are low risk and continue with their routine self-monitoring, which is always in place for medical screeners, a requirement which has been reiterated.

Source: CWMD, and media sources

Distribution: DHS HQ Leadership and Senior Staff, DHS Component Leadership and Operations Centers, White House Situation Room

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Section Chief / Supervisory Criminal Analyst

Watch Operations

Joint Intelligence Operations Center (JIOC)

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From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 4 Mar 2020 23:08:31 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: #ICE JIOC Management;JIOC-ICE
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 - Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

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This information is being provided for senior DHS and Component leaders. It is meant to increase senior leader situational awareness and is not for public release.

Overview: Placer County, CA Public Health is reporting a resident has died of COVID-19. The person, an elderly adult with underlying health conditions, was the second confirmed case of COVID-19 in the county and is now the first to die from the illness in CA. This patient had been a passenger on the Cruise Ship (C/S) GRAND PRINCESS, which departed San Francisco, CA on 11 Feb and returned on 21 Feb with port calls in Mexico. This sailing had 2,422 passenger and 1,122 crew aboard. With an additional COVID-19 fatality reported in WA today, the total number of reported domestic COVID-19 fatalities is now 11.

Report: USCG reports the C/S GRAND PRINCESS had disembarked this passenger, along with another who had shared a stateroom, on 21 Feb. Both subsequently displayed flu-like symptoms after disembarkation. On 21 Feb, the ship then departed San Francisco for a cruise to Hawaii, with 54 passengers from the 11 Feb cruise remaining onboard (2,383 passengers and 1,110 crew). While enroute, the steward who serviced the cabin of the two sick passengers also began to exhibit symptoms. The steward tested negative for COVID-19 in Hilo, HI.

There were reports of up to 11 passengers and 10 crew on the current cruise who were reported to be exhibiting flu-like symptoms, but USCG reports there is one patient of particular concern to the ship's doctor and CDC. GRAND PRINCESS was scheduled to return to San Francisco on 7 Mar via Ensenada, Mexico, but the ship advised the passengers last night that they would not make the Ensenada port call, and would instead return to San Francisco Thursday evening, 5 Mar. The ship is currently at sea, heading for home port, and has requested assistance in obtaining test capabilities prior to arrival.

USCG is part of a Unified Command with Princess Cruise Lines, CDC, CBP, the City of San Francisco, and the CA Office of Emergency Services, who has indicated a desire to use the CA Joint Information Center (JIC) for coordinated messaging. USCG Sector San Francisco will hold another Unified Command meeting this afternoon. The DHS Global MOTR Coordination Center (GMCC) intends to convene a Maritime Operational Threat Response (MOTR) conference call at 1800 ET today to ensure interagency

awareness of the situation and extensive state, local, and federal collaboration now occurring. Forthcoming decisions will include identifying lead agencies, courses of action, and coordination regarding public affairs guidance, if any. A USCG Critical Information Call will follow the MOTR and Unified Command meeting.

The NOC has queried HHS/CDC to confirm the Placer County, CA report that the GRAND PRINCESS fatality is indeed COVID-19 related.

Source: USCG, Placer County, CA Public Health, and media sources

Distribution: DHS HQ Leadership and Senior Staff, DHS Component Leadership and Operations Centers, White House Situation Room

V/r,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Section Chief / Supervisory Criminal Analyst

Watch Operations

Joint Intelligence Operations Center (JIOC)

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From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Sent: 4 Mar 2020 22:45:22 +0000
To: Albence, Matthew; Benner, Derek N; Kelly, Christopher S; Barrera, Staci A; Erichs, Alysa; Lucero, Enrique M; Pham, Tony H; Rodriguez, Waldemar
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) Johnson, Tae D; (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) Davis, Mike
P: (b)(6); Fenton, Jennifer M; Kovacic, Raymond
Subject: COVID-19 Supplemental
Attachments: govdoc20200304-211705.pdf

See attached Emergency Supplemental summary and below article. Doesn't appear to include anything directly for DHS. Senate is expected to vote tomorrow and send to the President for signature. Total \$8.3 billion.
HHS: \$6.5 billion
FDA: \$60 million
State Dept: \$1.25 billion
Small Business Admin: \$20 million
Medicare Waiver: \$500 million

Vr,

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The House approved an \$8.3 billion emergency spending package to help contain the rapidly spreading COVID-19 illness on Wednesday after about 15 minutes of debate, as the death toll continued to mount in the United States and worldwide.

The vote was 415-2, easily eclipsing the two-thirds threshold necessary for passage under suspension of the rules. The two 'no' votes were Republicans [Andy Biggs](#) of Arizona and [Ken Buck](#) of Colorado. In a statement after the vote, Biggs called it a "larded-up bill" that wouldn't solve the problem and wastes taxpayer dollars.

The Senate is expected to quickly send the legislation ([HR 6074](#)) to President Donald Trump, who said last week he would accept a higher spending level than the \$2.5 billion the White House originally requested. Only half of that amount was new funding, with the rest pulled from existing programs that lawmakers said would shortchange other priorities.

"We worked together to craft an aggressive and comprehensive response that provides the resources the experts say they need to combat this crisis," Senate Appropriations Chairman [Richard C. Shelby](#), R-Ala., said in a statement. "I thank my colleagues for their cooperation and appreciate President Trump's eagerness to sign this legislation and get the funding out the door without delay."

Trump's legislative director, Eric Ueland, confirmed after the House vote that the president "looks forward to signing" the bill.

Only hours earlier, Shelby said negotiators were "at a standstill" over Democratic demands to maintain drug and vaccine affordability provisions that GOP lawmakers said would stifle innovation. Asked what triggered quick turnaround in sentiment, House Appropriations

Chairwoman [Nita M. Lowey](#), D-N.Y., said: "Just a willingness on the part of both sides to have a deal."

The measure includes \$300 million for the federal government to buy drug treatments, tests and eventually vaccines for the coronavirus-caused illness when those are developed.

The package would maintain standard procurement requirements for federal contracts requiring a "fair and reasonable" price for those supplies. It would also provide the Department of Health and Human Services with authority to ensure that they are "affordable in the commercial market" as long as product development isn't delayed as a result.

House Democrats last month had pushed HHS Secretary Alex Azar on requiring drug companies provided exclusive licenses for the development of vaccines and treatments to offer affordable prices, and if not, yank those licenses and give them to other companies.

Rep. [Donna E. Shalala](#), D-Fla., a former HHS secretary during the Clinton administration, argued that the provision granting the secretary the ability to ensure low prices in the commercial market was symbolically important.

"I think that we're trying to send a very clear signal that this is going to be accessible to everyone," she said. "Why would anyone have an interest in not having everyone who needs to from having access to the vaccine?"

A Senate GOP aide, who wasn't authorized to speak publicly, said Republican negotiators "never compromised availability or affordability of vaccines, and stopped Democrats from setting prices in the commercial market."

Republicans also successfully removed a provision Democrats wanted in the final bill that would have required Medicare to fully cover the cost of a future vaccine, according to a source involved in the negotiations.

Stockpiling supplies

Most of the money in the package, \$6.5 billion, would go to HHS, with \$3.1 billion for the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund to stockpile medical supplies, including the \$300 million to ensure affordable vaccines and drugs. The money would also support research and development into vaccines and drug treatments and aid in response efforts.

About \$2.2 billion would go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including \$1 billion for state and local preparedness grants; \$300 million for global health security accounts; and \$300 million for a fund set up to allow the agency to respond quickly to infectious disease outbreaks.

Other funding includes:

- The U.S. Agency for International Development would receive \$1.25 billion for global health programs, economic support funds and diplomatic programs.
- The National Institutes of Health would receive \$836 million, mainly for R&D but also \$10 million for training to reduce disease exposure for hospital workers, first responders and others.
- \$61 million to the Food and Drug Administration to "monitor and mitigate" any shortages of medical products as well as to strengthen the country's medical product manufacturing sector.
- \$20 million for the Small Business Administration to boost lending to affected businesses.
- \$136 million to reimburse programs the administration had tapped for initial COVID-19 response efforts, including a program that helps low-income individuals and families heat, cool and insulate their homes.

And there's a nearly \$500 million provision waiving Medicare reimbursement rules so that beneficiaries can receive in-home care without incurring significant out-of-pocket expenses.

So far, more than 80 people in the United States have been diagnosed with COVID-19, and there have been 11 deaths due to the illness. Two more were reported today, including one in Placer County, Calif. — the first outside of Washington state.

Truncated process

The House voted on the measure roughly three hours after releasing text of the bill, an unusually truncated process that illustrates the pressure on lawmakers to act.

The Senate is expected to vote on the coronavirus package Thursday, but will first need to reach an agreement to move off of the energy bill ([S 2657](#)) senators are currently debating.

Senate Majority Whip [John Thune](#), R-S.D., told reporters Tuesday that senators might not hold a roll call vote on the emergency spending bill, in the interest of speeding up its path to the president's desk.

“If it's got the support of the leadership in the House and the Senate on both sides of the aisle, my guess is that there'll be pretty strong interest in moving it quickly. And if we want to move it quickly over here, voicing it or doing it by [unanimous consent] would be a way to do that,” Thune said.

The aid package is seen as essential to ongoing monitoring of the epidemic as well as reassuring the public that the U.S. government is capable of handling unforeseen events.

There is some also hope that the supplemental funding deal will help to calm stock markets that have dropped precipitously over the past week despite surges of optimism on Monday about coordinated government action — and then Wednesday after the Super Tuesday primary results became clear.

This might not be the only supplemental bill Congress passes to address the new virus, lawmakers said Tuesday.

“I wouldn't be surprised in a matter of weeks that we consider something else,” said Senate Minority Whip [Richard J. Durbin](#), D-Ill. “But you know, I can't predict the pace of this or the complexity of this challenge. We just have to be ready to put the resources on the table to make it work.”

CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL

CHAIRMAN SHELBY STATEMENT

“This should not be about politics; this is about doing our job to protect the American people from a potential pandemic. We worked together to craft an aggressive and comprehensive response that provides the resources the experts say they need to combat this crisis. I thank my colleagues for their cooperation and appreciate President Trump’s eagerness to sign this legislation and get the funding out the door without delay.”

OVERVIEW

1. *Aggressive Surge in Resources.* The package provides an aggressive surge in funding -- \$7.767 billion -- to combat the coronavirus, more than triple the Administration’s original request.
2. *Comprehensive Response.* The package contains funding to combat the spread of the virus at the local, state, national, and international levels. 85 percent of the total funding will be spent domestically.
3. *Moving Quickly.* The House will take up the package first; the Senate will follow soon thereafter.

Note: The amounts below are based on estimated needs from the experts and agencies on the front lines battling the coronavirus. The funding provided in this package is designated specifically for coronavirus prevention, preparation, and response efforts.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) -- \$6.497 billion

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) -- \$2.2 billion

- State and Local Preparedness Grants -- \$1 billion for state and local preparedness and response, half of which will go to states, cities, and tribes within 30 days. Each state will receive no less than \$4 million.
- Global Health Security -- \$300 million to continue CDC’s global health efforts that are critical to the health and security of the United States.
- Infectious Diseases Rapid Response Fund -- \$300 million

Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund, HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response -- \$3.1 billion

- For procurement of medical supplies to supplement the Strategic National Stockpile and support federal and state response efforts; research and development of vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics; and hospital and health system preparedness
- An additional \$300 million is made available for the purchase of vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics; ensuring all Americans will have access to the drugs they need to combat coronavirus
- Health Resources and Services Administration -- \$100 million for community health centers

National Institutes of Health -- \$836 million

- \$826 million for the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases for research and development of vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics
- \$10 million for the National Institute on Environmental Health Sciences for worker-based training to prevent and reduce exposure for hospital employees, emergency first responders, and other workers on the front lines combatting the virus

Food and Drug Administration -- \$61 million for pre- and post-market work on countermeasures, therapies, and vaccines; to monitor and mitigate any medical product shortage; and to strengthen the U.S. medical product manufacturing sector

Telehealth -- Contains a provision that waives certain telehealth requirements during the coronavirus public health emergency to ensure Medicare beneficiaries can receive the care they need at home to avoid placing themselves at greater risk of this virus

Department of State and USAID-- \$1.25 billion

- Diplomatic Programs -- \$264 million for consular operations, evacuation expenses, and emergency preparedness
- Global Health Programs -- \$435 million, including \$200 million for the Emergency Reserve Fund
- International Disaster Assistance -- \$300 million to address humanitarian and health needs in affected areas
- Economic Support Fund -- \$250 million to address related economic, security, and stabilization requirements
- Office of the Inspector General -- \$1 million for oversight of resources provided in the package
- Increases transfer threshold for emergency evacuations from \$10 million to \$100 million

Small Business Administration (SBA) -- \$20 million for administrative expenses related to increased loan volume to help businesses affected by the outbreak

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Page 316

Withheld pursuant to exemption
Referred to Another Agency/Component
of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: JIOC-ICE
Sent: 5 Mar 2020 19:48:02 +0000
To: #ICE-Watch_SLN_NOCnote
Cc: #ICE JIOC Management;JIOC-ICE;Cronen, C M;Macam, Lisa M;Villanueva, Raymond;Whatmough, Joshua J
Subject: (U//FOUO) OPS-NOC Note (Interim Update): COVID-19 - Worldwide (NOC 0051-20)

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Update (1434 ET 5 Mar) USCG reports two California Air National Guard (CAANG) 129th Rescue Wing H-60 helicopters departed Moffet Federal Airfield at 1229 ET, and have delivered 100 COVID-19 test kits, along with a CDC representative and two U.S. Air Force Pararescuemen (PJs) to the Cruise Ship GRAND PRINCESS, which is still offshore and enroute San Francisco. The CDC representative and PJs will train and assist the ship's medical crew in collecting samples for those passengers who have exhibited flu-like symptoms (approx. 34). These passengers have been isolated in their cabins, and the GRAND PRINCESS crew has conducted their highest level of disinfection. Once the samples are collected, the CAANG H-60s will retrieve them for transport to a Richmond, CA lab for overnight testing.

Alternatives for the disposition of the GRAND PRINCESS, depending on whether there are positive COVID-19 tests, are under development by the Unified Command (UC). Depending on test results and subsequent CDC/UC determinations, the potential exists for the GRAND PRINCESS to proceed to an alternate port to help facilitate the logistics associated with shoreside quarantine, if warranted. USCG remains in support of HHS/CDC as the lead federal agency.

Initial (1631 ET 4 Mar): Placer County, CA Public Health is reporting a resident has died of COVID-19. The person, an elderly adult with underlying health conditions, was the second confirmed case of COVID-19 in the county and is now the first to die from the illness in CA. This patient had been a passenger on the Cruise Ship (C/S) GRAND PRINCESS, which departed San Francisco, CA on 11 Feb and returned on 21 Feb with port calls in Mexico. This sailing had 2,422 passenger and 1,122 crew aboard. With an additional COVID-19 fatality reported in WA today, the total number of reported domestic COVID-19 fatalities is now 11.

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The NOC has queried HHS/CDC to confirm the Placer County, CA report that the GRAND PRINCESS fatality is indeed COVID-19 related.

Source: USCG, Placer County, CA Public Health, and media sources

Distribution: DHS HQ Leadership and Senior Staff, DHS Component Leadership and Operations Centers, White House Situation Room

V/r,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Section Chief / Supervisory Criminal Analyst
Watch Operations

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From: Albence, Matthew
Sent: 4 Mar 2020 23:26:55 +0000
To: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) Benner, Derek N; Kelly, Christopher S; Barrera, Staci A; Erichs, Alysa; Lucero, Enrique M; Pham, Tony H; Rodriguez, Waldemar
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) Johnson, Tae D; (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) Davis, Mike P; Aguilar, Max; Fenton, Jennifer M; Kovacic, Raymond
Subject: RE: COVID-19 Supplemental

Thanks, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

Sent with BlackBerry Work
(www.blackberry.com)

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov
Date: Wednesday, Mar 04, 2020, 5:45 PM
To: Albence, Matthew (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov, Benner, Derek N (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov, Kelly, Christopher S (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov, Barrera, Staci A (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov, Erichs, Alysa (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov, Lucero, Enrique M (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov, Pham, Tony H (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov, Rodriguez, Waldemar (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov, Johnson, Tae D (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov, Davis, Mike P (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov, Aguilar, Max (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov, Fenton, Jennifer M (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov, Kovacic, Raymond (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) @ice.dhs.gov
Subject: COVID-19 Supplemental

See attached Emergency Supplemental summary and below article. Doesn't appear to include anything directly for DHS. Senate is expected to vote tomorrow and send to the President for signature. Total \$8.3 billion.
HHS: \$6.5 billion
FDA: \$60 million
State Dept: \$1.25 billion
Small Business Admin: \$20 million
Medicare Waiver: \$500 million

Vr,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

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The House approved an \$8.3 billion emergency spending package to help contain the rapidly spreading COVID-19 illness on Wednesday after about 15 minutes of debate, as the death toll continued to mount in the United States and worldwide.

The vote was 415-2, easily eclipsing the two-thirds threshold necessary for passage under suspension of the rules. The two 'no' votes were Republicans [Andy Biggs](#) of Arizona and [Ken Buck](#) of Colorado. In a statement after the vote, Biggs called it a "larded-up bill" that wouldn't solve the problem and wastes taxpayer dollars.

The Senate is expected to quickly send the legislation ([HR 6074](#)) to President Donald Trump, who said last week he would accept a higher spending level than the \$2.5 billion the White House originally requested. Only half of that amount was new funding, with the rest pulled from existing programs that lawmakers said would shortchange other priorities.

"We worked together to craft an aggressive and comprehensive response that provides the resources the experts say they need to combat this crisis," Senate Appropriations Chairman [Richard C. Shelby](#), R-Ala., said in a statement. "I thank my colleagues for their cooperation and appreciate President Trump's eagerness to sign this legislation and get the funding out the door without delay."

Trump's legislative director, Eric Ueland, confirmed after the House vote that the president "looks forward to signing" the bill.

Only hours earlier, Shelby said negotiators were "at a standstill" over Democratic demands to maintain drug and vaccine affordability provisions that GOP lawmakers said would stifle innovation. Asked what triggered quick turnaround in sentiment, House Appropriations Chairwoman [Nita M. Lowey](#), D-N.Y., said: "Just a willingness on the part of both sides to have a deal."

The measure includes \$300 million for the federal government to buy drug treatments, tests and eventually vaccines for the coronavirus-caused illness when those are developed.

The package would maintain standard procurement requirements for federal contracts requiring a "fair and reasonable" price for those supplies. It would also provide the Department of Health and Human Services with authority to ensure that they are "affordable in the commercial market" as long as product development isn't delayed as a result.

House Democrats last month had pushed HHS Secretary Alex Azar on requiring drug companies provided exclusive licenses for the development of vaccines and treatments to offer affordable prices, and if not, yank those licenses and give them to other companies. Rep. [Donna E. Shalala](#), D-Fla., a former HHS secretary during the Clinton administration, argued that the provision granting the secretary the ability to ensure low prices in the commercial market was symbolically important.

"I think that we're trying to send a very clear signal that this is going to be accessible to everyone," she said. "Why would anyone have an interest in not having everyone who needs to from having access to the vaccine?"

A Senate GOP aide, who wasn't authorized to speak publicly, said Republican negotiators "never compromised availability or affordability of vaccines, and stopped Democrats from setting prices in the commercial market."

Republicans also successfully removed a provision Democrats wanted in the final bill that would have required Medicare to fully cover the cost of a future vaccine, according to a source involved in the negotiations.

Stockpiling supplies

Most of the money in the package, \$6.5 billion, would go to HHS, with \$3.1 billion for the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund to stockpile medical supplies, including the \$300 million to ensure affordable vaccines and drugs. The money would also support research and development into vaccines and drug treatments and aid in response efforts.

About \$2.2 billion would go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including \$1 billion for state and local preparedness grants; \$300 million for global health security accounts; and \$300 million for a fund set up to allow the agency to respond quickly to infectious disease outbreaks.

Other funding includes:

- The U.S. Agency for International Development would receive \$1.25 billion for global health programs, economic support funds and diplomatic programs.
- The National Institutes of Health would receive \$836 million, mainly for R&D but also \$10 million for training to reduce disease exposure for hospital workers, first responders and others.
- \$61 million to the Food and Drug Administration to “monitor and mitigate” any shortages of medical products as well as to strengthen the country’s medical product manufacturing sector.
- \$20 million for the Small Business Administration to boost lending to affected businesses.
- \$136 million to reimburse programs the administration had tapped for initial COVID-19 response efforts, including a program that helps low-income individuals and families heat, cool and insulate their homes.

And there's a nearly \$500 million provision waiving Medicare reimbursement rules so that beneficiaries can receive in-home care without incurring significant out-of-pocket expenses.

So far, more than 80 people in the United States have been diagnosed with COVID-19, and there have been 11 deaths due to the illness. Two more were reported today, including one in Placer County, Calif. — the first outside of Washington state.

Truncated process

The House voted on the measure roughly three hours after releasing text of the bill, an unusually truncated process that illustrates the pressure on lawmakers to act.

The Senate is expected to vote on the coronavirus package Thursday, but will first need to reach an agreement to move off of the energy bill ([S 2657](#)) senators are currently debating.

Senate Majority Whip [John Thune](#), R-S.D., told reporters Tuesday that senators might not hold a roll call vote on the emergency spending bill, in the interest of speeding up its path to the president's desk.

“If it's got the support of the leadership in the House and the Senate on both sides of the aisle, my guess is that there'll be pretty strong interest in moving it quickly. And if we want to move it quickly over here, voicing it or doing it by [unanimous consent] would be a way to do that,” Thune said.

The aid package is seen as essential to ongoing monitoring of the epidemic as well as reassuring the public that the U.S. government is capable of handling unforeseen events. There is some also hope that the supplemental funding deal will help to calm stock markets that have dropped precipitously over the past week despite surges of optimism

on Monday about coordinated government action — and then Wednesday after the Super Tuesday primary results became clear.

This might not be the only supplemental bill Congress passes to address the new virus, lawmakers said Tuesday.

"I wouldn't be surprised in a matter of weeks that we consider something else," said Senate Minority Whip [Richard J. Durbin](#), D-Ill. "But you know, I can't predict the pace of this or the complexity of this challenge. We just have to be ready to put the resources on the table to make it work."

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DHS Crisis Action Team (CAT) Events of the Day
COVID-19
Monday, 9 Mar 20
(all times Eastern)

0000 Component Actions Report (CAR) inputs due
0400 CAT Shift Change
0700 NOC Incident Report published
0700 CAT Placemat published
0700 CAT Events of the Day published
0815 SOC / IMT / Task Force Operational Coordination Call (HHS led)
0845 AS1 Daily COVID 19 Sync
1000 COVID-19 MGMT Conference Call
1200 COVID-19 Global Integration Meeting SVTC – Global integration Meeting
1200 CAT Shift Change
1600 AS1 White House COVID-19 Task Force Meeting
1700 DHS Medical Workforce Sync Call
1700 HHS SLB published
1800 DHS CAR published
2000 CAT Shift Change

Prepared by the Office of Operations Coordination

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