

# Eye on the World

## *July 22, 2017*

This compilation of material for "Eye on the World" is presented as a service to the Churches of God. The views stated in the material are those of the writers or sources quoted by the writers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the members of the Church of God Big Sandy. The following articles were posted at churchofgodbigandy.com for the weekend of July 22, 2017.

**Compiled by Dave Havir**

**Luke 21:34-36**—"But take heed to yourselves, lest your souls be weighed down with self-indulgence, and drunkenness, or the anxieties of this life, and that day come on you suddenly, like a falling trap; for it will come on all dwellers on the face of the whole earth. But beware of slumbering; and every moment pray that you may be fully strengthened to escape from all these coming evils, and to take your stand in the presence of the Son of Man" (Weymouth New Testament).



A Reuters article by Luke Baker titled "Jerusalem on Alert As Religious Tensions Rise Over Holy Site" was posted at reuters.com on July 17, 2017. Following is the article.

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Israel bolstered security in the Old City of Jerusalem on Friday [July 14] and prepared for possible clashes with Muslim worshippers after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decided metal detectors at a sensitive holy site would not be removed.

There have been daily confrontations between Palestinians hurling rocks and Israeli police using stun grenades since the detectors were placed at the entrance to the shrine, known to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary and to Jews as Temple Mount, on Sunday, after the killing of two Israeli policemen.

Muslim leaders and Palestinian political factions have urged the faithful to gather for a "day of rage" against the new security policies, which they see as changing delicate agreements that have governed the holy site for decades.

The Israeli police said extra units had been mobilised to bolster security in the Old City, while Muslim access to the shrine for prayers would be limited to women of all ages and men over 50. Roadblocks were in place on approach roads to Jerusalem to stop buses carrying Muslims to the site.

"Police are coordinating to enable Friday prayers to take place and at the same time security measures are taking place," spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said.

The Noble Sanctuary-Temple Mount compound, containing the Dome of the Rock and the Aqsa Mosque, has long been a source of religious friction. Since Israel captured and annexed the Old City, including the compound, in the 1967 Middle East war, it has also become a symbol of Palestinian nationalism.

On Thursday [July 13], there were calls for Netanyahu to back down and remove the metal detectors so as not to inflame the situation. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, after discussing the issue with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, called Israeli President Reuven Rivlin to press for their removal.

Nickolay Mladenov, the United Nations' special coordinator for long-stalled Israel-Palestinian peace talks, appealed for calm and the White House urged a resolution. Jordan, which is the ultimate custodian of the holy site, has also been involved in mediation efforts.

### **Detectors stay**

But after a late-night meeting of his security cabinet, Netanyahu decided the metal detectors should stay. Officials said they were necessary to ensure Palestinians and Israeli-Arabs do not smuggle weapons into the holy compound.

Far-right members of Netanyahu's government - which relies on religious and right-wing parties for support - had publicly urged him to keep the devices in place.

"Israel is committed to maintaining the status quo at the Temple Mount and the freedom of access to the holy places," the security cabinet said in a statement.

"The cabinet has authorised the police to take any decision in order ensure free access to the holy places while maintaining security and public order."

Tensions around the Noble Sanctuary-Temple Mount have erupted into violence in the past. In 2000, after then Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon visited, Palestinians took it as a provocation. It led to clashes that spiralled into the second Intifada, when an estimated 1,000 Israelis and some 3,000 Palestinians were killed over four years of violence.

As well as anger at having to submit to Israeli security policies, Palestinians are alarmed at what they see as the slow chipping away at the status quo at the Noble Sanctuary.

Since Ottoman times, while Jews are permitted to visit the area - considered the holiest place in Judaism, where an ancient temple once stood - only Muslims are allowed to pray.

Over the past decade, however, visits by religious-nationalist Jews have increased sharply and some attempt to pray. While police are supposed to eject them if they do, the rules are not always enforced, fuelling Muslim anger.



An article by Selcan Hacaoglu titled "Turkey Chooses Russia Over NATO for Missile Defense" was posted at bloomberg.com on July 13, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

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Turkey has agreed to pay \$2.5 billion to acquire Russia's most advanced missile defense system, a senior Turkish official said, in a deal that signals a turn away from the NATO military alliance that has anchored Turkey to the West for more than six decades.

The preliminary agreement sees Turkey receiving two S-400 missile batteries from Russia within the next year, and then producing another two inside Turkey, according to the Turkish official, who asked not to be named because of the sensitivity of the matter.

A spokesman for Russia's arms-export company Rosoboronexport OJSC said he couldn't immediately comment on details of a deal with Turkey.

Turkey has reached the point of an agreement on a missile defense system before, only to scupper the deal later amid protests and condemnation from NATO. Under pressure from the U.S., Turkey gave up an earlier plan to buy a similar missile-defense system from a state-run Chinese company, which had been sanctioned by the U.S. for alleged missile sales to Iran.

Turkey has been in NATO since the early years of the Cold War, playing a key role as a frontline state bordering the Soviet Union. But ties with fellow members have been strained in recent years, with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan pursuing a more assertive and independent foreign policy as conflict engulfed neighboring Iraq and Syria.

Tensions with Washington mounted over U.S. support for Kurdish militants in Syria that Turkey considers terrorists, and the relationship with the European Union soured as the bloc pushed back against what it sees as Turkey's increasingly autocratic turn. Last month, Germany decided to withdraw from the main NATO base in Turkey, Incirlik, after Turkey refused to allow German lawmakers to visit troops there.

The missile deal with Russia "is a clear sign that Turkey is disappointed in the U.S. and Europe," said Konstantin Makienko, an analyst at the Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, a Moscow think-tank. "But until the advance is paid and the assembly begins, we can't be sure of anything."

The Russian system would not be compatible with other NATO defense systems, but also wouldn't be subject to the same constraints imposed by the alliance, which prevents Turkey from deploying such systems on the Armenian border, Aegean coast or Greek border, the official said.

The Russian deal would allow Turkey to deploy the missile defense systems anywhere in the country, the official said. The partnership could boost Turkey's defense industry and serves the nation's goal of diversifying arms suppliers.



An article by Ben Hubbard, Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt titled "Saudi King's Son Plotted Effort to Oust His Rival" was posted at nytimes.com on July 18, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

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As next in line to be king of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Nayef was unaccustomed to being told what to do. Then, one night in June, he was summoned to a palace in Mecca, held against his will and pressured for hours to give up his claim to the throne.

By dawn, he had given in, and Saudi Arabia woke to the news that it had a new crown prince: the king's 31-year-old son, Mohammed bin Salman.

The young prince's supporters have lauded his elevation as the seamless empowerment of an ambitious leader. But since he was promoted on June 21, indications have emerged that Mohammed bin Salman plotted the ouster and that the transition was rockier than has been publicly portrayed, according to current and former United States officials and associates of the royal family.

To strengthen support for the sudden change in the line of succession, some senior princes were told that Mohammed bin Nayef was unfit to be king because of a drug problem, according to an associate of the royal family.

The decision to oust Mohammed bin Nayef and some of his closest colleagues has spread concern among counterterrorism officials in the United States who saw their most trusted Saudi contacts disappear and have struggled to build new relationships.

And the collection of so much power by one young royal, Prince Mohammed bin Salman, has unsettled a royal family long guided by consensus and deference to elders.

"You may have now such a concentration of power within one branch and within one individual who is also younger than so many of the cousins and sons of former kings that it may begin to create a situation where the family is out of whack," said Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, a fellow for the Middle East at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, who studies Persian Gulf politics.

The insularity of Saudi Arabia's sprawling and phenomenally wealthy royal family is well known, often leaving diplomats, intelligence agents and members of the family itself struggling to decipher its inner workings.

But since The New York Times reported last month that Mohammed bin Nayef had been confined to his palace, United States officials and associates of senior royals have provided similar accounts of how the elder prince was pres-

sured to step aside by the younger one. All spoke on the condition of anonymity so as not to endanger their contacts inside the kingdom, or themselves.



An article by Mark Browne titled "Venezuelan President Reportedly Considering Asylum As Pressure Grows on Regime" was posted at cnsnews.com on July 20, 2017. Following is the article.

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Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro is actively considering asylum in Russia or Cuba as international pressure grows on his embattled regime and the country's political crisis worsens, according to an international risk consultancy.

Texas-based Stratfor say its analysts have "received persistent reports" over the past year that Maduro "has considered asking for refuge in Russia or Cuba."

Cuba is playing a key role in "indirect talks between Russia and the United States on Venezuela," the consultancy said in a recently released report.

"The Russian or Cuban governments would be willing to accept the president and his wife, Cilia Flores, but not other political figures," the Stratfor report said, citing an unnamed source.

Cuban officials were also involved with Spain in "months of negotiations," that resulted in a decision by Maduro to release opposition Leopoldo Lopez from prison earlier this month.

The release of Lopez, was "an apparent concession to the United States," according to Stratfor.

Maduro is facing intensifying pressure from the administration of President Trump, who this week called the Venezuelan president a "bad leader who dreams of becoming a dictator."

Trump threatened "swift economic sanctions," if Maduro moves forward with plans to form a Constituent Assembly on July 30.

"The United States once again calls for free and fair elections and stands with the people of Venezuela in their quest to restore their country to a full and prosperous democracy," he said.

Maduro's push to form a Constituent Assembly, rejected by a majority of some 7.1 million voters in a non-binding referendum held last Sunday, would "disrupt the constitutional order in Venezuela," according to Moises Rendon, associate director of the Americas Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington.

"This new and handpicked assembly will claim it has the power to change and select new institutions and authorities, implement different private property laws, and rewrite the Constitution," he wrote in a column that appeared this week on the center's website.

"Venezuela is rapidly becoming a failed state," Rendon told CNSNews.com.

"The institutions are not functioning, the police, the judiciary, the health sector are in a shambles."

A failed state, Rendon said, would pose significant security risks for the U.S. because Maduro's government and the military are deeply involved in drug trafficking and other illegal activities.

In February, the Treasury Department named Maduro's executive vice-president, Tareck El Aissami, as a "specially designated narcotics trafficker."

El Aissami's associate, Lopez Bello, was also "designated for providing material assistance, financial support, or goods or services in support of the international narcotics trafficking activities of, and acting for or on behalf of, El Aissami."

The vice-president has also been accused of running an illegal immigration scheme while head of Venezuela's National Office of Identification, in which he issued "identity and travel documents to suspicious Arab and Iranian operatives," according to a report released this month by the American Enterprise Institute (AEI).

The same report said elements of Venezuela's government ""directly manage and support drug trafficking, money laundering, terrorism financing, support for guerrilla movements, and international corruption."

According to one of the report's authors, visiting fellow Roger Noriega, officials within Maduro's administration and the military involved in drug trafficking, "are pushing 20 years evading accountability."

"The U.S. judicial system is the only thing that most of these people fear," Noriega said.

Many would prefer to negotiate deals with US law enforcement "to avoid prosecution" for international drug crimes rather than be left exposed if the Maduro regime loses power, he said.

"There are very important figures in the government's security apparatus who have decided to cooperate with U.S. investigators to protect themselves."

According to the State Department's 2017 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Venezuela is "one of the preferred trafficking routes for illegal drugs, predominately cocaine, from South America to the Caribbean region, Central America, the United States, Western Africa, and Europe."

The U.S. has indicted a former national guard commander Gen. Nester Luis Reverol Torres, and Edylberto Jose Molina Molina, former assistant director of the country's anti-drugs office, for conspiracy to traffic internationally in cocaine, it noted.



An article by Patrick Goodenough titled "Major US Aid Recipients Pakistan, Lebanon Among 'Terrorist Safe Havens' in State Department Report" was posted at cnsnews.com on July 20, 2017. Following is the article.

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Countries identified as "terrorist safe havens" in the annual State Department terrorism report released Wednesday include major recipients of U.S. foreign assistance, including military aid.

Pakistan and Lebanon stand out, since in both cases the report indicates that their governments' approaches towards terrorism are part of the problem.

Although several other key U.S. aid recipients, notably Iraq, Egypt and Afghanistan, are also listed as "safe havens," in those cases government efforts battling terrorists are noted. Other "safe havens" include countries where large areas are ungoverned, such as Libya and Yemen.

The State Department's 2016 evaluation does not reflect well on Pakistan in particular, as the report reinforces long-held concerns that while Islamabad combats some terrorist groups it coddles others, allowing their leaders to address supporters and fundraise openly.

Pakistan has long been among the biggest recipients of U.S. foreign assistance. In the FY 2017 budget request it was fifth-biggest recipient, behind Israel, Egypt, Afghanistan and Jordan.

Since 2001 U.S. taxpayers have contributed more than \$33 billion to Pakistan, either in direct aid or as reimbursements for counterterrorism efforts.

An amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act authored by Rep. Ted Poe (R-Texas) and passed unanimously last week, requires the administration to certify that Pakistan is not providing military, financial, or logistical support to any terrorists operating in Pakistan or Afghanistan—a step Poe said "forces Pakistan to make a long overdue choice: either go after terrorists or lose millions of dollars of American aid."

The term "terrorist safe haven" in the report applies to "ungoverned, undergoverned, or illgoverned physical areas where terrorists are able to organize, plan, raise funds, communicate, recruit, train, transit, and operate in relative security because of inadequate governance capacity, political will, or both."

The report states that "numerous terrorist groups" continued to operate from Pakistani territory in 2016, including the Haqqani Network (HQN), Lashkar e-Toiba (LeT), and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM).

All three are U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs).

HQN, a Taliban faction, is viewed as the most effective terrorist group in the region, and frequently targets U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan.

Among others, HQN is accused of a suicide bombing at a U.S. military base in Afghanistan in 2009, in which seven CIA employees were killed. A declass-

sified Defense Intelligence Agency cable claimed that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency paid the terrorists to carry out the attack.

The other two groups cited, LeT and JeM, were established in Pakistan in the 1980s and 90s and primarily target India.

After being supposedly banned in 2002, LeT changed its name to Jamaat ud-Dawa (JuD). It is led by Hafiz Saeed, a U.N.-designated global terrorist, wanted by India for masterminding a terror attack in Mumbai in 2008, in which six Americans were among the 166 victims.

The U.S. and India have been calling on the government to act against Saeed for almost a decade, and he is the subject of a \$10 U.S. reward offer.

Pakistani authorities' approach towards LeT received particular attention in the new report. It said JuD and another LeT wing, Falah-i-Insaniat Foundation (FiF), were "able to openly engage in fundraising, including in the capital" and that Saeed "continued to address large rallies."

It acknowledged that Pakistan had, in February this year, proscribed Saeed under anti-terror legislation, "thus severely restricting his freedom of movement."

However, it said the government has not publicly reversed a 2015 declaration to the effect that neither JuD nor FiF is banned. Last January it placed both "under observation" which while short of a ban does allow the government to scrutinize their activities.

The report also said when Pakistan's National Counterterrorism Authority late last year published a list of banned organizations it did not include JuD, but put it in a separate "under observation" section.

The report did recognize that Pakistan has continued military operations against safe havens in the tribal areas along the border with Afghanistan, but added that "their impact on all terrorist groups was uneven."

### **Iran's proxy thrives in Lebanon**

Lebanon, another longstanding key recipient of U.S. aid, also appears in the report's "safe havens" section.

"The Lebanese government did not take significant action to disarm Hezbollah or eliminate its safe havens on Lebanese territory, nor did it seek to limit Hezbollah's travel to and from Syria to fight in support of the Assad regime or to and from Iraq," it said.

The report also stated that Hezbollah—an Iranian-backed, U.S.-designated FTO—has influence over "elements" in the country's security services, allowing it to operate with relative impunity.

The State Department did say the U.S. last year worked closely with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and Internal Security Forces (ISF) to counter terrorist threats within Lebanon and along its border with Syria.



U.S. aid to the LAF and ISF, amounting to some \$1.4 billion since 2005, is not uncontroversial. In early 2016, Saudi Arabia announced it was cutting \$4 billion in military aid to the two Lebanese entities because of the presence of Hezbollah in Lebanon's national government.

Like the U.S., the kingdom and other Gulf States view the Iranian-sponsored militia as a terrorist group.

The Obama State Department said at the time the U.S. would not follow the Saudi lead, but would continue to support the LAF and ISF "to ensure that the army continues its role as a legitimate protector of Lebanon's borders, people, including from extremist threats."

Its FY 2017 foreign operations budget request included \$105 million in foreign military financing for the LAF as well as international military education and training, and economic support funds.

Lebanon's refusal to disarm Hezbollah is a violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions calling for "the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias" (resolution 1559 of 2004) and "the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, so that ... there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than that of the Lebanese state" (resolution 1701 of 2006).

Other countries and regions identified as "safe havens" are: Somalia, the Trans-Saharan region, the southern Philippines, the seas between the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia (the "Sulu/Sulawesi Seas Littoral"), Colombia and Venezuela.



An article by Leah Barkoukis titled "Trump Administration Has Rolled Back More Than 800 Obama-Era Regulations" was posted at townhall.com on July 20, 2017. Following is the article.

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The Trump administration is following through on its vow to roll back the federal government's regulatory footprint, announcing Thursday that it had stopped more than 800 regulations proposed under the Obama administration.

Following are excerpts from Reuters.

■ In a report, the Trump administration said it had withdrawn 469 planned regulatory actions that had been part of the Obama administration's regulatory agenda published last fall. Officials also reconsidered 391 active regulatory proceedings actions by reclassifying them as long-term or inactive "allowing for further careful review," the White House said.

■ The Trump administration has identified nearly 300 regulations related to energy production and environmental protection it plans to rescind, review or delay across three agencies—the Environmental Protection Agency and the Interior and Energy Departments.

Slashing red tape at historic levels has been a priority for President Trump, who's signed several executive orders relating to regulations, including one shortly after being sworn in that requires agencies to identify two federal rules to eliminate for every new regulation proposed.

But during the administration's first six months, it did far better than the "one in, two out" order's goal, eliminating 16 old rules for every new one introduced, White House officials said.

"It's really the beginning of a kind of fundamental regulatory reform and a reorientation of where we're going with regulation," said Neomi Rao, administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs in the Office of Management and Budget.

The administration's efforts have already saved billions in regulatory costs.



An editorial by Jonah Goldberg titled "Health Care Fight Shows Washington at Its Worst" was posted at townhall.com on July 21, 2017. Following is the article.

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The story of health care policy this week, this month and for the last decade (at least) has been a tale of partisan folly. But fear not, this isn't another earnest pundit's lament for the vital center to emerge, phoenix-like, to form a governing coalition of moderates in both parties. That's not my bag.

After all, I have always argued that bipartisanship is overrated.

Bipartisan support often means unthinking support (as the founders could have told you). Partisans may be annoying from time to time, but they also can be relied upon to point out the shortcomings of what the other side is doing.

When partisan criticism is missing, it might be a sign that politicians in both parties are helping themselves, not the country. Or, it might mean they're pandering to the passions of the public and press rather than doing the hard work of thinking things through.

So you'll get no warm and fuzzy pleading for moderates to scrub clean the word "compromise" so that it's no longer a dirty word in Washington. Others can make the case for that. And besides, that argument misses the essence of this spectacular failure. Honest partisanship isn't the problem, bipartisan dishonesty is.

Both parties have become defined by their lies and their refusal to accept reality. It's a problem bigger than health care, but health care is probably the best illustration of it.

For seven years Republicans campaigned to repeal Obamacare. We now know that for many of those politicians, that pledge was a sales pitch that expired after the sale—i.e., the election—was final.

But before liberal readers pull a muscle nodding their heads: The Democrats aren't any better. Obamacare itself was lied into passage. "You can keep your plan!" "You can keep your doctor!" "Your premiums won't go up!" These were lies. If those promises were remotely true, Obamacare wouldn't be the mess it is.

But these aren't even the lies I have in mind.

The Republican "repeal and replace" bills debated for the last six months did not in fact repeal Obamacare. They kept most of its regulations intact—particularly the popular ones. The GOP did seek to repeal and reform the Medicaid expansion under Obamacare, but that's not the same thing as repealing Obamacare.

Yet Republicans insisted it was a repeal because they wanted to claim that they fulfilled their repeal pledge. Actually fulfilling the substance of the pledge was a low-order priority. Heroically winning the talking point: This was their brass ring.

So, too, for the White House. Donald Trump just wanted a win. He has made it abundantly clear that he would sign anything the Republicans sent him—up to and possibly including the head of Alfredo Garcia if someone had written "Obamacare: Repealed" on the poor chap's forehead. Trump has shown zero preference for any specific policy or approach during these debates. He just wants the bragging rights.

And that is the one thing Democrats are most determined to deny him. The Democrats know that Obamacare has been an albatross for their party. They often acknowledge, through gritted teeth, that the law needs a substantial overhaul.

More important, they also know that the GOP wasn't pushing an actual repeal. But they couldn't tolerate for a moment the idea that the Republicans would get to claim it was repeal. So the one thing both sides could agree upon was that this was a zero-sum war over repealing Obamacare—when it wasn't.

This was all about bogus gasconade and rodomontade for Republicans and insecure rhetorical wagon-circling around Barack Obama's "legacy" for Democrats. If Trump and the GOP agreed to abandon "repeal," as Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer wants, one can only wonder how much replacing of Obamacare Schumer would allow the GOP to get away with.

Likewise, if Democrats could somehow give Republicans the ability to say they repealed Obamacare, many Republican senators—and certainly Trump—would probably be happy to leave the bulk of it intact.

It is this fact that makes the polarized, tribal climate in Washington so frustrating. I like partisan fights when those fights are about something real. The Medicaid fight was at least about something real. But most of this nonsense is a battle of liars trying to protect past lies in the hope of being able to make new lies seem just plausible enough for the liars to keep repeating them.



An article by Terence P. Jeffrey titled "Monthly Federal Spending Tops \$400B for First Time" was posted at [cnsnews.com](http://cnsnews.com) on July 13, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

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Real monthly federal spending topped \$400 billion for the first time in June, when the Treasury spent a record \$428,894,000,000, according to the Monthly Treasury Statement released today [July 13].

Prior to June, the record for federal spending in a single month was held by March 2017, when the Treasury spent approximately \$392,816,000,000.

As the Treasury was spending a record \$428,894,000,000 in June it was taking in approximately \$338,660,000,000 in taxes—thus, running a deficit for the month of \$90,233,000,000.

So far in fiscal 2017 (which began on Oct. 1, 2016 and will end on Sept. 30, 2017), the Treasury has brought in \$2,507,820,000,000 in taxes and spent \$3,030,903,000,000—running a deficit of \$523,082,000,000.

Last year in June, the federal government spent \$323,320,000,000—or \$328,303,590,000 in constant 2017 dollars. The record \$428,894,000,000 that the federal government spent this June is \$100,590,410,000 more (in constant 2017 dollars) than last June's spending.

The dramatic increase in spending from last June to this June was driven by increases in spending by the Departments of Education, Housing and Urban Development and Health and Human Services. It was also helped by the fact that the first day of July fell on a Saturday rather than a business day.

In June 2016, the Department of Education spent \$12,096,000,000 and by that point in fiscal 2016, it had spent \$59,457,000,000. This June, the Department of Education spent \$45,691,000,000 and so far this fiscal year, it has spent \$90,206,000,000.

This year's June Department of Education spending is \$33,595,000,000 more than last year's.

In June 2016, the Department of Housing and Urban Development spent \$3,294,000,000 and up to that point in fiscal 2016, it had spent \$20,169,000,000. This June, Housing and Urban Development spent \$24,443,000,000, and so far this fiscal year, it has spent \$49,498,000,000.

This year's June Housing and Urban Development spending is \$21,149,000,000 more than last year's.

In June 2016, Health and Human Services spent \$87,030,000,000 and up to that point in fiscal 2016, it has spent \$792,492,000,000. This June, HHS spent \$113,925,000,000 and so far this fiscal year it has spent \$823,914,000,000.

In its own analysis of federal spending for June, the Congressional Budget Office explained the massive increases in Education and HUD spending during the month.

"Outlays for the Departments of Education and Housing and Urban Development increased by \$33 billion and \$21 billion respectively, because of

upward revisions to the estimated net subsidy costs of loans and loan guarantees issued in prior years," said CBO.

CBO also noted the impact of July beginning on a Saturday.

"Because July 1 fell on a weekend this year, certain payments scheduled for that date were instead made in June," said CBO. "If not for that shift, the deficit in June 2017 would have been about \$44 billion lower."



An editorial by Walter Williams titled "Slavery" was posted at jewishworldreview.com on July 19, 2017. Following is the article.

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Too many people believe that slavery is a "peculiar institution." That's what Kenneth Stampp called slavery in his book, "Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South."

But slavery is by no means peculiar, odd or unusual.

- It was common among ancient peoples such as the Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Hittites, Greeks, Persians, Armenians and many others.
- Large numbers of Christians were enslaved during the Ottoman wars in Europe.
- White slaves were common in Europe from the Dark Ages to the Middle Ages.
- It was only after A.D. 1600 that Europeans joined with Arabs and Africans and started the Atlantic slave trade.
- As David P. Forsythe wrote in his book, "The Globalist," "The fact remained that at the beginning of the nineteenth century an estimated three-quarters of all people alive were trapped in bondage against their will either in some form of slavery or serfdom."

While slavery constitutes one of the grossest encroachments on human liberty, it is by no means unique or restricted to the Western world or United States, as many liberal academics would have us believe. Much of their indoctrination of our young people, at all levels of education, paints our nation's founders as racist adherents to slavery, but the story is not so simple.

At the time of the 1787 Constitutional Convention, slaves were about 40 percent of the population of the Southern colonies. Apportionment in the House of Representatives and the number of electoral votes each state would have in presidential elections would be based upon population.

- Southern delegates to the convention wanted slaves to be counted as one person.

- Northern delegates to the convention, and those opposed to slavery, wanted only free persons of each state to be counted for the purposes of apportionment in the House of Representatives and the Electoral College.
- The compromise reached was that each slave would be counted as only three-fifths of a person.

Many criticize this compromise as proof of racism. My question to these grossly uninformed critics is whether they would have found it more preferable for slaves to be counted as whole persons. Slaves counted as whole persons would have given slave holding Southern states much more political power. Or, would the critics of the founders prefer that the Northern delegates not compromise and not allow slaves to be counted at all. If they did, it is likely that the Constitution would have not been ratified.

Thus, the question emerges is whether blacks would be better off with Northern states having gone their way and Southern states having gone theirs, resulting in no U.S. Constitution and no Union?

Unlike today's pseudointellectuals, black abolitionist Frederick Douglass understood the compromise, saying that the three-fifths clause was "a downright disability laid upon the slave holding states" that deprived them of "two-fifths of their natural basis of representation."

Douglass' vision was shared by Patrick Henry and others. Henry said, expressing the reality of the three-fifths compromise, "As much as I deplore slavery, I see that prudence forbids its abolition."

With this union, Congress at least had the power to abolish slave trade by 1808. According to delegate James Wilson, many believed the anti-slave-trade clause laid "the foundation for banishing slavery out of this country."

Many of the founders abhorred slavery. Their statements can be read on my website, [walterewilliams.com](http://walterewilliams.com).

The most unique aspect of slavery in the Western world was the moral outrage against it, which began to emerge in the 18th century and led to massive elimination efforts.

- It was Britain's military sea power that put an end to the slave trade.
- And our country fought a costly war that brought an end to slavery.

Unfortunately, these facts about slavery are not in the lessons taught in our schools and colleges. Instead, there is gross misrepresentation and suggestion that slavery was a uniquely American practice.



An article by Guy Benson titled "PC vs. Public Safety: San Francisco Withholding Security Footage of Crimes to Prevent 'Racial Bias'" was posted at [townhall.com](http://townhall.com) on July 12, 2017. Following is the article.

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Authorities in the San Francisco Bay Area have a funny way of protecting their citizens. They barely lift a finger (and worse) when violent mobs shut down political speeches, they offer sanctuary to illegal immigrants like the man who ended up murdering a young American woman after having been deported five times, and now they're censoring security footage of criminal attacks on their public transit system.

Why?

Because they don't want to "create racial bias" by showing images of the perpetrators. Via Legal Insurrection, here is the local CBS affiliate's story on the developing controversy:

■ April 22: Forty to sixty kids boarded a train at the Coliseum stop and robbed seven passengers, beating up two; June 28: A group of four kids assaulted a passenger and made off with a cell phone at Dublin; and June 30: A woman on a train with about a dozen teenagers had her phone snatched by one them before the group got off at the Coliseum stop. Thankfully, a good Samaritan was on hand to retrieve the phone.

■ So far, BART has refused to turn over surveillance video for any of these incidents. Allen told us the agency issued an explanation for why it is being tight-lipped about the thefts. "To release these videos would create a high level of racially insensitive commentary toward the district," she was told. "And in addition it would create a racial bias in the riders against minorities on the trains." According to a memo distributed to BART Directors, the agency won't do a press release on the June 30 theft because it was a "petty crime" that would make BART look "crime ridden." Furthermore, it would "unfairly affect and characterize riders of color, leading to sweeping generalizations in media reports."

I understand some of the other reasons offered for sometimes withholding video footage, but the racial component is unacceptable. Absent other factors, would BART release footage of crimes committed by criminals of one race, but not another?

Why?

Is it the job of public officials to determine which crimes the general public has a right to see, based on the color of the suspects' skin?

Do politically correct racial considerations take precedence over public safety and government transparency?

Various BART statements on these matters are also telling in another way: One explanation accuses the media of wanting to air the footage to boost clicks and ratings, not out of concern for the public interest: "The media's real interest in the videos of youth phone snatching incidents isn't the desire for transparency but rather the pursuit of ratings," one official wrote.

There may be some truth to that, but let's not pretend like BART doesn't have its own ulterior motives here.

Don't you think this struggling operation would prefer to keep dramatic footage of muggings and mob attacks committed on its trains and platforms off of local newscasts?

Dots on an online map signifying each crime will be seen by many fewer eyeballs, and would not elicit nearly the same visceral or fearful reaction from potential paying customers. Ultimately, this is a government entity operating with taxpayer dollars deliberately choosing to keep relevant information about criminal activity away from citizens for explicitly racial reasons—with a strong whiff of accountability-dodging and myopic self-preservation mixed in.

How do the inhabitants of this uber-liberal metroplex feel about that decision? Especially the implication that their inner racism would get stirred up if they were simply granted access to factual information by their government minders?

Over at Red State, Kira Davis—who is black—unloads:

■ Just to recap—innocent, paying BART riders are being beaten and robbed but authorities don't want to properly inform the public so they can be alert because that might make more racism. Allen says it would "create a racial bias in the riders against minorities on the trains." Not the actual criminals. They're not the ones creating a "racial bias" by beating and robbing people. No. It's you dirty racists who would like to be informed of crime risks on the transportation you pay for dearly in one of the most expensive cities in the nation.

Parting thought: BART claims that in many cases, the surveillance tapes can't be released because they're evidence in an investigation.

Excuse me, but doesn't such footage appear on television and online all the time?

And don't authorities use those videos to appeal to the public for help in solving crimes?

If an assailant of a "problematic" racial background is harming riders and stealing their belongings, and is still on the loose, which is more important: Identifying and capturing the suspect, or being careful not to perpetuate racial stereotypes?

How far does this nonsense go?



An article by Craig Bannister titled "Examples of Media Bias, Deceit, Distrust Highlighted by Congressional Caucus" was posted at [cnsnews.com](http://cnsnews.com) on July 20, 2017. Following is the article.

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In its latest newsletter, the Media Fairness Caucus highlights seven news stories that expose the dishonesty and bias of liberal media—and document how Americans are becoming wary of the deceit.

Three poll stories quantify how Americans have lost trust in the press and view it as politically-biased and destructive to America.

Three other stories expose examples of media censorship, bias, and manipulation of facts, and another reveals how a prominent liberal newspaper buried important information that negated its insinuations.

The Media Fairness Caucus newsletter is distributed by Congressman Lamar Smith (R-Texas). The Caucus website explains its goal “is not to censor or condemn, but to encourage the media to adhere to the highest standards of reporting and provide the American people with the facts, balanced stories and fair coverage of the news.”

Links to the stories discussed in the Media Fairness Caucus newsletter are provided below:

- Gallup: Less than 3 in 10 have ‘confidence’ in newspapers, TV
- CBS, NBC Censor Murder of Muslim Girl at Hands of Illegal Immigrant
- Just 4% say media like Trump, 50% say press biased against president
- CNN Gets Pummeled by Readers for How It Chose to Describe ‘Allahu Akbar’ Development in Police Stabbing
- MSNBC: Ivanka Is Anti-Woman. She Wore A Pink Dress With Bows
- Two-thirds of Americans say news media has a negative impact on the Nation: Poll
- Both Of The NYT’s Big Trump Jr. Scoops Contain This Key Disclaimer



An article by Elise Cooper titled “Sharyl Attkisson Exposes Big Media in *The Smear*” was posted at [americanthinker.com](http://americanthinker.com) on July 14, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

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Journalists today are elitists with their own agenda, never actually practicing journalism. Only a handful can be respected, trusted, and believed. Sharyl Attkisson falls into this category. She is an author and investigative reporter who hosts the syndicated TV news series Full Measure. Attkisson is a whistleblower who sorts in educating the public about the biased media. Her latest book, *The Smear*, reveals the tactics used to influence opinions in order to obscure the truth.

In the beginning of this book, Attkisson discusses the propaganda campaign used by the OSS, the predecessor to the CIA. They had asked the legendary

Marlene Dietrich to sing “Lili Marlene” in German and English in order to make the Axis forces feel homesick and realize they were fighting for the wrong side.

She contrasts this with Hitler’s chief propagandist Joseph Goebbels’s play-book, which calls for creating a big lie—the bigger, the better to get more people to believe it. Repeat it often enough so it becomes the truth, and persistence is the most important requirement for success.

Today’s media and leftists seem to take a page not out of the OSS, but out of Goebbels’s strategy. Attkisson wants to inform Americans on the tactics used by political operatives on both sides as well as corporate operatives.

These tactics fall into categories of “Astroturf and transactional journalism,” all tools of the smear campaign.

She told American Thinker her definition of a smear: “taking a sprinkle of truth and perverting it into a weapon of mass destruction to advance an undisclosed larger goal, often political or financial. Smear campaigns take something that many times has a grain of truth and amplifies it to accomplish the annihilation of their target.”

Attkisson has experienced smear campaigns personally. In an email, then-attorney general Eric Holder’s top press aide, Tracy Schmalzer, called Attkisson “out of control” and intended to call CBS news anchor Bob Schieffer to get the network to stop her reporting on Fast and Furious. After Attkisson’s first book, Stonewalled, came out, the liberal smear group Media Matters reviewed it as having “sloppy inaccuracies and absent context that reinforce her image as a journalist more interested in a biased narrative than uncovering the facts.”

One way the operatives do this is by Astroturf, an “idea to keep the public from ever knowing exactly who is behind a particular effort to sway opinion. I describe it in my book as a way to saturate our consciousness, where we are made to think everyone believes something.

It’s similar to the bandwagon approach. If you do not agree with a narrative, you are made to believe you’re an outlier, afraid to say what you think because ‘no one’ agrees with you. The idea is to give the impression there’s widespread support for or against an issue when there may not be.”

Attkisson points out that in his last State of the Union address, President Obama’s statements on climate change implied that anyone who does not support the popular theory is out of step with the rest of the world. In fact, polling contradicted the president. Just recently, while in South Korea, he continued this false narrative: “In Paris, we came together around the most ambitious agreement in history about climate change.”

Transactional journalism refers to the “friendly, mutually beneficial relationships that have developed between reporters and those on whom they report. It’s when the relationships cross a line.” Falling into that category are some political pundits.

Take for example CNN’s Donna Brazile, a Democratic Party operative, who secretly slipped Hillary Clinton an advance question for a CNN town hall with Bernie Sanders.

Attkisson noted, "We are not keeping an adequate firewall, giving the very people access to the newsroom who are trying to sway our opinion and shape news coverage. I am often not sure what these pundits on both sides add, besides propaganda talking points. As I discuss in the book, *Media Matters* and its groups claim to have coached and trained hundreds of these pundits on everything from messaging to facial expressions and body language, so they can appear on television news shows and effectively distribute narratives. This is part of what I call the 'soft infiltration' of the news media. We haven't done a good job at staying at arm's length from the interests who seek to use us as tools."

For example, Fox News has hired one of the Obamacare architects who basically got everything wrong about Obamacare. Yet he is now commenting on the new health care plan. Attkisson wonders, "Why is he being put forth as an expert in anything?"

Cognitive dissonance is the discomfort that results from the perception of a dichotomy between what is told and what is actually occurring. People's own personal experience allows them to question what the media is reporting or those in government are saying.

Donald Trump's recent speech in Poland had those who watched it saying how great it was for championing Western values. Yet CNN and MSNBC said the Western values could appeal only to whites. Are they implying that minorities do not believe in freedom of speech and religion, or in equality for all?

Attkisson went on: "I believe Donald Trump should be covered, as any president should, aggressively, and questioned on what he does. Yet there has been a shocking degree of false reporting on him in this short period of time by formerly well respected news organizations that have publicly suspended their normal standards and practices to cover Trump, saying they view him as uniquely 'dangerous.' This has also led to such practices as over-reliance on anonymous sources, who prove to be wrong time and again. I think this has resulted in experienced journalists at formerly well respected news organizations like CNN, *Time*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post* making rookie mistakes that would not even be accepted in journalism colleges."

As an investigative reporter, Attkisson is an expert at detecting smear campaigns.

She warns, "One smear artist I interviewed said nearly every image you run across in daily life, whether it's on the news, a comedian's joke, a meme on social media, or a comment on the internet, was put there for a reason. It's like scenes in a movie, he said. Nothing happens by accident. Sometimes people have paid a great deal of money to put those images before you. What you need to ask yourself isn't so much 'is it true,' but 'who wants me to believe it and why?'"



An editorial by Pat Buchanan titled "The Real Crimes of Russiagate" was posted at townhall.com on July 18, 2017. Following is the article.

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For a year, the big question of Russiagate has boiled down to this: Did Donald Trump's campaign collude with the Russians in hacking the DNC?

And until last week, the answer was "no."

As ex-CIA director Mike Morell said in March, "On the question of the Trump campaign conspiring with the Russians . . . there is smoke, but there is no fire, at all. . . . There's no little campfire, there's no little candle, there's no spark."

Well, last week, it appeared there had been a fire in Trump Tower. On June 9, 2016, Donald Trump Jr., Jared Kushner and Paul Manafort met with Russians—in anticipation of promised dirt on Hillary Clinton's campaign.

While not a crime, this was a blunder. For Donald Jr. had long insisted there had been no collusion with the Russians. Caught in flagrante, he went full Pinocchio for four days.

And as the details of that June 9 meeting spilled out, Trump defenders were left with egg on their faces, while anti-Trump media were able to keep the spotlight laser-focused on where they want it—Russiagate.

This reality underscores a truth of our time. In the 19th century, power meant control of the means of production; today, power lies in control of the means of communication.

Who controls the media spotlight controls what people talk about and think about. And mainstream media are determined to keep that spotlight on Trump-Russia, and as far away as possible from their agenda—breaking the Trump presidency and bringing him down.

Almost daily, there are leaks from the investigative and security arms of the U.S. government designed to damage this president.

Just days into Trump's presidency, a rifle-shot intel community leak of a December meeting between Trump national security adviser Gen. Michael Flynn and Russia's ambassador forced the firing of Flynn.

An Oval Office meeting with the Russian foreign minister in which Trump disclosed that Israeli intelligence had ferreted out evidence that ISIS was developing computer bombs to explode on airliners was leaked. This alerted ISIS, damaged the president, and imperiled Israeli intelligence sources and methods.

Some of the leaks from national security and investigative agencies are felonies, not only violations of the leaker's solemn oath to protect secrets, but of federal law.

Yet the press is happy to collude with these leakers and to pay them in the coin they seek. First, by publishing the secrets the leakers want revealed. Second, by protecting them from exposure to arrest and prosecution for the crimes they are committing.

The mutual agendas of the deep-state leakers and the mainstream media mesh perfectly.

Consider the original Russiagate offense.

Confidential emails of the DNC and John Podesta were hacked, i.e., stolen by Russian intelligence and given to WikiLeaks. And who was the third and indispensable party in this "Tinker to Evers to Chance" double-play combination?

The media itself. While deploring Russian hacking as an "act of war" against "our democracy," the media published the fruits of the hacking. It was the media that revealed what Podesta wrote and how the DNC tilted the tables against Bernie Sanders.

If the media believed Russian hacking was a crime against our democracy, why did they publish the fruits of that crime?

Is it not monumental hypocrisy to denounce Russia's hacking of the computers of Democratic political leaders and institutions, while splashing the contents of the theft all over Page 1?

Not only do our Beltway media traffic in stolen secrets and stolen goods, but the knowledge that they will publish secrets and protect those who leak them is an incentive for bureaucratic disloyalty and criminality.

Our mainstream media are like the fellow who avoids the risk of stealing cars, but wants to fence them once stolen and repainted.

Some journalists know exactly who is leaking against Trump, but they are as protective of their colleagues "sources" as of their own. Thus, the public is left in the dark as to what the real agenda is here, and who is sabotaging a president in whom they placed so much hope.

And thus does democracy die in darkness.

Do the American people not have a "right to know" who are the leakers within the government who are daily spilling secrets to destroy their president? Are the identities of the saboteurs not a legitimate subject of investigation? Ought they not be exposed and rooted out?

Where is the special prosecutor to investigate the collusion between bureaucrats and members of the press who traffic in the stolen secrets of the republic?

Bottom line: Trump is facing a stacked deck.

People inside the executive branch are daily providing fresh meat to feed the scandal. Anti-Trump media are transfixed by it. It is the Watergate of their generation. They can smell the blood in the water. The Pulitzers are calling. And they love it, for they loathe Donald Trump both for who he is and what he stands for.

It is hard to see when this ends, or how it ends well for the country.



**Isaiah 55:6-11**—“Seek you the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. ‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”