

Eye on the World

Jan. 27, 2018

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 January 27, 2018.

Compiled by Dave Havir

Luke 21:34-36—“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”



An article by Pat Buchanan titled “A US-Turkish Clash in Syria?” was posted at townhall.com on Jan. 19, 2018. Following is the article.

The war for dominance in the Middle East, following the crushing of ISIS, appears about to commence in Syria—with NATO allies America and Turkey on opposing sides.

Turkey is moving armor and troops south to Syria’s border enclave of Afrin, occupied by Kurds, to drive them out, and then drive the Syrian Kurds out of Manbij further south as well.

Says President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, “We will destroy all terror nests, one by one, in Syria, starting from Afrin and Manbij.”

For Erdogan, the Kurdish YPG, the major U.S. ally in Syria, is an arm of the Kurdish PKK in Turkey, which we and the Turks have designated as a terrorist organization.

While the Kurds were our most effective allies against ISIS in Syria, Turkey views them as a mortal peril and intends to deal with that threat.

If Erdogan is serious, a clash with the U.S. is coming, as our Kurdish allies occupy most of Syria’s border with Turkey.

Moreover, the U.S. has announced plans to create a 30,000-man Border Security Force of Kurds and Arabs to keep ISIS out of Syria.

Erdogan has branded this BSF a "terror army," and President Bashar Assad of Syria has called BSF members "traitors."

This U.S. plan to create a BSF inside Syria, Damascus declared, "represents a blatant attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity and unity of Syria, and a flagrant violation of international law."

Does not the Syrian government have a point?

Now that ISIS has been driven out of Raqqa and Syria, by what authority do U.S. forces remain to arm troops to keep the Damascus government from reimposing its authority on its own territory?

Secretary of State Tillerson gave Syria the news Wednesday.

The U.S. troop commitment to Syria, he said, is now open-ended.

Our goals: Guarantee al-Qaida and ISIS do not return and set up sanctuary; cope with rising Iranian influence in Damascus; and pursue the removal of Bashar Assad's ruthless regime.

But who authorized this strategic commitment, of indefinite duration, in Syria, when near two decades in Afghanistan have failed to secure that nation against the return of al-Qaida and ISIS?

Again and again, the American people have said they do not want to be dragged into Syria's civil war. Donald Trump won the presidency on a promise of no more unnecessary wars.

Have the American people been had again?

Will they support a clash with NATO ally Turkey, to keep armed Kurds on Turkey's border, when the Turks regard them as terrorists?

Are we prepared for a shooting war with a Syrian army, backed by Russia, Iran, Hezbollah and Shiite militias from Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, to hold onto a fourth of Syria's territory in alliance with Kurds?

The U.S. coalition in Syria said this week the BSF will be built up "over the next several years" and "be stationed along the borders ... to include portions of the Euphrates river valley and international borders to the east and north."

Remarkable: A U.S.-created border army is going to occupy and control long stretches of Syria's borders with Turkey and Iraq, over Syria's objections. And the U.S. military will stand behind the BSF.

Are the 2,000 U.S. troops in Syria really up to that task, should the Turks decide to cleanse the Syrian border of Kurds, or should the Syrian regime decide to take back territory occupied by the Kurds?

Who sanctioned this commitment to a new army, which, if Syria and its Russian and Iranian allies, and the Turks, do not all back down, risks a major U.S. war with no allies but the Kurds?

As for Syria's Kurds casting their lot with the Americans, one wonders: Did they not observe what happened when their Iraqi cousins, after helping us drive ISIS out of Mosul, were themselves driven out of Kirkuk by the Iraqi army, as their U.S. allies watched?

In the six-year Syrian civil war, which may be about to enter a new phase, America faces a familiar situation.

While our "allies" and adversaries have vital interests there, we do not. The Assads have been in power for the lifetime of most Americans. And we Americans have never shown a desire to fight there.

Assad has a vital interest: preservation of his family regime and the reunification of his country. The Turks have a vital interest in keeping armed Kurds out of their border regions adjacent to their own Kurdish minority, which seeks greater independence.

The Israelis and Saudi royals want the U.S. to keep Iran from securing a land bridge from Tehran to Damascus to Lebanon.

The U.S. War Party wants us to smash Iran and remain in the Middle East forever to assure the hegemony of its favorites.

Have the generals taking us into Syria told the president how and when, if ever, they plan to get us out?



An article by Patrick Goodenough titled "Did John Kerry Advise Palestinian Leader Abbas to Wait Out Trump?" was posted at cnsnews.com on Jan. 26, 2018. Following is the article.

Former Secretary of State John Kerry is under fire for allegedly urging Palestinian leaders to hold firm against President Trump's demands because he won't be in office for long.

But former U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich said Thursday he doubted Kerry would have given such "anti-American" and "stunningly unpatriotic" advice to the Palestinians.

Kerry has not responded publicly to claims, first reported by the Israeli daily *Ma'ariv*, that he made the comments during a recent meeting in London with Hussein Agha, a longstanding confidante of Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas. Agha reportedly briefed P.A. officials in Ramallah afterwards on the wide-ranging conversation.

According to the report Kerry told his interlocutor to advise Abbas to “hold on and be strong” and not to yield to Trump’s demands, suggesting the president may not be in White House for much longer.

Kerry also reportedly told Agha that if Trump does last a full first term, he may mount another White House run in 2020. Kerry was the Democratic Party’s nominee in the 2004 presidential election, when he lost to President George W. Bush.

The former secretary of state was quoted as advising that Abbas present a “positive” peace initiative of his own, for which Kerry would work to garner support.

And he allegedly counseled Abbas, via Agha, to direct his criticism not at the U.S. or the administration, but at Trump personally, on the grounds that the president was solely responsible for the current situation.

Trump angered the Palestinians and their supporters last month by recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and signaling plans to move the U.S. Embassy to the city. In a recent speech, Abbas attacked Trump, employing an Arabic curse translated as “may his house be razed.”

Agha, a Lebanese academic and author, is a senior associate of Oxford University’s St. Antony’s College who was deeply involved in previous behind-the-scenes Israeli-Palestinian peace initiatives. Attempts to reach him for comment on the reported conversation with Kerry were unsuccessful.

Reacting to the reports, the Republican Jewish Coalition called Kerry’s alleged actions “reckless.”

“John Kerry failed for four years as secretary of state to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace. Now he wants a second bite of the apple, a bite the American people chose not to give him when they rejected the Obama/Kerry foreign policy in 2016,” said RJC executive director Matt Brooks.

“John Kerry is no longer a representative of the American people and his action—conducting a shadow foreign policy—is reckless and undermines the possibility of achieving peace,” he said. “The American people chose President Trump, in part, because he promised to pivot away from the failed policies of John Kerry.”

Former House Speaker Gingrich said Thursday he doubted Kerry would have made the comments attributed to him.

“That would surprise me. Kerry knows, as former secretary of state, former U.S. senator, that that kind of advice would be stunningly unpatriotic,” Gingrich told the “Fox and Friends” program. “And I don’t think that John Kerry would do something like that. I hope he wouldn’t.”



A video and an article by Peter Hasson titled “Obama Mocked Trump’s Political Ambitions; Trump Spent His First Year Dismantling Obama’s Legacy” were posted at dailycaller.com on Jan. 20, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

As president, Barack Obama repeatedly mocked Donald Trump's political ambitions, laughing at the idea of Trump ever winning the presidency.

Obama mocked Trump at the 2011 White House Correspondents Dinner for calling into question whether he was born in America. Hawaii officials had recently authorized the release of Obama's longform birth certificate to put the matter to rest. Obama viciously mocked Trump for the controversy, before mocking the idea of Trump ever serving in the White House.

From the White House transcript of the event:

"Now, I know that he's taken some flak lately, but no one is happier, no one is prouder to put this birth certificate matter to rest than the Donald. (Laughter.) And that's because he can finally get back to focusing on the issues that matter—like, did we fake the moon landing? (Laughter.) What really happened in Roswell? (Laughter.) And where are Biggie and Tupac? (Laughter and applause.)"

"But all kidding aside, obviously, we all know about your credentials and breadth of experience. (Laughter.) For example—no, seriously, just recently, in an episode of Celebrity Apprentice—(laughter)—at the steakhouse, the men's cooking team cooking did not impress the judges from Omaha Steaks. And there was a lot of blame to go around. But you, Mr. Trump, recognized that the real problem was a lack of leadership. And so ultimately, you didn't blame Lil' Jon or Meatloaf. (Laughter.) You fired Gary Busey. (Laughter.) And these are the kind of decisions that would keep me up at night. (Laughter and applause.) Well handled, sir. (Laughter.) Well handled. Say what you will about Mr. Trump, he certainly would bring some change to the White House. Let's see what we've got up there. (Laughter.)"

A month before the 2016 election, Obama mocked Trump's campaign on "Jimmy Kimmel." Obama read a tweet from Trump saying that Obama "will go down as perhaps the worst president in the history of the United States," before turning Trump into a punchline. "Really? Well, @realDonaldTrump, at least I will go down as a president," Obama said, dropping his phone on the floor for dramatic effect.

A year into the Trump presidency, Obama's legacy is taking a beating.

Trump has overseen the dismantling of several of Obamacare's most controversial aspects. The tax cuts package Trump signed last month included a provision repealing Obamacare's individual mandate. Trump also rolled back the Obama administration's contraception mandate, which forced religious groups like the Little Sisters of the Poor to provide birth control for all employees, regardless of conscientious objections.

Trump's Department of Education rolled back several measures that conservatives had decried as federal overreach. The Trump administration repealed the Obama-era mandate that required all public schools to implement transgender bathroom policies and speech codes. The Trump administration also

revoked a legally dubious Title IX guidance that regulated sexual assault proceedings on college campuses.

In July, Trump announced the United States would be pulling out of the Paris Climate Accords, which Trump blasted as a threat to American sovereignty. Trump's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rolled back the Obama administration's Waters of the US rule, which drastically increased federal regulations of streams, and repealed the Obama-era Clean Power Plan, which increased environmental regulations on coal-fired plants. Trump approved both the Keystone XL and Dakota pipelines that Obama had rejected.

Last month, Trump's Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rolled back the Obama-era Net Neutrality policy that increased federal regulation of the Internet.

Trump's foreign policy has made for a similar contrast with Obama's.

Trump has embraced a distinctly more pro-Israel approach than his predecessor and has embraced a much harder line on Iran, which Obama sought to appease. Trump announced last month that the US recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, something Obama had promised to do, but never actually followed through.

The Trump administration announced in October that Trump planned on decertifying the Iran nuclear deal, which was a pillar of Obama's foreign policy legacy. Trump's national security strategy released last month slammed Iran, which is the number one state sponsor of terrorism, as the number one threat to peace in the Middle East.

The bad news for Obama: Trump has at least three more years to get the last laugh.



Looking back to December, here is an article by Peter Hasson titled "Five Ways Trump's New National Security Strategy is a Rejection of Obama's" was posted at dailycaller.com on Dec. 18, 2017.

President Donald Trump's new national security strategy is set to be released on Monday.

A copy of the document obtained by The Daily Caller reveals a stark contrast between President Trump's America First National Security Strategy and former President Barack Obama's most recent national security strategy in 2015.

■ Renewed focus on Islamist terrorism

Trump's new national security strategy places an emphasis on stopping Islamist terrorism and calls it out by name. Obama's 2015 national security strategy referred to Islam just twice: once because it's part of ISIS' name and once to say the administration rejected "the lie that America and its allies are at war with Islam."

The new national security strategy explicitly links Islamist ideology to jihadist terrorism.

“The United States continues to wage a long war against jihadist terrorist groups such as ISIS and Al Qaeda. These groups are linked by a common radical Islamist ideology that encourages violence against the United States and our partners and produces misery for those under their control,” the new strategy states.

Trump’s strategy also notes, “jihadist terrorists such as ISIS and al-Qaida continue to spread a barbaric ideology that calls for the violent destruction of governments and innocents they consider to be apostates. These Islamist terrorists attempt to force those under their influence to submit to Sharia law.” A source familiar with the strategy’s drafting process described the reference to Sharia law as a “huge” inclusion by the Trump administration.

■ Dumping climate change as a ‘National Security Threat’

Obama’s 2015 national security strategy prioritized climate change as a national security threat. Obama’s strategy devoted more space to the threat posed by climate change than to the threat posed by North Korea. “Climate change is an urgent and growing threat to our national security, contributing to increased natural disasters, refugee flows, and conflicts over basic resources like food and water,” Obama’s national security strategy said.

Trump’s national security strategy reverses that approach and does not identify climate change as a national security threat. In fact, it goes one step further.

“U.S. leadership is indispensable to countering an antigrowth energy agenda that is detrimental to U.S. economic and energy security interests,” the new strategy states. “Given future global energy demand, much of the developing world will require fossil fuels, as well as other forms of energy, to power their economies and lift their people out of poverty.”

The 2015 strategy noted that the administration was “working toward an ambitious new global climate change agreement,” which became the Paris Climate Accords.

Trump withdrew the United States from the climate deal last summer, denouncing it as a threat to American sovereignty.

In what appears to be a reference to the Paris deal, Trump’s new strategy states that “it should be clear that the United States will not cede sovereignty to those that claim authority over American citizens and are in conflict with our constitutional framework.”

■ Iran, not Israel, is the threat to peace in the Middle East

In perhaps the sharpest contrast to Obama’s national security strategy, Trump’s new strategy takes a hardline stance on Iran, which it describes as “the world’s most significant state sponsor of terrorism.” Obama’s strategy emphasized the need to protect the Iran nuclear deal—a pillar of his legacy as president.

Trump's strategy notes that Iran "has taken advantage of instability to expand its influence through partners and proxies, weapon proliferation, and funding. It continues to develop more capable ballistic missiles, intelligence capabilities, and it undertakes malicious cyber activities."

Trump's strategy states that—despite Obama officials' claims to the contrary—the Iran nuclear deal has done nothing to stop any of the above activities.

"These activities have continued unabated since the 2015 nuclear deal," the document states. "Iran continues to perpetuate the cycle of violence in the region, causing grievous harm to civilian populations. Rival states are filling vacuums created by state collapse and prolonged regional conflict."

Trump's national security strategy explicitly blames Iran, rather than Israel, for conflicts in the Middle East.

"For generations the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians has been understood as the prime irritant preventing peace and prosperity in the region," the strategy states.

"Today, the threats from radical jihadist terrorist organizations and the threat from Iran are creating the realization that Israel is not the cause of the region's problems. States have increasingly found common interests with Israel in confronting common threats."

The strategy notes that the U.S. will work "with allies and partners to deter and disrupt other foreign terrorist groups that threaten the homeland—including Iranian-backed groups such as Lebanese Hizballah."

The Obama administration, in contrast, torpedoed a DEA operation against Hezbollah for money laundering and narcotics trafficking in order to preserve the Iran nuclear deal, according to a bombshell report in Politico Sunday night. The report said that the Obama administration's reluctance to confront Hezbollah allowed the group to grow rapidly in size and expand its influence across Lebanon in particular and the Middle East as a whole.

■ Immigration: Ending chain migration, increasing vetting, tougher border security

Obama's 2015 national security strategy placed an emphasis on giving amnesty to illegal immigrants by giving them a "pathway to citizenship," while paying lip service to the need for border security. The 2015 strategy framed the flood of illegal immigrants to the US-Mexico border as a "major consequence of weak institutions and violence" and emphasized the need for America to help those countries.

"American leadership, in partnership with these countries and with the support of their neighbors, remains essential to arresting the slide backwards and to creating steady improvements in economic growth and democratic governance," the Obama strategy stated.

Trump's strategy frames the immigration issue in terms of sovereignty, saying the U.S. "affirms its sovereign right to determine who should enter our

country and under what circumstances.”

The document emphasizes the importance of knowing and controlling who enters the country through tactics like increased vetting, ending chain-migration, ending the Diversity Visa Lottery program and increasing border security.

“The United States affirms its sovereign right to determine who should enter our country and under what circumstances. The United States understands the contributions immigrants have made to our Nation throughout its history. Illegal immigration, however, burdens the economy, hurts American workers, presents public safety risks, and enriches smugglers and other criminals,” the Trump strategy states.

The document continues:

“The United States will continue to welcome lawful immigrants who do not pose a security threat and whose entry is consistent with the national interest, while at the same time enhancing the screening and vetting of travelers, closing dangerous loopholes, revising outdated laws, and eliminating easily exploited vulnerabilities. We will also reform our current immigration system, which, contrary to our national interest and national security, allows for randomized entry and extended-family chain migration. Residency and citizenship determinations should be based on individuals’ merit and their ability to positively contribute to U.S. society, rather than chance or extended family connections.”

Two recent terrorist attacks, the October truck attack in New York City and last week’s attempted bombing, were committed by individuals who entered the country through either chain migration or the Diversity Visa Lottery program.

■ Approach toward China

President Obama’s national security strategy emphasized its “scope of cooperation with China” on economic issues, which the administration touted as “unprecedented.” Trump’s national security strategy rejects this approach as a failure and embraces a more competitive view of global economics.

“For decades, U.S. policy was rooted in the belief that support for China’s rise and for its integration into the post-war international order would liberalize China,” the document states. “Contrary to our hopes, China expanded its power at the expense of the sovereignty of others in the region. China gathers and exploits data on an unrivaled scale and spreads features of its authoritarian system, including corruption and the use of surveillance.”

Under the subhead “A Competitive World,” the strategy reads: “China and Russia challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity. They are determined to make economies less free and less fair, to grow their militaries, and to control information and data to repress their societies and expand their influence.”

“These competitions require the United States to rethink the policies of the past two decades—policies based on the assumption that engagement with rivals and their inclusion in international institutions and global commerce

would turn them into benign actors and trustworthy partners. For the most part, this premise turned out to be false,” the section concludes.

Elsewhere in the document, the Trump administration notes that “China is gaining a strategic foothold in Europe by expanding its unfair trade practices and investing in key industries, sensitive technologies, and infrastructure.”

The Trump strategy also calls out China by name for stealing American intellectual property—something Obama’s strategy did not do.



An article by Patrick Goodenough titled “8 of 10 Countries ‘Where It is Most Dangerous to Follow Jesus’ are Islamic” was posted at cnsnews.com on Jan. 22, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

Eight of the ten countries where Christians face the worst persecution are Islamic nations, according to Open Doors USA’s 2018 “world watch list,” which attributes the maltreatment to “Islamic oppression.”

And of the top 50 “countries where it is most dangerous to follow Jesus” in this year’s report, no fewer than 36 are members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the bloc of Muslim-majority states.

The advocacy organization reports that 215 million Christians—one in 12 worldwide—experience high levels of persecution.

List of nations

1. North Korea
2. Afghanistan
3. Somalia
4. Sudan
5. Pakistan
6. Eritrea
7. Libya
8. Iraq
9. Yemen
10. Iran

During the reporting period for the 2018 list, it says, 3,066 Christians were killed, 1,252 were abducted, 1,020 were raped or sexually harassed, and 793 churches were attacked.

The two non-Islamic states among the ten worst persecutors of Christians in the latest report are North Korea—the Stalinist regime has topped the list every year since 2002 and does so again this year; and Eritrea, an authoritarian dictatorship that has ranked in the top ten since 2015, and is in sixth place this year.

11. India
12. Saudi Arabia
13. Maldives
14. Nigeria
15. Syria
16. Uzbekistan
17. Egypt
18. Vietnam
19. Turkmenistan
20. Laos

All are OIC members bar India (a Hindu-majority nation with a large Muslim minority), and communist-ruled Vietnam and Laos.

Syria has dropped out of the top ten for the first time in five years. In 2014, Open Doors ranked it as the third-worst persecutor of Christians.

Among Islamic states where persecution of Christians is rife are countries deemed to be important U.S. allies, such as Afghanistan (2), Pakistan (5), Iraq (8), Saudi Arabia (12), Egypt (17), Jordan (21), Qatar (27) and Turkey (31).

The world watch list report scores countries on a scale of 0 to 100 points (with 100 characterizing the greatest degree of persecution), based on a research process that draws from data from field workers and external experts and includes "questions covering five spheres of life and the prevalence of violent incidents." The five spheres are church life, national life, community life, family life and private life.



A Reuters article titled "Indonesia Quake Shakes Capital, Causes Some Injuries and Damage in Java" was posted at reuters.com on Jan. 23, 2018. Following is the article.

Office workers fled high-rise buildings in the Indonesian capital on Tuesday after a strong earthquake shook the city, causing some injuries and damage to at least 130 buildings elsewhere on the densely populated island of Java.

The relatively shallow quake of magnitude 6 struck off Java, the U.S. Geological Survey said, and authorities ruled out the risk of a tsunami.

Many people ran along the streets of downtown Jakarta, pointing at the buildings above them, witnesses said. Metro TV showed patients being evacuated from a hospital.

The quake struck about 104 km (64.62 miles) west of the city of Sukabumi, at a depth of 44 km (27 miles). Jakarta is about 100 km (62 miles) away.

"In Cianjur, six students were seriously injured and two students suffered light injuries when the (school) roof collapsed," Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, a spokesman for Indonesia's disaster agency, said in a statement, referring to a district of West Java province.

Besides schools, more than 130 houses and a mosque were damaged in the provinces of West Java and Banten, the agency said.

The quake was felt for about 10 to 15 seconds in Jakarta, though many residents thought it lasted far longer.

"I was just sitting down, then I felt the building swaying," said Rudy Togatorop, 35, who works at the Chilean embassy. "The emergency stairs were very narrow. I was worried if something would happen."

Indonesia sits on the geologically active Pacific Ring of Fire and is regularly hit by earthquakes. In 2004, the Indian Ocean tsunami killed 226,000 people in 13 countries, including more than 120,000 in Indonesia.

In December, a quake of 6.5 magnitude killed at least three people when it hit Java, at a depth of 92 km (57 miles), and buildings in Jakarta swayed for several seconds.

The World Bank reckons natural disasters cost Indonesia 0.3 percent of its gross domestic product annually, but a 2015 government report on disaster risk management said a major earthquake, occurring once every 250 years, could cause losses in excess of \$30 billion, or 3 percent of GDP.



A Reuters article by Yereth Rosen titled "Magnitude 7.9 Quake Off Alaska Sparks Brief West Coast Tsunami Fears" was posted at reuters.com on Jan. 23, 2018. Following is the article.

Tsunami alerts were lifted on Tuesday for the U.S. West Coast and western Canada after a magnitude-7.9 earthquake struck in the Gulf of Alaska, sending the state's coastal residents inland to seek shelter from possible tidal waves.

In Alaska, people packed into high schools and other evacuation centers after the quake hit shortly after midnight local time (0900 GMT).

Officials had warned residents as far south as San Francisco to be ready to evacuate coastal areas but by 5:15 a.m. PST (1315 GMT) the U.S. National Weather Service had lifted all tsunami advisories, watches and warnings for California, Oregon Washington and Alaska. Canadian officials lifted one for coastal British Columbia.

In Alaska, residents gathered in shelters on Kodiak Island, the closest land point to the temblor, around 160 miles (250 km) southeast of Chiniak, Alaska, at a depth of 25 km—considered shallow but with broader damage—according to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage from the quake, which was initially measured at magnitude 8.2.

"People are fine," said Neil Hecht, assistant principal of Kodiak High School, which was sheltering a few hundred people. "Spirits are high."

Long lines of traffic formed in coastal communities including Homer and Seward, Alaska, residents said on social media.

In Homer, a few hundred cars were packed into its high school parking lot. Shawn Biessel, a 32-year-old park ranger, and his mother were in the lot, a few hundred feet above sea level.

"It was a really obvious, pretty strong, long quake. A good rumbler," Biessel said in a phone interview. "It went on for a solid minute and after a while we thought we should get outside."

Police drove through Biessel's neighborhood with flashing lights to alert residents to evacuate, Biessel said.

San Francisco briefly warned residents within three blocks of the Pacific Ocean or five blocks of San Francisco Bay to prepare to evacuate. That warning was later lifted.

Earthquakes of similar magnitude are not uncommon in Alaska, which is seismically active. The state has recorded 11 tremors with a magnitude of 7 or greater within 373 miles (600 km) of Tuesday's quake over the past century, according to Zachary Reeves, a USGS seismologist in Golden, Colorado.

The largest U.S. earthquake ever recorded was a magnitude-9.2 temblor in Alaska in March 1964, causing tidal waves of more than 100 feet (30 m) high that killed 131 people.



An article by Melody Gutierrez titled "California Democrats Want Businesses to Give Half Their Tax-Cut Savings to State" was posted at sfgate.com on Jan. 21, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

California lawmakers are targeting the expected windfall that companies in the state would see under the federal tax overhaul with a bill that would require businesses to turn over half to the state.

A proposed Assembly Constitutional Amendment by Assemblymen Kevin McCarty, D-Sacramento, and Phil Ting, D-San Francisco, would create a tax surcharge on California companies making more than \$1 million so that half of their federal tax cut would instead go to programs that benefit low-income and middle-class families.

“Trump’s tax reform plan was nothing more than a middle-class tax increase,” Ting said in a statement. “It is unconscionable to force working families to pay the price for tax breaks and loopholes benefiting corporations and wealthy individuals. This bill will help blunt the impact of the federal tax plan on everyday Californians by protecting funding for education, affordable health care, and other core priorities.”

As a constitutional amendment, the bill would require approval from two-thirds of the Legislature to pass, a difficult hurdle now that Democrats have lost their supermajority. If passed and signed by Gov. Jerry Brown, it would then go to voters for final approval.

Democrats lost their supermajority following resignations of two Assembly Democrats, Matt Dababneh of Encino (Los Angeles County), and Raul Bocanegra of San Fernando Valley (Los Angeles County) amid sexual misconduct allegations. Another Assembly Democrat, Sebastian Ridley-Thomas of Los Angeles, resigned citing health issues. In the Senate, Democrat Tony Mendoza of Artesia (Los Angeles County) is taking a leave of absence pending an investigation into sexual misconduct allegations.

California Democrats have been exploring ways to help those in the state who could end up paying higher federal taxes next year under the Republican tax overhaul.

The GOP overhaul caps state income taxes and local property tax write-offs on the federal income tax return at \$10,000, a move expected to hurt high-local-tax states such as California, where the average state and local tax write-off in 2016 was \$22,000.

State Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de León introduced legislation this month that would allow Californians to get around the state and local tax cap with a voluntary donation to a charitable fund created by the state of any amount of owed taxes above \$10,000. That donation—in lieu of taxes—would allow donors to write off the gifts on their federal tax returns.



An article by Rachel Alexander titled “Let’s Stop Calling It a Government Shutdown” was posted at townhall.com on Jan. 22, 2018. Following is the article.

The more government “shutdowns” that take place in recent years, the more people realize they’re not really shutdowns. They’re merely called that to make the other political party look bad. Urgent services aren’t curtailed, and even non-urgent services and landmarks like public monuments are often kept open through creative ways.

This latest government shutdown—which should really be called a partial government slowdown—threatens to withhold funding for the low-income children’s healthcare program CHIP. Republicans included its funding in a Continuing Resolution that would keep the government temporarily funded,

as an incentive for Democrats to vote for the CR. Democrats complained that Republicans were using poor children as a pawn. But the reality is there was never any danger of the funding going away. Individual states can scramble and come up with temporary funding until a federal funding bill is passed.

Congress got into this current situation due to Democrats' feigned outrage over Trump allegedly calling countries like Haiti a profane word during a meeting with Democrats, where they insisted on including an expansive version of DACA in the forthcoming budget bill. However, Republicans in the room say Trump never used the term. Democrats seized on the opportunity, refusing to agree to a budget compromise unless Trump expanded DACA status to countries like Haiti. They wanted to make Trump look racist and Republicans look bad for a government shutdown. Trump refused to expand DACA, so Republicans were stuck at the last minute coming with a short-term funding CR that would last until February, when further negotiations could take place. Most Democrats refused to vote for the CR this past week, resulting in the so-called shutdown.

The last government shutdown took place in October 2013. Republicans could likely halt the shutdown immediately if the Senate changes the rules to only require 51 instead of 60 votes to clear procedural hurdles. Trump is urging this "nuclear option" change.

The reality of the shutdown is that only non-essential government employees will be furloughed, and they will still get paid later. Postal workers are still delivering mail and TSA screeners are still scanning travelers and their luggage at airports. Social Security checks are being sent out. Even many national monuments will remain open as state governments find ways to fund and staff them.

The economy is in great shape, so a postponement of payments to vendors and other hiccups caused by the shutdown should not affect it. Tad Dehaven, budget analyst for the CATO Institute, told CNN he doesn't anticipate any problems. "The last time we had a government shutdown, the stock market was fine," he said. "The economy was fine."

Yes, there are some negatives to the shutdowns, just nothing living up to the draconian words government shutdown. Shutdowns cost taxpayers over a billion dollars each time, in large part due to the salaries paid to federal workers told to stay at home.

Democrats are counting on the American people failing to understand the insignificance of the alleged shutdown. When it took place twice in 1995, Democrats successfully used it against Republicans after President Bill Clinton vetoed a CR. In 1996, Republicans lost seats in Congress and Clinton easily beat off Republican challenger Bob Dole to win reelection as president. House Speaker Newt Gingrich lost his popularity and ability to push through much of his agenda.

During the 2013 shutdown, the Obama administration put barricades in front of the WWII memorial on the National Mall to keep out military veterans and make Republicans look extra awful.

It's time to get rid of the phrase government shutdown. It's not accurate, and has been primarily used as a ploy by Democrats to make Republicans look bad. "Republicans don't care about children," "Republicans don't care about the elderly;" whatever fits the Democrats' usual mantra they will throw out there. The complicit media also enjoys the phrase because it creates urgent sounding news. The phrase should be replaced by partial government slow-down. It's not flashy, but it represents the mere posturing going on in Congress better than that dire description.



An article by Mike Ford titled "It's Not 'The Wall' Democrats Fear" was posted at americanthinker.com on Jan. 22, 2018. Following is the article.

You can tell what scares Democrats by what they aren't talking about.

Senator Chuck Schumer and Representative Luís Gutiérrez have indirectly given away Democratic fears. First, Senator Schumer came out of his meeting with President Trump claiming he had offered some compromise with the president on the wall.

Gutiérrez then added: He's ready to give President Trump his signature border wall if the Republicans will agree to new legal protections for "[DREAM]ers.[" Furthermore, he said he'd help with the construction. "I'll take a bucket, take bricks, and start building it myself," Gutiérrez told reporters in the Capitol. "We will dirty our hands in order for the [DREAM]ers to have a clean future in America."

We all know that Democrats are good at coordinated messaging. Why the sudden reversal? The wall has been the main sticking point for both sides. Why are Democrats suddenly ready to give President Trump a victory in this regard?

The short answer is chain migration and the visa lottery. The wall in and of itself, while obviously helpful in border security, is not the be-all, end-all. Its real importance is that it is a visual and physical demonstration that President Trump intends to keep his promises on immigration. If Trump gets any significant portion of the wall started, then he wins a modest political victory, and border security is enhanced a bit. However, if recalcitrant Democrats prevent funding or delay construction, they will be the ones hurt, not President Trump.

Chain migration and the visa lottery are a completely different story. As we all know, Democrat interest in immigration reform is in simply assuring a continuing and steady supply of new Democrat voters. If recent immigration history demonstrated that newly minted citizens tend to vote Republican, the wall would have already been built. Instead, chain migration and the visa lottery continue to assure a steady supply of Democrat voters of low skill.

In his immigration speeches, President Trump always says, "Build the wall!" Lately, he's also added chain migration and the visa lottery, along with E-Verify, to his list of immigration fixes. Of all those immigration reforms, the

loss of chain migration and the visa lottery would do the most damage to the Democrat voter import machine. Both of those programs are responsible for a large number of unsuitable foreign arrivals who end up on public assistance or in prison and eventually as Democrat voters, legally or sometimes not.

Two things will have an impact on this discussion.

■ First, President Trump's administration is gaining serious momentum.

A burgeoning economy, the result of Trump's assault on egregious regulation along with the recent tax bill, are already having a positive effect on workers' wallets. Couple that with positive employment news among some core Democrat constituencies: women's unemployment is lowest in decades, and of even more concern to Democrats, black and hispanic unemployment is the lowest ever. This could give President Trump some legislative muscle if the GOP will get behind him.

■ Second and directly on the heels of the "Trump Recovery," Democrats have decided to back the concerns of illegal aliens instead of American citizens in the most public possible way: by shutting down the federal government. For now, President Trump appears to be winning the messaging war on this, calling out Senator Schumer and the Democrats for taking the side of illegal aliens.

This is why Democrats are showing willingness to move toward President Trump on the wall. This would be a minor political retreat, but as long as their legal supply of voters isn't cut off, they can live with it. Schumer's and Gutiérrez's recent statements are an attempt to lock in a DACA agreement and pay for it with a minor concession regarding the wall.

However, President Trump has some serious economic wind at his back. Add to this the Democrats' open choice of illegals over Americans, and Trump may actually run the table and get everything he asks for on his immigration reform list. Democrats, on the other hand, could end up with the 800K DACA "children" being given some sort of work status and funding for the wall being revisited annually. All in all, a pretty good deal.

Keep the pressure on the Democrats. Every 24 hours that goes by, take something else off the table.



An article by Nicholas Fondacaro titled "CBS/NBC Downplay GOP Victory in Shutdown, ABC Guilts Dems for 'Giving In' " was posted at news busters.org on Jan. 22, 2018. Following is the article.

Congressional Republicans and President Trump declared victory on Monday over the Democrats in the government shutdown, as the Resistance could no longer hold out and voted on the continuing resolution to fund the government. In an exchange, they received a promise to negotiate and vote on DACA in the next few weeks. The three major network news outlets (ABC,

CBS, and NBC) were notably disappointed and frustrated that their party caved after just three days.

■ *CBS Evening News* was one of two programs that downplayed the Republican victory. As they were coming on the air, anchor Jeff Glor took on an indefinite tone. "The federal government is fully reopening tonight. Nearly three days after a dispute over immigration led to a closure. Senate Democrats and Republicans reached a deal today to fund the government for a few more weeks and put off a potential DACA fix until next month," he reported.

Throughout their first report on the shutdown, CBS didn't declare a winner as the liberal media swiftly did back in 2013. Instead, Congressional Correspondent Nancy Cordes touted the progressive Senators who were still holding out and who conveniently had presidential ambitions. "16 progressive senators, including several presidential hopeful, wanted to hold out for more. California Democrat Kamala Harris said McConnell's vow fell far short of an ironclad guarantee," she reported.

Cordes was cheerful that the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) was funded for six years, but suggested it was only a Democratic priority when it was a key priority for Republicans since the six-year funding plan was their idea. Obviously, she was trying to find something positive she could spin for Democrats.

CBS didn't declare a winner until their second report, and White House Correspondent Major Garrett seemed frustrated by it. After being asked by Glor about what the President was looking for in the immigration bill, the reporter appeared to snap at him:

We'll get to that in a minute, Jeff. One of the reasons the nation didn't see the President this weekend is because the White House strategy was not to have the President appear to own any part of this shutdown. And the President's lack of engagement, not a single phone call over the weekend with Democrats, led to a victory largely on his terms.

■ *NBC Nightly News* also downplayed the Republican and White House victory. It took until their third report to declare a winner in the shutdown stand-off. "So Chuck, back to this shutdown. What happened here? Did Democrats lose their nerve," fill-in anchor Savannah Guthrie wanted to know.

"To put it in football terms, Savannah. I would say this was a false start by the Democrats," explained *Meet the Press* moderator Chuck Todd. "The Democrats showed their cards. At a minimum, he already knows he's going to get his wall from Democrats if he gives them DACA. And that in itself is already a small victory for this White House."

■ ABC anchor David Muir, on *World News Tonight*, was quick to declare Republicans victorious and did it often, but the network was clearly disappointed in the Democrats and sent them on a guilt trip. "Three days in, and late today, the Senate voting to end it. The House voting just moments ago. The Democrats giving in on the dreamers for now," he announced in the opening tease.

And Muir did it again during the introduction of their first report. "Today was day three and then Senate Democrats deciding to give in on the dreamers with a promise from Senate Republicans that they'll take up the issue soon," he reported. "Senate Majority Leader McConnell emerging triumphant."



A video and an article by Katie Yoder titled “Evening News Cover Women’s March Three Times More Than March for Life” were posted at newsbusters.org on Jan. 20, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

For a second year, the networks are favoring a march supporting abortion and other lefty causes over a march for life.

During their Saturday news shows the first evening of the Women’s March, ABC, CBS and NBC spent a total of 6 minutes, 43 seconds highlighting the event. In comparison, following Friday’s March for Life, the three broadcast networks spent just 2 minutes, 6 seconds on the pro-life rally.

On Saturday, Jan. 20, several cities, including Washington, D.C. and New York City, hosted their second annual Women’s March calling for “Power to the Polls.”

The first Women’s March, held the day after President Trump’s inauguration, aimed to mobilize women to tell the new administration that “women’s rights are human rights.” Except, according to the march’s pro-abortion platform and its behavior towards pro-life organizations, “women” doesn’t include all women. That became even clearer when organizers removed pro-life group New Wave Feminists from its partner list last year.

And in the case, when it comes to time, the networks prioritized abortion supporters.

According to organizers, more than 100,000 Americans attended the 45th March for Life on Jan. 19. The rally condemns abortion around the anniversary of the Supreme Court’s 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, which legalized abortion in the U.S. But while the largest annual march in Washington, D.C. regularly attracts massive crowds, the networks refuse to give them—and the unborn they march for—the coverage they deserve.

Before the main Women’s March event even happened (scheduled for Sunday in Las Vegas), the news shows already covered the Women’s March three times more than the 2018 March for Life.

■ During Saturday’s *Nightly News*, NBC dedicated a whopping 2 minutes, 42 seconds to the Women’s March—more than the total the March for Life received Friday night. Anchor José Díaz-Balart remarked how women “took to the streets today, as they did a year ago, to demand equality, justice and social and political change.”

From there, correspondent Morgan Radford reported on the “army of marchers” in “hundreds of cities” to demand “change in Washington.” She went on to interview Whoopi Goldberg, the founders of the Women’s March and Virginia delegate Kelly Fowler, who ran for office after last year’s march. NBC even played a clip of her young daughter wearing a sign reading, “Trump is mean.”

“An inspiration for millions of women hoping to change the face of politics,” Radford said of Fowler.

■ CBS followed NBC timewise, with a 2 minute, 2 second segment on the Women's March during *Evening News*. Anchor Reena Ninan brought up the "thousands" of marchers who focused on "having their voices heard in November midterm elections."

Reporter Paula Reid described them as a "sea of pink hats" who, in Washington, D.C., chanted, "Lock him up" of the president. She interviewed Emily's List president Stephanie Schriock on how her organization, which trains "democratic, pro-choice" women to run for office.

Reid also gave assurance to critics—by interviewing one marcher who claimed everyone was welcome.

"The Women's March has been criticized for only representing women on one side of the aisle, opposing a Republican president and then pushing for only Democratic candidates," Reid admitted.

■ For *World News Tonight*, ABC spent 1 minutes 59 seconds. Following anchor Tom Llamas' introduction, correspondent Eva Pilgrim reported on the "hundreds of thousands" of women with "crowds significantly larger this year" with 200,000 in New York. (Though there were certainly fewer in Washington, D.C.—something she didn't say.)

"This crowd stretches for as far as the eye can see in both directions," she stressed. "Everyone here marching for change."

She concluded by saying that the crowd presented "lessons from the past and hope for the future," and interviewed a marcher who compared the Women's March to her mother marching in the '60s for "abortion rights."

During their morning and evening news shows for the past five years (2013-2017, the broadcast networks have offered fewer than 24 minutes to the March for Life. To put that in perspective, ABC, CBS and NBC spent *more than three times that* on the Women's March in 2017 alone, with 1 hour, 15 minutes, 18 seconds.

With their evening shows immediately following the 2018 March for Life on Friday, the networks combined spent a mere 2 minutes, 6 seconds on the pro-life rally. The networks that follow President Trump's every move couldn't devote more time to the event making history: for the first time ever, the president addressed the March for Life live via satellite.

Meanwhile, according to MRC Latino, U.S. Spanish-language television news leader Univision only dedicated 20 seconds to the March for Life Friday evening. In contrast, it offered 2 minutes to the Women's March Saturday evening.

UPDATE: This post has been updated to include numbers from MRC Latino.

Methodology: MRC Culture watched the evening news shows from the three broadcast networks (ABC, CBS and NBC) directly following the March for Life on January 19, 2018. MRCC also watched those same evening news shows from ABC and NBC directly following the Women's March on January 20, 2018. For CBS,

MRCC watched the Women's March *Evening News* segment online (only local news aired on east coast). Teasers to segments were not included in the time tally.



A video and an excerpt by Melanie Arter titled "Congresswoman Tells How She Chose Life for Her Daughter Who Was Given No Chance for Survival" were posted at cnsnews.com on Jan. 19, 2018. Following is the excerpt.

In a speech at the 45th Annual March for Life on Friday, Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-Wash.) shared the story of how she and her husband chose not to get an abortion despite learning that their daughter had zero chance of survival, because she had no kidneys and undeveloped lungs from of a condition that was usually fatal upon birth.



An article by Al Jones titled "Lawsuit Against Kellogg Over Religion and Weekend Work Back on Table" was posted at mlive.com on Jan. 19, 2018. Following is the article.

Kellogg Co. and two former workers will have to head back to court to let a judge determine whether the cereal giant infringed on the workers' religious freedoms by requiring them to work on Saturdays.

The U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals announced Wednesday, Jan. 17, that it reversed a lower court ruling that found in favor of Kellogg without the need for a full trial.

Richard Tabura and Guadalupe Diaz are Seventh-day Adventists who worked for a Kellogg USA Inc. food production plant in Utah. They were fired in 2012 after they failed to work every other Saturday as was required in a change of work rules by Kellogg.

Seventh-day Adventists observe Saturday as the Sabbath and do not work between sundown Friday and sundown Saturday.

According to court documents, the workers used various workplace resources—including exchanging shifts with co-workers and vacation time—to try to accommodate the requirements. But over a period of time, that was not successful and they were terminated.

Among other things, Tabura and Diaz allege in a their lawsuit that by firing them, Kellogg violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act by failing to accommodate their Sabbath observance. Their attorneys and those representing Kellogg moved for summary judgement on the matter, a ruling on the merits or issues of the case without the need for a full trial.

On July 7, 2016, the United States District Court for the District of Utah denied the workers' motion for that judgement and granted Kellogg's motion. The lower court found that Battle Creek-based Kellogg did reasonably accommodate the workers' religious practice and that Kellogg could not accommodate their Sabbath observance any further without incurring undue hardship for itself.

In March 2017, the workers appealed that finding, leading to the decision this week by the Denver-based 10th Circuit Court of Appeals.

A summary of the decision by a three-judge panel of that appeals court, released on Wednesday, concluded that the district court erred in granting Kellogg a summary judgement.

In its conclusion, the appeals court stated: "Title VII required Kellogg reasonably to accommodate Plaintiffs' (the workers') religious practice, if Kellogg could do so without incurring undue hardship to its business. Whether Kellogg reasonably accommodated Plaintiffs' Sabbath observance and, if not, whether Kellogg could do so without undue hardship, must await further proceedings."

Asked for a response to the finding, Kellogg declined to comment. In an email, its media relations department stated that the company does not comment on ongoing litigation.

The decision was hailed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

"The Seventh-day Adventist Church is pleased with this watershed decision upholding the critically important right of Americans to adhere to their religious beliefs in the workplace," Todd McFarland, associate general counsel for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, stated in a press release.

In an April posting on its Adventist News Network website, the church noted that Kellogg Co. co-founder John Harvey Kellogg was a Seventh-day Adventist in 1906 when the company was founded.



Isaiah 55:6-11—"Seek 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.' "