

Eye on the World

April 14, 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 churchofgodbigsandy.com for the weekend of April 14, 2018.

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).



An article by Susan Jones titled "Mattis: No Decision Yet to Launch Military Attack Against Syria" was posted at cnsnews.com on April 12, 2018. Following is the article.

"We have not yet made any decision to launch military attacks into Syria," Defense Secretary James Mattis told the House Armed Services Committee on Thursday. He also said a military response is only one option. The others are diplomacy and economic measures.

President Trump on Wednesday tweeted: "Russia vows to shoot down any and all missiles fired at Syria. Get ready Russia, because they will be coming, nice and new and 'smart!' You shouldn't be partners with a Gas Killing Animal who kills his people and enjoys it!"

But by Thursday, Trump backed off a bit, tweeting: "Never said when an attack on Syria would take place. Could be very soon or not so soon at all!"

Mattis on Thursday was responding to a question from Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hawaii), who noted that Syria has not threatened or declared war against the U.S., and therefore an attack by the U.S. would violate the U.S. Constitution, which gives the president the power only to repel sudden attacks, not to declare war.

Gabbard also noted that an attack on Syria ordered by Trump would violate the War Powers Resolution, which requires the president to consult with Congress before

sending troops into hostilities. And a Trump-ordered attack would violate the omnibus spending bill, signed by Trump this year, that says none of the funds made available by the act may be used in Syria in contravention of the War Powers Resolution.

Mattis replied that President Barack Obama faced a similar situation when he sent troops into Syria to go after a terrorist group, ISIS, which is not named in the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force.

"This is a complex area, I'll be the first to admit," Mattis said.

Gabbard pressed Mattis on whether Trump will comply with the Constitution and the law.

"I believe that the president will carry out his duties under the Constitution to protect the country," Mattis replied.

Asked how an attack on Syria would serve the interests of the American people, Mattis demurred: "I don't want to talk about a specific attack that is not in offing," he said.

"Again, the president has not made that decision. However, looking at the chemical warfare convention, I think it's by far in the best interest of civilization, certainly in the best interest of America, that that convention be obeyed by the nations that have signed it," Mattis said.

"And what has happened in Salisbury, England and now has happened in Syria—again shows that this is not an idle concern."

Mattis, asked risking a war with Russia over Syria serves American interests, said he's "not ready to speculate that that would happen."

"And there's a lot of ways to respond to the violation of the chemical weapons convention—diplomatically, economically, militarily—taken in total—would represent, I think, what we have to do in this world if we're going to turn it over in accord with international norms, international law."



An article by Patrick Goodenough titled "Netanyahu to Iranian Regime: Don't Test Our Resolve" was posted at cnsnews.com on April 12, 2018. Following is the article.

Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu warned Iran on Wednesday night not to put his country's determination to confront its enemies to the test, a day after a senior aide to supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei vowed that Iran would respond to a missile strike on a Syrian airbase which it blames on Israel.

"I have a message to convey to the rulers of Iran," he said. "Do not put the determination of the State of Israel to the test."

Netanyahu also had a message for the Iranian people: "Israel is not your enemy. It is the tyrannical regime that oppresses you who's the enemy."

Netanyahu was speaking at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem as Israel began to mark Holocaust Remembrance Day. In his address he compared the nuclear deal reached with Iran in 2015 to European attempts to appease Hitler in the run-up to World War II.

"A very radical regime threatens us and the safety of the entire world," he told an audience of Holocaust survivors and families, officials and diplomats, speaking through a translator. "And this regime declares out in the open that it intends to annihilate the state of the Jewish people, to annihilate all of us," he said.

"Some people delude themselves, just like what happened in Munich in 1938, that the agreement signed with the Iranian regime, this murderous regime, will stop its belligerence. Throughout history we've seen time and time again how agreements with regimes of this nature were not worth the paper they were written on."

Israel has neither confirmed nor denied responsibility for an airstrike early Monday on an airbase in Homs province which, according to Iranian state media, killed seven Iranian military advisors.

Israel's primary national security concern in the Syrian civil war is that Iran is using it to establish a powerful military presence in the country, adding to the threat Israel already faces from large numbers of missiles Iran has provided to its Lebanese proxy militia, Hezbollah. Iran also supports Palestinian terror groups in Gaza.

On Tuesday, Khamenei's advisor on international affairs, Ali Akbar Velayati, traveled to Damascus for consultations, and used the opportunity to warn Israel that the strike on the airbase would "not be left unanswered."

Bashar al-Assad's other main ally is Russia. President Vladimir Putin in a phone conversation with Netanyahu Wednesday stressed the importance of respecting Syria's sovereignty and urged Israel to refrain from any action that could further destabilize the situation in the country, according to a Kremlin readout.

A brief statement by Netanyahu's office about the phone call had a different emphasis, saying he had "reiterated that Israel will not allow Iran to establish a military presence in Syria."

The airstrike on the base occurred as the region braced for a possible U.S. military response to a deadly chemical weapons attack Saturday near Damascus, which Washington blames on the Assad regime.

Iran and Russia are backing its denial of responsibility for the attack in Douma, claiming it was a "false flag" or staged incident designed to discredit Assad and draw in U.S. military intervention.

In his speech Netanyahu referred to the chemical attack.

"The events of the last few days teach us that standing against evil and belligerence is a mission given to every generation," he said. "We saw the Syrian children who were slaughtered with chemical weaponry. Our hearts were torn when we looked at the atrocities."

Netanyahu said a major lesson learned since the Holocaust is that “murderous evil” which is not confronted “expands very rapidly and gradually threatens the entire humanity.”



A Reuters article by Philip Pullella titled “After ‘No Hell’ Report, Pope Gives the Devil His Due” was posted at yahoo.com on April 9, 2018. Following is the article.

Pope Francis has put Satan in his place, citing the devil repeatedly in a document published on Monday following a Vatican rebuke last month of a journalist who quoted him as saying hell does not exist.

In the document known as an Apostolic Exhortation called “Gaudete et Exsultate,” (Rejoice and Be Glad), the pope also bewails the amount of defamation and slander spread online by some Roman Catholic bloggers and Twitter users.

Satan gets more than a dozen mentions in the document as Francis talks about how life can be “a constant struggle against the devil, the prince of evil.”

He continues in the same section: “Hence, we should not think of the devil as a myth, a representation, a symbol, a figure of speech or an idea. This mistake would lead us to let down our guard, to grow careless and end up more vulnerable.”

Francis refers to the “wiles of the devil,” “the spirit of the devil,” “keeping the devil at bay,” how to “banish the devil,” and “snares and temptations of the devil.”

On March 29, the Vatican felt compelled to reaffirm the existence of hell after Eugenio Scalfari, 93, an avowed atheist who has struck up an intellectual friendship with Francis, wrote that the pope had told him that “A Hell doesn’t exist.”

Scalfari prides himself on not taking notes and not using tape recorders, “reconstructing” encounters later in articles.

Ironically, Francis did mention hell in Monday’s document—in a section that warned against “unguarded tongues” in the media.

In it, he referred to online hate in the Catholic media, which is predominately present on right-wing, conservative blogs and Twitter handles that often use strong language to criticize liberal Catholics and even the pope himself.

“Even in Catholic media, limits can be overstepped, defamation and slander can become commonplace, and all ethical standards and respect for the good name of others can be abandoned,” Francis said.

“It is striking that at times, in claiming to uphold the other commandments, they completely ignore the eighth, which forbids bearing false witness or lying, and ruthlessly vilify others. Here we see how the unguarded tongue, set on fire by hell, sets all things ablaze,” he said, paraphrasing a passage from the Bible.



An article by Catherine Marciano titled "Pope Hits Out at Critics of His Pro-Migrant Policy" was posted at yahoo.com on April 9, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

Pope Francis issued a warning to Catholics who criticize his calls to welcome migrants with open arms, in a much-awaited text published Monday.

The Argentine pontiff has put the plight of people fleeing war, persecution and poverty at the heart of his five-year papacy, putting him at odds with a wave of anti-immigrant sentiment in many parts of the world.

In the third apostolic exhortation of his pontificate—a guideline on how Catholics can strive for "holiness"—the 81-year-old unexpectedly hit out at his critics.

"Some Catholics consider the situation of migrants to be a secondary issue," he wrote.

"That a politician looking for votes might say such a thing is understandable, but not a Christian for whom the only proper attitude is to stand in the shoes of those brothers and sisters of ours who risk their lives to offer a future to their children."

Citing a passage from the Old Testament urging the welcoming of foreigners, Francis remarked sharply that the issue was not "a notion invented by some pope, or a momentary fad."

In April 2016, he flew to a Greek island on the frontline of the migrant crisis, Lesbos, and returned to Rome with three families of Syrian Muslims.

The pontiff also took the opportunity to reiterate his staunch opposition to abortion in the text entitled "Gaudete et exsultate" (Rejoice and be glad).

"Our defence of the innocent unborn needs to be clear, firm and passionate," he said, adding that the "lives of the poor" were "equally sacred."

The first years of Francis' papacy were peppered with strong words against governments, which he has accused of not doing enough to welcome the millions of refugees and migrants fleeing their home countries.

But over the years, he has moderated his discourse, suggesting that host countries had the right to regulate the number of arrivals according to their capacity to accommodate and integrate foreigners.

"There are those who feel encouraged by the pope's stance on migrants and it is still a majority," Christophe Dufour, archbishop of the French city of Aix-en-Provence, told AFP.

"And there is a small number who say: 'he is naive, let him come and live among migrants, it is not so simple.' "



“Eye on the World” comment: The following list of articles consists of headlines of extra articles, which are considered international. The articles were not posted, but the headlines give the essence of the story.

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- An article by Rod Ardelhali, Danyal Hussain and Dianne Apen-Sadler titled “Three Dead After Minibus Ploughs Into Diners Outside Restaurant Leaving Dozens Injured Before Driver ‘Shoots Himself’ in Front of Shocked Onlookers in German Market Town” was posted at dailymail.co.uk on April 7, 2018.
 - An article by Emily Zanotti titled “London’s Mayor Declares Intense New ‘Knife Control’ Policies to Stop Epidemic of Stabbings” was posted at dailywire.com on April 8, 2018.
 - An article by Ivan Couronne titled “Saudi Crown Prince Rounds Off US Tour With Ex-Presidents [both Bushes] Meeting” was posted at yahoo.com on April 8, 2018.
 - An article by Patrick Goodenough titled “Iran Blames Trump, Saudis, Social Media as Currency Nosedives” was posted at cnsnews.com on April 11, 2018.
 - A Reuters article by Nobuhiro Kubo and Tim Kelly titled “Japan Activates First Marines Since WW2 to Bolster Defenses Against China” was posted at reuters.com on April 7, 2018.
 - An article by Terence P. Jeffrey titled “Indicted Russian Agency Had 4,334 Facebook, Instagram, Twitter Accounts; Targeted Energy Industry As Well As Election” was posted at cnsnews.com on April 6, 2018.



An article by Flora Carr titled “Facebook is Telling People Their Data was Misused by Cambridge Analytica and They’re Furious” was posted at time.com on April 10, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

Facebook began alerting some users that their personal information was accessed during the Cambridge Analytica data breach, and suffice to say, Facebook users aren’t happy.

Some 87 million people are estimated to have possibly been affected by the Facebook Cambridge Analytica data breach, a higher number than the social media giant originally anticipated.

Last week, Facebook announced that users who may have had their data misused by Cambridge Analytica would get a detailed message via their News Feed on Monday. Facebook has said most of the affected users are in the U.S., though there are over a million each in the Philippines, Indonesia and the U.K.

Now users are taking to social media to reveal whether or not their personal information was obtained during the data breach, screen-shotting their Facebook notification. “Facebook sold me out to Cambridge Analytica too,” one user wrote on Twitter.



An editorial by Michelle Malkin titled “The Student Data-Mining Scandal Under Our Noses” was posted at michellemalkin.com on April 11, 2018. Following is the article.

While congresscritters expressed outrage at Facebook’s intrusive data grabs during Capitol Hill hearings with Mark Zuckerberg this week, not a peep was heard about the Silicon Valley-Beltway theft ring purloining the personal information and browsing habits of millions of American schoolchildren.

It doesn’t take undercover investigative journalists to unmask the massive privacy invasion enabled by educational technology and federal mandates. The kiddie data heist is happening out in the open—with Washington politicians and bureaucrats as brazen co-conspirators.

Facebook is just one of the tech giants partnering with the U.S. Department of Education and schools nationwide in pursuit of student data for meddling and profit. Google, Apple, Microsoft, Pearson, Knewton, and many more are cashing in on the Big Data boondoggle.

State and federal educational databases provide countless opportunities for private companies exploiting public schoolchildren subjected to annual assessments, which exploded after adoption of the tech industry-supported Common Core “standards,” tests, and aligned texts and curricula.

The recently passed Every Student Succeeds Act further enshrined government collection of personally identifiable information—including data collected on attitudes, values, beliefs and dispositions—and allows release of the data to third-party contractors thanks to Obama-era loopholes carved into the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

And the so-called school-to-work pipeline creates endless avenues into taxpayer coffers for firms pitching data-gathering initiatives to “align” student learning with “skill sets” and “competencies” desired by corporations.

Facebook, for example, joined with the Department of Education’s federally sponsored Digital Promise initiative last fall to develop a system of “micro-credentialing” badges for adult students in digital marketing.

You can be sure it’s not merely out of benevolence and public interest that Zuckerberg’s empire is training thousands of these students to learn “Social Media Marketing Basics,” “Marketing with Facebook Pages,” “Marketing with Facebook Ads” and “Marketing with Instagram.”

As parent and educational privacy advocate Cheri Kiesecker reported, the Facebook/Digital Promise partnership is “a wonderful data collection and marketing tool for Facebook and the US Department of Ed, but it is incredibly alarming for students’ privacy and security.”

Facebook is on the march from luring adult students into its orbit to encroaching on secondary and elementary school-age users through its Messenger Kids app

and “whole-child personalized learning” programs funded through the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. CZI, a “philanthropic investment company” funded with up to \$1 billion in Facebook shares over the next three years, [4/11 correction: whose education division] is headed by Jim Shelton.

He’s a former program officer at the Gates Foundation and a key Common Core champion in the Obama administration.

“Personalized learning” is an edutech buzz phrase for hijacking the classroom and hooking students and teachers on branded software and hardware—iPads, smartboards, computerized portfolios, homework apps, you name it—without any evidence that such shiny objects improve academic performance.

Under the guise of customizable assessments, public and private preschools in Colorado experimented with toddlers whose student activities and social/emotional behaviors were tracked using the TS Gold (Teaching Strategies Gold) system—funded with \$30 million in Race to the Top subsidies under the Obama administration.

As I reported in 2014, parent Lauren Coker discovered that TS Gold assessors in her son’s Aurora, Colorado, public preschool had recorded information about his trips to the bathroom, his hand-washing habits and his ability to pull up his pants.

Sunny Flynn, a mom with kids in Jefferson County, Colorado, asked all the right questions: “What security measures are being used to protect this data? Who exactly has access to this data? How long will the data be stored? What is the proven benefit of a kindergarten teacher putting all of this data into a database?”

With little public oversight, Google has infiltrated schools through its “free” Google Apps for Education [GAFE] suite. As I’ve reported previously, Google is building brand loyalty through its questionable certification program that essentially turns teachers into tax-subsidized lobbyists for the company.

GAFE enrollees are “trained” on Google products, earn certification, and then open up consultancy businesses and bill their school districts (i.e., the public) to hawk Google’s suite of products to other colleagues.

And this week, 23 parent and watchdog groups filed a complaint with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission alleging that Google is violating child protection laws by collecting personal data of and advertising to those aged under 13.

Over the past four years, Google has admitted “scanning and indexing” student email messages sent using GAFE and data mining student users for commercial gain when they use their accounts for noneducational purposes.

Google can collect student/family data to target ads through related services outside the GAFE suite, such as YouTube for Schools, Blogger and Google Plus. These are not covered under the already watered-down federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Under the Obama years, Grand Canyon-sized loopholes in federal student and family privacy protections opened data mining to third-party private entities.

Those have yet to be closed by the Trump administration. Why not? It's time to drain the student data-mining swamp and their facilitators in Washington. For the children.



A video and an article by Brian Murphy titled "These Black Trump-Supporting Sisters Say Facebook Considers Them 'Unsafe'" was posted at newsobservers.com on April 10, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

Popular social media personalities Diamond and Silk—black sisters from North Carolina who proudly support President Donald Trump—say that Facebook has deemed their content "unsafe to the community" and is limiting access to their million-plus followers.

More than 1.3 million Facebook users like the Diamond and Silk page, which features commentary from Fayetteville-area sisters Lynette "Diamond" Hardaway and Rochelle "Silk" Richardson. The page was created in December 2014.

The sisters said that they have been corresponding with Facebook since September about "bias censorship and discrimination," alleging that Facebook is not sending notifications of new content to people who like or follow their page.

According to an April 6 post by Diamond and Silk, after months of back and forth communication, Facebook's policy team told them in a message sent a day earlier that it had determined their content was "unsafe to the community."

"How are we and our content and our brand unsafe for the community? We don't sell drugs. We not laying out in the streets. We not no thugs. We don't belong to no gang, so how are we unsafe to the community?" said Hardaway during an appearance on Fox News' "Fox and Friends."

"It bothers me. It's offensive. It's appalling. It taints our brand. It taints us as women."

Conservatives have long accused Facebook of liberal bias. Liberals have complained about the company's spreading of fake news stories during the 2016 elections. Both sides have concerns about how the social media giant protects user data and how it allowed foreign entities to purchase ads and produce content during the 2016 elections.

During congressional testimony by Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, cited Diamond and Silk as an example of the platform's "bias and political censorship."

Cruz said Facebook had shown a "pervasive pattern of political bias."

Zuckerberg said he was committed to "making sure Facebook is a platform for all ideas. I'm proud of the discourse and different ideas that people can share on the service."

Zuckerberg was called to testify before congressional committees after the company admitted that more than 87 million users' data was accessed by a third-party vendor and used by data firm Cambridge Analytica, which was employed by numerous Republican candidates, PACs and committees in 2014 and 2016.

Fox News reported Monday night that Facebook is reconsidering its designation.

In a statement to Fox, a Facebook spokesperson said: "We have communicated directly with Diamond And Silk about this issue. The message they received last week was inaccurate and not reflective of the way we communicate with our community and the people who run Pages on our platform. We have provided them with more information about our policies and the tools that are applicable to their Page and look forward to the opportunity to speak with them."

Diamond and Silk posted Tuesday morning that no one from Facebook has communicated directly with them and they have not spoken to Zuckerberg or anyone from Facebook.

Diamond and Silk gained prominence during the 2016 election as staunch Trump supporters. Their page is filled with content bashing Democrats like Michelle Obama, Nancy Pelosi and Hillary Clinton. It includes video of their appearances on Fox News and promotions for their "Chit Chat Tour."

They shared a post and a chart from Sarah Palin, alleging that Facebook is showing her content to fewer and fewer fans of the former Republican vice presidential nominee. Palin opens her post with "What the Zuck, Facebook?"

"Why are you censoring two women of color, two black women? Why are you not allowing our viewers or our followers and likes to view our content because you deem it unsafe and you can't even give us an explanation as to why?" Hardaway said on "Fox & Friends."

The sisters said it is because of their conservative views.

"When we signed up with Facebook, they didn't say that this platform was only for liberal views," Richardson said.



An editorial by Walter Williams titled "Black Political Power Means Zilch" was posted at jewishworldreview.com on April 11, 2018. Following is the article.

It's often thought to be beyond question that black political power is necessary for economic power and enhanced socio-economic welfare. That's an idea that lends itself to testing and analysis.

Between 1970 and 2012, the number of black elected officials rose from fewer than 1,500 to more than 10,000. Plus, a black man was elected to the presidency twice.

■ Jason Riley, a fellow at the Manhattan Institute, tells how this surge in political power has had little beneficial impact on the black community.

In a PragerU video, ("Blacks in Power Don't Empower Blacks"), Riley says the conventional wisdom was based on the notion that only black politicians could understand and address the challenges facing blacks. Therefore, electing more black city councilors, mayors, representatives and senators was deemed critical. Even some liberal social scientists now disagree.

Gary Orfield says, "There may be little relationship between the success of ... black leaders and the opportunities of typical black families."

■ Riley says that while many black politicians achieved considerable personal success, many of their constituents did not.

After the 2014 Ferguson, Missouri, riots, which followed the killing of Michael Brown after he charged a policeman, much was made of the small number of blacks on the city's police force.

Riley asks: If the racial composition of the police force is so important, how does one explain the Baltimore riots the following year after Freddie Gray died in police custody?

Baltimore's police force is 40 percent black. Its police commissioner is black. Its mayor is black, as is the majority of the City Council. What can be said of black political power in Baltimore can also be said of Cleveland, Detroit, Philadelphia, Washington, Atlanta and New Orleans. In these cities, blacks have been mayors, police chiefs, city councilors and superintendents of schools for decades.

By contrast, when blacks had little political power, they made significant economic progress.

During the 1940s and '50s, black labor force participation rates exceeded those of whites; black incomes grew much faster than white incomes.

Between 1940 and 1950, black poverty rates fell by as much as 40 percent.

Between 1940 and 1970, the number of blacks in middle-class professions quadrupled. Keep in mind that was before affirmative action programs.

Riley says that racial gaps were narrowing without any special treatment for blacks.

After the 1960s, the government began pouring trillions of dollars into various social programs. These programs discouraged marriage and also undermined the work ethic through open-ended welfare programs, helping keep poor people poor.

The fact that political success is not a requirement for socio-economic success—and indeed may have an opposite effect—doesn't apply only to blacks.

■ American Jews, Italians, Germans, Japanese and Chinese attained economic power long before they had political power.

By almost any measure of socio-economic success, Japanese and Chinese are at or near the top. Riley asks, "How many prominent Asian politicians can you name?" By contrast, Irish-Americans have long held significant political power yet were the slowest-rising of all immigrant groups.

Riley says that the black experience in the U.S. has been very different from that of other racial groups. Blacks were enslaved. After emancipation, they faced legal and extralegal discrimination and oppression.

■ But none of those difficulties undermines the proposition that human capital, in the forms of skills and education, is far more important than political capital.

Riley adds that the formula for prosperity is the same across the human spectrum. Traditional values—such as marriage, stable families, education and hard work—are immeasurably more important than the color of your mayor, police chief, representatives, senators and president.

As Riley argues in his new book—“False Black Power?”—the major barrier to black progress today is not racial discrimination. The challenge for blacks is to better position themselves to take advantage of existing opportunities, and that involves addressing the anti-social, self-defeating behaviors and habits and attitudes endemic to the black underclass.



A video and an article by Kyle Olson titled “Alabama Football Players Surround Trump in Prayer After White House Ceremony” were posted at theamericanmirror.com on April 10, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

A remarkable thing happened while the media was focused on Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg’s Senate testimony. After a White House ceremony, several Alabama football players huddled around President Trump and prayed with him.

WBRC’s Christina Chamber captured the moment: “What a cool moment! JK Scott asked @POTUS if he could pray for him and his staff. Video below shows President Trump and Bama players praying after the Tide’s White House visit!”

Chambers’s video shows several players surrounding the president with their heads bowed.



An article by Craig Bannister titled “‘Anti-Trump, Pro-Clinton’ FBI Agent and Lawyer Retain Top Secret Clearance” was posted at cnsnews.com on April 11, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

FBI Agent Peter Strzok and FBI lawyer Lisa Page, who according to the Washington Post were “romantically involved” and exchanged “anti-Trump, pro-Clinton texts during investigations of both political figures” still retain Top Secret security clearances, according to Sen. Rand Paul’s interpretation of a letter the FBI sent him and he released today.

On January 30, Paul wrote to FBI Director Christopher Wray inquiring about Strzok’s and Page’s security clearances.

“In light of recent reports describing Peter Strzok and Lisa Page’s extensive discussion, at work, of their political vendetta against President Donald Trump, I am concerned about their continued access to sensitive private information, such as contained in Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA database,” Paul said in the letter.

"Do Mr. Strzok and Ms. Page still have security clearance?" Paul asked the FBI director.

"Do Mr. Strzok and Ms. Page have the ability to search FISA data or other classified databases?" he asked.

"If openly biased agents such as Mr. Strzok and Ms. Page still have access to classified databases, one might argue that the FBI's internal control are inadequate," Paul said in closing his letter.

The assistant director of the FBI's Office of Congressional Affairs Gregory A. Brower responded to Paul in a letter dated March 30.

"I write in response to your January 30, 2018 letter," Brower said.

"All FBI employees must maintain a Top Secret security clearance," he continued. "Because of security concerns and law enforcement sensitivities, the FBI does not reveal the specific accesses granted to particular employees. The release of information regarding access to and searches of FBI databases is similarly constrained by law enforcement sensitivities or the classified nature of that information, as well as related FBI security measures. We hope this answers your inquiries, and thank you for your continued support of the FBI, its mission, and its people."

Appearing on Fox News today, Sen. Paul argued that the logical deduction from the FBI letter is that Strzok and Page, as FBI agents, retain their security clearances.

"The answer we got was sort of a non-answer, but it is an interesting non-answer because they said all FBI agents have Top Secret clearance and must keep that," said Paul. "So, if they're still FBI agents, which apparently they are, he means, the non-answer, specifically, really is an answer, it says that they can search our databases."

In a story published on January 26, the Washington Post said that Strzok was "removed from the Trump probe in July 2017 after internal investigators discovered he and Page, who were romantically involved, exchanged anti-Trump, pro-Clinton texts during investigations of both political figures."

The Post story said in part:

■ "The Washington Post reported in December that Strzok was removed from the Trump probe in July 2017 after internal investigators discovered he and Page, who were romantically involved, exchanged anti-Trump, pro-Clinton texts during investigations of both political figures. Page had left the Mueller team two weeks before Strzok for what officials said were unrelated reasons."

■ "In recent weeks, the Justice Department has provided Congress with hundreds of pages of their messages, and Republicans said the texts revealed political bias at the bureau's highest levels. Democrats have accused Republicans of seizing on the issue in an effort to derail or delegitimize the Russia investigation—accusing conservatives of trying to discredit the FBI as they seek to protect the president."

■ "Congress was notified last week that the FBI could not find five months' worth of texts between the two officials—which President Trump and others met with skepticism."



An editorial by Victor Hanson titled “Mueller at the Crossroads” was posted at townhall.com on April 12, 2018. Following is the article.

Robert Mueller was appointed special counsel in May 2017 in reaction to a media still gripped by near hysteria over the inexplicable defeat of Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential election.

For nearly a year before Mueller’s appointment, leaks had spread about collusion between Russia and the Donald Trump campaign that supposedly cost Clinton a sure victory.

Most of these collusion stories, as we now know, originated with Christopher Steele and his now-discredited anti-Trump opposition file.

After almost a year, Mueller has offered no evidence that Trump colluded with the Russians. Aside from former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, a few minor and transitory campaign officials have been indicted or have pleaded guilty to a variety of transgressions other than collusion.

Ironically, the United States has often interfered in foreign elections to massage the result. Recently, Bill Clinton joked about his own efforts as president to collude in the 1996 Israeli election to ensure the defeat of Benjamin Netanyahu. “I tried to do it in a way that didn’t overtly involve me,” Clinton said.

The Obama administration did the same in 2015, when it used State Department funds to support an anti-Netanyahu political action group.

Since Mueller’s investigation began, a number of top FBI and Department of Justice officials have either retired, or were reassigned or fired.

With the exception of former FBI Director James Comey, all left their jobs due to investigations of improper conduct that took place during the 2016 election cycle. Most were under a cloud of suspicion for lying, having conflicts of interest or misleading investigators.

Mueller is reaching the crossroads of his investigation and faces at least four critical decisions.

- One, Mueller can wind up his investigations now. He can write a report affirming that he has found no evidence while conducting his originally assigned inquiry: Donald Trump did not collude with the Russians to throw the election his way.
- Two, Mueller might pause and await Inspector General Michael Horowitz’s report concerning possible Department of Justice and FBI abuses pertaining to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) Court. If Horowitz finds credible evidence of lawbreaking, then Mueller might seek indictments based on the IG’s likely actionable evidence.
- Three, Mueller could continue to investigate anyone close to the Trump campaign for another year. If he did that, he would confirm that his inquiry has

descended into a political cause. If Mueller calibrates the release of his findings to the fall midterm elections, he will be hailed by Trump opponents as a crusading prosecutor—despite finding nothing related to collusion. A Democratic takeover of Congress would shut down congressional investigations of FBI and DOJ wrongdoing and further empower Mueller.

■ Four, Mueller could more evenly apply his investigations of lying, obstruction of justice and collusion during the 2016 campaign. That way, he would reassure the country of equal treatment of all under the law.

For example, in his search for instances of lying, Mueller might also re-examine the false testimonies given to investigators by McCabe and by Clinton aides Cheryl Mills and Huma Abedin.

In his search for Russian collusion, Mueller might also investigate Steele, Glenn Simpson of Fusion GPS and the Clinton campaign. All used Russian sources to leak unproven gossip and smears to the press in an effort to warp the 2016 election.

In his search for obstruction of justice, Mueller might also investigate whether top DOJ and FBI officials deliberately misled the FISA Court before and during after the 2016 election cycle by withholding evidence that the Steele dossier was flawed.

Did Justice Department officials inform the FISA Court that Steele's dossier was hired research paid for by the Clinton campaign?

Did they tell the court that the FBI had stopped using Steele as a source for purportedly leaking information to the media?

Did they tell the court that Comey was on record as saying the Steele dossier might not have been credible?

In his search for felonious behavior concerning the leaking of classified documents, Mueller might determine:

■ (1) Whether the memos regarding presidential conversations that Comey leaked to the press were classified.

■ (2) Whether former top national security and intelligence officials—among them John Brennan, James Clapper, Samantha Power, Ben Rhodes and Susan Rice—requested that the redacted names of surveilled Americans be unmasked, and whether officials then illegally leaked those names to the media.

■ (3) Whether FBI officials such as Comey and McCabe leaked confidential findings from their investigations to the press during the 2016 campaign and lied to investigators about it.

If the special counsel's investigation has turned into a political cause, Mueller will no doubt prefer the third option.

That is, Mueller's report (and possibly more indictments of minor campaign aides) would likely appear shortly before the midterm elections. If Democrats win the

House, then they will probably shut down all congressional investigations of the FBI and the DOJ—and perhaps all reviews of the actions of Mueller himself.



An editorial by Judge Andrew Napolitano titled “The Real Threat to Donald Trump” was posted at townhall.com on April 12, 2018. Following is the article.

In the midst of worrying about North Korea, Syria and Democrats taking control of the House of Representatives this fall, President Donald Trump is now worrying about a government assault on his own business, which targeted his own lawyer.

Michael Cohen has been the personal lawyer for Trump and for the Trump Organization—the umbrella corporation through which Trump owns or manages nearly all entities that bear his name—for many years.

Cohen is so closely connected to the Trump Organization that one of his two law offices is located on the 26th floor of Trump Tower, just a few doors from the corner office formerly occupied by Trump himself.

On Monday, shortly before dawn, a team of FBI agents bearing a search warrant from a federal judge broke in to the offices of the Trump Organization and removed computers, files, tax returns and telephones from Cohen’s office.

At about the same time, three other teams of FBI agents performed raids. One was at another of Cohen’s offices a few blocks away, and his vacant New York City apartment and hotel rooms he had been occupying were searched, too; and agents also seized personal and professional files and equipment from those venues.

Did the FBI lawfully break in to the headquarters of the president’s family business and cart away files and equipment from his lawyer, as well as legal and financial files of the president himself?

The short answer is: yes.

Here is the back story.

In October 2016, when the federal government began its investigation of alleged attempts by the Russian government to interfere with the 2016 presidential election, then-Attorney General Loretta Lynch managed the work.

After Trump became president and Jeff Sessions became attorney general and Sessions recused himself from this investigation, the No. 2 person in the Department of Justice appointed former FBI Director Robert Mueller as special counsel in charge of the Russia investigation. The investigation in Washington is 18 months old and has been run by Mueller for about 11 months.

If a criminal investigation stumbles upon evidence of crimes substantially removed by geography or subject matter from the location and principal responsibilities of

the investigation, it is the prosecutors' duty either to prosecute those crimes if feasible or to pass whatever evidence has been found on to another prosecutor closer to the place of the alleged crime.

Sometimes, keeping that evidence is a temptation too great to resist. That's because one of the techniques that prosecutors in America use to gather evidence about a crime is to indict those at the fringes of the behavior they are investigating and then attempt, by coercion and bribery, to turn those indicted individuals into cooperating witnesses. Sometimes the indicted crime is truly at the fringes, both rationally and geographically.

But the targets of these fringe prosecutions are rarely attorneys who are representing a person who is a subject of the investigation.

Until now.

Though Cohen does not represent Trump in the Mueller investigation, he does represent him in nearly all other legal matters, and his files contain a treasure-trove of confidential and financial materials from and about Trump. Judges are very reluctant to sign search warrants authorizing the seizure of legal files, with two exceptions.

- The first is the so-called crime/fraud exception. Under this rule, if the client is using his confidential communications with his lawyer to further an ongoing crime, fraud or tort, the communications are not privileged, and evidence of them may be seized.
- The other exception is the independent criminal activity of the lawyer.

That appears to be the case here. It seems that Cohen—who claims he borrowed \$130,000 from a bank to pay an adult-film actress to remain silent about her relationship to Trump, which Trump denies was sexual—did not tell the bank from which he borrowed the funds the true purpose of the loan.

If so, that may be evidence of bank fraud on Cohen's part. If he wired those funds over interstate lines, that is evidence of wire fraud. If he used the U.S. Postal Service to facilitate a material part of the deal with the actress, that would be considered mail fraud. Each of these fraud charges carries a prison term of five years.

When FBI agents arrive for a raid, they rarely take the time to examine fully all the documents they have seized—even if the documents are protected by the attorney-client privilege and even if the client is the president of the United States.

Needless to say, there are safeguards in place to prevent the prosecutors who dispatched the agents from viewing the privileged materials.

When Mueller in Washington came upon evidence of Cohen's bank fraud in Manhattan, he passed it along to the U.S. attorney's office in Manhattan. That office—not Mueller—examined the evidence and obtained the search warrants for Cohen's personal and professional premises, authorized the raids of those premises and received the fruits of the raids.

What will become of Cohen?

Federal prosecutors in Manhattan will now decide whether to ask a grand jury to indict him on the fraud charges, and if he is indicted, Mueller will enter the picture looking to make a deal.

Trump's lawyer was Mueller's bait.

All of this has understandably infuriated Trump. His rights as a client were violated. His attorney of many years and on many matters will soon be a defendant.

Can Trump restrain himself from offering to pardon those who could harm him or firing those who are tormenting him or waging war against real or imagined enemies?

Will his anger, frustration and disgust at the violation of his financial and personal privacy push him and America into what even congressional Republicans fear would be a constitutional crisis?

The potential failure of self-restraint is the real threat he now faces.



"Eye on the World" comment: The following list of articles consists of headlines of extra articles, which involve the United States. The articles were not posted, but the headlines give the essence of the story.

Finances

- An article by Laura Saunders titled "Top 20% of Americans Will Pay 87% of Income Tax" was posted at wsj.com on April 6, 2018.
- An article by Stephen Dinan titled "Trillion-Dollar Deficits Come Roaring Back Under Trump" was posted at washingtonexaminer.com on April 9, 2018.
- An article by Dan Hannan titled "Trump's Tariffs are Just Tax Hikes on American Consumers" was posted at washingtonexaminer.com on April 9, 2018.
- An article titled "Why is Trump So Eager to Compete With China in Tax-Hiking?" was posted at washingtonexaminer.com on April 9, 2018.
- An article by Susan Jones titled "McConnell: 'Certainly Worth Discussing' a Move to Undo Some of the Omnibus Spending" was posted at cnsnews.com on April 11, 2018.
- An article by Guy Benson titled "Bernie: [Heck] Yes, We Need to Repeal the GOP Law With Higher Taxes" was posted at townhall.com on April 11, 2018.

Illegal immigration

- An article by Susan Jones titled "Trump Credits Mexico's Willingness to Avoid 'A Giant Scene at Our Border' " was posted at cnsnews.com on April 5, 2018.
- An article by David S. Cloud titled "M Mattis Authorizes Up to 4,000 National Guard Troops for U.S. Border With Mexico" was posted at latimes.com on April 7, 2018.

■ An article by Melanie Arter titled "Sen. Joseph Crowley: Trump Sending Troops to US Border 'A Very Provocative Move' Even Though Obama Did It Too" was posted at cnsnews.com on April 9, 2018.

Comments about weapons

■ An article by Leada Gore titled "South Carolina Lawmaker Introduces Bill to Secede From US If Guns Seized" was posted at al.com on April 7, 2018.

■ An article by Michael W. Chapman titled "School District: Pro-Life Walkout Not 'Viewpoint Neutral,' Anti-Gun Walkout 'Viewpoint Neutral' " was posted at cnsnews.com on April 9, 2018.

Comments about Trump support

■ A video and an article by Scott Whitlock titled "Meghan McCain Buries Behar: How Dare You Equate Trump and Kim Jong-Un!" were posted at newsbusters.org on April 12, 2018.

Comments about Trump opposition

■ An article by Ginny Montaibano titled "Jimmy Kimmel's Tasteless Attack on Melania Trump" was posted at dailysignal.com on April 5, 2018.

■ An article by Melanie Zanona titled "Retiring GOP Lawmakers Cut Loose on Trump" was posted at thehill.com on April 8, 2018.

■ An article by Chris Reeves titled "Madeline Albright: Trump is Part of a World-wide Revival of Fascism" was posted at townhall.com on April 11, 2018.

News about the media

■ An article by Katie Yoder titled "Networks Totally Ignore Pro-Life Walkout, Spent 10 Minutes on Gun Walkout" was posted at newsbusters.org on April 11, 2018.

■ An article by Geoffrey Dickens titled "Flashback: Before They Loved Comey, the Liberal Media Trashed Him" was posted at newsbusters.org on April 12, 2018.

General interest

■ An article titled "4 in 10 Millennials Don't Know 6 Million Jews Were Killed in Holocaust, Study Shows" was posted at cbsnews.com on April 12, 2018.

■ An article by Taimaz Szirik and Fiacha Gibbons titled "North Americans World's Biggest TV Addicts, Watching Four Hours a Day" was posted at yahoo.com on April 9, 2018.

■ An article by James Owen titled "Nick Saban Vs. LeBron James: The Internet Crushes King James for Coming After Alabama Football" was posted at statesman.com on April 4, 2018.



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.”