

Eye on the World

April 21, 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 April 21, 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).



A Reuters article by Dan Williams titled "Israel Hints It Could Hit Iran's 'Air Force' in Syria" was posted at reuters.com on April 17, 2018. Following is the article.

Israel released details on Tuesday about what it described as an Iranian "air force" deployed in neighbouring Syria, including civilian planes suspected of transferring arms, a signal that these could be attacked should tensions with Tehran escalate.

Iran, along with Damascus and its big-power backer Russia, blamed Israel for an April 9 air strike on a Syrian air base, T-4, that killed seven Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) members. Iranian officials have promised unspecified reprisals.

Israeli media ran satellite images and a map of five Syrian air bases allegedly used to field Iranian drones or cargo aircraft, as well as the names of three senior IRGC officers suspected of commanding related projects, such as missile units.

The information came from the Israeli military, according to a wide range of television and radio stations and news websites. Israel's military spokesman declined to comment.

However, an Israeli security official seemed to acknowledge the leak was sanctioned, telling Reuters that it provided details about "the IRGC air force (which) the Israeli defence establishment sees as the entity that will try to attack Israel, based on Iranian threats to respond to the strike on T-4."

The official, who requested anonymity, would not elaborate.

Israel's Army Radio reported that, given tensions with Iran over Syria, the Israeli air force cancelled plans to send F-15 fighter jets to take part in the U.S.-hosted exercise Red Flag, which begins on April 30.

Roni Daniel, military editor for Israeli TV station Mako, said the disclosure was a signal to Iran that its deployments in Syria "are totally exposed to us, and if you take action against us to avenge (the T-4 strike) these targets will be very severely harmed."

According to Daniel, Israel was bracing for a possible Iranian missile salvo or armed drone assault from Syria.

There was no immediate response from the IRGC or Syria.

The Iranian death toll in T-4 was unusually high. "It was the first time we attacked live Iranian targets - both facilities and people," the New York Times on Sunday quoted an Israeli military source as saying.

Iran, Israel's arch-foe, has cast its military personnel in Syria as reinforcements helping President Bashar al-Assad battle a seven-year-old insurgency. The Iranians have also described their cargo flights to Syria as carrying humanitarian aid only.

An Israeli-Iranian showdown over Syria has loomed since Feb. 10, when Israel said an armed drone launched from T-4 penetrated its air space. Israel blew up the drone and carried out a raid on Syrian air defences in which one of its F-16 jets was downed.

"Israel is headed for escalation," Yaacov Amidror, former national security adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, told Tel Aviv radio station 103 FM. "There could be a very big belligerent incident with Iran and Hezbollah."

While not claiming responsibility for the T-4 strike, Israel has restated a policy of preventing Iran setting up a Syrian garrison. Scores of previous such raids went unanswered but Israel worries that changing conditions may now embolden Iran.

Russia, which long turned a blind eye to Israeli actions in Syria while serving as a brake on retaliation by Iran or its Lebanese Hezbollah guerrilla allies, is now at loggerheads with Western powers over accusations, denied by Syria's government, that it has used chemical weaponry in fighting.



An article by Anna Ahronheim titled "Israel Planning for Direct Retaliatory Attack From Iran" was posted at jpost.com on April 17, 2018. Following is the article.

Israel is preparing for a crossborder attack by the Revolutionary Guard Corps [IRGC], in response to a strike allegedly carried out by the Jewish state against an Iranian-operated air base in Syria that killed seven of its soldiers.

Israel believes the attack will come in the form of precision-guided missiles or armed drones launched from a base in Syria by the IRGC itself—not by proxies, as was done before—under the command of Quds Force commander Maj.-Gen. Qassem Soleimani.

“Israel will react strongly to any Iranian action from inside Syria,” a senior IDF source told Sky News in Arabic, adding that Iran plans to attack Israel from Syria.

Aerial photos of Iranian bases in Syria were released Tuesday morning that show Tehran has increased the scope of its military relationship with the Assad regime under the auspices of the IRGC’s air force commander Brig.-Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh.

The source stated that civilian airlines Simorgh Air and Pouya Cargo Air are used by the IRGC as a front for military flights bringing in soldiers and weaponry to bolster Iran’s military presence.

According to the pictures, the IRGC has established several bases in Syria including a military base in Deir al-Zor province in eastern Syria where Ilyushin planes transporting weapons from Iran to Syria can be seen.

The aerial intelligence photos showed five air bases with an IRGC presence: T4, Aleppo, Deir al-Zor, Damascus International Airport and another airfield south of the capital.

The photos reportedly illustrate how Tehran remains capable of flying in surface-to-surface missiles to the war-torn country as well as unmanned aerial vehicles under the guise of humanitarian aid.

The release of the photos comes ahead of Iran’s national Army Day on Wednesday, when Israel also begin marking its 70th Independence Day in the evening.

Tensions have risen dramatically between the two archenemies following the infiltration of an Iranian drone into northern Israel, which the IDF on Friday said was armed and on an attack mission against the Jewish state.

Last week, an alleged Israeli air strike on Syria’s T4 Airbase in Homs province killed seven IRGC soldiers, including Col.

Mehdi Dehghan who led the drone unit operating out of the base. A senior IDF official confirmed to The New York Times on Monday that Israel was behind the attack, stating the February incident “opened a new period” between the Jewish state and the Islamic Republic.

“This is the first time we saw Iran [itself] do something against Israel—not by proxy,” he said, adding that the strike on the Iranians at T4 “was the first time we attacked live Iranian targets—both facilities and people.”

Following the strike, Ali Akbar Velayati, the top aide to Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, warned that Israel “should be waiting for a powerful response” to the strike on the airfield, saying “it will not remain unanswered.”

Khamenei's representative to the IRGC, Ali Shirazi, cautioned, "If Israel wants to continue its treacherous existence . . . it should avoid stupid measures. If they give excuses to Iran, Tel Aviv and Haifa will be destroyed."



An article by Leonid Bershidsky titled "Why Germany Didn't Join the Syria Strikers" was posted at bloomberg.com on April 16, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

Former German Defense Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg has mockingly remarked that the German government's decision to back the U.S., British and French strikes in Syria with rhetoric but not with missiles "has shown once again that it's a grandmaster of dialectics."

U.S. President Donald Trump may snort in agreement. But Chancellor Angela Merkel's Hegelian approach to geopolitics makes more sense than her Western allies' willingness to rattle their weapons.

■ Merkel's statement on Saturday morning's strike on Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's supposed chemical weapons installations is one of unequivocal support.

■ It also hints at an excuse for Germany's decision not to participate directly in the raid: The U.S., the U.K. and France, unlike Germany, are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council—nations with the ultimate responsibility of making sure international rules are followed. It's a subtle abrogation of global leadership ambition in a situation where Germany cannot lead.

Saturday's strike, after all, was a direct result of U.S. President Donald Trump's incautious tweet last week, in which he promised that the missiles were "coming." It was after that outburst that the Trump administration sought to enlist allies' help (though French President Emmanuel Macron needed no prodding); Trump badly needed followers, especially since he wasn't going to ask Congress for authorization to take action.

U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May couldn't refuse: Trump had backed her all the way in the aftermath of the attempted poisoning of a former Russian double agent, and May had to be seen as both grateful and consistent, given that Assad is accused of using chemical weapons.

Macron didn't have to get on board, but he's cultivating a relationship with Trump that's better than any other European leaders. And Macron wants to be seen as a foreign policy leader.

Merkel has struggled to get along with the U.S. president and failed to hide her distaste for his politics.

Sending a few planes to participate in the raid would have been a relatively cheap way to get into Trump's good graces: He's praised the U.K. and France effusively for going along with him.

Yet the German chancellor passed on this opportunity.

- As ever, her considerations are primarily domestic. Merkel has never wanted a higher international profile for Germany in exchange for a more troubled domestic situation, and she still doesn't.

May backed Trump despite British public opinion's strong opposition to the Syria strikes. Macron, too, went against the majority of the French.

Merkel, facing similar polls—60 percent of Germans consider the three nations' strike a mistake—went along with public opinion.

Merkel was only recently—and barely—able to form a government after an inconclusive election last September.

- The last thing she needs early in the fragile cabinet's tenure is controversy about dragging Germany into what could turn into a military confrontation between the U.S. and Russia.

Merkel and other German government officials make it clear they're no friends of Russian President Vladimir Putin, but that they don't want any part of a hot war with his country. That's not as self-contradictory as it might seem.

Merkel is being criticized both from the right and from the left, anyway.

- To the German left, diplomacy is the only way to resolve the Syrian conflict.

- At the other end of the spectrum are hawks such as Zu Guttenberg and Atlanticists like the leaders of the pro-business Free Democratic Party, who condemned the lack of action on Germany's part as damaging to the country's alliance with the U.S.

Another domestic factor is rarely mentioned. Since 2014, 513,213 Syrians have applied for asylum in Germany. Most of them are anti-Assad, but even if only a minority isn't, it's simply not wise for Germany to get too mixed up in the Syrian civil war or to lend open military support to one of the sides.

Compared with Germany, participants in Saturday's strikes barely accept any Syrian refugees. The U.S. let in only 3,024 of them last year.

A few bombs dropped on Assad's military installations would have cost German taxpayers far less than Merkel's asylum policy does. But I appreciate the refugee effort more, not just for humanitarian reasons but as an important integration experiment that no other country has dared attempt. Dropping bombs on the country of origin of many of these new German residents would further complicate that experiment.

Merkel is a grandmaster of compromise. Her position on Syria is one—between domestic stability and the need to signal loyalty to the U.S.-led Western alliance. It makes sense that the balance of the compromise is in favor of domestic issues.

After all, the three nations' one-time attack on Assad was largely symbolic: It didn't reverse the Assad regime's military victory in eastern Ghouta, and, if the regime has any chemical weapons capability left, it's not likely to have been housed at the obvious, previously used sites that were hit.

When it comes to symbolic gestures, words are about as good as missiles. Most Germans, and this German resident, are pleased their leader understands that.



"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 Leah Barkoukis titled "Russia Claims Syrian Chemical Attack was Staged [by Britain]" was posted at townhall.com on April 13, 2018.
 - An article by Toluse Olorunnipa, Jennifer Jacobs, Anthony Capaccio and Margaret Talev titled "Warship Ruse and New Stealth Missiles: How the U.S. and Allies Attacked Syria" was posted at bloomberg.com on April 14, 2018.
 - An article by Justin Carissimo titled "Theresa May, Emmanuel Macron Back Up Trump on Syrian Airstrikes" was posted at cbsnews.com on April 13, 2018.
 - An article by Tim Ross and Robert Hutton titled "May Defends Syria Airstrikes Without Parliamentary Vote" was posted at bloomberg.com on April 14, 2018.
 - An article by Adam Plowright titled "New Tests for Macron and May With First Major Military Operations" was posted at yahoo.com on April 14, 2018.
 - An article by Thomas Watkins and Rim Hadded titled "Trump, Allies Praise Syria Strikes As Moscow Seethes" was posted at yahoo.com on April 15, 2018.
 - An article titled "Erdogan Welcomes Syria Strikes Against Assad Regime" was posted at yahoo.com on April 14, 2018.
 - An article titled "Iran's Ayatollah Ali Khamenei Slams 'Criminals' Trump, Macron, May After Syria Strikes" was posted at news18.com (India) on April 14, 2018.
 - An article by Anita Kumar, Franco Ordonez and Tim Johnson titled "Bolton, Key Trump Advisor, Has Evolved His Views on Syria" was posted at mcclatchy-dc.com on April 14, 2018.
 - An article by Danny Crichton titled "As Chinese Censorship Intensifies, Gays are Back While Teenage Mothers and Tattoos are Out" was posted at techcrunch.com on April 16, 2018.



A video and an article titled "Official: Mother Dies After Southwest Engine Blows, Woman Nearly Sucked Out" were posted at cbsphilly.com on April 17, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

Officials say a passenger has died after a Southwest Airlines flight made an emergency landing at Philadelphia International Airport on Tuesday morning after a reported engine fire. The plane was flying from LaGuardia Airport in New York to Dallas Love Field.

A bank executive and mother of two from New Mexico has been identified as the woman who died after a Southwest Airlines jet plane blew an engine and got hit by shrapnel that smashed a window.

News of Jennifer Riordan's death was first shared by the assistant principal of the Albuquerque Catholic school attended by her two children.

In an email to parents, assistant principal Amy McCarty wrote that "the family needs all the prayers we can offer."

Riordan was a vice president of community relations for Wells Fargo bank. She was the wife of Michael Riordan, who served until recently as the chief operating officer for the city of Albuquerque.

The New Mexico Broadcasters Association on social media said Riordan was a graduate of the University of New Mexico and former board member.

The NTSB says it appears the left engine failed in-flight. Tracking data shows the flight was heading west over New York's southern tier when it abruptly turned toward Philadelphia around 11:15 a.m.

The plane landed safely and taxied to a remote area of the runway where passengers were taken off after 11 a.m. Chopper 3 video shows a broken plane window and damage to the left engine of the plane.

Officials say pieces flew out of the engine and pierced the fuselage of the plane.

The National Transportation Safety Board says a preliminary examination of the blown jet engine shows evidence of "metal fatigue."

In a late night news conference, NTSB Chairman Robert Sumwalt said one of the engine's fan blades was separated and missing. Sumwalt says the blade was separated at the point where it would come into the hub and there was evidence of metal fatigue.

According to Sumwalt, part of the engine covering was found in Bernville, Pennsylvania, about 70 miles (112 kilometers) west of Philadelphia.

The plane's recorders have been secured.

Philadelphia Fire Commissioner Adam Thiel gave the following information.

- Firefighters responded to an engine fire and fuel leak around 11:10 a.m.

- A passenger was taken to the hospital in critical condition, where she later died.
- Seven other people were treated on scene for minor injuries.
- The scene was placed under control around 12:30 p.m.

Thiel lauded the passengers and crew for how they responded during the incident.

“It is our understanding that passengers onboard the aircraft, in addition to the flight crew and the cabin crew, did some pretty amazing things under very difficult circumstances,” said Thiel.

Southwest Airlines says there were 143 passengers and five crewmembers on board the flight.

“The entire Southwest Airlines Family is devastated and extends its deepest, heartfelt sympathy to the Customers, Employees, Family Members, and loved ones affected by this tragic event. We have activated our emergency response team and are deploying every resource to support those affected by this tragedy,” the airline said in a statement.

Southwest Airlines CEO Gary Kelly commended the flight crew for their “swift action” and thanked first responders and employees at the scene for helping the passengers and crew.

Boeing is also assisting in the investigation.

Mr. Marty Martinez, a passenger on the plane, posted a Facebook Live during the emergency landing.

“Flight attendants ran over calling for passengers to help cover the hole as they broke down and began uncontrollably crying and looking horrified as they looked outside. Plane dropped dramatically and it smelled like fire with ash coming down on everyone thru the vents. Absolutely terrifying, but we are okay,” Martinez wrote.

In an interview with CBSN, Martinez said an engine exploded and broke a window.

“First there was an explosion and almost immediately, the oxygen masks came down and, probably within a matter of 10 seconds, the engine then hit a window and busted it wide open,” said Martinez.

Martinez says a woman was critically injured.

“There was blood everywhere,” Martinez explained.

Martinez told CBSN that he thought it was his last few minutes alive when the plane was free-falling.

“We were probably going down for 10 or 15 minutes. And, of course, everyone is freaking out, everyone is crying. It was the scariest experience,” said Martinez.



An article by Brent Bozell and Tim Graham titled "Zeroing in on Facebook's Anti-Conservative Tilt" was posted at cnsnews.com on April 13, 2018. Following is the article.

Two days of congressional hearings with Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg underlined how American perceptions of media power are changing.

After 2012, Democrats and their media allies oozed over the way former President Barack Obama's brilliant strategists changed the face of campaigning through Facebook.

But in 2016, Donald Trump was elected, and Facebook became a malignant ghetto of "fake news" and inappropriate election manipulation.

Congress is justified in asking how Facebook's massive popularity could also lead to massive violations of privacy and, potentially, international manipulation in our political process.

But there is more to discuss, questions of bias and censorship that the left doesn't want to cover, and for good reason. It's guilty of that.

Several Republican senators underlined conservatives' fears about what Facebook is becoming now that it's under pressure from leftist elites to ban free speech.

Sen. Ben Sasse asked Zuckerberg how he defines "hate speech," noting that many young people find the First Amendment allows too much hurtful speech.

He couldn't really answer it. But in his opening statement, he insisted Facebook has to "make sure people aren't using it to hurt people or spread misinformation."

Sen. Ted Cruz zeroed in on the hard evidence of Facebook demonstrating a "pervasive pattern of political bias."

■ Gizmodo reported in 2016 that Facebook insiders revealed the social media giant kept major conservative stories like ones on Conservative Political Action Conference off its "trending" topics for readers.

■ Facebook shut down the "Chick-fil-A Appreciation Day page," blocked a post by Fox News reporter Todd Starnes, has blocked over two dozen Catholic pages.

■ Facebook recently declared the videos of pro-Trump black ladies known as Diamond and Silk "unsafe for the community."

To his credit, Zuckerberg replied, "I understand where that concern is coming from because Facebook and the tech industry are located in Silicon Valley, which is an extremely left-leaning place."

Just acknowledging that reality caused the liberals to tear their hair out.

But then Cruz asked whether Zuckerberg had ever heard of a Planned Parenthood page being taken down. No.

How about a MoveOn.org page? No.

Any Democratic candidate pages? No.

Nobody's aware of that happening. But we can suspect that Facebook's content police have an itchy trigger finger in identifying where conservatives "hurt people or spread misinformation."

Conservatives are used to the national media excluding our viewpoint or loading up a pundit panel with eight liberals and one marginal Republican. We're not going to be happy if the social media start hindering us from communicating with one another on what Zuckerberg claims is a "platform for all ideas."

Zuckerberg recently told the leftist blog Vox that Facebook plans to boost "broadly trusted news sources" like *The New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* (national media elites) as opposed to looking "down to blogs that may be on more of the fringe."

Would it be wrong to see ourselves in that "fringe"?

We are certainly not placing our trust in *The New York Times*. But the Facebook founder explained they would like to "help these news organizations, drive subscriptions."

For all of Zuckerberg's willingness to acknowledge the bias in Big Tech, he needs to acknowledge that conservatives have news outlets, too, like our CNSNews.com. Showing favoritism toward building the profits and influence of liberal media elites is taking sides, not offering a neutral forum for all.



An article by Robert Knight titled "A Black-Robed Counterrevolution" was posted at townhall.com on April 17, 2018. Following is the article.

Federal judges sit on the bench for life and can either uphold the law or rule like tyrants. This puts judicial appointments right near the top of the most important things a president can do.

The newest Supreme Court justice, Neil Gorsuch, has already shown what a difference a constitutionalist can make. But we need many more to counter the hundreds of Clinton, Obama and Jimmy Carter-appointed judges who issue zany rulings that override common sense and thwart democratically enacted popular will.

A case in point is U.S. District Judge Carlton Reeves, a 2010 Obama appointee. In March, he issued a temporary restraining order to keep Mississippi's new, 15-week abortion ban from taking effect.

Judge Reeves buys into the "viability" definition of human life beginning at 23 weeks. By contrast, science has confirmed that from the moment of conception, an entirely unique human being with DNA from mother and father is alive and growing exponentially. By the eighth week, the baby has a beating heart, arms,

legs, organs and human shape. The judge's ruling implies that babies before the 23rd week are something other than human, and so, practically speaking, ending their lives is no more consequential than getting rid of a mole or skin tag.

"If there is no viability the state has no real interest in telling a woman what to do with her body," the judge said, deploying the abortion industry's arbitrary rationale.

In 2014, Judge Reeves struck down Mississippi's marriage law, which voters had approved by 86 percent to 14 percent. Seeing nothing uniquely valuable in the male-female complementarity central to marriage, he likened resistance to racism. This would be news to black and Hispanic Mississippians who voted overwhelmingly to define marriage as between one man and one woman and reject any comparison to morally neutral racial characteristics.

Throughout his two terms, Barack Obama made good on his goal to stack the federal judiciary with leftwing ideologues like Judge Reeves. His 333 appointees (George W. Bush had 330, Bill Clinton 379 and Ronald Reagan 384), which included two Supreme Court justices, have been hard at work to "fundamentally transform" America.

One of the most dramatic turns was on the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals, which hears cases from nine federal district courts in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina and federal administrative agencies.

In 2007, Republican appointees held a 7-5 majority. After six Obama appointments plus retirements, Democratic appointees now dominate 9-7 and have made their presence felt.

For example, in April 2016, a three-judge Fourth Circuit panel with two Obama appointees ruled 2 to 1 against school officials in Gloucester County, Va. that a girl identifying as a boy could use boys' restrooms and the locker room.

Three months after the transgender ruling, a three-judge Fourth Circuit panel comprising two Obama appointees and a Clinton judge struck down North Carolina's voter ID law on a 3-0 vote, accusing lawmakers of discriminatory intent. The Left has long argued absurdly that requiring voters to show some ID when voting is "racist."

Another key Obama judicial takeover was at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, perhaps the second most influential court in the country because it hears cases involving federal power.

In 2008, conservatives had a 6-3 edge. Mr. Obama quickly made four appointments, flipping it to a 7-4 Democrat majority.

In June 2016, an Obama appointee and a Clinton appointee on a three-judge D.C. appeals panel upheld the Federal Communications Commission's power grab of the Internet in the name of "net neutrality."

The ruling was a reversal of the same court's opinion in 2010, when it ruled unanimously that Congress never gave the FCC jurisdiction over the Internet.

The good news is that President Trump understands the gravity of his opportunity.

In 2017, he seated 12 appeals court judges, the most ever in the first year of a presidency. So far, he has seated 30 judges, including Justice Gorsuch, with 61 nominees in the pipeline, another 90 vacancies on top of that, and a likely Supreme Court appointment looming.

By all accounts, the newly robed Trump judges are restoring balance to the federal courts, which alarms Democrats like California Sen. Dianne Feinstein, who explained the stakes last December:

“The Supreme Court hears between 100 and 150 cases each year out of the more than 7,000 it’s asked to review. But in 2015 alone, more than 55,000 cases were filed in federal appeals courts . . . In a way, circuit courts serve as the de facto Supreme Court to the vast majority of individuals who bring cases. They are the last word.”

When all is said and done, the last word on the Trump presidency may well be his counterrevolution to restore judicial integrity and the rule of law.



An article by Judge Andrew Napolitano titled “President Trump and the Attorney-Client Privilege” was posted at townhall.com on April 19, 2018. Following is the article.

A few weeks ago, President Donald Trump was an outwardly happy man because of the utterance of one solitary word from the lips of special counsel Robert Mueller to one of Trump’s lawyers. The word that thrilled the president and his legal team was “subject.”

It seems that Mueller and one of Trump’s lawyers had been negotiating the terms under which the president would submit to an informal interrogation by Mueller and his team of prosecutors and FBI agents. Mueller’s request for such an interview was not unusual.

Investigators are usually looking to trap an unwary potential defendant into lying to them—a crime in that environment, even though the potential defendant is not under oath—or unwittingly admitting to them an allegation for which they need proof.

The potential defendant often believes—foolishly, as history has shown—he can actually talk the investigators out of indicting him.

In preparation for this type of interview, the government often tells the lawyer for the person being interviewed whether that person is a witness, a subject or a target.

■ A witness is a person whose knowledge and memory the government wishes to examine.

■ A subject is a person whose behavior is under criminal investigation. A target is a person whom the government plans to indict.

When Trump and his team learned that he was just a subject and not a target, they rejoiced. And then, in a series of bizarre events, all hell broke loose, and his joy turned to gloom. Here is what happened.

In the course of its continuing investigation of Trump, Mueller's team came across evidence of criminal behavior on the part of Michael Cohen, Trump's longtime New York City lawyer. Because the evidence was related to activities that took place in New York City, Mueller sent the evidence to the chief federal prosecutor in Manhattan.

After a team of federal prosecutors there examined whatever Mueller brought them, in conjunction with what they already knew about Cohen, they applied to a federal judge for search warrants of venues where they believed Cohen kept files of his work. The search warrants were executed simultaneously at 5:30 in the morning two Mondays ago.

Cohen's lawyers then filed a motion that asked a federal judge to prevent the federal prosecutors in Manhattan from examining what the FBI seized—enough to fill a small pickup truck—arguing that it was Cohen's records of the legal work he had performed for his clients and thus was protected by the attorney-client privilege.

In opposition to Cohen's motion, federal prosecutors argued that Cohen and Trump have engaged in behavior together that may have been criminal or fraudulent and that they used the attorney-client privilege to mask their communications.

The federal prosecutors also argued that Cohen was not truly performing legal work for Trump; rather, they said, he was a fixer of Trump's image and a trickster to Trump's adversaries.

Then they revealed that the source of their purported knowledge of the Trump-Cohen relationship was surveillance of Cohen, whose telephone calls, emails and text messages the feds had been capturing for months.

That means that federal prosecutors have overheard the president of the United States in telephone conversations he believed were protected by privilege, in which he was talking to a man under criminal investigation who he has said was his lawyer.

When all this came to a head this past Monday in the federal courtroom of Judge Kimba Wood, she confronted a legally unusual situation. Trump's lawyers demanded that everything seized from Cohen be turned over to Trump because he was and is—as far as Trump knew—Cohen's sole client.

Cohen claimed he has three clients, and he demanded that all that was seized be examined by a neutral special master to determine what is privileged and what is not. The prosecutors demanded that they have access to all that was seized, because the seizure had already been approved by another federal judge when he signed the search warrants that triggered the FBI's seizures.

Judge Wood ordered the FBI to copy all that was seized and send copies to lawyers for Trump and for Cohen and to federal prosecutors; and then the lawyers can argue to the court what is privileged and what is fair game for the prosecutors' use.

In the course of those arguments, federal prosecutors will see what was seized, whether privileged or not.

- The attorney-client privilege protects from scrutiny or revelation the confidential communications of a client to his lawyer that are integral to the lawyer's legal work for the client.

- The privilege does not apply to casual conversations between client and lawyer or if the lawyer is doing nonlegal work or if the client is committing a crime, a fraud, a tort or a regulatory violation and is consulting the lawyer about that.

Now we have a very perilous situation for the president. Records of whatever work Michael Cohen has been doing for him in the past 10 years will soon be in the custody of federal prosecutors who expect it to be evidence of wrongdoing on the part of the president himself.

These are the best federal prosecutors in the country. They are civil service-protected and can only be fired for cause, and they have been listening to the president's phone calls to his confidant and "fixer" and will soon see the fixer's files.

Has Trump been in cahoots with a bad guy as federal prosecutors have alleged?

Is this prosecutorial team in Manhattan more dangerous to Donald Trump than Mueller and his crew in Washington?

Was evidence about Trump the real goal of those early-morning FBI raids?

Is the president no longer just a subject and now a target of a new team of federal prosecutors?

Who can safely confide in a lawyer after this?



An article by Ross A. Lincoln titled "Rachel Maddow Raises 'Wag the Dog' Possibilities As Trump Orders Syria Strike" was posted at thewrap.com on April 13, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

Minutes after Donald Trump's announced U.S. military airstrikes in Syria, Rachel Maddow said on her MSNBC show that no matter how the decision was made, the timing has the appearance of a "wag the dog" situation.

"There are national security consequences to having a presidency that is as chaotic as Mr. Trump's presidency, that is as consumed by scandal and criminal intrigue as his presidency is," Maddow said Friday night, referring to spe-

cial counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation and the FBI raid on Trump attorney Michael Cohen, among other things.

According to Maddow, enemies and allies alike may believe that Trump "issued the order to launch this strike tonight, even in part, because... he wanted to distract from a catastrophic domestic scandal that is blowing up at home at the same time."

In 1998, critics accused President Bill Clinton of using the bombing of the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical factory in Sudan to distract from his sex scandal involving White House intern Monica Lewinsky. News of the Clinton scandal broke just a month after the release of the film "Wag the Dog," about Hollywood insiders who stage a war to distract from a presidential sex scandal.



An article by Paul Bedard titled "List: Obama's 29 Scandals and the Media's Campaign to Hide Them" was posted at washingtonexaminer.com on April 16, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

Was former President Obama the "scandal free," top 10 greatest president he claimed to be as he exited the White House?

To his aides and most in the media, the answer has been a hearty "yes."

The View's Joy Behar said, "President Obama, for eight years, was completely scandal-free." NBC's Tom Brokaw said, "He's been scandal free, frankly, in the White House. We haven't had that what for a while."

But now, to counter that legacy campaign, biographer Matt Margolis has penned a book detailing some 29 "scandals" under Obama in, "The Scandalous Presidency of Barack Obama."

It reviews some of the bigger affairs, such as the Benghazi attacks, and littler ones, like his stonewalling of the media, in an effort to chip away at Obama's stain-free legacy.

And it also details the ways the media sometimes played along—or played dead—in a pattern that has been flipped in the coverage of President Trump.

"Obama's supporters in the media, academia, and the grassroots of the Democratic Party are invested in the idea that his presidency was an unparalleled success, and that he was the archetype of presidential ethics. Nothing could be further from the truth, as the following pages prove, but if they repeat their lies often enough, perhaps others will believe them," wrote Margolis.

He also hopes that it keeps a focus on Obama's administration and its effort to help 2016 Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Asked to list the worst scandal under Obama, Margolis told Secrets, "There are many serious scandals, and therefore it's hard to say which is the biggest scandal, but I believe Obama's spying on the Trump campaign, which is starting to be fully unraveled now, will likely prove to be one of the biggest."

But the media is also his target, said the the co-author of the critical best-seller, *The Worst President in History: The Legacy of Barack Obama*. "The purpose of the free press is to hold our elected leaders accountable, but they were asleep at the wheel during Obama's two terms. Had they done their job during the Obama years, perhaps presidential historians and 'experts' wouldn't be ranking Obama as a top-tier president," he said.

"Many of Obama's scandals covered in my book make Watergate look like a high school prank gone wrong by comparison. Yet, last year, the state of Illinois honored Obama by making his birthday a state holiday. Can you imagine if California had made Richard Nixon's birthday a state holiday after he resigned from the presidency?" he added.

His publisher is Bombardier Books which also just published *Fraud and Fiction: The Real Truth Behind Fire and Fury*, from the Examiner's Eddie Scarry. It shredded the anti-Trump book from Michael Wolff that was gobbled up by the mainstream media.

With that book, Margolis said the media is continuing with its history of treating Democratic and Republican presidents differently.

"The same people who treat Michael Wolff's *Fire and Fury* as gospel despite it being discredited garbage are the same people who continue to dismiss Obama's real scandals as much ado about nothing. If Donald Trump abuses his authority while in office he should be held accountable, but how can we have an honest conversation about corruption in government if we don't hold our leaders to the same standards regardless of party?" he said.



An article by Leah Barkoukis titled "Former MSNBC Host Opens Up About What He Believes is the Real Reason the Network Fired Him" was posted at townhall.com on April 17, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

Former MSNBC host Ed Schultz opened up in a recent interview about why he believes he was fired in 2015.

Schultz, who's now anchor of a show on RT, told *National Review's* Jamie Weinstein that he believes it was because he supported Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), which was problematic, he charged, because the network was "in the tank for Hillary Clinton."

He described how MSNBC chief Phil Griffin was a "watchdog" who closely managed which stories were covered, and relayed one incident where his story about Sanders's launch of his campaign was bumped in favor of other news.

Sanders gave his official campaign launch speech in Burlington, Vermont on May 26, 2015, and Schultz said he was the only cable news host planning to air it live. He had also taped an interview with Sanders at the lawmaker's home ahead of the speech.

However, he said Griffin called him five minutes before air time at 5 p.m. EST, and he said, "You're not covering this."

"It got rather contentious," Schultz said.

"I think the Clintons were connected to [NBC News chief] Andy Lack, connected at the hip," Schultz said. "I think that they didn't want anybody in their primetime or anywhere in their lineup supporting Bernie Sanders. I think that they were in the tank for Hillary Clinton, and I think that it was managed, and 45 days later I was out at MSNBC."

"I thought it stunk," he continued.

"The Ed Show," which ran from 2009 to 2015, was canceled in July—the same week the network spiked two other programs, "The Cycle" and "Now With Alex Wagner."

Schultz said he's very happy at RT, the Russian state-run network he joined in January of 2016.

"I'm doing real journalism. It's not opinion," he said.

"There was more oversight and more direction given to me on content at MSNBC than there ever has been here at RT," he added. "I think that it's very sad that story is not getting out."



An article by Madison Park titled "What Cities and States are Doing About Guns Since the Parkland Shooting" was posted at cnn.com on April 11, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

Local and state lawmakers aren't holding their breath waiting for the federal government to take action on guns.

Several cities and states have taken matters into their own hands since the February 14 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, from raising the age limit for owning guns, banning bump stocks or increasing gun restrictions for people convicted of domestic abuse.

Here are some highlights.

■ Deerfield, Illinois

Officials in Deerfield, Illinois, passed an ordinance that not only bans assault weapons, but will penalize residents who don't forfeit or secure weapons that fall under the ban by June 13.

They could be charged from \$200 to \$1,000 a day as a penalty, according to the new rule in the Chicago suburb that passed April 2. The ordinance makes specific reference to recent mass shootings in Parkland, Florida; Las Vegas; and Sutherland Springs, Texas. And it passed with the aim of increasing the “public’s sense of safety.”

But gun advocates call the measure “draconian” and groups have filed a lawsuit against it.

■ Florida

Florida Gov. Rick Scott signed a bill named after Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in March that tightens gun control in several ways and also includes a provision that would allow some teachers to be armed.

It raised the minimum age to purchase a firearm to 21, required a three-day waiting period for firearm purchases and banned the sale or possession of bump fire stocks.

The National Rifle Association immediately filed a federal lawsuit against Florida, saying the age-minimum section of the law violates the Second and 14th amendments of the US Constitution.

The new law also allows law enforcement officers to ask the court to temporarily prohibit someone from possessing or buying firearms.

■ Lincoln, Nebraska

The Lincoln City Council voted unanimously on an ordinance to ban bump stocks in March, reported CNN affiliate KOLN.

(A bump stock device fits on a semi-automatic rifle to increase the firing speed.)

The ordinance bans the sale and ownership of the gun accessory that makes it easier to fire rounds quickly from a semi-automatic weapon, mimicking automatic fire.

The device was used by the gunman in Las Vegas who killed 58 people, the deadliest mass shooting in modern American history.

■ New Jersey

New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy signed an executive order on April 6 calling for key information related to gun offenses to be made available to the public.

The state will issue quarterly reports on where guns used in crimes had come from, identifying their state of origin. More than 80% of the guns used in crimes committed in New Jersey come from outside the state, according to the New Jersey’s Office of the Attorney General.

Murphy said in a statement the new tool “will allow residents to see how gun violence impacts their communities and gain a fuller understanding of how firearms are trafficked into New Jersey from other states.”

The New Jersey State Police will release monthly reports on gun crimes, including the offense committed, the type of gun used, number of people shot and where it happened.

New Jersey is ranked second as having the strongest gun laws in the United States by the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence. California ranked first.

■ New York

People convicted of domestic abuse in New York will now have to turn over all firearms, not just handguns. A news release from New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo in March said the legislation amends state law passed after the Sandy Hook killings that previously prohibited domestic abusers from owning pistols and revolvers.

The changes in the law included adding a list of serious misdemeanors.

Cuomo said the state wants its laws to prevent dangerous people from getting weapons.

■ Oregon

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown signed a bill in March to prevent convicted stalkers and domestic violence offenders from buying and keeping guns.

The law is intended to close what was known as the “boyfriend loophole” in the state’s gun law that had allowed convicted domestic abusers and stalkers to buy firearms if they weren’t married to the victim. The law expands that to intimate partners, according to CNN affiliate KOIN.

■ Rhode Island

Weeks after the massacre at the Parkland high school, Rhode Island Gov. Gina Raimondo signed an executive order in February, creating a statewide “red flag” policy to keep guns out of the hands of people who could pose a danger to themselves and others.

Rhode Island became the sixth state, joining Connecticut (enacted in 1999), Indiana (2005), California (2014), Washington (2016), and Oregon (2017), although the laws vary state to state.

It allows law enforcement to consider “red flags” such as recent threats of violence, including those made in person or on social media, and allows them to consider all legal steps to remove the guns from the person posing a threat.

Raimondo is part of a coalition to combat gun violence that was formed by four Democratic governors from the Northeast in February in the aftermath of the Parkland shooting.

■ Vermont

Vermont Gov. Phil Scott signed sweeping gun control measures that ban bump stocks, limit rifle magazines to 10 rounds, require all gun transactions to be facilitated by a licensed dealer and raise the purchase age to 21.

Residents will be permitted to keep larger-capacity magazines they already own.

Scott, a Republican who called himself a Second Amendment supporter, signed the bill in April.

The legislation makes exceptions for law enforcement and the military and those who have taken gun safety courses. The bill was opposed by gun rights supporters who held a large protest in Montpelier in early April in which they handed out free rifle magazines, capable of holding 30 rounds of ammunition.

■ Washington

Bump stocks will be illegal in Washington state, starting July 2019. From that date, police will be able to seize them.

Gov. Jay Inslee signed a bill in March making it a crime to manufacture or sell the device starting this July. A year later, it will be illegal to buy, own, furnish, assemble, repair, loan, transport or possess bump stocks in the state.

The Washington State Patrol is creating a bump stock buyback program for \$150 per device.

■ Meanwhile, on the federal level

In March, Congress passed a \$1.3 trillion spending package that includes a bill that incentivizes state and federal authorities to report more data to the country's gun background check system.

President Donald Trump announced in March that his administration will issue a rule banning bump stocks.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced that the Justice Department would clarify rules that define bump stocks within the definition of "machine gun" under federal law, a move that would ban the sale of such accessories.

The public comment period is open until June 27.



"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 Patti Domm titled "\$3 Gasoline is Coming Soon As Demand Jumps and Crude Oil Prices Rise" was posted at cnbc.com on April 18, 2018.

Illegal immigration

■ An article by Leah Barkoukis titled "More California Cities Fight Back Against State's Sanctuary Law" was posted at townhall.com on April 13, 2018.

- An article by Melanie Arter titled "Jerry Brown Supports Letting National Guard Stop Drug Smugglers, Not Illegal Aliens" was posted at cnsnews.com on April 17, 2018.
- An article titled "The Supreme Court Just Handed the Trump Administration a Loss on Immigration—and Gorsuch was the Tiebreaking Vote" was posted at businessinsider.com on April 17, 2018.

Comments about weapons

- An article by Jen Kirby titled "National School Walkout on April 20 Kicks Off the Next Wave of Gun Control Activism" was posted at vox.com on April 19, 2018.
- An article by Tristan Justice titled "Conservative Parkland Survivor to Host Livestream to Counter Gun Control Walkout" was posted at washingtonexaminer.com on April 19, 2018.

Comments about Trump support

- An article by Katie Pavlich titled "James Comey and Loretta Lynch Snipe at Each Other Over Who's Telling the Truth" was posted at townhall.com on April 16, 2018.

Comments about Trump opposition

- An article by Tim Morris titled "Ann Coulter Says She's Now a 'Former Trumper' " was posted at nola.com on April 2, 2018.
- An article by Katie Pavlich titled "Comey Didn't Tell Trump the Infamous Dossier was Financed by Hillary Clinton" was posted at townhall.com on April 13, 2018.
- An article by Leah Barkoukis titled "Now Comey's Hitting the Late Shows to Mock Trump" was posted at townhall.com on April 18, 2018.
- An article by Leah Barkoukis titled "Booker Demands Pompeo Answer Questions About Homosexuality As a Perversion" was posted at townhall.com on April 13, 2018.
- An article by Patrick Goodenough titled "CAIR Thanks Booker for Challenging Pompeo on Islam; Doesn't Mention Exchange on Homosexuality" was posted at cnsnews.com on April 13, 2018.
- An article by Michael W. Chapman titled "FBI's McCabe to DOJ: 'Are You Telling Me That I Need to Shut Down' the Clinton Foundation Case?" was posted at cnsnews.com on April 17, 2018.

News about the media

- An article by Michael W. Chapman titled "New Report: How Social Media Giants Facebook, Twitter, YouTube Suppresses Conservative Speech" was posted at cnsnews.com on April 16, 2018.
- A Reuters article by Brendan Pierson, Karen Freifeld and Jonathan Stempel titled "Fox's Hannity Revealed As Mystery Client of Trump's Personal Lawyer" was posted at reuters.com on April 16, 2018.

■ A Reuters article by Jessica Toonkel titled “Fox News Pledges Full Support of TV Host Hannity” was posted at reuters.com on April 17, 2018.

General interest

■ A video and an article by Matthew Hutson titled “Watch Artificial Intelligence Create a 3D Model of a Person—From Just a Few Seconds of Video” were posted at sciencemag.org on April 13, 2018.

■ An article by Timothy Meads titled “Environmentalists Burn Himself to Death to Protest Fossil Fuels” was posted at townhall.com on April 14, 2018.

■ An article titled “200 Million Eggs Recalled Over Salmonella Fears” was posted at usatoday.com on April 14, 2018.

■ An article by Mary Shanklin titled “8,000 Inquire About 201 Apartments As Central Florida Officials Seek Affordable Housing Options” was posted at orlandosentinel.com on April 14, 2018.

■ An article by Peggy Fox titled “Washington, D.C. May Allow 16-Year-Olds to Vote for President in the 2020 Election” was posted at usatoday.com on April 17, 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.”