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| --- |
| Jihad Report Jan 06, 2018 -Jan 12, 2018 |
| Attacks | **29** |
| Killed | **215** |
| Injured | **198** |
| Suicide Blasts | **4** |
| Countries | **12** |

**Facebook Begins Open Censoring of Posts**

In a move that is set to infuriate news organizations that are not deemed "trustworthy", Facebook is set to introduce "sweeping changes" to its newsfeed as early as next week, prioritizing trustworthy sites and removing "clickbait" and low quality news publishers, while promoting posts from friends and family, the [WSJ reports](https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-considers-prioritizing-trustworthy-news-sources-in-feed-1515714244).

Under its new approach, Facebook would evaluate parameters such as public polling about news outlets, and whether readers are willing to pay for news from particular publishers. Such variables would inform its algorithm that determines which publishers’ posts are pushed higher in the feed, one of the people said.

**It is not known how Facebook will decide which publications are deemed trustworthy.**

The move would thrust Facebook into an even more active role in deciding what content is acceptable on its site, **in other words censoring content it deems inappropriate while promoting news outlets that are ideologically aligned with the organization.**

While the WSJ writes that Facebook hasn’t decided whether to proceed with the shift, and it may choose not to do so, the [FT disagrees](https://www.ft.com/content/69551254-f727-11e7-88f7-5465a6ce1a00)and reports that the world’s largest social network will unveil the change imminently, according to people briefed on the plans, hoping to differentiate between salacious content and quality news. "Zuckerberg has finally realized that not all news is equal," said one publisher - clearly on the promoted sight of "equal" - briefed on the plans.

While Facebook will try to make the newsfeed a place for personal sharing and in-depth discussions - similar to Snapchat - and move other content from pages and publishers to a separate space within the app, the move is widely expected to infuriate news organizations which are not deemed trustworthy or high quality by the site.

Meanwhile, the change to the algorithm is sure to have a dramatic impact - whether positive or negative - on the revenue of virtually all news organization who now rely almost exclusively on facebook for inbound traffic referral.

Publishers have become increasingly reliant on Facebook as more and more news is consumed on the app. They may see traffic drop if they are moved to an area of the app which users end up not visiting.

Why now? The dramatic change comes after Mark Zuckerberg set a goal for the year to focus on fixing the important issues about Facebook’s role in the world.

“Facebook has a lot of work to do — whether it’s protecting our community from abuse and hate, defending against interference by nation states, or making sure that time spent on Facebook is time well spent,” he wrote in a post on Facebook.

While the transformation is seen as an attempt to increase trust in the social app, which has suffered from a reputation for fake news since the 2016 US presidential election, it will likely backfire: in December, FaceBook ditched its first attempt at soft censorship when it [removed its "fake news flag](https://www.zerohedge.com/news/2017-12-22/facebook-ditches-its-fake-news-flag-after-realizing-people-shared-flagged-articles-e)" when it found that people shared the flagged articles even more.

Ironically, the newsfeed overhaul is also said to be "an attempt to encourage more sharing and personal connecting, amid a backlash with many people worrying about social media sucking up time and damaging users’ mental health" according to the FT.

In reality, it will only succeed in further alienating an already deeply polarized American population.

Yet while it remains to be seen what impact on Facebook, or Zuckerberg's 2020 presidential ambitions, this latest foray into censorship has, the biggest losers are clear.

Last year, the company tested separating friends and family posts from those posted by businesses and publishers. It created a tab called “Explore” for those other posts in six countries including Sri Lanka, Slovakia and Cambodia. What happened next? **Publishers in those countries complained that traffic fell dramatically.**

At the time, Adam Mosseri, head of newsfeed, said Facebook currently had no plans to roll this test out further in other countries and said it was unfortunate that some had "mistakenly made that interpretation." It now appears that this "test" is about to applied to everyone.

**The Hawaii Nuke Attack**

HONOLULU (HawaiiNewsNow) -

A false ballistic missile threat alert was sent to all cell phones in Hawaii on Saturday morning, [sending the state's 1.4 million residents and hundreds of thousands of visitors into a panic](http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/37259815/biggest-fright-of-my-life-many-scramble-for-shelter-after-false-alarm-missile-warning) for more than 30 minutes until emergency officials confirmed the message was sent in error.

### Additional Links

####  [WATCH: Ige says false missile threat alarm was result of someone pushing wrong button](http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/37260138/watch-gov-david-ige-on-what-triggered-ballistic-missile-false-alarm)

####  [Lawmakers demand answers on false missile alarm and state's response](http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/37260017/lawmakers-demand-answers-on-states-response-to-false-missile-threat)

####  [Fear. Alarm. And tears. For 38 minutes, Hawaii thought it was under attack](http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/37259815/biggest-fright-of-my-life-many-scramble-for-shelter-after-false-alarm-missile-warning)

####  [TIMELINE: False ballistic missile warning sends Hawaii into panic](http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/37260030/timeline-false-ballistic-missile-warning-sends-hawaii-into-panic)

####  [If a missile attack on Hawaii was actually real, here's what you should do](http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/36426106/if-nkorea-attacks-hawaii-youll-have-minutes-to-prepare-heres-what-the-state-wants-you-to-do)

The cause of the false alarm? A state emergency management employee apparently [pushed the wrong button](http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/37260138/watch-gov-david-ige-on-what-triggered-ballistic-missile-false-alarm).

"I know firsthand that what happened today is totally unacceptable, and many in our community were deeply affect by this," Gov. David Ige said, at a news conference at the Hawaii Emergency Management agency on Saturday afternoon.

"I'm sorry for that pain and confusion that anyone might have experienced. I, too, am very angry and disappointed that this happened."

While city and military officials took to social media within 15 minutes to quell fears and say the message was sent in error, it took state emergency management — which sent out the message in the first place — 38 minutes to send out a "false alarm" alert to cell phones using the same mechanism that distributed the emergency warning in the first place.

"It's totally unacceptable," said U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii. "There was anxiety across the state and it was terrifying. There was a lot of unnecessary pain and anxiety. It's important to have accountability at the state level and the emergency management level in terms of what exactly what went wrong."

Ige and the head of Hawaii's Emergency Management agency, Vern Miyagi, told Hawaii News Now on Saturday morning that the false alert was the result of human error — and boiled down to a state emergency management employee clicking the wrong message during a shift change.

"We did make the determination that it was a false alarm. The alarm was sent out in error, and we know that the procedure in a shift change had been followed, and a human error sent out the false alarm," Ige told Hawaii News Now.

"We then went through our process to correct that and send out a notification that the alert was in error."

Miyagi added, "This is regrettable. This won't happen again."

The governor has scheduled a 1 p.m. news conference with emergency management officials to release additional details.

According to Buzzfeed, the White House said in a statement that, "The President has been briefed on the state of Hawaii's emergency management exercise. This was purely a state exercise."

The state has confirmed the alert was an error, not an exercise, however.

Meanwhile, the FCC said it was launching a "full investigation into the false emergency alert" sent to Hawaii residents

**Texas Flash Boom**

A mysterious “boom” rattled a North Texas neighborhood and residents have no idea what exactly it was or what it could mean.

Residents in North Oak Cliff said they heard an explosive noise around 8:34 p.m. on Wednesday night. Some reported seeing a flash first, then the loud noise.

Resident Isaac Martinez managed to capture a short video of the event from his security cameras.

“Out of nowhere, just this pow!” said Phillip Washington, who heard the noise from his Kings Highway apartment. “Just this huge explosion.”

Washington was one of many who reported hearing the noise.

“It was without a doubt, the loudest sound that I’ve heard,” said Washington. “You could feel the percussion of the sound.”

Some suspected fireworks or gunfire. A few thought the noise was a bad car wreck.

Others figured a transformer blew up, but no one reported any power outages in the area.

“It was immediately apparent that something had fallen from the sky,” said Ron DiIulio, an astronomer at the University of North Texas.

DiIulio said the noise was from a sonic boom caused by either a meteorite or some sort of space debris.

“As it’s coming in, it explodes. But as it’s exploding it’s also passing the speed of sound. So that’s what we’re get as it comes in,” said DiIulio.

He said hundreds of tons of meteorites fall every day.

DiIulio said most burn up quickly or are rarely caught on camera.

From what he saw captured in the video, DiIulio estimates whatever entered the Earth’s atmosphere was about the size of a grapefruit.

“They should just consider themselves lucky that they got an experience in life that a lot of people don’t,” said DiIulio. “A true shooting star.”

Having never experienced a fall himself, DiIulio is pretty jealous and hopes folks like Washington made a wish.

“I know! Why didn’t I do that?” said Washington. “I should have wished for something man!”

**Zuma Disappears**

The top-secret satellite known only by a code name, “Zuma,” was a mystery from the start. Its classified mission was intentionally inscrutable, whether to detect missile launches, spy on adversaries or track ships at sea with a space radar.

The satellite was so highly secretive that it was not publicly released which government agency — The National Reconnaissance Office? The CIA? — was responsible for it. During the launch on the evening of Jan. 7, SpaceX cut short its webcast so that it wouldn’t reveal details of where the satellite was going or what it looked like.

Now there’s another mystery: What happened to Zuma?

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After reports Monday that the satellite suffered some sort of failure, SpaceX rushed to defend its reputation, denying that it had done anything wrong. Its Falcon 9 rocket “performed nominally,” it said.

Then, on Tuesday morning, SpaceX President Gwynne Shotwell issued a more strongly worded statement, saying: “For clarity: after review of all data to date, Falcon 9 did everything correctly on Sunday night. If we or others find otherwise based on further review, we will report it immediately.”

In this image made with an eight-minute-long exposure, the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket launches and lands as seen from the Ocean Club Marina in Port Canaveral, Fla., on Jan. 7. (Malcolm Denemark/AP)

Shotwell pushed back on reports that seemed to implicate SpaceX with the satellite’s demise, saying “information published that is contrary to this statement is categorically false.”

*[*[*The mystery behind the fate of a top-secret satellite comes at the height of one of Elon Musk’s biggest rivalries*](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2018/01/09/the-mystery-behind-the-fate-of-a-top-secret-satellite-comes-at-the-height-of-one-of-elon-musks-biggest-rivalries/)*]*

Northrop Grumman, the satellite’s manufacturer, said it could not comment on a classified mission. As members of Congress began requesting classified briefings about what, if anything, went wrong, Pentagon officials were also mum.

ADVERTISING

For SpaceX, the stakes are especially high — not just because a valuable national security asset valued at hundreds of millions of dollars, or more, that it was hired to launch was possibly lost. It had fought so hard for the right to compete for national security launches. After a bitter legal and lobbying battle, the Pentagon certified SpaceX’s Falcon 9 for the missions and now is relying on SpaceX to reliably fly its satellites to orbit.

Furthermore, NASA is counting on Elon Musk’s company to fly astronauts to the International Space Station, with test flights as early as this year.

U.S. Rep. John Garamendi (D-Calif.), who said he received a “preliminary briefing,” had two concerns about the possible loss of the satellite.

“One is the loss of the intelligence that would have been available,” he said. “The second concern is the reliability of the delivery systems. And that issue is being debated between the contractors, SpaceX and the satellite manufacturer, Northrop.”

While he said he did not know who was to blame, he indicated that the dispute might lead to litigation. “Those two companies are going to have a long and, I suspect, very expensive discussion,” he said.

SpaceX’s resolve and relentless drive were unchanged by the mystery surrounding Zuma (which included the possibility that nothing went wrong and that the satellite was, indeed, in orbit). Last year, the company launched 18 times successfully, a record for SpaceX. This year, it plans to break that record, continuing its disruption of an industry Musk first targeted when he founded SpaceX in 2002.

As critics were quick to call SpaceX’s reliability into question, the company rolled its new powerful rocket, the Falcon Heavy, onto the same launchpad at the Kennedy Space Center that hoisted the Apollo astronauts to the moon. An engine test fire had been postponed earlier in the week and was scheduled for Saturday afternoon.Despite the Zuma mystery, SpaceXvowed to continue with its manifest without delay.

That in itself was a statement: “They’re not going to launch again if they think there’s a chance it was their fault,” said Todd Harrison, a defense analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Matt Desch, the chief executive of Iridium, a communications satellite company that is one of SpaceX’s biggest customers, said in an interview that he “absolutely” had full confidence in SpaceX and that he had no qualms about proceeding with the four launches Iridium has on the Falcon 9 this year.

“We’re moving forward with plans for our next launch,” he said. “I know there are people who would love SpaceX to be taken down a few notches. And I’d be glad to hold them accountable for things they should be held accountable for. But this isn’t one. I believe they weren’t really responsible.”

Meanwhile, SpaceX’s chief rival made a statement of its own on Friday. After a couple-day delay, the United Launch Alliance, the joint venture of Lockheed Martin and Boeing, launched a Delta IV rocket carrying a classified satellite for the National Reconnaissance Office from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

After a successful liftoff, the rocket was traveling at Mach 1, the speed of sound, within 49 seconds, as it burned through propellant at a rate of 1,950 pounds per second.

“Delta is ripping the sky at incredible speed,” Tory Bruno, the United Launch Alliance’s chief executive, wrote on Twitter.

‘What an incredible way to start off 2018’

On Jan. 7, the SpaceX launch appeared to go smoothly. The company cheered a successful liftoff and then the touchdown of its first-stage booster back on land so that it could be flown again, a practice designed to lower the cost of spaceflight.

Musk on Monday tweeted a long-exposure picture of the launch showing its fiery trail to space — and then the return of the booster,which has become routine for the company.

The Air Force’s 45th Space Wing congratulated SpaceX in a tweet: “What an incredible way to start off 2018 w/the world’s 1st successful launch and landing of this year!”

The launch was an important one for the California-based company founded nearly 16 years ago. Since its early days, Musk has waged war against the traditional contractors, namely the United Launch Alliance, in an attempt to compete for national security launch contracts, generally worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

For years, Musk proclaimed that SpaceX could save taxpayers millions by offering the Pentagon launches for far less than its rival. Meanwhile, the United Launch Alliance maintained that responsibility for vital national security satellites that cost hundreds of millions should not be decided on just price.

More than 10 years ago, even before it had flown a rocket to space successfully, SpaceX sued Boeing and Lockheed Martin in an attempt to block the formation of the United Launch Alliance, which it said was using “strong-armed tactics to demand that the Air Force grant them exclusive long-term contracts.” But SpaceX was derided as an “ankle biter” by its competitors, and the lawsuit went nowhere.

In 2014, SpaceX sued again in an attempt to end the nearly decade-long monopoly the United Launch Alliance held on national security launches, arguing that it should be able to compete for the launch contracts. By that point, SpaceX had been flying its Falcon 9 rocket successfully, and the Air Force settled the case with SpaceX, eventually granting it the certification required for it to compete.

Under mounting pressure from SpaceX, Bruno vowed to “literally transform” the company to compete — and he also continued to champion the firm’s track record of more than 100 successful launches in a row.

Since the contracts became competitively bid, SpaceX has won two of three contests.

‘Space is a risky business’

But it has also had its setbacks. In 2015, a Falcon 9 rocket blew up while carrying cargo to the space station. Then, in 2016, another rocket exploded while being fueled ahead of an engine test. No one was hurt in either explosion, but the payloads, worth millions of dollars, were lost.

In both cases, the company was grounded while it investigated the cause of the problems. As of now, SpaceX is moving ahead with its launch manifest.

“Since the data reviewed so far indicates that no design, operational or other changes are needed, we do not anticipate any impact on the upcoming launch schedule,” Shotwell said.

As for Zuma’s fate, little is known.

This week, members of Congress began receiving briefings but were tight-lipped about the classified sessions.

U.S. Rep. Mike D. Rogers (R-Ala.), chairman of the House Armed Services strategic forces subcommittee, said in a statement that while he couldn’t comment on classified matters, “space is a risky business.” He said his committee would provide “rigorous oversight that accounts for that risk and ensures that we can meet all of our national security space requirements as the Air Force looks to competitively procure space launch services in the future.”

Harrison, the defense analyst, said that SpaceX is in a frustrating position because it is limited in what it can say publicly about what happened.

“It’s a particular nightmare if nothing went wrong on their part and they can’t prove it because of the classified nature of the mission,” he said

**Wonder Woman Better than Captain America**

When I was a kid, I always liked Captain America. When the movies depicted him, I liked the scripts even better than the comics. But, when the actor that plays Captain America began to insult America, rather than the evil that walks with impunity through the land taking whatever it wants and killing those in its way, I lost my enthusiasm.

Now, when Wonder Woman came on the scene, I hoped for something more in line with what we hold as the highest ideals in humanity. That all men and women are free. That one person cannot own another, against their will. That children are sacred. That women should not be oppressed by men. Guess what? My hope is alive.

Actress and Wonder Woman star Gal Gadot made an impassioned call for unity and equality while accepting the special #SeeHer award at Thursday night’s Critics’ Choice Awards in Santa Monica, California.

Gadot, accepting the award from her friend and Wonder Woman director Patty Jenkins, vowed never to be “silenced” and said there was still much progress to be accomplished to ensure equality in Hollywood and society.

The 32-year-old actress said that throughout her career, she had always wanted to portray a “strong and independent woman,” and had finally found that role in superhero Diana Prince.

“All of these qualities I looked for, I found in her: she’s full of heart, strength, compassion, and forgiveness. She sees wrong that must be made right,” Gadot said. “She takes action when everyone around her is idle. She commands the attention of the world, and in doing do, sets a positive example for humanity.”

Gadot added that when she began her career, there were very few female-led films, and even fewer female directors.

“This year, three of the top-grossing films were female-led, and one of them was directed by my wonderful Patty Jenkins,” Gadot said to loud applause. “There were eight other films in the top 100 which were directed by females. Although this is progress, there is still a long way to go.”

The actress concluded by saying that as artists, she believes it’s “not only our job to entertain, but our duty to inspire and educate for love and respect.”

“In the past weeks and months, we’ve been witnessing a movement in our industry and society, and I want to share this award with all the women and men who stand for what’s right, standing for those who can’t stand or speak for themselves,” she said. “My promise and commitment to all of you is that I will never be silenced, and we will continue to band together to make strides, uniting for equality.”

Wonder Woman stormed the box office upon its release in June, amassing a domestic haul of $412 million on its way to an $821 million worldwide gross, making the film one of the most successful of the year.

Both Gadot and Jenkins have reportedly already signed on for a sequel. By the way, let’s not forget another great female director, Mimi Leder who made the phenomenal movie, *Deep Impact.* The message was mighty, and the reality was powerful, and the directing was off the charts fantastic.

The actress’s acceptance speech comes as Hollywood has been rocked by an ongoing sexual misconduct scandal that has seen more than 100 prominent men in the industry accused of misconduct.

Actresses attending Sunday night’s Golden Globes wore all black on the red carpet as a statement of solidarity with victims of sexual assault. Well almost all black. Theire breasts were barely hidden and they proudly exposed their asses, their pelvic area, and that upper thigh area men are not supposed to look at when women expose it. Of course, it was to highlight the fact that women are treated as nothing but sex objects in Hollywood. Many also wore specially-made Time’s Up pins to raise awareness of the newly-created Times Up legal fund, started by Hollywood talent and executives to provide resources to victims of sexual abuse. They reportedly made millions off the new victim Me-Too jewelry line.

**Dirty Jobs**

TV host Mike Rowe is known for his measured, devastating take-downs of people who attack him or his work. **He has perfected the art of subtly twisting the knife in the side of critics with calm, cool language.**

 **This skill was on display Thursday when Rowe responded to a woman criticized his politics on Facebook.**

Rowe narrates the show “How The Universe Works” on the Science Channel. The woman, Rebecca Bright, called Rowe an “anti-education, science doubting, ultra-right wing conservative” who should be fired.

“I love the show How the Universe Works, but**I’m lost on how the producers and the Science Channel can allow anti-education, science doubting, ultra-right wing conservative Mike Rowe to narrate the show**,” Bright wrote, [according to Rowe](https://www.facebook.com/TheRealMikeRowe/posts/1780970495246419). “There are countless scientists that should be hired for that, or actors, if you must, that believe in education and science that would sound great narrating the show, example: Morgan Freeman. **Cancel this fools contract and get any of your scientists so often on the show to narrate it.**”

**In his response, Rowe started off by exhibiting his knowledge of the subject of the show and killing Rebecca with kindness**:

Well hi there, Rebecca. How’s it going?

**First of all, I’m glad you like the show. “How the Universe Works” is a terrific documentary series that I’ve had the pleasure of narrating for the last six seasons.** I thought this week’s premiere was especially good. It was called, “Are Black Holes Real?” If you didn’t see it, spoiler alert….no one knows!!!

It’s true. **The existence of Black Holes has never been proven. Some cosmologists are now convinced they don’t exist at all, and the race to prove their actuality has become pretty intense.**Why? Because so much of what we think we know about the cosmos depends upon them. In other words, the most popular explanations as to how the universe actually works, are based upon the existence of a thing that no one has been able to prove.

As I’m sure you know, it’s OK to make assumptions based on theories. In fact, it’s critical to progress. But it’s easy these days to confuse theory with fact. Thanks to countless movies and television shows that feature Black Holes as a plot device, and many documentaries that bring them to life with gorgeous CGI effects and dramatic music, a lot of people are under the assumption that Black Holes are every bit as real as the Sun and the Moon. Well, maybe they are, and maybe they aren’t. We just don’t know. That’s why I enjoyed this week’s show so much. **It acknowledged the reasons we should question the existence of something that many assume to be “settled science.” It invited us to doubt.**

Oftentimes, on programs like these, I’m asked to re-record a passage that’s suddenly rendered inaccurate by the advent of new information. Sometimes, over the course of just a few days. That’s how fast the information changes. Last year for instance, on an episode called “Galaxies,” the original script – carefully vetted by the best minds in physics – claimed there were approximately one hundred billion galaxies in the known universe. A hundred billion! (Not a typo.) I couldn’t believe it when I read it. I mean, the Milky Way alone has something like 400 billion stars! Andromeda has a trillion! How many stars must there be in a universe, with a hundred billion galaxies? Mind-boggling, right?

**Well, a few weeks later, the best minds in physics came together again, and determined that the total number of galaxies in the universe was NOT in fact, a hundred billion. They were off. Not by a few thousand, or a few million, or few billion, or even a few hundred billion. The were off by two trillion. That’s right…TWO TRILLION!!**

But here’s the point, Rebecca – when I narrate this program, it doesn’t matter if I’m correct or incorrect – I always sound the same. And guess what? So do the experts.

**Rowe then slowly turned his keyboard to Rebecca’s idea that he should be fired** because doesn’t “believe in education and science,” **and it gets brutal**:

When I wrote about this discrepancy, people became upset. They thought I was making fun of science. They thought I was suggesting that because physicists were off by one trillion, nine hundred billion galaxies, all science was suddenly suspect, and no claims could be trusted. In general, people like you accused me of “doubting science.” Which is a curious accusation, since science without doubt isn’t science at all.

This is an important point. **If I said I was skeptical that a supernatural being put us here on Earth, you’d be justified in calling me a “doubter of religion.” But if I said I was skeptical that manmade global warming was going to melt the icecaps, that doesn’t make me a “doubter of science.”**

Once upon a time, the best minds in science told us the Sun revolved around the Earth. They also told us the Earth was flat, and that a really bad fever could be cured by blood-letting. Happily, those beliefs were questioned by skeptical minds, and we moved forward.**Science is a wonderful thing, and a critical thing. But without doubt, science doesn’t advance. Without skepticism, we have no reason to challenge the status quo.**Anyway, enough pontificating. Let’s consider for a moment, your very best efforts to have me fired.

You’ve called me an “ultra-right wing conservative,” who is both “anti-education,” and “science-doubting.” Interestingly, you offer no proof. Odd, for a lover of science. **So I challenge you to do so now. Please provide some evidence that I am in fact the person you’ve described.**And by evidence, I don’t mean a sentence taken out of context, or a meme that appeared in your newsfeed, or a photo of me standing next to a politician or a talk-show host you don’t like. I mean actual proof of what you claim I am.

**Also, please bear in mind that questioning the cost of a college degree does not make me “anti-education.” Questioning the existence of dark-matter does not make me a “dark-matter denier.” And questioning the wisdom of a universal $15 minimum wage doesn’t make me an “ultra-right wing conservative.”** As for Morgan Freeman, I agree. He’s a terrific narrator, and a worthy replacement. But remember, Morgan played God on the big screen. Twice. Moreover, he has publicly claimed to be a “believer.” (gasp!) Should this disqualify him from narrating a series that contradicts the Bible at every turn? If not, why not?

**Anyway, Rebecca, my beef with your post comes down to this – if you go to my boss and ask her to fire me because you can’t stand the sound of my voice, I get it.**Narrators with unpleasant voices should probably look for other work anyway, and if enough people share your view, no hard feelings – I’ll make room for Morgan.

**But if you’re trying to get me fired simply because you don’t like my worldview, well then, I’m going to fight back. Partly because I like my job, and partly because you’re wrong about your assumptions, but mostly because your tactics typify a toxic blend of laziness and group-think that are all too common today – a hot mess of hashtags and intolerance that deepen the chasm currently dividing our country.**

Re-read your own post, and think about your actual position. You’ve publicly asked a network to fire the narrator of a hit show because you might not share his personal beliefs. Don’t you think that’s kind of…extraordinary? **Not only are you unwilling to engage with someone you disagree with – you can’t even enjoy a show you claim to love if you suspect the narrator might not share your view of the world!** Do you know how insular that makes you sound? How fragile?

I just visited your page, and **read your own description of you. It was revealing. It says, “I stand my ground. I fear no one & nothing. I have & will fight for what’s right.”**

Maybe I’m missing something, but I don’t think the ground you’re standing on is worth defending. **If you truly fear “no one & nothing,” it’s not because you’re brave; it’s because you’re unwilling to expose yourself to ideas that frighten you.** And while I can see that you like to fight for what you think is “right” (in this case, getting people fired that you disagree with,) one could easily say the same thing about any other misguided, garden-variety bully.

**In other words, Rebecca, I don’t think you give a damn about science.** If I’m wrong, prove it. Take a step back and be skeptical about your own assumptions. Take a moment to doubt your own words, and ask yourself – as any good scientist would – if you’ve got your head up a black hole.

**The End of the BLM?**

The Nevada rancher accused of leading an armed standoff that stopped federal agents from rounding up his cattle in 2014 walked out of a courthouse in Las Vegas a free and defiant man Monday, declaring that his fight against U.S. authority is not over.

Cliven Bundy emerged to supporters’ cheers, while environmental and conservation advocates worried that the dismissal of his charges would bolster “violent and racist anti-government” followers who aim to erode established parks, wildlife refuges and other public lands controlled by U.S. officials.

“We’re not done with this,” the 71-year-old Bundy declared in his first minutes of freedom since his arrest in February 2016.

The family patriarch and states’ rights figure said he had been held as a political prisoner for 700 days and promised that if U.S. Bureau of Land Management agents come again to seize his cattle over unpaid grazing fees, they will encounter “the very same thing as last time.”

“The whole world is looking at us,” he said. ”‘Why is America acting like this? Why are we allowing the federal government, these bureaucracies, to have armies?’ That’s a big question the whole world wants to know.”

The stunning collapse of the federal criminal case against Cliven Bundy and his sons Ryan and Ammon marked a new low for government lawyers whose work is now under review by the Trump administration. Prosecutors have faced several losses in Oregon and Nevada arising from armed Bundy standoffs over federal control of vast stretches of land in the U.S. West.

U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions launched an investigation into the Nevada case last month after Chief U.S. District Judge Gloria Navarro declared a mistrial. On Monday, she dismissed outright all 15 counts against Bundy, his sons and Montana militia leader Ryan Payne.

“The court finds that the universal sense of justice has been violated,” Navarro said as audible gasps and sobs erupted in a court gallery crammed with Bundy supporters

It comes after prosecutors failed to gain full convictions in two trials against six other defendants who acknowledged carrying assault-style weapons during the April 2014 confrontation outside Bunkerville, 80 miles (129 kilometers) northeast of Las Vegas.

Jurors in Portland, Oregon, also acquitted Ryan and Ammon Bundy more than a year ago of taking over a federal wildlife refuge in early 2016 and calling for the U.S. government to turn over public land to local control.

The judge ended the latest case by ripping government prosecutors, led by First Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven Myhre, for “intentional abdication of ... responsibility,” ″flagrant misconduct” and “substantial prejudice.”If President Trump wants to be known as a president seeking the restoration of the U.S. Constitution, one of his goals should be to turn federal lands – the millions of acres run by the Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service and National Park Service – over to the states.

It’s because the Constitution doesn’t allow for federal ownership of land unless it’s for certain limited purposes, argues a former California lawmaker.

Steve Baldwin served in the California Assembly from 1994 to 2000 and was minority whip during that time. He’s argued in a new report in [the American Spectator](https://spectator.org/trump-needs-to-transfer-all-federal-land-back-to-the-states/) that two recent cases highlight the problem with the federal government owning vast acreages.

And he says the solution is in the Constitution.

“Most Americans have no clue what our founders said about federal land management. The Constitution’s Property Clause (Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2) gave Congress the power to dispose of property, but does not mention a power to acquire property. However, under the Necessary and Proper Clause (Article I, Section 8, Clause 18), the federal government was given the power to acquire land but only for the purpose of carrying out its enumerated powers. This would include parcels for military uses, post offices, etc.

“Nowhere does the Constitution give the federal government the power to retain acreage for unenumerated purposes such as grazing, mineral development, agriculture, forests, or even national parks. This was wisely left up to the prerogative of the states and the people.”

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He noted the issue has arisen before.

[*Sen. Tom Coburn has come up with the answer to a Washington bureaucracy that doesn’t seem to care about the Constitution, or American people: An Article V convention, which he describes in “Smashing the DC Monopoly: Using Article V to Restore Freedom and Stop Runaway Government.”*](http://superstore.wnd.com/smashing-the-DC-Monopoly-Tom-Coburn-Hardcover)

“Most Americans have forgotten this, but the shady tactics of federal land management agencies were a big issue in Ronald Reagan’s 1980 campaign. At the time, the movement of those fighting such abuses was called the ‘Sagebrush Rebellion,’ and this issue propelled tens of thousands of voters to support Reagan’s candidacy. To be honest, though, Reagan was unable to carry out any substantial reforms regarding federal land ownership.

“If Trump wants to go down in history as a president who restored the federal government to its proper limited role, then he should revitalize this forgotten section of the U.S. Constitution and transfer all non-enumerated federal land back to the states. Such action will allow states to control their own destinies, create better managed parks and preserves, and create tens of thousands of new jobs by energizing natural resource industries such as oil, natural gas, mining, and timber.

“This is a perfect issue for him. Be bold, Mr. President, and just do it.”

The two issues that came up recently, he explained, were Trump’s decision to reduce the size of federal land grabs under Bill Clinton and the fight over the Bundy Ranch grazing rights.

“Both events illustrate how the federal government has used its massive land holdings to control the lives of Americans,” he said.

At this point, the federal bureaucracy has acquired some 640 million acres of the nation, about one-third.

“The majority of land in Nevada, Alaska, Utah, Oregon and Idaho is owned by the feds. In Arizona, California, Wyoming, New Mexico and Colorado, federal ownership exceeds a third. Indeed, if all 11 Western states were combined into one territory, the feds would own nearly 50 percent of it,” he wrote.

The Utah land fight saw Trump knock down the size of the lands demanded under Clinton and Barack Obama from 3.2 million acres to about 1.2 million.

“Not surprisingly, the left went ballistic, but the truth is Trump is the one acting in accord with the Constitution and in the best interest of the people of Utah, and even the environment,” he pointed out.

“Both of these land grabs were initiated with little or no input from Utah’s civic, political, and business leaders. And, of course, as with most Democrat ‘environmental’ initiatives, cronyism and corruption are evident. For example, Bill Clinton’s Utah land grab — the ‘Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument’ — placed off-limits all energy development, including the world’s largest known deposit of clean burning coal. Not coincidentally, this proviso also quietly benefited the owners of the world’s second-largest deposit of clean burning coal: the Lippo group, owned by the Indonesia-based Riady family and, of course, large donors to the Clinton Foundation (and huge Clinton donors going back decades).”

In the Bundy case, in which a federal judge recently dismissed counts and ordered the government not to file more charges because of massive prosecutorial misconduct in the first case, the Bureau of Land Management launched a police-state action against the ranching family over payment of grazing rights fees.

The family argued the land belonged to the state and the feds had no right to charge fees.

Baldwin’s report explained how former BLM Special Agent and whistleblower Larry Wooten pulled back the curtain on the government’s nefarious activities.

Wooten wrote, “the investigation revealed a widespread pattern of bad judgment, lack of discipline, incredible bias, unprofessionalism and misconduct, as well as likely policy, ethical, and legal violations among senior and supervisory staff at the BLM’s office of Law Enforcement and Security.”

For example, Wooten explained, the BLM posted photos of the Bundy family with x’s on their faces “as if they were to be eliminated.”

His report includes statements attributed to officials such as “Go out there and kick Cliven Bundy in the mouth (or teeth) and take his cattle.”

Other comments by the government included, “rednecks,” “retards” and “douche bags,” the report said.

Baldwin explained that there certainly were nefarious components to the Bundy ranch fight.

“Reports … indicated that former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid had teamed up with Chinese billionaire Wang Yusuo in an effort to create a massive 9,000-acre solar energy farm on the same federal land apparently used by Bundy to graze cattle. And Yusuo’s company, the ENN Group, contributed over $40,000 to Reid over the course of three election cycles. One BLM document makes clear that Bundy’s cattle grazing negatively impacted potential solar farm development on this land,” he explained.

When that plan fell apart, Reid began working on another project “which, again, targets the area Bundy’s cattle grazes on.”

According to Courtwatcherblog, “Harry Reid’s interests are clear. He doesn’t care about public lands, but what he stands to profit off of their sale, no matter if it’s sold to China, Saudi Arabia, Russia, or even South Africa… the facts show Harry Reid’s interests in the Bundy men being in jail, make it a lot easier to grab their land…”

Baldwin said returning land to the states would restore the constitutional standard, and would energize the economies of many states.

Baldwin explains that it was during federal convention debates in 1787 that Elbridge Gerry, later vice president, issued a warning. He said federal ownership of land “might be made use of to enslave any particular state by buying up its territory, and that the strongholds proposed would be a means of awing the state into an undue obedience.

**The Ghost Missile**

Hawaii’s false ballistic missile alert was the latest reminder of the nuclear threat that North Korea poses to the U.S. amid the rising tensions and war of words between the two nation’s leaders.

“BALLISTIC MISSILE THREAT INBOUND TO HAWAII. SEEK IMMEDIATE SHELTER. THIS IS NOT A DRILL,” said the [emergency system alert](http://time.com/5102459/what-hawaii-missile-alert-looked-like-on-phone/) pushed to people’s smartphones statewide.

It wasn’t until a second message popped up 38 minutes later that people learned the missile alert was a mistake, later blamed on someone pushing the wrong button. But had the alert been real, a series of high-level assessments and decisions would have been made during that time in quick succession, perhaps with dire consequences.

The U.S. military officers at Pacific Command headquartered at Honolulu were able to immediately determine Hawaii’s Emergency Management Agency had made a mistake and [publicly delivered messages](https://dod.hawaii.gov/hiema/files/2018/01/20180113-NR-HI-EMA-statement-on-missile-launch-false-alarm.pdf) to that end.

[View image on Twitter](https://twitter.com/PacificCommand/status/952256032859832320/photo/1)



[](https://twitter.com/PacificCommand)**[U.S. Pacific Command](https://twitter.com/PacificCommand)**

[✔@PacificCommand](https://twitter.com/PacificCommand)

U.S. Pacific Command has detected no ballistic missile threat to [#Hawaii](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Hawaii?src=hash). Earlier message was sent in error and was a false alarm.

[2:08 PM - Jan 13, 2018](https://twitter.com/PacificCommand/status/952256032859832320)

[441441 Replies](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?in_reply_to=952256032859832320)

[2,0822,082 Retweets](https://twitter.com/intent/retweet?tweet_id=952256032859832320)

[3,0463,046 likes](https://twitter.com/intent/like?tweet_id=952256032859832320)

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Every moment of every day, the U.S. military and intelligence agencies have satellites in high-Earth orbit scouring the globe for anything amiss. The so-called early warning satellites are designed to identify within seconds the location of the launch site, the missile’s trajectory and its potential target.

A constellation of school bus–sized satellites, known as the [Defense Support Program](http://www.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/104611/defense-support-program-satellites/), forms the backbone of the system. The spacecraft are armed with cutting-edge infrared sensors and instruments that operate at wide angles to detect heat signatures from missile plumes as they flash against Earth’s background.



A screenshot shows messages of emergency alerts on Jan. 13, 2018 for residents of Hawaii

Eugene Tanner—AFP/Getty Images

The satellites are sensitive enough to detect a short-range missile’s launch, and are therefore capable of tracking a North Korean ballistic missile as it headed 4,600 miles toward Hawaii.

U.S. [radar installations](http://www.afspc.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/1126401/ballistic-missile-early-warning-system/), [naval ships](http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact_display.asp?cid=2100&tid=200&ct=2), and allies’ detection systems in the region would assist in tracking the weapons’ flight and capturing its electronic emissions. For instance, all North Korean missiles use guidance and tracking systems to help guide it to a target.

A combination of all this intelligence over a period of seconds or minutes would allow the U.S. government to triangulate the point of launch and track the trajectory of the missile, much of it under a method of spy-craft known as measurement and signature intelligence, or MASINT.

The information would be relayed to U.S. Forces Korea, headquartered in Seoul, and U.S. Pacific Command. A decision would be made on whether Americans were at-risk and if the U.S. or its allies should use missile defense systems to attempt a shoot-down. That could take place on the Korean peninsula, where the U.S. recently [deployed new systems](http://time.com/4930745/south-korea-thaad-anti-missile/), or by [Japan’s missile defense network](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-missiles-japan-aegis/japan-to-expand-ballistic-missile-defense-with-ground-based-aegis-batteries-idUSKBN1ED051), or by American warships carrying interceptors operating in the Pacific Ocean.

Adm. Harry [Harris](http://fortune.com/fortune500/harris/), head of Pacific Command, [said in April](http://www.staradvertiser.com/2017/04/26/breaking-news/u-s-sets-up-missile-defense-in-s-korea-as-north-shows-power/) that the missile defense systems in Hawaii were adequate for now but suggested considering stationing new interceptors and radar to knock out waves of incoming North Korean missiles.

“I believe that our ballistic missile architecture is sufficient to protect Hawaii today, but it can be overwhelmed,” Harris told Congress.

If a missile attack were determined to be a nuclear strike, a decision on a counter-strike would have to be made by President Donald Trump. The order to strike, [which only the president can make](http://time.com/5024035/donald-trump-nuclear-weapons-authority/), would be relayed to U.S. military officers in command of the nation’s intercontinental ballistic missiles, nuclear submarines or heavy bombers.

As tensions continue to rise with North Korea, [states like Hawaii](https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/12/02/568019908/hawaii-initiates-a-new-monthly-test-of-a-nuclear-siren) and others governments are re-evaluating how well prepared they are in the event of a nuclear strike.

[15h](https://twitter.com/GovHawaii/status/952351768389722112)

[](https://twitter.com/GovHawaii)**[Governor David Ige](https://twitter.com/GovHawaii)**

[✔@GovHawaii](https://twitter.com/GovHawaii)

Today is a day most of us will never forget. A terrifying day when our worst nightmares appeared to become a reality. A day where we frantically grabbed what we could, tried to figure out how and where to shelter and protect ourselves and our ohana, said our “I love yous,”

[](https://twitter.com/GovHawaii)**[Governor David Ige](https://twitter.com/GovHawaii)**

[✔@GovHawaii](https://twitter.com/GovHawaii)

and prayed for peace.

I know firsthand how today’s false notification affected all of us here in Hawaii, and I am sorry for the pain and confusion it caused. I, too, am extremely upset about this and am doing everything I can to immediately improve our emergency mngment systems

[8:28 PM - Jan 13, 2018](https://twitter.com/GovHawaii/status/952351769647972352)

[2727 Replies](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?in_reply_to=952351769647972352)

[2020 Retweets](https://twitter.com/intent/retweet?tweet_id=952351769647972352)

[4444 likes](https://twitter.com/intent/like?tweet_id=952351769647972352)

[Twitter Ads info and privacy](https://support.twitter.com/articles/20175256)

The messaging from civil defense agencies — remember [Duck and Cover?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lg9scNl9h4Q) — that had been fine-tuned during the Cold War has melted away in the intervening years. The federal government and law enforcement is more prepared for the aftermath of a terror attack than a missile attack — let alone one involving a nuclear detonation.

The false missile alert in Hawaii is all but certain to jolt many state and local governments to reassess their processes.

Two hours after the alert was rescinded, with his heart rate still elevated, Conner described the roughly half hour that he and his family spent thinking that nuclear Armageddon was upon them. His account has been edited and condensed.

“Our apartment looks out over the international airport and Pearl Harbor. Whenever there’s fighter-jet activity, it goes right by our [lanai](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lanai). There’s been a lot of exercises recently. The local news has been reporting why so many fighter jets are running around, and the stories described the name of the exercises: Sunset Aloha. Apparently, they’re military drills. What it meant, for us, is F-22s and F-35s have been screaming through the skies over the past two weeks.

“We were sitting out on the lanai when the announcement came over the building speaker that there was an inbound ballistic missile to Hawaii. And that it wasn’t a drill. They repeated that. I got a text from a friend who’s an airline pilot who runs a Honolulu route and happened to be in town saying, ‘Did you guys see this?’ My wife called a friend of hers on the Big Island to see whether it was something that was just Honolulu, just Oahu, or the entire state. She was able to get through, and her friend said ‘Yes, it’s for the entire state.’

“At that point, we secured all the windows and all the doors. We started filling the tubs and every container we could with water. And texting family and friends. There’s been an increasing amount of information in Hawaii about what to do in case of a ballistic missile, over the last few months, clearly tied to tensions with North Korea. Everybody in Hawaii is very aware that [after Guam](https://www.newyorker.com/news/as-told-to/what-it-feels-like-on-guam-caught-between-trump-and-north-korea)we’re the next-closest target. We’re the only part of the U.S. that’s been a target of a military attack by a foreign power in the past century. And, of course, coming from New York, being the target of a non-military attack, that resonated with us in the worst possible way. Hawaii has also started doing monthly air-raid drills.

“It took me maybe a minute to process that this was actually happening. It was an ‘Oh my god, but I need to execute, I need to get things done’ kind of feeling. ‘Is this real? Can this really happen? They’re gonna shoot it down, right? What happens if our building collapses and we can’t get to our little girl?’

“After about five minutes, we were visibly upset. My wife was crying, and George, our daughter, wanted to know why. We asked her to come over for a family hug. We explained that we’d heard very bad news that something very, very bad was happening and it had us really, really upset. I don’t think she really understands nuclear Armageddon or ballistic missiles, but she certainly understands that Mommy and Daddy are really upset.

“We continued to fill every container we could find with water for maybe another fifteen or twenty minutes. We tried calling people. My wife tried her father in Chicago three times, got a busy signal. I texted my mother and my twenty-one-year-old daughter. We texted the rest of my wife’s family to say there’s a ballistic missile coming towards Hawaii and it’s not a drill.

“I’m not a religious person. There are no prayers to God in our household.

“At eight twenty-nine, we got a text back from my wife’s brother saying it was a hoax. Half an hour had passed, roughly. Then I checked and started seeing reports on Twitter from Tulsi Gabbard and other reps, from the governor, saying this was a false alarm. Then we got an alert over the building loudspeaker also saying it was a false alarm. Then we got the cell-phone alert. At that point, I was able to get through to my mother on the phone. She reported that what she saw on the news in the mainland was nothing until finally they said, ‘Oh, there’s a false alarm of a missile coming into Hawaii.’ Meanwhile, everyone over here is really upset and thinks they’re all going to die. Our friend the pilot was in a hotel saying the lobby was full of crying children.

“We began to relax a little and start to deal with the aftereffects of a severe adrenaline rush. I’m still shaking, though. My wife is still having waves of goose bumps and chills periodically. I’ve been part of cyber-security emergency responses, so part of my thinking was, What can we possibly learn from this? We need to make sure that both the alert procedure, which clearly had some problems, and response procedures—which hopefully all worked well, but I don’t know—that those are all tied up. I’d hope that with the initial lack of reporting by the mainland media, that people would take this as a scare to say, ‘Let’s calm this all down. Nuclear war is not gonna be good for anybody.’

“We’re going to brunch now in a neighborhood nearby called Kaka‘ako. We’re walking over, rather than driving, in a few minutes. Mai Tai cocktails are on order.”

**Uranium One Indictments Unsealed**

The Department of Justice unsealed an 11-count indictment on Friday to a former DoD intelligence analyst-turned uranium transportation executive who stands accused of a bribery and money laundering scheme involving a Russian nuclear official connected to the Uranium One deal.

The indictment corroborates a November report by The Hill that an FBI mole deeply embedded in the Russian uranium industry had gathered extensive evidence of the scheme.

Mark Lambert, 54, of Mount Airy, Maryland, was charged with one count of conspiracy to violate the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) and to commit wire fraud, seven counts of violating the FCPA, two counts of wire fraud and one count of international promotion money laundering. The charges stem from an alleged scheme to bribe [Vadim Mikerin](https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/former-russian-nuclear-energy-official-sentenced-48-months-prison-money-laundering-conspiracy), a Russian official at JSC Techsnabexport (TENEX), a subsidiary of Russia’s State Atomic Energy Corporation and the sole supplier and exporter of Russian Federation uranium and uranium enrichment services to nuclear power companies worldwide, in order to secure contracts with TENEX.

According to the indictment, beginning at least as early as 2009 and continuing until October 2014, **Lambert conspired with others at “Transportation Corporation A” to make corrupt and fraudulent bribery and kickback payments to offshore bank accounts associated with shell companies, at the direction of, and for the benefit of, a Russian official, Vadim Mikerin, in order to secure improper business advantages and obtain and retain business with TENEX.**-DOJ

While the indictment lists Lambert's company as "Transportation Corporation A," a simple search reveals that **Lambert is the co-President of DAHER-TLI,**"the leading front end freight forwarding company dedicated to Nuclear Cargo**," according to its**[**website**](http://archive.is/39VpA)**.**

In 2012, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission [**sent a letter**](https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML1216/ML12165A411.pdf) to Lambert with findings that TLI had exported plutonium "in excess of the maximum quantity and type applied for and licensed," and "exported Australian obligated material, which was not authorized under license conditions."

Prior to his 26 year tenure in the transportation industry - 20 of which have been with TLI, **Mr. Lambert was an Arabic Linguist for the Navy for five years, and a Senior Intel Analyst for the Department of Defense** (DoD) for three years.

The indictment against Lambert corroborates prior reporting by [***The Hill***](http://thehill.com/policy/national-security/355749-fbi-uncovered-russian-bribery-plot-before-obama-administration) that **an FBI mole buried deep within the Russian nuclear industry had gathered extensive evidence of a scheme involving bribes and kickbacks between Russian nuclear officials and TLI**-**which would have transported the U.S. uranium sold to Russia in the ’20 percent’ Uranium One deal.**

“***The Russians were compromising American contractors in the nuclear industry with kickbacks and extortion threats, all of which raised legitimate national security concerns. And none of that evidence got aired before the Obama administration made those decisions***,” a person who worked on the case told The Hill, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of retribution by U.S. or Russian officials."

Based on what the FBI knew – including evidence which purportedly includes a video of Russians preparing [***briefcases of bribe money***](https://www.zerohedge.com/news/2017-11-18/fbi-informant-has-video-russian-agents-briefcases-bribe-money-clinton-uranium-scanda) – **the Uranium One deal never should have gone through.**Moreover, both Robert Mueller and current deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein were directly involved – and current Attorney General Jeff Sessions and other Justice Department officials appear to be covering for them.

In short, **the FBI had ample evidence of the Russian bribery plot before the Obama administration approved the Uranium One deal thanks to their embedded mole in the Russian nuclear industry.**

The informant – outed as energy consultant William Campbell - was “[threatened](http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2017/10/19/grassley-wants-gag-order-lifted-for-fbi-informant-allegedly-threatened-by-obama-doj.html)” by Obama admin AG Loretta Lynch to keep quiet with an iron-clad gag order, according to his attorney – former Reagan Justice Dept. official and former Chief Counsel to the Senate Intelligence Committee Victoria Toensing. After Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-VA) demanded Campbell be allowed to testify in front of Congress, the gag order was lifted.

**Attorney General Jeff Sessions**originally tried to claim that there was no connection between Uranium One and the nuclear transport bribery case, however several congressional republicans pushed back:

“**Attorney General Sessions seemed to say that the bribery, racketeering and money laundering offenses involving Tenex’s Vadim Mikerin occurred after the approval of the Uranium One deal by the Obama administration. But we know that the FBI’s confidential informant was actively compiling incriminating evidence as far back as 2009**,” Rep. Ron DeSantis, (R-Fla.) told The Hill.

“It is **hard to fathom how such a transaction could have been approved without the existence of the underlying corruption being disclosed**. I hope AG Sessions gets briefed about the CI and gives the Uranium One case the scrutiny it deserves,” added DeSantis, whose House Oversight and Government Reform subcommittees is one of the investigating panels.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) sent a similar rebuke last week to Rosenstein, saying the deputy attorney general’s first response to the committee “largely missed the point” of the congressional investigations.

**“The essential question is whether the Obama Justice Department provided notice of the criminal activity of certain officials before the CFIUS approval of the Uranium One deal and other government decisions that enabled the Russians to trade nuclear materials in the U.S**,” Grassley scolded."

**Meanwhile,** journalists John Solomon and journalist Sara Carter claim to **have copies of the FBI informant’s evidence**, while Carter issued an [**explosive report**](https://saraacarter.com/2017/11/21/treasure-trove-of-documents-tying-russia-to-uranium-one/)in late November laying out the players, the timeline, and the evidence at hand.

**“By the time the sale of Uranium One was approved by the Obama Administration, the FBI’s investigators had already gathered substantial evidence and the bureau was also aware of Russia’s intentions to enter the U.S. energy market and its desire to purchase a stake in American uranium,**” Carter writes.

**Highlights:**

* FBI mole William Campbell was a highly valued FBI asset - paid $51,000 by FBI officials at a celebration dinner in Chrystal City, VA, where Campbell's attorney says they thanked him for his service.
* Campbell **was required by the Russians, under threat, to launder large sums of money - which allowed the FBI to uncover a massive Russian "nuclear money laundering apparatus**"
* Campbell collected over 5,000 documents and briefs over a six year period
* Campbell uncovered a Russian plot to penetrate the Obama administration and gain approval for the Uranium One sale, including a 2010 email which describes "**Russia's intent on expanding its Uranium expansion in the United States."**

“**This is not just about bribery and kickbacks but about a U.S. company that was transporting yellow-cake for the Russians with our approval**,” an unnamed U.S. Intelligence official told Carter, adding “**This should raise serious questions**. At the time everyone was concerned about Russia’s ties to Iran, we still are. And of course, Russia’s intentions and reach into the U.S. energy market.”

Given Friday's unsealed indictment, however it looks like the DOJ may have changed their tune on Campbell. **If so, perhaps that "briefcase full of bribe money" video will finally see the light of day**.

**The UN is At It Again**

The United Nations is being warned about a “disingenuous and illegitimate” attempt to create a new nation – Palestine – without having any of the internationally accepted components at hand.

The move came from Palestinian Authority chief Mahmoud Abbas, “in a fit of pique,” after President Donald Trump announced he would allow the implementation of a 20-year-old law in the U.S. that formally recognizes Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.

In response, Abbas claimed that the PA intended to accede to 22 different international conventions and agreements.

However, the European Center for Law and Justice, in a letter to U.N. chief Antonio Guterres, pointed out that that’s simply not how things are done.

“For a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to, the PA’s inability to accede to such treaties as a ‘state’ (since it fails to meet minimal criteria for statehood under customary international law), its wholly disingenuous and illegitimate reasons for signing on to such agreements, and its clear breach of the Oslo Accords in doing so, Palestinian accession to such agreements must be rejected,” the center told the U.N.

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The [letter this week,](http://media.aclj.org/pdf/LTR-Guterres-1-10-18_Redacted.pdf) signed by Jay Sekulow, who also heads the American Center for Law and Justice, urged the U.N. to “disqualify” the PA from signing treaties.

The Trump decision regarding Jerusalem, it explained, “was a lawful act by a sovereign state, subject to neither censure nor approval by foreign powers.”

[*Sign the petition encouraging Congress and President-election Donald Trump to defund, discount and deport the United Nations.*](http://www.wnd.com/wnd_petition/petition-urging-donald-trump-and-the-congress-of-the-united-states-to-withdraw-from-the-united-nations/)

But the Palestinian Authority still has obtained no action “with respect to the creation or existence of a Palestinian ‘State,'” it said.

“Under the U.N. Charter, the General Assembly has no lawful authority whatsoever to create or recognize a ‘state.’ The U.N. does not officially recognize states or declare statehood; such actions are the responsibility of individual governments,” it continued.

“Further, when the states of the world gather together to make decisions as members of the U.N. General Assembly, they are bound by the explicit terms of the U.N. Charter as to what they may do,” it continued, meaning it would be out of bounds for the U.N. to create a “state.”

The letter pointed out even the Palestinians accept that, as Abbas recently “announced … .2017 would be ‘the year of the independent Palestinian state.'”

“PA officials have made it clear that their signing of these international conventions has nothing to do with a genuine interest in upholding the norms contained within them, but is merely being done in reprisal for the United States’ decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem,” the letter explained.

After all, the same thing happened in 2014, when the PA was “upset” over Israel’s decisions regarding the release of prisoners.

If a non-qualified participant is allowed to sign a treaty, “the meaning and value of such agreements will be forever cheapened and tarnished.”

“It is clear from its actions that the PA is intent on conducting its affairs as if a Palestinian ‘State’ already exists, in the hope that nations and other international actors will ignore the PA’s utter failure to meet even the most basic requirements of statehood under customary international law,” the letter said.

Allowing a non-state actor to play the role of a nation is no more than appeasement and “is both illogical and dangerous and serves as a powerful disincentive for the PA to engage in the good-faith negotiations needed to actually resolve the issues.”

Officials with the ECLJ explained the letter calls out what the PA and its supporters are trying to do now, that “they have been unable to do anywhere and everywhere else: unilaterally create a would-be Palestinian ‘state.'”

Back in 2014, the ECLJ explained, after walking away from negotiations with Israel, the PA decided to sign a large group of international treaties and conventions all at once. Their reasoning was that since treaties and conventions can only be signed by states, their being allowed to sign them is now proof that they are a state.

“That’s not how treaties work. That’s not how international law works. That’s not how any of this works,” the ECLJ said.

“The very act of allowing non-state actors to ‘sign’ on to treaties and conventions makes a mockery of international law. It not only belittles the important topics of those treaties, but it weakens their enforcement and cheapens their effectiveness.”

While the conventions regarding suppressing nuclear war, the sale of children, child prostitution, trafficking, organized crime and more, are important, “These essential and imperative conventions are being used by the PA to score cheap political points. These conventions and treaties represent an international response to real life horrors like human trafficking, rape, child prostitution, and nuclear war; and this flippant use of them to score would-be political points must not be allowed.

“We notified the U.N. Secretary-General of this fact and made him aware that this kind of cheap ploy should not be allowed to move forward,” the team said.

**DAVOS Finished Commanding the Invasion**

The World Economic Forum held in Davos, Switzerland each year, is about to be told "What's what" and that "the wine and prime rib party they've had for twenty-eight years at America's expense, is over."

In a statement, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, the White House press secretary, said the president was looking forward to attending the gathering of world leaders and business executives.

 “The president welcomes opportunities to advance his America First agenda with world leaders,” Ms. Sanders said. “At this year’s World Economic Forum, the president looks forward to promoting his policies to strengthen American businesses, American industries and American workers.”

Mr. Trump’s planned appearance at an event that is synonymous with wealth and elite prestige comes as he enters the second year of a term he won on a message of economic populism.

Presidents have rarely attended the forum in Davos, in part out of a concern that it would send the wrong message to be rubbing shoulders with some of the world’s richest individuals. But Trump isn't coming to rub elbows with the world's richest people, he is coming to lay down the law. Among the things Trump is expected to say at the event something like this:

1) I'm as rich or richer than many of you. Unlike my predecessors, I do not owe any of you anything, and I cannot be bought. I have no skeletons in my closet that any of you can hold over my head, so I cannot be blackmailed. Most of you knew this when I announced my campaign for President, which is why so many people in this room vehemently opposed me before the election, and several of you continue to engage in destructive activities now that I have taken office. To those folks who continue to sew unrest I say You've had a year of fun, but it's gone too far. Stop now -- while I am still willing to LET you stop on your own." Foreigners laundering money into political entities inside the United States is illegal. You would not do well inside an American federal prison.

2) Since the Administration of George H.W. Bush, you have sucked virtually all the economic life out of the United States, with your deceitful "Free Trade." You began negotiating NAFTA with President George HW Bush (We in the US refer to him as Bush I) and he signed it in 1992. By the time it was approved by Congress, we had a new President, Bill Clinton, who signed it into law in 1994. You told then-President Bill Clinton that changing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) into a new "World Trade Organization" (WTO) would level the playing field to allow American companies to successfully compete on world markets. You convinced Bill Clinton that this would allow American companies to better compete worldwide. You told him that it would mean more American jobs and higher profits. He signed the WTO into law in 1995.

Later you convinced George W. Bush (We in the US refer to him as Bush II) to add 13 more countries to the Free-trade agreements. After him, Barack Obama, that getting rid of Tariffs would make American-made goods more competitive, increasing jobs and helping economic growth in America.

Under Bush II, the United States’ trade deficit—the gap between what the United States exports and imports—reached historic levels.

Large sustained trade deficits meant the United States was consuming much more than it was producing. Just like a household that spends more than it earns, this national gap had to be financed by borrowing.

Chronic trade deficits led to a rising foreign debt, the displacement of millions of jobs from the manufacturing sector, and downward pressure on the wages of non-college educated workers.

• Under Bush II the U.S. trade deficit nearly doubled from $379 billion (2000) to $700 billion (2007).

• The trade deficit with China alone tripled from $83 billion in 2000 to $256 billion in 2007.

• As a share of the economy, the overall trade deficit rose from 3.9% of GDP in 2000 to a peak of 5.7% in 2006, before moderating slightly to 5.1% of GDP in 2007.

• During Bush II's first term, the United States lost 1.9 million jobs to trade deficits.

• In 2007, the bilateral trade deficit with China represented 1.85% of the entire economy. Growth in this deficit since 2001 has displaced 2.3 million net jobs.

• Between 2000 and June 2008, the United States lost 3.4 million manufacturing jobs.

So while the things promised to past Presidents all sounded terrific, all those promises were deliberate LIES.

What you \_actually\_ did, was to export American JOBS to cheap-labor countries, make the same products that used to be made in America, then shipped them back to America - without tariff - to sell at the same price as before. As result, America lost our manufacturing base, you got richer and the American Middle Class was virtually wiped out.

You tried to build on this with a massive Trade Agreement called the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). This would have added to the burden of American firms, and actually would have prevented the COURTS in most countries, from adjudicating certain Civil Damage Claims, Product Liability, and even Environmental Damage.

As you all know, I put a stop to the TPP.

As you all also know, I am renegotiating the NAFTA and unless negotiations go as they should, I will walk away from NAFTA - before the end of 2018.

One thing that none of you know, that I am pleased to announce here, for the first time, I intend to renegotiate the GATT in its new form, the WTO. And I tell you now it looks as though we are \_probably\_ going to exit the WTO - because you have used it as a sledge-hammer against America and our companies. and because your scams to enrich yourself and crush American businesses are now known. Since I do not owe any of you anything, you have no sway over me to stop this.

3) In your never-ending quest to get richer, you began a totally fraudulent scam called "Global Warming." You BRIBED scientists with promises of free grant money if they produced reports which upheld or promoted this scam. You undermined legitimate Scientists who shouted from the rooftops that these claims of Global Warming were false. But you saw the writing on the wall as scientific information began leaking out, proving the so-called "temperature increases" were manually adjusted estimates . . . . not real data . . . . because the real data showed Global Warming to be totally false.

So you then switched gears and started promoting another lie, which you called "Climate Change." You pushed this lie so far, that countries around the world came to Paris and created the Paris Climate Agreement, which you expected to be codified into Treaty law.

But folks were already wise to this manufactured climate nonsense and they looked at the factual data, which exposed "Climate Change" as yet another lie.

And who was it that would be most adversely affected by the Paris Agreement? The United States of course. Our companies, our citizens, our government were all to make dramatic changes to our way of life to meet the totally manufactured emissions standards.

Who stood to benefit from this Paris Agreement? Companies in Europe and in China. Much of the Paris Agreement would not be applicable to Europe and China, so their companies would have a permanent advantage over American companies - again sucking the life blood out of America.

I put a stop to this charade. I have withdrawn the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement because the entire thing is based on deliberately fraudulent data designed to harm the economic might of the United States.

4) NATO countries have been required by Treaty to pay two percent (2%) of their GDP for Defense. Many of them, most in fact, weren't paying nearly that amount. Instead they relied upon the United States to foot the bill, provide the men and the equipment to assure their safety. Many of the people in this room owe the safety of themselves and their countries to the US via NATO.

Some of these countries used money that should have been spent on defense, to assist BUSINESSES inside their countries, who were in direct competition with American firms.

I put a stop to that. Almost all NATO Countries are now paying what the Treaty requires, and those that don't . . . . well, they may not be in NATO much longer.

5) I also want to spend a moment on the issue of Migration. There are people in this very room, who have personally spent millions promoting the idea that bringing uneducated barbarians into advanced western countries is somehow good. The results have been catastrophic.

In my country, crime by non-citizen aliens is at high levels grossly disproportionate to the general population. Here are some official statistics from the United States Sentencing Commission which monitors US federal prisons:

Of the people in federal prison right now, Illegal Aliens are responsible for:

22% of all MURDERS

18% of all FRAUD

33% of all MONEY LAUNDERING

29% of all DRUG TRAFFICKING

72% of all DRUG POSSESSION

YET THEY ONLY MAKE UP 7% OF PEOPLE IN THE USA!!!!!!

So those of you in this room who have been lobbying for Amnesty and a path to citizenship for Illegal aliens both in America and elsewhere, are actually committing civilizational suicide! Your money and public policy advocacy is bringing in savages and barbarians who are not assimilating, they are taking over entire section some some cities. Not just in the United States, but in Europe too.

Well, Europe may have lost its instinct for self-preservation, allowing millions of fit foreign men of fighting age into their countries, but we in America have not.

I will build a wall along the US southern Border to stem the tide of illegal aliens and I will deport those already in the country. I have already banned immigration from several countries with terrible records. There will be more.

I say to those in Europe WAKE UP - your societies are being killed by politically correct politicians, selling you out for campaign cash or other compensation.

To those in this room who have been funding American politicians to support your agenda, I remind you: Laundering foreign money into US political entities is a federal crime. There's a new sheriff in town. And the law \_\_ is \_\_ going to be enforced.

**The Barking Dog**

South Carolina Rep. Trey Gowdy resigned his membership on the House Committee on Ethics to concentrate on his other legislative duties.

Gowdy, a Republican, tendered his resignation Jan. 11 from the powerful ethics committee. His new position as Chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee prompted the resignation, [according to a letter](https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2018/01/11/house-section/article/H162-5) Gowdy sent to House Majority Leader Rep. Paul Ryan.

“Accordingly, I tender my resignation from the House Ethics Committee pending your designation of a replacement,” he told the Wisconsin Republican. “Thank you again for this opportunity and thank you to my colleagues on the Committee for their hard work and friendship.”

Gowdy was aware that being elected in June of last year to the House Oversight Committee, which is responsible for investigating congressional affairs, required him to cut loose one of the other committees in which he’s involved.

“When I became Chairperson of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform I knew I would not be able to keep all other committee assignments to include Judiciary, Intelligence and Ethics. Four committee assignments, including a Chairmanship, is a challenging workload,” he added.  Gowdy is the first congressman to serve on four committees simultaneously.

“It is unprecedented for any member of Congress to simultaneously serve on four committees,” Amanda Gonzalez, spokeswoman for Gowdy told The Daily Caller News Foundation. “When Rep. Gowdy was named Chairman of the Oversight Committee, he asked House leadership to be taken off one of his Committees, and was finally granted that request last week.”

His tenure in Congress has been a rocky one. Gowdy, who was elected during the Tea Party wave of 2010, used $150,000 in taxpayer dollars to settle with a former aide who alleged he was fired for not focusing his investigative work on former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, [according to a report](https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/gowdy-benghazi-panel-settled-wrongful-firing-suit-with-150000-in-public-funds/2017/12/01/d7c49dac-d6db-11e7-a986-d0a9770d9a3e_story.html?tid=ss_tw-bottom&utm_term=.961acb24f615) last year from The Washington Post.

A list of settlements the Office of Compliance released in December 2017 confirmed the confidential settlement reached between Gowdy’s office and Bradley Podliska, a military veteran who also alleged his supervisors acted against him after he left to fulfill his obligations as an Air Force reservist. Gowdy has stated that he does not personally know Podliska.

He is still Chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. He also sits on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, The Judiciary Committee with subcommittees on Crime Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigation as well as the Constitution and Civil Justice.

**The FISA Corruption Factory**

In 1970 it was discovered by a gentleman named [Christopher H. Pyle](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/facultyprofiles/christopher_pyle.html) that the U.S. Army Intelligence Command had [1500 commissioned officers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Pyle) whose duty it was to spy on any known protest or demonstration in this country involving 20 or more people. While Pyle’s eventual revelations about this stunning information captured the attention of the Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights, Sen. Sam Ervin, the great Watergate truth-seeking champion, had little authority to do anything about the “spying on Americans” scandal.

But in 1975 a younger, and lesser known, Democratic senator from Idaho named Frank Church put the Pyle information to good use. In the wake of President Richard Nixon’s resignation for the massive criminal corruption associated with Watergate, Senator Church [used a December 1974 report](http://civilliberty.about.com/od/waronterror/tp/History-of-FISA.htm) by New York Timescolumnist Seymour Hersh concerning widespread CIA warrantless surveillance to bring Pyle’s information before the senator’s U.S. Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities.

Thanks to courageous Americans like Pyle, Hersh, and Sens. Church and Ervin, the people of this country learned that its executive branch of government had been violating their civil and constitutional rights at such a mind-numbing scale that many lost their faith in “honest government.” It was out of the ashes of this governmental lawlessness that the [Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_Intelligence_Surveillance_Act) (“FISA”) was signed into law by former President Jimmy Carter in 1978. A central feature of the Act was the creation of the [Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Foreign_Intelligence_Surveillance_Court)(“FISA Court”) which allows the executive branch to secretly obtain warrants for electronic surveillance but only with strict judicial review ([18 USC 36 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode50/usc_sup_01_50_10_36.html))

The [eleven members](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode50/usc_sec_50_00001803----000-.html) (originally the number was seven) of the FISA Court are designated by the Chief Justice of the United States. These judges have the authority to entertain ex parte[applications for electronic surveillance](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode50/usc_sec_50_00001802----000-.html) “for the purpose of obtaining foreign intelligence information.” FISA defines “[foreign intelligence information](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode50/usc_sec_50_00001801----000-.html)” as:

(**1**) information that relates to, and if concerning a United States person is necessary to, the ability of the United States to protect against –
(**A**) actual or potential attack or other grave hostile acts of a foreign power or an agent of a foreign power;
(**B**) sabotages, international terrorism, or the international proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by a foreign power or an agent of a foreign power; or
(**C**) clandestine intelligence activities by an intelligence service or network of a foreign power; or
(**2**) information with respect to a foreign power or foreign territory that relates to, and if concerning a United States person is necessary –
(**A**) the national defense or the security of the United States; or
(**B**) the conduct of the foreign affairs of the United States.

In order to issue a FISA warrant for electronic surveillance, a [FISA Court judge must believe](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode50/usc_sec_50_00001805----000-.html) there is “probable cause” that the subject of the surveillance is a “foreign power or an agent of a foreign power” and that the place where the surveillance will occur are “being used, or … about to be used by a foreign power or an agent of a foreign power.”

In the wake of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks on the Twin Towers in New York City, Congress enacted the [Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act](http://intelligence.senate.gov/patriot.pdf) (“PATRIOT Act”). This legislation substantially changed the nature of FISA, which had been enacted as a “reform” measure to control lawlessness in executive branch initiated intelligence-gathering, by granting unto the executive branch greater powers to conduct surveillance against not only suspected “terrorists” but against anyone who may ever spoken the word terrorism.

Former President Bill Clinton carefully paved the way for the abuses FISA would experience in the wake of 9/11. Use of intelligence for political force is a well-known tactic of the Clintons. His administration was confronted with the far-reaching and scandalous revelations in 1994 that CIA agent Aldrich Ames was a Russian spy responsible for scores of deaths of CIA undercover operatives. FISA at the time only authorized electronic surveillance.  Since FISA did not authorize “physical searches” in such cases, the former president usurped the law by ordering then Attorney General Janet Reno to conduct [warrantless searches of Ames’ residence](http://civilliberty.about.com/od/waronterror/tp/History-of-FISA.htm). The Administration argued it didn’t need a warrant because the suspect was believed to be the agent of a foreign power.  Faced with intense criticism from civil libertarians, President Clinton eventually agreed to a revision of FISA authorizing the Justice Department to obtain warrants from the FISA Court, rather than a traditional federal district court, before conducting physical searches. The end result, according to James Bovard, is that the FISA Court became “[a bunch of lapdogs in the federal government](http://www.fff.org/comment/com0601c.asp),” approving virtually all (99%) the 15,000 requests for search warrants between 1978 and 2002.

National security expert [James Bamford](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Bamford) put it this way: “Like a modern Star Chamber, the FISA court meets behind a cipher-locked door in a windowless, bug-proof, vault-like room guarded 24 hours a day on the top floor of the Justice Department building. The eleven judges (increased from seven by the Patriot Act) hear only the government’s side.”

President George W. Bush’s “war on terror” proved to be a perfect opening for the executive branch to once again entrench itself, more often than not lawlessly, in the intelligence gathering process. For example, Bovard said that in 2002 alone former Attorney General John Ashcroft “personally issued” more than 170 “domestic spying warrants” allowing federal agents to “carry out wiretaps and search homes and offices for as many as 72 hours before the feds requested a search warrant from the FISA court.” Ashcroft used this power “almost a 100 times as often as attorneys general did before 9/11.” The FISA Court itself would say in a 2002 decision that this power allows the FBI to simultaneously conduct telephone, microphone, cell phone, e-mail and computer surveillance of the target person’s home, workplace and vehicle. Attorney General Ashcroft praised the FISA Court as revolutionizing “our ability to investigate terrorists and prosecute terrorist acts.”

Following a [New York Times report](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/f/foreign_intelligence_surveillance_act_fisa/index.html), President Bush in December 2005 proudly conceded to the nation that in 2002 he had personally ordered the National Security Agency to conduct warrantless wiretaps and email intercepts on everyday Americans. He vowed to continue the practice regardless of the FISA provisions prohibiting such executive actions. In 2008, in the middle of an election season which prominently featured the potential of “terror threats,”[Congress overhauled FISA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_Intelligence_Surveillance_Act) to bring it more line with [Bush’s secret policies](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/20/washington/20fisa.html). In effect, the executive branch, not the FISA Court, now controls both the “checks and balances” of the sensitive intelligence gathering process in this country.

But not everyone is prepared to fall in line with lawless wiretapping/email interceptions policies practiced under the Bush administration. Last April [U.S. District Court Judge Vaughn Walker](http://www.acslaw.org/taxonomy/term/290)ruled in favor of the now defunct Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation, Inc. by concluding that the Bush administration’s warrantless foreign email interceptions of Al-Haramain’s employees violated the provisions of FISA ([Al-Haramain v. Obama](http://www.politico.com/static/PPM145_link_033110.html)). Judge Walker’s ruling was an unmistakable indictment of the NSA warrantless wiretapping program ordered by Bush.

But Judge Walker’s ruling is a rare victory in the federal courts who have demonstrated a proclivity to kowtow to the government demands associated with the “war on terror.”  This was evidenced last month by a Second Circuit Court of Appeals decision in [United States v. Hassan Abu-Jihaad](http://www.ca2.uscourts.gov/decisions/isysquery/8f1c0ade-8b12-400c-a8c6-e2c5c9562a6e/5/doc/09-1375_opn.pdf#xml=http://www.ca2.uscourts.gov/decisions/isysquery/8f1c0ade-8b12-400c-a8c6-e2c5c9562a6e/5/hilite/). Abu-Jihaad’s birth name was Paul Raphael Hall, He changed his name to Abu-Jihaad, which means the “Father of Jihad.” In January 1998 he enlisted in the United States Navy. At the time the Navy was aware the United States had become a target of terrorists. This stark reality was evidenced by the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the 1995 discovery of plots to bomb American passenger planes en route from Asia, and the 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia. The Navy, nonetheless, gave Abu-Jihaad security clearance to receive classified information between 1998 and 2002, despite his “Father of Jihad” name.

Sometime in August 2000Abu-Jihaad developed an email relationship with the London-based “Azzam Publications,” an organization that reportedly glorified jihad martyrdom and the violence of Islamic mujahedeen around the world (Azzam Publications has been shut down and has been accused of being part of a conspiracy to provide material support to people engaged in terrorism). Abu-Jihaad allegedly conveyed to Azzam, or persons associated with them, classified information about Navy ship movements to the Persian Gulf in 2001.

In December 2003 British authorities were searching the residence of Babar Admad, an individual with alleged ties to Azzam who has been in a British prison awaiting extradition to the U.S since 2004, and discovered a computer disk  which, according to the Second Circuit, “contained a three-page unsigned document describing the anticipated Spring 2001 deployment of ten U.S. Navy ships carrying 15,000 sailors and Marines from the Pacific coast of the United States to the Persian Gulf.” The document concluded by highlighting the vulnerabilities of the naval battle group. A subsequent investigation determined that this particular document had been created by an Azzam employee named Syed Talha Ahsan, a British citizen.

The Government case against Abu-Jihaad as the person responsible for conveying this classified information to Azzam was premised on three points: first, he had access to the information (one of 40 sailors with access); second, he had a relationship with Azzam (an exchange of 11 emails between August 2000 and September 2001); and, third, he made implicit admissions in a 2006 recorded conversation that he had conveyed classified information during his service in the Navy.

Abu-Jihaad was living in Phoenix, Arizona in 2006. He had four telephone calls with a friend and another person who turned out a confidential informant. During these conversations Abu-Jihaad expressed concerned about “tapped” telephones; protecting himself from a Kafir (“infidel”); instructed the persons to whom he was talking not to refer to associates by their real names; discussed martyrdom operations; and referred to military intelligence as “meals” (“hot meals” current information, “cold meals” out of date information),

Abu-Jihaad was subsequently indicted for providing material support to terrorists, [18 U.S.C. Sec. 2339A](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/718/usc_sec_18_00002339---A000-.html), and with disclosing classified information to unauthorized persons under the Espionage Act, [18 U.S.C. Sec. 793(d)](http://codes.lp.findlaw.com/uscode/18/I/37/793). A jury found him guilty of both charges in March 2008 but in March 2009 the trial judge granted Abu-Jihaad’s motion for [judgment of acquittal](http://www.law.cornell.edu/rules/frcrmp/Rule29.htm) on the providing material support to terrorist count and then sentenced him to ten years on the disclosing the classified information count.

On appeal Abu-Jihaad challenged the 2006 recorded telephone conversations which had been intercepted under an authorized FISA warrant. His challenged was premised on the theory that (1) FISA violated the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution; and (2) the FISA requirements were not adhered to in his case. The Second Circuit rejected both challenges, deferring to two [FISA Review Court](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode50/usc_sec_50_00001803----000-.html) decisions rendered in 2002 and 2008 respectively which rejected challenges similar to the ones raised by Abu-Jihaad: [In re Sealed Case](http://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=14926646895729978023&q=In+Re+Sealed+Case,+310+F.3d+717&hl=en&as_sdt=10000000000002&as_vis=1) and [In re FISA Section 105B Directives](http://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=11505951744212671898&q=In+re+FISA+Section+105B+Directives,+551+F.3d+1004&hl=en&as_sdt=10000000000002&as_vis=1). Interestingly, besides these two cases, the FISA Review Court, which was set up to review FISA Court determinations, has only convened one other time to hear FISA-related matters emanating from the FISA Court; hardly confidence inspiring oversight.

When FISA was enacted in 1978, the [sole purpose](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode50/usc_sec_50_00001804----000-.html) of a warrant request by a high-ranking member of the executive branch was strictly to obtain “foreign intelligence information”—nothing more. But the 2001 Patriot Act amendment relaxed this narrow requirement by allowing the FISA Court to issue a warrant if the executive branch certifies that procuring foreign intelligence information is a “significant purpose” of the requested surveillance. Abu-Jihaad argued that this 2001 amendment essentially undermined the constitutional intent and purpose of FISA: the sole acquisition of foreign intelligence information. He argued that the Government can now use FISA to conduct “criminal investigations,” as it did in his case, without demonstrating the Fourth Amendment probable cause requisite that “an individual is committing, has committed, or is about to commit a particular offense” and that “particular communications concerning that offense will be obtained” through electronic surveillance.

We agree. We recently posted a piece about how the “war on terror” has significantly, and quite dangerously, blurred the lines between intelligence gathering and crime fighting. The Second Circuit offered up this flimsy reasoning for abdicating its constitutional responsibility to protect the longstanding “probable cause” requirement in criminal investigations:  “… the Fourth Amendment warrant requirement demands a showing of probable cause reasonable to the purpose being pursued. Thus, the identification of the purpose is necessary to assess the reasonableness of the probable cause standards at issue. Where multiple purposes are significant, however, the Fourth Amendment does not require the government to identify a purpose or limit its ability to secure a warrant to the satisfaction of the standards for that purpose. Rather, the government may secure a warrant under the probable cause standards applicable to any purpose that it pursues in good faith. Thus, we identify no constitutional defects in FISA’s certification requirement of ‘a significant’ rather than a primary ‘purpose … to obtain foreign intelligence information.”

Abu-Jihaad in 2006, when the FISA Court authorized “electronic surveillance” of him, was not involved with either “foreign agents” or a “foreign power.” He was an ex-sailor who had exchanged 11 emails with an organization that supposedly had terrorism ties. He certainly was not providing “material support to terrorists” in 2006 as evidenced by the trial judge acquitting him on that charge. He was talking to a friend named Derrick Shareef and a government informant with only “implicit” references that he had given classified information to suspected terrorists. The informant conveyed this information to his handlers. At that point the FBI had sufficient probable cause to apply for wiretapping warrant from a federal judge or magistrate. But the FBI did not have any legitimate basis for turning what was no more than a criminal investigation into a “foreign intelligence” case by securing a FISA warrant.

It is cases like the Abu-Jihaad case, and the Second Circuit’s cavalier response to it, that has us concerned about our government’s comingling of criminal investigations with intelligence-gathering investigations. Legitimate foreign intelligence gathering requires much lesser standards of probable cause for surveillance than internal criminal investigations. And it is maintaining distinct constitutional lines between these two divergent governmental objectives that protects our private lives from lawless governmental intrusion and spying so prevalent under the Republican administrations of Richard M. Nixon, George W.  Bush, and to a lesser extent, under the Democratic administration of Bill Clinton.

As has been said many times by those fighting for our civil liberties and the integrity of our great Constitution, if the terrorist have forced us to voluntarily give up our fundamental constitutional protections and liberties as free people, then they have won a might battle indeed.

We do not like “government spooks” in our private lives. We had enough of that from the CIA in the 1960s and early 1970s; and we detest even more those cops like the late J. Edgar Hoover who used unlawfully obtained surveillance information to maintain his corrupt hold on power for decades. Unfortunately, the spying days of the panty-wearing Hoover, the rogue electronic surveillance of our intelligence agencies against Americans and the “communists brain-washing of our children” of those like Joseph McCarthy are back in vogue—and too few courts seem willing to halt this cavalier trampling upon the civil and constitutional rights of law-abiding citizens spawned by the overzealous fear-mongering “war on terror” advocates similar to those of bygone eras.