|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Jihad Report  Feb 25, 2017 - Mar 03, 2017 | |
| Attacks | 37 |
| Killed | 183 |
| Injured | 241 |
| Suicide Blasts | 4 |
| Countries | 12 |

**Space Tourism**

SpaceX CEO Elon Musk unveiled an ambitious plan yesterday [to fly two private space tourists around the moon in 2018](http://www.space.com/35844-elon-musk-spacex-announcement-today.html). The move drew a commendation from NASA along with a clear reminder that the agency expects SpaceX to meet its other obligations while pursuing the moon.

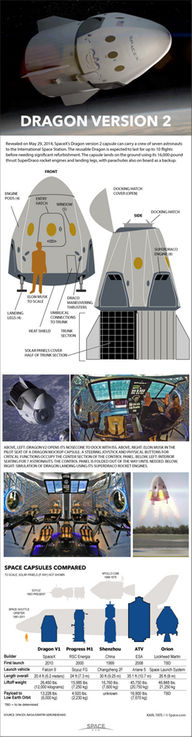
In a teleconference with reporters Monday (Feb. 27), Musk said SpaceX will launch two paying passengers around the moon using the company's Dragon crew capsule and [massive Falcon Heavy rocket](http://www.space.com/28384-spacex-falcon-heavy-to-be-reusable-animation-reveals.html). Both vehicles are scheduled for unpiloted test flights later this year.

"NASA commends its industry partners for reaching higher," [NASA officials wrote in a statement](https://www.nasa.gov/press-release/nasa-statement-about-spacex-private-moon-venture-announcement). "We will work closely with SpaceX to ensure it safely meets the contractual obligations to return the launch of astronauts to U.S. soil and continue to successfully deliver supplies to the International Space Station." [[SpaceX's Crew Dragon Spacecraft in Pictures](http://www.space.com/26060-spacex-dragon-v2-manned-spaceship-photos.html)]



An artist's illustration of a crewed Dragon spacecraft in space.

*Credit: SpaceX*



SpaceX's Dragon Version 2 spacecraft is a manned space capsule designed to fly seven astronauts to and from low-Earth orbit. [See how SpaceX's Dragon V2 spacecraft works in this Space.com infographic](http://www.space.com/26188-spacex-dragon-v2-manned-spacecraft-infographic.html).

*Credit: by Karl Tate, Infographics Artist*

Under the SpaceX plan, passengers would take a trip on Dragon and loop around the moon, "skimming" above the lunar surface at the closest point and flying out up to 400,000 miles (650,000 kilometers) from Earth at the farthest point. The entire trip should last five days, Musk said.

The flight could launch near the end of 2018, and potentially coincide with the 50th anniversary of [NASA's historic flight of Apollo 8](http://www.space.com/28084-christmas-eve-from-lunar-orbit-apollo-8-flashback-video.html), which launched the first Apollo astronauts around the moon in December 1968.

SpaceX has a $2.6 billion contract with NASA to fly astronauts to and from the International Space Station using its Dragon crew capsules and Falcon 9 rockets, which are smaller than the Falcon Heavy. Those flights are funded through NASA's Commercial Crew Program and were expected to begin in 2018, though a recent report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office said that the [first crewed flights by SpaceX's Dragon](http://www.space.com/35739-spacex-boeing-astronaut-taxis-2019-delay.html) and Boeing's CST-100 Starliner (NASA's other astronaut taxi choice) will likely slip to 2019.

SpaceX has been flying unpiloted Dragon cargo ships to the International Space Station since 2012 under a separate contract with NASA. Another company, Orbital ATK, has been doing the same with its robotic Cygnus supply ships since 2014. A third company, Sierra Nevada Space Systems, is developing a robotic Dream Chaser space plane to deliver NASA cargo as well.

"For more than a decade, NASA has invested in private industry to develop capabilities for the American people and seed commercial innovation to advance humanity's future in space," NASA officials wrote in the statement on SpaceX's moon plan. "NASA is changing the way it does business through its commercial partnerships to help build a strong American space economy and free the agency to focus on [developing the next-generation rocket](http://www.space.com/35831-massive-nasa-rocket-first-launch-crew.html), spacecraft and systems to go beyond the moon and sustain deep space exploration."

Musk told reporters that NASA would have first pick on the 2018 moon flight, and SpaceX would bump the two space tourists (who have already placed a "significant deposit" for the trip) to a later flight if the space agency wanted the seats. Musk did not reveal who had purchased the moon flight seats on Dragon, or how much the trip cost per person.

"NASA always has first priority," Musk said yesterday. "So if NASA decides to have the first mission of this nature be a NASA mission, then of course NASA would take priority."

SpaceX representatives said [the first unpiloted Crew Dragon](http://www.space.com/30516-spacex-animates-crew-dragon-in-orbit-ride-video.html) (or Dragon 2) test flight will launch by the end of 2017.

"This first demonstration mission will be in automatic mode, without people on board," SpaceX representatives [wrote in a separate statement Monday](http://www.spacex.com/news/2017/02/27/spacex-send-privately-crewed-dragon-spacecraft-beyond-moon-next-year). "A subsequent mission with crew is expected to fly in the second quarter of 2018. SpaceX is currently contracted to perform an average of four Dragon 2 missions to the ISS per year, three carrying cargo and one carrying crew. By also flying privately crewed missions, which NASA has encouraged, long-term costs to the government decline and more flight reliability history is gained, benefiting both government and private missions."

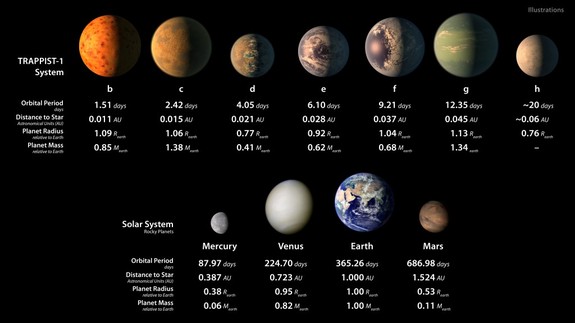
The moon flight and commercial Dragon flights for NASA will serve as steppingstones for SpaceX's ultimate goal, building a sustainable colony on Mars, Musk said.

"This should be incredibly exciting," Musk said. "Next year is going to be the big year for carrying people to the space station and hopefully beyond."

**How Long to Get to Trappist?**The [discovery of seven Earth-size planets](http://www.space.com/35790-seven-earth-size-planets-trappist-1-discovery.html) around a nearby star, TRAPPIST-1, is certainly exciting news. But what would it take to visit one of these potentially Earth-like alien worlds?

TRAPPIST-1 is 39 light-years away from Earth, or about 229 trillion miles (369 trillion kilometers). It would take 39 years to get to its current location traveling at [the speed of light](http://www.space.com/15830-light-speed.html). But no spacecraft ever built can travel anywhere near that fast.

That said, people have sent some pretty fast vehicles into outer space. With today's technology, [how long would it take to get to TRAPPIST-1](http://www.space.com/35795-traveling-to-trappist-1-how-long-would-it-take-video.html)?



Characteristics of the seven TRAPPIST-1 worlds, compared to the rocky planets in our solar system.

*Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech*

Given a spacecraft's speed, calculating the amount of time it would take to travel to TRAPPIST-1's present location is simple. Because speed is equal to distance divided by time, the total travel time must equal the distance to TRAPPIST-1 (39 light-years) divided by the spacecraft's speed.

**New Horizons**

New Horizons, the fastest spacecraft ever launched, [flew past Pluto](http://www.space.com/18377-new-horizons.html) in 2015 and is currently traveling out of the solar system at 14.31 kilometers per second, or about 32,000 mph, according to NASA's [New Horizons tracking page](http://pluto.jhuapl.edu/Mission/Where-is-New-Horizons/index.php). At this rate, it would take the Pluto probe about 817,000 years to travel the 39 light-years.

**Juno**

NASA's Juno spacecraft actually flew faster than New Horizons during its approach to the gas giant Jupiter in 2016. With the help of Jupiter's gravity, Juno hit a top speed of about 165,000 mph (265,000 km/h) relative to Earth, making it the [fastest human-made object](http://www.space.com/33336-nasa-juno-probe-jupiter-orbit-tonight.html) ever (though New Horizons' initial speed was faster than Juno's speed after launch).

Even if Juno were constantly traveling that fast — not just getting a speed boost en route —  it would take the spacecraft 159,000 years to reach TRAPPIST-1's current location.

**Voyager 1**

[Voyager 1](http://www.space.com/17688-voyager-1.html), Earth's most distant spacecraft, left the solar system and entered interstellar space in 2012. According to NASA, it is currently speeding away at 38,200 mph. For Voyager 1 to travel 39 light-years, it would take the spacecraft 685,000 years.

But Voyager 1 isn't going there anytime soon, or ever. Instead, the spacecraft is [heading for a different star](http://www.space.com/22783-voyager-1-interstellar-space-star-flyby.html), AC +79 3888: It will fly within 1.6 light-years of this star in about 40,000 years (NASA's calculation takes into account that [the star is moving](http://voyager.jpl.nasa.gov/mission/interstellar.html), also).

**Space Shuttle**

NASA's [space shuttle](http://www.space.com/12127-8-surprising-space-shuttle-facts.html) traveled around the Earth at a maximum speed of about 17,500 mph (28,160 km/h). A spaceship traveling at this speed would take around 1.5 million years to get to TRAPPIST-1's current location.

So for a human mission to the TRAPPIST-1 solar system, the space shuttle would not be a practical mode of transportation.

**Breakthrough Starshot**

One ultrafast spacecraft that could reach TRAPPIST-1 in a much shorter time span is an interstellar mission dreamed up by Stephen Hawking in his [Breakthrough Starshot](http://www.space.com/32551-breakthrough-starshot-interstellar-spacecraft-infographic.html) initiative.

Hawking's tiny, laser-propelled probes could theoretically fly as fast as 20 percent of the speed of light, or 134 million mph (216 million km/h). That's about 4,000 times faster than NASA's record-breaking New Horizons spacecraft! A spacecraft that fast could travel 39 light-years in less than 200 years. But that concept has yet to leave the ground.



An artist's impression of the view from a planet in the TRAPPIST-1 system.

*Credit: ESO/M. Kornmesser/*[*spaceengine.org*](http://www.spaceengine.org/)

With today's technology, there's no way that anyone alive right now could make it to TRAPPIST-1 in a lifetime. While discussing the new discovery at a news conference today (Feb. 22), NASA officials suggested that it would likely take at least 800,000 years to reach the TRAPPIST-1 system.

So don't start making any interstellar vacation plans anytime soon.

**What would a Day on Trappist Look Like**

**Amazing night-sky views**

Perhaps one of the most dramatic things that visitors to the TRAPPIST-1 system would notice is the view of the other six planets in the sky. In some cases, a neighboring planet might appear twice as large as the full moon seen from Earth. [[Images: The 7 Earth-Size Worlds of TRAPPIST-1](http://www.space.com/35784-trappist-1-earth-size-exoplanets-pictures-gallery.html)]

"If you were on the surface of one of these planets you would have a wonderful view of the other planets," Michaël Gillon, an astronomer at the University of Liège in Belgium and an author on the new paper, said in describing the discovery. "You wouldn't see them like we see Venus or Mars, like dots of light. You would see them really as we see the moon. … You would see the structures on these worlds."

All seven of the known planets in the TRAPPIST-1 system orbit closer to their star than Mercury orbits the sun. The innermost planet and the outermost planet are almost 30 times closer together than Earth and Venus at their largest separation.

The reason these seven planetary siblings can fit into such tight orbits is because their parent star is an [ultracool dwarf star](http://www.space.com/23772-red-dwarf-stars.html). It's about 2,000 times dimmer than the sun, and only slightly larger than the planet Jupiter.

Three of the known planets orbit the star in what's known as the "[habitable zone](http://www.space.com/23910-habitable-zones-alien-planets-stars-infographic.html)," or the region around a star where the planet could have a surface temperature right for liquid water. The position of the habitable zone is different around each star — on a very dim star like TRAPPIST-1, which radiates significantly less heat than the sun, the habitable zone lies much closer to the star.

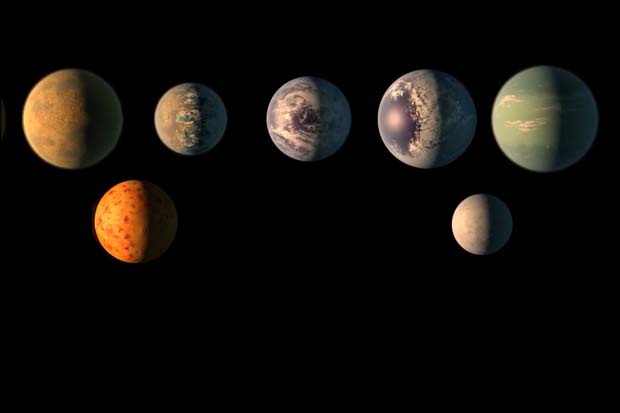
But there's no guarantee that a planet in the habitable zone of TRAPPIST-1 can host liquid water on its surface. Without an atmosphere, water won't remain a liquid in space. For example, on comets (which don't have atmospheres), [water ice sublimates](http://www.space.com/31607-water-ice-comet-rosetta-mission.html) directly into a vapor when it is heated by the sun.

**Perpetual twilight**

Even though the seven known planets in the TRAPPIST-1 system orbit extremely close to their parent star, the natural lighting on these planets would seem very dim to a human visitor.

Ultracool dwarf stars produce significantly less radiation than sun-like stars, and most of TRAPPIST-1's light is radiated in the infrared wavelengths rather than visible wavelengths, according to Amaury Triaud of the Institute of Astronomy at the University of Cambridge in England, a co-author on the paper describing the discovery.

TRAPPIST-1 would be able to warm the air on the surface of the seven planets, but the daytime skies would never get brighter than Earth's skies just after sunset, suffusing the world in a salmon-colored light, Triaud told reporters on Tuesday (Feb. 21).



This artist's rendition imagines what the seven planets of the TRAPPIST-1 system might look like.

*Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech*

**Short years, eternal days (and nights)**

The TRAPPIST-1 planets take almost no time at all to make one complete orbit around their parent star. Six of the planets make a complete an orbit in anywhere from 1.5 to 12.4 days. (The most distant planet's orbital period is thought to be about 20 days).

That means one "year" (or what scientists call the orbital period) on most of these planets is less than two weeks on Earth. But the orbital period of these planets is slightly upset by their neighbors.

"[The planets] tug and pull each other as they go orbiting around their star," Sean Carey, manager of NASA's Spitzer Science Center at Caltech in Pasadena, California, said during a NASA news conference on Wednesday (Feb. 22). [Using the Spitzer Space Telescope](http://www.space.com/35787-planet-hunter-spitzer-space-telescope-trappist-1-data-explained.html), scientists were able to see the seven planets each time they passed in front of the dwarf star, or what's known as a transit.

"What that does is it changes the timing of the transits a little bit, as the planets are tugging each other, so they (the transits) aren't happening as regularly as you would expect without the tug," Carey said.



A travel poster for the TRAPPIST-1 system. Planets in the system would undoubtedly offer great night sky views.

*Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech*

Even though the years are short in the TRAPPIST-1 system, the days would be very long — almost eternal, because the according to the scientists behind the discovery, it's very likely the seven planets are tidally locked, meaning that one side of each planet is always facing the star. The moon is tidally locked to Earth, which is we see only one side of our lunar companion (at least from the ground).

There's [some debate](http://www.space.com/13950-habitable-alien-planets-tidal-lock-life.html) about whether or not a tidally locked planet could host life. Some tidally locked planets might be uninhabitable because the side facing the star would become extremely hot, while the other side would grow extremely cold. But [some models show](http://www.space.com/33456-air-conditioning-could-make-some-exoplanets-habitable.html) that if the planet's atmosphere can dissipate heat across the planet's surface, then life could still find a welcoming home there.

**The Chinese Wealthy want Liberty**

Chinese regulators said they’ve broken up an underground banking operation that conducted $3.7 billion in illegal foreign currency transfers. The move comes as Beijing attempts to curb massive capital flight.

The State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) said it had investigated six companies suspected of illegal FX transfers in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen.

According to the regulators, other firms were found to have used false documentation and fabricated trades to transfer money out of the country.

The authorities in particular cracked down on 'ant moving' strategies whereby large sums of money were transferred out of China in small portions to avoid detection.

*"Underground banking has become a major channel used for money laundering and illegal cross-border transfer of funds,"* said the Ministry of Public Security.

*"It creates an enormous black hole of funds, severely disrupting normal financial supervision and endangering the economic safety of the nation,"* it added.

Last year Chinese police busted more than 380 underground banks, involving more than $131 billion (900 billion yuan). More than 800 suspects were arrested.

Read more

[[](https://www.rt.com/business/322822-china-illegal-bank-crackdown/)China busts biggest “underground bank”](https://www.rt.com/business/322822-china-illegal-bank-crackdown/)

Chinese regulators have intensified their fight against irregularities in the foreign exchange market, following the acceleration of capital flight.

The government has taken restrictive measures limiting cash withdrawals abroad as foreign exchange reserves unexpectedly fell below the $3 trillion level in January for the first time in nearly six years.

Chinese nationals have been moving their money offshore over fears of a weakening economy and with confidence that investments were safer outside the country.

To bolster the bond market and attract more foreign investment SAFE allowed foreign investors in the country’s interbank bond market to trade derivatives for the first time.

You don’t need to be a finance expert to know that something’s wrong when an interest rate reaches almost 70 percent. With China’s growth outlook darkening and capital flowing out of the country, speculators have been betting heavily against the yuan. The People’s Bank of China effectively declared war on them in early January, directing state banks to buy large sums of the currency in Hong Kong to support its value and burn the short sellers. With the yuan suddenly scarce in Hong Kong, the annualized cost of borrowing it overnight there hit 66.82 percent on Jan. 12—more than 10 times the usual interest rate. (It receded to 8 percent the next day.) Michael Every, head of financial markets research at Rabobank Group, called the rate spike “murderous” and predicted that things wouldn’t end well for Chinese authorities. Central banks “usually win a round like this, but lose in the end,” he told Bloomberg.

China’s central bank isn’t freestyling. It takes its instructions from the government, which means President Xi Jinping. Xi has shrewdly consolidated power since his ascension in 2012, but he seems befuddled by free markets, at times allowing them to operate and at times trying to throttle them—as with the circuit breakers that have failed to arrest the slide in stock prices.



Photo Illustration: 731; Photos: Getty Images (1); Hainan Airlines (1)

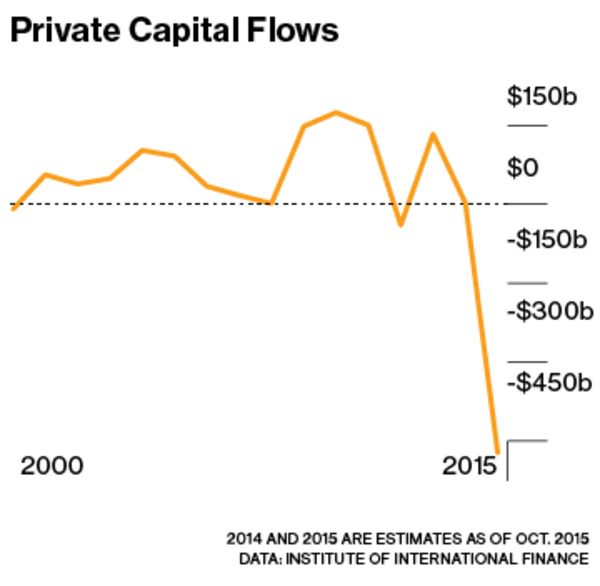
One of the big questions for the global economy in 2016 is what Xi will do next to stop the flight of capital, which threatens to sap funds from China when growth is already weak. One option is to lure money back by making the country more inviting to both Chinese and foreign investors. That would involve decontrolling interest rates and halting directed lending to heavily indebted state-owned enterprises and local governments. But doing so would require loosening the Communist Party’s control over the economy and harm some powerful domestic constituencies, like long-favored companies and provincial chiefs. So the temptation to amp up command-and-control will be great. True, a clampdown would jeopardize China’s ambition to become an equal of the U.S. in global finance. But it would insulate China from the ungovernable swings of the global financial markets, which investor George Soros once memorably said are more a wrecking ball than a pendulum.

Some China watchers say the question of Xi’s direction is already being answered. “China will become increasingly closed to the rest of the world,” predicts Alicia Garcia-Herrero, chief economist for Asia and the Pacific at Natixis Asia, a unit of Groupe BPCE, France’s second-largest banking company. “Xi Jinping’s mindset is one in which China is at the center of the world’s economy but not necessarily open to the rest of the world, or at least not vulnerable to it.”

Xi seems to realize that he paid a high price for the honor of having the Chinese yuan included, starting this October, in the International Monetary Fund’s basket of reserve currencies along with the dollar, the euro, the yen, and the British pound. To be included in the basket, China had to demonstrate that the yuan was “freely usable.” That forced it to lower some investment barriers—enabling the capital flight now bedeviling the leadership. The Institute of International Finance estimated in October that net capital flows out of China would reach $478 billion in 2015. New estimates due this month could show even larger outflows, the IIF says.

It’s worth taking a close look at what “capital flight” really means for China. Capital flows out of the country aren’t necessarily bad; they’re simply the mirror image of its trade surplus. Whenever China chooses to use a dollar, euro, pound, or ringgit earned from exports to buy a foreign asset, it’s sending capital abroad. Many foreign acquisitions strengthen the country, economically and politically.

The problem now is that more money wants to get out of the country than wants to get in. Here’s the math: Last year, the IIF estimates, China had a little more than $250 billion coming in from the surplus on its current account, the broadest measure of trade. It got an additional $70 billion or so in net capital from nonresidents, including Chinese companies’ overseas affiliates. But those inflows were swamped by a record $550 billion in net outflows by individuals and companies inside China.



Who stashed all that money abroad? The Bank for International Settlements attempted to answer that question in its *Quarterly Review* in September using the example of a hypothetical Chinese multinational. During the boom years, BIS economist Robert McCauley wrote, such a company made money by borrowing at near-zero rates in the U.S. and Europe, converting the money to yuan, and investing in China at higher yields. Now, he wrote, it was reversing course: borrowing more in yuan and holding more money in foreign currencies.

That’s the dynamic the government is trying to overcome with its yuan-buying. The IIF projected in October that the government would need to sell off more than $220 billion of its reserves last year to meet the demand for foreign currency. The actual number was probably closer to half a trillion. The nation’s stockpile of foreign exchange reserves has dwindled to about $3.3 trillion. The cushion is shrinking. “Considering China’s foreign debt, trade, and exchange rate management, it needs around $3 trillion in foreign exchange reserves to be comfortable,” says Hao Hong, chief China strategist at Bocom International Holdings.

What Xi is running up against is what international economists call the trilemma, or the impossible trinity. It says that a country can’t have all three of the following things at once: a flexible monetary policy, free flows of capital, and a fixed exchange rate. They fight one another. As soon as China started allowing free (or at least freer) flows of capital, it was inevitable that it would have to give up on one of the other two objectives. If it wanted to keep the yuan from falling, it would have to raise interest rates higher than is good for the domestic economy, essentially giving up on setting an appropriate monetary policy. Or, if it wanted to set interest rates as it pleased, it would have to allow the yuan to sink.

“It really is a puzzle,” says Steven Wei Ho, a Columbia University economist. “We can only speculate,” he adds, which option the leadership will choose. To University of Macau economist Vinh Dang, the answer is obvious: Because flexible monetary policy is essential and China is too big to wall itself off from the world, “exchange rate control must be given up,” he wrote in an e-mail.

Judging from China’s stop-and-go policies, its leaders haven’t completely wrapped their heads around the idea that they must make a choice. They still want all three parts of the impossible trinity. Calls for a large depreciation are “ridiculous,” Han Jun, the deputy director of China’s office of the central leading group on financial and economic affairs, said on Jan. 11 at a briefing in New York.

It can’t be easy for Xi to suffer the indignity of losing a fight against the world’s financial markets. That’s one reason to think he’ll try to escape the trilemma by restoring at least some controls on capital. Garcia-Herrero, the economist for Natixis, predicts that permission to send or keep money abroad will be doled out more stingily in the future. The One Belt, One Road initiative to make China a hub of Asian commerce should have no trouble getting financing, she says, but an investment that doesn’t obviously serve the national interest could be rejected. Chinese authorities will remain open to investing or extending credit outside the country when it’s fully under their control, she predicts. An example would be the nascent “panda bond” market, which allows foreigners to borrow money in yuan inside China.

Kevin Yan, an analyst at Stratfor, a geopolitical intelligence firm based in Austin, agrees with Garcia-Herrero that the short-term trend is toward closing China off from the world, but he’s more optimistic about the long term. “It’ll be opening and closing, opening and closing, but slowly moving in a positive direction, probably over the next 5 to 10 years,” Yan says.

Bottom of Form

The worst thing China’s leaders could do now would be to fall back on the tired old trick of supporting employment by building roads, bridges, and apartments. Gunther Schnabl, a professor at the University of Leipzig, says that lax lending merely keeps zombie enterprises on their feet: “If you do not have a hard budget constraint, you do not have an incentive to put forward dynamic, innovative investment.” Judging from the amount of capital flight that China is experiencing, a lot of people in the Middle Kingdom are worried about precisely that.

**The Mission to the Sun**

Humans have sent spacecraft to the moon, Mars and even distant interstellar space, but could we send a spaceship to the scorching sun?

The answer is yes, and it's happening soon.

In 2018, NASA plans to launch the Solar Probe Plus mission to the sun. Earth is about 93 million miles (149 million kilometers) from the sun, and Solar Probe Plus is slated to get within 4 million miles (6 million km) of the blazing star. [[What Will Happen to Earth When the Sun Dies?](http://www.livescience.com/32879-what-happens-to-earth-when-sun-dies.html)]

"This is going to be our first mission to fly to the sun," said Eric Christian, a NASA research scientist at Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland. "We can't get to the very surface of the sun," but the mission will get close enough to answer three important questions, he said.

First, the mission aims to reveal why the surface of the sun, called the photosphere, is not as hot as the sun's atmosphere, called the corona. The surface of the sun is only about 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit (5,500 degrees Celsius). But the atmosphere above it is a sizzling 3.5 million F (2 million C), according to NASA.

"You'd think the farther away you get from a heat source, you'd get colder," Christian told Live Science. "[Why the atmosphere is hotter](http://www.livescience.com/13208-sun-mystery-explained-plasma-jets.html) than the surface is a big puzzle."

Second, scientists want to know how the solar wind gets its speed. "The sun blows a stream of charged particles in all directions at a million miles an hour," he said. "But we don't understand how that gets accelerated."

People have known about the solar wind for years, as early observers noticed that the tails of comets always pointed away from the sun, even if the comet was traveling in another direction. This suggested that something — that is, the solar wind — was coming off the sun faster [than the comet was moving](http://www.livescience.com/7926-10-failed-doomsday-predictions.html), Christian said.

Third, the mission may ascertain why the sun occasionally emits high-energy particles — called solar energetic particles — that are a danger to unprotected astronauts and spacecraft.

Researchers have tried to figure out these mysteries from Earth, but "the trouble is we're 93 million miles away," Christian said. "[The distance makes] things get smeared out in a way that makes it hard to tell what's happening at the sun."

But flying to within 4 million miles of the sun has its challenges. The main challenge, unsurprisingly, is the heat. To deal with the extreme temperatures, NASA scientists have designed a 4.5-inch-thick (11.4 centimeters) carbon-composite shield, which is designed to withstand temperatures outside the spacecraft of 2,500 F (1,370 C), [according to the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory](http://solarprobe.jhuapl.edu/), a NASA collaborator working on the Solar Probe Plus.

In addition, the probe will have special heat tubes called thermal radiators that will radiate heat that permeates the heat shield to open space, "so it doesn't go to the instruments, which are sensitive to heat," Christian said.

If these protections work as expected, the instruments in the probe will stay at room temperature, Christian said. [[Is There Gravity in Space?](http://www.livescience.com/32109-is-there-gravity-in-space.html)]

The Solar Probe Plus will also be protected from radiation, which can damage the probe's electrical circuits, especially its memory, he said.

The spacecraft will be unmanned, but if given enough time and money, NASA scientists could probably develop a spacecraft that could safely carry an astronaut to within 4 million miles of the sun, Christian said. However, the cost of a human life is great, and that's a risk uncrewed missions don't carry, he noted.

If all goes as planned, the Solar Probe Plus will be the closest that a human-made object has ever made it to the sun. Until now, the closest spacecraft were Helios 1 (launched in December 1974), which flew to within 29 million miles (47 million km) of the sun, and Helios 2 (launched in April 1976), which flew to within 1.8 million miles (3 million km) closer to the sun than Helios 1.

# Temperature Swings of Black Hole Winds Measured for First Time

Rapidly varying temperatures have been measured on the ultrafast streams of gas emanating from around a black hole.

Supermassive black holes can be voracious, devouring gas, dust, and other material pulled in by their gravity. These feeding frenzies can get messy: the disks of matter surrounding black holes can fling out ultrafast streams of hot gas, or "winds," that blast through their host galaxies. These winds, according to new measurements of a nearby supermassive black hole obtained with NASA's Nuclear Spectroscopic Telescope Array (NuSTAR) telescope, can heat up and cool down in the span of just a few hours.

The findings, made with NuSTAR and the European Space Agency's XMM-Newton telescope, appear in a paper in the March 2 issue of Nature.

"We know that supermassive black holes affect the environment of their host galaxies, and powerful winds arising from near the black hole may be one means for them to do so," says NuSTAR principal investigator [Fiona Harrison](https://www.pma.caltech.edu/content/fiona-harrison-0), the Benjamin M. Rosen Professor of Physics and the Kent and Joyce Kresa Leadership Chair of Caltech's Division of Physics, Mathematics and Astronomy. "The rapid variability, observed for the first time, is providing clues as to how these winds form and how much energy they may carry out into the galaxy."

Supermassive black holes are orbited by disks of gas and dust, called accretion disks, from which they feed. Young and energetic black holes, such as the nearby one studied by NuSTAR, can only feed so quickly, however, before their accretion disks begin to emit streams of fast, hot gas in all directions. These winds, which travel at a quarter of the speed of light and carry an enormous amount of matter, can disrupt star formation in the black hole's host galaxy.

To measure the temperatures of these winds, the team studied X-rays coming from the edge of the black hole. As they travel toward Earth, these X-rays pass through the winds, and some wavelengths of the X-ray spectrum are absorbed by different elements in the winds, such as iron and magnesium. By examining the holes, or "absorption features," in the X-ray spectrum as it reaches Earth, astronomers can learn more about the components of the wind.

While observing this spectrum, the team noticed that the absorption features were disappearing and reappearing in the span of a few hours. The team concluded that the X-rays were actually heating up the winds to very high temperatures—millions of degrees Fahrenheit—such that they became incapable of absorbing any more X-rays. The winds then cool off, and the absorption features return, starting the cycle over again.

"This is the first time we have seen that winds are interacting with the black hole's radiation," says Michael Parker, postdoctoral scholar at University of Cambridge Institute of Astronomy and first author on the paper. "Further study of this source is likely to have wide-ranging implications for our knowledge of how these winds form and are powered, where they are located, how dense they are, and how long they last—all of which will add to our understanding of the interaction between black holes and their galaxies."

The paper is titled ["The response of relativistic outflowing gas to the inner accretion disk of a black hole."](http://resolver.caltech.edu/CaltechAUTHORS:20170301-125605305) Other Caltech co-authors include postdoctoral scholar Javier Garcia. The work was funded by the European Research Council, the European Union Seventh Framework Programme, the Science and Technology Facilities Council of the United Kingdom, the European Space Agency, and NASA.

NuSTAR is a Small Explorer mission led by Caltech and managed by JPL for NASA's Science Mission Directorate in Washington. JPL is managed by Caltech for NASA.

Written by Lori Dajose

**Journey to the Center of the Moon**

More than four decades after the last man walked on the lunar surface, several upstart space entrepreneurs are looking to capitalize on NASA's renewed interest in returning to the moon, offering a variety of proposals with the ultimate goal of establishing a lasting human presence there.

The commercial sector's interest comes as many anticipate support from the Trump administration, which is eager for a first-term triumph to rally the nation the way the Apollo flights did in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The latest to offer a proposal is Jeffrey P. Bezos, whose space company Blue Origin has been circulating a seven-page white paper to NASA leadership and President Trump's transition team about the company's interest in developing a lunar spacecraft with a lander that would touch down near a crater at the south pole where there is water and nearly continuous sunlight for solar energy. The memo urges the space agency to back an Amazon-like shipment service for the moon that would deliver gear for experiments, cargo and habitats by mid-2020, helping to enable “future human settlement” of the moon. (Bezos, the founder of Amazon.com, owns The Washington Post.)

“It is time for America to return to the Moon — this time to stay,” Bezos said in response to emailed questions from The Post. “A permanently inhabited lunar settlement is a difficult and worthy objective. I sense a lot of people are excited about this.”

The Post obtained a copy of the white paper, marked “proprietary and confidential,” and the company then confirmed its authenticity and agreed to answer questions about it.

Bezos’s proposal comes as SpaceX founder Elon Musk made a stunning announcement this week that his company planned to fly two unnamed, private citizens on a tourist trip around the moon by next year — an ambitious timeline that, if met, could beat a similar mission by NASA.

[[SpaceX plans to fly two private citizens around the moon by late next year.](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2017/02/27/elon-musks-spacex-plans-to-fly-two-private-citizens-around-the-moon-by-late-next-year/?utm_term=.77e552aa3ccc)]

Anticipating that the Trump administration is focusing on the moon, the space agency recently announced it is considering adding astronauts to the first flight of its Space Launch System rocket and Orion crew capsule. That flight, originally scheduled to fly without humans in 2018, would also circle the moon. But as the space agency seeks to move faster under the Trump administration, it is now studying the feasibility of adding crew for a mission that would then occur by 2019.

[[NASA officials discuss Trump's push for first-term moon mission.](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/speaking-of-science/wp/2017/02/24/nasa-officials-discuss-trumps-push-for-first-term-moon-mission/?utm_term=.74c020de9a17)]

Obama killed plans for a lunar mission, saying in 2010 that “we’ve been there before.” But the administration’s Mars plan was still far from actually delivering humans there, and critics grew frustrated that NASA has not been able to fly humans out of low Earth orbit since the 1970s. A shot around the moon, however, could be feasible, even within a few years.

Blue Origin’s proposal, dated Jan. 4, doesn’t involve flying humans, but rather is focused on a series of cargo missions. Those could deliver the equipment necessary to help establish a human colony on the moon — unlike the Apollo missions, in which the astronauts left “flags and footprints” and then came home.

NASA already has shown a willingness to work closely with the commercial sector, hiring companies to fly supplies and eventually astronauts to the International Space Station. It is providing technical expertise, but no funding, to SpaceX’s plan to fly an uncrewed spacecraft to Mars by 2020.

The prospect of a lunar mission has several companies lining up to provide not just transportation, but also habitats, science experiments and even the ability to mine the moon for resources.

The United Launch Alliance, the joint venture of Boeing and Lockheed Martin, has also been working on plans to create a transportation network to the area around the moon, known as cislunar space.

“I’m excited by the possibilities,” said Tory Bruno, the alliance's chief executive. “This administration, near as we can tell, feels a sense of urgency to go out and make things happen, and to have high-profile demonstrations that are along the road map to accomplish these broad goals. … There is an opportunity to begin building that infrastructure right now — within the next four years.”

Robert Bigelow, the founder of Bigelow Aerospace, a maker of inflatable space habitats, said his company could create a depot that could orbit the moon by 2020, housing supplies and medical facilities, as well as humans. A smaller version of the possible habitats, known as the BEAM, is docked to the International Space Station, where astronauts have been testing it.

In an interview, Bigelow said he was glad the administration seems to be refocusing on the moon. “Mars is premature at this time. The moon is not,” he said. “We have the technology. We have the ability, and the potential for a terrific business case.”

After remaining quiet and obsessively secretive for years, Blue Origin’s attempt to partner with NASA is a huge coming out of sorts for the company, which has been funded almost exclusively by Bezos. The paper urges NASA to develop a program that provides “incentives to the private sector to demonstrate a commercial lunar cargo delivery service.”

Blue Origin could perform the first lunar mission as early as July 2020, Bezos wrote, but stressed that it could “only be done in partnership with NASA. Our liquid hydrogen expertise and experience with precision vertical landing offer the fastest path to a lunar lander mission. I’m excited about this and am ready to invest my own money alongside NASA to make it happen.”

Last year, Blue Origin successfully launched and landed its suborbital rocket, the New Shepard, five times within less than a year, flying just past the 62-mile edge of space and then landing vertically on a landing pad at the company’s West Texas facility.

That same technology could be used to land the Blue Moon vehicle on the lunar surface, the company said. Its white paper shows what looks like a modified New Shepard rocket, standing on the moon with an American flag, a NASA logo and Blue Origin’s feather symbol.

The company said it plans to land its Blue Moon lunar lander at Shackleton Crater on the moon’s south pole. The site has nearly continuous sunlight to provide power through the spacecraft’s solar arrays. The company also chose to land there because of the “water ice in the perpetual shadow of the crater’s deep crevices.”

Water is vital not just for human survival, but also because hydrogen and oxygen in water could be transformed into rocket fuel. The moon, then, is seen as a massive gas station in space.

**The Coup Exposed**

## The Daily Mail reports Valerie Jarrett has moved into the new Washington, D.C. mansion of former President Barack Obama, from which she will mount an insurgency against President Donald Trump.

According to the [report](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4271412/Obama-confidante-Valerie-Jarrett-moves-Kaloroma-home.html), Jarrett, Obama’s former special advisor in the White House, has moved into the home with former first lady Michelle Obama. The mansion, in the exclusive Kaloroma section of the nation’s capital, is alleged to serve as “the nerve center of a mounting insurgency against [Obama’s] successor, President Donald J. Trump.”

The plan, reportedly, is for Obama to force Trump to resign or to have him impeached.

The Daily Mail states that “a close Obama family friend” reported Jarrett and Michelle Obama have moved into Obama’s 8,200 square-foot home, which Obama is renting from Joe Lockhart, former President Bill Clinton’s press secretary.

“There was never any doubt that Valerie would have a suite of rooms in the house that the Obama’s are renting,” the family friend reportedly said. “Obama trusts her judgment more than any other person on the planet, as does Michelle. Obama doesn’t make a decision without her.”

The report continues:

The former president has set up an office on the West End of the national’s capitol, where he recently hosted an open house for his White House staff – including Joe Biden, Susan Rice, Josh Earnest and Jarrett.

But the office, part of his post presidency perks, cannot be used for political purposes. The rent on his home is paid by him personally.

On Tuesday, former Attorney General Eric Holder revealed that Obama is indeed getting closer to making his public reappearance in politics.

“It’s coming. He’s coming,” Holder said speaking to reporters. “And he’s ready to roll.”

“No longer the most powerful man in the world, he was just observing Trump and not liking what he saw,” the source reportedly said. “He was weary and burned out after eight years in office. But Valerie convinced him that he didn’t have any choice if he wanted to save his legacy. And, as usual, he bowed to Valerie’s political wisdom and advice.”

However, what Obama does have in information: Maxine Waters: ‘Obama Has Put In Place’ Secret Database With ‘Everything On Everyone’

"The President has put in place an organization with the kind of database that no one has ever seen before in life," Representative Maxine Waters told Roland Martin on Monday.   
"That's going to be very, very powerful," Waters said. "That database will have information about everything on every individual on ways that it's never been done before and whoever runs for President on the Democratic ticket has to deal with that. They're going to go down with   
that database and the concerns of those people because they can't get around it. And he's [President Obama] been very smart. It's very powerful what he's leaving in place."

Read more at https://www.liveleak.com/view?i=49a\_1360284775#88mq62pDdpMq3GiX.99

Obama recently made one public comment in support of the protests against Trump’s executive order on immigration.

“He is going to use his immense popularity with the half of the country that identifies as liberals and progressives,” the Obama family source reportedly said. “Millions of Americans are energized and ready to take to the streets to oppose Trump, but they need to be organized and have their anger focused and directed.”

“Obama is dismayed at the way Trump is tearing down his legacy — ObamaCare, the social safety net and the welcome mat for refugees he put in place,” the source reportedly added.

Right Scoop [comments](http://therightscoop.com/report-valerie-jarrett-is-living-in-obamas-dc-mansion-to-mount-an-insurgency-against-trump/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+TheRightScoop+%28The+Right+Scoop%29) on the story: “It’s one thing to criticize Trump. But to mount an insurgency against him with the goal of him resigning or getting him impeached?”

Following this story, the following items appear to reveal a well-funded and focused effort to overthrow the US government by the former President, Barack Hussein Obama.

There is a clear and present danger of the overthrow of the US government by Obama and his soldiers inside the Agency government.

**1. June 2016: FISA request.** Bill Clinton rendezvous with Loretta Lynch’s plane at the Phoenix Airport. The Obama administration [files a request](https://heatst.com/world/exclusive-fbi-granted-fisa-warrant-covering-trump-camps-ties-to-russia/) with the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISA) to monitor communications involving Donald Trump and several advisers. The request, uncharacteristically, is denied.

**2. July: Russia joke**. Wikileaks releases emails from the Democratic National Committee that show an effort to prevent Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) from winning the presidential nomination. In a press conference, Donald Trump refers to Hillary Clinton’s own missing emails, joking: “Russia, if you’re listening, I hope you’re able to find the 30,000 e-mails that are missing.” That remark becomes the basis for accusations by Clinton and the media that Trump invited further hacking.

**3. October: Podesta emails.** In October, Wikileaks releases the emails of Clinton campaign chair John Podesta, rolling out batches every day until the election, creating new mini-scandals. The Clinton campaign blames Trump and the Russians.

**4. October: FISA request number two.**The Obama administration submits a new, more narrow request to the FISA court, now focused on a computer server in Trump Tower suspected of links to Russian banks. No evidence of wrongdoing is presented to the FISA Court (all Clinton appointees)— but the wiretaps are approved anyway, ostensibly for national security reasons, Andrew McCarthy at National Review later [notes](http://www.nationalreview.com/article/443768/obama-fisa-trump-wiretap). The Obama administration is now monitoring an opposing presidential campaign, weeks before the election, using the high-tech surveillance powers of the federal intelligence services.

**5. November: DHS Hacks into Georgia Voting Records**, despite specific instructions by the Governor of Georgia not to do so. Jeh Johnson uses his authority as DHS Commander to order the hack after all the votes were cast, but before they were tallied. The discovery showed a margin of victory for Donald trump over Hillary Clinton that was too large to manipulate. If it was a close race of less than 5%, the DHS was in a position to switch the tally to provide Hillary a narrow victory of 2%. That is beyond the threshold where a recount could be demanded.

**6. January 2017: Buzzfeed/CNN dossier.** [Buzzfeed releases, and CNN report](http://www.breitbart.com/2016-presidential-race/2017/01/11/cnn-distances-itself-from-buzzfeed-russia-claims/)s, a supposed intelligence “[dossier](http://www.breitbart.com/wp-admin/)” compiled by a foreign former spy. It purports to show continuous contact between Russia and the Trump campaign, and says that the Russians have compromising information about Trump. None of the allegations can be verified and some are proven false. Several media outlets claim that they had been aware of the dossier for months and that it had been circulating in Washington.

**7. January: Obama expands NSA sharing.**As Michael Walsh later [notes](https://pjmedia.com/trending/2017/02/15/surprise-at-the-end-obama-administration-gave-nsa-broad-new-powers/), and as the New York Times reports, the outgoing Obama administration “expanded the power of the National Security Agency to share globally intercepted personal communications with the government’s 16 other intelligence agencies before applying privacy protections.”  This was done 17 days before the inauguration, forcing the NSA to disseminate raw surveillance data real-time to the other 16 Intelligence Agencies, without analysis or redacting of American identities that may be involved in the tapped conversation. The new powers, and reduced protections, provide a nearly untraceable pathway for American identities to be leaked to the press.

**8. January: Times report.** The New York Times [reports](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/19/us/politics/trump-russia-associates-investigation.html?_r=0), on the eve of Inauguration Day, that several agencies — the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Treasury Department are monitoring several associates of the Trump campaign suspected of Russian ties. Other news outlets also report the existence of “a multiagency working group to coordinate investigations across the government,” though it is unclear how they found out, since the investigations would have been secret and involved classified information.

**9. February: Mike Flynn scandal.** Reports emerge that the FBI intercepted a conversation in 2016 between future National Security Adviser Michael Flynn — technically still a private citizen — and Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak. The intercept supposedly was part of routine spying on the ambassador, not monitoring of the Trump campaign. Although Federal law requires that the identity of Americans involved in these conversation be protected, Obama’s ruling one day before Flynn speaks with Kislyak ensures his indentity is leaked to the press. The FBI transcripts reportedly show the two discussing Obama’s newly-imposed sanctions on Russia, though Flynn earlier denied discussing them. Never Trumper Sally Yates, acting Attorney General whom Trump would fire within hours of her open and public insubordination, is involved in the investigation. In the end, Flynn resigns over having misled Vice President Mike Pence (perhaps inadvertently) about the content of the conversation. Further conversations about this non-recorded conversation between Pence and Flynn appear to have been about a list of names that Pence presented to Flynn for identification as being involved in his investigation, pursuant to his appointment as National Security Advisor. Flynn denied to Pence that any of the names on that list were involved. That turned out to be false. The consensus is that Flynn was protecting Pence, so that he would not contact his friends on that list to tell them to erase everything and get out of town. Flynn took one for the team, and quietly resigned. Know this. Mike Flynn is a spy. He is a spook. Although he does not hold the title of the job anymore, he did not go far. Obama is scared.

**10. January-February: Times claims extensive Russian contacts.**The New York Times [cites](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/14/us/politics/russia-intelligence-communications-trump.html?_r=0) “four current and former American officials” in reporting that the Trump campaign had “repeated contacts with senior Russian intelligence officials. The Trump campaign denies the claims — and the Times admits that there is “no evidence” of coordination between the campaign and the Russians. The White House and some congressional Republicans begin to raise questions about illegal intelligence leaks. ***CNN* Prints a story** with allegations that the Trump campaign had “continuous communication with Russian Operatives with the purpose of defeating Hillary Clinton.” There are no facts, no names, and no dates. Sessions is asked in confirmation hearings to respond to the speculation, which he denies.

Update: It has been announced that the Obama command center is complete, and Valerie Jarrett, the Iranian-born agent in command has moved into her luxury suite in the Obama Compound. Eric Holder, Loretta Lynch, and Susan Rice are commanding and coordinating insurgent forces such as the OFA, the Obama Foundation, MoveOn.org, and other terrorist groups working actively to overthrow the US government as we speak. There are more than 30 thousand soldiers on payroll, and more than 250 command posts nationally in encrypted communication with the Obama compound 2 miles from the White House.

Update 2: As the final bricks and signal jamming technology was being laid around the Obama Compound, one of Russia’s high-tech spy ships sailed slowly a few miles away, monitoring all communications to and from the Trump Administration. Are they relaying information to the Obama Compound? Is the presence of Russia’s spy ship a coincidence with the Obama insurgency to overthrow the American government from within? Is Trump able to monitor what Obama is planning inside his compound? If Trump does know what is going on, through the very skillful efforts of Mike Flynn—a former Obama insider—will he do anything about it?

**11. March: the Washington Post targets Jeff Sessions.** The Washington Post [reports](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/sessions-spoke-twice-with-russian-ambassador-during-trumps-presidential-campaign-justice-officials-say/2017/03/01/77205eda-feac-11e6-99b4-9e613afeb09f_story.html?utm_term=.aeb0609c8196) that Attorney General Jeff Sessions had contact twice with the Russian ambassador during the campaign — once at a Heritage Foundation event and once at a meeting in Sessions’s Senate office. The Post suggests that the two meetings contradict Sessions’s testimony at his confirmation hearings that he had no contacts with the Russians, though in context (not presented by the Post) it was clear he meant in his capacity as a campaign surrogate, and that he was responding to claims in the “dossier” of ongoing contacts. The New York Times, in [covering](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/01/us/politics/obama-trump-russia-election-hacking.html) the story, adds that the Obama White House “rushed to preserve” intelligence related to alleged Russian links with the Trump campaign. By “preserve” it really means “disseminate to his soldiers in the Agency government”: officials spread evidence throughout other government agencies “to leave a murky trail of intelligence for government investigators” and perhaps the media as well.

In summary: the Obama administration sought, and eventually obtained, authorization to eavesdrop on the Trump campaign; continued monitoring the Trump team even when no evidence of wrongdoing was found; then relaxed the NSA rules to allow raw, unfiltered evidence to be shared widely to his soldiers within the government, virtually ensuring that the information, including the identity of private citizens, would be leaked to the media in violation of Federal law.

What the whole world knows now is that the Obama administration never disbanded as the Constitution requires, and that American custom has established. Rather, it has reconvened in his walled compound two miles from the White House, and is focused on overthrowing the US government from within using an army of soldiers he put in place in the Agency government for specially this purpose. We the people demand that it be investigated, and that the Obama soldiers be expunged from their positions of authority before a Civil War erupts.

# EXCLUSIVE: FBI ‘Granted FISA Warrant’ Covering Trump Camp’s Ties To Russia

By Louise Mensch | 10:18 pm, November 7, 2016

Saturday morning one of the most illegal acts since Nixon’s Watergate was exposed. The Obama team tapped the phone communications at Trump Tower, before the 2016 election. The Fake Stream Media buried the story so deep, no one found it until now. Two separate sources with links to the counter-intelligence community have confirmed to Heat Street that the FBI sought, and was granted, a FISA court warrant in October, giving Obama administration spies permission to examine the activities of ‘U.S. persons’ in Donald Trump’s campaign with ties to Russia.

As you know, an Obama spokesperson issued a vague and convoluted denial on Saturday, but did not actually answer the allegations made by President Trump. The President has the proof. Now, the only question is, does Trump have the balls to go after a former president? I would say his move on Saturday was brilliantly played as it openly and specifically accuses Obama without revealing how he knows or the method by which he discovered it. Obama cannot defend himself in the court of public opinion, which is the only place it really counts anyway.

So, here is the truth. [Contrary to earlier reporting in the New York Times](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/01/us/politics/fbi-russia-election-donald-trump.html), which cited FBI sources as saying that the agency did not believe that [the private server in Donald Trump’s Trump Tower which was connected to a Russian bank](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/cover_story/2016/10/was_a_server_registered_to_the_trump_organization_communicating_with_russia.html) had any nefarious purpose, Miss Step-and-Fetch’s counter-intelligence arm at the DOJ, sources say, re-drew an earlier FISA court request around possible financial and banking offenses related to the server believed to be located in Trump Tower. The first FISA request was crafted and submitted within days of a secret June 2016 meeting on the tarmac of the Phoenix Airport. The warrant named Trump and was denied. Think about that for a moment. These warrants are for foreign communications, but they needed the DOJ to be the manager so the evidence could be used in a US court. The Republican nomination process wasn’t even completed then. Trump had just obliterated Jeb Bush. The second was drawn more narrowly and was granted in October less than 3 weeks prior to the election [after evidence was presented of a server, possibly related to the Trump campaign, and its alleged links to two banks; SVB Bank and Russia’s Alfa Bank.](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/cover_story/2016/10/was_a_server_registered_to_the_trump_organization_communicating_with_russia.html) You will recall that Hillary was being destroyed in the debates, and Trump’s rallies were drawing tens of thousands of people multiple times a day. While the *NY* Times story speaks of metadata, we now have confirmation that a FISA warrant was granted to look at the full content of emails and other related documents that may concern US persons including their names. Couple this with the fact that just 17 days before the election, Obama issued an Executive Order that required the NSA to share all real-time raw surveillance data with the other 16 Agencies, virtually guaranteeing that it would be leaked to the press. This is precisely what caused the exposure of General Mike Flynn.

The FBI agents [who talked to the New York Times](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/01/us/politics/fbi-russia-election-donald-trump.html), and rubbished the ground-[breaking stories of](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/cover_story/2016/10/was_a_server_registered_to_the_trump_organization_communicating_with_russia.html) Slate ( Franklin Foer) and [Mother Jones](http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2016/10/veteran-spy-gave-fbi-info-alleging-russian-operation-cultivate-donald-trump) (David Corn) may not have known about the FISA warrant, sources say, because the counter-intelligence and criminal sides of the FBI often work independently of each other employing the principle of ‘compartmentalization’. None of the reports could get any traction, due to the DOJ’s damage control efforts.

The FISA warrant was granted in connection with the investigation of suspected activity between the Trump server and two banks, SVB Bank and Alfa Bank. However, it is thought in the intelligence community that the warrant covers any ‘US person’ connected to this investigation, and specifically covers Donald Trump and at least three further men who have either formed part of his campaign or acted as his media surrogates. This means that the Obama Spokesperson openly and blatantly lied to the American people Saturday by saying they never ordered any wiretapping.

The warrant was sought, they say, because actionable intelligence on the matter provided by friendly foreign agencies could not properly be examined without a warrant by US intelligence as it involves ‘US Persons’ who come under the remit of the FBI and not the CIA. Should a counter-intelligence investigation lead to criminal prosecutions, sources say, the Justice Department is concerned that the chain of evidence have a basis in a clear warrant. Otherwise, the evidence found could not be used in a court of law.

In June, when the first FISA warrant was denied, the FBI was reportedly alarmed at Carter Page’s trip to Moscow and meetings with Russian officials, one week before the DNC was hacked. Counter intelligence agencies later reported to both Presidential candidates that Russia had carried out this hack; Donald Trump said publicly in the third debate that ‘our country has no idea’ if Russia did the hacking. The discovery of the Trump Tower private Russian server, however, communicating with Alfa Bank, changed matters, sources report.

To further complicate the story, the FISA warrant was allegedly granted in part because of the involvement of Vladimir Putin’s own daughters. One is married to a senior official at Gazprom, where Carter Page and Paul Manafort reportedly have holdings; another to Kirill Shamalov, a banking official. By the way, next month he turns 35 and is Russia’s youngest billionaire.

The fact that the alleged warrant was a FISA warrant is itself significant. The court exists to grant warrants to examine cases concerned with Foreign Intelligence. You will recall that two weeks ago, Obama’s spies inside the Agency government successfully leaked the name of Mike Flynn to the press after a tapped phone conversation, which ended up getting him fired after a narrow approval in the Senate. Democrats did not want him, voted unanimously against him, and resorted to spying to finally get their way.

Pursuant to FISA, the Court entertains applications submitted by the United States Government for **approval of electronic surveillance, physical search, and other investigative actions for foreign intelligence purposes.** Most of the Court’s work is conducted ex parte as required by statute, and due to the need to protect classified national security information.

Bradley P. Moss is a national security lawyer. Here is what he said:

“If a FISA warrant was issued, it does not necessarily mean that the court considered any U.S. persons as literal ‘spies.’ I can imagine an argument having been made that there was probable cause to believe they were “agents of influence” who were unwittingly being influenced by a foreign power.

“If the operation concerns suspected money laundering involving a foreign government, the FISA warrant could theoretically encompass U.S. persons in that limited context. A FISA warrant is authorization to collect evidence, not to arrest.”

On October 9th, the Trump campaign released a large number of documents pointing out [Hillary Clinton’s](https://www.donaldjtrump.com/press-releases/clintons-close-ties-to-putin-deserve-scrutiny) ties to Russia.  Three days later, in retaliation, on October 12th, a new FISA warrant issue was leaked to the press.  Donald Trump’s campaign had not answered requests for comment on the matter at time of going to press.

Now, this report substantiates Trump’s accusation Saturday. It exposes the Obama Deep State Coup and the American people know it.

**The President CAN actually legally order a wiretap. The truth is that NO ONE had the authority to order the wiretap EXCEPT Obama.**

In [Chapter 36 of Title 50 of the US Code \*War and National Defense", Subchapter 1, Section 1802](http://college.cengage.com/polisci/schubert/law_legal_process/9e/assets/students/additional_cases/schubert_9e_additional_cases_ch04_03.pdf), we read the following:

(1) **Notwithstanding any other law, the President, through the Attorney General, may authorize electronic surveillance without a court order under this subchapter to acquire foreign intelligence information for periods of up to one year if the Attorney General certifies in writing under oath that—**

(A) the electronic surveillance is solely directed at—  
(i) the acquisition of the contents of communications transmitted by means of communications used exclusively between or among foreign powers, as defined in section 1801(a)(1), (2), or (3) of this title; or  
(ii) the acquisition of technical intelligence, other than the spoken communications of individuals, from property or premises under the open and exclusive control of a foreign power, as defined in section 1801(a)(1), (2), or (3) of this title;

(B) there is no substantial likelihood that the surveillance will acquire the contents of any communication to which a United States person is a party; and

(C) the proposed minimization procedures with respect to such surveillance meet the definition of minimization procedures under section 1801(h) of this title; and  
if the Attorney General reports such minimization procedures and any changes thereto to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence at least thirty days prior to their effective date, unless the Attorney General determines immediate action is required and notifies the committees immediately of such minimization procedures and the reason for their becoming effective immediately.

While (B) seems to contradict the underlying permissive nature of Section 1802 as it involves a United States person, what the Snowden affair has demonstrated all too clearly, is how frequently the NSA and FISA court would make US citizens collateral damage. To be sure, many pointed out the fact that Fox News correspondent [James Rosen was notoriously wiretapped in 2013](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/justice-departments-scrutiny-of-fox-news-reporter-james-rosen-in-leak-case-draws-fire/2013/05/20/c6289eba-c162-11e2-8bd8-2788030e6b44_story.html?utm_term=.6c63bf04c79c) when the DOJ was investigating government leaks. The [Associated Press was also infamously wiretapped](http://www.commondreams.org/news/2013/09/24/dojs-wiretapping-ap-results-lengthy-prison-term-source) in relation to the same investigation.

**On December 30, 2012, about a month after he was elected for his second term, Obama signed warrantless-wiretapping bill into law.**

“The FISA bill gives the government clearance to tap into American citizens’ communications with people outside of the U.S. without a warrant, so long as it is done in the name of collecting foreign intelligence.”

Recall that the acting Attorney General for Obama pursued this course of action and was reject by the FISA court. This court is comprised of differing appointee’s, the appointments made by a variety of former presidents. The current court has Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton, GW Bush and Obama appointees.

Thus, this supposedly non-partisan committee turned down the initial request made in June of 2016, coordinated by the [secret meeting on the tarmac](http://theblacksphere.net/2016/12/ag-lynch-admits-tarmac-meeting-bad-move/) Bill Clinton had with Miss Step-and-Fetch, the attorney general, at the Phoenix Airport. The case was then appealed, and this went to the appellate court which just happen to be all Clinton appointed judges.

The procedure is as follows. After denial of FISA applications by the FISC, the action may be appealed to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court of Review. The Court of Review is a three judge panel. Since its creation, the court has come into session twice: in 2002 and 2008.

### FISC Judges: Who are these [judges](http://www.fisc.uscourts.gov/fiscr_membership) who approved the FISA warrant appeal on President Trump…

#### #1. Bryson, William Curtis

**Federal Judicial Service:**  
Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit  
**Nominated by William J. Clinton on June 22, 1994**, to a seat vacated by Howard Thomas Markey. Confirmed by the Senate on September 28, 1994, and received commission on September 29, 1994. Assumed senior status on January 7, 2013.

#### #2. Josė A. Cabranes

**Federal Judicial Service:**  
Judge, U.S. District Court, District of Connecticut  
Nominated by Jimmy Carter on November 6, 1979, to a seat vacated by Jon O. Newman. Confirmed by the Senate on December 5, 1979, and received commission on December 10, 1979. Served as chief judge, 1992-1994. Service terminated on August 12, 1994, due to appointment to another judicial position.

Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit  
**Nominated by William J. Clinton on May 24, 1994**, to a seat vacated by Richard J. Cardamone. Confirmed by the Senate on August 9, 1994, and received commission on August 10, 1994.

#### #3. Richard C. Tallman

**Federal Judicial Service:**  
Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit  
**Nominated by William J. Clinton on October 20, 1999**, to a seat vacated by Betty Binns Fletcher. Confirmed by the Senate on May 24, 2000, and received commission on May 25, 2000.

Judge, Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court of Review, 2014-present

### Just so we are clear, let’s recap:

The Obama administration was denied a wiretap of four Trump campaign staffers. They then formed a cabal, where they managed to appeal the ruling to a court stacked with Clinton administration appointees, whereby they obtained the wiretap.

They then monitored the activities of a competing campaign.

**Another X-Squared Radio Prediction Comes True**

If you own Bitcoin, rejoice: A single unit of digital cryptocurrency is now worth more than an ounce of actual, physical gold.

According to CoinDesk's Bitcoin Price Index, the [price of 1 Bitcoin](http://www.coindesk.com/price/) is $1,281.95 at the time of this writing, while the [gold spot price](https://www.bloomberg.com/quote/XAUUSD:CUR) is $1,227.66 per ounce, according to Bloomberg Markets.

SEE ALSO: [Bitcoin reaches an all-time high as SEC decision looms](http://mashable.com/2017/02/24/bitcoin-record-high-sec/)

The two prices met after a shoddy day and a flat year for gold, in contrast to the amazing year Bitcoin has had in terms of price — exactly a year ago, the cryptocurrency traded at around $200 per one Bitcoin.

The correlation between the two numbers is not very important as the price of physical gold has little to do with the price of one Bitcoin. But it's an important psychological barrier for Bitcoin, which is currently trading at an all-time high, as the cryptocurrency has often (and somewhat inaccurately) been [called](https://news.bitcoin.com/german-tv-channel-says-bitcoin-is-digital-gold/) "digital gold."

The reasons behind Bitcoin's price surge — after its horrendous slump in 2014 — aren't very clear, but one possibility is the market's positive expectations with regards to the U.S. SEC approving the Winklevoss brothers' [bitcoin ETF](http://www.coindesk.com/bitcoin-prices-edge-1100-etf-decision-approaches/), which would make trading Bitcoin in the U.S. much easier.

Does this mean you should ditch gold and buy Bitcoin, or vice versa? Based on just this one fact, absolutely not. Bitcoin's price has been incredibly volatile in the past, and though the past several months look very solid, a number of questions loom over the digital currency. The main point is that despite the SEC’s concerted effort to destroy the non-fiat currency, investors, buyers, and customers consider it valuable and legal. Thousands of businesses and municipalities accept Bitcoin for payment. Bitcoin is based on prime numbers. Which are being continuously generated, but appear to be asymptotic in nature.

That is to say, the larger the numbers get, the more rare is a prime number along the line. Rarity creates value. It is not fiat currency, and although it is subject to the same shorting tactics as other investments, no one investor owns enough of them to make this happen, and there it is by nature not able to be nakedly shorted. That means that in order to sell the Bitcoin, you must first own the Bitcoin.

The real question is, what does this mean for precious metals as a method of payment? All precious metals have a bullion counterpart on the stock market. It is the shorting of the bullion that controls the price. Bitcoin does not have a bullion counterpart, and is not based on the value of precious metals. The point is, that X-Squared Radio told you 5 months ago to buy Bitcoins. If you would have done it, you could buy 7 times what you paid for them today.

**25 Million Fake Votes for Hillary**

**A study published by NPR reveals that over 25 million Hillary Clinton votes were completely fraudulent, meaning that the Democratic candidate actually lost the popular vote by a huge margin.**

A study by the Pew Center claiming that over [800,000 non-citizens](http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/jan/26/hillary-clinton-received-800000-votes-from-nonciti/) voted for Hillary Clinton failed to take into account dead and fraudulent voters which totalled over 25 million “registered voters”.

According to reports, illegal aliens combined with dead voters and “multiple state” voters explains why Hillary appeared to have won the popular vote over Trump during this years presidential race.

[Infowars.com](http://www.infowars.com/bombshell-at-least-25-million-dead-and-fraudulent-registered-voters-in-2016/) reports:

“A [report](http://web.archive.org/web/20120217132319/http:/www.pewcenteronthestates.org/report_detail.aspx?id=85899370604) by the Pew Center on the States finds that more than 1.8 million dead people are currently registered to vote, and 24 million registrations are either invalid or inaccurate,” NPR [reported](http://www.npr.org/2012/02/14/146827471/study-1-8-million-dead-people-still-registered-to-vote) in 2012, which is ironic given how NPR is heavily controlled by Democrats.

And many of the dead, registered voters somehow keep voting Democrat from beyond the grave, most recently in [Philadelphia, Penn.](http://www.lifezette.com/polizette/illegal-voters-uncovered-philly-just-tip-iceberg/) and [Colorado](http://www.infowars.com/dead-people-voting-in-colorado/).

It’s also worth noting that the U.S. population has increased since 2012, meaning that there’s likely more dead and invalid voters than before.

“…The Pew study found that almost 3 million people are registered to vote in more than one state,” NPR added.

That’s because when a new resident registers to vote in a state, officials usually never bother to tell his former state about the change in voter residency.

Under the “catch and release” immigration program by the Obama administration, illegal aliens were routinely given bus tickets to travel to other states by immigration officials, so it was theoretically possible for non-citizens to register to vote in a border country illegally, then register to vote in another state after their taxpayer-funded bus dropped them off.

Clinton won most of the 163 most populous counties in the US that account for half of the total votes in the election, including dense urban areas in New York and California, yet she only won the popular vote by 2.8 million votes, which reveals the lack of enthusiasm voters had for her in comparison to Trump – and that Democrats would have depended more on illegal votes.

A portion of the 24 million invalid voter registrations combined with a portion of the 1.8 million dead voters and the over 800,000 known illegal voters could explain the difference of 2.8 million votes, and it’s worth noting that the 800,000 figure could be a low, conservative estimate.

That said, a popular vote victory is meaningless; if the president was elected by popular vote, then both Trump and Clinton would have campaigned in entirely different states because only densely population regions of the U.S. would decide who would become president.

Without the electoral college, the United States of America would be reduced to the United States of New York and California, with 48 other vassal states.

Yet notice how Clinton campaigned in other, less populated states.  They knew the popular vote was meaningless ahead of the election.

However, the popular vote is useful as a barometer for voter fraud since the most populous countries are also the most susceptible to election tampering by illegal, invalid and dead voters.

**The Obama Political Playbook Being Used by Turkey**

The first one to call a name, generate a label, or make an accusation wins. That’s the Obama playbook. Speaking in Istanbul, the Turkish president [fanned the flames with a stinging verbal attack](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-referendum-germany-idUSKBN16C0KD?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm_source=Twitter&utm_medium=Social&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Reuters%2FworldNews+%28Reuters+World+News%29).

"In Germany, they are not allowing our friends to speak. Let them do so. Do you think that by not allowing them to speak the votes in Germany will come out 'no' instead of 'yes?'" Erdogan said. "**Germany, you don't have anything to do with democracy. These current practices of yours are no different than the Nazi practices of the past."** the Turkish president said at a rally in Istanbul.

"When we say that, they get disturbed. Why are you disturbed?"

"We will talk about Germany's actions in the international arena and we will put them to shame in the eyes of the world," Erdogan said and added "**We don't want to see their fascist actions**. **We thought that era was in the past, but apparently it isn't."**

A similar situation is developing in the Netherlands where the Dutch government is investigating whether it can halt a rally being planned for later in the week at which Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu is reportedly due to speak. Prime Minister Mark Rutte told Dutch broadcaster NOS on Saturday that his government "is looking at all legal avenues to prevent such a visit." Rutte said the proposed constitutional changes take Turkey, an aspirant European Union member state, "in a less democratic direction."

"We believe that Dutch public space is not the place for political campaigns of other countries," Rutte wrote earlier on his Facebook page. Kern urged "a concerted approach by the EU to prevent such campaign appearances," saying then specific countries like Germany would not come under pressure from Turkey.

Meanwhile, at an election campaign event in Amsterdam, Dutch populist challenger in the upcoming March 15 elections, Geert Wilders also resorted to extreme-right comparisons, calling Erdogan an "Islamo-fascist leader." Wilders, whose Party for Freedom is lagging only slightly behind Rutte's VVD party in polls before the Dutch March 15 election for parliament's lower house, said that "I think that coming here to advocate a change of the Turkish constitution that will only strengthen the Islamo-fascist leader Erdogan of Turkey more than Parliament, Turkish parliament, is the worst thing that could happen to us," Wilders told reporters at a campaign event.

Just like in the US, it now appears that in Europe too when one needs to make a really "bold" political statement, the logical recourse is to just call one's adversary fascist, or simply "Nazi."

Wilders added that if he were the Dutch prime minister, "''I would call the whole cabinet of Turkey 'persona non grata' for a month or two, not allowing them to come here."

Kern, however, pointed out that totally cutting ties with Ankara wouldn't be in EU interests. An EU migrant deal with Turkey, which also is a NATO member, has significantly cut down the number of migrants crossing into Europe. "We should realign the relationship, without the illusion of EU membership," Kern said. "Turkey is an important partner in security matters, on migration and on economic cooperation. Turkey has stuck to all of its commitments resulting from the refugee deal, in any case. We should build upon that."

For now, Erdogan realizes this, and he also grasps that Turkey maintains the leverage in relations with Europe, not least of all because Turkey withholds some 2 million Syrian refugees that could potentially flood Europe should a total breakdown in relations between Turkey and Europe take place. How much longer his outbursts will be tolerated by an increasingly displeased German population, for whom Nazi comparisons may be the stick that breaks the proverbial camel's back, remains to be seen.

**Western States Sue the BLM**

Under Obama, The BLM seized enough private and State lands to bloat the Federal government’s holdings to more than 770 million acres. It is now collateral for the Federal government to borrow against from Chinese banks. At the end of 2016, counties in six western states and a soil and water conservation district [filed suit](https://www.americanstewards.us/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Kane-County-et-al-v-DOI-et-al-No-16-cv-1245-BCW-D-Utah.pdf) in federal district court in Utah challenging new resource planning rules adopted by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).  The group maintains these new rules will severely impair their ability to work with the BLM on future planning and management issues, while changing the way public lands are managed to the detriment of their citizens.

The petitioners in the suit are Kane County, Utah, Big Horn County, Wyoming, Chaves County, New Mexico, Custer County, Idaho, Garfield County, Colorado, Modoc County, California and the Dona Ana Soil and Water Conservation District in New Mexico. Thousands of land owners saw their lands stolen from them as the Obama Administration called them monuments, parks, easements, and protected lands.

The BLM’s new rules were published in the Federal register today, and will govern how resource management plans will be prepared and implemented for more than 175 million acres of public lands in 11 western states (excluding Alaska).  These plans determine the level of resource use, including grazing, mineral exploration and development, rights-of-way, timber production, and outdoor recreation.  They also designate areas for special restrictions and control access to the public lands.

The impetus for the BLM’s new resource planning rules are two Obama administration programs, the Climate Change Adaptation Program and the Landscape-scale Mitigation Program.  These programs were created by secretarial order and directed the BLM and other Interior Department agencies to change the way they manage federal lands.  The suit also alleges that these programs were adopted and are being implemented in violation of federal law.

One of the primary reasons for the lawsuit is the new rules violate the coordination requirements imposed in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).  This law requires the BLM to coordinate with local governments on land use inventory, planning, and management activities and to consider and resolve inconsistencies with local land use plans.  The public lands are the backbone of many rural economies in the West, which is why Congress mandated that the BLM to coordinate with local governments during the resource planning process.

Most counties in the West have more than 50% of their land base owned by the federal government.  For example, 97% of Custer County, Idaho, is owned by state and federal governments. FLPMA ensures that local governments are involved in the planning for and management of these lands, protecting local citizens and ensuring strong western economies.  Coordination with local governments is essential to ensure that the people most affected by the BLM’s management decisions have the strongest voice.

The BLM’s new rules, however, allow only limited local government involvement, effectively treating western counties and districts like members of the public.  There is no coordination process for local governments that would allow them to effectively discuss and, if necessary, challenge the BLM’s plans in an open forum.  By contrast, there are specific coordination requirements for states as well as government-to-government consultation with Indian tribes.  What is missing is the statutorily required coordination process for local governments.

Additionally, counties and other local governments have state-delegated land use planning and management authority.  For example, most counties have adopted comprehensive land use plans that consider not only the BLM’s plans, but also those of cities, fire, school and hospital districts, state lands, and police and emergency services.  The BLM’s plans are only one part of a larger, comprehensive land use program that must work in a coordinated fashion.  Congress requires coordination to ensure that local plans are carefully considered and incorporated into federal planning efforts to ensure consistency and protect the people most affected by the BLM’s planning and management activities.

“The new rules fail to recognize that we are authorized by law to represent the public in our County,” commented Commissioner Tom Jankovsky from Garfield County, Colorado.  “We are charged with protecting the health, safety and welfare of the people in our community.  We should not be relegated to commenting on BLM plans or asked to violate open meeting laws and have discussions about planning conflicts behind closed doors. The public should be allowed to hear our concerns and the BLM should not be afraid to answer our questions and defend its position in the public view.”

The BLM has taken the position that they will coordinate with local governments during the cooperating agency process under a different federal law, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).  Nothing could be further from the truth. They are not cooperating with local land owners. They are crushing local land owners. NEPA requires federal agencies to consider the effects on the human environment in making decisions.  However, the NEPA process is not intended to resolve conflicts with local land use plans and programs.  Moreover, the rules governing NEAP require that the local governments sign agreements with the BLM and keep all discussions and materials confidential. No press. Immune from litigation, and by any means necessary; including murder, arson, and predatory litigation with threats of jail time for not vacating their own property.

Section 202(c)(9) of FLPMA, in contrast, places specific requirements on the BLM to resolve conflicts with local plans during its inventory, planning and management activities.  It also requires the BLM’s land use plans be consistent with local plans to the extent practical as necessary to comply with federal law.  While the new rules recognize this responsibility, they fail to provide a path for meaningful coordination throughout the process.  The rules place the responsibility on local governments to identify the inconsistencies between plans at the end of the process, instead of considering local needs and planning constraints at the beginning of the process.

Commissioner Jim Matson of Kane County, Utah, explained: “While we recognize the BLM is charged with managing the public lands, we are charged with protecting the people and the resources within our county.  We have the institutional knowledge of how the resources should be managed and what our communities need, which often times means we are the agency’s strongest critic.  It is easier for them to plan if they can keep local governments on the sidelines where we are unable to hold them accountable.”

The group is also concerned with other parts of the new rules, which shift decision-making authority to Washington, D.C., and eliminate the requirement that the impact on local economies be considered during the planning process.  The new rules also emphasize controversial concepts such as “ecosystem management,” “areas of ecological importance” and “ecosystem services,” while downplaying the principal public land uses identified in FLPMA.

The BLM’s new planning rules have been adopted to implement the Department of Interior’s Climate Change Adaptation and Landscape-scale Mitigation Programs.  The Climate Change Adaptation Program was created by a secretarial order that directed Interior Department bureaus and agencies, including the BLM, to develop landscape-scale strategies for responding to future climate change.  The Landscape-scale Mitigation Program was also created by secretarial order, and requires that “landscape-scale approaches” be incorporated into all facets of development and conservation planning.  These new programs, which were not authorized by Congress, will dramatically change how the public lands are managed.

Despite the significance of these resource planning and management changes, the BLM made no effort to comply with NEPA.  It did not prepare an environmental impact statement or even an environmental assessment, which would have delayed the adoption of the new rules.  Instead, the BLM declared the new rules to be “categorically exempt” from NEPA.  In contrast, the BLM’s sister agency, the U.S. Forest Service, issued a programmatic environmental impact statement prior to adopting its current planning rules for the National Forest System in 2012.

“The BLM requires that a 300-plus page EIS be prepared to renew a livestock grazing permit, but then exempt itself from the same level of scrutiny when making sweeping changes to the planning process on 175 million acres of America’s land,” commented Chairman Robert Corn with Chaves County, New Mexico.

The lawsuit also points out that the Interior Department’s Climate Change Adaptation Program and the Landscape-scale Mitigation Program were not subject to an environmental analysis as required by NEPA, nor were these programs subject to public review and comment.  If the lawsuit is successful, these programs may also be revoked.

The coalition of local governments is represented by Norman James of Fennemore Craig in Phoenix and Shawn Welch of Holland and Hart in Salt Lake City.

The American Stewards of Liberty, a private property rights organization that trains and helps local governments coordinate with federal agencies, is managing the litigation effort.