

Flashpoint Intelligence Review for 17 August 2018

Flashpoint Intelligence Review is a weekly report of the country's most important or potential disruptions to the civil society. We look at signs of political and societal instability, the situation along the U.S. Southwest border, threats to national security and critical infrastructure, and significant prepper-related reporting. This report is available each week only to subscribers.

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Up Front: In recent days Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., who is seen as an early frontrunner for her party's 2020 presidential nomination (though she has not formally launched a campaign yet) declared that the country's entire justice system was *racist*.

"Let's just start with the hard truth about our criminal justice system: it's racist," she said, adding that the justice system was flawed "all the way, front to back."

She later tried to walk back her comments at a separate political event when she was challenged by a "young man of color" in the audience by claiming that she understood there are good people working in the system. But then in a subsequent media interview she doubled down on her original comment.

Warren becomes the latest "mainstream" Democrat to declare our justice system null and void, and make no mistake, that's what she's doing when she claims that the whole thing is "racist" – declaring all of it null and void. Flawed "all the way, front to back" is broad, all-inclusive, and does not single out any particular elements of the system (such as certain "good" people who work within the system, as she tried to say).

This is a continuation of the Obama administration's hard-Left view of the justice system.

Within weeks of his first inauguration in 2009, he claimed the same thing – the American system of justice is 'racist,' and what's more, 'everybody knows that' in response to his Harvard mentor, Prof. Henry Louis Gates, who is black, being arrested at his home by a white police officer without a record of racist allegations, after being called to Gates' home on suspicion of a burglary (Gates locked himself out and had to 'break' into his own residence).

For Obama, it only grew worse from there.

"I don't know, not having been there and not seeing all the facts, what role race played," Obama said in July 2009. "But I think it's fair to say, No. 1, any of us would be pretty angry; No. 2, that the Cambridge police acted stupidly in arresting somebody when there was already proof that they were in their own home; and, No. 3 ... that there's a long history in this country of African-Americans and Latinos being stopped by law enforcement disproportionately."

Obama's race-tinged language and lecturing only grew from there. Several incidents of white officers involved in deadly interactions with black suspects – though the officers' use of deadly force was exonerated by courts of law after indisputable evidence was presented – prompted the former president to repeat his claims that the American justice system is racist.

Now 2020 Democratic candidates are picking up the gauntlet.

It should be said that studies indicate there is evidence to support those who claim that our system is racist and those who maintain it isn't. How reliable and unbiased each study is can be a matter of interpretation, as always. But two things are certain: Our system of justice is the only one we have; and two, the constant denigration of our law enforcement and justice system is harming its legitimacy, as more and more Americans come to see it as unjust and therefore illegitimate. That's dangerous.

Law enforcement especially has hit back against such allegations. From police unions who defended the Cambridge officer, Sgt. James Crowley, to the state police chiefs in Warren's Massachusetts who chided her for her characterization, law enforcers who are already under siege by Leftist politicians, prosecutors, and mayors, are not afraid to speak out against the criticism.

Combine this Democrat political characterization of the justice system as racist with Alt-Left protests and demonstrations against federal immigration enforcement agencies and you can begin to see a pattern of Leftist undermining of the civil society through the delegitimization of law enforcers.

This is already happening on the local level. Earlier this month, as one example, video footage of NYPD officers who had responded to a report of a fight at a Bronx apartment building but were leaving without making any arrests were pelted with obscenities and insults from some residents, with one yelling, "Get the f**k out my building!" Also, video surfaced online of an officer being beaten at an event commemorating the first anniversary of the White nationalist rally in Charlottesville, N.C., last weekend. And there are numerous incidents of 'activists' showing up to block ICE facilities around the country.

Our country continues to steadily move towards a point of no return – where violence becomes far more prevalent as the preferred method of political protest. The new Left is hostile to every aspect of the unspoken but once universally accepted social contract vital to maintaining the civil society – respect for law enforcement, respect for governing institutions, respect for fellow

citizens, and respect in the traditional political processes. Worse, we have politicians who used to be considered “mainstream” backing the new Left and even encouraging the violence.

Welcome to this week’s Flashpoint Intelligence Review. Thank you for subscribing. — *Jon Dougherty*

Priority Intelligence Requirements (PIR) include:

PIR1: What are the new indicators of political or societal instability?

PIR2: What are the new indicators of potentially disruptive activity along U.S. borders?

PIR3: What are the new indicators of systems disruption and threats to critical infrastructure?

Significant Prepper Reporting

PIR1: What are the new indicators of political or societal instability?

Antifa protesters openly call for murder of president, political opponents

Several Antifa-aligned youths who showed up to counter-demonstrate against a small group of white nationalists in Washington, D.C., on Sunday had some disturbing things to say about President Trump. When asked by Benny Johnson, a journalist from a right-leaning news website what they would do if the president showed up, many gave disturbing answers. In the hour that the journalist spent at the counter-protest, “half a dozen protesters looked into my camera and threatened to physically harm or ‘murder the president,’” Johnson wrote. “The actions mirror those of progressive protests around the country Sunday — where journalists were attacked, property was vandalized and cops were arresting progressive protesters by the dozen for violent behavior,” he added. **[source]** Meanwhile, at the same counter-demonstration, other Antifa members marched openly what a large banner reading, “It takes a bullet to bash a fash” – which, in the past, has been directed at the president and his supporters. “This is open incitement to violence against all conservatives,” journalist Paul Joseph Watson wrote. **[source]** *Analyst comment: Most if not all presidents have had to deal with threats of violence and death, but people making such threats openly and cavalierly are rare – though in the age of President Trump, they appear to be happening much more frequently. The threats come as Left-wing violence increases overall as well. Worse, Leftist threats and acts of violence may not be getting the national media exposure they should be either, according to Watson. If he’s right, that means large numbers of Americans are not being fully informed about the rising political tensions throughout the country and would be caught off-guard if violence flares into open conflict, as the Antifa banner makes much more likely. Early on, Antifa demonstrators merely recommended ‘bashing’ ‘a fash,’ but this past week’s counter-protests offered a far more serious warning.*

British inability to deal with flu season last year shows pitfalls of socialized medicine in the U.S. and elsewhere

A growing number of young doctors and medical students in the United States are said to be in favor of giving government more control over our healthcare – “socialized medicine” on the model of Great Britain. London has often touted the country’s taxpayer-supported universal healthcare system but there are substantial flaws within it that are not widely reported or discussed in the U.S. For example, during last year’s flu season, the country was hit with a virulent strain of the flu, overloading hospitals that were already understaffed and under-resourced. “Today, the British National Health Service is plagued with long wait times, delayed procedures, and an overstressed medical workforce. A cursory survey of recent British news sources reveals a worrying trend in the delayed delivery and deteriorating quality of National Health Service health care. While British tabloids can be sensational, with bleeding ledes on hospital problems, sober British analysts are concerned. Last winter, a particularly virulent strain of influenza hit Britain. British hospital wards are often overcrowded, but the crush of flu patients exacerbated the system’s persistent and underlying problems—inadequate staffing and insufficient resources. The British Medical Association’s quarterly survey of physicians found that 82 percent of respondents felt their workplaces were understaffed.” **[source]** *Analyst comment: One-third of Senate Democrats are supportive of Sen. Bernie Sanders’ “Medicare for All” legislation that would mimic the British National Health Service, and though Sanders says his legislation would save us \$2 trillion over the next decade, sober analyses of his plan finds that it – like the British system – would be unsustainable without massive tax increases of the amount Americans would likely be unwilling to pay. As then-British Labor Minister David Owen admitted in an Oct. 12, 1975 interview with a British paper said: “The health service was launched on a fallacy. First, we were going to finance everything, cure the nation and then spending would drop. That fallacy has been exposed. Then there was a period when everybody thought the public could have whatever they needed on the health service- it was just a question of governmental will. Now we recognize that no country, even if they are prepared to pay the taxes, can supply everything.” Again, that was more than 40 years ago.*

Growing number of far-Left Democrat voters support no borders, ‘end’ of USA

During his NRA-TV show earlier this week, host Dan Bongino, a former Secret Service agent, played a clip of what appeared to be Antifa supporters counter-demonstrating last weekend in opposition to a small group of white nationalists in Washington, D.C. as they chanted, “No Border, No Wall, No USA At All.” While making clear he wasn’t stereotyping all Democratic Party voters, he did say that the party’s far-Left factions were no longer on the fringe but were becoming more mainstream. “This is not a fringe position anymore within the Democrat Party. This is a position embraced by a large swath of Democrat voters. This is frightening.” **[source]** *Analyst comment: As we’ve increasingly seen over the past year, Left-wing protests against the Trump administration’s immigration and border enforcement policies are becoming more prevalent and violent. We’ve seen occupations of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facilities, blocking of ICE facilities, and harassment of ICE personnel. In the meantime, calls for open borders and disbanding ICE altogether are being adopted by more Democratic candidates,*

some of whom may eventually run for their party's presidential nomination in 2020. If recent polling data is to be considered accurate, open borders and a relaxation of immigration laws does not appear to be popular among a majority of Americans. But if even a large plurality of Americans support the abolition of U.S. borders, that represents a very serious threat to our sovereignty and security. It also represents an ongoing threat to the civil society, at least in portions of the country. I have said in the past that I see the immigration issue as the modern-day civil rights equivalent of the slavery issue. As with slavery, the battle over 'immigrant rights' stirs high passion among both supporters and opponents. Also, slavery didn't just become a hot-button issue overnight; opposition to it simmered in the background following the founding of our country but within a few decades became much more politically divisive. By 1860, it had irreparably divided the country, making secession and war inevitable. I don't necessarily see another civil war breaking out, but if one were to occur, I believe differences regarding the immigration issue would be a key factor. But here's the kicker: I also don't see the political Left and Right compromising over the issue anymore, either. Compromises of sorts have been made in the past, but I think those days are over. One side or the other will have to impose their 'solution,' but even that won't be the end of it.

Drug overdoses hit new record in U.S.

Overdoses from opioids rose to a new record in 2017, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, taking the lives of more than 72,000 Americans. The agency said the figure represents a 6.6 percent increase in overdose fatalities over 2016, adding that preliminary figures are likely an underestimation. CDC said that more than 40,000 died from opioid overdoses last year, while more than 30,000 died from synthetic opioid overdoses such as fentanyl. Deaths from synthetic opioids rose dramatically last year over 2016 levels, while OD deaths from heroin, methadone, and prescription opioid pills fell. The implementation of control regulations has helped to curb the numbers of OD deaths from legal opioids, but the overall death toll is being pushed up by an influx of illegal opioids. Over the summer the House passed several opioid-related bills but none of them have yet been addressed by the Senate. [[source](#)]

Analyst comment: In many ways, our country's opioid epidemic is tied to border security. But after declaring an opioid crisis in June, Congress has yet to pass legislation that addresses shoring up border security in any appreciable way. Whether that means construction of a border wall, hiring more border agents, working more with the Mexican government to address the threat posed by the Mexico-based drug cartels smuggling product made in Chinese labs, or a combination of these and other measures, it's obvious by the latest CDC findings that what's being done thus far to address the opioid crisis isn't working well enough. Regulatory measures have had an impact, but last year's death rate from opioid overdoses was roughly the same as the combined annual death rates from firearms and automobiles, showing the magnitude of the problem. This is a multi-faceted national and domestic security problem that is growing worse by the year.

PIR2: What are the new indicators of potentially disruptive activity along U.S. borders?

DHS identifies more than 600,000 people who overstayed visas in 2017

The Department of Homeland Security said in a new report that more than 600,000 people who entered the U.S. last year on a visa remained in the country illegally after it expired. The figure represents 1.15 percent of some 52 million foreigners who entered the U.S. legally through air and seaports last year and is down from 1.25 percent who overstayed their visas in 2016. Moreover, 2017 marked the second year in a row that more than 600,000 people overstayed visas, making them illegal aliens subject to deportation. President Trump has urged Congress to finish a biometric entry-exit tracking system to better monitor visa holders and other foreigners who enter the country but not on a permanent visa. He has already signed an executive order requesting completion of the system. **[source]** *Analyst comment: This may seem like a trivial figure given the overall number of people allowed into the United States, but the lack of a coherent enforcement strategy only leads to more visa violations. Enforcing immigration law isn't 'racist' or 'political,' but a vital national security function that also has implications throughout society, especially for the U.S. labor market. Therefore, the numbers of those overstaying visas may not be as important as being able to identify who has overstayed and why, as well as what activities they are engaged in while overstaying.*

Analytics program developed to ID and target human smuggling networks

A new analytics program called Igloo has been developed to assist U.S. border authorities to combat human smuggling. The program was developed by the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology (S&T) Directorate and is now in use with a few select units of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the latter of which is DHS' lead agency investigating human trafficking. Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) represent a threat to life, property, and the rule of law, which is why HSI works to break them up. But it is a highly profitable enterprise, as well as complex, making it necessary to develop new technologies that assist in identifying smuggling activities. Igloo is designed to help HSI and DHS analyze an abundance of readily available data, providing the agencies with the intelligence necessary to identify and target TCOs and their smuggling networks. "Igloo puts good intelligence into the hands of agents so they can act on it" S&T says. "Its cutting-edge capabilities are allowing investigators to not only find new targets, but also deepen their understanding of how TCO networks operate and communicate. Additionally, Igloo is a wholly owned government project, so there are no licensing fees associated with its use or its distribution to agencies." **[source]**

Murders soar in Tijuana during first two weeks of August

Mexican federal authorities say that there has been a total of at least 100 murders in the border city of Tijuana, near the California border, during the first 12 days of August, bringing the yearly total to at least 1,547. The August murder rate is a record, officials said and puts the city on pace to have the bloodiest year in modern history. There were 257 recorded homicides in the city in July, according to reports. Murders have been averaging at or above 200 per month since January, in some cases well above 200. The escalating rates are being attributed to an uptick in turf war-related violence between rival cartels. Reports say the *Cártel Tijuana Nueva Generación* (CTNG) aligned with *El Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación* against the *Sinaloa Cartel*, and that some factions within Sinaloa are battling each other for control of street-level markets and smuggling routes to the U.S. Most of the violence is being committed by low-level dealers,

lookouts, customers and enforcers for the cartels. During the first six months of 2018 Mexican authorities registered 15,973 murders, the deadliest since 1997 when Mexican officials began keeping records. **[source]** *Analyst comment: At present, the cartels represent the biggest challenge to President-elect Andrés Manuel López Obrador. The ‘war’ against the cartels launched by previous Mexican presidents has produced little in the way of results but a lot in terms of death. What’s more, Mexico’s justice system is rife with corruption and infiltrated with cartel operatives. Add in the fact that the United States is an extremely lucrative market for illicit drugs and human trafficking, and the task of taking on the cartels for “AMLO,” as he is called, becomes monumental. He does have a plan: Demilitarize operations against the cartels; pardon non-violent drug offenders; and boost social spending programs. But that approach is a distinct break from years of a joint U.S.-Mexico approach to fighting the cartels. Through the Mérida Initiative, signed in 2008, the U.S. has provided Mexico with \$2.8 billion annually to fight the cartels, and while the Trump administration remains committed to the initiative, the president requested 35 percent less money for it in his FY2018 budget request than was sought in the FY2017 budget. That indicates that both countries are rethinking the initiative and the policies it was enacted to support. AMLO ran on a similar platform as his predecessor, current President Enrique Peña Nieto, who ran on the same platform as his predecessors, President Felipe Calderón and Vicente Fox, and no one has had much success against the cartels. The U.S. and Mexico have reportedly reached a new agreement on NAFTA – the 24-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement – that was a priority for the Trump administration, according to reports this week. It’s not yet known what changes have been made or agreed to, but AMLO has said he wants to improve economic conditions for Mexicans at home so there will be less need to emigrate to the U.S. for work, which is also in Washington’s best interests. Were that to happen, it would impact cartel income dramatically. A physical wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, some experts believe, could dramatically impact cartel drug smuggling income as well. Also, according to **this report**, U.S. and Mexican officials are also planning to go after cartel finances, estimated to be about \$29 billion annually. Said one DEA agent at a meeting of officials in Chicago this week, “We know how they move their drugs, and we know how they move their money.”*

Whatever policymakers on both sides of the border decide, the available evidence points to three most likely conclusions in the short term, at least: A continued rise in cartel-related homicides, disappearances, and general violence; drug smuggling will continue to increase; and whatever moves U.S. and Mexican officials make will be met with increased violence from the cartels – violence that could, finally, spill over into the United States.

PIR3: What are the new indicators of systems disruption and threats to critical infrastructure?

Hacked satellites could be used for ‘microwave-like’ attacks

A researcher for an information security firm said that satellite communications used by ships, planes and the military to connect to the Internet could be hacked and then used in a worst-case scenario to conduct “cyber-physical attacks” including turning satellite antennas into weapons that can operate like a microwave oven. Ruben Santamarta, with IOActive, said at the recent

Black Hat conference in Las Vegas that several popular satellite communications (SATCOM) systems are vulnerable to penetration and that hackers could leak information and break into Internet-connected devices. Right now, such attacks are just nuisances for the aviation industry, he said, but vulnerabilities in the systems could lead to safety risks for maritime users and the U.S. military. “The consequences of these vulnerabilities are shocking,” he said. “Essentially, the theoretical cases I developed four years ago are no longer theoretical.” One report noted that hackers would connect to SATCOM antennas from the ground and then navigate via the Internet using security flaws in operating software in order to gain control. Security risks vary but they are high for the military, especially: Hack attacks would also expose the location of the satellite antenna because they normally use GPS to function. “If you can pinpoint the location of a military base, that’s a safety risk,” said Santamarta. Other risks include allowing hackers to eavesdrop on email communications and interruption and modification of all communications passing through the hacked antenna. [\[source\]](#) *Analyst comment: As for the weaponization of such arrays, Santamarta said of hackers, “We’re basically turning SATCOM devices into radio frequency weapons. It’s pretty much the same principle behind the microwave oven.” Even if such weaponization can’t harm soldiers, passengers or crew, the microwave attack (HIRF – high-intensity radio frequency) can physically damage electrical systems.*

Trump signs legislation banning funding for shadow Chinese espionage activities on U.S. college campuses

President Trump signed the FY 2019 National Defense Authorization Act which includes a provision authored by Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas that prohibits funding for any university that hosts a chapter of the Confucius Institutes because the CIA has labeled the China-based organization a security threat. Currently, U.S. officials estimate there are 107 chapters on American universities. In addition, the Cruz amendment requires all American colleges and universities to provide the government a public record of all agreements and contracts with the program, which U.S. intelligence says is connected to the Chinese Communist Party. The CIA issued a classified report in March describing the Confucius Institutes as a threat. “The [Chinese Communist Party] provides ‘strings-attached’ funding to academic institutions and think tanks to deter research that casts it in a negative light,” says an unclassified portion of the report [\[published here\]](#). “It has used this tactic to reward pro-China viewpoints and coerce Western academic publications and conferences to self-censor. The CCP often denies visas to academics who criticize the regime, encouraging many China scholars to preemptively self-censor so they can maintain access to the country on which their research depends.” [\[source\]](#) *Analysis comment: Cruz told a U.S. newspaper earlier that his amendment was necessary because Beijing is using the program to infiltrate American college campuses to “meddle with our curricula, silence criticism of their regime, and steal intellectual property including sensitive dual-use research.” The Confucius Institutes program was employed by Beijing as an asymmetrical intelligence-gathering operation through the exploitation of free and open society. The Cruz amendment represents a win for U.S. efforts to counter Chinese espionage.*

Russian military spy software remains on hundreds of thousands of routers in U.S. homes

In May the Justice Department warned Americans to reboot their home Internet routers as a way of getting rid of spy malware placed on them by the Russian military, but now the National

Security Agency says there is more for device makers and the general public to do. A top U.S. cybersecurity official said the malware could allow the Russian government to steal individual's data or "enlist their devices in a massive attack intended to disrupt global economic activity or target institutions," according to a published report (source link below). Rob Joyce, the senior advisor to the director of the NSA and former White House cybersecurity coordinator, said simply rebooting machines isn't enough. "The Russian malware is still there," he said. A cybersecurity firm warned in May that perhaps as many as 500,000 machines or more in 54 countries were infected with the Russian military malware. The source reported: "The malware executes in three stages, according to the Talos report. The first stage is akin to a tick burrowing into a victim's skin, to "dig in" with its teeth by changing the infected devices' non-volatile persistent memory, the portion of the memory that persists even after the machine is turned off. During this phase, the malware also establishes links to any servers it finds. Stages two and three are about receiving and executing the orders. These could include: stealing traffic data from the victim (via port 80), launching 'man in the middle' attacks, using the router as a platform to attack other computers as part of a botnet, or overwriting the memory on the router to render it unusable." Joyce said that it's up to industry and individuals – since the routers are civilian machines, not government machines – to restore them to a trustworthy state. **[source]** *Analyst comment: How to do that? "What's needed now, Joyce said, is for government, industry, and cybersecurity professionals to find a way to straightforwardly tell individuals how to detect the presence of the malware on their routers and then to restore the device to its trustworthy state. The government won't be able to do that for them 'because, again, these are consumer devices...That's the sort of thing we're up against.'" In other words, we're going to have to wait for our router makers/providers to tell us all how to clean our machines, meaning it would be worth a phone call to the company that made your router to determine your next step.*

FBI looking at significant cyber threats along Mississippi River

FBI agents working out of the New Orleans field office and elsewhere are focusing on cyber threats to critical infrastructure stationed along or near the Mississippi River. Hackers could threaten or negatively impact giant cranes offloading massive barges, oil tankers, supply ships, flood control structures, chemical plants, cruise vessels, pipelines, and water treatment/drinking water sources, among other infrastructure, because they are all computer-reliant and tied to the Internet in one form. "Louisiana is a major cyber vulnerability area," FBI Special Agent in Charge of the New Orleans office Eric Rommal told American media. "Every time that we have a vessel that travels up or down the Mississippi River there's a vulnerability: That that vessel or persons on those vessels may, in fact, be doing harm to our systems. And that affects the national economy and affects the entire United States." In addition to energy disruptions, the bureau is concerned about cyber theft of money and/or critical information, terrorism, and physical destruction of CI. **[source]**

Significant Prepper Reporting:

Are two-way radios helpful during a SHTF-type situation?

Do you know how long it's safe to store drinking water?

Emergency care tips from 100 years ago: 7 Lessons that still apply today

How to secure water during an emergency disaster

Analysts Warn We're Running Out of Resources Needed to Sustain Life on Our Planet

How to travel to a safe location during a "Without Rule of Law" scenario

Have you done a dry run? Testing your bug out bag for when SHTF

Considerations you need to know before bugging out to a makeshift bunker

Camouflaging yourself and your shelter: Considerations for concealment

How to stockpile seeds for your survival cache

Gear tips: Prolonging the life of your dry bag

***About the editor:** Jon Dougherty has 30 years' worth of experience as a journalist, political analyst, and national and domestic security policy researcher. He has a BA in Political Science, an MA in National Security Studies and Intelligence Analysis, and spent 15 years in the military with overseas deployments to Japan and Afghanistan.*