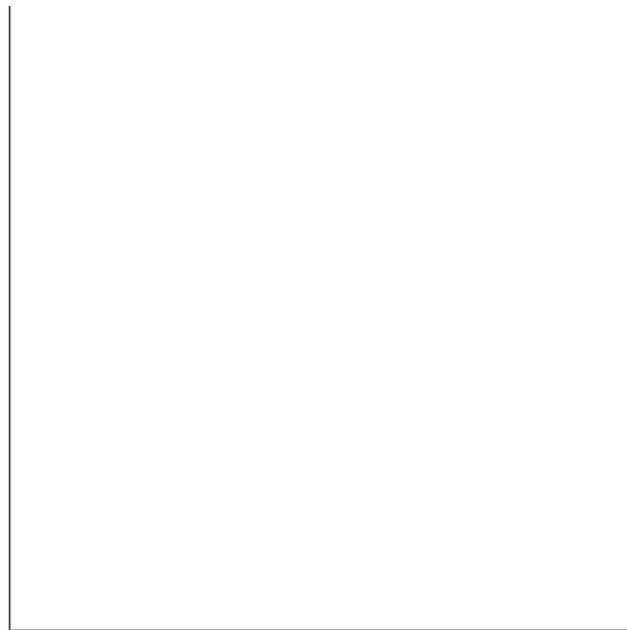
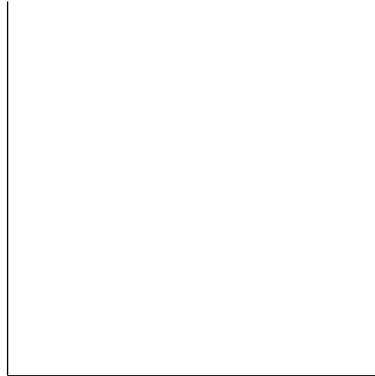


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Sent: Friday, June 16, 2023 8:23 AM
To: Stephan, Lindsey
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Executive Insight Brief

From: The Roosevelt Group <jpatton@rooseveltdc.com>
Sent: Friday, June 16, 2023 7:59 AM
To: Ingram, Diane <Diane.Ingram@yorkcounty.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Executive Insight Brief



June 16, 2023

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Aerospace & Defense

[Paris Air Show to spotlight aircraft order rush, emissions targets and rising defense budgets \(The Financial Times\)](#)

After a four-year hiatus, the world's biggest international aerospace gathering, the Paris Air Show, opens next week, with industry executives expecting a spate of multibillion-dollar aircraft deals. It will be the first time the industry has gathered in Paris since the Covid-19 pandemic and Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Organisers expect close to 2,500 exhibitors from 47 countries to attend the show amid a global rebound driven by resurgent passenger demand for air travel. The recovery is underpinning a buying spree from across the globe, from low-cost European airlines as well as Asian and Middle Eastern carriers. Order books at Boeing and Airbus are so full that carriers are having to wait until the end of the decade to receive the most popular single-aisle aircraft. Meanwhile, defence executives will be meeting with a renewed sense of purpose. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has triggered a global race to re-arm, as western governments have pledged to increase defence spending after years of shrinking budgets. At the same time, headwinds, including soaring inflation, shortages of components as well as labour constraints, have continued to make an impact on aerospace and defence supply chains. "It's hard to recall a time when we've had the level of demand for aircraft that we have today," said John Plueger, chief executive of Air Lease, one of the world's biggest aircraft lessors. The level of demand is reflected in the rate of lease extensions by airlines, which is high. Historically, 75 per cent of first-run leases would be extended with the current airline, Plueger told the Financial Times. Today, the percentage is "in the mid-90s". Yet, the industry has continued to struggle with persistent supply chain constraints and parts shortages that have limited the production capacity of the aircraft manufacturers and led to delivery delays. Willie Walsh, director-general of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), said the situation is unprecedented and its members are calling for the organisation to intervene with aircraft manufacturers to find solutions and identify where the pinch points are. "I have never heard so many people complain about an issue in all of my career. It's coming from everyone, not being able to access spare parts or the delays in accessing spare parts." Delivery rates of Airbus and Boeing will be in the spotlight as the year progresses as evidence that their production is on track. Airbus delivered 63 aircraft in May, significantly up from 20 delivered in January and 46 in February. Sash Tusa, analyst at Agency Partners, said the levels were still below the average Airbus needs to be at to show that the production "ramp" is really working. Boeing, meanwhile, shipped 50 jets in May. It recently reported a new flaw in the production of its 787 Dreamliner, which could slow deliveries. "Our worry is that the upcycle ends before the OEMs have got their houses in order," Tusa said. "To be fair, there is always a degree of over ordering . . . but the supply situation is certainly getting a bit worse." Sustainability will be the big buzzword at the show. The aviation industry has committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 through a mix of new fuel technologies, including the use of sustainable aviation fuels and hydrogen, as well as more efficient aircraft, engines and air traffic management. Executives will be at pains to stress that there is a credible path to net zero that will enable the industry to keep growing. Environmental groups argue the two do not go hand in hand. "If you want to solve a problem, start by not making it worse," said Carlos Lopez de la Osa, aviation manager at NGO Transport & Environment. "If the sector keeps growing, sustainable flying will remain a pipe dream. It's simple maths: more planes in the sky means more SAF required." IATA estimates that a cumulative \$5tn will be needed for aviation to achieve net zero by 2050, although executives say policy drivers will be critical to boost production of SAFs and hydrogen. They insist the industry will continue to grow, if at different rates in differing markets. Airbus this week raised its 20-year forecast for new aeroplane deliveries to 40,850 but trimmed its predictions for growth in the global fleet as airlines focus on replacing older, less fuel-efficient jets. About 80 per cent of the projected deliveries will be single-aisle aircraft such as the Airbus A320neo or Boeing 737 Max. In Europe, airlines are facing an increased cost for their carbon emissions. The EU is also negotiating rules to enforce the uptake of SAFs as well as potential increased taxes on kerosene. According to IATA's Walsh, the EU has an "anti-aviation leaning". "[In] Europe in particular, the view is

that you can retain all the economic and social benefits that you have derived from aviation at the same time as you are suppressing it. I disagree with that."

[The US wants Europe to buy American weapons: the EU has other ideas](#)

[The Shoulder-Fired Missile Making a Comeback \(The WSJ\)](#)

A shoulder-fired missile that can travel over three times the speed of sound is being brought back into production after its deployment in Ukraine revived interest in the weapon. Thales, the French defense and technology giant, is restarting production of the Starstreak for the first time in more than a decade as Ukraine uses the superfast air-defense system to help repel Russian attacks. The move is the latest example of how demand for weapons from Ukraine, combined with increased military spending by Western governments, is reviving once moribund production lines. But the Starstreak's relaunch could take more than a year, Thales says, underlining how the complexity of manufacturing weapons and industry wide supply-chain issues are slowing down Western rearmament in the face of rising geopolitical tensions. "It will take a bit of time to order and to produce and deliver these missiles," Thales Chief Executive Patrice Caine said of the overall task of boosting weapons production. "The lead times are quite long," he added. One issue is the need to

build up inventories of components. The Starstreak will be made at Thales's factory in Northern Ireland, which is already working to boost production of two other critical weapons for Ukraine. Those include an antitank missile that made headlines by destroying dozens of Russian tank columns early in the war. Starstreak was commissioned by Britain and designed in the 1980s during the Cold War before entering service the following decade. Since then, the weapon—initially made by a company that Thales later acquired—has been exported around the world from Belfast, where its last production round was in 2012. Last year, the U.K. government sent Ukraine a batch of the missiles from its own stockpiles as part of a broader package of thousands of surface-to-air weapons. Thales is now restarting Starstreak production amid increased interest in the weapon, company executives said, with an initial order for an undisclosed number of missiles to replenish U.K. supplies. Both Thales and Britain's Defense Ministry declined to comment on the cost of the weapon. The Starstreak is unique among portable air-defense systems. The missile, which can be fired off the shoulder, accelerates to greater than Mach 3 in a fraction of a second before releasing three laser-guided darts toward a target. It can hit targets more than 4 miles away.

[Putin sides with military chiefs over placing Wagner under direct control](#)

[Iran helping Moscow to build drone factory in Russia, U.S. says \(NBC News\)](#)

Iran is sending materials to Russia to help Moscow build a drone manufacturing plant that could be operational next year, part of a "deepening" military partnership between the two countries, the Biden administration said Friday. Officials also said that Tehran provided hundreds of armed drones to Russia last month for Moscow's war in Ukraine. Warning of growing defense ties between Iran and Russia, the Biden administration released a satellite photo of what it believes is the planned location of a drone production plant in the Alabuga special economic zone in the Russian republic of Tatarstan. The White House also described how Iranian-made drones are transported to Russia, releasing a graphic to illustrate the route. The drones are "shipped across the Caspian Sea, from Amirabad, Iran, to Makhachkala, Russia, and then used operationally by Russian forces against Ukraine," John Kirby, spokesperson for the White House National Security Council, said in a statement. "As of May, Russia received hundreds of one-way attack UAVs, as well as UAV production-related equipment, from Iran," added Kirby, using a military acronym for drones, unmanned aerial vehicles. Kirby said that Russia had used Iranian drones in recent weeks to strike Kyiv, which has experienced a vast uptick in aerial attacks. He said that Moscow has been "offering Iran unprecedented defense cooperation, including on missiles, electronics, and air defense" in return for Iran's supplying kamikaze drones to Russia. Iran has denied that it has provided Russia with drones for the war in Ukraine but has announced plans to bolster its defense cooperation with Moscow, including purchasing Russian fighter jets and other military hardware. Russia's embassy in Washington and Iran's mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to requests for comment. In March, Iran announced a deal to buy Russian Su-35 fighter jets to replace its aging fleet of military aircraft. Iran also has expressed interest in purchasing Russian attack helicopters, radars and YAK-130 combat trainer aircraft. "In total, Iran is seeking billions of dollars' worth of military equipment from Russia," Kirby said, calling the terms "a full-scale defense partnership that is harmful to Ukraine, to Iran's neighbors, and to the international community." The statement was the latest example of the Biden administration releasing intelligence information publicly to try to undermine Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The United States has imposed a series of sanctions on organizations or individuals allegedly involved in the transfer of Iranian drones to Russia and issued export controls to try to prevent Russia from obtaining electronic components needed to operate Iranian drones. The administration also issued an advisory to "help governments and businesses put in place measures to ensure they are not inadvertently contributing to Iran's UAV program." Officials also said the U.S. is working to provide Ukraine with air defense systems needed to counter Russian drone and missile attacks. Henry Rome, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a think tank, said Iran's provision of drones to Russia presents a "hard problem set for Western powers, given the direct air and sea routes between Iran and Russia." "We can try to expose and deter this activity, and over the long run complicate the relationship by restricting flows of technology," Rome said. "But these steps may take time to bear fruit.

Budget & Appropriations

[Congressional Support for Aiding Ukraine Frays Amid Spending Battle \(The New York Times\)](#)

A strong and longstanding bipartisan consensus in Congress around providing huge sums to aid Ukraine's war effort is beginning to fray as a pivotal counteroffensive against Russia is underway, and as Republicans bent on slashing federal spending gain traction in their efforts to limit or block future military assistance for Kyiv. Right-wing House Republicans have long opposed U.S. support for Ukraine, but until recently they lacked the numbers to threaten any aid packages, which have sailed through Congress with the support of a critical mass of G.O.P. hawks — including the party's top leaders — and Democrats. The bill that passed this month suspending the debt ceiling set spending limits that strengthened their hand, and increased the political pressure on Speaker Kevin McCarthy to keep a tight lid on federal expenditures. It also intensified the skepticism to new aid for Ukraine among some progressive Democrats, who were angry that the fiscal agreement capped spending on domestic programs, such as education, housing and food assistance, while it allowed military funding to continue to grow. They are now hinting that any future assistance to Kyiv must be accompanied by more nonmilitary spending, a nonstarter with Republicans. Since the Russian invasion, Congress has extended military and humanitarian assistance to Kyiv through a series of emergency spending measures totaling more than \$100 billion. While the Biden administration has not yet asked for funds for the next fiscal year, Democratic and Republican congressional aides anticipate that the next request will be smaller, reflecting battlefield limitations and the political difficulties of justifying huge expenditures during an election cycle. Mr. McCarthy, who last month publicly pledged his support for continued U.S. aid to Ukraine, changed his tune after he reached a compromise with President Biden on the debt limit, telling reporters that continuing to approve additional funds for Kyiv outside the normal budget would be "only blowing up the agreement." The comment reflected a schism that has been festering in the Republican Party between "America First" hard-liners, who have pressed to curtail aid to Ukraine and redirect those dollars toward things like protecting the U.S.-Mexico border, and traditional conservatives, who see funding Kyiv in the war as a vital investment in a fight to uphold a Western-style democracy. That divide has been intensified by the debt ceiling deal, which enraged hard-right Republicans who said it did not do enough to slash federal spending and some of whom revolted on the House floor last week, showing their willingness to bring the chamber to a halt in the future if their demands were not met. "We need to prepare," said Representative Andy Biggs of Arizona, one of the G.O.P. rebels, who said he was gearing up to fight any move to send additional funds to Ukraine. "I know it's coming; I just don't know when it's coming." Their position has prompted a mild panic, particularly among Republican hawks in the Senate, who are now scrambling to find ways to free up funds for Ukraine within the spending caps set by the bill, or to forge a bipartisan deal to provide another round of emergency funding outside those limits. "We've got to figure out where we can save in D.O.D.," said Senator Joni Ernst, an Iowa Republican who sits on the Armed Services Committee, suggesting that if Congress could identify and redirect wasteful spending at the Department of Defense, or find cuts to nonmilitary foreign aid programs, "we can make some headway in funding for Ukraine." Other staunch Republican supporters of Ukraine's military efforts argue that Congress has no choice but to approve additional funding for the war outside the regular budget, given the array of competing demands on limited U.S. defense dollars for things like modernizing infrastructure, hardening nuclear defenses and cyberdefenses, and deterring adversaries like China. "I personally don't believe that we can manage the Ukrainian assistance package that will be needed within the caps that have been prescribed," said Representative Steve Womack, Republican of Arkansas and a member of the Appropriations Committee. Whatever the ultimate size of the request, there would very likely be enough support in both chambers of Congress to pass an emergency spending bill for Ukraine if it reached the floor. A small number of left-wing Democrats have expressed unease about the continued fighting in Ukraine, but several have supported past assistance packages. Republicans who believe the United States should continue backing Ukraine's war against Russia far outnumber the detractors.

["Trying to figure it out": McCarthy's conservative rebels struggle with next steps](#)

[House Republicans select totals for fiscal 2024 spending bills \(PoliticoPro\)](#)

House Republicans are expected to approve their totals for a dozen appropriations bills Wednesday, outlining how they propose to fund the government well below current levels and the totals set under the bipartisan budget deal. The House Appropriations Committee is set to adopt the funding levels, known as the 302(b)s, after advancing the Agriculture-FDA spending measure. The new fiscal 2024 totals, which add up to about \$1.47 trillion, come after House GOP leaders pledged to pursue tens of billions of dollars in additional spending reductions for the coming fiscal year, hoping to appease conservatives angered by the debt limit package that cleared Congress earlier this month. Key context: The House funding totals amount to about \$119 billion less than the spending caps the debt deal set and about \$130 billion less than current government funding. In laying out the allocations, House Republicans committed in writing to yanking back \$115 billion in previously enacted funding for the IRS, the EPA, the General Services

Administration, the Department of Agriculture and other agencies. That unspent money would be redirected toward border security and fending off Chinese aggression, among other efforts, according to a copy obtained by POLITICO. But it's unclear exactly how that cash would be redistributed. Takeaways: The Defense, Military Construction-VA and Homeland Security spending bills would all be spared from cuts, with each measure receiving a small boost for the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1. The Financial Services, Interior-Environment, State-Foreign Operations, Agriculture, Labor-HHS-Education, Commerce-Justice-Science and Transportation-HUD bills would all see massive reductions, with as much as a quarter to a third of funding sliced from current levels, in most cases. The Financial Services budget would see a whopping 59 percent decrease from current levels.

Proposed funding totals:

- Agriculture-FDA: \$17.8 billion
- Commerce-Justice-Science: \$58.7 billion
- Defense: \$826.5 billion
- Energy-Water: \$52.4 billion
- Financial Services: \$11.3 billion
- Homeland Security: \$62.8 billion
- Interior-Environment: \$25.4 billion
- Labor-HHS-Education: \$147.1 billion
- Legislative Branch: \$6.7 billion
- Military Construction-VA: \$155.7 billion
- State-Foreign Operations: \$41.4 billion
- Transportation-HUD: \$65.2 billion

Outlook: The totals House Republicans have proposed will never fly in the Democratic-controlled Senate, where appropriators plan to mark up spending bills in line with the \$1.59 trillion government funding total established under the debt ceiling agreement Speaker Kevin McCarthy and President Joe Biden reached. Senate appropriators are largely nonplussed about the House's decision to undercut the deal, acknowledging that the House and Senate were always going to have major differences to resolve on annual spending bills before federal cash expires Sept. 30. "At the end, we'll have to work it out," Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said Tuesday. "But it's not totally uncommon for these to be different as they move through the process, and I think that's what's going to happen this time."

[Federal Reserve meeting, Fed leaves rates unchanged, for now](#)

[Deeply divided appropriators approve military infrastructure funding bill \(Politico Pro\)](#)

The House Appropriations Committee advanced legislation to fund military construction projects and veterans programs along party lines on Tuesday as the rift between the parties widened this week over how to handle spending. The measure was approved in a 34-27 vote. Democrats opposed the measure in protest of a GOP push for steep cuts to non-defense spending below the levels set in the recent debt limit deal. Appropriators slugged it out over the administration's efforts to promote diversity and inclusion, provisions taking aim at critical race theory, the Veterans Affairs Department's rules to expand abortion access and VA providing gender affirming care. The amended bill blocks the VA from performing abortions and providing medical procedures for transgender people. Funding fight: Democrats slammed Republicans for moving to cut even further below a recent deal struck by Speaker Kevin McCarthy and President Joe Biden to raise the debt limit and rein in spending. Amid a fight with conservatives that shut down the House floor last week, McCarthy indicated appropriators would craft some spending bills below spending caps set by the deal. Appropriations Chair Kay Granger (R-Texas) confirmed that on Monday evening, saying the panel will push to slash overall discretionary spending to fiscal 2022 levels without impacting defense, homeland security or veterans programs. Under the debt limit deal, defense spending still goes up while non-defense funding is cut from the current level. Granger said Tuesday the approach allows for spending reductions "without shortchanging" national security. But in previous spending deals, caps have been treated as a target to be met, though not exceeded. Democrats argued staying well beneath the caps amounts to Republicans renegeing on the debt deal. "Republicans have walked all the way back and in some cases gone even further," said Appropriations ranking member Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.), who opposed the debt limit deal. "It is no secret that I am no fan of where we ended up," she added, "but we have a path to funding the United States government on time and we ought to take that path." By the numbers: The legislation adds \$1 billion to President Joe Biden's military construction request for a total of \$17.7 billion. In both cases, however, Pentagon infrastructure spending would still go down from the previous year. Abortion and transgender care: The legislation includes an

amendment, adopted in a 34-27 vote, that would bar funding to implement VA's rule to expand abortion access that was rolled out in late 2022 that would permit abortion counseling and allow VA to perform the procedure in certain cases in states where it is banned. The same amendment also bars funding for surgical procedures or hormone therapy for gender-affirming care. The move from Republicans to overturn expanded access to abortion and medical care for transgender people at VA comes as they also attack similar Pentagon policies. Republicans have assailed moves to allow troops to be reimbursed for travel expenses and obtain leave to seek abortions following the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. Similar proposals could come up when the panel considers its main Pentagon spending bill. Diversity and inclusion: The panel rejected, 27-33, an amendment from Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.) that would remove GOP-authored provisions from the bill that would block administration efforts to promote diversity, equity and inclusion and bar the promotion of critical race theory. Guantanamo: Appropriators also downed an amendment from the ranking Military Construction-VA Democrat, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida, to remove provisions that block the closure of the terrorist detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and prohibit constructing or modifying a facility in the U.S. to hold detainees imprisoned there.

Advanced Technologies

[Samsung shows off vRAN, FWA, private 5G at new innovation center \(Fierce Wireless\)](#)

The center focuses on technologies that are of interest to mobile operators and enterprises, including virtualized Radio Access Networks (vRAN), fixed wireless access (FWA) and private networks, according to a post by Christine Nelson, senior manager at Samsung Networks Business. The facility supports hands-on collaboration among Samsung's partners and customers, including a dedicated on-site testing lab for working on new network innovations and solutions, according to the company. A RAN wall showcases various products from its indoor and outdoor network solutions, and videos illustrate the company's history of innovation, virtualized core solutions and network services. "The Samsung Networks Innovation Center is a culmination of the company's 40-year journey from challenger to global networks leader, reinforcing our commitment to investing in the rapidly changing U.S. market," Nelson wrote. Samsung established its networks business in the U.S. in 1999 and claims many commercial network deployment firsts, from 3G to 4G and now 5G. Its 5G customers in the U.S. include big mobile operators like Verizon and cable companies like Comcast. According to Nelson, the innovation center's demo of Samsung's vRAN technology gives visitors a close look at how virtualized networks offer operators key advantages, such as increased network flexibility, efficiency and optimization. Another demo gives visitors an opportunity to use an active 5G network to see various scenarios of network technologies powering FWA. The private 5G networks demo lets visitors partake in a digital twin AR experience within an industrial workplace, including interaction with a digitized version of a physical turbine engine to view parts virtually and diagnose issues.

[Cyber Insurance Premiums Surge by 50% as Ransomware Attacks Increase](#)

[Microsoft uncovers new 'wave' of Russian cyberattacks against Ukraine, NATO allies \(POLITICO Pro\)](#)

Russian government-linked hackers launched a new "wave" of cyberattacks against networks in Ukraine and its partners in NATO, Microsoft announced Wednesday. Ongoing conflict: The report was released amid a new Ukrainian counteroffensive operation against Russia in the ongoing war, and as the U.S. continues to provide cybersecurity support to Kyiv. According to the report from Microsoft, a hacking group associated with the Russian intelligence directorate, or GRU, began targeting the networks of Ukrainian government agencies and IT service providers in February. The group, which Microsoft named "Cadet Blizzard," also targeted organizations in NATO member states that have provided aid to Ukraine in the wake of the Russian invasion. Past activity: Microsoft researchers allege Cadet Blizzard was also behind January 2022 attacks on Ukrainian websites, known as "WhisperGate," that used malware in an attempt to wipe networks at government agencies and IT, and nonprofit groups. The United States and the European Union formally blamed the Russian government for the WhisperGate campaign last year. The renewed attacks involve the hackers using stolen credentials to gain access to systems, and then staying undetected within the networks for as long as possible to access more information, a technique known as "living off the land." Microsoft researchers assessed that the group has been active since 2020, and conducts attacks during non-office hours for targeted organizations. Not all bad news: The report notes that the new attacks had a "relatively low

success rate" compared to other Russian government hacking operations aimed at Ukraine over the past year, and have only been "occasionally successful." Microsoft has informed all customers potentially impacted by the activity. Prior to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia last year, global officials and cyber experts alike feared that cyberattacks would be a key factor in the war, and that Ukraine's critical infrastructure would be brought down by Russian hackers. While these attacks have either been fended off or been largely unsuccessful, Russia has been linked to attacks on Ukrainian energy stations and to targeting a large satellite group. Cyber aid: In response, the State Department announced last week that the U.S. is giving Ukraine \$37 million in cyber assistance funds, on top of prior financial assistance and threat hunting in Ukrainian networks carried out by U.S. Cyber Command.

[Keeping Up With The Sustainability Evolution Through Technology](#)

[Using AI for loans and mortgages is big risk, warns EU boss \(BBC News\)](#)

Discrimination is a more pressing concern from advancing artificial intelligence than human extinction, says the EU's competition chief. Margrethe Vestager told the BBC "guardrails" were needed to counter the technology's biggest risks. She said this was key where AI is being used to help make decisions that can affect someone's livelihood, such as whether they can apply for a mortgage. The European Parliament approved proposed AI rules on Wednesday. The MEPs vote in favour of the legislation comes amid warnings over developing the tech - which enables computers to perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence - too quickly. Some experts have warned that AI could lead to the extinction of humanity. In an exclusive interview with the BBC, Ms Vestager said AI's potential to amplify bias or discrimination, which can be contained in the vast amounts of data sourced from the internet and used to train models and tools, was a more pressing concern. "Probably [the risk of extinction] may exist, but I think the likelihood is quite small. I think the AI risks are more that people will be discriminated [against], they will not be seen as who they are. "If it's a bank using it to decide whether I can get a mortgage or not, or if it's social services on your municipality, then you want to make sure that you're not being discriminated [against] because of your gender or your colour or your postal code," she said. On Tuesday, Ireland's data protection authority said it had put Google's planned EU roll-out of its AI chatbot Bard on hold. It said it had been informed by Google that its ChatGPT competitor would be introduced in the EU this week, but was yet to receive details or information showing how the firm had identified and minimised data protection risks to prospective users. Deputy Commissioner Graham Doyle said the DPC was seeking the information "as a matter of urgency" and had raised further data protection enquiries about it with Google. Ms Vestager, who is the European Commission's executive vice president, said AI regulation needs to be a "global affair". She insisted a consensus among "like-minded" countries should be prioritised before getting more jurisdictions, such as China, on board. "Let's start working on a UN approach. But we shouldn't hold our breath," she said. "We should do what we can hear and now." Ms Vestager is spearheading EU efforts to create a voluntary code of conduct with the US government, which would see companies using or developing AI sign up to a set of standards that are not legally binding. The current draft of the AI Act seeks to categorise applications of AI into levels of risk to consumers, with AI-enabled video games or spam filters falling into the lowest risk category. High-risk AI systems include those that are used to evaluate credit scores or access to loans and housing. This is where the focus of strict controls on the tech will be. But as AI continues to develop quickly, Ms Vestager said there was a need to be pragmatic when it comes to fine-tuning rules around this technology. "It's better to get, let's say 80% now than 100% never, so let's get started and then return when we learn and then correct with others," she said. Ms Vestager said there was "definitely a risk" that AI could be used to influence the next elections. She said the challenge for police and intelligence services would be to be "fully on top" of a criminal sector where there is a risk they get ahead in the race to utilise the tech. "If your social feed can be scanned to get a thorough profile of you, the risk of being manipulated is just enormous," she said, "and if we end up in a situation where we believe nothing, then we have undermined our society completely." Many tech leaders and researchers signed a letter in March calling for a pause in the development of AI systems more powerful than OpenAI's GPT-4. But Ms Vestager said this was not realistic. "No-one can enforce it. No-one can make sure that everyone is on board," she said, pointing out that a pause could be used by some as an opportunity to get ahead of competitors. "What I think is important is that every developer knows that everyone has signed up for the same guardrails so that no-one takes excessive risks."

Military Installations & Communities

[Army renames Louisiana Base for Black WWI hero who received the Medal of Honor \(NBC News\)](#)

FORT JOHNSON, La. — A U.S. Army base in western Louisiana was renamed Tuesday to honor Sgt. William Henry Johnson, a Black hero of World War I who received the Medal of Honor nearly a century later. Fort Johnson had previously been named after a Confederate commander, Leonidas Polk. The renaming is part of the U.S. military's efforts to address historic racial injustice — work that included changing the names of nine Army posts that commemorated Confederate officers. "Sgt. William Henry Johnson embodied the warrior spirit, and we are deeply honored to bear his name," Brig. Gen. David Garner, the commanding general of the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Johnson, said in a post on Twitter. While serving on the front lines of France in 1918, Johnson fought off a German night raid near the Argonne Forest, according to the National Museum of the United States Army. Johnson was wounded 21 times while beating back the attacking forces. He also prevented a wounded Black comrade from being taken prisoner when, after running out of grenades and ammunition, he killed two German soldiers with his knife. "His frantic attacks broke the German morale and the enemy raiding party retreated," the Army museum's biography of Johnson says. He survived the war, and former President Theodore Roosevelt named him one of the five bravest Americans to serve in the conflict. He insisted he was no hero, and the Army biography quotes him as saying, "There wasn't anything so fine about it. Just fought for my life. A rabbit would have done that." His brave actions were recognized nearly a century later when he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 2015 "for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty." However, Johnson's actions were not recognized by the Army, which denied him a disability allowance and did not award him a Purple Heart. Due to his injuries, he struggled after returning home to Albany, New York, and died of a heart condition in 1929. He was 32 years old. The current process of renaming nine Army posts marks the first time bases will be named after Black soldiers and women. Earlier this month, Fort Bragg in North Carolina became Fort Liberty, and Fort Benning in Georgia was renamed Fort Moore last month. The original naming process involved members of local communities, although Black residents were left out of the conversations. Bases were named after soldiers born or raised nearby, no matter how effectively they performed their duties. Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg is widely regarded among historians as a poor leader who did not have the respect of his troops.

[4,500 Sailors and Marines return to San Diego after a seven-month deployment to Indo-Pacific](#)[US fight jets launch from Spangdahlem Air Base to join historic allied air drills \(Stars and Stripes\)](#)

SPANGDAHLEM AIR BASE, Germany — The repeated, ear-numbing rumble of American fighter jets from three squadrons shook the countryside around this base in Germany's rural Eifel region Wednesday. Barreling down the runway throughout the day were F-35s visiting from Vermont and F-16s hailing from Minnesota, as well as Spangdahlem's own Fighting Falcons. They flew as part of Air Defender, a German-led exercise involving the most aircraft working together in European skies in the history of NATO. It's the largest showcase of airpower from NATO and partner nations in more than 70 years. "The scope and scale of this exercise cannot be underestimated," said Col. Daniel Finnegan, commander of the 158th Fighter Wing of the Vermont Air National Guard. Having hundreds of aircraft from more than 20 countries launch from numerous bases to achieve a specific objective is daunting, he said. The exercise also is a good opportunity to practice getting across the Atlantic Ocean quickly and efficiently, and the wing is "exploring faster ways for us to get out of the East Coast ... (with) less tanker support," Finnegan said. For security reasons, he didn't disclose how many F-35s deployed to Spangdahlem, but about 100 personnel from the Vermont Air National Guard accompanied the aircraft, officials said. The 10 days of drills are being staged amid the Russia-Ukraine war, which began with an unprovoked, full-scale invasion by Russian forces on Feb. 24, 2022. In the past two weeks, Ukraine has reported recapturing territory during a counteroffensive supported by billions of dollars in military aid from the United States and its partners and allies. Air Defender has been in the works since 2018, a few years after Russia illegally annexed Crimea from Ukraine. "The exercise is a signal, a signal above all to us ... the NATO countries, but also to our population that we are in a position to react very quickly ... that we would be able to defend the alliance in case of attack," German air force chief Lt. Gen. Ingo Gerhartz told ZDF television Monday. Participants are simulating defense of the Baltic Sea coast and practicing protection of cities, ports and airports in the designated training areas, most of which are in Germany, Gerhartz said in his television interview. Scenarios to be practiced revolve around Article 5, which calls for all NATO countries to respond when one member comes under attack. But for the American fighter pilots involved in Air Defender, some of whom likely would be called on if Article 5 was invoked, the focus is more on teamwork. "This is all about relationship-building," said Lt. Col. Nathaniel Hofmann, who commands the 52nd Operations Support Squadron at Spangdahlem. "Anytime you go into a complex

environment, confusion is inherent, so the more that we can put ourselves in these scenarios in peacetime, (the easier) we're going to be able to do it when called upon." Relationships also were being forged on the ground. Guard troops from Vermont showed members of the German air force an F-35 parked inside a hardened aircraft shell at Spangdahlem on Wednesday, pointing out some of the plane's features. The F-16s from Spangdahlem are practicing their "bread and butter," the suppression of enemy air defenses, said Capt. Tyler Knickerbocker, a pilot with the 480th Fighter Squadron. The "Wild Weasels" are usually "the first ones into a contested area, and we're usually going to be the last ones out," he said, adding their singular focus is on destroying any potential ground threats.

[Lawmakers pressure Air Force to finally make space command HQ basing decision](#)

[VA hospitals are outperforming private hospitals, latest Medicare survey shows \(NPR\)](#)

A nationwide Medicare survey released Wednesday found that veterans rated Veterans Affairs hospitals higher than private health care facilities in all 10 categories of patient satisfaction. The VA takes care of about 9 million veterans at 1,255 facilities — the nation's largest integrated health care system. Despite many widely publicized scandals, VA health care has been consistently rated as competitive with private care in dozens of peer-reviewed articles. "I strongly believe that the VA is the best option for veteran care. Study after study shows that quality and patient safety is at least as good if not better than our private sector counterparts," said Dr. Shereef Elnahal, VA undersecretary for health. This most recent survey, known as HCAHPS (Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems), showed that the VA beat out private facilities in all categories surveyed, such as patient satisfaction, hospital cleanliness and communication with nurses and doctors. "This offers among the first opportunities to directly compare us with our private sector counterparts, and we're really happy with the results but we won't be content until 100% of hospitals are pinging in the right ratings," Elnahal told NPR. Favorably comparing with the private sector is important for the VA, because Congress has expanded the VA's use of private care as an option when veterans have to wait too long or travel too far for a VA appointment. Private care is much more expensive for the VA. Republicans in Congress, who generally support greater use of private care, have even accused the VA of obstructing it. Most recently, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Chairman Mike Bost wrote to VA Secretary Denis McDonough about what he called his "complete frustration with the Veterans Health Administration's lack of timely action to provide community care to veterans that ... are in dire need of timely care." "I hope you share my frustration. These roadblocks do not serve veterans well and we must do better," Bost wrote.

Homeland Security

[DHS extends deportation relief for some immigrants for four countries \(ABC News\)](#)

The Department of Homeland Security has issued an 18-month extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designations for El Salvador, Honduras, Nepal and Nicaragua, the department announced on Tuesday. The extension allows approximately 337,000 immigrants from those countries, who are currently protected from deportation, to temporarily continue legally living and working in the country. TPS is issued by the secretary of Homeland Security when countries are deemed too dangerous for their citizens for several reasons including national disasters, political unrest and war. Although TPS may protect immigrants from deportation, it does not offer a pathway to citizenship for certain people residing in the U.S. before a certain date. For those from Nicaragua, for example, TPS protections were granted after Hurricane Mitch devastated Central America in 1998, and so only certain individuals that were in the U.S. on Jan. 5, 1999, are eligible to apply. Applicants must also meet other criteria, like background checks. The Trump administration had previously tried to end TPS for these and other countries, but a lawsuit filed by advocates on behalf of TPS holders stalled the termination. DHS claims Tuesday's announcement officially rescinds those attempts. A hearing in that case is scheduled on June 22. Ahilan Arulanantham, an attorney representing TPS holders in the ongoing lawsuit, said in a tweet that details about how the announcement affects their case still need to be worked out but celebrated the government's actions. "That's why we are here now, watching the government finally inch toward doing the bare minimum version of the right thing," he said. Advocates say that Tuesday's announcement serves as an acknowledgement from the Biden administration that immigrants from those countries must be shielded from deportation, but it falls short of protecting the thousands more that have come to the U.S. since TPS was designated. TPS remains one of the only tools that the

administration has to protect large groups of migrants without congressional approval. "Through the extension of Temporary Protected Status, we are able to offer continued safety and protection to current beneficiaries who are nationals of El Salvador, Honduras, Nepal, and Nicaragua who are already present in the United States and cannot return because of the impacts of environmental disasters," said DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas in a statement. "We will continue to offer support to them through this temporary form of humanitarian relief." The DHS announcement coincided with TPS Children's Day, a celebration observed by immigrant advocates. Gabriela Hernandez, a communications specialist for immigrant organization CASA, says around 10 children of current TPS holders met with and shared friendship bracelets with White House officials today ahead of the announcement and urged them to protect their families from deportation and to designate TPS for Guatemala. The White House did not respond when asked to comment on the meeting. Yubrank Suazo, a Nicaraguan opposition leader formerly imprisoned by Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, was freed and flown to the U.S. in February 2021. "While I applaud the administration for doing this, it's regrettable they did not redesignate TPS," he told ABC News in Spanish. "Over 100,000 [Nicaraguan] immigrants who have fled oppression and the humanitarian crisis in our country are still vulnerable."

[Pentagon increases security screenings following leak of classified documents](#)

[White House pushes for renewal of electronic surveillance law provision \(The Guardian\)](#)

The White House is stepping up pressure on lawmakers to renew a section of electronic surveillance law which permits the government to conduct targeted surveillance of foreign persons located outside the US. The provision, known as section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (Fisa), is set to expire at the end of the year. But its renewal is facing pushback from privacy advocates and lawmakers, some citing examples in which law enforcement search requests were misused to conduct illegal surveillance on US citizens. On Monday, Joe Biden's administration circulated examples showing the US had used electronic surveillance under section 702 to catch fentanyl smugglers as well as the ransomware hackers who temporarily shut down the Colonial Pipeline Company in a 2021 cyber-attack that led to gas shortages along the eastern seaboard. The public campaign to build support for the provision comes as a poll released last week showed that the public is growing more skeptical of the need to sacrifice civil liberties for security. The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll released last week found that 28% of adults support the government listening to phone calls and emails made outside the US without a warrant while 44% oppose the practice. More broadly, 48% of Americans said they believe it is necessary to sacrifice their rights and freedoms to prevent terrorism, down from 54% in 2021 and nearly two-thirds in 2011, a decade after the 9/11 attacks. The decline in support for foreign surveillance was notably sharp among Republicans, with just 44% saying that it is sometimes necessary compared with 69% in 2011. Among Democrats, support remained relatively constant, dropping to 55% from 59% in 2011. Republican opposition to the renewal of section 702 in some cases has responded to the failure of the FBI to clearly identify the Steele dossier – also known as the Trump–Russia dossier – as a political opposition research report without merit. Ahead of a Senate hearing into the issue on Tuesday, South Carolina senator Lindsey Graham – the top Republican on the judiciary committee – said the FBI's mistakes had damaged its reputation with Congress and the public. Nonetheless, Graham insisted that section 702 should be reauthorized. "What I'm trying to tell my constituents back home [is] the threats to the country are growing – they're not lessening," Graham said. "Bottom line is: let's reauthorize this program and build in some safeguards." Illinois's Democratic US senator Dick Durbin, the panel's chairman, said he'd need to "see more" of the FBI's current reforms to support the provision's renewal. But civil liberties groups have come out strongly against reauthorization, which is required every five years. "Although purportedly targeted at foreigners, section 702 has become a rich source of warrantless government access to Americans' phone calls, texts, and emails," the Brennan Center for Justice, one of 21 civil liberties groups, said in a letter on Monday opposing the renewal of section 702. The groups said they opposed the reauthorization of the surveillance provisions the government "is using to gain warrantless access to Americans' communications, without significant and wide-ranging surveillance reforms". In 2022 alone, the groups said, "the FBI conducted more than 200,000 warrantless searches of section 702 communications to find Americans' information" and that, in turn, had converted section 702 "into something Congress never intended: a domestic spying tool". On Monday, Biden administration officials said they opposed proposals to require the FBI to get a warrant every time it searches for an American's information. "We must not forget the lessons of 9/11," said Matthew Olsen, the assistant attorney general for national security. "Unduly limiting the FBI's ability to access lawfully collected information and imposing artificial barriers between foreign intelligence and criminal investigations will set us back decades. It will put our nation at grave risk." In its effort to turn around opinion, the White House offered examples of when the provision had been used effectively, including learning of Beijing's efforts to track and repatriate Chinese dissidents and to warn an American who

was the target of foreign spies seeking information about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The FBI said it has instituted better training and new rules that have sharply reduced the number of searches for American citizens after agents were found to have wrongly run queries for the names of a congressman on the House intelligence committee, people linked to the January 6 Capitol attack and participants in the 2020 protests after a Minneapolis police officer's murder of George Floyd. The bureau said it would now immediately suspend any employee's access to section 702 databases for any incident involving "negligence".

[China has been spying on the U.S. from Cuba for years, Biden administration official says](#)

[Commerce blacklists firms selling U.S. technology for Chinese hypersonics \(The Washington Post\)](#)

The Biden administration this week escalated its efforts to scupper the sale of U.S. technology to the Chinese military by blacklisting more than 30 Chinese companies, including a network of resellers that provided advanced American technology to the Chinese hypersonic weapons program and several entities involved in training Chinese military pilots using Western resources. Among those added to the list are three companies that resold aerodynamics technology produced in the United States by Ansys, a Pennsylvania-based software company, and Siemens Digital Industries Software to Chinese universities that develop hypersonic technology. Yet another blacklisted Chinese firm facilitated sales of advanced U.S. optics technology to the China Air-to-Air Missile Research Institute in Luoyang. The resellers have openly advertised their work with the Chinese defense industry. "These entities have demonstrable ties to activities of concern, including hypersonic weapons development, design and manufacture of air-to-air missiles, hypersonic flight modeling, and weapon life cycle management using Western software," the Commerce Department said in a notice outlining the new controls on Monday. The latest bans come as Secretary of State Antony Blinken is expected to visit Beijing next week in a bid to improve relations between the two countries that soured in late January when a Chinese surveillance balloon flew over the United States. Tensions between the United States and China have reached new highs over a range of issues, including American efforts to contain Chinese access to semiconductors and other competitive technologies used for military purposes. The Washington Post earlier reported sales by four of the blacklisted Chinese firms as part of a broader investigation into U.S. technology transfers to around 50 Chinese groups that had been previously sanctioned by the United States for their ties to the Chinese military. The Chinese companies have been added to the Commerce Department's Entity List, which bars the export of U.S. technology to designated groups without a government license. The list has been expanded several times under the Biden administration to include firms linked to Chinese defense, human rights and state surveillance programs. It has become a major point of tensions in Beijing, where officials dismiss it as a tool for illegally suppressing Chinese firms. Other additions this year include five Chinese firms linked to the Chinese airship program. The 30 newly blacklisted Chinese groups are among over 40 entities added this week, including five from the United Arab Emirates, four from Pakistan and three from South Africa. Several of those firms are aviation groups, sanctioned for their ties to programs training Chinese military pilots using Western and NATO resources, the Commerce Department notice said. The sanctions follow reports that potentially dozens of pilots from countries including Germany and the United Kingdom have been recruited by China to train members of the People's Liberation Army. Two of the companies blacklisted by the United States this week are U.K. aviation training entities, though the Commerce Department did not specify whether they were linked to the previously reported recruitment programs. Other firms added to the Entity List include six Chinese firms that the Commerce Department says conspired to violate American export laws in a scheme to provide the Chinese Navy with U.S. military-grade vessels and equipment. Two further firms were added to the list for distributing surveillance and biometrics technology to Chinese police, including authorities in Xinjiang, where experts estimate more than 1 million ethnic Uyghurs have been detained in recent years as part of a broad crackdown. Beijing sharply criticized the fresh bans and accused the United States of abusing state power to "hysterically" destabilize global supply chains and "go after" Chinese firms.

Transportation & Infrastructure

[U.S. Transportation chief pledges support for Philadelphia after highway collapse \(Yahoo News\)](#)

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg on Tuesday pledged federal support for rebuilding

a major U.S. highway after a portion collapsed in Philadelphia over the weekend, snarling traffic and upending commutes. Buttigieg toured the scene and met with Pennsylvania officials. He said the federal government plans to provide emergency funding to help with the rebuilding but did not offer a timeline on restoring the highway that is used by about 160,000 vehicles a day. "Every resource that is needed will be made available," Buttigieg said at a press conference. Human remains were recovered from the scene of the wreckage on Monday after an overpass of I-95 fell when a tanker truck hauling gasoline ignited on Sunday, shutting down the major East Coast transportation artery. Buttigieg met with Philadelphia's mayor and other state and local officials and discussed "efforts to rebuild I-95 safely and efficiently, while limiting interim impacts to commuters and our supply chains," the U.S. Department of Transportation said in a statement. The head of the Federal Highway Administration was at the site on Monday as the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board investigates. Officials have said that it could take several months to rebuild the collapsed portion of the north-south highway, which runs from Miami to the Canadian border in Maine. Excavation teams worked to clear the site on Monday, with authorities eyeing Tuesday as a test of traffic workarounds.

[Executive of China-Backed Infrastructure Bank Criticizes It After Quitting](#)

[Transportation and Infrastructure: committee leaders introduce bipartisan FAA reauthorization legislation \(AJOT\)](#)

Today, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO), along with full Committee Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-WA), Aviation Subcommittee Chairman Garret Graves (R-LA), and Aviation Subcommittee Ranking Member Steve Cohen (D-TN), introduced the Securing Growth and Robust Leadership in American Aviation Act, bipartisan legislation to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and aviation safety and infrastructure programs for the next five years. Since the start of the 118th Congress, Chairman Sam Graves and the Committee have prioritized the passage of comprehensive FAA legislation, and today's bill introduction follows a series of hearings this year on various aviation issues and the solicitation of input from Members of Congress and the aviation stakeholder community. The Securing Growth and Robust Leadership in American Aviation Act takes important steps to ensure the United States maintains its status as the "Gold Standard" in aviation safety, addresses airport infrastructure needs, and provides a number of provisions to improve and streamline FAA programs. "For over a century, the United States has led the world in aviation safety and innovation, but our 'Gold Standard' status is being threatened by increasing global competition, rapid developments in technology, a shortage of aviation professionals, and FAA's own inefficiency. Our bipartisan legislation will improve critical infrastructure for airports of all sizes, streamline the FAA bureaucracy, strengthen the nation's general aviation sector, encourage the more rapid deployment of safe technological innovations, and address workforce challenges throughout the aviation system," said Chairman Sam Graves. "Not only does this legislation provide long-term stability and funding for the FAA, it also authorizes the important safety work of the National Transportation Safety Board. I want to thank Ranking Member Rick Larsen, Aviation Subcommittee Chairman Garret Graves, and Subcommittee Ranking Member Steve Cohen for working with me to develop and introduce this bill, especially given our tight deadline for getting a bill to the President's desk before the current FAA law expires in September." "The Securing Growth and Robust Leadership in American Aviation Act is a good faith bipartisan compromise that creates a safer, cleaner, greener, and more accessible U.S. aviation system. It transitions the nation to more sustainable fuels, makes a historic investment in the resiliency of our country's airports, implements key safety measures, and bolsters accessibility and consumer protections for all passengers," said Ranking Member Larsen. "This is also a jobs bill: it strengthens and diversifies the aviation workforce, recognizing that it is critical to our nation's economic success. Moreover, it ensures the safe integration of new airspace entrants into U.S. skies to advance American innovation and cultivate good-paying jobs. I appreciate the partnership and collaboration of Chair Sam Graves, Subcommittee Chair Garret Graves, and Subcommittee Ranking Member Steve Cohen on delivering this bipartisan bill to secure the future of America's aviation system." "The global aviation industry was born in America. This bill helps make sure it stays here, and our innovators continue to lead on aviation technology and convenience," said Subcommittee Ranking Member Garret Graves. "The aviation legislation also helps to improve the customer experience for commercial passengers and will help to bring new technology for safer and more efficient management of our skies." "I am pleased to see a bipartisan FAA reauthorization bill coming out of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and have appreciated the opportunity to work with Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Chairman Graves on this transformative bill," said Subcommittee Ranking Member Cohen. "If we stay on track, this will be the first time we pass the five-year bill on time, and I look forward to working together to advance this bill by the August recess. Our reauthorization legislation addresses several key priorities such as bolstering airport infrastructure investments, enhancing aviation safety, protecting consumers including

those with disabilities, addressing resiliency, ensuring the safe operation and integration of unmanned aircraft systems and advanced air mobility, and improving the development of the aviation workforce, including in minority communities. I look forward to continuing to work on this important legislation and appreciate the input of our various stakeholders in our districts and across the nation."

[New York City rebuilds \\$16.6M corridor with permeable concrete](#)

[US requires new passenger planes have secondary flight deck barrier \(Reuters\)](#)

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said on Wednesday it is requiring that new passenger airplanes have a secondary barrier to the flight deck to prevent intrusions. The final rule, which was first proposed in July, requires aircraft manufacturers to install a second physical barrier on planes used in commercial passenger service in the United States. The FAA said the additional barrier will protect flight decks from intrusion when the flight deck door is open. The requirements are to take effect two years from the effective date, which is expected to be in August. Unions had urged that the rule take effect one year after publication while Boeing Co (BA.N), Airbus SE (AIR.PA) and a major airline group had called for three years. "Every day, pilots and flight crews transport millions of Americans safely - and today we are taking another important step to make sure they have the physical protections they deserve," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. The FAA was supposed to have adopted rules by 2019 under a 2018 federal law, but the agency has said it was required to follow procedural rules before it could impose new regulations. After the hijacking of four U.S. airplanes on Sept. 11, 2001, the FAA adopted standards for flight deck security to make them resistant to forcible intrusion and unauthorized entry. The FAA is not requiring existing airplanes to be retrofitted. A major pilots union has previously called on Congress to require that existing fleets be upgraded. The FAA in 2007 set rules to address flight deck security when the cockpit door was opened, including requiring the door be locked when the airplane is in operation, unless necessary to open it to permit access by authorized persons.

Biotechnology & Healthcare

[When doctors use a chatbot to improve their bedside manner \(The New York Times\)](#)

On Nov. 30 last year, OpenAI released the first free version of ChatGPT. Within 72 hours, doctors were using the artificial intelligence-powered chatbot. "I was excited and amazed but, to be honest, a little bit alarmed," said Peter Lee, the corporate vice president for research and incubations at Microsoft, which invested in OpenAI. He and other experts expected that ChatGPT and other A.I.-driven large language models could take over mundane tasks that eat up hours of doctors' time and contribute to burnout, like writing appeals to health insurers or summarizing patient notes. They worried, though, that artificial intelligence also offered a perhaps too tempting shortcut to finding diagnoses and medical information that may be incorrect or even fabricated, a frightening prospect in a field like medicine. Most surprising to Dr. Lee, though, was a use he had not anticipated — doctors were asking ChatGPT to help them communicate with patients in a more compassionate way. In one survey, 85 percent of patients reported that a doctor's compassion was more important than waiting time or cost. In another survey, nearly three-quarters of respondents said they had gone to doctors who were not compassionate. And a study of doctors' conversations with the families of dying patients found that many were not empathetic. Enter chatbots, which doctors are using to find words to break bad news and express concerns about a patient's suffering, or to just more clearly explain medical recommendations. Even Dr. Lee of Microsoft said that was a bit disconcerting. "As a patient, I'd personally feel a little weird about it," he said. But Dr. Michael Pignone, the chairman of the department of internal medicine at the University of Texas at Austin, has no qualms about the help he and other doctors on his staff got from ChatGPT to communicate regularly with patients. He explained the issue in doctor-speak: "We were running a project on improving treatments for alcohol use disorder. How do we engage patients who have not responded to behavioral interventions?" Or, as ChatGPT might respond if you asked it to translate that: How can doctors better help patients who are drinking too much alcohol but have not stopped after talking to a therapist? He asked his team to write a script for how to talk to these patients compassionately. "A week later, no one had done it," he said. All he had was a text his research coordinator and a social worker on the team had put together, and "that was not a true script," he said. So Dr. Pignone tried ChatGPT, which replied instantly with all the talking points the doctors wanted. Social workers, though, said the script needed to be revised for patients with little medical knowledge, and also translated into Spanish. The ultimate result, which ChatGPT

produced when asked to rewrite it at a fifth-grade reading level, began with a reassuring introduction: "If you think you drink too much alcohol, you're not alone. Many people have this problem, but there are medicines that can help you feel better and have a healthier, happier life." That was followed by a simple explanation of the pros and cons of treatment options. The team started using the script this month. Dr. Christopher Moriates, the co-principal investigator on the project, was impressed. "Doctors are famous for using language that is hard to understand or too advanced," he said. "It is interesting to see that even words we think are easily understandable really aren't." The fifth-grade level script, he said, "feels more genuine." Skeptics like Dr. Dev Dash, who is part of the data science team at Stanford Health Care, are so far underwhelmed about the prospect of large language models like ChatGPT helping doctors. In tests performed by Dr. Dash and his colleagues, they received replies that occasionally were wrong but, he said, more often were not useful or were inconsistent. If a doctor is using a chatbot to help communicate with a patient, errors could make a difficult situation worse. "I know physicians are using this," Dr. Dash said. "I've heard of residents using it to guide clinical decision making. I don't think it's appropriate." Some experts question whether it is necessary to turn to an A.I. program for empathetic words. "Most of us want to trust and respect our doctors," said Dr. Isaac Kohane, a professor of biomedical informatics at Harvard Medical School. "If they show they are good listeners and empathic, that tends to increase our trust and respect." But empathy can be deceptive. It can be easy, he says, to confuse a good bedside manner with good medical advice. There's a reason doctors may neglect compassion, said Dr. Douglas White, the director of the program on ethics and decision making in critical illness at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. "Most doctors are pretty cognitively focused, treating the patient's medical issues as a series of problems to be solved," Dr. White said. As a result, he said, they may fail to pay attention to "the emotional side of what patients and families are experiencing." At other times, doctors are all too aware of the need for empathy, but the right words can be hard to come by. That is what happened to Dr. Gregory Moore, who until recently was a senior executive leading health and life sciences at Microsoft, wanted to help a friend who had advanced cancer. Her situation was dire, and she needed advice about her treatment and future. He decided to pose her questions to ChatGPT. The result "blew me away," Dr. Moore said.

[Health insurers tumble, device makers rally on rising elective surgery expectations](#)

[Cancer drug from Pfizer appears to stop aneurysm growth, opening door to nonsurgical treatment \(Fierce Biotech\)](#)

About five of every 100 people have a ballooning, weakened artery in their brain called an aneurysm, though the vast majority will never know it. Still, in the rare case that an aneurysm pops, or ruptures, it can be lethal. As many as 40% of people with a ruptured brain aneurysm will die, and 40% of survivors will be left with brain damage. Brain aneurysms at risk of rupture can only be treated with surgery, and that may not be possible if the aneurysm is in a hard-to-access location. But a new study hints at another solution: the cancer drug sunitinib. Commercialized by Pfizer as Sutent, the drug appears to prevent aneurysms in mice, according to findings published June 14 in Science Translational Medicine by researchers from Japan's RIKEN Center for Brain Science. "It was a groundbreaking finding, opening the possibility to develop medications for aneurysms, which currently should be treated only by surgical methods," study leader Hirofumi Nakatomi, M.D., Ph.D., told Fierce Biotech Research in an email. There are two main types of aneurysms. About 90% are intracranial saccular aneurysms, or ISAs, which form berry-like bulges along the outside of an artery. Another 3-5% are intracranial fusiform aneurysms, or IFAs, which expand the blood vessel into a spherical shape. ISAs are more likely to rupture but are also easier to treat. IFAs rarely rupture, but if they do, the patient has a worse prognosis. Most brain aneurysms of any form are sporadic; around 10% run in families. The researchers wondered whether there might be other risk genes and mutations involved in aneurysm development, though they expected that their contribution would be small. To find out, they started by performing a broad type of genetic sequencing called whole-exome sequencing, or WES, followed by a more granular type called targeted deep sequencing, or TDS, on artery samples taken from patients. The samples included 65 arteries with aneurysms and 24 without. The scientists were surprised by the findings: 92% of the aneurysms had mutations in at least one of a set of 16 genes, none of which were found in the normal samples. Six of the mutations showed up in both IFAs and ISAs, while another 10 mutations appeared only in one or the other. All of the mutations common to both types of aneurysm activated the NF-kappa beta signaling pathway, which has previously been shown to be involved in aneurysm formation. "These results suggest that the mutations identified in these 16 genes are relatively unique to sporadic intracranial aneurysms," the researchers wrote in the paper. They also suggest that most aneurysms might be triggered by the mutations, Nakatomi noted in a press release. One of the most common mutations was in the gene PDGFRB, which gives rise to the platelet-derived growth factor receptor beta protein (also known as PDGFRB). The PDGFRB protein is a receptor tyrosine kinase involved in cell signaling and cardiovascular system formation;

mutations in its encoding gene have previously been linked with rare tissue overgrowth syndromes, but not with brain aneurysms. The fact that both saccular and fusiform aneurysms had PDGFRB mutations “indicates the gene mediates a pivotal role in intracranial aneurysm formation” in both subtypes, Nakatomi said. Next, the researchers used a technique called spatial transcriptomics to see if PDGFRB mutations were present throughout an aneurysm’s tissue layers, which would help explain the mechanics behind its formation. The results showed that the mutations were limited to the outer layer of cells in small aneurysms but extended into the inner layers of larger ones. This suggests that a gene mutation on the artery surface initially triggers the aneurysm to form; the mutated cells then proliferate and spread into the inner layer of the artery, weakening the vessel wall, Nakatomi explained. The scientists then turned to cells grown in a petri dish to hone in further on the impact of PDGFRB mutations. They found that cells with the mutations migrated more quickly than wild-type cells and showed signs of inflammation. Treating the cells with sunitinib, a tyrosine kinase inhibitor, slowed their migration speed and reduced inflammation. This both confirmed the role of PDGFRB mutations and showed that it was possible to stave off their effects with a drug. Finally, the team tested their findings in mice. They started by using an adeno-associated virus vector to deliver a mutated PDGFRB gene to cells in the basilar artery of the animals’ brains, a site that only accounts for 3-5% of aneurysms but is one of the hardest to treat. A month later, the artery had weakened and ballooned into an IFA twice its initial size, again confirming the mutation could cause aneurysms. But the researchers didn’t see the same effect in mice who had also been given a dose of sunitinib daily beginning on the first day after viral infection. The size of their basilar arteries was roughly the same as controls, indicating that the drug was able to prevent aneurysms from forming. “Our finding that some of these high-risk ... cases have a common genetic cause, namely, mutations in PDGFRB, opens a new avenue of research towards future development of pharmacological interventions for [aneurysm], either alone or in combination with existing surgical options,” the researchers wrote in their paper. While the findings around sunitinib were encouraging, the team didn’t test whether it could stabilize or reduce the size of already-formed aneurysms. That will need to be investigated in future studies, they noted in the paper. And even if the drug could do that, there’s another problem: while PDGFRB mutations were common, they weren’t present in every case. Having no way to biopsy brain arteries makes it challenging to identify which ones to target right now, Nakatomi noted, though new technology could eventually make it possible. Still, there may be a place for the drugs sooner rather than later—as a preventative strategy for aneurysm recurrence, which happens in around 10% of patients who undergo surgery. “We anticipate that those drugs can be applicable relatively soon as preventative medications of recurrence of aneurysms after surgical treatments,” Nakatomi added.

[National health spending expected to hit \\$7.2T by 2031](#)

[Pharma Companies, Pharmacies agree to pay \\$19B in opioid settlement \(BioSpace\)](#)

Pharmacies and drug manufacturers will pay state and local governments an additional \$18.75 billion to settle lawsuits alleging that they drove the opioid epidemic, according to a report by *The Washington Post* published Friday. At the center of the lawsuits are drugmakers Allergan and Teva Pharmaceuticals, along with retail chains CVS, Walgreens and Walmart. Separately, on Friday, Walgreens also signed off on a \$500 million settlement with New Mexico over alleged lax supervision of opioid prescriptions. Nearly every state opted into this most recent round of settlements, along with more than 3,400 counties, cities and other local agencies. The payout, which will start rolling out later this year, was calculated considering the population adjusted by the consequences of the opioid crisis, according to *The Post*. Illinois, for example, will get \$518 million to be dispensed over 15 years. Under the nationwide agreement, at least 85% of the awarded settlement funds should be used to stop the opioid crisis and help communities cope with its effects. The drug companies and pharmacies are also required to update their opioid practices, including implementing better monitoring systems to better protect the public. The nearly \$19 billion settlement comes more than a year after AbbVie (through Allergan) and Teva were set to pay some \$5 billion to settle about 3,500 opioid lawsuits. In May 2022, a *Bloomberg* report cited three unnamed sources who indicated that the companies were considering a settlement, though neither made any formal confirmation. In a statement released Thursday, Teva announced it had fully resolved its nationwide settlement agreement regarding the opioid cases, with the final payment slated for the second half of 2023. The company has also started shipping out its nasal spray Narcan for the emergency treatment of opioid overdose. Teva has also arrived at a separate agreement with Nevada, to which it will pay \$193 million over 20 years. According to Teva’s statement, these arrangements do not constitute an admission of wrongdoing. Alongside Teva and AbbVie, Johnson & Johnson has also been contending with an onslaught of opioid lawsuits. In February 2022, the pharma company, along with distributors McKesson, AmerisourceBergen and Cardinal Health, agreed to resolve the allegations for \$26 billion. J&J’s share in this payout is \$5 billion. J&J has also previously

signed settlements with New York, Texas, Nevada and New Mexico.

Climate & Development

[Renewable energy: is it getting too hot for solar panels? \(BBC News\)](#)

DUP MP Sammy Wilson has tweeted: "The UK has had to start coal fired generators during this heatwave because the sun is too strong and solar panels have had to be taken offline." This isn't true. While it's correct that solar panels are less efficient at hot temperatures, this reduction is relatively small, and was not the main reason for firing up coal power stations. We spoke to Mr Wilson, who confirmed that the article he had read said that there was a "severe" fall in output, not that the panels had to be taken offline. According to Solar Energy UK, solar panel performance falls by 0.34 percentage points for every degree that the temperature rises above 25C. It also said that the longer days and clearer skies mean solar power generates much more electricity during the summer, even if the efficiency falls. On Monday 12 June, coal power was used for the first time in 46 days, but solar power still generated around one-fifth of the UK's electricity during the middle part of the day. Output from solar power was down by nearly a quarter last weekend compared with the weekend before - but it still generated a considerable amount of electricity. Overall, over the past seven days, solar power contributed 9.2% to the UK's electricity. That compares with 4.3% for the whole of 2022, so it has been generating more electricity than average in the past week, as you'd expect in the summer.

- Where does the UK get its energy and electricity?
- Is the UK on track to meet its climate targets?

A number of other factors explain coal power stations being briefly restarted:

- The hot temperatures increased demand for electricity from air conditioning
- It was less windy so less electricity was generated by wind farms than usual
- Maintenance on gas power stations meant less natural gas could be used
- The electricity interconnectors between the UK and Norway had lower capacity due to a technical fault, so less electricity could be imported.

The government's independent advisers, the Climate Change Committee, said in March that more would need to be done to prepare the UK for periods when the wind isn't blowing and the sun isn't shining. It suggested this could be done without contributing to greenhouse gas emissions - for example by investing in hydrogen, and by continuing with some limited use of natural gas that is made low carbon via carbon capture technology. The government has committed to generating all electricity from clean sources by 2035, as a key step towards its overall net zero by 2050 target.

[How Africa could become a climate savior, not a victim](#)

[Battle lines harden over big oil's role at climate talks in Dubai \(The New York Times\)](#)

An unavoidable tension surrounds this year's United Nations-sponsored climate talks in November: They will take place in the oil-rich United Arab Emirates, and the most important role at the talks is held by the man who heads the national oil company. The executive, Sultan al-Jaber, and other representatives of the Emirates have argued that they have a "game changing" plan to fight climate change by welcoming oil and gas companies from around the world to participate more fully in the talks. In other words, invite the producers of the fuels that cause the majority of global warming as key players in developing a plan to slow the warming. In an interview, Majid al-Suwaidi, an Emirati diplomat who will also play a major role at the climate talks, known by the acronym COP28, said, "We need to engage the people who have the technical know-how, the skills, the technology — and, by the way, the people who provide jobs — in a conversation about how they transform." To activists who have attended these conferences for years, that notion sounds far-fetched. "It's just like how tobacco lobbyists need to be kept out of conversations about cancer prevention," said Catherine Abreu, who heads Destination Zero, a network of nonprofits working on climate issues. The conference will take place amid a backdrop of resurgent fossil fuel investment after a brief, pandemic-era dip. Energy use derived from fossil fuels accounts for more than two-thirds of global emissions. Over the past year, the world's biggest producers — places like the United States, Saudi Arabia, Norway and the Emirates — have approved dozens of vast new drilling projects. This month, the Emirates received long-sought permission from OPEC, the coalition of oil-

producing nations that coordinates on output and prices, to pump more oil starting next year. ADNOC, the oil company Mr. al-Jaber heads, is investing billions in meeting those new targets. In a recent speech, Mr. al-Jaber, who also chairs the Emirates' biggest renewable energy company, said he hoped COP28 would deliver a collective pledge of tripling renewable energy by 2030, which he cast as part of a transition toward "an energy system that is free of unabated fossil fuels." As is the case in much of the nitty-gritty work of ironing out global agreements on technical issues, much of what is seen as progress for climate activists comes down to seemingly minute details like the use of the word "abatement" in Mr. al-Jaber's speech. It's a word echoed by other powerful actors in the climate arena like former Senator John Kerry, the United States' climate envoy. And its usage implies, to some, that these leaders see climate goals and continued fossil fuel production as compatible, as long as technology to capture their emissions is widely deployed. That kind of massive technological rollout is many years away in the rosier of scenarios. "Fossil fuel interests actively work to co-opt our imaginations," Ms. Abreu said. "Governments now can imagine a geo-engineered planet easier than a grow-out of renewables that already exist." Before this year, the COP process was already weathering a crisis of credibility. Despite warnings from top climate scientists, many of the conferences biggest achievements on paper — for instance, promises from rich nations to deliver sufficient funds for poorer ones to cope with a climate crisis they played little role in creating — have fallen far short in reality. Negotiators from small island nations, Latin America and Africa have been joined by those from the European Union in calling for the conference to deliver an agreement on a "phaseout" of fossil fuels. But they have received stiff resistance from representatives from producing countries like Russia and Saudi Arabia. Regarding a phaseout, Mr. al-Suwaidi said he hoped this COP would be "about what we are building up, what we are scaling up, what we are speeding up, not what we're taking away from people." This year's COP will take place in the Emirates because the United Nations' climate body rotates hosts among five world regions. Nations' representatives to that body endorsed the Asia-Pacific region's choice of the Emirates by consensus. The expected juxtaposition of fossil fuel companies alongside negotiators and activists calling for their elimination will be starker than ever, and suspicion between the two sides runs deep. Over the past weeks, seemingly automated Twitter accounts promoting the Emirates' climate credentials have produced a wave of content on the platform, leading activists to allege "greenwashing." A COP28 spokesman said that he was aware of "fake bot Twitter accounts" and that they were "generated by outside actors" and "clearly designed to discredit COP28." The distrust threatens to undermine the COP process further, said Tom Evans, a climate policy adviser at E3G, a think tank. It is likely to distract from the failures of industrialized nations that contribute the vast majority of climate-warming emissions and that continue to slow-walk what he said was urgent action needed on emissions reductions. "What's really important more broadly is a lack of leadership, of powerful countries being champions and creating the conditions for success," he said. "Instead we have a vacuum."

[Multiple reports of tornadoes as rare June severe weather outbreak hits Southeast](#)

[Germany unlikely to meet its greenhouse gas cutback goals by 2030 with current climate measures \(Fox News\)](#)

German officials said Wednesday that an array of climate measures being introduced by the government will bring the country closer but not all the way toward meeting its national goals for cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Germany's Climate Ministry said measures already in place or soon to become law will reduce emissions by about 900 million metric tons of carbon dioxide for the period from 2022 to 2030. An "emissions gap" of about 200 million tons of CO2 will remain and needs to be closed through additional steps over the coming years, largely because of persistent high emissions in the transportation sector. Germany aims to reduce its emissions of planet-warming gases by 65% from 1990 levels by 2030. The target for 2040 is an 88% reduction on the path to "net zero" emissions by 2045. A sharp increase in wind and solar power, energy efficiency improvements and subsidies for industry to reduce fossil fuel use are among the measures taken or planned by Chancellor Olaf Scholz's government since it took office in late 2021. "The political message is that, when I became a minister, achieving the climate targets looked impossible," Economy and Climate Minister Robert Habeck told reporters in Berlin. "For the first time, I would say, it is possible to keep to the climate targets," added Habeck, a member of the environmentalist Greens who is also Germany's vice chancellor. "The art of making things possible consists in not easing off now; I would say that we have put the ship back on course, and of course it is important now to pick up speed." After months of haggling that helped push down the governing coalition's poll ratings, leaders of the three-party alliance also reached a compromise this week over plans to replace old fossil fuel heating systems with cleaner alternatives such as heat pumps. Habeck acknowledged that concrete details still have to be worked out in the coming weeks. Germany's solar industry warned Wednesday that it urgently needs more workers to meet demand for photovoltaic installations in the coming years. Solar industry lobby group BSW

said that companies need to hire about 100,000 skilled workers as annual installations are expected to rise to 26 gigawatts by 2026 from 7.4 GW last year.

Next Week's Hearings

Armed Services Committees

House: None Listed

Senate: None listed

Appropriations Committees

House: None Listed

Senate: Tuesday, June 20, 2023, 4:45PM; [CLOSED: Subcommittee Hearing: The Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Request for the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency](#)

Homeland Security Committees

House: None Listed

Senate: None Listed



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