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| **Jihad Report  Jan 21, 2017 - Jan 27, 2017** | |
| Attacks | 37 |
| Killed | 275 |
| Injured | 228 |
| Suicide Blasts | 4 |
| Countries | 12 |

**US State Department Created ISIS**

Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, of Hawaii, [told CNN](https://twitter.com/TheLeadCNN/status/824368963819696129) on Wednesday that when she went to the country earlier this month she initially hadn't planned on meeting with Assad. But when CNN's Jake Tapper asked Gabbard if she met with the authoritarian ruler, she answered, "I did."

"My reason for going to visit Syria was really because of the suffering of the Syrian people that has been weighing heavily on my heart," she said. "I wanted to see if there was in some small way that I could express the love and the 'aloha' and the care that the American people have for the people of Syria and to see firsthand what was happening there."

Gabbard released a statement shortly after the CNN interview aired.

"My visit to Syria has made it abundantly clear: Our counterproductive regime change war does not serve America's interest, and it certainly isn't in the interest of the Syrian people," she said in the statement.

Gabbard was in Syria for four days. The nonprofit Arab American Community Center for Economic and Social Services (AACCESS)–Ohio sponsored the trip, according to Gabbard's statement.

Obama administration officials have repeatedly insisted that Assad, who has been accused of massacring his own people, must step down. But the US hasn't directly intervened to bring an end to his brutal rule.

Gabbard said in her statement that she returned to the US "with even greater resolve to end our illegal war to overthrow the Syrian government."

Gabbard has been a vocal opponent of the Obama administration's calls for Assad to relinquish power. On December 8, she introduced to Congress the [Stop Arming Terrorists Act](https://gabbard.house.gov/news/press-releases/video-rep-tulsi-gabbard-introduces-legislation-stop-arming-terrorists), which would prohibit the US government from funding or arming extremist groups like Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, Al Qaeda, and ISIS.

"When the opportunity arose to meet with [Assad], I did so because I felt it's important that if we profess to truly care about the Syrian people, about their suffering, then we've got to be able to meet with anyone that we need to if there's a possibility that we could achieve peace," Gabbard said. "And that's exactly what we've talked about."

When Tapper noted the crimes Assad has been accused of, Gabbard defended her choice to meet with him.

"Whatever you think about President Assad, the fact is that he is the president of Syria," she said. "In order for any peace agreement, in order for any possibility of a viable peace agreement to occur, there has to be a conversation with him. The Syrian people will determine his outcome and what happens with their government and their future."

Gabbard also repeated a line that the Assad regime has long pushed — that there are no moderate rebels left in Syria.

"Every place that I went, every person that I spoke to, I asked this question to them [about arming moderate rebels], and without hesitation they said, 'There are no moderate rebels,' 'Who are these moderate rebels that people keep speaking of?'" Gabbard said. "Regardless of the name of these groups, the strongest fighting force on the ground in Syria is al-Nusra or Al Qaeda and ISIS. That is a fact."

Assad often argues that his opposition is composed entirely of extremists. This is a convenient argument for his regime — Western governments won't support terrorists, so if Assad frames the Syrian civil war as a conflict between his government and terrorists who oppose him, he looks like the better option.

Gabbard ended her statement with a plea.

"My visit to Syria has made it abundantly clear: Our counterproductive regime change war does not serve America's interest, and it certainly isn't in the interest of the Syrian people."

"As I visited with people from across the country, and heard heartbreaking stories of how this war has devastated their lives, I was asked, 'Why is the United States and its allies helping al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups try to take over Syria? Syria did not attack the United States. Al-Qaeda did.' I had no answer."

"I return to Washington, DC with even greater resolve to end our illegal war to overthrow the Syrian government. I call upon Congress and the new Administration to answer the pleas of the Syrian people immediately and support the Stop Arming Terrorists Act. We must stop directly and indirectly supporting terrorists — directly by providing weapons, training and logistical support to rebel groups affiliated with al-Qaeda and ISIS; and indirectly through Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, and Turkey, who, in turn, support these terrorist groups. We must end our war to overthrow the Syrian government and focus our attention on defeating al-Qaeda and ISIS."

"From Iraq to Libya and now in Syria, the US has waged wars of regime change, each resulting in unimaginable suffering, devastating loss of life, and the strengthening of groups like al-Qaeda and ISIS."

"Originally, I had no intention of meeting with Assad, but when given the opportunity, I felt it was important to take it. I think we should be ready to meet with anyone if there's a chance it can help bring about an end to this war, which is causing the Syrian people so much suffering."

"The US must stop supporting terrorists who are destroying Syria and her people. The US and other countries fueling this war must stop immediately. We must allow the Syrian people to try to recover from this terrible war."

Syria, which has been thoroughly ravaged by a civil war that is nearing its sixth year, is generally inaccessible to Americans. Journalists who have reported from Syria in recent years have coordinated their trips with the Assad government and have had their travels carefully monitored and controlled.

Gabbard visited Damascus, Syria's capital, while she was inside the country. She also visited Aleppo, a major city that has been the scene of intense fighting between the regime and rebels in recent months.

Gabbard is a member of the House Armed Services and Foreign Affairs committees. [She met with President-elect Donald Trump](http://www.businessinsider.com/trump-is-set-to-meet-with-one-of-bernie-sanders-most-visible-congressional-supporters-2016-11) in late November to discuss how to avoid "the drumbeats of war" that may lead to US intervention in Syria, among other national-security concerns.

**The Green Card Scandal**

Thousands of green cards have been mishandled over the past three years, according to a new Department of Homeland Security [inspector general report.](https://www.oig.dhs.gov/assets/Mgmt/2017/OIG-17-11-Nov16.pdf)

Electronic system errors have caused at least 19,000 cards to be issued as duplicates or with incorrect information — such as name, date of birth, photo and gender — the report says.

But the head of U.S. Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS), which manages immigration benefits, said that several of the report’s conclusions were overstated.

The [USCIS](http://abcnews.go.com/topics/news/uscis.htm) director said that the agency did not issue green cards to any individuals who were not eligible to receive them and that the number of cards containing errors were only a “tiny percentage” of the total issued each year.

He added that for the cards to be misused, they would have to fall into the hands of someone with “malicious intent” and a physical resemblance to the card’s intended recipient.

[US Government Mistakenly Grants Citizenship to Hundreds of Immigrants](http://abcnews.go.com/US/us-government-mistakenly-grants-citizenship-hundreds-immigrants/story?id=42197159)

[Security Gaps Found in Massive Visa Database](http://abcnews.go.com/US/exclusive-security-gaps-found-massive-visa-database/story?id=38041051)

[Surge in Illegal Border Crossings Leads US to Open New Facility](http://abcnews.go.com/US/us-govt-opens-facility-surge-illegal-border-crossings/story?id=43671183)

In some cases, green card applicants who should have received a card good for two years were issued one valid for 10 years.

During the past year, USCIS inadvertently sent more than 6,000 duplicate green cards to applicants.

“It appears that thousands of green cards have simply gone missing. In the wrong hands, green cards may enable [terrorists](http://abcnews.go.com/topics/news/world/terrorism.htm), criminals and undocumented aliens to remain in the United States,” said DHS Inspector General John Roth.

The report follows up on the watchdog’s [March finding](https://www.oig.dhs.gov/assets/Mgmt/2016/OIG-16-48-Mar16.pdf) that USCIS possibly sent hundreds of green cards to the wrong addresses.

The problem was “far worse than originally thought,” according to Roth.

In September, Roth found that because of issues with USCIS digital fingerprint records, the U.S. government [mistakenly granted citizenship](http://abcnews.go.com/US/us-government-mistakenly-grants-citizenship-hundreds-immigrants/story?id=42197159) to at least 858 immigrants who had pending deportation orders.

New information on the scope and volume of issues prompted the publication of today’s report.

The majority of the card issuance errors were due to “flawed design and functionality problems” with the agency’s electronic immigration system, which was implemented in 2013, according to the report.

It also found that the percentage of green cards issued in error has steadily increased each year since the system was put into use.

The watchdog said that USCIS “lacked consistency and a sense of urgency” in its efforts to recover the inappropriately issued cards, despite previous findings.

“We must take concrete steps to remove any security gaps that can be exploited by terrorists and criminals. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services can assist such efforts by strengthening quality controls and its procedures to target lost, stolen or erroneously issued green cards,” said Senate Homeland Security Committee Chairman Ron Johnson, R-Wis., in response to the report.

Over the last three years, USCIS received more than 200,000 reports from approved applicants about missing cards, said the report.

The mistakes were costly. The agency spent just under $1.5 million to address card-related issues in fiscal year 2015, said the report.

The immigration agency agreed with all the report’s recommendations — including fixing the electronic system and implementing internal controls to identify issues early in the process — and said the measures will be implemented by June 2017.

4 hours ago

The US government will not automatically allow green card holders who traveled to countries placed under a temporary travel ban back into the United States, two sources familiar with the matter told CNN.

Instead, after landing those travelers will have to apply for a waiver to the executive order that instituted the ban, the sources said. When they land, they will be taken into a secondary screening process in which they will be interviewed and their biometric and biographic information will be checked to see if there are any red flags. Then their eligibility to enter the country will be determined.

The countries targeted by Trump's executive order include the Muslim-majority nations of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Sudan and Yemen.

Executive orders: Read more

* [All of Trump's executive orders, memos and proclamations](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/politics/trump-executive-actions-orders/index.html)
* [Will the orders and actions stick?](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/26/politics/will-trump-executive-actions-stick/index.html)
* [How Trump's actions stack up against previous presidents](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/26/politics/executive-orders-presidents-actions-presidential-memoranda/index.html)
* [What Trump can and cannot do](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/23/politics/donald-trump-executive-orders-executive-actions/)
* [What's the difference between and order and action?](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/23/politics/donald-trump-executive-orders-executive-actions/)

Green card holders already overseas seeking to return to their homes in the US will be processed through a waiver authority that has already been established.

One official said there is a case-by-case admissions process and another said it is being done "expeditiously."

People from the seven countries who have green cards -- a government document granting permanent residence in the US -- should not leave the country because they may not be allowed back in the US, one source familiar with the matter said.

[Trump's immigration ban sends shockwaves](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/politics/donald-trump-executive-order-immigration-reaction/index.html)

There's been significant confusion over the precise terms of Trump's executive order since he signed it Friday afternoon, particularly over how it pertained to visa holders who are traveling and if any different treatment was afforded to green card holders.

Exemptions will be at the discretion of the Department of Homeland Security and the State Department, and criteria for exemptions include refugee status for religious minorities facing persecution, if denying admission would cause undue hardship or if not doing so would not pose a risk to the security or welfare of the US.

Those traveling without a green card who landed in the United States after the order was signed would be detained and put back on a flight to their country of citizenship, an administration official told CNN.

Separately, Department of Homeland Security officials acknowledged people who were in the air would be detained upon arrival and put back on a plane to their home country. A couple dozen people were held overnight at US airports, an official familiar with the matter told CNN.

Two men who had been granted visas [filed suit](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/politics/2-iraqis-file-lawsuit-after-being-detained-in-ny-due-to-travel-ban/index.html) after being detained at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York, although neither was a green card holder and instead entering under visas tied to their involvement with the US military in Iraq.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry [said on Saturday](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/middleeast/iran-will-ban-us-citizens/index.html) it would ban travelers from the United States in response to Trump's temporary ban.

**PROTECTING THE NATION FROM FOREIGN TERRORIST ENTRY INTO THE UNITED STATES**

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, including the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), 8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq., and section 301 of title 3, United States Code, and to protect the American people from terrorist attacks by foreign nationals admitted to the United States, it is hereby ordered as follows:

**Section 1. Purpose.** The visa-issuance process plays a crucial role in detecting individuals with terrorist ties and stopping them from entering the United States. Perhaps in no instance was that more apparent than the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, when State Department policy prevented consular officers from properly scrutinizing the visa applications of several of the 19 foreign nationals who went on to murder nearly 3,000 Americans. And while the visa-issuance process was reviewed and amended after the September 11 attacks to better detect would-be terrorists from receiving visas, these measures did not stop attacks by foreign nationals who were admitted to the United States.

Numerous foreign-born individuals have been convicted or implicated in terrorism-related crimes since September 11, 2001, including foreign nationals who entered the United States after receiving visitor, student, or employment visas, or who entered through the United States refugee resettlement program. Deteriorating conditions in certain countries due to war, strife, disaster, and civil unrest increase the likelihood that terrorists will use any means possible to enter the United States. The United States must be vigilant during the visa-issuance process to ensure that those approved for admission do not intend to harm Americans and that they have no ties to terrorism.

The ban and its impact

* [134 million banned from US](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/27/politics/donald-trump-refugees-executive-order/index.html)
* [What the ban says: The full text](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/politics/text-of-trump-executive-order-nation-ban-refugees/index.html)
* [What to know about the restrictions](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/politics/trump-immigration-refugees-visa-policy/index.html)
* [Legal battle begins](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/politics/2-iraqis-file-lawsuit-after-being-detained-in-ny-due-to-travel-ban/index.html)
* [The ban's Christian focus](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/27/politics/trump-christian-refugees/index.html)
* [A family's plight just got more complicated](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/politics/trump-visa-ban-families-refugees-stories/index.html)
* [Bergen: Trump's big mistake](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/opinions/trumps-big-mistake-on-syrian-refugees-bergen/index.html)
* [All of Trump's executive orders, memos and proclamations](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/politics/trump-executive-actions-orders/index.html)
* [Comparing Trump to previous presidents](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/26/politics/executive-orders-presidents-actions-presidential-memoranda/index.html)

In order to protect Americans, the United States must ensure that those admitted to this country do not bear hostile attitudes toward it and its founding principles. The United States cannot, and should not, admit those who do not support the Constitution, or those who would place violent ideologies over American law. In addition, the United States should not admit those who engage in acts of bigotry or hatred (including "honor" killings, other forms of violence against women, or the persecution of those who practice religions different from their own) or those who would oppress Americans of any race, gender, or sexual orientation.

**Sec. 2. Policy.** It is the policy of the United States to protect its citizens from foreign nationals who intend to commit terrorist attacks in the United States; and to prevent the admission of foreign nationals who intend to exploit United States immigration laws for malevolent purposes.

**Sec. 3. Suspension of Issuance of Visas and Other Immigration Benefits to Nationals of Countries of Particular Concern.** (a) The Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Director of National Intelligence, shall immediately conduct a review to determine the information needed from any country to adjudicate any visa, admission, or other benefit under the INA (adjudications) in order to determine that the individual seeking the benefit is who the individual claims to be and is not a security or public-safety threat.

(b) The Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Director of National Intelligence, shall submit to the President a report on the results of the review described in subsection (a) of this section, including the Secretary of Homeland Security's determination of the information needed for adjudications and a list of countries that do not provide adequate information, within 30 days of the date of this order. The Secretary of Homeland Security shall provide a copy of the report to the Secretary of State and the Director of National Intelligence.

Executive orders: Read more

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* [Will the orders and actions stick?](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/26/politics/will-trump-executive-actions-stick/index.html)
* [How Trump's actions stack up against previous presidents](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/26/politics/executive-orders-presidents-actions-presidential-memoranda/index.html)
* [What Trump can and cannot do](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/23/politics/donald-trump-executive-orders-executive-actions/)
* [What's the difference between and order and action?](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/23/politics/donald-trump-executive-orders-executive-actions/)

(c) To temporarily reduce investigative burdens on relevant agencies during the review period described in subsection (a) of this section, to ensure the proper review and maximum utilization of available resources for the screening of foreign nationals, and to ensure that adequate standards are established to prevent infiltration by foreign terrorists or criminals, pursuant to section 212(f) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. 1182(f), I hereby proclaim that the immigrant and nonimmigrant entry into the United States of aliens from countries referred to in section 217(a)(12) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. 1187(a)(12), would be detrimental to the interests of the United States, and I hereby suspend entry into the United States, as immigrants and nonimmigrants, of such persons for 90 days from the date of this order (excluding those foreign nationals traveling on diplomatic visas, North Atlantic Treaty Organization visas, C-2 visas for travel to the United Nations, and G-1, G-2, G-3, and G-4 visas).

(d) Immediately upon receipt of the report described in subsection (b) of this section regarding the information needed for adjudications, the Secretary of State shall request all foreign governments that do not supply such information to start providing such information regarding their nationals within 60 days of notification.

(e) After the 60-day period described in subsection (d) of this section expires, the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall submit to the President a list of countries recommended for inclusion on a Presidential proclamation that would prohibit the entry of foreign nationals (excluding those foreign nationals traveling on diplomatic visas, North Atlantic Treaty Organization visas, C-2 visas for travel to the United Nations, and G-1, G-2, G-3, and G-4 visas) from countries that do not provide the information requested pursuant to subsection (d) of this section until compliance occurs.

(f) At any point after submitting the list described in subsection (e) of this section, the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Homeland Security may submit to the President the names of any additional countries recommended for similar treatment.

(g) Notwithstanding a suspension pursuant to subsection (c) of this section or pursuant to a Presidential proclamation described in subsection (e) of this section, the Secretaries of State and Homeland Security may, on a case-by-case basis, and when in the national interest, issue visas or other immigration benefits to nationals of countries for which visas and benefits are otherwise blocked.

(h) The Secretaries of State and Homeland Security shall submit to the President a joint report on the progress in implementing this order within 30 days of the date of this order, a second report within 60 days of the date of this order, a third report within 90 days of the date of this order, and a fourth report within 120 days of the date of this order.

**Sec. 4. Implementing Uniform Screening Standards for All Immigration Programs.** (a) The Secretary of State, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Director of National Intelligence, and the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation shall implement a program, as part of the adjudication process for immigration benefits, to identify individuals seeking to enter the United States on a fraudulent basis with the intent to cause harm, or who are at risk of causing harm subsequent to their admission. This program will include the development of a uniform screening standard and procedure, such as in-person interviews; a database of identity documents proffered by applicants to ensure that duplicate documents are not used by multiple applicants; amended application forms that include questions aimed at identifying fraudulent answers and malicious intent; a mechanism to ensure that the applicant is who the applicant claims to be; a process to evaluate the applicant's likelihood of becoming a positively contributing member of society and the applicant's ability to make contributions to the national interest; and a mechanism to assess whether or not the applicant has the intent to commit criminal or terrorist acts after entering the United States.

(b) The Secretary of Homeland Security, in conjunction with the Secretary of State, the Director of National Intelligence, and the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, shall submit to the President an initial report on the progress of this directive within 60 days of the date of this order, a second report within 100 days of the date of this order, and a third report within 200 days of the date of this order.

**Sec. 5. Realignment of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program for Fiscal Year 2017.** (a) The Secretary of State shall suspend the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) for 120 days. During the 120-day period, the Secretary of State, in conjunction with the Secretary of Homeland Security and in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, shall review the USRAP application and adjudication process to determine what additional procedures should be taken to ensure that those approved for refugee admission do not pose a threat to the security and welfare of the United States, and shall implement such additional procedures. Refugee applicants who are already in the USRAP process may be admitted upon the initiation and completion of these revised procedures. Upon the date that is 120 days after the date of this order, the Secretary of State shall resume USRAP admissions only for nationals of countries for which the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Director of National Intelligence have jointly determined that such additional procedures are adequate to ensure the security and welfare of the United States.

(b) Upon the resumption of USRAP admissions, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, is further directed to make changes, to the extent permitted by law, to prioritize refugee claims made by individuals on the basis of religious-based persecution, provided that the religion of the individual is a minority religion in the individual's country of nationality. Where necessary and appropriate, the Secretaries of State and Homeland Security shall recommend legislation to the President that would assist with such prioritization.

(c) Pursuant to section 212(f) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. 1182(f), I hereby proclaim that the entry of nationals of Syria as refugees is detrimental to the interests of the United States and thus suspend any such entry until such time as I have determined that sufficient changes have been made to the USRAP to ensure that admission of Syrian refugees is consistent with the national interest.

(d) Pursuant to section 212(f) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. 1182(f), I hereby proclaim that the entry of more than 50,000 refugees in fiscal year 2017 would be detrimental to the interests of the United States, and thus suspend any such entry until such time as I determine that additional admissions would be in the national interest.

(e) Notwithstanding the temporary suspension imposed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, the Secretaries of State and Homeland Security may jointly determine to admit individuals to the United States as refugees on a case-by-case basis, in their discretion, but only so long as they determine that the admission of such individuals as refugees is in the national interest -- including when the person is a religious minority in his country of nationality facing religious persecution, when admitting the person would enable the United States to conform its conduct to a preexisting international agreement, or when the person is already in transit and denying admission would cause undue hardship -- and it would not pose a risk to the security or welfare of the United States.

(f) The Secretary of State shall submit to the President an initial report on the progress of the directive in subsection (b) of this section regarding prioritization of claims made by individuals on the basis of religious-based persecution within 100 days of the date of this order and shall submit a second report within 200 days of the date of this order.

(g) It is the policy of the executive branch that, to the extent permitted by law and as practicable, State and local jurisdictions be granted a role in the process of determining the placement or settlement in their jurisdictions of aliens eligible to be admitted to the United States as refugees. To that end, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall examine existing law to determine the extent to which, consistent with applicable law, State and local jurisdictions may have greater involvement in the process of determining the placement or resettlement of refugees in their jurisdictions, and shall devise a proposal to lawfully promote such involvement.

**Sec. 6. Rescission of Exercise of Authority Relating to the Terrorism Grounds of Inadmissibility.** The Secretaries of State and Homeland Security shall, in consultation with the Attorney General, consider rescinding the exercises of authority in section 212 of the INA, 8 U.S.C. 1182, relating to the terrorism grounds of inadmissibility, as well as any related implementing memoranda.

**Sec. 7. Expedited Completion of the Biometric Entry-Exit Tracking System.** (a) The Secretary of Homeland Security shall expedite the completion and implementation of a biometric entry-exit tracking system for all travelers to the United States, as recommended by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States.

(b) The Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit to the President periodic reports on the progress of the directive contained in subsection (a) of this section. The initial report shall be submitted within 100 days of the date of this order, a second report shall be submitted within 200 days of the date of this order, and a third report shall be submitted within 365 days of the date of this order. Further, the Secretary shall submit a report every 180 days thereafter until the system is fully deployed and operational.

**Sec. 8. Visa Interview Security.** (a) The Secretary of State shall immediately suspend the Visa Interview Waiver Program and ensure compliance with section 222 of the INA, 8 U.S.C. 1222, which requires that all individuals seeking a nonimmigrant visa undergo an in-person interview, subject to specific statutory exceptions.

(b) To the extent permitted by law and subject to the availability of appropriations, the Secretary of State shall immediately expand the Consular Fellows Program, including by substantially increasing the number of Fellows, lengthening or making permanent the period of service, and making language training at the Foreign Service Institute available to Fellows for assignment to posts outside of their area of core linguistic ability, to ensure that non-immigrant visa-interview wait times are not unduly affected.

**Sec. 9. Visa Validity Reciprocity.** The Secretary of State shall review all nonimmigrant visa reciprocity agreements to ensure that they are, with respect to each visa classification, truly reciprocal insofar as practicable with respect to validity period and fees, as required by sections 221(c) and 281 of the INA, 8 U.S.C. 1201(c) and 1351, and other treatment. If a country does not treat United States nationals seeking nonimmigrant visas in a reciprocal manner, the Secretary of State shall adjust the visa validity period, fee schedule, or other treatment to match the treatment of United States nationals by the foreign country, to the extent practicable.

**Sec. 10. Transparency and Data Collection.** (a) To be more transparent with the American people, and to more effectively implement policies and practices that serve the national interest, the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Attorney General, shall, consistent with applicable law and national security, collect and make publicly available within 180 days, and every 180 days thereafter:

(i) information regarding the number of foreign nationals in the United States who have been charged with terrorism-related offenses while in the United States; convicted of terrorism-related offenses while in the United States; or removed from the United States based on terrorism-related activity, affiliation, or material support to a terrorism-related organization, or any other national security reasons since the date of this order or the last reporting period, whichever is later;

(ii) information regarding the number of foreign nationals in the United States who have been radicalized after entry into the United States and engaged in terrorism-related acts, or who have provided material support to terrorism-related organizations in countries that pose a threat to the United States, since the date of this order or the last reporting period, whichever is later; and

(iii) information regarding the number and types of acts of gender-based violence against women, including honor killings, in the United States by foreign nationals, since the date of this order or the last reporting period, whichever is later; and

(iv) any other information relevant to public safety and security as determined by the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Attorney General, including information on the immigration status of foreign nationals charged with major offenses.

(b) The Secretary of State shall, within one year of the date of this order, provide a report on the estimated long-term costs of the USRAP at the Federal, State, and local levels.

**Sec. 11. General Provisions.** (a) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(i) the authority granted by law to an executive department or agency, or the head thereof; or

(ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This order shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

**Trump's executive orders, memorandums and proclamations**

Updated 2:26 PM ET, Sat January 28, 2017

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*(CNN)*The following is a list of presidential executive orders, memorandums and proclamations from the Trump administration posted on the White House website (the most recent post was from January 26):

**Executive orders**

[Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements](http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2017/images/01/28/border.security.and.immigration.enforcement.improvements.pdf) -- January 25

[Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States](http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2017/images/01/28/enhancing.public.safety.in.the.interior.of.the.united.states.pdf) -- January 25

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* [All of Trump's executive orders, memos and proclamations](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/politics/trump-executive-actions-orders/index.html)
* [Will the orders and actions stick?](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/26/politics/will-trump-executive-actions-stick/index.html)
* [How Trump's actions stack up against previous presidents](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/26/politics/executive-orders-presidents-actions-presidential-memoranda/index.html)
* [What Trump can and cannot do](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/23/politics/donald-trump-executive-orders-executive-actions/)
* [What's the difference between and order and action?](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/23/politics/donald-trump-executive-orders-executive-actions/)

[Expediting Environmental Reviews and Approvals for High Priority Infrastructure Projects](http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2017/images/01/28/expediting.environmental.reviews.and.approvals.for.high.priority.infrastructure.projects.pdf) -- January 24

[Minimizing the Economic Burden of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act Pending Repeal](http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2017/images/01/28/minimizing.the.economic.burden.of.the.patient.protection.and.affordable.care.act.pending.repeal.pdf) -- January 20

[Related: Statement from Mark Sandy, acting director of the Office of Budget and Management, on the budgetary impact analysis for the executive order on the Affordable Care Act](http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2017/images/01/28/statement.from.acting.omb.director.mark.sandy.pdf) -- January 26

**Presidential memorandums**

[Streamlining Permitting and Reducing Regulatory Burdens for Domestic Manufacturing](http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2017/images/01/28/presidential.memorandum.streamlining.permitting.and.reducing.regulatory.burdens.for.domestic.manufacturing.pdf) -- January 24

[Regarding Construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline](http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2017/images/01/28/presidential.memorandum.regarding.construction.of.the.dakota.access.pipeline.pdf) -- January 24

[Regarding Construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline](http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2017/images/01/28/presidential.memorandum.regarding.construction.of.the.keystone.xl.pipeline.pdf) -- January 24

The ban and its impact

* [134 million banned from US](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/27/politics/donald-trump-refugees-executive-order/index.html)
* [What the ban says: The full text](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/politics/text-of-trump-executive-order-nation-ban-refugees/index.html)
* [What to know about the restrictions](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/politics/trump-immigration-refugees-visa-policy/index.html)
* [Legal battle begins](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/politics/2-iraqis-file-lawsuit-after-being-detained-in-ny-due-to-travel-ban/index.html)
* [The ban's Christian focus](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/27/politics/trump-christian-refugees/index.html)
* [A family's plight just got more complicated](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/politics/trump-visa-ban-families-refugees-stories/index.html)
* [Bergen: Trump's big mistake](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/opinions/trumps-big-mistake-on-syrian-refugees-bergen/index.html)
* [All of Trump's executive orders, memos and proclamations](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/28/politics/trump-executive-actions-orders/index.html)
* [Comparing Trump to previous presidents](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/26/politics/executive-orders-presidents-actions-presidential-memoranda/index.html)

[Regarding Construction of American Pipelines](http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2017/images/01/28/presidential.memorandum.regarding.construction.of.american.pipelines.pdf) -- January 24

[Regarding the Hiring Freeze](http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2017/images/01/28/presidential.memorandum.regarding.the.hiring.freeze.pdf) -- January 23

[Related: Memorandum from Sandy, the acting OMB chief, on the federal civilian hiring freeze](http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2017/images/01/28/m-17-17.pdf) -- January 25

[Regarding Withdrawal of the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership Negotiations and Agreement](http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2017/images/01/28/presidential.memorandum.regarding.withdrawal.of.the.united.states.from.the.trans-pacific.partnership.negotiations.and.agreement.pdf) -- January 23

[Regarding the Mexico City Policy](http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2017/images/01/28/presidential.memorandum.regarding.the.mexico.city.policy.pdf) -- January 23

[Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies (from Chief of Staff Reince Priebus)](http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2017/images/01/28/memorandum.for.the.heads.of.executive.departments.and.agencies.pdf) -- January 20

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

January 20, 2017

Memorandum for the Heads of

Executive Departments and Agencies

FROM:

Reince Priebus

Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff

SUBJECT:

Regulatory Freeze Pending Review

The President has asked me to communicate to each of you his plan for managing the Federal regulatory process at the outset of his Administration.

In order to ensure that the President's appointees or designees have the opportunity to review any new or pending regulations, I ask on behalf of the President that you immediately take the following steps:

1. Subject to any exceptions the Director or Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget (the "OMB Director") allows for emergency situations or other urgent circumstances relating to health, safety, financial, or national security matters, or

otherwise, send no regulation to the Office of the Federal Register (the "OFR") until a department or agency head appointed or designated by the President after noon on January 20, 2017, reviews and approves the regulation. The department or agency head may delegate this power of review and approval to any other person so appointed or designated by the President, consistent with applicable law.

1. With respect to regulations that have been sent to the OFR

but not published in the Federal Register, immediately withdraw them from the OFR for review and approval as described in paragraph 1, subject to the exceptions described in paragraph 1. This withdrawal must be conducted consistent with OFR procedures.

1. With respect to regulations that have been published in the OFR but have not taken effect, as permitted by applicable law, temporarily postpone their effective date for 60 days from the date of this memorandum, subject to the exceptions described in paragraph 1, for the purpose of reviewing questions of fact, law, and policy they raise. Where appropriate and as permitted by applicable law, you should consider proposing for notice and comment a rule to delay the effective date for regulations beyond that 60-day period.

In cases where the effective date has been delayed in order to review questions of fact, law, or policy, you should consider potentially proposing further notice – and - comment rulemaking.

Following the delay in effective date

1. for those regulations that raise no substantial questions of law or policy, no further action needs to be taken; and
2. for those regulations that raise substantial questions of law or policy, agencies should notify the OMB Director and take further appropriate action in consultation with the OMB Director.
3. Exclude from the actions requested in paragraphs 1 through 3 any regulations subject to statutory or judicial deadlines and identify such exclusions to the OMB Director as soon as possible.
4. Notify the OMB Director promptly of any regulations that, in your view, should be excluded from the directives in paragraphs 1 through 3 because those regulations affect critical health, safety, financial, or national security matters, or for some other reason.

The OMB Director will review any such notifications and determine whether such exclusion is appropriate under the circumstances.

1. Continue in all circumstances to comply with any applicable Executive Orders concerning regulatory management. As used in this memorandum, "regulation" has the meaning given to "regulatory action" in section 3(e) of Executive Order 12866, and also includes any "guidance document" as defined in section 3(g) thereof as it existed when Executive Order 13422 was in effect.

That is, the requirements of this memorandum apply to "any substantive action by an agency (normally published in the Federal Register) that promulgates or is expected to lead to the promulgation of a final rule or regulation, including notices of inquiry, advance notices of proposed rulemaking, and notices of proposed rulemaking," and also covers any agency statement of general applicability and future effect "that sets forth a policy on a statutory, regulatory, or technical issue or an interpretation of a statutory or regulatory issue."

This regulatory review will be implemented by the OMB Director.

Communications regarding any matters pertaining to this review should be addressed to the OMB Director.

The OMB Director is authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the Federal Register.

REINCE PRIEBUS

**Green Card Holders Will Not be Barred from entry**

A top White House official appeared to reverse a key part of President Trump’s [immigration order](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/28/us/politics/annotating-trump-immigration-refugee-order.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=a-lede-package-region&region=top-news&WT.nav=top-news) on Sunday, saying that people from the affected countries who hold green cards will not be prevented from returning to the United States.

But the official, Reince Priebus, the White House chief of staff, also said that border agents had “discretionary authority” to detain and question suspicious travelers from certain countries. That statement seemed to add to the uncertainty over how the executive order will be interpreted and enforced in the days ahead.

Even with his statement, much of the order was still being enforced, and travel was disrupted for many around the world. Thousands of protesters gathered for a second day at American airports and other public spaces amid uncertainty about whether federal officers were fully complying with court orders blocking the immediate deportation of some people arriving from affected countries and requiring that anyone detained be granted access to lawyers.

With thousands of protesters marching outside the White House and thronging the streets of Washington and other cities, Mr. Trump late Sunday defended his order. “To be clear, this is not a Muslim ban, as the media is falsely reporting,” he said in a written statement. “This is not about religion — this is about terror and keeping our country safe.”

[Continue reading the main story](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/29/us/politics/white-house-official-in-reversal-says-green-card-holders-wont-be-barred.html#story-continues-1)

**Related Coverage**

He noted that the seven countries singled out were identified by former President Barack Obama’s administration as sources of terrorism and that his order does not affect citizens from dozens of other predominantly Muslim countries. “We will again be issuing visas to all countries once we are sure we have reviewed and implemented the most secure policies over the next 90 days,” he said.

As for Syria, whose refugees he has banned indefinitely, Mr. Trump said he was mindful of the suffering of victims of the long-running civil war. “I have tremendous feeling for the people involved in this horrific humanitarian crisis in Syria,” he said. “My first priority will always be to protect and serve our country, but as president I will find ways to help all those who are suffering.”

While Mr. Trump denied that his action was targeted against Muslims, just hours earlier he made clear on Twitter that he was concerned about Christian refugees. Part of his order gives preferential treatment to Christians who try to enter the United States from majority-Muslim countries.

In his Twitter post on Sunday morning, Mr. Trump deplored the killing of Christians in the Middle East without noting the killings of Muslims, who have been killed in vastly greater numbers in Iraq, Syria and elsewhere.

**X-Squared Radio is Right Again: Could Russia Replace Britain?**

Sanctions against Russia have failed to alter the Kremlin’s policies and actually increased popular support for Vladimir Putin. Now, there are growing calls for a change of tack.

Like a lake reliant on multiple affluents, the individual headlines eventually morph into a whole. An assemblage dripping with drivel. Russia is apparently attempting to infiltrate – or interfere with – the [Baltics](http://www.voanews.com/a/spy-jailing-stirs-fears-of-russian-interference-in-baltics/2928089.html), [Germany](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/29/german-spy-chief-russian-hackers-could-disrupt-elections-bruno-kahl-cyber-attacks), [France](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/russias-likely-to-interfere-in-french-and-german-elections-next_us_5845e0afe4b028b32338dfb1), the [Netherlands](http://www.newsweek.com/trump-putin-russia-interfered-presidential-election-541302), [Scotland](https://www.rt.com/op-edge/375506-putin-sanctions-eu-euro-nato/%28http:/blogs.spectator.co.uk/2014/01/putins-strange-intervention-over-scottish-independence/), [Italy](http://tass.com/politics/910478), the [Czech Republic](https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/dec/28/czech-republic-to-fight-fake-news-with-specialist-unit), [Sweden](https://sputniknews.com/europe/201701121049540019-sweden-russian-meddling-commentary/), and [Finland](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-finland-russia-informationattacks-idUSKCN12J197). And all at the same time to boot. Which is pretty impressive for a country that doesn’t even boast the largest economy in Europe (that being Germany).

[Europe paying the bill for US-masterminded sanctions against Russia says Italy](https://www.rt.com/business/374904-russia-sanctions-italy-us/)

This follows Moscow’s alleged success in securing the [US Presidency](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/dec/10/cia-concludes-russia-interfered-to-help-trump-win-election-report) for Donald Trump and convincing millions of Brits to opt for [Brexit](http://news.sky.com/story/russian-hackers-probably-swayed-brexit-vote-says-ben-bradshaw-mp-10694779). Not to mention how it seemingly orchestrated recent [election](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/14/pro-russian-candidates-win-presidential-votes-in-bulgaria-and-mo/) successes in Bulgaria and Moldova for its “*useful idiots*.”

Nevermind the fact that the Kremlin’s soft power can’t convince the majority of Ukrainians to love it, despite practically everyone understanding the Russian language there and a great many citizens boasting direct family ties to their neighbor. We are expected to swallow how Russia is so incredibly influential that it dominates politics practically everywhere. Like an elephantine geopolitical octopus. Something even the US couldn’t manage in the late 1940’s when it [controlled](http://theamericanscene.com/2008/05/07/a-post-american-world) around half of global GDP. And was handing out interest free loans to boot.

The reason this nonsense narrative has taken hold is simple. The Western establishment – which thought it had achieved “*the end of history*” twenty-five years ago – is getting a severe kicking. And sustained by an absolute conviction that it oversees the sole legitimate belief system in the world – an assumption which would survive a trek through the most Byzantine hall of mirrors – it’s looking for somebody else to blame. Indeed, at this stage, Popes from the Middle Ages would be impressed by Eurocrats’ resolute belief in their infallibility.

**Bad Guy**

Thus, these mandarins have chosen the Kremlin as their bogeyman. In part, because it has been the traditional enemy of European liberals. Additionally, the fact that people of a certain age – i.e. most current leaders and opinion formers – grew up fearing its Soviet incarnation makes it an easier sell. And Russia has obliged them by adopting increasingly conservative domestic policies and consistently re-electing Vladimir Putin, who has become the sworn enemy of the entrenched elite. Largely because he reversed Boris Yeltsin’s policy of bending over backwards to appease the West.

But most importantly, blaming Russia means our betters don’t need to take any responsibility for their own shortcomings. Because, why would they conduct thorough investigations into why Americans rejected Hillary Clinton or the Brits decided to divorce from Brussels when they can blame Moscow? After all, the latter path allows the avoidance of accountability.

[**READ MORE: EU expands task force aimed at combatting alleged Russian propaganda**](https://www.rt.com/news/375092-eu-fake-news-agency-reinforcement/)

Instead, Obama sanctions Russia for “*hacking*.” Without a shred of proof. And then pundits wonder why Putin’s approval ratings remain sky-high, even though this country has just endured a pretty nasty recession and living standards have stalled for most, and decreased for many. In other words, the perfect conditions exist for popular discontent against the government.

**Senseless Helpers**

Yet, rather than weakening Putin’s administration, the penalties bolstered it. And the negative propaganda assault against Russia has encouraged a siege mentality here. And, of course, like any proud people who feel victimized, the Russians have rallied around their leader, who is now popular even with younger people that largely disliked him when I first moved here seven years ago.

So, it’s fair to say how Western powerbrokers unwittingly pulled off a considerable achievement. Their cack-handed policy towards Russia has made the government of a country experiencing serious economic difficulties more secure than it was a decade ago, when the economy was growing at around eight percent annually. And it takes a profoundly misguided policy to produce this sort of result.

Thus, imagine you were in Brussels right now advising Donald Tusk? Or across in Berlin, at Angela Merkel’s desk? The previous desire to extend NATO and EU power projection up to Russia’s borders has failed, Ukraine is a bloody mess, and the two aforementioned institutions are facing existential crises. Meanwhile, attempts to make Putin pay for stymying their dreams have backfired.

Given how these officials believe the decline of the “*liberal order*” is entirely the Kremlin’s fault, and their own decisions have had no part to play, the only solution is to weaken Putin’s position. And sanctions clearly aren’t working.

**Different Strokes**

There are a few options here. Eurocrats could pump billions of euros into Ukraine, bolstering the Maidan regime there by spreading so much cash around that everyone could steal something. Not just the ruling classes. Indeed, if Ukraine became a success – which is long shot, in fairness – it would undermine the Kremlin by showing how submission to the West means oodles of filthy lucre. However, this is a costly notion and austerity-loving Germans are unlikely to approve.

Another scheme might involve dangling visa-free travel for Russians if they’d agree to vote for someone else in the 2018 election, but the Dutch won’t even countenance open borders for “*loyal*” Ukrainians. And, anyway, easier movement would only really appeal to the middle classes in Moscow and St Petersburg, who were already pretty hostile to Putin before the imposition of sanctions.

Some in Brussels think increased splurging on media messaging could yield dividends, but, given how EU states already outspend Moscow by huge amounts, this is a pipe-dream. For all the fear-mongering about Russian television and web services, the entire state broadcasting budget – both domestic and foreign – is less than one third of what the British alone spend on the BBC network.

Bearing all this in mind, there seems to be only one way Eurocrats can undermine Putin. One that, I will admit, is somewhat counterintuitive and probably unfathomable to Brussels – how about a formal invitation for Russia to replace Britain in the European Union, on condition that it also joins the Euro? Because in the (admittedly unlikely) event the Kremlin would accept such entreaties, Putin would be gone in short order. After all, look at how successful the Euro has been at destroying living standards across Europe, and the hopes and dreams of millions? From Athens to Dublin, it has wrought damage that the EU’s biggest enemies could only have dreamed of.

**The Article V Convention: Tonight’s Guest is Mike Faulkenberry with conventionofstates.com**

The states can convene & propose constitutional amendments to rein in federal power. Last week, one of the most significant events in the history of our constitutional republic in our lifetime occurred: Delegations, consisting primarily of state legislators, from all 50 states gathered in Colonial Williamsburg with the intent to rein in the federal government’s abuse of power. An assembly of 137 delegates representing every state quietly convened in a simulation that, when convened officially, could effectively strip Washington of its purloined power overnight. Legally. What’s this all about?

Article V of the U.S. Constitution grants Congress the power to propose amendments to the U.S. Constitution, and we’re all familiar with that process. It’s happened successfully 27 times in our nation’s history, and it’s how we’ve accomplished some important things, like ending slavery and guaranteeing women’s right to vote. But Article V also grants the same power to the states to propose amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

The power granted to the States to amend the Constitution hasn’t been exercised in American history — yet. The reason this provision was added to the Constitution, just two days before the close of the 1787 convention, was a concern raised by George Mason. In keeping with the checks and balances of the Framers, Mason believed that no branch of government should have the power to determine the extent of its own power. He predicted that someday the federal government would abuse the carefully enumerated powers bestowed in the text of the Constitution.

When that day arrived, structural amendments would be needed to curtail federal usurpations, but if Congress alone had the power to propose amendments, no corrections would ever be forthcoming. Based on this clear-headed observation, the Framers unanimously added the option for the states to propose amendments through a convention of states. The U.S. Constitution is a grant of specific, limited powers to the federal government to fulfill its duty to preserve and protect individual rights and promote the “general welfare.” But the Founders recognized that the federal government might overstep and abuse those powers, and that it was highly unlikely Congress would then act to restrain itself.

So the Founders also gave the states the power to convene together and propose amendments to the Constitution to restrain federal abuses, in what Article V calls a “convention” of the states. Article V reads:

The Congress, whenever two thirds of both houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this Constitution, or, on the application of the legislatures of two thirds of the several states, shall call a convention for proposing amendments, which, in either case, shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of this Constitution, when ratified by the legislatures of three fourths of the several states . . .

In other words, two-thirds (34) of the states pass an application for a convention to propose amendments, then the states choose their delegates, and whatever amendments are passed at that convention by the states still need to be ratified by the same process as any congressional amendment. Over the years, the states have enacted over 400 applications for a convention, but none has ever been called, because two-thirds of the states have never agreed on the subject matter for such a convention.

Several states have already called for a convention to impose fiscal restraints on the federal government, limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and impose term limits on federal officials. It was this application that formed the framework for the convention-of-states simulation last week in Colonial Williamsburg. Every state sent delegates, who spent two days debating dozens of ideas for amendments under these general topics.

The simulated convention passed significant amendment proposals on the following six ideas:

1. Requiring the states to approve any increase in the national debt

2. Imposing term limits on Congress (effective retroactively)

3. Limiting federal overreach by returning the Commerce Clause to its original meaning

4. Limiting the power of federal regulations by allowing an easy congressional override

5. Requiring a supermajority to impose federal taxes and repealing the 16th Amendment, which legalized the federal income tax

6. Giving the states (by a three-fifths vote) the power to abrogate any federal law, regulation, or executive order This is the Founders’ solution to Washington’s hunger for power and institutional corruption, and the states are rallying.

Other amendment proposals were discussed and debated, including term limits on the Supreme Court and giving the states the power to vacate a Supreme Court opinion. The simulation lasted only two days, but the real convention of states would have sufficient time to consider amendments and carefully craft final texts. Importantly, the Convention does not have power (just as Congress does not have power) under Article V to rewrite or completely overhaul the U.S. Constitution, or propose amendments beyond the scope of the application passed through each state legislature. Two of the nation’s foremost constitutional attorneys have written extensively on the procedural safeguards of a convention of states, and this simulation showed exactly how and why it will work as a check on the federal government, exactly as intended. This is the Founders’ solution to Washington’s hunger for power and institutional corruption, and the states are rallying. Going into the 2017 legislative sessions, eight states have passed the convention of states application and another 30 states have considered it. We all need to pay attention to the states and the Convention of States Project. We may feel horribly frustrated at national-level politics and parties for dozens of reasons. But we have one very important reason to remain hopeful for the preservation of liberty — at the state level, the convention of states can and will happen. We can and should get involved in our states and help lobby our legislators to pass the application for a convention. The future of our country doesn’t rest solely on the results in November. There is a much bigger and better solution in the U.S. Constitution itself — in Article V.

Please join us as we take a stand for liberty. February 7th, 2017 NC will file the Article V Convention of States resolution. It is our time, and we must take advantage of it. So far, eight states have passed the COS resolution. We still need 26. And with a strategic plan in place, it is North Carolina's time to shine. Rep. Bert Jones leads the way again. HB2 and the marriage amendment are obvious talking points for NC. Also, 2nd amendment rights, Common Core, employment, voter ID laws. COS addresses these and more.

NC will file in both houses on the same day. We need all North Carolinians support. Talk to your legislators, county commissioners, relatives and friends. Have them sign the petition and call their representatives and senators. There's power in numbers.

NC will take a stand and will not listen to the naysayers. We stand behind the Constitution. And not the tome that has been created by the supreme court precedents but the Constitution the Founders signed. There's a big difference.

What can you do to help?

Listen to the people around you in the grocery stores. Talk about Convention of States. Spread the word. Volunteer to be a District Captain at

http://www.conventionofstates.com/district\_captain

**What would an Article V Convention Look Like?**

How would an Article V “convention for proposing amendments” work? What would be its agenda? What about its procedures? How would voting be conducted?

History and constitutional law provide the answer to most of those questions, but it also helps to have a specific modern example. That is why [Citizens for Self Governance](https://selfgovern.com/) sponsored a simulated convention of states at Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia on September 21 through 23.

[Some have conjured up images of an amendments convention acting like a national party convention](http://www.eagleforum.org/psr/2009/may09/psrmay09.html#concon), with a mob of thousands of screaming attendees. This simulation was more realistic: It included 137 commissioners (delegates) from all 50 states. The number of commissioners was similar to the number (133) in the last national convention of states, the [Washington Conference Convention of 1861](http://articlevinfocenter.com/its-been-done-before-a-convention-of-the-states-to-propose-constitutional-amendments/). In practice, both bodies acted much like sober legislative chambers.

In Williamsburg, each state was represented by one, two, or three commissioners. The overwhelming majority were state lawmakers, but some delegations included non-legislators involved in public affairs. For example, California was represented by [John Eastman](https://www.chapman.edu/our-faculty/john-eastman), a well-known constitutional law professor and former candidate for state attorney general.

The agenda was fixed by the standard “convention of states” legislative application formally adopted by eight of the necessary 34 state legislatures. That application empowers the convention to propose amendments imposing fiscal restraints on the federal government, limiting the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and fixing term limits for members of Congress and for federal officials.

The rules for the simulation were based on rules earlier drafted for a real convention. I drafted both sets, with input from [Michael Farris](https://www.hslda.org/about/staff/attorneys/Farris.asp), a noted constitutional attorney and educator. In crafting both sets of rules we relied heavily on the actual rules of previous conventions of states. The source for resolving issues outside the rules was [*Mason’s Manual of Legislative Procedure*](http://www.ncsl.org/research/about-state-legislatures/masons-manual-for-legislative-bodies.aspx), the authority on parliamentary procedure for 70 of the 99 American state legislative chambers.

On the first day, the commissioners elected a president and vice president, and then broke into three principal committees. Each committee was to address certain discrete areas: (1) fiscal restraints, (2) limiting federal legislative and executive power, and (3) term limits plus limiting federal judicial power. The committees worked mostly from proposals submitted previously by their members, and each committee was permitted to propose up to three amendments. Each of the three committees was advised by a senior constitutional lawyer: Dr. Farris, [Professor Randy Barnett](https://www.law.georgetown.edu/faculty/barnett-randy-e.cfm) of Georgetown Law Center, and myself.

The committees ultimately sent eight amendments to the full convention.

The following day, the full session met again. It debated, amended, and approved or rejected the committees’ proposals. By the end of the day the assembly had proposed six amendments. In the real world, these then would have gone to the states for ratification. The six amendments are as follows:

**Fiscal Restraints Proposal 1:**

SECTION 1. The public debt shall not be increased except upon a recorded vote of two-thirds of each house of Congress, and only for a period not to exceed one year.

SECTION 2. No state or any subdivision thereof shall be compelled or coerced by Congress or the President to appropriate money.

SECTION 3. The provisions of the first section of this amendment shall take effect 3 years after ratification.

**Federal Legislative & Executive Jurisdiction Proposal 1**:

SECTION 1. The power of Congress to regulate commerce among the several states shall be limited to the regulation of the sale, shipment, transportation, or other movement of goods, articles or persons. Congress may not regulate activity solely because it affects commerce among the several states.

SECTION 2. The power of Congress to make all laws that are necessary and proper to regulate commerce among the several states, or with foreign nations, shall not be construed to include the power to regulate or prohibit any activity that is confined within a single state regardless of its effects outside the state, whether it employs instrumentalities therefrom, or whether its regulation or prohibition is part of a comprehensive regulatory scheme; but Congress shall have power to define and provide for punishment of offenses constituting acts of war or violent insurrection against the United States.

SECTION 3. The Legislatures of the States shall have standing to file any claim alleging violation of this article. Nothing in this article shall be construed to limit standing that may otherwise exist for a person.

SECTION 4. This article shall become effective five years from the date of its ratification.

**Federal Term Limits & Judicial Jurisdiction Proposal 1**:

No person shall be elected to more than six full terms in the House of Representatives. No person shall be elected to more than two full terms in the Senate. These limits shall include the time served prior to the enactment of this Article.

**Federal Legislative & Executive Jurisdiction Proposal 2**:

SECTION 1. The Legislatures of the States shall have authority to abrogate any provision of federal law issued by the Congress, President, or Administrative Agencies of the United States, whether in the form of a statute, decree, order, regulation, rule, opinion, decision, or other form.

SECTION 2. Such abrogation shall be effective when the Legislatures of three-fifths of the States approve a resolution declaring the same provision or provisions of federal law to be abrogated. This abrogation authority may also be applied to provisions of federal law existing at the time this amendment is ratified.

SECTION 3. No government entity or official may take any action to enforce a provision of federal law after it is abrogated according to this Amendment. Any action to enforce a provision of abrogated federal law may be enjoined by a federal or state court of general jurisdiction in the state where the enforcement action occurs, and costs and attorney fees of such injunction shall be awarded against the entity or official attempting to enforce the abrogated provision.

SECTION 4. No provision of federal law abrogated pursuant to this amendment may be reenacted or reissued for six years from the date of the abrogation.

**Fiscal Restraints Proposal 2**:

SECTION 1. Congress shall not impose taxes or other exactions upon incomes, gifts, or estates.

SECTION 2. Congress shall not impose or increase any tax, duty, impost or excise without the approval of three-fifths of the House of Representatives and three-fifths of the Senate, and shall separately present such to the President.

**Federal Legislative & Executive Jurisdiction Proposal 3**:

Whenever one quarter of the members of the United States House of Representatives or the United States Senate transmits to the President their written declaration of opposition to any proposed or existing federal administrative regulation, in whole or in part, it shall require a majority vote of the House of Representatives and Senate to adopt or affirm that regulation. Upon the transmittal of opposition, if Congress shall fail to vote within 180 days, such regulation shall be vacated. No proposed regulation challenged under the terms of this Article shall go into effect without the approval of Congress. Congressional approval or rejection of a rule or regulation is not subject to Presidential veto under Article 1, Section 7 of the U.S. Constitution.

**In the News: Convention of States get fresh look in North Carolina**

Posted by Convention of States Project on January 26, 2017

*The following article was written by Barry Smith and originally published in the* [*Carolina Journal.*](https://www.carolinajournal.com/news-article/convention-of-states-may-get-fresh-look-in-ncga/)

Advocates of constitutional amendments to rein in federal powers are optimistic North Carolina soon will join the effort.

The effort surrounds a proposed meeting, called “Article V Convention of the States,” which refers to that part of the [U.S. Constitution](https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution) governing constitutional amendments. The article allows two-thirds of the states’ legislatures to apply to Congress to establish a convention proposing amendments to the Constitution. The two-thirds threshold means at least 34 state legislatures must approve the call for a convention.

So far, eight states — Georgia, Alaska, Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, Indiana, Oklahoma, and Louisiana — have passed bills calling for a convention of the states, said Mike Faulkenberry, state director of the [Convention of the States Project](http://www.conventionofstates.com/).

There’s no deadline to complete the process, so if additional state legislatures authorize the convention, those states will be added to the tally.

“We don’t have to start all over again; we get to pick it up where we left off,” Faulkenberry said. “We’ve developed a lot more and a lot better relationships with a lot of legislators.”

“I’m hoping we’ll have better chances at getting it passed this time,” said Rep. [Dennis Riddell](http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/members/viewMember.pl?sChamber=H&nUserID=665), R-Alamance, one of the bill’s sponsors.

[The proposal](http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/BillLookUp/BillLookUp.pl?Session=2015&BillID=h321&submitButton=Go) calls for a convention to propose three amendments to the Constitution: one imposing fiscal restraint on the U.S. government; a second limiting the power and jurisdiction of the federal government; and a third calling for term limits for federal officials, including members of Congress.

Faulkenberry said the convention would decide specifics of the proposed amendments. For example, he said, the states aren’t specifying how long congressional term limits would be or whether fiscal restraint would require a balanced budget amendment. Leaving those matters open could preclude legislatures, which may have differing opinions, from getting bogged down in the specifics and delay or prevent the convention, he said.

“We’re all having a little bit of a competition to see which state is the next to pass it,” said Tamara Colbert, a spokeswoman for the national Convention of the States Project. Colbert is also co-director for the state of Texas.

Riddell said supporters of the proposal couldn’t get such a bill out of committee two years ago. “There’s a curiosity or hesitancy by some of our colleagues on what an Article V convention is,” Riddell said.

Some of Riddell’s fellow representatives were concerned such a convention, once convened, may go rogue and stray from the original intent. Riddell said that the bill calling for the convention would be very specific — to limit the power and reach of the federal government.

“I think the biggest thing in its favor is that it’s constitutional,” Riddell said. “This is not an extraconstitutional remedy.”

Riddell said the nation’s founders anticipated a time when the federal government would be insensitive to the needs of the states. They placed the convention of the states option for amending the Constitution as a remedy for such indifference.

The scope of the proposed gathering, Faulkenberry says, would have limits. “Anything outside the scope of these three things could not be considered,” Faulkenberry said. For example, he said an amendment to expand the scope of the federal government could not be considered.

Once such a convention were held and amendments proposed, legislatures in three-fourths of the states — 38 altogether — must ratify the amendments before they become effective.

Riddell and Faulkenberry say requiring three-fourths of the states to ratify any proposed amendments also serves as a check on a runaway convention.

“That’s a very high bar,” Riddell said. He also noted that Republicans have majorities in 33 state legislatures. “This is going to have to be a bipartisan effort to get the 38 states.”

Supporters of calling a convention of the states are planning a rally in Raleigh on Feb. 7.

**Life on Venus**

The question of [life on Venus](http://www.space.com/33758-venus-habitable-for-billions-of-years.html), of all places, is intriguing enough that a team of U.S. and Russian scientists working on a proposal for a new mission to the second planet — named Venera-D — are considering including the search for life in its mission goals.

If all goes as planned, an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) could one day be cruising the thick, sulfuric-acid clouds of [Venus](http://www.space.com/15502-planet-venus-quiz-venus-facts.html) to help determine whether dark streaks that appear to absorb ultraviolet radiation could be evidence of microbial life.

Venus has long been a focus of Russian planetary science, which has the proud legacy of the record-breaking [Venera space probes](http://www.space.com/18551-venera-13.html) that landed on the Venusian surface in the late 1970s and early 1980s. [[Mysterious Venus: 10 Weird Facts](http://www.space.com/15988-venus-planet-weird-facts.html)]

With many questions remaining unanswered, the joint mission of Roscosmos and NASA, if approved, would see an orbiter launch toward [Venus](http://www.space.com/44-venus-second-planet-from-the-sun-brightest-planet-in-solar-system.html) in 2025 with the aim to make remote-sensing observations of the planet and its atmosphere; deploy a lander on the surface; and search for future landing sites.

Among several possible additions to the mission are a small sub-orbiter to study Venus' magnetosphere, and either a balloon or an UAV taking measurements of the atmosphere over a long duration.

Should the UAV be approved, its main goal would be to take meteorological measurements to determine why the atmosphere rotates so fast relative to the surface, a phenomenon known as [super-rotation](http://www.astrobio.net/also-in-news/deciphering-atmospheric-waves-venus/). This fast rotation was discovered in the 1960s by astronomers tracking the motion of the dark streaks in the atmosphere. Puzzlingly, astronomers do not know the origin and composition of these dark streaks, nor do they understand why the streaks haven't mixed with the rest of the atmosphere and why they are absorbing ultraviolet light.

"These are questions that haven't been fully explored yet, and I'm shouting as loud as I can, saying that we need to explore them," said Sanjay Limaye, an atmospheric scientist from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and a former chair of NASA's Venus Exploration Analysis Group (VEXAG).

According to Limaye, the nature of the UV absorber is completely unknown. It could be particulate matter mixed into the clouds, or a substance that has been dissolved by the droplets of sulfuric acid, or it may be crystalline in nature, like ice. Iron chloride has been proposed, but there is no confirmed mechanism that could loft particles of iron chloride 31 to 37 miles (50 to 60 kilometers) above the surface, particularly as winds near the surface only blow weakly through the dense lower atmosphere.

Venus seen in ultraviolet light by the European Space Ageny's Venus Express mission. The dark streaks in the clouds are where an unknown material is absorbing ultraviolet light. Could it be life?

Credit: ESA/MPS/DLR/IDA

## Life in the clouds?

A more exciting explanation for the dark streaks is that they are [evidence of microbial life](http://www.space.com/search-for-life). "It's a possibility we can't overlook," said Limaye, who is a member of the Venera-D science definition team.

Finding life at high altitude in the atmosphere of a planet would make sense. After all, microbes have been found at similar heights in Earth's atmosphere. The challenge for life on Venus is the planet's extreme temperature. The surface, at 864 degrees Fahrenheit (462 degrees Celsius), is hot enough to melt lead, and the surface pressure of 92 bar is the equivalent of being almost 0.6 miles (1 km) under water.

However, in a region beginning around 31 miles (50 m) in altitude and extending 7.5 miles (12 km) outward is a sweet spot where the temperature ranges between 86 degrees F and 158 degrees F (30 degrees C and 70 degrees C), and the pressure is similar to that on Earth's surface. Life could potentially survive in this zone where the dark-streaking UV absorber is found.

Intriguingly, the sulfuric acid droplets within the clouds aren't necessarily a show-stopper to life. Earlier Venera missions detected elongated particles in the lower cloud layer that are about 1 micron long, about the width of a small bacterium. These particles could be coated in ring-shaped polymers of eight sulfur atoms, called S8 molecules, which are known to exist in Venus' clouds and which are impervious to the corrosive effects of sulfuric acid, researchers said. [[5 Bold Claims of Alien Life](http://www.space.com/11057-science-claims-alien-life.html)]

Furthermore, S8 absorbs ultraviolet light, re-radiating it in visible wavelengths. If the particles are microbes, they could have coated themselves in S8, making them resistant to the corrosive effects of sulfuric acid. It has even been postulated that the S8 exists as a result of microbial activity. Is this then the key to life on Venus?

"I cannot say that there is microbial [life in Venus' clouds](http://www.space.com/15716-alien-life-search-solar-system.html)," Limaye said. "But that doesn't mean it's not there, either. The only way to learn is to go there and sample the atmosphere."

Planet Venus: Quiz Yourself on Venus Facts

Planet Venus is often likened to Earth but with a runaway greenhouse problem. The 2nd planet from the sun is hot shrouded with deadly clouds. Those are hints. Now test your knowledge of Venus facts.

[Start the Quiz](javascript:void(0);)

The original Russian plan for [Venera-D](http://www.astrobio.net/venus/dark-streaks-venus-clouds-microbial-life/) featured balloons patrolling the atmosphere, but balloons are not very maneuverable and would not necessarily be able to reach the regions with the dark streaks. A solar-powered UAV would stand a far better chance, according to Limaye.

"The idea is that, with a large enough wingspan, you can generate enough power and actually fly through the atmosphere of Venus, with electric propellers, for a very long time," Limaye said.

Descending hypersonically into the atmosphere after detaching from the orbiter, the UAV would be filled with hydrogen or helium gas, keeping it buoyant at a nominal floating altitude of 31 miles (50 km), allowing it to glide through the clouds while moving through the night-time hemisphere. Upon daylight, the solar-powered propellers would kick in and raise the craft's altitude to around 37 miles (60 km).

Over the course of three to four days, the craft could move around the planet along the upper atmosphere's "super-rotation," the strange phenomenon where the atmosphere seems to be uncoupled from the solid planet and rotates much faster. The UAV would therefore be able to explore the clouds at different altitudes, moving from air mass to air mass, from regions with UV absorbers to regions devoid of them, sampling and measuring the composition of the atmosphere.

The aerospace company Northrop Grumman has already independently developed a concept for a Venusian UAV, [called VAMP](http://www.space.com/24847-venus-exploration-vamp-inflatable-aircraft.html) (Venus Atmospheric Maneuverable Platform), which would have a giant 180-foot (55 m) wingspan and be designed to operate in the atmosphere for at least a year.

The ‘D' in Venera-D's name stands for "dolgozhivushaya," which in Russian means "long-lived." This originally referred to the hopes of keeping a lander operational on the [Venusian surface](http://www.astrobio.net/also-in-news/venus-will-seen-radar-green-bank-telescope/) for days or weeks, although the oppressive conditions on the surface mean that realistically the most that any lander could survive is mere hours. Instead, the UAV, continually circling around Venus, would take the mantle of being long-lived.

The final report describing the science goals of the Venera-D mission will be submitted to Roscosmos and NASA by the end of January 2017, at which point the two space agencies will have to decide whether they will collaborate on the mission. An answer is not expected until late 2017 at the earliest