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Republican Harris will not run again after tainted U.S. House election



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Probe begins after Boeing 737 slides off runway into Florida river

(Reuters) - A team of 16 federal investigators was traveling to Jacksonville, Florida on Saturday after a Boeing jetliner with 143 people on board slid off a runway into a shallow river while trying to land at a military base during a thunderstorm, injuring 21 people.

The Boeing 737-800 chartered by the U.S. military was arriving from Naval Station Guantanamo Bay in Cuba with 136 passengers and seven crew members when it slid into the St. Johns river at the end of the runway at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, authorities said.

No one was badly hurt and the 21 people taken to a hospital were listed in good condition, the local sheriff's office said.

The National Transportation Safety Board said on Twitter that 16 investigators were arriving in Jacksonville on Saturday.

"NTSB team has expertise in aircraft operations, structures, powerplants, human performance, weather, airports and other areas," the agency said, adding that it expects to brief the media later in the day.

The plane, chartered from Miami Air International, was attempting to land at about 9:40 p.m. local time amid thunder and lightning when it slid off the runway and came to rest in the shallow water of the river, authorities and passengers said.

The military base is on the western bank of the St. Johns River about 8 miles (12.87 km) south of central Jacksonville, about 350 miles (563.27 km) north of Miami.

Miami Air International is a charter airline operating a fleet of the Boeing 737-800, different from the 737 MAX 8 aircraft that has been grounded following two fatal crashes involving that plane.

Representatives of the airline did not immediately reply to requests for comment.

A spokesman for Boeing Co. said that the company was aware of the incident and was gathering information.

The charter company is contracted by the military for its twice-weekly "rotator" roundtrip service between the U.S. mainland and Guantanamo Bay, said Bill Dougherty, a spokesman for the Jacksonville base.

It flies every Tuesday and Friday from the Naval Station Norfolk in Virginia to the Jacksonville air station and on to Cuba. It then flies back to Virginia with a stop again at Jacksonville, Dougherty said.



A Miami Air, Boeing 737 aircraft from Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, sits in shallow water of the St Johns River after it slid off the runway at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Florida, U.S., May 3, 2019. U.S. Navy/Senior Chief Mass Communication Specialist Monica R. Hopper/Handout via REUTERS

Warren Buffett praises Kraft Heinz operations, says Wells Fargo made 'big mistakes'

OMAHA, Neb. (Reuters) - Warren Buffett on Saturday signaled his commitment to Kraft Heinz Co and defended his actions toward Wells Fargo & Co, two of the largest investments at his Berkshire Hathaway Inc, despite mistakes at both that have caused many investors to sour on them.

Buffett, 88, spoke before tens of thousands of people at Berkshire's annual meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, the centerpiece of a weekend of shareholder events, where he and Vice Chairman Charlie Munger, 95, were fielding several hours of shareholder and analyst questions.

Kraft Heinz has been a thorn for Berkshire, which in February took a \$3 billion writedown on its 26.7 percent stake, because of the packaged food company's inability to keep up with changing consumer tastes and reliance on older brands such as Oscar Mayer and Jell-O.

The company was created from the 2015 merger of Kraft Foods and H.J. Heinz, the latter of which had been owned by Berkshire and Brazil's 3G Capital, which runs Kraft Heinz day-to-day.

Buffett defended 3G's management, saying the

combined company is doing well operationally, and that its current problems cannot be blamed on a lack of investment.

'We screwed up' not buying Google shares, Berkshire's Munger says
Berkshire swings to big profit; Buffett laments Kraft Heinz

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But he also maintained that "we paid too much money" for Kraft.

"You can turn any investment into a bad deal by paying too much," he said, while adding it was "not inconceivable" Berkshire could partner with 3G again on a transaction.

He said 3G had more willingness to take on leverage and "pay up," but in many cases also had "way better operators."

'MISTAKES' AT WELLS FARGO

Buffett, who became famous in 1991 for criticizing Salomon Inc's practices and becoming interim chairman to right the mess, also faced a question about his relative silence about Wells Fargo, where Berkshire owns a nearly 10-percent stake.



Berkshire Hathaway Chairman Warren Buffett walks through the exhibit hall as shareholders gather to hear from the billionaire investor at Berkshire Hathaway Inc's annual shareholder meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, U.S., May 4, 2019. REUTERS/Scott Morgan

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Trump aides ignored legal warnings in pushing reactor plan

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Top White House aides ignored repeated warnings they could be breaking the law as they worked with former U.S. officials and a close friend of President Donald Trump to advance a multi-billion-dollar plan to build nuclear reactors in the Middle East, Democratic lawmakers alleged in a report released Tuesday. The House of Representatives Oversight Committee report said former national security adviser Michael Flynn and two aides promoted the plan with Tom Barrack, the chairman of Trump's inaugural committee, and a consortium of U.S. firms led by retired military commanders and former White House officials.

The effort, the report said, began before Trump took office and continued after his inauguration in January 2017 despite National Security Council staff warnings that a proposed transfer of U.S. nuclear technology to Saudi Arabia was being fast-tracked around a mandatory approval process in possible breach of the Atomic Energy Act. John Eisenberg, the top NSC lawyer, had ordered the work halted because of concerns that Flynn could be breaking a conflict of interest law as he advised the consortium while serving on Trump's campaign and transition team, said the report, which is based on documents and whistleblower accounts.

Administration support for the nuclear project, however, appears to have continued to the present, with Trump meeting consortium representatives in the Oval Office last week, the committee report said. "The committee is now launching an investigation to determine whether the actions being pursued by the Trump administration are in the national security interests of the United States, or rather, serve those who stand to gain financially," the report said.

The report, compiled by the Democratic staff of the panel chaired by Representative Elijah Cummings, comes as Democrats expand inquiries into alleged administration wrongdoing after winning a majority in the House in November elections.

The nuclear project is being promoted by IP3 International, a consortium of U.S. technology firms founded by retired Navy Rear Admiral Michael Hewitt, retired Army General John Keane, and Robert McFarlane, a former

national security adviser to President Ronald Reagan. The board includes former senior U.S. civilian and military officials.

The report said the companies include reactor manufacturer Westinghouse, which emerged from Chapter 11 bankruptcy last year.

The White House, Flynn and IP3 had no immediate response to the report. A spokesman for Barrack said in an email that the long-time Trump friend and CEO of Colony Capital, a private equity firm, was not contacted prior to the report's release, was reviewing the document and "stands ready to cooperate" with the committee

PLAN FOR DOZENS OF REACTORS

Working with the U.S. government, the consortium would build dozens of power reactors in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and other U.S. Arab allies, according to the IP3 website. In doing so, the project would help restore U.S. influence in the Middle East while boosting regional economic and political stability, according to the website.

Flynn, a retired Army general, promoted the plan on two 2015 trips to Saudi Arabia, and listed himself on government documents as an IP3 advisor during a period in 2016 while he was working for Trump's campaign and transition, the report said.

Flynn's work on the nuclear plan was



FILE PHOTO: Former National Security Adviser Flynn arrives for status hearing at U.S. District Court in Washington

"thoroughly" reviewed by Special Counsel Robert Mueller, who never indicated it was legally problematic, a person familiar with the matter said. Flynn was charged in December 2017 with lying to FBI agents about his contacts with the Russian ambassador and is cooperating with Mueller's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election.

A spokesman for Mueller declined to comment. Barrack was represented in the plan, the report said, by the then-head of his firm's Washington office, Rick Gates, a former political consultant and Trump's deputy campaign manager. Gates pleaded guilty last year to financial fraud and lying to the FBI and also is now cooperating with Mueller.



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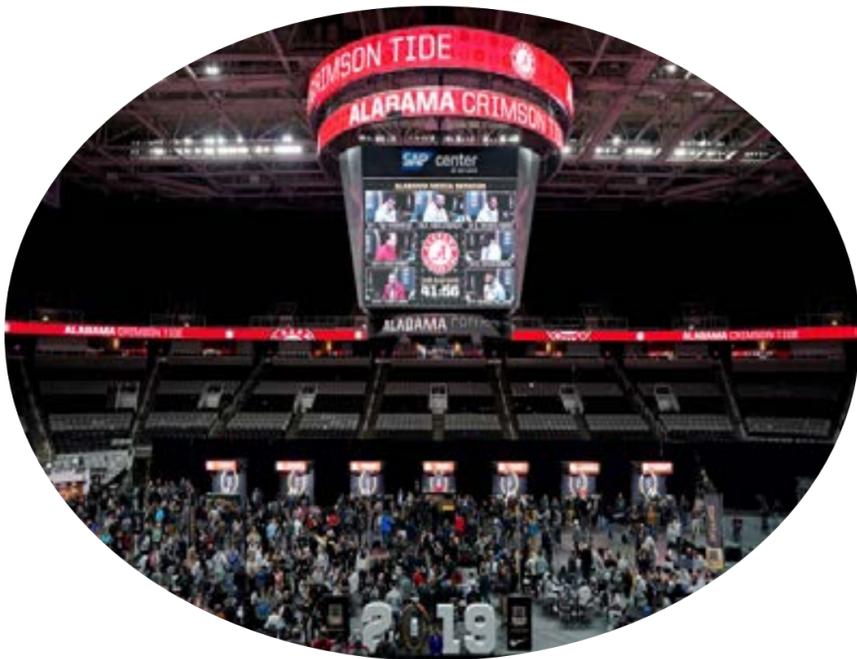
Editor's Choice



FILE PHOTO: People participate in a Women's March to protest against U.S. President Donald Trump in New York City, U.S



Federal workers left unpaid or furloughed collect a free bag of groceries from Kraft Foods on the 27th day of the partial government shutdown in Washington



San Jose, CA, USA; An overall view of the arena during the College Football Playoff Championship Media Day at SAP Center. Mandatory Credit: Kyle Terada-USA TODAY Sports



A Brexit supporter wears a tie with pro-Brexit pins as she arrives for a "Leave Means Leave" rally in London, Britain REUTERS/Simon Dawson



Backstage at Edward Crutchley catwalk show at London Fashion Week Men's



Russian President Vladimir Putin stands during his visit to the St Sava temple in Belgrade



A Cuban reads the final draft proposal of changes to the constitution, in Havana



People wearing protective masks arrive to a place near a landslide at rubbish landfill in Alpacoma, near La Paz, Bolivia, . REUTERS/David Mercado

Hung Le's face lit up when his 7-year-old daughter came home from school Friday.

"There's no living if I go back to Vietnam, only death," Le said after she left the room.

The U.S. and Vietnamese governments met last Monday to discuss dissolving a 2008 repatriation agreement, according to immigration advocacy groups and multiple media outlets.



Donald Trump and Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen speak at a meeting in February 2018.

If Vietnam caves to pressure from the U.S. to back out of the agreement set to renew in January, an estimated 9,000 Vietnamese immigrants nationwide — and roughly 1,500 in Texas — would be subject to deportation at the start of the new year.

The move, immigration advocates and lawyers say, would be a devastating and unfair blow to a vulnerable population. Many came to the United States to flee the Vietnam War only to be placed in struggling neighborhoods with little or no resources.

"The original agreement for us has been tremendously important in providing humanitarian relief and protection for Vietnamese-Americans who came over as refugees... and unfortunately committed crimes they have served through sentences, many of them a decade old," said Quyen Dinh, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based Southeast Asian Resource Action Center.

Those who entered the country illegally prior

9,000 Vietnamese Immigrants Nationwide And Close To 1,500 In Texas Could Be Affected Vietnamese Refugees, Immigrants Across U.S. Face Deportation Under Proposed Trump Policy

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



Khanh Hung Le, 47, thinks about what would happen to him and his 7-year-old daughter if he is deported back to Vietnam. Le and his daughter live at his sister's house in Spring. Le legally moved to the United States in the 1990s and has criminal records from when he was young. A car accident a few years ago left him paralyzed from the chest down.

utive director of the Washington, D.C.-based Southeast Asian Resource Action Center. Dinh added that the government considers a criminal act by a noncitizen problematic in and of itself, thanks to major immigration law reforms passed in 1996.



There has been a surge in immigration arrests of people living in the United States under the President Trump.

to 1995, or who overstayed temporary visas would also potentially be affected by the policy change, said Khanh Pham, attorney for the refugee and asylum advocacy group Boat People SOS.

The Trump administration started shifting gears on the 2008 agreement in the spring of 2017, stating that it does not protect Vietnamese immigrants convicted of criminal offenses from deportation. Vietnamese immigrants with final deportation orders started getting detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement when they stopped by for their routine check-ins with the agency, and Vietnam accepted only about a dozen repatriates before hardening its stance again, Pham and Dinh said.

With nowhere to send the rest of the newly-detained immigrants, the administration was then sued by civil rights groups who claimed it was violating the ruling in Zadvy-

das v. Davis, a 2001 Supreme Court decision that deemed it illegal to hold immigrants in detention indefinitely.

However, the resource action committee released a report on Dec. 8 that the two governments were meeting to reconsider renewing the repatriation agreement. The Atlantic reported last week that a State Department spokesperson confirmed that officials with the Department of Homeland Security met with representatives of the Vietnamese embassy in Washington, D.C., but declined to provide details of when the talks took place or what was discussed.



Phuoc Thang, his wife Kat and their two daughters Audrina, 17 months, and Mia 3 spend time together at home in San Jose, Calif., on Friday, July 20, 2018. Thang is among roughly 200 Cambodian & Vietnamese immigrants who, for the first time, are under threat of deportation for old crimes many of them committed as teenagers.

Neither Homeland Security nor the Vietnamese embassy in Washington responded to requests for comment from the Houston Chronicle. Experts say this is the Trump administration's latest move showing its hardened stance on immigration. Between 1998 and 2016, Vietnam accepted about 30 deported repatriates each year, Dinh said. That number more than doubled to 71 people in 2017.

cans have contributed significantly to the vibrant, diverse and strong communities here in Houston and in the U.S. with so many achievements and contributions," said community organizer Anhlanh Nguyen.

Preparing for the worst Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner released a statement Monday in opposition to the potential policy change, saying that Houston's 91,000 Vietnamese immigrants "have enriched the economic, cultural, religious and intellectual fabric of our city."

"Potentially deporting thousands of these refugees strikes at the heart of Houston and the soul of America," Turner continued. "To say to them now that they must return to a place where they suffered many years ago, and where they no longer have a home, is wrong."



A U.S. soldier guards Vietnamese refugees on ship heading to the U.S. in the 1960's. Dinh said people have been coming to the resource center in a panic, unsure if they would be affected by the policy change and separated from their families.

"We don't know if the agreement has been changed at all, but we're preparing families for the worst-case scenario," she said.

The organization has been recommending people find immigration attorneys to reopen and examine their cases, and to seek pardons from state governors for past convictions. For Le, being deported would separate him from his daughter, who he still calls his baby — a heartbreaking possibility for the single dad.

It would also mean risking his life, Le said. Two years ago, he was paralyzed from the chest down during a car accident. Le says that going back to Vietnam would mean death.

"In my condition, there's no living if I'm to go back," he said. "I have to take medication for the rest of my life, have to use equipment to go pee, I can't live normally. Maximum for me — four months." (Courtesy houston-chronicle.com)

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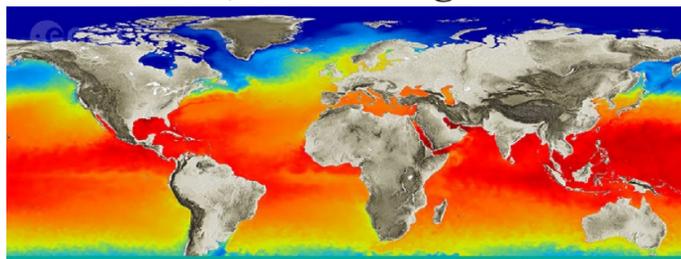
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Earth Had A Top 3 Warmest March On Record, Climate Agencies Find



Climate change

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Global average temperature anomalies in degrees Celsius for March 2019 compared to the 1951-1980 average. Image: NASA GISS.

March may have been unusually cold in parts of the U.S., but globally, average temperatures ticked upward to rank as one of the top 3 warmest Marches on record, new data from climate groups in Europe, Japan and the U.S. shows.

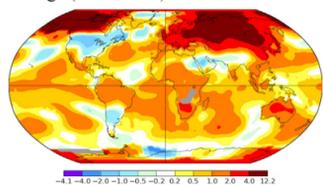
Why it matters: The new data shows that global average temperatures during 2019 are on track to make it another top 5 warmest year, should these trends continue. An El Niño event, featuring unusually warm water in the tropical Pacific Ocean along with an increase in shower and thunderstorm activity near the equator, is helping to add additional heat to the atmosphere.

Typically, El Niño years have a higher chance of setting global heat records by combining natural climate variability with long-term trends from global warming.

The big picture: According to preliminary NOAA data, the globe just had its 2nd-warmest March on record, with global average surface temperatures at 1.91°F above the 20th century average. This also marked the 3rd time in 140 years that the globe had an average temperature anomaly that reached 1.8°F or greater, NOAA found (the other two times were March of 2016 and 2017).

NASA ranked the month slightly lower although its temperature readings were similar, concluding the globe just had its

3rd-warmest March on record, with a global average surface temperature anomaly of 1.11°C, or 1.99°F, above the 20th century average (1951-1980).



Global temperature change before and after 1970

Data: NASA GISS; Graphic: Harry Stevens/Axios

Last year was Earth's 4th-warmest year on record, coming in behind 2016, the planet's warmest recorded year, as well as 2015 and 2017, according to information released Wednesday by NOAA, NASA and the U.K. Met Office.

Why it matters: The yearly rankings don't tell the whole story of long-term climate change, since natural variability can still push or pull an individual year up or down the rankings. However, the overall picture is growing starker with each passing year. Nine of the 10 warmest years on record since reliable data began in 1880 have occurred since 2005. At the same time, greenhouse gases from the burning of fossil fuels — as well as deforestation and intensive agriculture — have skyrocketed to levels not seen in more than 800,000 years.

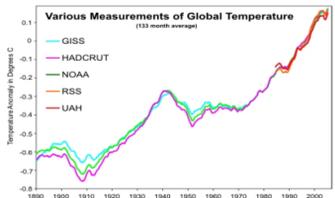
By the numbers: For 2018, the average temperature across global land and ocean surfaces was 1.42°F (0.79°C) above the 20th century average, according to NOAA. According to NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS), global temperatures in 2018 were 1.5°F (0.83°C) warmer

than the 1951-1980 mean.

Analyses from the U.K. Met Office and the World Meteorological Organization also ranked 2018 among the top 4 warmest years on record.

Each group relies on similar surface temperature data but uses different methods and baselines to fill in gaps between observing stations.

According to NOAA, the annual global land and ocean temperature has increased at an average rate of 0.13°F (0.07°C) per decade since 1880. However, this rate has more than doubled, to 0.31°F (0.17°C) per decade, since 1981.



The big picture: "The impacts of long-term global warming are already being felt — in coastal flooding, heat waves, intense precipitation and ecosystem change," Gavin Schmidt, director of NASA GISS, said in a press release.

Since the 1880s, the average global surface temperature has risen about 2°F (1°C), which Schmidt — along with the vast majority of climate scientists — attributes largely to increased emissions of greenhouse gases due to human activities.

Increasing average temperatures are most pronounced in the Arctic, where temperatures have jumped at more than twice the rate of the rest of the globe, triggering sea ice and land-based glaciers to melt.

Record high annual temperatures over land surfaces were measured across much of Europe, New Zealand, and parts of the Middle East and Russia. No land areas were record cold for the year, NOAA found.

Details: NOAA also tallied up the list of billion-dollar weather disasters that affected the U.S. during 2018, counting 14 such events that add to a total of nearly \$100 billion.

These disasters included Hurricanes Florence and Michael, Western wildfires and other extreme events. Their total damage is estimated at \$91 billion, with Hurricane Mi-

chael in the top spot at \$25 billion.

Studies show that climate change is already increasing the odds and severity of some types of extreme weather events, particularly heat waves and precipitation extremes. Links are also well-established between warming and drying conditions in the American West and more frequent, severe wildfires.

The past 3 years have seen more than double the annual average number of billion-dollar disasters, which NOAA's Adam Smith attributes to "a combination of increased exposure, vulnerability, and the fact the climate change is increasing the frequency of some types of extremes that lead



to billion-dollar disasters." Between the lines: Global average surface temperatures are edging closer to the 1.5°C aspirational warming target contained in the Paris climate agreement, which many low-lying island nations see as key to their survival, but the world's energy system is marching in the wrong direction for limiting global warming's severity.

Global carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas ticked up in 2018, to the highest levels in recorded history, according to the Global Carbon Project and the International Energy Agency.

A separate report showed that U.S. carbon emissions from energy — which is the overwhelming cause of planet-warming emissions — jumped by 3.4% last year, ending years of declines.

In order to meet the Paris agreement's 1.5°C goal, global emissions of greenhouse gases would have to fall by 45% by 2030 and reach "net zero" by mid-century. (Courtesy axios.com)

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