Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Nation Watch: February 2, 2017

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As social actions around the world demonstrate, the people listen, the streets listen. A vast, strong community seeks a world of greater compassion and justice. Politicians listen too, when there are enough people in real and virtual streets.

Cultural Weekly's **Nation Watch** highlights topics you may wish to take action on. We also wish to alert you to **DCReport**, a new website dedicated to investigative journalism of what the President and Congress *do*, not what they say, founded by Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter David Cay Johnston.

Who are your representatives?
Find your Senators here: https://www.senate.gov/senators/contact/
Find your Representative here: http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/

Public Lands
Congress is preparing to give away millions of acres of public land worth hundreds of billions of dollars. The first move, transferring property owned by all Americans to individual states, was quietly adopted by the House in early January as part of a routine internal rules change. Source: DC Report.

National Security
Trump added his chief strategist, Steve Bannon, to all meetings of the National Security Council, while limiting attendance by the Director of National Intelligence and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Source: Fortune*. Under previous administrations, the Director of National Intelligence and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff attended all meetings of the NSC's inner circle. *Source: BBC*.

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Immigration
Trump signed an executive order announcing the collaboration of White House staff and the Department of Homeland Security to "begin immediate construction of a [1,900-mile long] border wall." *Source: The Guardian.*

Trump signed an executive order designed to "enhance public safety in the Interior of the United States," which would supply 10,000 additional immigration officers, and would deny federal

funding to cities choosing not to comply with immigration agents. Considering that the order does not clarify which cities would be affected, it is widely assumed that this order poses a threat to Sanctuary Cities and States. There was also no further information given on which departments would go unfunded. *Sources: White House press secretary, The Atlantic.*

The city of San Francisco filed a lawsuit in federal court, suing Trump on the grounds that his executive order enhancing public safety in the Interior of the United States is unconstitutional, citing it's 2013 "Due Process for All" ordinance. The 2013 law makes a clear distinction between local authorities and the right they have over who can or cannot be detained and turned over to federal immigration officials. *Source: Los Angeles Times.*

Trump signs an executive order banning "radical islamic terrorists" from traveling from seven Muslim-majority countries for 90 days and suspending all refugee admission for 120 days. The order imposes an indefinite ban on refugees from Syria, and also cuts the number of refugees allowed into the US to 50,000, from the previous limit of 110,000. Additionally, the order gives preference to allow religious minority immigrants to enter the US from these same seven countries. The countries listed in the ban are: Iran, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Yemen, and Somalia. This ban does not apply to UAE, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, or Egypt – countries which have been known to harbor terrorists. *Source: CNN.*

Acting US Attorney General Sally Yates refused to defend executive order banning immigrants, on the grounds that she found it was not "wise or just." *Source: Quartz.*

Acting US Attorney General Sally Yates was fired by President Trump, because her actions amounted to "betrayal." *Sources: Politico, The White House.*

"The Trump administration is considering a plan to weed out would-be immigrants who are likely to require public assistance, as well as to deport — when possible — immigrants already living in the United States who depend on taxpayer help, according to a draft executive order obtained by The Washington Post." *Source: Washington Post. The drafts are here.*

Trump replaced Daniel Ragsdale in his role as acting director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). *Source: The Hill.*

Holocaust

Trump issued a statement on Holocaust Remembrance Day omitting mention of Jews or Judaism. Critics noted that omission of Jews from Holocaust descriptions is a common trope of extreme right groups in Europe and elsewhere. *Source: USA Today.*

Reproductive Rights/Health

The administration's official policy regarding the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is "to seek the prompt repeal" of the Affordable Care Act. It directs the secretary of health and human services, as well as other agencies, to "waive, defer, grant exemptions from or delay implementation of any provision or requirement" of Obamacare that imposes a burden "to the maximum extent permitted by law." *Source: CNN.*

Public Information

Trump introduces an outline for a cybersecurity plan, to be headed by his son-in-law Jared Kushner. The plan would require all agencies to update their IT systems, electrical grid, and "critical infrastructures. The administration postponed the signing of the order. *Source: NBC News.*

Environment
Executive Order 13755 calls for expedited of environmental reviews for “high priority” infrastructure projects *Source: US Department of Energy*. Documents relating to the construction of American pipelines are here.

“The Acting Secretary of the Army Robert Speer informed us that he has directed the Army Corps of Engineers to proceed with the easement needed to complete the Dakota Access Pipeline,” Senator John Hoeven (R-ND) said in a Tuesday night statement. *Source: Fox News – West Dakota.*

House Republicans revealed plans to repeal Obama’s coal rule that prohibits the pollution of water sources near coal plants. *Source: The Hill.*

Military
Trump ordered a military report to be completed and delivered within 30 days, to outline a new and effective military strategy to combat ISIS. The order was signed hours after speaking with Russian President Vladimir Putin. *Source: Military.com.*

The administration withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership Negotiations and Agreement. *Source: Wall St. Journal.*

Trump signed an executive order streamlining permitting for, and reducing regulatory burdens on, domestic manufacturing. Part of his campaigned-on plan of infrastructure actions. *Documents here.*

State Dept.
Multiple State Department officials have resigned their posts. *Source: The Atlantic.*

SCOTUS
Trump announced new Supreme Court Justice nominee, textualist and originalist Judge Neil Gorsuch *Source: Denver Post.*

Treasury Dept.
The Senate Finance Committee advanced nominees Steven Mnuchin to head Treasury Department, and Rep. Tom Price to head Health and Human Services. Senate Republicans made the uncommon decision to advance the nominees without democrats present for fear that the democrats would continue blocking the vote past the two days running. *Source: Business Insider.*

Education
Jerry Falwell Jr., president of Liberty University, was asked by Trump to head a task force on higher education, one that would reduce regulations and micromanagement of institutions. *Source: The Hill.*

Last week’s Nation Watch.

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