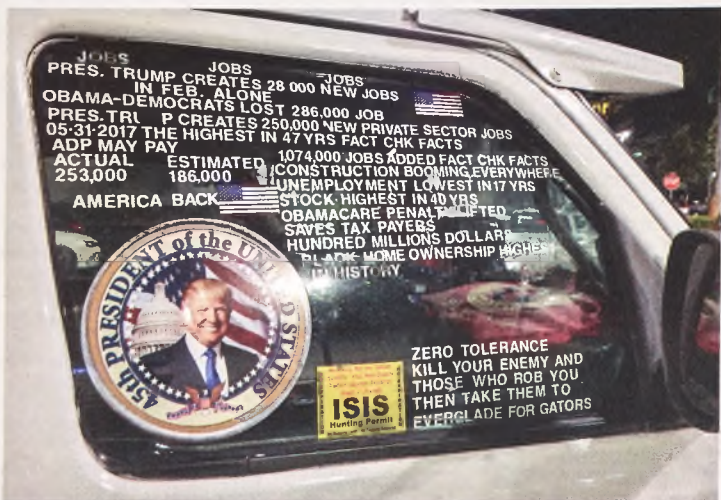


CHEAT SHEET

EACH WEEK THE PENDULUM BREAKS DOWN COMPLEX EVENTS BY INTERVIEWING RELEVANT EXPERTS

Pipe bomb packages threaten political climate



Cesar Sayoc Jr.'s van is pictured in Oakland Park, Florida on Thursday, Oct. 18.

After the danger, professor breaks down the bomb threats

Victoria Traxler

Elon News Network | @victoriatrax

The United States faced a matter of domestic terrorism last week when 14 pipe bombs were sent to Democrats around the country and



Damion Blake

defined by the F.B.I. as "Perpetrated by individuals and/or groups inspired by or associated with primarily U.S.-based movements that espouse extremist ideologies of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature."

These attacks and threats come at a time of highly polarized political agendas. Damion Blake, an assistant professor in political science and policy studies who specializes in National Security, gave Elon News Network his analysis of the situation.

Q: What do you think these pipe bombs mean for the state of the American government right now?

A: The pipe bombs indicate or suggest that there are groups or individuals within the American state that are unhappy with one political side or the other. It seems to me that the political narrative, because we are at a very polarized political moment in America's history right now, and the pipe bomber has tapped into this very partisan, polarized environment that we are at and somehow has found motivation for the kind of vision that he has for

America. It is an outcome of the political polarization that we have right now.

Q: Would you define this as domestic terrorism?

A: It absolutely is domestic terrorism. If you go off of the definitions of terrorism, terrorism is the act of violence or the use of the threat of violence, so it doesn't have to be actual violence, but the threat of violence. And there is an ideology here as well, a partisan politicized ideology that you're seeing happening.

There is the somehow mobilization of political objectives. What you do have here are the targeting of one side of the political spectrum, and so there is a political objective — all the ingredients in terms of the definitions of homegrown or domestic terrorism.

Q: What would be another example of domestic terrorism in recent U.S. history?

A: Recently, if we go to the 1990s, we can think about Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City bombings who had a political objective, who was again inspired or radicalized by some anti-governmental ideologies. There were some religious things mixed in with that. That's one that we could talk about a wide scale, perpetrated by a lone-wolf type terrorist in the Oklahoma City bombing.

Q: What do you think the correct government response should be?

A: It's very difficult to tackle a counter-terrorist, especially the lone-wolf, homegrown type. But I think the first order of business is to de-escalate the polarized political narratives because people are tapping into that and co-opting it for their own extremist ends.

BOMB TARGETS

George Soros
Democratic donor; One package delivered on Monday, Oct. 22; New York

Bill and Hillary Clinton
Former president and former secretary of state; One package delivered on Monday, Oct. 22; New York

Barack Obama
Former president; One package delivered on Wednesday, Oct. 24; Washington, D.C.

CNN and John Brennan
News organization and former CIA director; One package delivered on Wednesday, Oct. 24; New York

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Democratic representative from Florida; One package delivered on Wednesday, Oct. 24; Florida

Maxine Waters
Democratic representative from California; Two packages delivered on Wednesday, Oct. 24; California and Washington, D.C.

Robert De Niro
Actor; One package delivered on Thursday, Oct. 25; New York

Joe Biden
Vice President; One package delivered on Thursday, Oct. 25; New York

Cory Booker
Democratic senator from New Jersey; One package delivered on Friday, Oct. 26; Florida

James Clapper Jr.
Former director of National Intelligence; One package delivered on Friday, Oct. 26; New York

Kamala Harris
Democratic senator; One package delivered on Friday, Oct. 26; California

Tom Steyer
Democratic donor; One package delivered on Friday, Oct. 26; California

Reacting to the death of journalist Jamal Khashoggi



Protestors demonstrate at the entrance of Saudi Arabia consulate over the disappearance of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul on Tuesday, Oct. 9.

Former war correspondent tries to make sense of murder

Joe Heck & James Mitchell

Elon News Network | @elonnewsnetwork

On Oct. 2, Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi disappeared from the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul, Turkey.



Ahmed Abdullah Al Fadaam

Eighteen days later, the Saudi government announced his gruesome death. The specific details of what happened the day the journalist went missing remain unclear due to different accounts from the Saudi government and from Turkish officials.

Assistant professor of communications Ahmed Abdullah Al Fadaam offers his perspective as a fellow journalist.

Q: What was your reaction, as a journalist, to Khashoggi's death?

A: Actually, I was shocked about the way he was assassinated — inside his country's consulate, this never happened before — but, I don't find it strange because we all know about the human rights violations in Saudi Arabia. Their constitution is based on Shariah law, and if you check the kind of punishments they have, it includes beheading, it includes hand chopping. Some of these punishments are considered by other countries as barbaric, so this also tells us that they tend to get rid of their opponents in an ugly way.

Q: What steps should news organizations and individual journalists take to ensure their safety?

A: Unfortunately, in regions like the Middle East, there are no guarantees. I covered the war in Iraq for almost 10 years, and during these 10 years, I received multiple death threats from armed groups in Iraq. I was treated poorly by the Iraqi police and the Iraqi army. People used to say that it is dangerous to say anything about Saddam, but after 2003, it became dangerous to say anything about anyone. They claim that they have democracy in the Middle East, but apparently, it's a fake expression — there is no democracy in that part of the world.

Q: What would you tell aspiring journalists, who are now afraid of reporting in dangerous areas?

A: If you go to the Middle East to cover any of the events there, you have to be very careful about what you say and what you do. When covering the war in Iraq, I was very careful about everything because they won't hesitate to use any mean to get rid of you if you're a threat to them. Does this mean that journalists should stop doing their jobs? I don't think so, no. This is who we are, this is what we do; our job is to inform the world on what is happening.

Q: How do you feel that the United States and news publications should move on from this death?

A: This is something I have been wondering about. What is so special about Khashoggi's death? ... If you look at what Saudi Arabia is doing in Yemen,

for example, they've been bombing this country daily since 2014. ... But nobody is talking about it, why's that? If you look at what's happening inside Saudi Arabia, all the human rights violations they're doing against their own citizens, nobody is talking about that either, why is that?

In the case of Khashoggi — and this is my opinion — because it became the focus of every other media organization in the world, the American government couldn't ignore this anymore, even though it was committed by Saudis. If you check the statements from President Trump, he first said that maybe it was a rogue killer and that maybe we'll dig into it, now after the Saudis admitted that Khashoggi was killed inside the consulate, this is when President Trump changed his tone and said that if the Saudis were behind it there would be some severe punishments.

What does this tell you? Before looking at the political relationships between Saudi Arabia and the United States, take a look at the economic relationships between the two countries. Follow the money.

Saudi Arabia is an oil producing country — if we remember what happened in 1973 when the Nixon administration decided to help Israel in their war against the Arabs, and oil exports to the United States were cut, this caused the U.S. economy to collapse in 15 days.

It's not something the United States wants to do when it comes to oil. If you check what Mohammed Bin Salman has threatened to do, if there are any punishments from the U.S., is to stop the oil flow. It's all connected. Yes, what happened to Khashoggi is a heinous crime, but are we giving the Saudis what they deserve?