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US Tests 'Next Generation' Fragmentation Bomb as 'Viable Substitute' for Cluster Munitions

The US Air Force (USAF) recently tested a new cluster bomb that it says will no longer leave unexploded munitions on the battlefield, which can maim and kill innocent civilians decades later.

During tests at Nevada's Nellis Air Force Base in July, the Air Force dropped 10 BLU-136 Next Generation Area Attack Weapons at targets to test the weapon's effectiveness.

The weapon, which sits in the 2,000-pound bomb class, is intended to replace the Pentagon's existing cluster bomb arsenal, [following a 2017 doctrinal change in which the US gave up its pledge](#) to get rid of bombs or shells that deploy smaller exploding bomblets.

"The operational tests were designed to gather data to determine the operational performance of the BLU-136, specifically in the areas of blast and fragmentation damage," Lt. Col. Daniel Lambert, 28th Test and Evaluation Squadron Global Strike division chief, [said in a USAF news release](#). "This data will help decision makers determine if the BLU-136 is a viable substitute for the Air Force's fleet of cluster bombs."

According to the Air Force, the new bomb's fragmentation is non-explosive, meaning any pieces left behind cannot explode at a later time. [According to The Drive, the bomb's explosive filler](#) fractures brittle cast ductile iron into little fragments of shrapnel, which it flings across the target area at incredible speed.

Citing [a spokesperson from Eglin Air Force Base. Military.com reported](#) the July tests involved three concentric rings 75 feet, 150 feet and 225 feet away from the target, and the tests found fragments that passed the furthest ring.

[A New York Times report in 2017 found](#) that cluster bomblets can have a "dud" rate as high as 20%, meaning that 1 in 5 of the small explosive devices is left behind on the target site afterward. Those bomblets can last for decades, enabling them to be found by civilians - especially children, as they resemble small toys - who are maimed or killed when they explode. While cluster munitions have been used in many conflicts, the United States' [secret bombing campaign against Laos](#) in the 1960s and 1970s dropped 2 million tons of bombs onto the mountainous Southeast Asian nation, including some 80 million cluster bomblets that never detonated. More than 20,000 Laotians have been killed by the unexploded bombs since the war's end in 1975, and large parts of what had been farmland remains unusable even today. Because of controversies over their use, more than 108 nations have signed the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions, forswearing their use. However, the United States refused to sign the treaty, but then-President George W. Bush made a separate pledge to end use of the weapons by 2019.

The Pentagon's position at that time was that cluster munitions were actually humane weapons, and diplomatic cables [published by WikiLeaks revealed the US put extensive pressure](#) on allied

nations to either reject the treaty or to reject the notion of a ban. The US also [conspired with the British government to circumvent the ban](#) and to continue storing its cluster bombs in the UK. "Because future adversaries will likely use civilian shields for military targets – for example by locating a military target on the roof of an occupied building – use of unitary weapons could result in more civilian casualties and damage than cluster munitions," [the Pentagon's 2008 policy statement claimed](#). "Blanket elimination of cluster munitions is therefore unacceptable due not only to negative military consequences but also due to potential negative consequences for civilians."

This position was reaffirmed in 2017 when then-Defense Secretary Patrick Shanhan backtracked on the 2008 pledge.

"Although the Department seeks to field a new generation of more highly reliable munitions, we cannot risk mission failure or accept the potential of increased military and civilian casualties by forfeiting the best available capabilities," Shanahan said in the policy change, [according to the Associated Press](#). "Cluster munitions are legitimate weapons with clear military utility."

On the 10th anniversary of the treaty's entrance into force on July 31, 2020, [Human Rights Watch blasted the US for its efforts](#) to destroy the treaty and its continued opposition to ending cluster bomb use, but noted the US has allegedly not used cluster bombs since the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which the NGO credits to the staunch opposition to cluster bombs by Washington's closest allies.

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US Army Pursuing Another Medium-Range Strike Missile Outside Discarded INF Treaty's Parameters

A US Army spokesperson revealed earlier this week the service is looking to develop another new medium-range surface-to-surface missile that would have violated the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty the US left last year.

[According to Defense News, the Army is pursuing](#) yet another medium-range missile for land and sea strikes after a program to upgrade the service's aging Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) hit an unexpected technical snag. The publication noted the Army's Public Affairs Office was non-specific as to the problem.

Robyn Mack, a spokesperson for the Army Futures Command's Research and Analysis Center at White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico, told Defense News the service had conducted a study earlier this year designed to "examine future strategic fires capabilities and provide emerging insights to inform procurement options and future materiel capability requirements." That study found a near-term need for a medium-range missile, but Mack said little other information was available for the public on the prototyping effort.

The ATACMS is [due to ultimately be replaced by the Precision Strike Missile](#) (PrSM), but that isn't expected to enter service until at least 2024, [especially now that missile maker Raytheon has left](#) the development program.

When the US left the INF Treaty in August 2019, it immediately set about developing and testing new missiles [with ranges that would have been hindered by the treaty](#). The 1987 agreement between the US and Russia - then part of the Soviet Union - banned land-based missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers in a bid to reduce tensions created by quick-strike missiles capable of delivering a nuclear attack in between six and eight minutes. However, China was never party to the agreement and continued developing a slew of weapons with such ranges, [enabling it to severely outclass the US in this field](#). Washington also claimed Russia had been secretly violating the INF Treaty by building missile systems with ranges banned by the agreement, but Moscow denied the accusations and countered that it was actually the US breaking the treaty by building Aegis Ashore missile systems. [According to Lockheed, the PrSM's maximum range](#) is 499 kilometers, but Defense News noted the gap the Army is looking to fill involves missiles with ranges near 1,000 kilometers.

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#### US Dow Plunges 807 Points, Tech Stocks Lead Big Sell-Off

In their biggest plunge since June, US stocks sank on Thursday amid huge selloffs driven by tech giant losses.

At closing bell on Thursday, US stocks had suffered some of their biggest single-day losses in months. The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed at 28,292.73, an 807.77-point loss, and the S&P 500 suffered a 125.78-point loss to close at 3,455.06. Meanwhile, the Nasdaq Composite lost 598.34 points, closing at 11,458.10.

Big losses by tech giants helped drive the stock sell-offs, as Facebook lost more than 4% of its share value, Apple and Microsoft lost nearly 7% each and Amazon and Netflix more than 5% each.

“Someone hit the ‘sell tech, buy dreck’ button and this is creating a bid beneath beleaguered groups, while [tech] gets pummeled,” [Adam Crisafulli of Vital Knowledge told CNBC](#). “For tech specifically, the stocks are seeing large percent declines, but this comes after a massive recent rally. Tech has been untethered from fundamentals for a while and momentum can work in both directions.”

While tech companies have been one of the biggest beneficiaries of the COVID-19 crisis, which caused tens of millions of people to switch to remote working, learning and shopping options, some analysts warned their big boom might be wearing itself out.

“Over the past few months we’ve had really quite a strong recovery, and that has started to stall,” Andrew Hunter, senior US economist at Capital Economics, [told the Wall Street Journal](#). However, not all economic news was dismal: [the US Department of Labor announced on Thursday](#) that about 70,000 fewer unemployment applications than expected had been filed in August - 880,000 instead of 950,000 - but a more widely anticipated jobs report on August is due to be released Friday, which could have an even greater effect on the markets.

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US Military Members Likely Won't Be Among First Group to Receive COVID-19 Vaccine  
US Air Force

US military service members will likely not be first in line to receive a COVID-19 vaccine once it is ready unless they are health care workers or at high risk of contracting the virus, according to a four-phased approach for distributing a vaccine drafted by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

Pentagon officials have previously said that service members are less likely to be adversely affected by COVID-19, [Stars & Stripes reported](#). As of Wednesday, the military has reported 38,424 cases of COVID-19. Since March, around 600 service members have been hospitalized due to the virus, and seven have died.

"We have a young, healthy, fit, robust demographic in the United States military," US Defense Secretary Mark Esper said in March, Stars & Stripes reported.

According to the [preliminary framework](#), military members will not be prioritized over civilians in any of the four phases of distribution for a vaccine.

The committee recommends that health care workers and first responders, especially those who have direct contact with COVID-19 patients, be the first to receive the vaccine. "Critical risk workers," whose jobs are socially essential and who have a high chance of COVID-19 exposure, as well as teachers, people in homeless shelters and people in prisons, jails, detention centers or similar facilities should be next to receive the vaccine, according to the committee. After that, vaccines would be given to young adults, children and workers in industries essential to the functioning of society. Lastly, anyone not covered in the previous steps would be vaccinated.

"The discussion draft includes a summary of lessons learned from past allocation frameworks for mass vaccination campaigns, including for H1N1 influenza in 2009 and during the Ebola epidemic in West Africa in 2013-2016, as well as from recent guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic for the allocation of scarce resources, such as medical resources and supplies," the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine said in a [September 1 news release](#).

Under the Trump administration's Operation Warp Speed, seven vaccine developers have received more than [\\$11 billion in total funding from the US](#).

The three most promising vaccines to receive US government funding are being developed by Moderna; Pfizer and BioNTech; and AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford, respectively. All three have started large-scale clinical trials that will involve a total of around 90,000 people.

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### Video: Woman Walks on Wing of Parked Plane in Kiev After Complaining of Being Hot

A woman in Ukraine was banned from flying with Ukraine International Airlines (UIA) this week after opening an emergency exit on a Boeing 737-86N plane and climbing onto its wing to cool down after complaining of being too hot.

A video shared online shows the mother of two casually walking on the wing of the plane after it had landed at Boryspil International Airport near the Ukrainian capital city of Kiev. She then climbs back into the cabin.

"The aircraft landed and almost all the passengers got off. She walked almost all the way from the tail to the emergency exit row, opened the door and went out," another passenger on the plane [told The Sun](#).

"By that time her two children were outside the plane and standing right next to me. They were surprised, saying: 'This is our mum,'" the passenger added.

According to the outlet, officials with aviation security, the border service, police and medical center of the airport were immediately alerted to the incident by the chief pilot on the flight.

Boryspil International Airport also confirmed the incident, while UIA announced that it had blacklisted the passenger from flying with the airline.

"A passenger of flight PS6212 Antalya-Kyiv illegally opened the emergency exit of the plane after it stopped near gate 11 of terminal D and went on to its wing," UIA said, The Sun reported.

"The passenger was blacklisted for gross violation of aviation safety rules and behavior on board," the airline added.

The airline has also demanded that the woman pay a hefty fine.

Tests showed that the woman was not intoxicated at the time of the incident.

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### Rochester Mayor Suspends All Seven Officers Involved in Man's March In-Custody Death Pixabay/CC0

Rochester, New York, Mayor Lovely Warren on Thursday ordered the immediate suspension of the police officers involved in the death of 41-year-old Black man Daniel Prude in March.

"I am suspending the officers in question today against the advice of [the city] council, and I urge the [New York] Attorney General to complete her investigation. I understand that the union may sue the city for this; they shall feel free to do so," Warren said during a briefing, [Rochester First reported](#).

"Mr. Daniel Prude was failed by our police department, our mental health care system, our society, and he was failed by me. Daniel Prude's death has proven yet again that many of the challenges that we faced in the past are the same challenges that we face today," Warren added.

In this image taken from police body camera video provided by Roth and Roth LLP, Rochester police officers hold down Daniel Prude on March 23, 2020, in Rochester, N.Y.

“In addition I have addressed with the police chief [La’Ron Singletary] how deeply, personally and professionally disappointing - he needs to do better to truly protect and serve our community, and I believe he will. I have since order[ed] the chief to provide me with video from any in-custody death, or use of force incident, within 24 hours, and charge him to provide a plan within 30 days to further address the police department’s response to mental health calls,” Warren continued.

Prude died in March in the upstate New York city after police restrained him on the ground and covered his head with a hood.

Body camera footage of the incident was released Wednesday. Warren also stated during the Thursday briefing that she wasn’t aware of what happened until August 4.

Three of the officers named in the police report about the incident are Mark Vaughn, Troy Taladay and Fransisco Santiago. All seven officers involved have been suspended without pay. An autopsy report from the Monroe County Medical Examiner’s Office ruled Prude’s death a homicide, stating that his cause of death included “complications of asphyxia in the setting of physical restraint,” Rochester First reported.

According to his family’s lawyers, Prude was going through an “acute, manic, psychotic episode” at the time of the incident. Joe Prude called the Rochester Police Department for assistance at 3 a.m. on March 23 after his brother ran out the back door while Joe wasn’t in the room. Police found Prude running naked through the streets of Rochester at around 3:15 a.m., and he complied with officers when they told him to lie on the ground and place his hands behind his back.

Officers handcuffed him, and when Prude appeared to spit at the cops, they placed a hood over his head. An officer held his head down while another knelt on his back. After being pinned down for several minutes, Prude lost consciousness. Paramedics eventually arrived at the scene, and Prude was soon thereafter pronounced brain dead at a local hospital. He died on March 30.

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#### Antisocial Traits Linked to Forgoing Masks, Social Distancing During Pandemic - Study

A recent study by researchers in Brazil found that people with antisocial traits like low levels of empathy and higher levels of callousness, deceitfulness and risk-taking are less likely to comply with COVID-19 prevention measures, such as mask-wearing and social distancing.

The study, conducted by researchers at the State University of Londrina, polled 1,578 Brazilian adults between the ages of 18 and 73.

The [study](#) participants answered questionnaires about their compliance with COVID-19 containment measures as well as personality traits such as empathy and willingness to take risks.

“Our findings indicated that antisocial traits, especially lower levels of empathy and higher levels of callousness, deceitfulness, and risk-taking, are directly associated with lower compliance with containment measures. These traits explain, at least partially, the reason why people continue

not adhering to the containment measures even with increasing numbers of cases and deaths,” the researchers concluded.

A Polish [study](#) also found that people who show three socially aversive personality traits - which it named as narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy - were also less likely to comply with COVID-19 restrictions. People with such traits also believed they were more likely to contract the virus.

The proper wearing of face masks has been shown to be highly effective at preventing a COVID-19 infection.

A [study](#) by researchers at the UK's University of Edinburgh, published August 14 on preprint website MedRxiv, found that face coverings can block 99.9% of respiratory droplets released by coughing or speaking, which in turn can significantly reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

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'Bit of a Mystery': US Labor Dept Inexplicably Alters Unemployment Calculation Ahead of Election

The US Department of Labor has changed how it calculates seasonal adjustments for unemployment, a move that may be a political effort to manipulate unemployment numbers during an election year, Steve Grumbine, founder and CEO of Real Progressives and Real Progress in Action and host of the podcast Macro n Cheese, told Sputnik.

The Labor Department on Thursday [announced in a news release](#) that the seasonally adjusted number of initial claims for jobless benefits fell by 130,000 from the previous week to 881,000. In addition, the latest data shows that the number of people collecting unemployment benefits through regular state programs also decreased by 1.24 million for the week that ended August 22. The figures may reflect the methodology change in how the Labor Department calculates seasonal adjustments.

“What they're really trying to do, they're trying to say, ‘Hey, look. This is a once-a-century kind of scenario. We don't know how to handle gauging what's happening around us. We don't know how many of these are directly related to COVID-19 shutting down the economy and how many of them are typical seasonally adjusted rates that we have for summertime employment and Christmas employment and stuff like that. So, I'll be perfectly honest with you, it's a bit of a mystery,” Grumbine told [hosts Michelle Witte and Bob Schlehuger on Thursday](#).

“But I'll say this: given that it's an election year and given that all of a sudden they're trying to show that jobs are not as bad as it seems, although we know clearly that they are very, very bad ... I think there's a little bit of politics going on here, to say the very, very least,” Grumbine noted.

“While I can't give you the formula that they've tried to use to do this, there's no question whatsoever that two things are at play: 1) We're in unprecedented territory, they don't know how to handle it, and 2) We're in a political year, and it wouldn't shock me at all if in fact this was something that was brought in by the Trump administration to kind of make things look a little better than they are,” Grumbine added.

The latest data by the Department of Labor also shows that applications for another unemployment program created in March to cover gig workers, the self-employed and those with special circumstances, like not being able to go to work due to lack of child care, increased for the second week in a row.

"We've gotten away from full-time employment. You look around - there's so many contractors that are at-will employees. Forget just the contractors that are at-will employees. We also have ... the gig economy people out there trying to make a buck by hook or by crook, and what's happened is there's no money out there for people to do extraneous things, to do extra stuff that they otherwise have invested in," Grumbine noted.

"So, the gig economy is very highly dependent on people having some liquidity to be able to pay for these gig-type jobs. And with Uber, for example, many people aren't going out, they're not traveling out with the pandemic, so Uber drivers are missing money," he added.

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'Praying That Things Change': Biden Meets Jacob Blake, Family in Kenosha After Trump Passed on Visit

Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden was in Wisconsin Thursday to meet with members of the Kenosha community following the police shooting of 29-year-old Black man Jacob Blake on August 23.

Biden and his wife Jill arrived at the Mitchell International Airport on Thursday and privately met with members of Blake's family for about an hour, the Washington Post reported. Blake also joined the meeting virtually by phone from his hospital bed, his attorney, Ben Crump, confirmed, as he has now been removed from intensive care.

"The family was grateful for the meeting and was very impressed that the Bidens were so engaged and willing to really listen," Attorney Ben Crump said in a statement obtained by the [Washington Post](#).

"Jacob's mother led them all in prayer for Jacob's recovery. They talked about changing the disparate treatment of minorities in police interactions, the impact of selecting Kamala Harris as a Black woman as his running mate, and [former] Vice President Biden's plans for change. Mr. Blake Sr. talked about the need for systemic reform because the excessive use of force by police against minorities has been going on for far too long. Jacob Jr. shared about the pain he is enduring, and the vice president commiserated," Crump added.

"The vice president told the family that he believes the best of America is in all of us and that we need to value all our differences as we come together in America's great melting pot. It was very obvious that Vice President Biden cared, as he extended to Jacob Jr. a sense of humanity, treating him as a person worthy of consideration and prayer," Crump continued.

"He talked about how nothing was going to defeat him how whether he walked again or not he was not going to give up," Biden said of his conversation with Blake, [according to WISN 12](#). Biden later met with other members of the Kenosha community at Grace Lutheran Church.

"No president's ever going to say 'they're very fine people on both sides,'" Biden said at the church, referring to Trump's comments about violent clashes between far-right protesters and anti-fascist counterprotesters in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017 that left a female counterprotester dead. "No president has ever said anything like that ... It legitimizes the dark side of human nature."

Biden's visit comes two days after Trump made his own trip to Kenosha alongside Attorney General William Barr to meet with law enforcement officers following his dispatchment of more than a thousand national guardsmen and federal officers to crush protests in the city. Kenosha has been the scene of protests ever since Blake was shot by police in late August.

"These are not acts of peaceful protest but, really, domestic terror," Trump said on Tuesday, [AP reported](#).

[Trump's visit came against the explicit request of Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers](#), who asked the president to "reconsider" his trip. Trump did not meet or speak with the Blake family, as they insisted a lawyer be on the phone with them during the call, a condition Trump refused.

Blake was shot four times in the back by Officer Rusten Sheskey, who fired a total of seven bullets toward Blake during a roadside confrontation. Blake is now paralyzed below the waist.

"My wife asked to say a prayer and his mom said a prayer," Biden said. "Where she said I'm praying for Jacob. But I'm praying for the policeman as well. I'm praying that things change."

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Graphic Video: US Cop Arrested, Fired for Slamming Handcuffed Woman to Ground by Her Hair

Former Master Deputy Kyle Oliver, a 29-year-old supervisor with the Richland County Sheriff's Department (RCSD) in South Carolina, was terminated from his job after his superiors were shown body camera video of him slamming a woman in police custody against the ground. RCSD Sheriff Leon Lott revealed during a [Wednesday news conference](#) that Oliver, a member of the force since 2013, observed a "highly agitated" woman who was detained, handcuffed and banging her head against a wall on January 7.

He said that after the woman put a hole in the wall, Oliver "walked up to her and grabbed her by the head of her hair and slung her on the ground."

Be advised, the footage below contains scenes that some may find offensive.

"It's disturbing," Lott remarked of the video. "It disturbed me greatly. It didn't take me long after seeing it to realize we have a problem."

Lott revealed to the public that he received a phone call alerting him to the recorded incident on Monday. It remains unclear who reported Oliver, as the sheriff noted the woman who was abused did not do so, nor did the officers who witnessed the assault. Additionally, Oliver's police filing on the matter did not match the body camera footage.

"Our checks and balances did not work," Lott said, referring to the RCSD policy of reviewing body camera footage tied to a use of force report.

"The reason why we have these cameras is to monitor the deputies and their activities and this is one time that it didn't happen," he said, adding that he hopes this is the only incident that slipped through the department's self-regulation system.

Lott went on to emphasize that the type of force displayed by Oliver in the video was "not part of our training, not what we teach, not what we approve."

"When we fail as an agency ... we take quick, swift action, and we do it publicly," he said. "We're not going to hide from it or try to sugarcoat it -- we're going to put it out there for what it is."

Lott declared that the RCSD will be implementing "new policies" geared toward ensuring its checks and balances are carried out without fail.

Oliver had his equipment confiscated during his Tuesday arrest. The 29-year-old was transported to Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center and booked on charges of [third-degree assault and battery](#), but he has since been released after posting a [\\$2,125 personal recognizance bond](#).

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Researchers Use Supercomputer to Crunch Genetic Data on How COVID-19 Attacks Human Body

The Summit supercomputer - one of the world's most powerful computers - has allowed scientists to analyze more than 40,000 genes from 17,000 samples related to the COVID-19 novel coronavirus and develop a new hypothesis on how the contagious disease causes various symptoms in the human body.

"This is one of those rare times where you can really tie everything back to a eureka moment," study lead Dan Jacobson, of the US Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) in Tennessee, [said in a news release](#).

"I was looking at data, and I suddenly saw some very distinct patterns happening in the pathways of the renin-angiotensin and bradykinin systems. That led us to do a deep dive of the gene families of the blood pressure regulatory system."

The release described a phenomenon called a cytokine storm: a severe reaction that occurs when the human body produces more cytokines, "a variety of small proteins that help regulate the immune system," than necessary.

Cytokine storms have been blamed for the mysteriously [higher death rate seen in some illnesses, such as influenza](#), among younger people with stronger immune systems, which effectively overreact to the illness.

Early COVID-19 research was carried out to determine whether these cytokine storms were causing a variety of symptoms prevalent in those with COVID-19, including the loss of smell, skin lesions known as "COVID toes" and heart damage.

However, Jacobson believes this is related to the bradykinin pathway, which, along with the renin-angiotensin system, "regulates blood pressure and fluid balance in the body" and could actually help explain the different ways in which the novel coronavirus attacks the human body.

A normal blood vessel, shown at top, is compared with a blood vessel affected by excess bradykinin. A hyperactive bradykinin system permits fluid, shown in yellow, to leak out and allows immune cells, shown in purple, to squeeze their way out of blood vessels.

“We believe that when you take the inhibition at the top of this pathway off, you end up with an out-of-control cascade that leads to an opening up of the blood vessels, causing them to leak,” Jacobson said. “If that happens in the lung, that’s not good. Immune cells that are normally contained in the blood vessels flood into the surrounding infected tissue, causing inflammation.” “Jacobson and his colleagues required the power of Summit to run 2.5 billion correlation calculations that helped them understand the normal regulatory circuits and relationships for the genes of interest,” according to the news release.

The results, published in peer-reviewed, open-access [scientific journal eLife](#), revealed that genes associated with the bradykinin system “appear to be excessively ‘turned on’ in the lung fluid cells of those with the virus,” according to the news release.

If Jacobson and his colleagues’ hypothesis proves correct, then at least 10 existing drugs could be used to treat the pathways disrupted by the contagious disease, “but large-scale clinical trials are needed to determine whether they might be effective at treating COVID-19,” highlighted the release.

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Cities Called ‘Anarchist’ by Trump Have ‘Sent Police Into Every Protest’, Not Defunded Them -  
Journo

A memorandum issued on Wednesday by the White House directed a review of federal funding allocated to certain cities that “allow themselves to deteriorate into lawless zones” and “permit anarchy, violence, and destruction.” In addition to the legal questions raised by the order, one expert claims it’s also filled with disinformation.

Cities explicitly deemed “anarchist jurisdictions” [by the White House](#) included: New York City, New York; Seattle, Washington; Portland, Oregon; and the US capital of Washington, DC. Eugene Puryear, host at BreakThrough News and author of "Shackled and Chained: Mass Incarceration in Capitalist America," joined [Radio Sputnik’s Political Misfits](#) on Thursday and told hosts Bob Schlehuder that although he lives in one of the so-called anarchist cities, he has yet to witness the chaos and lawlessness alleged by US President Donald Trump.

Trump’s memo detailed that more cities could be added to the list for a litany of actions: “unreasonably” refusing federal law enforcement “assistance”; defunding or disempowering a police department; blocking police access to areas or structures they are “lawfully entitled to access”; and more.

If none of the enumerated criteria apply, a city can still be labeled an “anarchist jurisdiction” due to “any other related factors the Attorney General deems appropriate.”

Puryear asserted the memo implies that the four listed cities have become “lawless” or defunded their police departments, which is not the case.

"All the cities he listed did not, in fact, defund the police. And in fact, most of them have been widely panned by the activists demanding 'Defund the Police' ... they've sent police into every protest," he asserted.

"In every single one of the cities he listed, the police there locally have massively brutalized protesters, used chemical weapons, arrested people for no reason at all."

If anything, Trump's bombastic assertions have done more to tie nonviolent, Constitutionally-permitted protesting to illegal acts and, as of now, anarchy, concluded Puryear. While the situation at hand regarding nationwide protests is complicated, the US two-party system now appears to have reached something of a "consensus," Puryear said - at least among many Republicans and moderate and mainstream Democrats who appear more vocal about property damage than the loss of life.

Democratic New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio [slammed Trump's memo](#) during a Thursday news conference, claiming the US president's efforts will not make it past a judge.

"I want to speak directly to the president," he said.

"If you persist in trying to deny the funding that's keeping New York City going in the middle of this crisis, we will see you in court and once again we will beat you in court."

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Teamwork Makes the Dream Work: Smart Ape Helps Human Friend - Video Club

We all need a little bit of help from our friends sometimes. Luckily, our animal pals are there to lend a helping hand on occasion.

Footage shared on Twitter captures a chimpanzee and his human friend out on a stroll, walking hand-in-hand as the primate leads the way forward. When it is time for them to climb up to the second floor of their tree house, the considerate simian is more than happy to help up his human companion. To top it all off, the smart ape proceeds to fist-bump his pal.

What a great friendship!

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Vote Early, Vote Often - Cartoon

After months of complaining about alleged future election fraud by the Democrats against him, US President Donald Trump this week told North Carolinian voters to go ahead and try and vote twice. That's illegal - each person can only vote once.

Maybe it's best not to take political advice from infamous Chicago gangster Al Capone!

On Wednesday, during a campaign trail speech in Wilmington, North Carolina, Trump told his supporters to try and vote twice in the November presidential election, suggesting they go to the polls even after voting by mail to "make sure it counted."

"Well, they'll go out, and they'll go vote, and they're going to have to go and check their vote by going to the poll and voting that way, because if it tabulates, then they won't be able to do that," Trump told [local news station WECT](#) in Wilmington, while standing in front of Air Force One.

[Twitter later flagged a pair of tweets](#) carrying the same message with a public interest notice for violating its Civic Public Integrity policy.

Despite the possible illegal outcome of someone managing to cast two votes, The Donald obviously wouldn't mind - as long as the double vote were for him.