

From: POLITICO Pro Energy
To: megan_bloomgren@ios.doi.gov
Subject: Afternoon Energy, presented by the National Wildlife Federation: Dakota Access stays on track — Barton to lead DOE review — OPEC follows through on supply cuts
Date: Monday, February 13, 2017 3:43:48 PM

By Alex Guillén | 02/13/2017 04:33 PM EDT

With help from Eric Wolff

CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES: A federal judge today decided not to halt construction of the Dakota Access pipeline. Judge James Boasberg did not grant the temporary restraining order the Cheyenne River Sioux were seeking "since there is no immediate harm if the oil is not yet set to flow," he said today. The tribe is seeking to block the project on religious grounds, arguing that the completion of Dakota Access will bring to fruition a tribal prophecy of a "black snake" that will harm its people. A lawyer for the pipeline builders, led by Energy Transfer Partners, said it has cut its time line to start the project from 60 days to 30. More [here](#).

In other DAPL news, Cheyenne River Sioux Chairman Harold Frazier said he met with the acting assistant secretary for Indian Affairs today to complain about the use of law enforcement at the site of protests over the Dakota Access Pipeline. "We asked for them before to protect the water protectors," he told POLITICO, referring to last fall, when President Barack Obama was still in office. "They showed up two weeks ago. It looked to me like they're trying to enforce North Dakota state law on tribal members."

BARTON TRAINS SIGHTS ON DOE: Rep. [Joe Barton](#), chairman emeritus of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, will lead an analysis of the Energy Department, including a possible new interim waste storage site, [according](#) to Chairman [Greg Walden](#). "Not since the 1980s has the Department of Energy undergone the extensive review and reauthorization we have planned," the Oregon Republican said at the meeting of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners. "Clearly, the nation's energy and national security landscape is substantially different today than it was 30 years ago, so we need a 21st century Department of Energy. That's what Joe Barton's tasked with designing."

Well this will be controversial: Walden also said he is also pursuing "targeted reforms" for the Clean Air Act, including ethanol mandates.

TRUMPDEAU — LEADERS PROMISE COLLABORATION ON ENERGY

INFRASTRUCTURE: President Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau today pledged in a joint statement to improve energy, trade and environmental initiatives between the two countries, including moving forward on the Keystone XL pipeline. "We share the goals of energy security, a robust and secure energy grid, and a strong and resilient energy infrastructure that contributes to energy efficiency in both countries," the two leaders said in the statement, which made no mention of climate change. More [here](#).

TRUMP'S COAL TRIP TO OHIO IS OFF: President Donald Trump was slated to visit Vienna, Ohio, on Thursday, purportedly to sign the Congressional Review Act resolution killing the Interior Department's stream rule, but that trip has been called off, [reports](#) the Cleveland Plain Dealer. No explanation was given.

Welcome to Afternoon Energy! I'm your substitute host Alex Guillén, covering for Kelsey Tamborrino who will be back Tuesday. Send her your thoughts, news and tips at ktamborrino@politico.com, and also to mdaily@politico.com and njuliano@politico.com, and keep up with us on Twitter at [@kelseytam](https://twitter.com/kelseytam), [@dailym1](https://twitter.com/dailym1), [@nickjuliano](https://twitter.com/nickjuliano), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy) and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

Today's must-read news: A federal court [ruled](#) that the Snuggie is a blanket, not a garment.

**** A message from the National Wildlife Federation:** America's 40 million hunters and anglers depend upon our nation's public lands. Some in Congress want to overturn National Monument protections or even sell-off the places Americans hunt, fish, hike, and camp. Join us as we urge President Trump and Congress to defend America's public lands for future generations: <http://bit.ly/2lhONxJ> **

ICAHN BE YOUR HERO, BABY: Seven Senate Democrats are [demanding](#) more information about the role billionaire investor Carl Icahn is playing in President Donald Trump's administration, and whether Icahn has inappropriate influence over the Renewable Fuel Standard. Icahn was an early Trump supporter, and the president made him an adviser on regulations with the goal of reducing federal rules. But Icahn's exact role isn't clear, and the senators sent a letter to the White House today demanding more information. Eric Wolff has [more](#).

OPEC FOLLOWING THROUGH ON AGREEMENT TO CUT SUPPLY: Global oil production dropped by 1.29 million barrels per day between December and January thanks to cuts by both OPEC members and countries outside the cartel, the oil producers' grouping said today. OPEC's 14 members lowered their output by 890,000 barrels per day to an average 32.14 million in the first month of their six-month production cut agreement, according to OPEC's monthly oil market report. Saudi Arabia, its largest producer, accounted for 44 percent of that reduction. Our colleague from across the pond, Sara Stefanini, [reports](#).

TERRIFIC, RADIANT, HUMBLE: Wilbur Ross, President Donald Trump's nominee for Commerce secretary, will hold onto some of his assets with connections to the agency, including an oil tanker company, despite Commerce's key role in overseeing spills from such vessels, [writes the Wall Street Journal](#). "They include a co-investment with the Chinese government's sovereign-wealth fund in Diamond S Shipping Group Inc., one of the world's largest owners and operators of medium-range oil tankers, according to its website." In response to questions from Sen. [Maria Cantwell](#), "Mr. Ross wrote that he wouldn't recuse himself from his department's work on oil spills. In the event of a major spill, it would be 'my duty as secretary to provide the public and President the benefit of my experience.' ... Mr. Ross added that he would recuse himself 'in the unlikely event' of a spill involving Diamond S Shipping."

KEEP IT TIGHT: The U.S. is projected to increase oil production through 2040, but most of that increase comes from tight oil in places like the Bakken and Permian shale plays, [according to the Energy Information Administration](#). Traditional oil production is expected to decline slightly over that period. "After 2026, tight oil production remains relatively constant through 2040 in the Reference case as tight oil development moves into less productive areas and as well productivity decreases."

AUTOMAKERS AGAIN PRESS TRUMP ON MIDTERM REVIEW: The auto industry is again urging President Donald Trump to revisit the 2022-2025 auto emissions standards.

Automakers in the days after the election urged Trump to ease those late-term standards, but the Obama administration cut that short last month when it issued a finding 14 months earlier than was expected saying the standards were achievable and should remain unchanged. A new industry letter, [viewed by Reuters](#), asks Trump to re-open that midterm review "without prejudging the outcome" and praised Trump's "personal focus on steps to strengthen the economy in the United States and your commitment to jobs in our sector."

1-800-GRIJALVA: Sen. [Raúl Grijalva](#) has launched a new anonymous [tip line](#) on his website for Interior Department officials or other government employees to use to report allegations of wrongdoing. "I strongly urge anyone working under or with this new administration to come forward with any information on unethical activity, as well as risks to the safety or health of the public," he said in a statement.

INSERT VALENTINE'S DAY PITCH HERE: RepublicEn, the Bob Inglis-led group promoting a conservative policy on climate change, is dropping off [Sno Balls](#) (the lunch-bag dessert) to lawmakers today to promote free market responses to climate change — a reference to the famous [Jim Inhofe snowball moment](#). "We would much rather have a sweet start to a conversation about climate policy than starting an argument," the group [says](#) on its site.

Attention Inhofe: In researching Sno Balls, we stumbled upon something Inhofe may want to keep on hand in his office: An [indoor snowball fight kit](#).

MOVERS, SHAKERS — CEQ —> CAP: Christy Goldfuss, who ran the White House Council on Environmental Quality from 2015 through the end of Barack Obama's term, has returned to the liberal Center for American Progress as vice president for energy and environment policy. Goldfuss served as the unconfirmed managing director of CEQ; Obama never nominated her or anyone else for the position of chair, which would have required Senate confirmation. She worked at CAP and then the National Park Service before taking over at CEQ in 2015.

— Naomi Klein [will report on](#) "the shock of the Trump victory and the crisis it has created" for The Intercept.

QUICK HITS

— 188,000 evacuated as California's massive Oroville Dam threatens catastrophic floods, [Washington Post](#)

— Phillips 66 pipeline fire in Paradis extinguished, missing worker presumed dead, [Times-Picayune](#)

— Former Wagoner County sheriff sues Attorney General Scott Pruitt for slander in bribery case, [Tulsa World](#)

— Governors of Red, Blue States Urge Trump to Back Wind, Solar, [Bloomberg](#)

WIDE WORLD OF POLITICS

— ['I'm Still All Trumped Up'](#)

— [The husband-and-wife team driving Trump's national security policy](#)

— [Pelosi: Fire Flynn](#)

**** A message from the National Wildlife Federation:** America's 40 million hunters and anglers depend upon our nation's public lands. Many of these lands have been protected over the past century by both Republican and Democratic Presidents through the Antiquities Act - a bedrock conservation law enacted by President Theodore Roosevelt - so that every American can enjoy our nation's outdoor treasures. These majestic places help define us as Americans. They are indispensable to America's hunting and fishing heritage - and serve as powerful economic engines for local communities. Yet right now, some in Congress want to overturn National Monument protections for iconic places, like Bears Ears in Utah. Others want to allow more pollution or even sell-off special places where Americans hunt, fish, hike, and camp. President Trump has strongly supported keeping America's public lands public and we need Congress to do the same for America's hunters and anglers. Help us defend America's public lands: <http://bit.ly/2lhONxJ> **

To view online:

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/afternoon-energy/2017/02/dakota-access-stays-on-track-021359>

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Judge won't halt Dakota Access construction [Back](#)

By Eric Wolff | 02/13/2017 03:42 PM EDT

A federal judge today rejected a request by the Cheyenne River Sioux to stop construction on the Dakota Access Pipeline.

The tribe had hoped to block construction on religious grounds, arguing that completion of Dakota Access would fulfill a prophecy of a "black snake" that would harm the tribe's people. But they acknowledged in court today that that damage would only come when oil started to flow through the pipeline.

Because the pipeline is still being built, and oil won't flow for weeks, U.S. District Judge James Boasberg decided damage was not imminent, and he did not issue a temporary restraining order to halt construction.

"Since there is no immediate harm if the oil is not yet set to flow," Boasberg said.

The case has become complicated as multiple tribes are now challenging the pipeline by filing an assortment of legal motions to erase the easement granted last week by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Meanwhile the pipeline builders, led by Energy Transfer Partners, are boring under the Missouri River as fast as they can, and the timeline for oil flowing through the pipeline has shrunk from 60 days to 30 days or fewer, according to an attorney for the company.

Despite today's loss, the tribe says it will continue to press its case. Another round of oral arguments is scheduled for Feb. 27.

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Walden: Barton will lead 'comprehensive review' of DOE [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 02/13/2017 09:40 AM EDT

Texas Rep. [Joe Barton](#) will lead a House Energy and Commerce Committee analysis of the Energy Department that could include an effort to develop an interim nuclear waste site, panel chairman [Greg Walden](#) said this morning.

"I've asked committee vice chair Joe Barton to lead a comprehensive review of the Department of Energy and to develop reauthorization legislation in concert with soon-to-be-Secretary Rick Perry," Walden said at the meeting of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners.

"Not since the 1980s has the Department of Energy undergone the extensive review and reauthorization we have planned. Clearly, the nation's energy and national security landscape is substantially different today than it was 30 years ago, so we need a 21st Century Department of Energy. That's what Joe Barton's tasked with designing."

Walden said that although the long-stalled Yucca Mountain project "must remain central to our nuclear waste management system," the committee's work could "include authorizing a centralized interim storage facility."

The Oregon Republican said his other energy priorities included "targeted reforms" to the Clean Air Act, and "a broader long-term review that examines transportation fuels, efficiency standards and the renewable fuels mandate."

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Trump, Trudeau vow cooperation on energy projects, Keystone XL [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 02/13/2017 01:56 PM EDT

President Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau today pledged in a joint statement to improve energy trade and environmental initiatives between the two countries, including moving forward on the Keystone XL pipeline.

"We share the goals of energy security, a robust and secure energy grid, and a strong and resilient energy infrastructure that contributes to energy efficiency in both countries," the two leaders said in the statement, which made no mention of climate change.

"We collaborate closely on energy innovation, particularly in the clean energy sphere. As the process continues for the Keystone XL pipeline, we remain committed to moving forward on energy infrastructure projects that will create jobs while respecting the environment."

The statement also said the U.S. and Canada will build on "areas of environmental cooperation, particularly along our border and at the Great Lakes."

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Democratic senators demand info on Icahn's influence on Trump administration [Back](#)

By Eric Wolff | 02/13/2017 12:17 PM EDT

Seven Senate Democrats are demanding more information about the role billionaire investor Carl Icahn is playing in President Donald Trump's administration, and whether Icahn has inappropriate influence over the Renewable Fuel Standard.

Icahn was an early Trump supporter, and the president made him an adviser on regulations with the goal of reducing federal rules. But Icahn's exact role isn't clear, and the senators sent a [letter](#) to the White House today demanding more information. Among other questions, they want to know whether Icahn is a federal employee, whether he has filled out ethics forms, whether he has access to agency heads and other institutional knowledge.

They are also particularly focused on Icahn's influence over the Renewable Fuel Standard and the selection of Scott Pruitt, Trump's choice to run the EPA. Icahn has been a passionate advocate for making changes to the program that would relieve a company he owns, refiner CVR, from having to comply with the program. The EPA in December denied petitions for the change, but opened a comment period that left the final decision to Trump's EPA.

"These publicly reported facts suggest a conflict of interest between Mr. Icahn and advice he gave Mr. Trump on the nomination of Mr. Pruitt," the senators said.

The letter was signed by Democratic Sens. [Sheldon Whitehouse](#) (R.I.), [Elizabeth Warren](#) (Mass.), [Al Franken](#) (Minn.), [Sherrod Brown](#) (Ohio), [Debbie Stabenow](#) (Mich.), [Tammy Baldwin](#) (Wisc.), and [Amy Klobuchar](#) (Minn.).

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OPEC: Oil supply drops as agreement takes effect [Back](#)

By Sara Stefanini | 02/13/2017 07:38 AM EDT

Global oil production dropped by 1.29 million barrels per day between December and January thanks to cuts by both OPEC members and countries outside the cartel, the oil producers' grouping said today.

OPEC's 14 members lowered their output by 890,000 barrels per day to an average 32.14 million in the first month of their six-month production cut agreement, according to OPEC's monthly oil market report. Saudi Arabia, its largest producer, accounted for 44 percent of that reduction.

The data supports [analysts' estimates](#) that OPEC has so far stuck to around 90 percent of its agreement to reduce its supply by about 1.2 million barrels per day between January and June — although many warn the cartel's track record suggests its compliance could still dissipate.

While global oil supply also fell in January, to an average 95.75 million barrels per day, OPEC estimated that production from outside the cartel increased in 2016 and will continue to do so this year. The anticipated increase from outside OPEC, expected to be 120,000 barrels per day in 2017, is largely driven by a pickup in drilling and investment in the U.S., it said.

OPEC also expected to see global oil and gas companies boost their spending on exploration and production in 2017, for the first time in three years. That will further stimulate production in North America, potentially bringing more oil supply online later this year.

As supply rises, so does oil demand. OPEC hiked its estimate for demand growth in 2016 to 1.32 million barrels per day, following higher-than-expected consumption in OECD countries. This year, it expects demand to rise by 1.19 million.

This article first appeared on [POLITICO.EU](#) on Feb. 13, 2017.

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Inhofe's latest climate pitch: Snow joke [Back](#)

By Elana Schor | 02/26/2015 05:08 PM EDT

Winter-weary Washington needs no reminder of the season, but Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman Jim Inhofe offered one anyway today — [tossing a snowball](#) on the Senate floor as he argued that human activity isn't affecting climate change.

The Oklahoma Republican, whose family built an igloo on the National Mall five years ago as a jab at former Vice President Al Gore, lobbed his snowball gently before arguing that the risks of global warming are exaggerated.

"The reality is that climate change has been occurring since the beginning of time," Inhofe said.

Most scientists agree that greenhouse gas emissions from human activity are accelerating the warming of the planet and the resulting rises in sea levels and average temperatures — a trend not contradicted by the continued existence of winter. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned in November that a disastrous rise in planetary temperatures is growing more likely unless nations drastically cut global carbon emissions.



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Still, Inhofe's cheeky snowball toss captured the attention of Twitter. "Just wow," a White House spokesman wrote of the move.

One thing Inhofe made sure to do was follow Senate procedure. Near the end of his remarks, he clarified that he'd obtained unanimous consent to "use a prop on the floor."

An Inhofe spokeswoman did not immediately return a request to clarify who, if anyone, caught the snowball.

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'T'm Still All Trumped Up' [Back](#)

By Adam Wren | 02/13/2017 05:13 AM EDT

TERRE HAUTE, Indiana—On the first Saturday of Donald Trump's presidency, as protesters and marchers stormed the nation's capital and cities around the country, Dick and Jane Ames

threw a party. Four days earlier, they visited a Party Mania store and purchased two big red balloons, \$11 apiece, one in the shape of the number 4 and the other in the shape of a 5. For \$50, they purchased a cardboard cutout of the guest of honor. Jane, 74, prepared a tantalizing, if at first blush random, spread of food. She whipped up a tamale casserole, a tossed salad with tomatoes, tips of asparagus and tacos—any dish she could conceive of that began with the letter "T".

By the time Saturday night in Terre Haute rolled around, in the sunroom of their three-bedroom house, the Amesese and eight of their closest friends and family members feted the newest occupant of the Oval Office.

"Oh, Trump—I'm still all Trumped up," Jane, a retired insurance broker, told me, reveling in the memory of that night one recent weekday afternoon over lunch at Logan's Rib-Eye, a wood-paneled budget steakhouse situated in Terre Haute, a town along the Wabash River at the intersections of U.S. Highways 40 and 41, just off Interstate 70. Terre Haute proudly calls itself the "Crossroads of America," a title Indiana would later adopt as its state motto. Across the table, her husband Dick, 73, a former air traffic controller, smiled and nodded. Trump, as far as these longtime Republicans were concerned, had already delivered on some of his biggest promises.

More than 600 miles to the east, in New York City and D.C., people's Twitter feeds were clogging with breathless posts about the nascent administration's seemingly disastrous first 24 hours: Trump's false claims about crowd size at the inauguration, his dystopian inaugural address, and his rambling and self-referential address to CIA officers at Langley, to name only a few. Not here. While Sean Spicer was reaming out the press, the Amesese listened to Fox News, and followed their "T" feast with a "T" dessert, sipping tea while noshing on tea cakes, careful to keep the party's elements on theme.

Almost a month into Trump's administration, Vigo—population 108,000, the nation's swingiest swing county—seemed to be an ideal place to take the temperature of voters. This year, Vigo swung for Trump (who took 55.4 percent to Hillary Clinton's 40.2 percent), continuing a 60-year streak as the nation's most accurate bellwether county. In the past 16 elections stretching back to 1956, the candidate who has won Vigo has turned out to be the next president: It went for Reagan, Bush, Bill Clinton, Bush, and then Obama, both times. When I first visited Vigo, well in advance the 2016 primaries, I'd found surprising enthusiasm for the outsider New York real-estate mogul, long before the political establishment was giving him a real shot. They liked his business-minded approach to politics, though Jane conceded at the time that Marco Rubio had a "cute smile." Now, I was curious: Were the Amesese, and voters like them, happy with Trump so far? Did they feel any buyer's remorse? Had their lives changed substantively since Inauguration Day?

What I heard, in conversations with nearly a dozen Trump supporters, is that like the Amesese, most of Vigo County is still "Trumped up." All around town, folks are still buzzing about the county's winning streak and Trump's surprise win. You hear it in chatter at eateries like Logan's and in coffee shops and diners such as Boo's Crossroads Cafe & Corner Grind, which could pass as a knockoff of Luke's Diner in the show "Gilmore Girls." And the grist of the coastal media's hot takes? The lies, the fumbles and faux pas that have rattled the D.C. establishment and global allies? None of it seems to resonate here.

"I think Trump is doing exactly what he said he was going to do," said Keith Kindsvatter, a 64-year-old system specialist with the Federal Aviation Administration, as he chomped on his

BLT sandwich at Boo's. He was catching up with an old friend, Anna White, 60. The two, I had gathered from eavesdropping, once played in a garage band together, though their last big show was at the Little Italy Festival in town several Labor Days back. They played hard rock—Anna on the drums and guitar, and Keith on the guitar—and had called themselves "Daze of Misspent Youth. I sat down next to them and introduced myself. "What brings you to Terre Haute?" Kindsvatter asked me. "Lose a bet?"

To a person, the Trump voters I talked to in Vigo offered a similar refrain as they assessed Trump's first days in office, almost as if they were reading from a fresh batch of talking points issued by the president's director of Surrogate Outreach: "He's doing exactly what he promised he would do," Kelly, 48, a pharmacist in Terre Haute who felt uncomfortable divulging her last name, told me when I asked her about Trump's controversial immigration executive order, as she ate a slice of cheese pizza at the food court in Honey Creek Mall. Nor are voters like Kelly lamenting his Twitter tirades: "He's speaking directly to the people. Like Reagan!" Dick told me over lunch. Trump's brusque, shoot-from-the-hip conversations with world leaders and allies? "We're not going to go to war with Australia," Kindsvatter said.

"I think he's pretty much following *The Art of the Deal*," said Ken Warner, 60, who works in the finance industry. "He's got the price of fighter jets down. It's not something we're used to. It's a little unorthodox. Listening to his Carrier negotiation, you have to shrug on the means but can't disagree with the ends. You don't want to be picking winners and losers. You don't want to see a president calling out people on Twitter. However, the results so far have not been bad. So I can't say it's wrong." ("I'm disappointed in some of the tweets he does," Warner, who voted for Ohio Gov. John Kasich in Indiana's May primary, did allow. "He should stay away from things with his daughter's brand, and criticizing the courts.")

The flap over the size of Trump's inaugural crowd? "It does not matter," Jane said. "There were thousands there! His rallies set records. Most of the U.S. is thrilled."

"He's done more in the two weeks he's been president than the other president did in eight years," Dick told me.

It's a completely different view of Trump's early performance than you'd get in any coastal city, or even 75 miles away in the urban center of Indianapolis—where thousands of women descended on the statehouse on the same Saturday afternoon when the Ameses were preparing for their "T" party. And it's an important barometer of whether America is really souring on Trump. If Trump is going to lose momentum, he's going to have to lose it in places like Vigo first. And as far as Vigo is concerned, Trump is delivering the goods.

That doesn't mean everyone here is thrilled. Even in [Trump County, U.S.A.](#), a county with a lot of demographic and cultural homogeneity, tensions between Clinton and Trump voters run raw, mirroring the fissures in the civic fabric at the national level. At the cafe, as Kindsvatter filibustered for a few minutes on how good a job he thought Trump was doing, White stopped pecking at her cottage cheese and fruit. When I asked Kindsvatter about Trump's controversial executive order banning travel—and he told me that "there's nothing in the order that mentions religion"—White catapulted out of her chair, stepped away from the table and made a beeline to the door. She looked back at Kindsvatter and me.

"Are you leaving, Anna?" Kindsvatter asked.

"He's not my president," White said, pushing open the door. "That's all I'm going to say."

"It was good seeing you, Anna," Kindsvatter said, but White had already disappeared around a corner.

"We've been friends for years," he told me, turning back to his sandwich. "She'll get over it." He added that she was an Egyptologist and had already purchased a temple-like mausoleum in a cemetery at the edge of town, apropos of nothing, as if the political opinion of Egyptologists couldn't be trusted.

Back at the steakhouse, Dick and Jane were finishing up their chicken breast and burger, but still far from done singing Trump's praises. The only missteps I could get the Amesese to cite? "I don't really like the nickname Mad Dog," Jane said of James Mattis, Trump's secretary of defense. "That really sounds violent."

"I do!" Dick shot back. "He's like Patton!" Dick did admit, though, that he was bothered by Trump's response to Bill O'Reilly's pre-Super Bowl interview question about Vladimir Putin being "a killer." There are a lot of killers," Trump said. "You think our country's so innocent?" "He shouldn't have said that," Dick told me. He wouldn't say more. "He just shouldn't have said that."

By the end of his first 100 days, Trump will begin construction on a border wall, the Amesese hope. When I asked if they were at all concerned about an estimated \$15 billion price tag, they scoffed.

"I'd love to make a donation," Jane said. When Trump visited Terre Haute's Indiana Theatre during the state's heated primary last April, she pondered purchasing a brick and bringing it the rally to give to Trump—the symbolic first brick it would take to build the wall. When she saw security at the theater, she thought better of it.

"You are going to make a donation," Dick responded. "It's going to come out of your taxes."

"The people we've talked to are thrilled," Jane relayed, ignoring Dick. She has noticed a change in her daily mood since Trump was elected. There's a lightness now that she hadn't known for the past eight years during the days of Obama. "I feel happy. I'm happy. I like what he's doing. You don't feel like someone is selling out the country—"

"Or selling Christians down the river!" Dick said, finishing Jane's sentence.

As our lunch came to an end, I asked the Amesese what they would tell the president if they could send him a message.

"Stand strong," Dick said, as he took the last bite of his cheeseburger.

"Stand strong," Jane said not more than a second later, stabbing her sweet potato with her fork. "We're with you!"

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The husband-and-wife team driving Trump's national security policy [Back](#)

By Eli Stokols, Bryan Bender and Michael Crowley | 02/13/2017 05:05 AM EDT

Before they became a Trump administration power couple, Sebastian and Katharine Gorka

were prolific collaborators on research about the Islamic terrorist threat who built a fan base in far-right circles.

Business partners as well as published co-authors, the Gorkas made successful careers out of their shared passion. "Our pillow talk is the Islamic State and Al Qaeda," Sebastian Gorka, now a senior White House aide, [said](#) during a talk in Florida last November.

At times it can even be difficult to tell which Gorka is doing the talking. Several passages of Sebastian's 2007 dissertation, on the rise of radical Islam, appeared almost verbatim two years earlier in an [article](#) for the conservative journal *Human Events*. The byline over an online version of the article, "ccornell," links to an author page for Katharine Cornell — the maiden name of Katharine Gorka.

The dissertation, written for Sebastian's doctorate in political science from Corvinus University of Budapest, does not credit either a Katharine Cornell or Katharine Gorka in its endnotes.

"We write together all the time," Gorka said during an hourlong conversation with POLITICO. He brushed off the overlapping passages as "probably something I dictated or that we came up with together." Much of his writing and that of his wife, he explained, is the result of a "collaborative effort," even if that's not clear to readers. "She's my wife and she's my closest collaborator," he said.

In the decade since earning his doctorate, Sebastian has vaulted into the heart of the American national-security apparatus. At the White House, Gorka — who was born in Britain and became a U.S. citizen in 2012 — is a deputy assistant to the president. He reports to strategist Steve Bannon and includes the Strategic Initiatives Group, Bannon's in-house think tank, in his email signature.

That appointment, which includes a portfolio focusing on terrorism and national security, has befuddled mainstream counterterrorism experts, who recognize Gorka from his Fox News appearances but not as an influential thinker.

"He is hard-core," said retired Army Col. Joseph Collins, a professor at National Defense University who worked with Sebastian Gorka when he taught there. "He came at the issue from the ideological route."

Joining Sebastian in Trump's orbit is his wife, Katharine, who served on the Trump transition's Department of Homeland Security "landing team," focusing on [plans](#) to shift its "Countering Violent Extremism" programs to concentrate on Islamist extremism, according to a former DHS official. Sebastian Gorka declined to comment on his wife's current role within the department, and calls and emails seeking comment from DHS were not returned.

Trump first summoned Gorka to Trump Tower in the summer of 2015. At the time, Gorka was national-security editor at Breitbart News, the right-wing website Bannon ran before joining Trump's campaign. Long before most people took Trump's candidacy seriously, Gorka wrote him a series of position papers.

Gorka's biography at the Institute of World Politics, a Washington-based program that offers masters' degrees and continuing education programs for military and other government officials, casts him as an "internationally recognized authority on issues of national security,

irregular warfare, terrorism and democratization." Gorka taught there as an adjunct before becoming a professor in 2016.

Several experts interviewed by POLITICO puzzled over the gap between the numerous military academic credentials listed by Gorka — a political science Ph.D. who unfailingly uses the title "Dr." — and their unfamiliarity with his work and views.

"When I first encountered his name during the transition, I did a triple-take. I've been in counterterrorism since 1998, and I thought I knew everyone. But I'd never heard his name and couldn't recall anything he'd written or said," said Daniel Benjamin, who served as counterterrorism coordinator under Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Retired Col. Peter Mansoor, a former top aide to Gen. David Petraeus in Iraq who helped rewrite the Army's counterinsurgency manual, also said he's never crossed paths with Gorka. "What I've heard has not been complimentary," added Mansoor, who now teaches at Ohio State University and remains active in military circles.

In a subsequent email to POLITICO, Gorka said the two participated together on a panel discussion. Mansoor responded that he had forgotten about the event but said he remains critical of Gorka's recent views.

Gorka's defenders dismiss such criticism. "Seb has never been in the traditional kind of academic world," said James Carafano, a national security expert at the conservative Heritage Foundation. "There is a certain demonization that goes on against these guys."

Trump's rhetoric and actions since taking office reflect the influence of the Gorkas, who call for a tougher response against Islamist radicalism. In his Florida speech days after Trump won the election, Gorka showed what he acknowledged was a controversial PowerPoint slide featuring a dead ISIS fighter face down in the sand framed by a black background featuring white text that read: "Now we can win." The Trump administration, Gorka told POLITICO, is committed to "crushing" ISIS "with [its] partners in the region."

Gorka was one of the few White House staffers consulted ahead of Trump's controversial Jan. 27 executive order limiting arrivals into the U.S. from seven majority-Muslim countries. He told POLITICO that he believes "it's absolutely watertight when it comes to the legality and the president's right to do this." Although two federal courts have halted the order, Gorka hasn't changed his opinion. "It's a fundamentally preventative measure," he added. "Counterterrorism isn't about responding afterwards."

Katharine Gorka [wrote](#) in 2013 that the Obama administration "seems to be allowing Islamists to dictate national security policy." And she criticized President Barack Obama's DHS for allegedly changing its training protocols to include an "emphasis on Islam as a religion of peace."

The Gorkas are also strong believers in changing official U.S. government rhetoric to include the phrase "radical Islamic terrorism," which Obama, and George W. Bush before him, shunned. "We are prepared to be honest about the threat. We're not going to white it out, delete it as the Obama administration did," Sebastian Gorka told NPR last month.

In November, the Council on American-Islamic Relations [described](#) the views of both Gorkas as "Islamophobic."

Gorka disputes that characterization. He claims that half of the students he has instructed are from predominantly Muslim countries, including Jordanian Princess Aisha bin Al Hussein, King Abdullah's sister. "I've said again and again, the people who are most at peril in this world are our Muslim partners, because ISIS and Al Qaeda are killing them first," he told POLITICO. "It's not a war *with* Islam," he continued. "It's a war within Islam."

Gorka was born in the United Kingdom to Hungarian parents who fled during the country's failed 1956 anti-Soviet revolution. In the book "Defeating Jihad," Gorka describes how his father was tortured and imprisoned for two years, searing in his mind what he calls the "evil" of Soviet totalitarianism and turning him, unlike many anti-jihadist hard-liners, [against torture](#), which he calls "fundamentally wrong."

The Gorkas met in Romania in 1994, when they both attended a symposium for young leaders. At the time, Gorka was working in Budapest, while Katharine was working for a small policy think tank in New York. Katharine, whose father was president of a major Pennsylvania iron works factory, earned her master's degree from the London School of Economics and in the early 1990s focused on the post-Soviet transition to democracy.

They [married](#) in Hungary and remained in Europe. After the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, they turned their attention to terrorism, like many in the national-security world.

Gorka's biography at the Institute of World Politics says he spent four years on the faculty of the Program on Terrorism and Security Studies at the George C. Marshall Center in Germany. Gorka said he worked for the program's founder, retired U.S. Marine Corps Col. Andrew Nichols Pratt, who died in 2013. The program's current director, James Howcroft, also a retired Marine colonel, said Gorka only "periodically delivered lectures or served as a seminar leader."

The Gorkas returned to the U.S. nine years ago, Gorka said. On several of his personal biography pages, Gorka lists a two-year fellowship at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, though he said he left after less than a year to take a position at the Rand Corp., the Washington think tank.

Several military sources noted that Gorka's teaching affiliations — including the Marine Corps University Foundation as well as the Joint Special Operations University — have been with part-time professional development seminars for midcareer military officers, rather than at premier war colleges such as the Naval Postgraduate School in California and the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Carafano, who has known the Gorkas for 15 years, said Gorka is a serious scholar. Carafano said he's filled in for Sebastian Gorka at the Institute of World Politics. "I struggled to keep up with his curriculum," said Carafano, who also worked alongside Katharine Gorka on Trump's transition team for DHS.

Earlier this month, Gorka was [cleared](#) of a weapons charge filed after he attempted to board a plane at Reagan National Airport with a gun; Gorka has said he was carrying a gun because he'd received death threats.

During his conversation with POLITICO, Gorka defended himself — unprompted — against recent reports, including [one](#) that he overstated his role as an expert witness for the Department of Justice during the trial of Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev. "I've

got invoices claiming I wrote studies for [DOJ]," he said, but "they just never put me on the stand."

The Gorkas have been clear about their desire to position themselves and their ideas in the public eye. During his Florida talk last November, for the right-wing Freedom Center, Sebastian Gorka described how his wife encouraged him to market "Defeating Jihad" — a how-to manual for fighting terrorism that fills 244 large-type pages, about a third of which consist of appendixes, recommended reading and an index.

"I'm going to write about what I do for our war fighters, what I teach them in the class, how to understand the enemy, the A-Z of national security and counterterrorism," Gorka described telling Katharine.

"My wife, she said, 'Are you crazy? I mean, don't you want to sell books, or we just want to sell them to wonks?'" Gorka told the audience. "She gave me some very sage advice, and this is to all you budding authors out there: If you want the people to read your book, especially Americans, you must have a good story. You have to connect."

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Pelosi: Fire Flynn [Back](#)

By Austin Wright | 02/13/2017 02:24 PM EDT

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) on Monday called on President Donald Trump to fire Michael Flynn amid reports Trump has [privately expressed displeasure](#) with his embattled national security adviser.

"Michael Flynn's conduct was alarming enough before his secret communications with the Russians were exposed," Pelosi said in a statement. "Now, we have a national security adviser who cannot be trusted not to put Putin before America."

Pelosi said Flynn should be "fired immediately" and added that "the reports of the Trump-Russia dossier gain credence with each passing day," in reference to the 35-page [dossier](#) of unsubstantiated allegations published by BuzzFeed News last month.

Pelosi's statement is an escalation from this weekend, when she said Flynn should be suspended and have his intelligence clearance revoked "until the facts are known about his secret contacts with the Russians."

Democratic calls for Flynn to be fired have grown louder since The Washington Post [reported](#) last week that Flynn had pre-inauguration discussions with Russia's ambassador about sanctions imposed by the Obama administration for Russia's meddling in November's presidential election.






Vice President Mike Pence last month defended Flynn, saying on CBS's "Face the Nation" that Flynn's contacts with the Russian ambassador were not about sanctions — fueling new reports that Flynn might have misled Pence about the nature of his conversations.

Rep. Adam Schiff, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, is also calling for Flynn to go.

"His explanation now that he doesn't remember whether he talked about sanctions just isn't credible," the California congressman said on CNN.

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