

**To:** Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]  
**From:** POLITICO Pro Energy  
**Sent:** Mon 5/22/2017 9:48:35 AM  
**Subject:** Morning Energy, presented by POET: Skeptical lawmakers await first official Trump budget — Energy deals signed in Saudi Arabia as Trump visits — Controversial waters bill hits House floor again

By Anthony Adragna | 05/22/2017 05:46 AM EDT

*With help from Ben Lefebvre and Darius Dixon*

**LET'S GET READY TO BUDGET!** President Donald Trump may be out of the country, but all eyes are on the White House for the release of the fiscal year 2018 spending plan, which is expected to land on Tuesday. And if [Friday's leak](#) of the EPA budget numbers is indicative, federal agencies should expect the administration to stick pretty close to the deep cuts proposed in the March "skinny" budget. The EPA [summary](#) calls for a 31 percent overall budget cut for the agency and outlines significant rollbacks for programs that have been championed by lawmakers from both parties.

**Lawmakers sounded warnings** last week that the proposed cuts for 2018 were likely to be cast aside by Congress. Rep. [Mike Simpson](#), chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water, [predicted](#) deep GOP budget divisions would result in a yearlong continuing resolution, while Rep. [Ken Calvert](#), who leads the EPA spending panel, said it would be "very difficult" to pass a package with anything like the cuts Trump's team called for last time around. But ... it appears the administration, led by OMB Director Mick Mulvaney, is dead set on spending a message so keep a close eye on lawmakers' reactions to the document Tuesday.

**ICYMI:** Pro's Budget & Appropriations Brief's Sarah Ferris and Jennifer Scholtes [looked at](#) how GOP lawmakers preemptively blasted the budget. And they [reported](#) how it reflects ongoing, internal White House divisions.

**TRUMP HITS ISLAMIC STATE'S OIL SALES:** Trump didn't delve into energy much at all during [his speech to the Arab Islamic American Summit](#) in Saudi Arabia Sunday, but he did call for countries around the world to "cut off the financial channels that let ISIS sell oil, let extremists pay their fighters, and help terrorists smuggle their reinforcements."

**A wave of energy deals announced:** Saudi Aramco [announced](#) \$50 billion worth of deals Saturday with various U.S. companies, including GE, Baker Hughes and Halliburton, that the oil and gas giant said would create thousands of jobs. Exxon Mobil and Saudi Basic Industries [agreed](#) to conduct a detailed study on the proposed Gulf Coast Growth Ventures project in Texas that when up and running could create 12,000 permanent jobs. GE [announced](#) \$15 billion worth of agreements that span a variety of industries, including the oil and gas sector. The announcements came as dozens of top U.S. executives gathered for a conference that coincided with Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia.

**IT'S ANOTHER WEEK OF FUN EVERYONE!** I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and Akin Gump's Christopher Treanor was first to identify Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin as the chief executive with a flock of nine children. For today: How many of the 50 states produce at least

some wine? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to [aadragna@politico.com](mailto:aadragna@politico.com), or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning\\_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy), and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

**IT'S BAAAAAACK:** House lawmakers are expected this week to consider (again) a controversial piece of legislation that would exempt pesticide applicators from needing a Clean Water Act permit when spraying over water. The [Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act](#) (H.R. 953) hits the House Rules Committee today ahead of likely floor action later in the week. The House [passed](#) an earlier iteration of the bill in May 2016.

**DEVON EARLY BENEFICIARY OF PRUITT'S EPA:** Five days after Scott Pruitt's Senate confirmation to run the EPA, Oklahoma's Devon Energy announced it would reconsider an air pollution settlement with the agency, The New York Times [reports](#). It's part of the change in how energy companies are dealing with EPA now that Pruitt is at the helm, a shift that has benefited his [long-time political ally](#).

**Tweeted:** The White House may be in turmoil, but Pruitt still [tweeted out](#) a couple of pictures with Vice President Mike Pence on Friday. He also posted [a picture](#) of a speech he gave to the Council for National Policy, a secretive group of conservative activists. And he [met Friday](#) with Rep. [Pete Olson](#), a senior member of the Energy and Commerce Committee and author of legislation that would alter how EPA sets ozone limits.

**SCIENCE PANEL CHAIR TO TESTIFY:** Deborah Swackhamer, chairwoman of EPA's Board of Scientific Counselors, testifies Tuesday at a House Science Committee hearing entitled "Expanding the Role of States in EPA Rulemaking," Pro's Annie Snider [reports](#). The professor of public policy and environmental health sciences at the University of Minnesota leads the EPA scientific advisory board that has been targeted by Pruitt for a membership revamp.

**HOME STRETCH IN RACE TO REPLACE ZINKE:** Voters head to the polls Thursday in a much-watched contest to fill Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's seat as Montana's congressional representative. Sen. [Bernie Sanders](#) hit [the stump](#) for Democrat Rob Quist Saturday afternoon in Missoula. Both Quist and Republican Greg Gianforte have seen a late flood of television advertising in the contest.

**DISMISSAL SOUGHT:** The Massachusetts and New York attorneys general of have [asked a court](#) to dismiss Exxon Mobil's lawsuit alleging the AG offices have harassed the oil major. Massachusetts AG Maura Healey and New York AG Eric Schneiderman in a filing Friday said the harassment suit could have a chilling effect for regulators investigating allegations of corporate wrongdoing, adding that Exxon failed to "allege a ripe injury." The attorneys are investigating the oil major under allegations that it defrauded investors by sitting on its in-house research on climate change. Exxon and some Republicans have called the investigations politically motivated.

**PERRY'S IN OAK RIDGE, BOYS:** Continuing his tour of national laboratories, Energy Secretary Rick Perry tours Oak Ridge National Laboratory today at 4 p.m. in Knoxville, Tenn. Also coming along: Sen. [Lamar Alexander](#), top Energy appropriator, and Rep. [Chuck Fleischmann](#).

**ANOTHER INCIDENT AT HANFORD:** Just days after a tunnel storing nuclear waste partially collapsed, a contractor working at the Hanford site Friday detected radioactive contamination on the clothing of one of its workers, according to [the AP](#). Workers removed the tainted protective clothing and no further contamination was detected, but Washington Gov. Jay Inslee expressed further concern about the latest incident. "It is another urgent reminder that Congress needs to act, and they need to act quickly," he said in a statement.

**That comes as** Inslee and Oregon Gov. Kate Brown sent a [letter](#) to Trump, Perry and Mulvaney calling for increased federal spending on the clean up of the aging nuclear reservation. "New legal requirements require, and recent developments at the site have emphasized, the need for robust resources to ensure the federal government continues to make progress in cleanup," the two Democratic governors wrote.

**MAIL CALL! THAT'S NO FUN(DING):** Sens. [Jeanne Shaheen](#) and [Maria Cantwell](#), ranking members of the Senate Small Business and Energy committees, sent a [letter](#) to Perry and Small Business Administration Administrator Linda McMahon asking why federal research and development grants to small businesses are being held up by the Trump administration. "We have consistently heard from small businesses that delays and missed deadlines by federal agencies have an outside impact on small businesses," they wrote. "Unlike large firms and major research institutions, small businesses simply do not have the resources to tide them over when the government fails to meet its own deadlines."

**BUILDING SUPPORT FOR CCS:** Reps. [Carlos Curbelo](#) (R-Fla.) and [Marc Veasey](#) (D-Texas) are circulating a [dear colleague letter](#) in hopes of building support for legislation (H.R. 2011) that would boost the deployment of carbon capture and sequestration technologies. The bill would allow the use of tax-exempt private activity bonds to cut the upfront cost of installing the pricey technologies.

**\*\* A message from POET - one of the world's largest ethanol producers:** With scientists and engineers, POET operates 30 biofuel facilities & America's first cellulosic biofuel plant. We produce a cleaner fuel for millions of drivers, every day. We're POET and we're driving innovation, from the ground up. Learn more [here](#). \*\*

**SALT LAKE FOR NATIONAL MONUMENTS:** Jackie Biskupski, the mayor of Salt Lake City, sent a [letter](#) to Zinke Friday asking him to retain the existing designations of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments without changes. "Any federal decision to modify acreage or roll back protection of these incredible spaces will have negative and far-reaching impacts on Salt Lake City, as well as our entire state," she wrote.

**HITTING THE TOWN:** Twenty CEOs from the [Large Public Power Council](#), which represents the 26 largest consumer-owned utilities in the U.S. are in town today and tomorrow for meetings with administration officials and lawmakers on tax reform, infrastructure and cybersecurity. The group also celebrates its 30th anniversary with a reception tonight.

**FOR YOUR VIEWING PLEASURE:** The League of Conservation Voters is out with a [new](#)

[video](#) urging action to resist Trump's environmental agenda. It features video from the People's Climate March, as well as interviews with Sen. Tom Carper, Massachusetts AG Maura Healey and former EPA Administrator Carol Browner.

**MOVER, SHAKER:** Suzanne Hammelman has been named president and chief operating officer of the Hawthorn Group, which offers communications advice to investor-owned utilities and other regulated industries. She was previously the firm's chief client officer.

**Karen Wayland**, a veteran energy policy adviser to both former Sen. Harry Reid and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, starts today as the newly minted executive director of the Clean Energy Project, a Nevada-focused advocacy nonprofit. Wayland's most recent post was with the Energy Department's Energy Policy and Systems Analysis office and advising former Deputy Energy Secretary Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall. Outgoing executive director Jennifer Taylor plans to work with the Project as an advisor on state policy.

**AND WELCOME:** The United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has joined the Main Street Energy Alliance, which opposes efforts to alter the point of obligation requirement under the Renewable Fuel Standard.

## QUICK HITS

— Scott Pruitt's first 100 days at the EPA have shown he's unlike any former chief. [Business Insider](#).

— Wind Project in Wyoming Envisions Coal Miners as Trainees. [New York Times](#).

— Shell shareholders to vote for new climate change goals. [The Guardian](#).

— Swiss voters embrace shift to renewable energy. [Reuters](#).

— In 2017 alone, enough US coal plants to power Qatar have announced closures. [Quartz](#).

— Duke Energy files lawsuit against environmentalists over NC coal power plant. [The News & Observer](#).

## HAPPENING THIS WEEK

### MONDAY

10:00 a.m. — The Bipartisan Policy Center and the International Council on Clean Transportation host a [panel discussion](#) on how motor vehicle emission standards influence the international competitiveness of auto manufacturers, 1225 Eye Street NW, Suite 1000

5:00 p.m. — House Rules [meeting](#) on the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act, H-313

### TUESDAY

10:00 a.m. — House Science subcommittee hearing on states and EPA rulemaking, 2318 Rayburn

10:00 a.m. — Legislative hearing on four bills, House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands, 1324 Longworth

10:00 a.m. — "Balance for Oil, Imbalance for LNG?" Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1616 Rhode Island Avenue, NW

11:30 a.m. — The American Biogas Council, the Coalition for Renewable Natural Gas and the Environmental and Energy Study Institute host a lunch briefing on "the untapped energy in domestic wastes," 201-00 Capitol Visitor Center (Senate side)

1:00 p.m. — 2017 RNG Summit Industry, Policy & Regulatory Forum, American Gas Association, 400 N Capitol St NW #450

2:30 p.m. — Senate Environment and Public Works subcommittees hold hearing on two ozone bills, 406 Dirksen

### **WEDNESDAY**

9:00 a.m. — House Natural Resources subcommittee hearing on federal natural resource laws, 1324 Longworth

9:15 a.m. — Report release on the state of American cities, National League of Cities Office, City-County Leadership Center, 660 North Capitol St. NW

10:30 a.m. — House Energy and Water Subcommittee Appropriations hearing on the FY2018 budget request, 2362-B Rayburn

10:30 a.m. — "Energy & Environmental Symposium: What Can We Expect From the New Administration and Congress?" Faegre Baker Daniels, The City Club of Washington, 555 13th Street NW

10:30 a.m. — "Corps of Engineers (Civil Works) and the Bureau of Reclamation FY 2018 Budget Requests," House Appropriations Energy and Water Subcommittee, 2362-B Rayburn

1:00 p.m. — "The Kremlin's Gas Games in Europe: Implications for Policy Makers," The Atlantic Council, 106 Dirksen

2:00 p.m. — "High Risk American Indian and Alaska Native Programs (Education, Healthcare, Energy)," House Appropriations Committee's Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee, 2007 Rayburn

2:00 p.m. — "Examining 'Sue and Settle' Agreements: Part 1," House Oversight and Government

Reform subcommittees, 2154 Rayburn

2:30 p.m. — "[Department of Energy Atomic Energy Defense Activities and Programs](#)," Senate Armed Services Committee's Strategic Forces Subcommittee, G50 Dirksen

## THURSDAY

8:15 a.m. — Environmental and Energy Study Institute event on transmission infrastructure, Reserve Officers Association, 5th Floor, One Constitution Ave NE

9:30 a.m. — House Appropriations Committee [hearing](#) on the U.S. Forest Service, 2007 Rayburn

10:00 a.m. — "[Nomination Hearing to Consider DOE, FERC Nominees](#)," Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, 366 Dirksen

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*To view online:*

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/05/skeptical-lawmakers-await-first-official-trump-budget-022935>

## Stories from POLITICO Pro

### Leaked budget document shows EPA still targeted for sharp cuts [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén and Annie Snider | 05/19/2017 02:56 PM EDT

EPA's 2018 budget proposal will include significant spending cuts for programs championed by lawmakers from both parties and would eliminate hundreds of millions of dollars for popular grant programs, according to a summary document leaked today.

The [summary](#) — released by the National Association of Clean Air Agencies, which said it "comes directly from an Administration document" — maintains the 31 percent overall budget cut for EPA laid out in the administration's March "skinny" budget. The agency would get \$5.6 billion, a wrenching drop from this year's annualized funding of more than \$8.2 billion.

Lawmakers from both parties decried the skinny budget's cut to popular programs and state grants, and appropriators have said Congress isn't likely to approve slashing EPA's budget as severely as the Trump administration is asking.

The budget proposal shows EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's emphasis on water infrastructure, tagging an additional \$4.3 million for the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds, an increase of less than 1 percent, and keeps funding for the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act level at \$20 million.

But the budget would slash water spending elsewhere, including for research and water quality work. And it would zero out funding for popular watershed programs like the Chesapeake Bay and Great Lakes, which Congress explicitly protected from the Trump administration's proposed cuts when it passed its funding measure for the remainder of 2017.

While EPA would not verify the numbers in the document, a spokeswoman reiterated the administration's priorities.

"The budget prioritizes federal funding for work in infrastructure, air and water quality, and ensuring the safety of chemicals in the marketplace," EPA spokesman Liz Bowman said via email. "The budget aims to reduce redundancies and inefficiencies and focus on our core statutory mission."

Despite the boosts to the State Revolving Fund budgets, overall state and tribal assistance grants would be cut by \$96 million from the 2017 level of \$2.4 billion, not including one-time funding of \$100 million for Flint, Mich., according to the summary from NACA. The proposal maintains plans to eliminate funding for grant programs covering Alaska Native villages, the Mexican border and targeted airshed grants. Additional cuts would be made to the popular Brownfields and Diesel Emissions Reduction programs.

Categorical grants, which pay for state environmental programs, would drop by \$481 million from the current \$1.08 billion budget. Several grant categories are completely zeroed out, including radon, lead, pollution prevention, beach protection and nonpoint source pollution.

The proposed cuts to grants and the rest of the budget would "devastate state and local governmental air pollution control agencies," NACAA Executive Director Bill Becker said in a statement. "While the Trump Administration has been touting its commitment to 'cooperative federalism,' these proposed cuts belie that assertion."

The budget also continues to go after programs Pruitt has championed as the "basic" work of EPA. The Superfund cleanup program, for example, would get a \$194 million cut, down to \$516 million. That's a major reduction from this year's budget of \$710 million, which was below the \$780 million in fiscal 2016.

Two Superfund enforcement programs are also on the chopping block: one program enforcing Superfund at federal sites would be zeroed out, while a broader enforcement program would lose \$56 million of its \$150 million 2017 budget.

EPA's Brownfields cleanup program would be cut \$9.4 million, down to \$16 million, while two Brownfields grants programs are also in line for significant cuts.

In EPA's primary compliance budget, criminal enforcement would lose \$3 million, dropping to \$4.1 million, while the small environmental justice spending would be eliminated.

One of the few areas to get a budget boost is the agency's chemical risk review program, which would get an extra \$6.6 million, up to \$65 million. However, the proposal more than offsets that increase by zeroing out a lead risk reduction program and a pollution prevention program.

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### **Simpson: Yearlong stopgap most likely for fiscal 2018** [Back](#)

By Sarah Ferris | 05/17/2017 04:28 PM EDT

Rep. [Mike Simpson](#) warned this afternoon that the GOP's fractious divide on spending levels will likely force Congress into a yearlong stopgap spending bill.

"The rest of the appropriators and chairmen will probably kill me, but, I think we're into a CR for 2018," the chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water told reporters.

Simpson (R-Idaho) said infighting over President Donald Trump's proposed spending cuts could make it politically impossible for the GOP to find a path forward on fiscal 2018 appropriations bills, which are due in September.

"This is [OMB Director Mick] Mulvaney's budget," Simpson said. "Like I want to go home after voting against Meals on Wheels and say 'Oh it's a bad program, keeping seniors alive.'"

Simpson, whose bill is typically the first to land on the House floor, said he is already instructed his staff to start a list of potential add-ons to the current spending package in case it's extended this fall.

"The best thing we might be able to do for the agencies and their funding is actually do a CR for the full year," Simpson said.

Doubting his own fiscal 2018 bill will come to the floor, Simpson said he may not even hold hearings this year. Asked about calling on Cabinet members to testify, he put his hand to his ear to resemble a phone and said: "The hearings will be, 'Hey buddy, whadda ya think about that?'"

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## Trump budget reflects White House internal divisions [Back](#)

By Jennifer Scholtes and Sarah Ferris | 05/19/2017 05:26 PM EDT

President Donald Trump will include an unorthodox blend of policy requests in his first official budget, combining uncharacteristically liberal demands with calls for the most extreme domestic spending cuts the country has ever seen.

Details leaked by the White House suggest the president's fiscal year 2018 spending plan — expected Tuesday — reflects the administration's internal divisions. It will simultaneously require states to provide the kind of paid family leave programs championed by Trump's daughter Ivanka and propose slashing everything from disability payments to farm subsidies and public housing, reflecting the views of budget director Mick Mulvaney, a former member of the conservative House Freedom Caucus.

The budget is expected to go much further than the \$54 billion in spending cuts Trump called for in his preliminary "skinny budget" in March, which completely wiped out more than 60 domestic programs, according to multiple sources with knowledge of the document.

In a decade, the proposed cap on discretionary spending is expected to be roughly \$360 billion, according to one source — nearly \$200 billion below current domestic spending levels. That figure would bring Congress back to 2001 spending levels, likely too extreme for most Republicans.

But at the same time, Trump will propose adding \$200 billion in federal infrastructure spending over 10 years in the hope of spurring an additional \$800 billion in public and private investment. His family leave proposal — requiring states to provide six weeks of paid leave to new parents — could cost \$25 billion, and goes beyond what most GOP lawmakers support.

The internal contradictions are already spurring a hostile response from Republicans ultimately in charge of writing federal spending levels.

As some figures have leaked out ahead of the budget release, GOP legislators have reacted with fury, speaking directly to Mulvaney in recent days.

Plenty of Republicans on Capitol Hill have publicly pressured Trump to roll back what they called draconian cuts to programs like the State Department, the National Institutes of Health and the Appalachian Regional Commission.

"I'm deeply concerned about the severity of the domestic cuts," Rep. [Hal Rogers](#) (R-Ky.), who oversees spending for international programs, told POLITICO on Friday. "We'll see how that changes."

"This is Mulvaney's budget," Rep. [Mike Simpson](#) (R-Idaho) said this week. "Like I want to go home after having voting against Meals on Wheels and say, 'Oh it's a bad program, keeping

seniors alive.' There's just some of the stuff in here that doesn't make any sense. ... Frankly, you can't pass these budgets on the floor."

Meanwhile, on the issue of paid family leave, GOP lawmakers have advocated a more hands-off approach than the Trump administration will propose. Congressional Republicans have bucked Democratic calls for a government-run insurance program to facilitate paid leave and have instead pushed legislation that would provide tax credits to businesses that voluntarily provide that benefit to employees.

And Trump can't expect support from Democrats who anticipate Republicans will switch out the president's liberal-leaning proposal on paid leave for their own plans.

"I'm not going to watch it get watered down just for the sake of a press release saying, 'We voted for paid leave,'" Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.), a top appropriator who has introduced paid leave legislation herself, said in an interview Friday.

With Mulvaney set to testify before spending committees in both the House and Senate in the days immediately following the Tuesday budget release, DeLauro and her Democratic colleagues are prepared to personally attack the OMB director, who has justified calls for massive domestic cuts by suggesting programs like Meals on Wheels don't deliver results.

"You know, have real-life experience. Don't just sit someplace and talk about it," DeLauro said Friday, suggesting Mulvaney should do a ride-along with a Meals on Wheels volunteer to witness the program's effect on senior citizens.

The document released Tuesday will also offer the first glimpse at how the new White House would tackle mandatory spending — the largest driver of the federal deficit — at the same time it proposes the largest-ever increase in defense spending.

Lawmakers and aides say Trump will not cut funding from Medicare or Social Security, abiding by a highly visible campaign promise despite its complex budgetary implications. But some safety-net advocates believe the White House could still seek reductions to those programs by arguing that the administration is simply trying to eliminate waste and fraud.

Several sources said the Trump budget is expected to trim parts of Medicare that don't directly fund benefits. And some also said the budget will target Social Security Disability Insurance, which is technically separate from the far larger program for seniors.

Given the unpopularity of Trump's proposed cuts, even among those in his own party, Democrats say their opposition will be easily waged.

"In the skinny budget, they telegraphed dramatic and draconian cuts," Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.), ranking member on the House subcommittee that handles funding for military construction and Veterans Affairs, told reporters Friday. "If they're worse than that, then I have my battle arms already."

But opposition to Trump's budget is tempered by the fact that no part of any White House budget is destined to become law.

Rep. [Charlie Dent](#) (R-Pa.), a top appropriator who speaks frequently with Mulvaney, said a White House budget is purely symbolic. He said he is more anxious about the House budget, which will set the amount of money Congress can spend next year.

"I've often said, the budget around here is an exercise in confederate money. It's not real," Dent said. "We spend a lot of time fighting about things that are aspirational and messaging points."

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### **Trump strikes moderate tone on Islam** [Back](#)

By Annie Karni | 05/21/2017 08:12 AM EDT

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — Against the backdrop of an ornate, Mar-a-Lago style ballroom with members of the Saudi royal family sitting nearby, President Donald Trump on Sunday delivered a moderate speech on Islam designed to reset his relationship with the Muslim world.

Trump emphasized a war against terrorism around the globe, and not between religions, saying that the fight "means honestly confronting the crisis of Islamic extremism and the Islamists, and Islamic terror of all kinds." He notably steered clear of the loaded term "radical Islamic terrorism," which he has used in the past.

"We are not here to lecture — we are not here to tell other people how to live, what to do, who to be, or how to worship," Trump said in a 33-minute speech free of unprompted asides, which also did not depart from traditional American Middle East foreign policy.

"Instead," he said in his first major foreign policy address since taking office, "we are here to offer partnership — based on shared interests and values."

The Middle East, he said, "should not be a place where refugees flee, but to which newcomers flock." He framed the global fight against terrorism as a "battle between good and evil," including on the positive side of the ledger, "decent people" of all religious backgrounds fighting together against "barbaric criminals."

In substance, Trump's decree against terrorism did not differ greatly from President Barack Obama's first big speech on Islam, which he delivered in Cairo in 2009, where he also called for peace in the Middle East. The starkest difference was in optics: Obama spoke in front of a crowd of activists, students and government officials, while the visual of Trump was a man seated next to the king of Saudi Arabia.

But Trump, who was speaking at a meeting that included 55 leaders of the Muslim world inside the opulent King Abdulaziz International Conference Center, framed his audience as a strength of his speech.

"We in this room are the leaders of our people," he said. "They look to us for answers. When we look back at their faces, behind every pair of eyes is a soul that yearns for justice and for peace."

In the days leading up to Trump's high-stakes speech, his advisers said he was working through five different drafts of the speech, a process overseen primarily by his chief policy adviser and speechwriter Stephen Miller — also the architect of Trump's Muslim ban.

But in the end, national security adviser H.R. McMaster finally won an ideological battle in the White House. It is McMaster who had been trying — and failing — to delete from the president's vocabulary the term "radical Islamic terrorism."

McMaster has reportedly called the phrase "counterproductive" because terrorists are "un-Islamic." But in his first address in front of a joint session of Congress in February, Trump used the phrase anyway, saying that the administration was "taking strong measures to protect our nation from radical Islamic terrorism."

On his trip to Riyadh, Trump was accompanied by Miller, as well as McMaster and his deputy, Dina Powell, who have played starring roles on the Saudi piece of the trip.

Miller has been more out of the spotlight here, since the White House delegation arrived on Saturday. But on Sunday, he was spotted at the Ritz Hotel, dressed casually in a polo shirt a few hours ahead of Trump's speech. In the end, he appeared to be overruled by the more moderate voices in the administration.

Administration officials were eager to downplay any tension between its different ideological wings. "The president wrote the speech," said his communications adviser Hope Hicks, when pressed on which aides were responsible for the new rhetoric on Islam.

In the speech, Trump veered off of the prepared remarks when referring to "confronting the crisis of Islamic extremism." Prepared remarks used the words "Islamist extremism." A senior White House official told reporters after the speech that it wasn't on purpose. The official said it was simply due to Trump being "an exhausted guy" by the middle of his second day on the road.

Trump's speech bought him some distance from the divisive, anti-Muslim rhetoric he employed to appeal to voters in the Rust Belt during the campaign.

"There's something going on," he said in November 2015, when asked whether Islam was an inherently peaceful or inherently violent religion. "I don't know that that question can be answered. ... We are not loved by many Muslims."

At another point, he said, pointedly: "Islam hates us."

At a late-night briefing with reporters, a senior administration official pushed back on the idea that anything about Trump's rhetoric had softened. "I would argue he toughened," the official said, noting that Trump spoke truth to power to Muslim leaders by urging them to accept responsibility for destruction caused by terrorism — and choose a more hopeful future for themselves by driving out terrorists.

But the question of his credibility remained — on two fronts. Would the Muslim world he was addressing take his new tone at face value and forget years of inflammatory comments about Islam? And would the Trump base, which ate up the old version, stand by the president's more moderate words?

His longtime political strategist, Roger Stone, who helped Trump frame his candidacy to appeal to his white, working-class base, hinted that the latter could be a problem.

"While I certainly still support the President, I fear he has become captive of the neocons he has surrounded himself with," Stone said in an email. "Dina Habib Powell? Why? Did she even vote for Trump? If the people had wanted a continuation of the George W. Bush administration they would have voted for Jeb."

Powell, a former senior official in the Bush administration, is an Egyptian-born, fluent Arabic speaker, and has served as a key adviser on Trump's trip to the Middle East.

But the pivot, and the input from new aides who joined the administration post-campaign, was a gamble Trump and his West Wing aides were willing to take.

"Drive them out," was Trump's refrain on Sunday, referring to terrorists — not to the refugees he has sought to keep out of the country, or to his Muslim ban.

His speech included a promise to allies in the Middle East that appeared to explain that his "America first" ideology does not mean America alone. "America is prepared to stand with you — in pursuit of shared interests and common security," he said.

He castigated the Iranian regime for speaking "openly of mass murder, the destruction of Israel."

"Until the Iranian regime is willing to be a partner for peace, all nations must work together to isolate, deny it" funding for terrorism, Trump said.

Despite the more moderate language, the speech still included some of the dark imagery that has colored Trump's biggest oratorical moments, like his "American carnage" inaugural address. "If you choose the path of terror, your life will be empty, your life will be brief," he said, "and your soul will be fully condemned."

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## **House approves 'Zika' bill to block EPA pesticide permit requirements [Back](#)**

By Annie Snider | 05/24/2016 05:13 PM EDT

The House voted 258-166 to approve a measure to exclude pesticide spraying from certain environmental permitting requirements in the name of helping to control the mosquito-borne Zika virus.

The bill, H.R. 897, would exempt pesticide applicators from needing a Clean Water Act permit for spraying over water, as an appellate court ruled was necessary in 2009. The issue has been a long-time concern for Ohio Republican [Bob Gibbs](#), who originally introduced the bill as the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act. This week's version was rebranded the Zika Vector Control Act.

The White House objected to the bill, saying in a statement of administration policy that state and federal agencies already have the ability to act swiftly to control dangerous viruses like Zika.

The bill failed last week when Republican leaders brought it to the floor under suspension of the rules, an expedited procedure that requires two-thirds support, and was brought back today with a rule in place, allowing it to pass with a simple majority.

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## **EPA advisory board head to testify at House Science hearing [Back](#)**

By Annie Snider | 05/19/2017 04:25 PM EDT

The chairwoman of an EPA scientific advisory board that has been targeted by Administrator Scott Pruitt for a membership revamp will testify at a House Science Committee panel next week.

Deborah Swackhamer, professor of public policy and environmental health sciences at the University of Minnesota and chairwoman of EPA's Board of Scientific Counselors, will be Democrats' witness at the environment panel's Tuesday hearing titled "Expanding the Role of States in EPA Rulemaking."

Earlier this month, Pruitt [dismissed](#) nine members of the 18-person board whose terms were up for renewal instead opting to reopen the nomination process. The agency indicated it would seek more industry representatives for the panel, which provides advice and recommendations to EPA's Office of Research and Development. Two additional board members later resigned in protest.

A press release from Science Committee Democrats said Swackhamer "will testify to the key role science plays in developing sound environmental regulations at both the Federal and State level." The panel's top Democrats yesterday expressed "serious concerns" to Pruitt in a letter about the scientific counselors and asked for documents and information related to decision.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** EPA is reopening the nomination process for the Board of Scientific Counselors and has indicated it will seek representatives from industry. The board's work is likely to be significantly slowed while the nomination process plays out.

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