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Subject: Morning Clips – Thursday, December 22, 2016

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Nikki Haley: UN Ambassador News:

Washington Post: Donald Trump is holding a government casting call. He's seeking 'the look.'
https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/donald-trump-is-holding-a-government-casting-call-hes-seeking-the-look/2016/12/21/703ae8a4-c795-11e6-bf4b-2c064d32a4bf_story.html?utm_term=.e3a868608c41

Phillip Rucker and Karen Tumulty

Donald Trump believes that those who aspire to the most visible spots in his administration should not just be able to do the job, but also look the part. Given Trump's own background as a master brander and showman who ran beauty pageants as a sideline, it was probably inevitable that he would be looking beyond their résumés for a certain aesthetic in his supporting players. "Presentation is very important because you're representing America not only on the national stage but also the international stage, depending on the position," said Trump transition spokesman Jason Miller. To lead the Pentagon, Trump chose a rugged combat general, whom he compares to a historic one. At the United Nations, his ambassador will be a poised and elegant Indian American with a compelling immigrant backstory. As secretary of state, Trump tapped a neophyte to international diplomacy, but one whose silvery hair and boardroom bearing project authority.

NOTE: South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley (R) has little obvious foreign policy experience to qualify her for United Nations ambassador, but she is a rising political star who brings diversity to Trump's largely white and male picks for top jobs. Given how she and the president-elect had clashed during the 2016 campaign, Haley's selection also suggests that Trump is willing to bring adversaries into the fold when they suit his needs.

Newsweek: Why The U.N. Is Right To Worry About The Trump Administration

<http://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-antonio-guterres-united-nations-security-council-534741>

Sebastian Von Einsiedel and Cale Salih

Donald Trump and Antonio Guterres will assume their respective posts as U.S. President and U.N. Secretary-General next month. The imperious American businessman and the polished Portuguese diplomat will oversee a new and potentially confrontational era in U.S.-U.N. relations—one that could carry high costs for the United Nations. While much remains difficult to predict, the views of Trump and his advisers—combined with Republican majorities in both houses of Congress—indicate that Washington is poised to adopt a more negative approach toward the international body than it has in recent years. Trump and some key people advising him—including his National Security Adviser (Michael Flynn) and rumored pick for deputy Secretary of State (John Bolton, a former U.S. ambassador to the U.N.)—ascribe to the self-described "America First" camp of Republican foreign policy. Anti-globalist sovereignty hawks, America Firsters tend to see the U.N. in narrow transactional terms. According to this view, the U.N. is at best a sometimes-convenient instrument to serve U.S. foreign policy interests; at worst, it is pernicious to U.S. interests and does not merit U.S. support.

NOTE: Vice-President-elect Mike Pence's unyielding positions on women's rights and abortion suggests that the U.N. Population Fund and related U.N. programs could become soft targets for the new administration. LGBTI rights could slip from the U.N.'s agenda without an outspoken American advocate like Samantha Power; and Trump's pick for U.S. Ambassador to the U.N, Nikki Haley, is unlikely to champion this issue.

General Assembly News:

Associated Press: Former state House majority leader to appear in court

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=k2iVBOPb

SC State Wire

A former South Carolina House majority leader is expected in court to face corruption charges. A bond hearing for GOP Rep. Jim Merrill of Charleston is set for Thursday in Columbia. Prosecutor David Pascoe announced the indictments against Merrill last week. They include two counts of misconduct in office and 28 counts of ethics violations. House Speaker Jay Lucas has suspended Merrill until he's either cleared or vacates his seat. The 16-year House veteran is accused of illegally profiting from his position. He was majority leader from 2004 to 2008. The indictments allege Merrill's public relations and political consulting firm collected more than \$1 million from clients who hired him because of his office. Merrill denies doing anything illegal. His attorneys note he's been in public relations for two decades.

Herald-Journal: S.C. lawmakers' bill seeks to prevent 'foreign law'

<http://www.goupstate.com/news/20161221/sc-lawmakers-bill-seeks-to-prevent-foreign-law?rssfeed=true>

Zach Fox

A trio of Upstate lawmakers has pre-filed a House bill that would prevent state and national courts from enforcing any form of law that's not based on the Constitution. The measure proposed by Spartanburg County Reps. Steven Long and Bill Chumley, along with Greenville County Rep. Mike Burns, would "prevent a court or other enforcement authority from enforcing foreign law in this state," including Sharia law. "We're using constitutional law instead of a law used in other countries," Long said. "It's very simple — it's making sure we're following the U.S. Constitution and the South Carolina Constitution, that we're not using precedent that came through foreign law or anything like that." The bill would apply to any religious law not currently found in the United States, Long said. Corey Saylor, spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, said similar bills have been proposed across the country. He said those efforts are all unnecessary.

WIS: Midlands students urge lawmakers to take on teen dating violence

<http://www.wistv.com/story/34109956/midlands-students-urge-lawmakers-to-take-on-teen-dating-violence>

Chad Mills

Ridge View High School senior Micayla Hayden is hoping 2017 will be the year. "It has really just inspired me to keep being an advocate for change," she said. The change she's seeking — preventing teen dating violence. It's also the goal of her teachers and other students in the Scholars Symposium at Ridge View. "My classmates and I were looking for kind of like a passion project to pursue, and teenage dating violence was just something that had a special place in our heart, as many of us have experienced it or witnessed it," Hayden said. "I know it's happening. I hear my kids say that it's happening. I see, you know, the after effects of it happening," added Ridge View English teacher Steve Nuzum. They say one of the most poignant examples is Sierra Landry, a Lancaster teen who was murdered by her ex-boyfriend back in 2013. She became the namesake of a bill that Ridge View students helped push last legislative session. The bill included an education component, but it would also allow teens easier access to orders of protection.

WACH: Casino cash: A fix for South Carolina's roads?

<http://wach.com/news/local/casino-cash-a-fix-for-south-carolinas-roads>

Tara Petitt

Fixing South Carolina's crumbling roads could come down to luck. One lawmaker has filed a bill for the second time that would allow casinos to come to the state to help pay for infrastructure. Representative Todd Rutherford is the sponsor of the bill and says the only way South Carolina will be able to generate enough money to fix the state's roads is to find new revenue. "By adding casino

gambling in South Carolina, we can bring in new revenue," said Rutherford. "The state of Maryland did it, and their revenue is in the hundreds of millions of dollars. This is where South Carolina needs to go, and this is where South Carolina has to go unless we wanna keep digging into our tax payers' pockets." Earlier this year, lawmakers passed a plan that funnels 2.2 billion dollars in borrowing over ten years, and it's paid for with 200 million dollars each year in existing fees and vehicle sales taxes. Rutherford says the plan passed is only temporary, and increasing taxes year after year is a dead end to paying for the state's roads.

North Carolina HB2 Law:

Associated Press: Deep divide stops effort to repeal North Carolina LGBT law

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/acc47e5907224b9ab69c783f30f75cbc>

A supposedly bipartisan deal to repeal North Carolina's anti-LGBT law collapsed when both sides balked and started blaming each other, likely meaning the state will remain a pariah shunned by corporations, entertainers and high-profile sporting events. After more than nine hours of backroom discussions and sporadic public effort, Republican state legislators quit trying to repeal the law called House Bill 2 and went home Wednesday night. The law omits gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people from state anti-discrimination protections, bars local governments from passing broad non-discrimination ordinances covering them, and orders transgender people to use bathrooms and showers that align with their sex at birth. "I'm disappointed that we have yet to remove the stain from the reputation of our great state that is around this country and around the world," Democratic Gov.-elect Roy Cooper said.

SC Political News:

The State: With the fate of Obamacare uncertain, SC enrollment drops

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article122293819.html>

Bristow Marchant

Nearly 11,000 fewer South Carolinians have enrolled for health insurance coverage through the Affordable Care Act than last year. A total of 147,459 people signed up in South Carolina by the Dec. 19 deadline to receive coverage starting Jan. 1, down from 158,267 during the same period last year, according to statistics from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Anyone can still sign up for a new health care plan until Jan. 31. The numbers released by health officials on Wednesday, as well as last year's, do not include policies that are renewed automatically. This year's sign-up period came in the middle of an uncertain period for the health care program, with the election of Donald Trump opening the way to a potential repeal of the ACA and uncertainty about what will replace it. "Last year, a lot of new people signed up after (the deadline on) Dec. 15, and we plan additional advertising in January targeted at new consumers," said HHS Secretary Sylvia Burwell in a call with the nationwide media on Wednesday.

Hurricane Matthew Recovery:

Sun News: \$6.7 million approved in relief funds as FEMA closes in Myrtle Beach

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/local/article122292144.html>

Megan Tomasic

FEMA closed its last Disaster Relief Center in Myrtle Beach on Tuesday after registration ended Dec. 13. "So far we've registered over 47,000 registrations for a total dollars approved of \$35.5 million" in the state of South Carolina, FEMA's media relations specialist Alberto Pillot said. In Horry County there were over 6,000 FEMA registrations, with an approved \$6.7 million. Georgetown County received about 2,000 registrations, with an approved \$1.4 million. With the approved dollars, FEMA focuses on the initial disaster and ensures that immediate needs are fulfilled, meaning that grant money is used toward rental needs, home repair, and even help to replace a home. "We try to get you back in a safe, sanitary, inhabitable environment after the disaster," Pillot said. FEMA accomplishes this goal by sending an inspector to a home to see what an applicant's immediate needs are.

Inspectors look for damage to doors and windows, any electrical damage, and other damage that would make the home uninhabitable. Once the home is assessed, FEMA grants a verified loss to the applicant.

Savannah River Site/MOX News:

Aiken Standard: SRS security company earns \$2.8M in review

http://www.aikenstandard.com/news/srs-security-company-earns-m-in-review/article_2025a2ba-c7c1-11e6-994e-3b00ebf30cf1.html

Those Gardiner

Savannah River Site's security company earned just under \$3 million and earned nearly 100 percent of available award money within the second half of fiscal year 2016, according to the U.S.

Department of Energy's recently published performance score card for Centerra. The report shows efficiency in judged areas that earned Centerra a high percentage of the award fee available this fiscal year. The overall amount available to the Savannah River Site security contract company was more than \$2.9 million for the second half of the fiscal year. Centerra earned more than \$2.8 million, and to-the-cent figures show the company earned 96 percent of available award money. Award money is separate from the basic operations contract and available amounts are determined by periodic negotiations between the Energy Department and the contract company.

South Carolina News:

Associated Press: Wandering elk moved to wildlife exhibit in Charleston

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=kEFFES1u

SC State Wire

An elk that wandered into South Carolina's mountains and wouldn't go home has been moved to a wildlife exhibit in Charleston. The state Department of Natural Resources said Wednesday the 500-pound elk has a new home at Charles Towne Landing, a state historic site that includes a natural habitat zoo. The elk was first spotted roaming the woodlands of Pickens County in October. State wildlife biologists think larger bulls pushed the young bull from its home territory in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina. Biologists tranquilized the animal Dec. 16 and moved it to remote Oconee County, hoping it would keep moving north and rejoin its herd.

Post and Courier: Volvo could be mulling stock offering as it works to finish South Carolina plant

http://www.postandcourier.com/business/volvo-could-be-mulling-stock-offering-as-it-works-to/article_79fc50fa-c78e-11e6-909f-1bb01f3fd5d0.html

David Wren

Even before residents of the Charleston region start building Volvo cars, they might be able to invest in the Swedish automaker. Volvo, which is building its first U.S. manufacturing plant in Berkeley County, said this week that it has raised \$532 million from a trio of institutional investors in its home country. The announcement has sparked speculation that the company is preparing to go public after eight years of private ownership by China-based Zhejiang Geely Holdings. "Today's move is another step towards Volvo Cars' long expressed ambition to act as a listed company," Volvo said in a written statement announcing the investment by a pair of pension funds and an insurance company. The automaker also entered the international bond market earlier this year, raising an additional \$519 million.

Local News:

Associated Press: Former Gaffney police officer charged with assault

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=sxr9lgMo

SC State Wire

A former Gaffney police officer has been charged with assault on an inmate at the Cherokee County

jail. Court records show that Billy Hyatt has been charged with third-degree assault and battery. Hyatt was a former sergeant with the department. The records show Hyatt was suspended in September after a report of an assault at the jail. The records show that several days later he talked with the police chief and resigned. The State Law Enforcement Division handled the investigation. Thirty-three-year-old Joshua Dewayne Rankin of Gaffney was taken to the jail Sept. 16 on a domestic violence charge. City officials have said Rankin was being taken to the jail when he was attacked. Rankin was taken to a hospital for treatment before he was returned to the jail.

Associated Press: Body found in fire in southeastern Richland County

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=qe2qdG7q

SC State Wire

Richland County officials say a body has been found in a burning house in Hopkins. Firefighters were called to the home around midnight Wednesday. Columbia Fire Chief Aubrey Jenkins says the body was found while crews were fighting the fire. The victim's name has not been released. Part of the home collapsed because of the flames. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Associated Press: 2 arrested in North Charleston shooting death

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=UZ7knXYa

SC State Wire

Two people have been arrested in a North Charleston shooting death. Jail and police records show that 20-year-old Maulique Alexander Heyward of North Charleston was arrested early Wednesday and has been charged with murder and possession of a gun during a violent crime. A 17-year-old male was also arrested early Wednesday and charged with being accessory to murder. Police were called to a home in North Charleston early Monday and found a male victim on the ground. His name has not yet been released. The shooting was originally investigated as an attempted murder. Police spokesman Spencer Pryor says the charges were upgraded when the victim died.

The Herald: Rock Hill, York Co. leaders plea for move to stop 'lives being lost' to guns

<http://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/article122281234.html>

Amanda Harris

Putting an end to gun violence in York County will take a team effort, say state and local leaders, who came together Wednesday to talk about what needs to be done. A press conference by state and local officials came in the wake of two apparently unrelated Rock Hill shootings Monday in which two men were wounded. In a third shooting on Dec. 2, a 37-year-old Rock Hill man, Jerry Howard, died. The past year "has been a year of too many news stories about gun violence, not only in our community, but in our nation," said state Rep. John King, D-Rock Hill. "We must not leave the burden to the police to fix it; it must be a community effort." Two men were injured, one of them critically, in separate shootings Monday, Rock Hill police said. The victims were ages 25 and 20. On Saturday, an 18-year-old student at York Comprehensive High School was shot in the face outside the home where a birthday party had taken place. York police are searching for information in that case.

Island Packet: Why some future gun owners might be opening an empty box this Christmas

<http://www.islandpacket.com/news/business/article122292169.html>

Madison Hogan

When a 12-year-old Adam Ruonala rounded his family Christmas tree after unwrapping his presents, he saw his father standing there, holding one of the greatest gifts he would ever receive. In his father's hands was a .410 shotgun, a firearm that for generations had passed through the hands of many Ruonalas. It was the same firearm Ruonala had seen and revered from a locked case, but never imagined would one day be his. His father placed the gun in Ruonala's hands, an invitation to manhood and trust, and told him something he'll never forget: "This firearm is like fire. It can warm your home, it can cook your food and it can keep away evil. But if you don't respect it, it can burn your whole world down." Today, Ruonala is chief marketing officer for Palmetto State Armory, a firearms retailer and manufacturer that has a location in Ridgeland. He said he still has his father's firearm, the

first gun he would ever own, and would only give it away to a child who would appreciate it.

Aiken Standard: Hearing scheduled in Scuttle's Island bankruptcy case

http://www.aikenstandard.com/news/hearing-scheduled-in-scuttle-s-island-bankruptcy-case/article_789565aa-c7d2-11e6-a705-9ba8e02b5327.html

Michael Smith

A Chapter 7 petition filed against former investors of the failed Scuttle's Island water park will be heard next month in an Augusta courtroom. U.S. District Judge Susan D. Barrett has scheduled a hearing for 9 a.m. Jan. 25, 2017, according to a notice of hearing filed late Monday. The hearing will be held at the federal justice center at 600 James Brown Blvd., in Augusta, according to the notice. The purpose of the hearing will be to hear arguments relating to a motion to dismiss recently filed by Cedar Rock Holdings, LLC, the team of investors that tried to build the water park off U.S. 25 in North Augusta. According to the motion from Cedar Rock Holdings, investors are requesting a judgment against the petitioners and also seeks costs and legal fees.

Sun News: Court shutdown: County stops work on International Drive

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/local/article122268759.html>

Audrey Hudson

Horry County trucks hauled heavy equipment out of the International Drive construction area Wednesday morning as officials shut down the site until a court fight is settled with environmentalists who are determined to block the road project. The S.C. Court of Appeals issued the order late Tuesday, reiterating that its decision to hear an appeal on the state court case that environmentalists lost earlier this year demands that all work be stopped until the court rules on the appeal. The county said in a statement released Wednesday afternoon that all work on International Drive had been halted, and the solicitation of bids on future construction work was canceled. Bids were supposed to be opened at 2 p.m., but will remain sealed until further notice. It's a temporary victory for the Coastal Conservation League and S.C. Wildlife Federation, which have so far lost legal challenges to the project in state and federal court, but is now counting on the appeals process to further push their case.

Independent Mail: Kinder Morgan CEO to be deposed in Belton leak case

<http://www.independentmail.com/story/news/local/2016/12/21/kinder-morgan-ceo-deposed-belton-leak-case/95711568/>

Mike Eads

A federal judge ruled Wednesday that Kinder Morgan CEO Ron McClain can be deposed for a lawsuit that alleges his company ruined several hundred acres near Belton with a 2014 gasoline leak from its Plantation Pipe Line. U.S. District Court Judge Henry Herlong said attorney Gary Poliakoff could question McClain as part of the lawsuit he has brought on behalf of Eric and Scott Lewis against the Houston-based pipeline operator regarding the December 2014 leak. State officials and environmental watchdog groups have said that more than 369,000 gallons of fuel spilled into the soil and groundwater on and around the Lewises' 350-plus-acre farm northwest of Belton, near the Cheddar community. At the preliminary hearing Wednesday in Herlong's court in downtown Greenville, Poliakoff argued that McClain was a party to several communications with federal regulators regarding pipeline maintenance and other issues related to the Plantation line.

President-elect Trump News:

Associated Press: The Latest: Kellyanne Conway is heading to the White House

<http://bigstory.ap.org/982adcf83c194e0c89f0794cb6f92f0e>

Donald Trump's campaign manager Kellyanne Conway is headed to the White House, where she'll serve as counselor to the president. The announcement was made by the president-elect's transition team early Thursday. Conway served as Trump's third campaign manager and is widely credited with helping guide him to victory. She is also a frequent guest on television news programs. Conway had

said previously that she planned to move her family to Washington to serve Trump, either inside or outside the administration. The transition team says Conway "will work with senior leadership" in the White House "to effectively message and execute the administration's legislative priorities and actions."

Associated Press: Trump denounces attack, vows tough immigration plan

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/f0ec634adae54108b316826f985bbaa3>

Denouncing the deadly attack on a Christmas market in Germany, President-elect Donald Trump renewed his vow to stop radical terror groups and appeared to suggest a willingness to move ahead with his campaign pledge to ban temporarily Muslim immigrants from coming to the United States. Trump proposed the Muslim ban during the Republican primary campaign, drawing sharp criticism from both parties. During the general election, he shifted his rhetoric to focus on temporarily halting immigration from an unspecified list of countries with ties to terrorism, though he did not disavow the Muslim ban, which is still prominently displayed on his campaign website. The president-elect, when asked Wednesday if the attack in Berlin would cause him to evaluate the proposed ban or a possible registry of Muslims in the United States, said "You know my plans. All along, I've been proven to be right, 100 percent correct."

National News:

Associated Press: Michigan governor doesn't expect to be charged over Flint

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/5ba32831635e4e1ab97b529819d9b18b>

Gov. Rick Snyder says he has "no reason to be concerned" about being charged in the Flint water investigation. Snyder's comments to the Detroit Free Press (<http://on.freep.com/2h51dml>) occurred as the bill for his legal fees reached \$4.9 million — all paid by taxpayers. The governor says much of the money has been spent on producing documents requested by Attorney General Bill Schuette's investigators. Snyder says investigators "keep on asking" and his lawyers "keep on responding." "Schuette filed charges against four more people this week, raising the number to 13. They include two Snyder-appointed emergency managers who were running Flint when the city was using the Flint River for drinking water. The water wasn't treated for corrosion, causing lead to leach from pipes and fixtures.

United Nations News:

Associated Press: Last group to be evacuated from Syria's Aleppo within hours

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/b72989c89dd94e99a0725696d014dcd1>

The evacuation of the last remaining civilians and fighters from a rebel-held enclave in eastern Aleppo will be completed in the coming hours, the Red Cross and state TV said Thursday, as more gunmen and civilians braved freezing temperatures to leave. The evacuations were set in motion last week after Syria's opposition agreed to surrender its last footholds in eastern Aleppo. Since then, about 30,000 fighters and civilians have been bused out, according to the United Nations. On Wednesday, buses began evacuating the last group, an estimated 3,000 people. The departures pave the way for President Bashar Assad to assume full control after more than four years of fighting over Syria's largest city. It marks his most significant victory since an uprising against his family's four-decade rule swept the country in 2011.

Associated Press: Israeli leader urges US to veto UN settlement resolution

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/c58b541ecf004d27b2f01bcb32d71b9>

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urged the U.S. on Thursday to veto a draft United Nations resolution demanding a halt to Israeli settlement activities in the West Bank. The vote, expected Thursday, provides one of the last opportunities for President Barack Obama to take a stand against Israeli settlement building after years of failed peace efforts, but doing so could re-ignite a dispute with a close ally in the waning days of his tenure. The draft resolution, circulated by Egypt, demands

Israel stop settlement activities in the Palestinian territories and declares that all existing settlements "have no legal validity" and are "a flagrant violation" of international law. In an overnight Tweet, Netanyahu wrote: "The U.S. should veto the anti-Israel resolution at the U.N. Security Council on Thursday."

World News:

Associated Press: The Latest: Russia: Assad's future not part of Syria talks

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/fe6b6142663e4eefa710b878c59f0cc4>

A top Russian diplomat says President Bashar Assad's future is not on the agenda of Syria talks involving Russia, Iran and Turkey. Foreign ministers of the three countries sat down for talks on Tuesday in what Moscow said was the "most effective format" to bring an end to the war in Syria. Western nations have long demanded Assad step down as part of any settlement, while Russia and Iran have provided extensive diplomatic and military support to his government. Sergei Ryabkov, Russia's deputy foreign minister, said in an interview with the RIA Novosti news agency Thursday that Assad's future is "absolutely not a topic for discussion right now" between Russia, Iran and Turkey.

Associated Press: Europe scrambles to find Tunisian suspect in Berlin attack

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/409c2c32bfac4f7b93ccce50ef6af757>

Authorities across Europe scrambled Thursday to track down a Tunisian man suspected of driving a truck into a Christmas market in Berlin, as one of his brothers urged him to surrender. Nearly three days after the deadly attack that killed 12 people and injured 48 others, the market in the center of the German capital reopened, with concrete blocks in place at the roadside to provide extra security. Organizers at the market decided to ditch party music or bright lighting, and Berliners and visitors have laid candles and flowers at the site in tribute. German authorities issued a wanted notice for Anis Amri on Wednesday and offered a reward of up to 100,000 euros (\$104,000) for information leading to the 24-year-old's arrest, warning that he could be "violent and armed."

Associated Press: In Turkey, things could get worse before they get better

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/b2f1f51108574ee3bd9b4d24f065c7c4>

The assassination of Russia's ambassador to Turkey fits into a long tradition of political violence in a country where the fallout from the Syrian war is deepening the chaos. Turkey's toxic combination of problems includes a Kurdish insurgency at home and state purges following a failed coup attempt in July, meaning the security situation will remain extremely tenuous for a while. While Russia and Turkey suspect the killer of Ambassador Andrei Karlov was part of a wider conspiracy, the Turkish government has come under scrutiny for its tolerance — or sponsorship — of Islamist rebel groups in Syria in recent years that may have indirectly radicalized some young Turks. "You have a blowback effect," said Halil Karaveli, a Sweden-based senior fellow at the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and the Silk Road Studies Program. He said a mix of hardline Turkish nationalism and Sunni Muslim fundamentalism had been prospering in some quarters in Turkey, creating the potential for homegrown violence.

Associated Press: US-based cleric rejects links to Russian envoy's killing

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/67f1f3cf301b4dadb96a99126049756d>

A U.S.-based Muslim cleric on Thursday condemned the killing of Russia's envoy to Turkey and rejected accusations that his movement was behind the attack. Ambassador Andrei Karlov was shot dead by an off-duty policeman in front of stunned onlookers at a photo exhibition in Ankara earlier this week. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has implicated Fethullah Gulen in the killing, saying the policeman had links to his movement. In a video address made available to The Associated Press, Gulen accused the Turkish government of blaming and defaming his movement and suggested the government would facilitate other assassinations and blame them on his followers. Gulen said "it is not possible for them to convince the world of such accusations." Russia flew a team of 18

investigators and foreign ministry officials to Turkey to participate in the investigation.

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