

## Bits n' pieces from east, west and beyond (for 4-24-2025)

Compiled by Lorraine H. Marie

East, west or beyond, sooner or later events elsewhere may have a local impact. A recent sampling:

The Dow Jones Industrial Average “is headed for its **worst** April performance **since 1932**,” when the country was suffering from the **Great Depression**. Horizon Investments said “it’s impossible to commit capital” to an unstable economy with an “**unknowable** policy structure”: *Wall Street Journal*.

Political pundits warn we are in a **Constitutional crisis**: the Trump Administration has been defying numerous court orders, including those regarding deportation of migrants. Legal analyst Joyce Vance stated, “The Trump administration **wants a confrontation with the courts**. Trump wants to try to **break** them. That’s an essential path forward for a **dictator**.” It’s been cat and mouse: The Administration holds deportees in different states, requiring different judges to rule, and **behind the scenes** they’ve tried to move detainees to where judges haven’t ruled, so they can be moved beyond U.S. borders. More:

A 9-0 Supreme Court decision affirmed district court orders to bring **Abrego Garcia** back from a prison in El Salvador. The Administration **admitted** Garcia was mistakenly deported, but **claimed** it could not arrange his return. Garcia was sent to CECOT, along with 250 others deported without due process. CECOT is a crowded prison described by *The Week* as having no windows, and no outdoor time. El Salvador’s president has bragged that **no one gets out** of CECOT and inmates are used for **slave labor**. A *Bloomberg* report found **90%** of those sent to CECOT had no U.S. criminal record.

**Trump ally** Joe Rogan stated of the deportations: “It’s horrific. People who **are not criminals** are getting lassoed up.” To deport, the Administration relied on the **rarely used** Alien Enemies Act of 1798, claiming the **U.S. is at war** with Venezuelan gangs. The Act typically targets countries, not gangs.

On Saturday the *AP* said the Supreme Court, in a 7-2 decision, ordered the Trump Administration to **not remove** Venezuelans held in the U.S. “until **further order** of this court.”

Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson said of a Trump Administration request to block a lower court's order to return Garcia to the U.S., "The government is asserting **a right to stash away** residents of this country in foreign prisons without...due process that is foundational of our constitutional order...it claims in essence that because it has rid itself of custody that there is nothing that can be done. This **should be shocking not only to judges**, but to the intuitive sense of liberty that Americans far removed from courthouses still hold dear." Wilkinson added, "If today the Executive **claims** the right to deport without due process and in disregard of court orders, **what assurance** will there be tomorrow that it will not deport American citizens and then **disclaim** responsibility to bring them home? And **what assurance** shall there be that the Executive will not train its broad discretionary powers upon its political enemies?"

Judge James Boasberg, who has ruled on one of the deportation cases, issued the opinion that "probable cause exists to **find the Government in criminal contempt**" due to their "**willful disregard**" of a court order to halt deportations via the Alien Enemies Act.

The **White House has posted** on social media that Garcia is "NOT coming back."

Alaska's Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski, speaking at a conference in Anchorage, said of the **political climate** in Trump's D.C.: "We are **all afraid**. It's quite a statement. But we are in a time and a place where I certainly **have not been before**. I'll tell you, I'm often times **very anxious** myself about using my voice, because **retaliation is real**. And that's **not right**."

On Easter Sunday Pope Francis condemned violent conflict, called for a ceasefire in Gaza, and decried stirring up contempt for "the vulnerable, the marginalized, and migrants." Pope Francis **passed** the next day at age 88, **just hours after a brief meeting with U.S. Vice President JD Vance**. Shortly after Trump took office, the pope said in an open letter to American bishops that the initiation of a program of **mass deportations**" using a **policy built on force** "begins badly and will end badly."

In the next two years the Trump Administration could spend as much as **\$45 billion** to build **new migrant detention** facilities. In 2024 **\$3.4 billion** was allocated for that: *The New York Times*.

**Pertinent headlines:** A deadly E. coli outbreak hit 15 states, but the FDA chose not to publicize it; Hundreds of scholars say US is swiftly heading toward authoritarianism.

Executive orders that **survive** legal challenges can be **reversed** by the next president: *U.S. News*.

**“No Kings”** was the theme for recent protests against the Trump agenda of undermining democratic ideals. It dovetailed with the **250<sup>th</sup> anniversary** of the beginning of the Revolutionary War effort to disengage from being ruled by England’s king. *The Guardian* said it was the **second wave** of coast-to-coast protests this month. Protest signs included: “It’s our turn to **fight tyranny**” and “Make America Smart Again,” a reminder to regain knowledge of rule of law and how democracy works.

**Blast from the past:** “Nobody makes a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little.” Edmund Burke, British statesman, author and orator, 1729-1797. During the Revolutionary War he urged the British government to reconcile with the Colonies.