Bits n' pieces from east, west and beyond (for 2-27-2025)

Compiled by Lorraine H. Marie

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

Last Friday night Trump did a **purge of U.S. military leadership**, primarily women and people of color. A military specialist writing in *The Atlantic* said "Now that Trump has captured the intelligence services, the Justice Department and the FBI, the military is the last piece he needs to establish a **foundation** for **authoritarian control** of the U.S. government."

Axios: Most government agencies and unions told federal employees to **ignore** a recent Elon Musk email telling them to account for their work or resign. Legal actions are pending against Musk's Department of Government Efficiency and a judge is questioning DOGE's constitutionality. *Newsweek*: over **20 DOGE staffers have resigned**, saying they don't approve of their work and many of Musk's DOGE **recruits lack skills** for finding fraud and waste. A federal employees' union president accused Musk of disrespect for veteran employees by telling them to justify their work, and said "this out-of-touch, privileged, unelected billionaire" has never performed honest public service.

Musk **claimed** DOGE has saved $16 billion in government contracts. Various reports say his figures are **off**: $55 billion of "savings" lacked specific documentation, ICE "savings" were actually $8 million, **not** $8 billion, and claims that dead people were getting SS checks were verified as false.

Sen. Bernie Sanders has scheduled a series of **coast-to-coast town halls**, *The Guardian* reported. Sanders says the meetings aim to target resistance to Trump policies of authoritarianism, kleptocracy, massive cuts to important programs and to say "**no to huge tax breaks** for the richest." He said Republicans' new **reconciliation bill** showcases their greed, and is contrary to the needs of **60%** of Americans living paycheck-to-paycheck, and **25%** of seniors living on **less than $15,000 a year**.

Trump posted on X that the "America First" **reconciliation** bill will make America great again. The bill proposes an **$800 billion cut** to Medicaid. In the past Trump said he opposed Medicaid cuts.

Various media: This week House Republicans are expected to vote on a budget that includes the following cuts: **$230 billion** from nutrition assistance; **$800 billion** from life-saving Medicaid and **$330 billion** from education. Rep. Rashida Tlaib proposes instead cutting **$1 trillion** from the military budget, and says it would cost just **$11 billion to end U.S. homelessness**. Republicans are asking for **$150 billion more** in military spending over the next decade, and **$175 billion more** for border security.

Numerous media say in his first month back in office Trump spent **$10.7 million** of taxpayers' money to play golf.

The *Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act* introduced to Congress requires voters to show either their passport or birth certificate to register to vote. Critics say **150 million** Americans don't have a passport and **69 million women** don't have a birth certificate that **matches** their current legal name.

On Fox News "border czar" Tom Homan confirmed he asked the Department of Justice to **investigate** Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez for **holding a "Know Your Rights"** webinar for **complying** with ICE officials. Ocasio-Cortez responded, "I am well within my duties to educate people of their rights."

During his recent stop at the Munich Security Conference in Germany Vice President JD Vance **refused** to meet with Germany's ant-fascist chancellor and instead met with Germany's far-right Alternative for Germany party, which is associated with **pro-Nazi** sentiments. Russia, Trump and Musk praised Vance's speech about stepping away from democracy. The *Bulwark's* Bill Kristol: "It's **heartening** that today the leaders of the two major parties in Germany are **unequivocally anti-Nazi and anti-fascist**. It's **horrifying** that today the president and vice-president of the United States of America are **not**."

Pertinent headlines: French far-right leader cancels CPAC speech over Steve Bannon's **Nazi salute**; IRS employee purge…could **disrupt tax-filing season**; Court rules Trump can't shut down birthright citizenship; Trump administration yanks CDC flu vaccine campaign; Missouri Republicans propose state **registry to track pregnant women**; Fox News Host and Senate Majority Leader Thune Agree Trump Is Wrong About Ukraine [Trump said Ukraine started the war with Russia]; Republicans aim to extend a $684 billion tax break that **benefits many of them**; Trump

expected to take **control of USPS**; Trump's Department of Transportation is **gutting over $20 billion** in infrastructure funding Congress already approved; [Defense Secretary Pete] Hegseth **refuses to say** he would abide by the Geneva Conventions, and condemn torture.

Three years of Russia invading Ukraine has resulted in over **700,000** Russians dead or wounded and **426,000** dead or wounded Ukrainians, *The Atlantic* reported. The Institute for the Study of War says at Russia's current rate, it will take Russia **83 years** to capture the remaining 80% of Ukraine.

Blast from the past: 92 years ago this week Hitler found it convenient when Germany's parliament building was set on fire by a Dutch socialist. Hitler blamed the fire on socialists and Jews. A month later he pushed through draconian legislation suspending people's rights.