

News; Domestic

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[21:00:06]

RACHEL MADDOW, MSNBC HOST: Good evening, Mehdi. You have done a fantastic job filling in.

I know you get no rest whatsoever before going back to your regular schedule. But I hope you at least know what a great job you've done and how much we appreciate it, man.

MEHDI HASAN, MSNBC HOST: Rachel, I appreciate that. I appreciate our brief chats here at night live on TV. Thank you for your support always

MADDOW: All right. We'll see you Sunday, Mehdi. Thank you.

And thanks for joining us this hour. Very happy to have you here this Friday night.

There's a lot going on tonight, particularly for Friday, a lot of news we are tracking.

James LaPorta -- Jim LaPorta is a U.S. marine. He was an infantryman who was a veteran of the war in Afghanistan. Mr. LaPorta is now an excellent journalist.

We have had him here on the show several times featuring his reporting from among other places "The Military Times". Mr. LaPorta now works as an investigative correspondent for "The Associated Press".

And tonight, he was first to break the news that a new phase is under way or at least a new resource is being brought to bear on the evacuation effort in Afghanistan. This is very interesting, potentially important. Mr. LaPorta first to report at the "AP" that U.S. forces in Afghanistan including intelligence agencies have started using helicopters to pick people up to safely bring them to the Kabul airport so they can be airlifted out.

He said today, quote, I have been sitting on this but can now report U.S. helicopters ferried 96 Afghans for evacuation, signaling military flights occurring outside Kabul airport. CIA/DIA -- which means Defense Intelligence Agency -- and SOF, Special Operations Forces, are collecting up U.S. and Afghans from outside Kabul airport for sortie rescue.

Now, soon after James LaPorta posted this late this afternoon, Zeke Miller and three other reporters at "AP" had this full story. Quote: U.S. military helicopters flew into Taliban-held Kabul on Friday to scoop up would-be evacuees. American officials confirmed to the "AP" today. Senior American military officials told the "AP" that an American CH-47 Chinook helicopter picked up Afghans, mostly women and children, and ferried them to Hamid Karzai International Airport on Friday.

The 3rd brigade combat team of the Army's 82nd Airborne Division, airlifted the Afghans from Camp Sullivan, which is quite near the Kabul airport. The officials said such sorties have been underway from various points in Kabul as Afghans seek to flee the country taken over by the Taliban.

Intelligence teams inside Kabul are helping guide Americans and Afghans and their families to the airport or are arranging for them to be rescued by other means.

Now, this is interesting. Quote, for those living in cities and provinces outside of Kabul, CIA case officers, special operation forces and agents from the Defense Intelligence Agency on the ground are gathering some

U.S. citizens and some Afghans who worked for the U.S. at predetermined pickup sites. Again, that's outside of Kabul.

Quote, the officials would not detail where these air lift sites were for security reasons. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss ongoing operations.

Let it be so that these are ongoing operations and that this reflects not just new ambition but new capability. Let's hope this can work to get more people safely out. As the situation outside the airport in Kabul stays bad, as it seems to be getting, if anything, even more dangerous with each passing day.

As of this evening, the Pentagon is only confirming some of the "AP's" reporting on the record about helicopters being used to air lift people to safety. Pentagon's only confirming some of that, but since some of this new reporting is about not just military operations but also what is being described as intelligence agency operations, it is perhaps not surprising that the Pentagon might be confirming it. I'm not saying that because I know anything that's not been printed or reported. I'm just saying that based on what I know about the Pentagon not confirming anything about what intelligence agencies do as a general course. We shall see. We shall see.

On the record and out loud, the Pentagon did say today that they greatly increased the number of people they were able to get out from the airport today. They announced at the beginning of this week, you my remember, they felt the upper limit how many people the U.S. could logistically get out, literally the number of seats on airplanes each day would be between 5,000 to 9,000 seats per day, which meant 5,000 to 9,000 people per day could be evacuated and we heard the number at the beginning of the week. Since then it has been disheartening each day to hear them report to us actually the total number of people who were able to be put on planes and were able to be taken out each day has been way lower than that.

[21:05:03]

At the beginning of the week it was less than 1,000 people. By yesterday they had gotten up to about 2,000 people flown out in one day, still way short of the physical capacity for what they could do, but then today it seems like something started happening. Today, they said they flew out 5,700 people, which means they do, but then today it seems like something started happening. Today they said they flew out 5,700 people, which means they are starting to fill the seats.

If the maximum capacity per day is 5,000 to 9,000 seats and today they got over 5,000 people out, well, that is -- that is what we have been hoping for, that every available seat will be filled. That's also reportedly what President Biden ordered military commanders to get done, to get the seats filled on all of these flights, to have no empty seats on any plane leaving Kabul.

So, a lot of interesting news. A lot of potentially -- not just interesting but potentially important news there coming out today including into this evening. We will have more coming up live with NBC's Pentagon correspondent Courtney Kube. We have multiple updates on that situation coming up tonight. Stick with us for that this hour.

We also tonight will be checking in with a doctor, pulmonologist, which means he is a specialist in the respiratory system, who is not only working in just the right field, he is also working right in the bullseye of one of the most overwhelmed communities in the country right now in terms of hospital capacity having run out statewide days ago while the patient numbers in that state have still been rising precipitously every day since then. We're going to be speaking with that doctor live in a few minutes as well.

I have to tell you, amazingly today, the state health officer for the great state of Mississippi was asked to comment on weird, disturbing new reports in that very hard-hit state. In Mississippi, the hospitals are full. The federal government and charitable groups are coming in setting up field hospitals in the parking garages of the state's flagship medical center.

Mississippi, the low vaccine uptake seems to have just doomed the state's hospitals as the huge number of new infections and newly very sick people are just swamping the system. In that state that, frankly, has enough to deal with they are now facing a new challenge related to COVID. The Mississippi state department of health confirming today that, quote, at least 70 percent of the recent calls to poison control in Mississippi have been related to ingestion of livestock or animal formulations of ivermectin purchased at livestock supply centers.

Ivermectin -- why are people taking livestock formulations of ivermectin in Mississippi? Ivermectin livestock formulation -- that's a horse dewormer. Literally people won't take the vaccine because they're super suspicious of that, but they're taking horse deworming medication that they're buying at a feed store? For COVID?

Why on top of everything else Mississippi has to deal with right now, why are they dealing with this? I don't know, but I have a guess.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

LAURA INGRAHAM, FOX NEWS HOST: And we know that our FDA has in many ways failed us by not allowing for the use of ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine, both of which are used around the world to reduce COVID hospitalizations and deaths.

SEAN HANNITY, FOX NEWS HOST: I pelted them with questions about COVID-19 and the vaccine and therapeutics, hydroxychloroquine, ivermectin and ivermectin as well as other proactive treatments and practices that are already helping COVID-19 patients all across the country.

TUCKER CARLSON, FOX NEWS HOST: On June 5th, Weinstein (ph) discussed the benefits of a drug called ivermectin which can and is around the world used to treat and prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: You thought it was just hydroxychloroquine, right? Kind of me too. I guess I haven't been paying enough attention, but apparently they've been pushing this as well.

Oh, ivermectin, it is curing COVID all over the world. No, it is not. There's been one significant study about ivermectin saying, oh, this works for COVID. That study has been withdrawn because the data in it was apparently faked and the introduction to it was apparently plagiarized. Nevertheless, Fox News is busy saying don't take the vaccine but do take this horse deworming medication. Trust us, it is proven.

You could trust them or you could trust the FDA which says do not take ivermectin for COVID. You could trust the NIH which says do not take ivermectin for COVID. W.H.O. says do not take ivermectin for COVID. Even the company that makes the drug says, my god, seriously, people, do not take ivermectin for COVID. Yes, use it to deworm your horses but this is not a COVID drug.

Fox News says otherwise though. So now here, amid everything else they have to deal with, here is the state health department confirming to the "Mississippi Free Press" today that, yes, 70 percent of the poison control calls in Mississippi now are about people taking this drug, ivermectin they're buying at agricultural feed stores.

[21:10:04]

They're taking a livestock formulation of it because, hey, Fox News didn't warn them not to do that. For all the pressure on hospital beds in Mississippi, the state health department confirming at least one of the beds in the state is being taken up by someone who had to be hospitalized for taking this drug that Fox News Channel told them to take. Then they picked some up at the feed store.

And here is the state health officer of Mississippi today, exasperated, having to try to talk people out of even this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DR. THOMAS DOBBS, MS STATE HEALTH OFFICER: You know, please work with your doctor. This is medical treatment. You wouldn't get your chemotherapy at a feed store. I mean you wouldn't get your pneumonia with your animals medication. It can be dangerous to get the wrong doses of medication, especially for something that's meant for a horse or a cow.

So, you know, we understand the environment we live in, but it is really important if people have medical needs, go through your physician or provider.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: I know we are in a crisis in multiple states now because of -- basically because of low vaccine uptake. I kind of thought we were past the take other drugs instead, that right wing media and Trump fans tell you to take, but I guess not. I did not know we were still in the snake oil part of this.

But I'll tell you also, I went through some of the statements that former President Trump has made since leaving office and he actually has gone back to the hydroxychloroquine nonsense again since leaving office.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DONALD TRUMP, FORMER PRESIDENT: Hydroxychloroquine actually works. Remember? Remember? I made a mistake on hydroxy. I should have said, hydroxychloroquine is a disaster. Please do not use it. They would have said -- instead I said it works and now reports are coming out that it works.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: No, there are not reports coming out that it works. It doesn't work. It is not a good COVID drug. Neither is your horse stuff.

That was his first big political rally as a post-president in Ohio about eight weeks ago. Going back to the hydroxychloroquine thing again.

I will tell you, he is doing another rally tomorrow in rural Alabama. Hospitals in Alabama are completely overrun with COVID patients. The actual town he is appearing in literally just declared a COVID emergency today and he will be there doing a big rally tomorrow. We'll see how that goes.

But here is one other thing to see. In that same speech I just played a clip from, that same rally where he goes back to the hydroxychloroquine nonsense, that was about eight weeks ago, this is from that same speech.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TRUMP: Worse than Afghanistan, how about that? Worse than Afghanistan where, by the way, I started the process, all of the troops are coming back home. They couldn't stop the process. Twenty-one years in enough, don't we think? Twenty-one years.

They couldn't stop the process. They wanted to, but it was very tough to stop the process when other things -- years by a government that wouldn't last. The only way they'll last is if we're there. What are we going to say? We'll stay for another 21 years? We'll stay for another 15.

The whole thing is ridiculous. We are bringing our troops back home from Iraq. We are bringing troops back home from Afghanistan.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: I started the process. All of the troops coming back home. They couldn't stop the process once I started it. It was very tough to stop the process.

Then he says the government there won't last. The only way they last is if we're there. It is ridiculous. So I started the process. They couldn't stop it to bring all of the troops home. The audience applauds. That was eight weeks ago.

You know, whether or not you think it is a good idea or a bad idea to have brought home U.S. troops from the war in Afghanistan, here is the former president bragging about how he's the one who set that in motion, and he set it in motion in a way that could not be stopped even though, even though he said the Afghan government would definitely fall as soon as our troops left.

He's bragging about that, right? He is getting applause for that from his supporters. Now it is actually less than eight weeks since he said that. U.S. troops, in fact, did leave and the Afghan government did, in fact, immediately fall. Now he's leading his supporters, you know, in unbridled chest-pounding outrage that President Biden must resign, that it is so terrible that U.S. troops left and that the Afghan government fell.

Again, whether or not you are for or against U.S. troops leaving Afghanistan, you can't be for it, you can't take credit for doing it and for doing it in such a way that your successor could not reverse, you can't say you were for it, take credit for doing it, say that you made it so that nobody else had any choice and then also be against it when it happens, can you?

[21:15:01]

I don't know. It seems like these days anything is possible. Take, for example, Republican Congressman Bill Posey of Florida. Here is a statement his office put out Tuesday of this week.

Quote, recent events in Afghanistan underscore the need for a proper plan when conducting military operations. Every effort should have been made to evacuate Americans, our allies and military equipment before pulling out. Fair enough.

Every effort should have been made to evacuate our allies, Congressman Posey. Every effort? Every effort?

Three weeks before he put out that statement, Congressman Bill Posey of Florida was confronted with an actual thing he could do on this actual subject, not theoretical, but what some might call making an actual plan related to military operations. 22nd of July, House of Representatives voted on whether or not to expedite the processing of special immigrant visas for our Afghan allies, for Afghan interpreters, contractors and security personnel who worked with U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

He says this week, every effort should have been made to evacuate our allies. Literally three weeks, three weeks before that he got the opportunity to vote to make more of an effort to evacuate our allies and he voted no on that. He voted no on doing more to evacuate our Afghan allies, and now he says he is outraged that more wasn't done. Can he do that?

Can President Trump both take credit for withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan, for setting it in motion in a way that could not be reversed, and also be against the fact that it happened? Can a congressman like Bill Posey in Florida be outraged that more was not done to make sure our Afghan allies were evacuated right after he voted against doing more to make sure we would evacuate our Afghan allies? Can you? Can you do that?

Olivia Troye served as counterterrorism and homeland security adviser to Vice President Mike Pence during the Trump administration. She served as a key convener of the White House COVID task force and she quit that senior level job in the Trump White House during the COVID crisis. She became a whistleblower basically about the things she saw within the administration that her conscience could no longer bear and she felt the public needed to know.

Today, Ms. Troye broke new ground and explained something publicly that had never been explained before. Why it is, what explains, why our Afghan allies as valued and high priority to us, why Afghans with this special visa category created for them because they worked with U.S. troops, they worked with the U.S. government, they worked as part of the security mission in Afghanistan, they helped our forces there, why can't they get their visa applications processed? Why is that process so broken and under resourced? Why does it take so long?

Here is Olivia Troye earlier today. I met with numerous external organizations during my White House tenure who advocated for refugees and pleaded for help in getting U.S. allies through the proceeds process. I got the phone calls and letters as the homeland security and counterterrorism advisor to Vice President Pence.

She said, quote, the system wouldn't budge, regardless of how much this was argued about in National Security Council meetings. The Pentagon weighed in saying we needed to get these allies through the process. Mattis and others sent memos.

Now, that's checkable actually and we checked and she is right about that. Here is Defense Secretary Jim Mattis' memo in September 2018 telling the administration, advising the administration as secretary of defense, do not limit the numbers of people you are going to let in. We need to protect and prioritize these Iraqis and Afghans who aligned with our diplomats and war fighters by providing essential mission support.

Olivia Troye today saying, quote, Mattis and others sent memos. We all knew the urgency, but the resources had been depleted.

Well, what does that mean? Why were the resources depleted?

Well, she has the story. She was there. She says, quote, there were cabinet meetings about this during the Trump administration where Stephen Miller would peddle his racist hysteria about Iraq and Afghanistan. He and his enablers across government would undermine anyone who worked on solving the SIV issue, the special immigrant visa issue, by devastating the system at Homeland Security and State.

She says, quote, I tracked this issue personally in my role during my White House tenure. We got nowhere on it because Trump and Stephen Miller had watchdogs in place at the Justice Department and Homeland Security, at State and security agencies that made the already cumbersome SIV process even more challenging.

Quote: The fear of people across the Trump administration to counter these enablers was palpable. There were numerous behind-closed-door meetings, strategizing about how to navigate this issue.

[21:20:01]

She says, quote, Trump had four years while putting this plan in place to evacuate these Afghan allies who were the lifelines for many of us who spent time in Afghanistan. They had been waiting a long time. The process slowed to a trickle for reviews, other priorities, then it came to a halt.

Now, to be clear, what Olivia Troye is saying here is that for the Afghans who helped U.S. troops and U.S. forces in Afghanistan who are now getting so much attention, right, for all of the right reasons, these are Afghan allies of our forces, they are supposed to be able to get visas to come here with their families in thanks for what they did for our country. A special visa category was created for them for just that purpose.

She is saying, yes, that process of getting that visa was already cumbersome, but she is saying under the Trump administration while they were making overt plans to end the war in Afghanistan and bring all U.S. troops home from Afghanistan like Trump was bragging about, right, while Trump was bragging that, yes, certainly he would bring home all of the troops and, yes, certainly the Afghan government would collapse as soon as he did that but he wanted all of the troops out anyway so that's what he was setting in motion in a way that couldn't be reversed by anyone, while they were setting all of that in motion during the trouble administration they were also simultaneously deliberately sabotaging the process.

What did she say? She called it devastating the system at Homeland Security and the State Department on purpose. So that those visas for our Afghan allies would be stuck in the system forever, so our Afghan allies wouldn't be able to get out as they were planning to take out all U.S. troops whereupon they knew the Afghan government would collapse.

They deliberately sabotaged the process to make sure those Afghan visas would not be processed in a timely manner.

Elizabeth Neuman who's a senior homeland security official under Trump, she today publicly confirmed the account of how it happened, the Trump administration deliberately sabotaging the visas for the Afghan allies which is why so many have been stuck all of this time.

And, you know, some has been hiding in plain sight. In 2019 a federal judge ruled the Trump administration broke the law by radically dragging out the process of administering these visas and refusing to give answers to Afghans and even members of Congress who were inquiring on behalf of Afghans who worked with U.S. troops and who had applied for the special visas. A federal judge ruled they broke the law by breaking the system so the visas would never get processed. It was hiding in plain sight that the system was broken under the Trump administration.

But still, it is another thing to have senior officials inside the administration say, yeah, that process was broken, it was broken deliberately. Deliberately in order to strand the Afghans who helped us.

Joining us now is Olivia Troye, who served in the White House as a top adviser to Vice President Mike Pence.

Olivia, Ms. Troye, it is nice to see you. Thank you for being back with us tonight.

OLIVIA TROYE, FORMER TOP AIDE TO VP MIKE PENCE: Thanks for having me. It is nice to see you again.

MADDOW: Let me just ask you if -- I mean we reported out what you wrote today as best as we could and tried to match it up with publicly available -- with other public reporting and publicly available documents. Obviously, you have been corroborated in your account by Elizabeth Neumann today who was at the Homeland Security Department and in a position to know.

Let me ask if I got anything wrong or if I'm misunderstanding any of this.

TROYE: No, that's exactly it. I think it has just been incredibly frustrating to me to watch some of the narratives being pushed now that if Trump were in office he would have, you know, rescued all of the translators and all of these interpreters and that all would be fine. It is also awful to watch the narratives saying -- secondary narratives saying the Afghan refugees and interpreters aren't welcome here.

So, I have been thinking about this. It has been bothering me the entire week as we watched scenes in Afghanistan unfold. Like many others who have been there on the ground, who travelled in Afghanistan and have gotten to know the Afghan people and know that the lifelines that these interpreters and other U.S. allies provided to us on the ground, it is hard to watch what is happening there.

I guess -- I guess my point in writing the thread was watching what is happening here and watching, you know, president Biden work now very hard to rescue a lot of these people while we still can, I just think about the thousands of people that were in this pipeline for several years, who should have been processed, who should have gotten through this pipeline. I'm talking about Afghans and I'm talking about Iraqis, too, right. We saw the withdrawal from Syria where we know, my colleague Elizabeth Neumann knows this, we think about this, we talk about it all the time, many of these people did not make it out alive and they were our allies there.

[21:25:00]

So watching this is incredibly angering and frustrating for me because for four years, this administration under Trump, they did no ironing and they decimated the process and they destroyed it. It was challenging for us working on these issues to really push the needle forward or get anything done.

Like I know Mike Pence knows this. You know, he knows that this fell under my portfolio, he knows that I followed up on it diligently. He would call on me to check on some of the applicants' visa and check on what the process was, but it was a well-known thing that Stephen Miller allies were across the agency.

We had to meet with them. They were heads of offices. They were installed on purpose. Some of these loyalists eventually were installed in the NFC whether other career servants who were dedicated to trying to figure this process out were then removed from the rolls and replaced with loyalists who only made this process harder.

MADDOW: Olivia, one of the things that emerged in the court case over this, it was a class action case brought in federal court on behalf of people who qualified for special immigrant visas who weren't getting them because the process got so broken, and one of the things that emerged in that court case, again, where the Trump administration was found to have broken the law by breaking the process so much on processing these things, is that while, as you say today, it started off as a cumbersome process the number of SIV visas that were issued over time by the U.S. government dramatically declined under President Trump and that the process actually broke the law.

There's a legal requirement in terms of how quickly people need to hear one way or the other about their application, and in almost every single case the law was broken because that time frame, that nine-month time frame was exceeded.

Was it clear to you within the Trump administration, was it clear in these discussions about these things that this was a deliberate thing? That there wasn't just something that had slowed down and gone wrong, that there was an on-purpose effort to make sure these visas were never going to get cleared?

TROYE: I think it was. For those of us who were working on this issue, we knew that the offices were under resourced, that they were overwhelmed, that they were working a number of things. The response would be like, well, there's a border crisis and asylum seekers.

And -- yeah, I mean, these people, it is the same office, a lot of them handle the same workload, that's true, but why aren't we resourcing them?

You mentioned the Mattis letter and the reason I mentioned that letter is because we were going to a cabinet meeting that he could not attend, and I remember that so vividly because he wanted to be on record via that memo that was delivered during that meeting to really highlight the fact that we needed to figure out how we were going to get these translators -- and this is specifically on Iraq -- into the pipeline when we were trying to basically, you know, reduce the refugee ceiling. That pipeline falls under that processing system, and he knew that the system was being under resourced and it was being targeted by people like Stephen Miller and these people.

So I use that as an example because, case in point, we navigated this issue very carefully. When I say closed door meetings, it was very hard. I had State Department people I worked with very closely who would behind-the-scenes have conversations with me and there were sometime situations where people would come to me and say, you're our last hope, can you push this through your office, can you push it through the office of the vice president, maybe your voice or maybe his voice will get through and matter on some of these issues.

MADDOW: Olivia Troye, served in the White House as a top adviser on Homeland Security and counterterrorism to Vice President Mike Pence. Thank you for your time tonight. I know even after all of this time it is not always easy to talk about these things but it is a public service. Thank you.

TROYE: Thanks for having me.

MADDOW: All right. We've got much more ahead tonight. Stay with us.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REPORTER: On Afghanistan, are you afraid that once the U.S. pulls out that the Taliban will basically just overrun --

TRUMP: You know, eventually countries have to take care of themselves. We can't be there for the next -- another 20 years. We have been there for 20 years.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

[21:33:29]

MADDOW: Even as the Pentagon said today they were able to get more people out of Kabul than any previous day, they got 5,700 people out in one day today, for one eight-hour stretch today no planes took off from Kabul at all. While that was worrying, the defense department later explained it actually wasn't a problem on the ground, at least on the runway at Kabul. It was actually an issue on the ground where those flights were going.

Most of the evac flights have been ferrying people out of Afghanistan to Qatar. That's where the state department has been processing visa holders, visa applicants, even American citizens before they're flown to the United States or some other temporary destination.

But today, apparently, the site at Qatar, they've been flying to was full up. The defense department said their landing site in Qatar was at capacity, so all of the flights out of Kabul were paused until they could start sending planes to a different destination to make more room for the next incoming groups.

The Defense Department said they're setting up addition allocations for the flights out of Kabul to head to, another allied nation in the region that will be next after Qatar has done its part for the first few days. They're hoping this kind of backlog doesn't happen again. The flights out of Kabul did resume after the eight-hour pause.

As I mentioned, President Biden announced today 5,700 people were successfully evacuated from Afghanistan in one day today. Those kinds of numbers were close to the 5,000 to 9,000 capacity that the Pentagon said at the beginning of the week was the physical capacity for this airlift operation.

At least in the most basic terms of the sheer number of people they're able to fly out every day, it seems like maybe today was a mark toward hitting that stride.

Joining us is NBC Pentagon correspondent Courtney Kube.

Courtney, I know it has been an incredibly long and intense week for you. Thank you for being here.

COURTNEY KUBE, NBC NEWS PENTAGON CORRESPONDENT: Sure. Thanks for having me.

MADDOW: It feels like that 5,700 number is a much better number than we have been seeing. Is that getting close to what the Defense Department wants to be doing on a daily basis now until they have cleared all of the people they want to clear?

KUBE: Yes. I mean they actually -- if they were operating at their full capacity that they have the ability to do, they could get upwards of 9,000 out a day. I mean what -- what's difficult here is the numbers. They're just confusing. They always are in these cases, and how do you measure the 24 hours?

So what we know is they had really ramped up the evacuations up until late yesterday, and that was when there became this capacity issue at the next place where they were taking these evacuees, namely in Doha in Qatar. They were able to get thousands out throughout the course of the week, but you take them someplace that takes several days in many cases for them to process and move them on to another location.

So they just got a backlog. They could only care for so many people, and they're not going to take these refugees, many of them carrying a backpack and nothing else, and they're not going to take them and not provide food and water, shelter, sanitation for them. So that's what we saw today.

And, basically, it led to what was really a scramble, a diplomatic scramble to find other locations where they could send some of these people. This is both Afghans, Americans, there's some other sort of third country nationals, some other NATO allies. And there was a long stretch of time today, somewhere between six and eight hours, where there were no flights.

I should point out that when that first flight went out, then there was another lag of several more hours before another flight. There really was a slowdown, but defense department officials feel pretty confident they will be able to -- now that they've identified several other locations including Germany, that they're going to be able to get the flights coming and going back towards the pace where they were yesterday.

MADDOW: And, Courtney, in terms of the dangerous conditions outside the Kabul airport, the gates and the walls of the Kabul airport, there was interesting reporting somewhat contested by the Pentagon this evening there have been at least a limited number of helicopter airlifts within Kabul, and according to the "AP" even beyond Kabul where various U.S. government agencies, both military and intelligence agencies have been able to pick up and ferry them to the airport to get out.

Now, as I mentioned, it seems a little contested. It seems there's no on-the-record agreement as to what is the extent of this. But is this your sense it is actually a resource being employed to get people over the wall and through the gate?

KUBE: And we heard from President Biden for the first time today this was a possibility. After asking this question all week and being told, well, you know, at one point, Secretary Austin seemed to indicate that the U.S. didn't have the capacity.

Well, the reality is the U.S. military has the capacity to do this. But for first time we heard today about some U.S. military Chinook helicopters that went and picked up 169 Americans and brought them back into Kabul airport. So, Chinooks are a people mover. They can carry upwards of 30 people, it depends on sort of how they're configured on the inside.

But what is interesting about this is our viewers may not be really familiar with Kabul airport but there is a hotel that's literally maybe 100, maybe 200 meters away from the -- one of the gates called the Abbey Gate. It is the Barron Hotel. They were able to pick these individuals up and literally hop them, it is a very short hop via Chinook helicopter into Kabul airport.

The reason being I guess these individuals all met at the Barron and they were going to get some sort of access into the Abbey Gate, but in the interim before they were able to get to the gate a large crowd of people, Afghans -- it is not really clear who it was, but I guess there was some potential danger for them to walk that distance. So the military came in and sent helicopters in.

Why this is significant is because is this a harbinger of what could be coming? Is it possible that the U.S. military may decide to start picking up other people? At this point it doesn't seem so. It seems like this really is -- was a case where they were very close to the airport. It was a relatively easy landing zone. It was a safe and quick flight, but it opens up the possibility combined with the fact that President Biden today said that they were going to get every American out and he opened up the door to picking people up who may not be able to get to the airport on their own.

MADDOW: Courtney Kube, NBC's Pentagon correspondent who has been up approximately 40 hours per day for the past seven days. Courtney, thank you so much for being here with us tonight. I appreciate it.

Your reporting has been fantastic. Thank you.

KUBE: Thank you. Thank you very much.

MADDOW: All right. More news ahead. Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

[21:44:23]

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DR. SCOTT HARRIS, ALABAMA STATE HEALTH OFFICER: Alabama's pandemic of unvaccinated people continues. We have not had a particularly good week. We have seen increases in our hospitalizations again. As you know, our state has a net negative capacity of ICU beds at this time, which is extremely problematic.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: A net negative capacity. Alabama state health officer Dr. Scott Harris, saying the state of Alabama has not had a particularly good week.

As we reported last night, the state of things in Alabama right now is not good in a simple and easy to understand way. As he said, they have negative ICU capacity.

[21:45:01]

They have no ICU beds available at all, and the ones that are in existence and being used have a wait list for them. Hospital beds in the state are maxed out all over the state. And that is happening with a statewide patient census right now, statewide patient numbers right now of 2,700, 2,800. That's the crisis level at Alabama.

Well, now, doctors are predicting by next month, it's going to be more like 5,000 people that need to be hospitalized in the state. Where are they going to go?

And you can see the strain in individual communities across the state. For example, in Coleman, Alabama, which is the city where president Trump plans to hold what he is calling his epic political rally tomorrow, in advance of that rally, Coleman today declared a COVID state of emergency.

Today, a hospital down in southern Alabama on the Gulf Coast, a town called Foley, announced they're getting a deployment of federal medical staff, federal medical staff from the federal Department of Health and Human Services to come and reinforce their staffing because they're stretched beyond breaking.

As Alabama struggles, one of the things the state is relying on heavily, really trying hard to pivot hard to, is getting antibody treatments for people who have tested positive in order to try to keep them out of the hospital, monoclonal antibody treatments.

One doctor with a lot of experience with that is our next guest. Dr. David Thrasher is respiratory director at Jackson Hospital. He's an educator on monoclonal antibody treatments. He's helping to manage all the critical care patients across Montgomery.

Dr. Thrasher, it's a pleasure to have you with us tonight. Thank you for being here.

DR. DAVID THRASHER, JACKSON HOSPITAL RESPIRATORY DIRECTOR: Glad to be here.

MADDOW: I'm worried about that simple math in the state where we've got between 2,700 and 2,800 people in the hospital and it seems to be a tipping point in terms of no ICU beds and most hospitals having no beds at all, but this prediction that those numbers of people needing to be hospitalized might nearly double within a month. I just don't -- I don't understand how the state is going to cope with that strain.

THRASHER: It is going to be very hard. We are already maxed out. I don't have any ICU beds available.

I said a year ago, you give me a good nurse and a ventilator and I can put you in a parking lot and have an ICU. I got a parking lot, I got a ventilator. I don't have -- my good nurses are out homesick. We have a lot of health care providers out homesick.

The last three days, I have been notified I am treating nine providers right now. Those providers are not taking care of patients. I had one entire family practice group went out, one day. It is tough.

MADDOW: Talk to me about this -- the hope that you have for monoclonal antibody treatments. I saw you were quoted in an Alabama paper calling them the golden goose for treating COVID. You said, everybody understands this is the answer.

We've been talking about these treatments for a long time on the show and the NIH now says that it is very easy to qualify for these treatments, and they, of course, are free to the patient. The federal government will cover the cost of them.

Can you explain why you are hopeful about them and whether it might offer a sort of way out or at least a relief valve in your state?

THRASHER: Sure. I was contacted last November about five days after Lilly got approval for emergency use authorization for their product. We started -- I got educated on it, started using those and Alabama at that time had more moan more monoclonal antibodies given per capita than any state.

We've been doing this for years. We've developed infrastructure across the state, myself and another doctor, helped us get infusion centers across the state. That helped us from surging last summer. We have a different now, Regeneron product, the same thing that President Trump got.

We have broad eligibility requirements. I said if you are greater than 12 years old and you can walk and talk in Alabama, you probably qualify. Now, way mean by that, you have to have -- BMI of 25, and that's pretty thin, and a few other things to qualify.

Most people qualify. If people will get to us and let us know early, within ten days of symptoms -- not diagnosis but symptoms, we can keep you out of the hospital over 70 percent of the time and the mortality drops dramatically. It is, as I call it, the golden goose.

If we could get people treated early, and that's what we're trying to do in Alabama, expand capacity, and our problem here is so many of our good nurses and techs are out sick.

MADDOW: Dr. David Thrasher, respiratory director at Jackson Hospital in Montgomery, Alabama -- you are in the middle of a very difficult storm but making really resourceful decisions, sir. Good luck to you and your team. Come back, keep us apprised. We'll -- we've got Alabama on our hearts to nights.

THRASHER: Thank you very much.

MADDOW: All right.

We will be right back, right back. Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

[21:54:03]

MADDOW: I know it has been a really heavy week in the news. I'm hoping you will indulge me for just a second while I give you a little bit of good news -- from a personal perspective, this is impugns out of Afghanistan tonight. Just give me a second.

Last night, if you saw the show, we were joined live here on the air from the Kabul airport by a longtime NBC producer named Ahmed Mengli.

Ahmed is a journalist. He's been working with NBC and other news outlets out of Kabul for nearly 20 years. He is not at all a stranger when it comes to dangerous situations and dangerous reporting. Even just this week since Kabul fell he has been going out of his way to track down and interview Taliban fighters like this one, this is his interview footage just this week.

But as much as we had Ahmed on last night as a journalist and talked to him about what's going on in Kabul, we also had him on to talk about his own experience as a dad and a husband trying to get his wife and kids into the airport and out of the country. Here is another piece of video that we have thanks to Ahmed, thanks to Mr. Mengli.

[21:55:02]

It shows the gigantic groups of people crowding up against the Kabul airport gates and blast walls, desperately trying to get in. He was able to shoot that footage because he was in the middle of it. He and his family were cleared to leave and vouched for and everything set up, but as he told us last night, they still had an intense struggle, a physical struggle just to get through and into the airport.

As of last night's show when we talked to him live, he was still with his family at the airport. They were not able yet to get onto a plane. But I can now happily report that not only was Ahmed's family able to safely get on a plane, I can report tonight they are safely out of the country now, they are out of Afghanistan.

And as we reported, Ahmed himself was at the airport to make sure they got on a plane but he did not get on the plane, he himself is staying behind of his own volition. He wants to keep doing his job. He wants to keep interviewing some of the most dangerous people in the world to document what happens in Afghanistan now once Western forces leave.

I mean, at least as of tonight he can do so with the peace of mind of knowing his family is out of harm's way.

It's been so much bad news this week, so much bad news out of Afghanistan this week, at least it's night to get this little bit.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MADDOW: Thank you for being with us tonight. Like I said, it has been a heavy week in the news. But the weight of it doesn't mean we can walk away from it.

Thanks for being with us tonight, thanks for being with us all week. I will see you again on Monday night.

Now it's time for "THE LAST WORD" with the great Jonathan Capehart filling in for Lawrence tonight.

Good evening, Jonathan. It's nice to see you.

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