

Groton Daily Independent

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Mon., July 31, 2017

31

Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, broccoli, garlic toast, orange sherbet.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study at 6:30 a.m.

Olive Grove: Kid's Lessons

5:30 p.m.: Special School Board Meeting

- 1- Recycling trailers
- 1- Groton Ford Ad
- 2- Chicken Soup of the Soul image
- 3- Special School Board Meeting Agenda
- 3- Pappas receives Elks Award
- 4- Vehicles Heat Up Quickly – Protect Passengers from Heatstroke
- 5- Weekly Vikings Roundup
- 6- Today in Weather History
- 7- Today's Forecast
- 8- Yesterday's Weather
- 8- Today's Weather Info
- 8- National Weather Map
- 9- Daily Devotional
- 10- News from the Associated Press

Official Notices

- Brown County (Updated 7-26)**
- Groton City Book (updated 7-26)**
- Groton Area School (updated 7-26)**
- Frederick Area School Book (updated 7-26)**
- Westport Town Book (updated 7-26)**
- Frederick Town (updated 7-18)**
- Other Official Notices Book**
- Claremont Town Official Notices Book**

Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave.

The cardboard/paper
recycling trailer at the school is **Open**

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The real
voyage of
discovery
consists not
of seeking new
landscapes
but in having
new eyes.

Marcel Proust

GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

Special School Board Meeting

July 31, 2017 – 5:30 PM – GHS Conference Room

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Approve hiring Chance Strom, Boys Soccer Coach for the 2017 season.
2. Approve Craig Sternhagen as Volunteer Assistant Boys Soccer coach.
3. Approve hiring Ryan Scepaniak as JH Football Coach for 2017 season.

ADJOURN



Keri Pappas, receiving the plaque and scholarship, from the South Dakota Elks; from Lee Schinkel, representing the Aberdeen Elks Lodge.

Vehicles Heat Up Quickly – Protect Passengers from Heatstroke

Summer is NOT over - kids and pets remain at risk

July 31, 2017 – Despite the recent break in oppressive temperatures, heatstroke poses a significant safety threat to children and pets left alone in hot cars. National Heatstroke Prevention Day is today, Monday, July 31, and AAA South Dakota is joining other advocacy groups and safety organizations to warn drivers to never leave children or pets alone in a vehicle.

Heatstroke is the leading cause of non-crash-related fatalities for children 14 and younger, with an average of 37 fatalities per year since 1998.

“Drivers may think it’s okay to leave children and pets unattended in a vehicle while they run a quick errand,” says Marilyn Buskohl, manager of Public and Government Affairs for AAA South Dakota. “The decision to choose perceived convenience over safety can have tragic consequences.”

Some scary statistics:

To date, 26 children have died from vehicular heatstroke in 2017, 18 since Memorial Day weekend.

Vehicle heatstroke claimed the lives of 39 children in 2016.

A child’s body heats up three to five times faster than an adult’s body

A child can die of heat stroke on a 72-degree day

On a 95-degree day a car can heat up to over 180-degrees

The steering wheel can reach 159 degrees (temperature for cooking medium rare meat)

The seats can reach 162 degrees (temperature for cooking ground beef)

The dash can reach 181 degrees (temperature for cooking poultry)

At 104 degrees internal organs start to shut down

Of the 636 heatstroke deaths in children from 1998-2014:

53% child “forgotten” by caregiver (336 children)

29% child playing in unattended vehicle (186 children)

17% child intentionally left in vehicle by adult (110 children)

“In the summer heat a vehicle’s interior can reach lethal temperatures very quickly, essentially creating an oven, causing a child’s internal organs to shut down if left unattended inside,” said Buskohl. “Young children should never be left alone in a vehicle under any circumstances. Even if you have to put a reminder post-it note on your dashboard, an alarm on your phone or a stuffed animal in the front seat to remember to take a child out of the car, do it.”

AAA South Dakota Urges Motorists To ACT:

A—Avoid heatstroke by never leaving a child in the car alone, not even for a minute.

C—Create reminders by putting something in the backseat you need when exiting the car - for example, a cell phone, purse, wallet, briefcase or shoes. Never leave car keys or car remote where children can get to them.

T—Take action and immediately call 9-1-1- if you notice a child unattended in a car.

When it comes to heatstroke, your animals are also at risk. Leaving them in a vehicle while you run into a store, take a break at a rest stop during a family road trip or for any other reason, can have deadly consequences. Make no mistake – just because your pet can’t tell you they are in distress, doesn’t mean they aren’t. Animals left in hot cars can face irreversible organ damage, heat stroke, brain damage and, in extreme cases, death.

Signs of heatstroke in dogs and cats can include:

Panting

Excessive drooling

Vomiting

Reddened gums and tongue

Rapid heart rate

Wobbly, uncoordinated movement

Animals are also at a more severe rate of risk when they have factors like age (very young, very old), obesity, poor heart/lung conditioning, are a short-nosed, flat-faced breed, or have a thick hair coat.

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Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

Last week, the Minnesota Vikings began their training camp program. Training camp is an important date, because it means there will be football activity nearly every day between now and the championship game. Football season is finally here!

If you weren't able to follow the team news this past week, here is what you may have missed...

Teddy Bridgewater was officially placed on the Physically Unable to Perform (PUP) list. He will be able to attend team meetings and workout at the facility, but he won't be able to practice with the team until he is medically cleared by a doctor. This move comes as no surprise, and he will likely remain on the PUP list through week 6 of the regular season, at which time his contract would toll and the Vikings would be able to bring him back next season.

Everson Griffen still had two years left on his contract, but he's such a vital player on Mike Zimmer's defense that the team decided to give him a contract extension. NFL Network reported the contract was worth \$58 million. Griffen is now locked up through the 2022 season, and he seems beyond excited, saying he couldn't be more proud to be a "Viking for life".

After the Vikings locked up one of the league's best defensive ends, they locked up one of the league's best cornerbacks when they gave a 5-year, \$70 million extension to Xavier Rhodes. He is also now under contract with the Vikings through the 2022 season. Rhodes was listed as the best cornerback in the league last season, according to Matt Harmon of NFL.com. Harmon used Next Gen Stats to determine the best cover corner, and not only was Rhodes number one, it wasn't very close. This deal is a steal for the Vikings, who locked up a great player who is entering his prime.

Of course, it wouldn't be a Vikings training camp without an injury along the offensive line. The news broke on Thursday that newly-signed left tackle Riley Reiff left practice early with an undisclosed injury. Head coach Mike Zimmer later said it was just a "twinge" and it shouldn't keep him out for an extended amount of time. Let's hope it isn't anything serious, because the offensive line cannot afford another year of injuries.

The rookies arrived at training camp on Sunday, three days before the veterans. Even though pads weren't allowed at those practices, it didn't take long for Dalvin Cook to impress. The running back showed his athleticism and shiftiness, making decisive cuts and repeatedly outrunning the defense to the edge. Cook also showed his commitment to becoming great, arriving early and staying after practice to work with Vikings running backs coach Kennedy Polamalu. Fellow running back Latavius Murray was placed on the PUP to begin training camp, and even though he's expected back soon, his absence creates an opportunity for Cook to grab a hold of the starting gig.

Laquon Treadwell has shown improvement and looks primed to play significantly more snaps his sophomore season. He is battling with Michael Floyd to be the team's third wide receiver, and will earn the spot if he is at least equal to Floyd (who will miss the first four games of the season). Treadwell appears to have gained confidence, which is leading to crisp routes and aggressive catches. Receivers usually take three years before they produce, so there is still plenty of time for Treadwell to become the player we all hoped he could be.

If you have any Vikings related questions, feel free to reach out to me through Facebook ([facebook.com/SkolJWright](https://www.facebook.com/SkolJWright)) or on Twitter (@SkolJWright). Skol!

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Today in Weather History

July 31, 1966: A deadly, estimated F3 tornado moved southeast, passing south of Ashley, North Dakota, destroying buildings on five farms with near F4 damage to one farm house. Another tornado with F2 strength occurred north of Long Lake where two adults were killed, and three children were injured as a car was thrown 500 feet from Highway 101. A second estimated F2 tornado moved ENE just south of Aberdeen. A trailer was demolished, killing a man and injuring his wife. Seven airplanes were also had damage. Property damage was estimated at a quarter million dollars. An estimated 90 mph wind gust was also reported northeast of Aberdeen.

July 31, 2008: In the early morning hours of the 31st, a line of storms originating in North Dakota began to expand and surge southeast into northeast South Dakota. As the storms moved southeast, they started to tap into warmer, more humid air and rapidly evolve into a line of severe thunderstorms. Widespread damage occurred in a wide swath extending from Long Lake in McPherson County all the way into eastern Grant County and southern Big Stone County in Minnesota. The most extensive damage was found along and near US Highway 12 from Aberdeen to Milbank. Several observing stations in the path of this system measured wind speeds ranging from 70 mph to over 115 mph. Estimated wind speeds from damage surveys indicated even stronger winds with peak speeds of 120 mph.

Over fifty communities in northeast South Dakota and the surrounding rural areas received minor to major tree, and structural damage as straight line winds from 70 to 120 mph raced across the area. Webster and Waubay received the most extensive damage from the storms. Thousands of trees were snapped or uprooted, hundreds of grain bins were damaged or destroyed, hundreds of homes, businesses, and out-buildings were damaged or destroyed along with many power poles and miles of power lines downed. Many mobile homes, campers, and boats were damaged or destroyed along with many road and business signs.

Fallen trees also damaged countless homes, vehicles, and campers. Thousands of acres of crops were also damaged or destroyed by the winds and hail. The greatest crop damage occurred in the Roslyn, Grenville, Eden, and Pickerel Lake areas in Marshall and Day counties. Many acres of corn were blown down and not able to come back. The large hail combined with the strong winds also broke out many windows in homes and vehicles along with damaging the siding on homes. Thousands of people were left without power for up to several days. Large hay bales were moved up to 700 yards by the high winds. A semi was overturned on Highway 12 near Webster, injuring the driver. Near Milbank on Highway 12, two other semis were blown off the road resulting in injuries to both drivers. A State Forestry Specialist said it was one of the worst tree damage events he has ever seen in the Webster area. A fifty-eight-year-old man died two miles north of Waubay during the cleanup after the storms when he was pinned between a backhoe and a tree.

1715: Spanish treasure ships, returning from the New World to Spain, encountered a hurricane during the early morning hours on this day. Eleven of the twelve ships were lost near present-day Vero Beach, Florida.





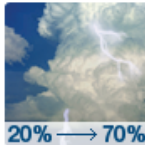


1949: Lightning struck a baseball field at Baker, Florida during a game. The shortstop and third baseman were killed instantly.

1987: The second deadliest tornado in Canadian history occurred in Edmonton, Alberta. An F4 tornado killed 27 people, injured over 300, and caused a quarter of a billion dollars in damage.

1997: South Pole, Antarctica recorded their coldest July ever. The average temperature of -86.8 degrees broke the previous record of -83.6 degrees set in July 1965.

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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
						
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear then Slight Chance T-storms	Slight Chance T-storms	Partly Cloudy	Slight Chance T-storms then T-storms Likely	T-storms Likely	Chance T-storms
High: 88 °F	Low: 64 °F	High: 85 °F	Low: 59 °F	High: 77 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 72 °F

Today
Highs: 80s To Low 90s
Isolated Storms South
Central

Tonight
Lows: 60s
Isolated Storms
North Central - Northeast

Tuesday
Highs: 80s
Scattered PM Storms



National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD

www.weather.gov/abr

 NWSAberdeen

Created: 7/31/2017 5:01 AM

 @NWSAberdeen



Published on: 07/31/2017 at 5:08AM

A weak system drifting across south-central/southeast South Dakota could support a weak, heat of the afternoon storm or two - otherwise the area will remain dry till a front moves out of North Dakota tonight. This feature will provide the focus for an isolated storm or two. As the front continues south during the day, daytime heating will result in additional development of scattered storm activity. We will also see another system with widespread storm activity Wednesday.

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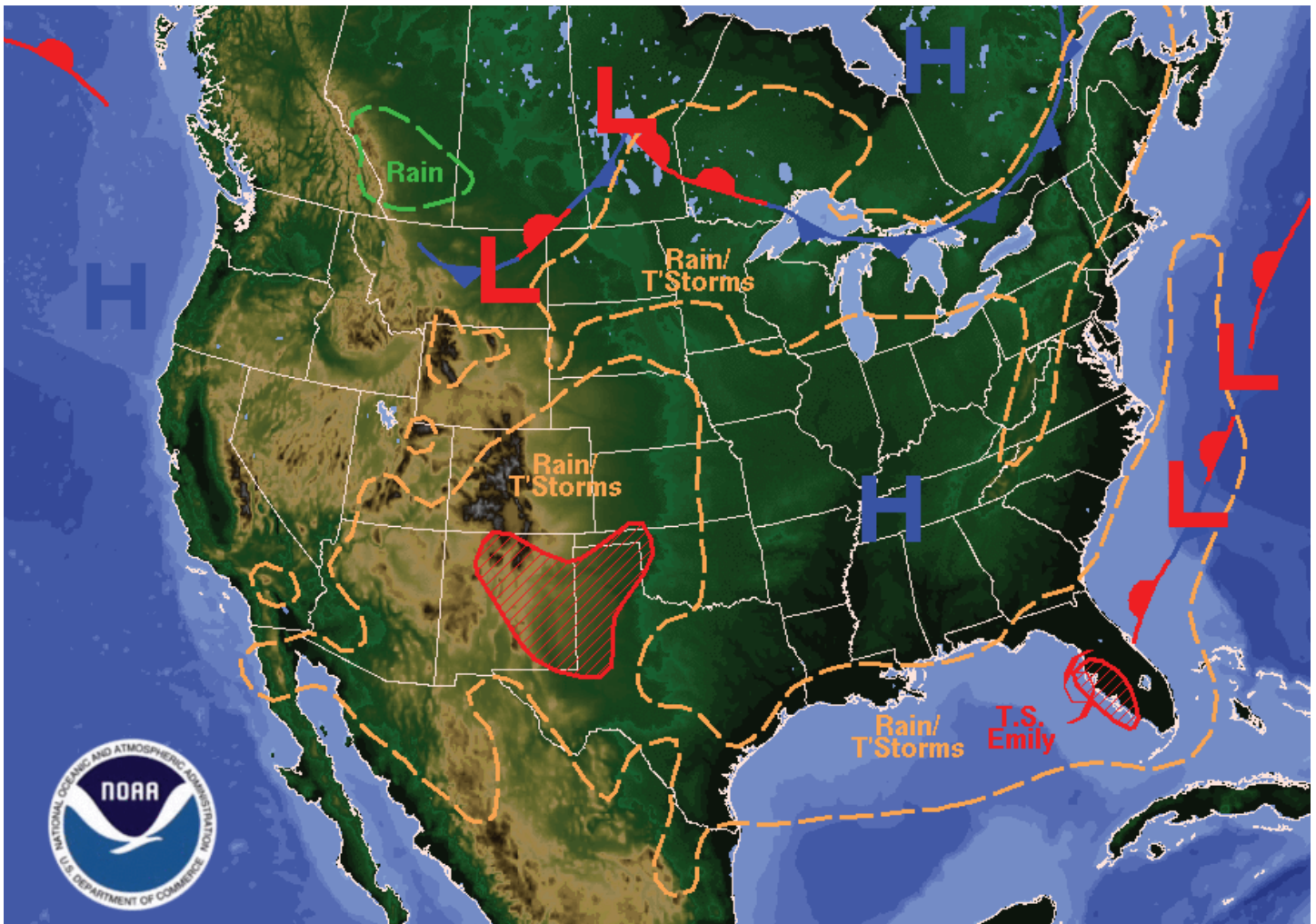
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 85.2 F at 5:57 PM
Low Outside Temp: 65.3 F at 11:58 PM
High Gust: 21.0 Mph at 4:45 PM
Precip: 0.11

Today's Info

Record High: 106° in 1987
Record Low: 42° in 1903
Average High: 84°F
Average Low: 59°F
Average Precip in July: 3.02
Precip to date in July: 1.58
Average Precip to date: 13.86
Precip Year to Date: 7.35
Sunset Tonight: 9:02 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:18 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Mon, Jul 31, 2017, issued 7:44 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Santorelli with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain
Rain and T'Storms
Rain and Snow
Snow

Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)
Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)
Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)
Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

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WHEN GOD IS SILENT

The second grade teacher stood before her noisy class, raised her voice and shouted, "I want you to be so quiet that you can hear a pin drop!"

Silence suddenly prevailed. When Danny could no longer contain himself, he shouted, "Let `er drop!"

It's not unusual to have an attitude like that toward God. We pray and wait. Then pray again. Then wait a little longer. Still, nothing happens. It seems as though we are waiting for "the pin to drop."

Psalm 28 begins with the "silence of God." In fact, He is so silent that the Psalmist becomes impatient and shouts, "If you don't answer soon, I will be like those going down to their grave – abandoned!"

The subtle message from David was that if God did not answer his prayer his enemies would rejoice. "They," he reminds God, "care nothing for what You have done or what Your hands have made." In other words, "God, I don't want You to be embarrassed. I don't want people to ridicule You. I've laid my life and Your reputation on the line and if You are silent, if You let me down, they will believe that You are untrustworthy!"

David was not afraid to present his case to God and demand help. He did not want "unbelievers" to look at his situation and say, "I told you so. Your God is no more dependable than ours. He's not even listening!"

Not so. David looked at them and said, "I praise the Lord! For He has heard my cry for mercy." David prayed. God answered. And everyone saw God "at work."

Prayer: Father, when You seem silent may our faith never falter knowing that You will hear, help and heal. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 28:6 Praise be to the LORD, for he has heard my cry for mercy.

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Rulings on juvenile life sentences affect 3 in South Dakota

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A national debate over juvenile life without parole is real for three inmates in South Dakota.

The U.S. Supreme Court in 2012 banned mandatory life without parole for juvenile killers and last year made its ruling retroactive. State lawmakers in 2016 went further, prohibiting any life term for minors.

Three so-called juvenile lifers have been resentenced in South Dakota.

Paul Jensen killed a cab driver in 1996 and received concurrent terms of 200 years. He's eligible for parole in 2021, at 39.

Daniel Charles killed his stepfather in 1999. He was sentenced to 92 years and is eligible for parole in 2045, at 60.

Jessi Owens pleaded guilty in a 1998 hammer beating death and was sentenced to 40 years. She's eligible for parole in 2018, at 37.

Fast-spreading trees a headache in Nebraska, Iowa, Dakotas

By **GRANT SCHULTE**, Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Trees that suck up sunlight and groundwater at the expense of other prairie plants are creating new headaches throughout the Plains, including Nebraska, western Iowa and the Dakotas.

The eastern red cedar tree spreads so quickly that it catches many landowners off-guard, consuming huge areas of productive rangeland and threatening many of the area's original prairies. At one point in Nebraska, the trees expanded at a pace of nearly 40,000 acres a year — an area roughly half the size of Omaha — until conservationists joined forces with local ranchers to conduct more brush-clearing burns.

Conservationists call it a "green glacier" that started in Texas and Oklahoma and swept north across the Plains into Kansas, Nebraska, western Iowa and the Dakotas.

"It gets worse every day," said John Ortmann, a rangeland ecologist in Ord, Nebraska, who has worked with conservation groups to thin the eastern red cedar population. "Some people say, 'Wait until it's a problem.' That's like saying, 'I'm not going to change my oil until the engine blows up.'"

The trees traditionally survived on steep, north-facing slopes in canyons where prairie fires couldn't reach. But then settlers started using them as windbreaks and doused wildfires, and birds further spread



In this Friday, July 28, 2017 photo, an eastern red cedar tree grows near a corn field in Cortland, Neb. The fast-growing trees species that sucks up sunlight and groundwater at the expense of other plant life is creating new headaches for farmers and ranchers throughout the Midwest, including Nebraska and Iowa. (AP Photo/Nati Harnik)

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the trees by eating seeds, then excreting them while perched atop power lines.

The trees are native to the Plains but they can grow so thick that many animals can't use them for shelter. They tower over smaller native plants and grasses, sucking up all sunlight and groundwater and turning prairie grass into barren patches of dirt. Without native grasses, water runoff increases and erodes the soil.

"The land becomes absolutely worthless," Ortmann said. "Once they've grown up, they take everything on the prairie. You can have hundreds of different kinds of plants, or you can have cedar trees. You can't have both."

In western Iowa, conservationists worry about the tree encroaching on the Loess Hills, an ecosystem with some of the state's few remaining prairies.

"It's a constant management issue," said Lindsey Barney, an Oakland-based district forester for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. "I'd say we're all concerned about it in western Iowa. These prairie remnants (in the Loess Hills) aren't the last ones in the state, but they're of a very high quality."

Barney said she considers the tree valuable in forested areas and as a natural windbreak. But in prairies, she said the tree can quickly dominate the landscape.

In Nebraska, the trees have been spreading quickly and reducing the number to pre-2000 levels would cost an estimated \$100 million, said Adam Smith of the Nebraska Forest Service

Removing the trees can cost as much as \$2,000 an acre in states like Oklahoma and Texas, where they've spread out of control. Clearing them in Nebraska can reach up to \$200 an acre, conservationists said, but the cost is likely to rise as they proliferate.

The trees also produce highly flammable needles and resin, and were partly to blame for massive wildfires that burned city-sized swaths of land in Nebraska in 2012.

"It's such a slow, benign progression, until one day you wake up and half your ranch is gone," said Pete Bauman, a range field specialist at South Dakota State University. "It's a huge problem for rangeland. Once the trees get to a point where you start to recognize they're a problem, they're much more difficult to control."

Bauman said landowners don't always realize they have a problem and fail to act before the trees are large and much harder to remove. Ranchers are most reluctant in parts of the Dakotas, which haven't yet seen a full outbreak.

Rangeland dominated by the trees typically loses about 75 percent of its profitability, said Dirac Twidwell, a rangeland and fire ecologist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The trees muscle out forage and grasses on which cattle graze. Reducing the amount of grasslands could also cut into K-12 public school state aid, which comes in part from leases on state-owned grasslands, Twidwell said.

"Because we're a grassland state, the consequences of the cedars are profound," he said.

Landowners in the Plains have formed landowner "burn cooperatives" to clear the trees before they spread out of control.

"It's definitely a problem," said Ed Hubbs, a volunteer with the Tri County Prescribed Burn Association, which works mostly in Lancaster, Seward and Saline counties in Nebraska. The trees "certainly take up resources and physical space as well, not just water and nutrients."

Hubbs, of Lincoln, said the trees become much more difficult to burn the larger they become, forcing crews to use chain saws or burn larger fires.

The prescribed burns are intended to prevent the trees from becoming as widespread as they are in Oklahoma and Kansas, said John Erixson, deputy director of the Nebraska Forest Service. Erixson said the trees are most prevalent in the eastern two-thirds of Nebraska, but they're now encroaching on the state's Sandhills, an ecologically fragile area of grass-covered sand dunes.

The eastern red cedar tree created major headaches for Robert Dutcher, who spent about three years removing hundreds of trees that spread over his family's property near Greeley, Nebraska. Some trees were 12 feet tall with 14-inch-thick trunks by the time he removed them.

"It just turns into a forest if you don't take care of them," Dutcher said. "It happens quicker than you think."

Follow Grant Schulte on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/GrantSchulte>

Social media increases popularity of South Dakota sites

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Technology and social media have turned little-known natural spots in South Dakota into not-so-secret tourist destinations, much to the dismay of some locals.

The Rapid City Journal reports that one such spot includes a natural swimming hole known as Devils Bathtub, where user-created footpaths lead to a tributary that's sometimes clogged with people.

Wyoming resident George Dunlap said he has had difficulty driving through all the parked vehicles to reach his cabin for the past several years. He has also seen people dumping garbage into the creek.

"It's an unfortunate deal that so many people have found out about it," Dunlap said. "Now it's not hidden. It's not anything right now except a mess."

Other public sites in the Black Hills that have seen a rise in popularity from social media include Poet's Table, a high granite alcove in Custer State Park; Hippie Hole, a natural swimming hole near Rockerville; and the Rock Maze, a labyrinthine cluster of rock formations in the Black Hills National Forest.

The management of such sites has come under scrutiny. With no infrastructure at any of the sites to control the flow of visitors, the increased visitation has caused congestion and public safety concerns.

Environmental damage also occurs — sometimes by accident, and sometimes by vandalism. Both Hippie Hole and the Rock Maze have been victims of graffiti.

The issues are causing some land managers to switch from loosely permissive oversight of the areas to aggressive intervention.

No-parking signs recently were installed along a highway curve near the gravel road that leads to Devils Bathtub's unofficial trailhead. Last week Custer State Park officials removed in-ground fire pits and a shelter that were constructed by Poet's Table visitors.

"We can either do nothing and let the damage occur, or we can manage it," said Jim Hagen, secretary of the state Department of Tourism. "And I think the responsible thing to do is to manage it the best that we can."

Information from: Rapid City Journal, <http://www.rapidcityjournal.com>

Sioux Falls man dead, another in custody after shooting

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A 24-year-old Sioux Falls man has died after an apparent shooting and another man is in custody.

Sioux Falls police say the shooting happened early Saturday at an apartment in the area of West 55th Street and South Louise Avenue.

A 27-year-old Sioux Falls man was arrested on manslaughter and drug charges.

Police say the two men knew each other and drugs appear to be involved.

More details are expected to be released Monday morning.

Transgender soldier fears life setback after Trump's tweet

By JULIE WATSON and CHRISTOPH NOELTING, Associated Press

BERATZHAUSEN, Germany (AP) — The U.S. Army soldier took a deep breath before hitting the button that sent the email to more than 200 fellow troops.

"All considered, I am, and have been, traversing what is essentially a personal matter, but is something I must address publicly," the email stated. "I am transgender."

The April 13 email officially ended the secret that burned inside Capt. Jennifer Sims, who was known as Jonathan Sims. But the feeling of relief swiftly turned to unease last week after President Donald Trump tweeted that transgender people were no longer welcome in the U.S. military.

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"I read the tweets while I was at work and you know it was devastating because I still have work to do and here I am reading basically what sounds like the president of the United States — who is the commander in chief, he is the ultimate boss of the military — telling me and anybody else that is transgender that we are fired," Sims said.

Pentagon officials say the policy will remain unchanged without official White House guidance. But for Sims, the uncertainty has been upsetting.

"So in the initial moments after the tweet, I saw myself forced into the state that I was in before I started transitioning — a state of depression, exhaustion and inability to enjoy things," said Sims, 28, who spoke to The Associated Press on her own behalf and not on that of the Army.

The reversal of the Obama administration policy that allows transgender people to serve openly and receive military medical coverage for transitioning from one gender to another also could affect her physically.

Sims has been on hormone therapy by her military doctor since November. If she interrupts the treatment, her body will revert to being male.

"It would be very difficult to have to go through that," said Sims, who is based at Hohenfels, a U.S. Army garrison in the German state of Bavaria.

Growing up in Minnesota and Florida, Sims, a high school football player, never felt comfortable being male. The son and grandson of military veterans quietly came to terms with identifying as a woman a year after joining the Army R.O.T.C., but outwardly kept it a secret "because I wanted to continue serving," Sims said.

Sims stopped socializing, feeling drained over worries about being masculine enough, and instead focused on work, serving in Afghanistan, Indonesia and Germany. Her sister, Natasha Sims, 24, said she saw "emptiness" in her eyes.

After the Defense Department announced in 2015 that it was considering allowing transgender troops to serve openly, Sims told Natasha and their parents. When the policy became official in June 2016, Sims said she felt the meaning of the word freedom personally after spending years fighting for it for her country.

"It was the best day of my life really," Sims said.

Sims made an appointment with the behavioral health office, was given a diagnosis of gender dysphoria and started hormone therapy in November.

Five months later, she decided to tell fellow troops.

She first told her two closest colleagues, Capt. Brandon Shorter and another infantry officer.

They were at a loss for words.

After Shorter got home, allowing it to sink in, he texted Sims about how that was brave.

"Infantry officers are best described as brutish. So Capt. Sims pulled me and another brute aside face to face. That took a lot of courage and that's the first thing that went through my mind, mixed in with surprise," Shorter said.

Sims then announced the "personal change" to more than 200 other troops.



In this July 29, 2017 photo transgender U.S. army captain Jennifer Sims lifts her uniform during an interview with The Associated Press in Beratzhausen near Regensburg, Germany. (AP Photo/Matthias Schrader)

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It was not an emotional email. The seasoned military officer wrote how a lifetime of discomfort had peaked three years ago. Sims meticulously explained gender dysphoria, announced she was Capt. Jennifer Sims, not Jonathan, and outlined the steps she would take to fully transition to a woman.

"Officially in DEERS, my gender will remain male until my medical transition is complete, which means I will still comport to male standards and use male facilities," she wrote, referring to the acronym for the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, a kind of HR database for U.S. military personnel.

"While it is my preference for people to refer to me with female pronouns, if you are uncomfortable with this, there is no requirement to do so, I only respectfully request you refer to me by my proper name, Captain Sims," the email stated.

Sims assured her unit the change "if anything, will only make me more productive and capable, as I no longer have to live two personas."

Five soldiers sent emails back with words of encouragement. Most didn't respond. For a few days, there were murmurs of "hey did you see the email?"

The force had just undergone training explaining what was expected in regards to transgender soldiers. Sims is the first transgender person Shorter has known.

The unit is basically full of "young men wanting to chew on nails and prove how tough they are and rightly so since they are infantry men," Shorter said. There are only about eight women among the 500 soldiers in the battalion.

He had a lot of questions "being naturally curious and wanting to be a good friend because we didn't really have a personal relationship. He's, excuse me, she's — see I still slip up sometimes — a single captain, I'm married with two daughters. Our lives are different."

Shorter, 32, of Alanson, Michigan, describes himself as conservative. He said he struggles with his beliefs about what's appropriate. An assistant operations officer for the battalion, Shorter is concerned about how Sims — whom he considers to be the best signal officer he's seen in the Army — cannot deploy while undergoing medical procedures.

But Shorter, speaking on his own behalf and not that of the Army, said he would be "incredibly disappointed" if Sims were kicked out.

After Trump's tweet, a few soldiers, including Shorter, asked Sims how she was doing. She didn't know what to say.

Her pills will run out in three months. Doctors recommend 12 months of hormone therapy before surgery. The cost of her surgery can run close to \$50,000, which Sims was expecting the military would help cover. Army officials told her nothing will change without official guidance.

"I had waited so long just to be able to tell the world this is who I am," Sims said.

Watson reported from San Diego.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. WHY THE U.S. MUST CUT DIPLOMATIC STAFF IN RUSSIA

Russian President Vladimir Putin says the United States needs to cut its embassy and consulate staff by 755 under new sanctions from Moscow.

2. GOVERNMENT VOTE DISPUTED IN VENEZUELA

Venezuelan electoral authorities said more than 8 million people voted to create a constitutional assembly endowing President Nicolas Maduro's ruling socialist party with virtually unlimited powers — a turnout more than double that estimated by outsiders and by opponents who derided the announcement.

3. AP INVESTIGATION FINDS A PATCHWORK OF JUSTICE FOR JUVENILE LIFERS

In an exclusive 50-state investigation, The AP examines how officials are weighing the cases of former teen offenders sent to prison for life with no chance of parole after Supreme Court rulings set out the pos-

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sibility of freedom for these inmates, many now in their 50s, 60s and 70s.

4. TRANSGENDER SOLDIER FEARS LIFE SETBACK AFTER TRUMP'S TWEET

A transgender soldier finds courage to shed secret, now fears setback to life, career from presidential tweet.

5. WHAT TRUMP IS LOOKING FOR FROM HIS NEW CHIEF OF STAFF

The president is hoping that retired Gen. John Kelly can bring some order to a chaotic White house.

6. WHITE HOUSE SAYS TRUMP TO DECIDE SOON ON ENDING HEALTH PAYMENTS

The White House is insisting that the Senate resume efforts to repeal and replace the nation's health care law, signaling that President Donald Trump stands ready to end required payments to insurers this week to let "Obamacare implode" and force congressional action.

7. PYONGYANG PRETTIES UP ITS 'PYRAMID'

While North Korea's second launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile dominated headlines late last week, Pyongyang quietly unveiled renovations around the capital's biggest landmark: a futuristic, pyramid-shaped 105-story hotel, the world's tallest unoccupied building.

8. STUDY SAYS FILMS EXCLUDE WOMEN, HISPANICS

Women, Hispanics and the disabled are among the most underrepresented groups in popular Hollywood films according to a revelatory study examining the ongoing epidemic of inequality on screen and off

9. WHERE INMATES ARE ON THE RUN

Authorities in Alabama say a manhunt is underway after 12 inmates escaped from a jail, including two who were incarcerated on charges of attempted murder.

10. WHO WAS INDUCTED INTO THE BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

"Pudge" Rodriguez couldn't hide the glee or the tears, and neither could Tim Lincecum and Jeff Bagwell on the culmination of their baseball journey, as they're inducted into the sport's Hall of Fame.



An anti-government demonstrator rests on the ground near a barricade in Caracas, Venezuela, Sunday, July 30, 2017. Venezuelans appear to be abstaining in massive numbers in a show of silent protest against a vote to select a constitutional assembly giving the government virtually unlimited powers. Across the capital on Sunday, dozens of polling places were empty or had a few dozens or hundreds of people outside, orders of magnitude less than the turnout in recent elections. (AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos)

VP Pence in Estonia: Attack on 1 NATO ally is attack on all

By JARI TANNER, Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — U.S. Vice President Mike Pence on Monday strongly pledged America's commitment to protecting NATO allies against attacks, including the Baltic states, which have anxiously watched a growing Russian military presence in the region.

"Under President Donald Trump, the United States stands firmly behind our Article 5 pledge of mutual defense — an attack on one of us is an attack on us all," Pence told reporters after meeting with the presidents of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the Estonian capital of Tallinn.

Mutual defense is a vital issue for the three small former Soviet states that border Russia, which were

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all occupied for nearly five decades by Soviet troops before regaining their independence in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Noting that Trump "knows security is the foundation of our prosperity," Pence said America and the Baltic countries would seek new ways to increase prosperity by increasing two-way trade that currently amounts to \$3.5 billion and increasing mutual investments.

Earlier, he met Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid, the president of Latvia, Raimonds Vejonis, and Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaite.

Estonia currently holds the rotating presidency of the 28-nation European Union.

Pence is also scheduled to meet NATO troops from Britain, France and the United States that are stationed in Estonia. The alliance has deployed some 4,000 troops and military hardware in the three Baltic states and Poland to counter Russia's presence in the Baltic Sea region.

Pence is in Estonia on the first leg of a European tour that also takes him to Georgia and Montenegro, two other regions facing strong pressure from Russia.



U.S. Vice President Mike Pence, right, and Estonia's President Kersti Kaljulaid pose for photographers prior to their meeting at the Kadriorg Palace in Tallinn, Estonia, Monday, July 31, 2017. Pence is visiting Estonia to meet the leaders of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to underscore America's commitment to NATO and convey Washington's support to the Baltic nations. (AP Photo/Mindaugas Kulbis)

Putin lays down a number: US must cut 755 Moscow diplomats

By NATALIYA VASILYEVA, Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin has demanded the United States cut its embassy and consulate staff in Russia by 755 people, underlining his displeasure with U.S. sanctions and heightening tensions between Washington and Moscow.

The U.S. State Department called Putin's move "a regrettable and uncalled-for act."

Putin's announcement Sunday came three days after the U.S. Congress approved sanctions against Russia and just hours after U.S. Vice President Mike Pence landed in Estonia, which borders Russia, for talks with the country that holds the rotating European Union presidency.

Russia's Foreign Ministry on Friday ordered a reduction by Sept. 1 in U.S. diplomatic personnel in Russia to 455 people in response to a new package of American sanctions. The White House says President Donald Trump will sign those sanctions into law.

The sanctions, which also target Iran and North Korea, seek to punish Moscow for meddling in the 2016 U.S. election and for its military aggression in Ukraine and Syria.

"We had hoped that the situation will somehow change, but apparently if it changes, it won't be soon," Putin told Rossiya 1, explaining why Moscow decided to retaliate. "I thought it was the time to show that we're not going to leave it without an answer."

Russia is open to cooperating with the U.S. on various issues, including terrorism and cybercrime, but instead it "only hears unfounded accusations of meddling in U.S. domestic affairs," he said.

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Putin said more than 1,000 people are currently employed at the Moscow embassy and three U.S. consulates in Russia. They include both Americans and Russians hired to work in the diplomatic offices.

The Russian leader did not explain how the figure of 755 positions was calculated.

In a statement, the State Department said: "This is a regrettable and uncalled-for act. We are assessing the impact of such a limitation and how we will respond to it. We have no further comment at this time."

The State Department declined to give an exact number of American diplomats or other U.S. officials in Russia, but the figure is believed to be about 400, some of whom have families accompanying them on diplomatic passports.

The vast majority of the more than 1,000 employees at the various U.S. diplomatic missions in Russia, including the embassy in Moscow and consulates in St. Petersburg, Vladivostok and Yekaterinburg, are local employees.

Asked about the potential for additional sanctions against Washington, Putin described the reduction in diplomatic staff as "painful" and said he currently opposes further measures.

"We certainly have something to respond with and restrict those areas of joint cooperation that will be painful for the American side, but I don't think we need to do it," he said, adding that such steps could also harm Russian interests.

Putin mentioned space and energy as the main areas where Russia and the United States have successfully pursued projects together.

Along with the cap on the size of the U.S. diplomatic corps in Russia, the Russian foreign ministry on Friday said it also was closing down a U.S. recreational retreat on the outskirts of Moscow as well as warehouse facilities.

The diplomatic tit-for-tat started under former U.S. President Barack Obama. In response to reports of Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election, Obama ordered the expulsion of 35 Russian diplomats and shut down two Russian recreational retreats in the U.S.



Russian President Vladimir Putin looks on attending the military parade during the Navy Day celebration in St. Petersburg, Russia, on Sunday, July 30, 2017. (AP Photo/

Alexander Zemlianichenko, Pool)

AP Diplomatic Writer Matthew Lee in Washington contributed to this report.

Turnout in Venezuela assembly vote another point of conflict

By **MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN, Associated Press**

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuelan electoral authorities said more than 8 million people voted to create a constitutional assembly endowing President Nicolas Maduro's ruling socialist party with virtually unlimited powers — a turnout more than double that estimated by outsiders and by opponents who derided the announcement.

National Electoral Council President Tibisay Lucena announced just before midnight that turnout in

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Sunday's vote was 41.53 percent, or 8,089,320 people. Members of the opposition said they believed between 2 million and 3 million people voted and one well-respected independent analysis put the number at 3.6 million.

The electoral council's vote counts in the past have been seen as reliable and generally accurate, but the widely mocked announcement appeared certain to escalate the polarization and political conflict paralyzing the country.

Opposition leader Henrique Capriles, the governor of the central state of Miranda, urged Venezuelans to protest Monday. Maduro said he would use the assembly's powers to bar opposition candidates from running in gubernatorial elections in December unless they sit with his party to negotiate an end to hostilities that have generated four months of protests that have killed at least 125 and wounded nearly 2,000.

"The people have delivered the constitutional assembly," Maduro said on national television. "More than 8 million in the middle of threats ... it's

when imperialism challenges us that we prove ourselves worthy of the blood of the liberators that runs through the veins of men, women, children and young people."

Across the capital, Venezuelans had appeared to be staying away from the polls in huge numbers in protest against the vote. Venezuela's chief prosecutor's office reported 10 deaths in new rounds of the clashes between protesters and police. Seven police officers were wounded when a fiery explosion went off as they drove past piles of trash that had been used to blockade a street in an opposition stronghold in eastern Caracas.

"If it wasn't a tragedy ... if it didn't mean more crisis, the electoral council's number would almost make you laugh," opposition leader Freddy Guevara said on Twitter. Maduro has threatened that one of the constitutional assembly's first acts would be jailing Guevara for inciting violence.

An exit poll based on surveys from 110 voting centers by New York investment bank Torino Capital and a Venezuela public opinion company estimated 3.6 million people voted, or about 18.5 percent of registered voters. "The results thus suggest that the government maintains an important loyal core of supporters that it can mobilize in both electoral and non-electoral scenarios," the report concluded.

The same exit poll also noted that Venezuela has an estimated 2.6 million government employees, "suggesting that a large fraction of the votes could have not been voluntary."

Several nations including Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Spain, Britain and the United States said they would not recognize Sunday's vote. The Trump administration again promised "strong and swift actions" against Venezuelan officials, including the 545 participants in the constitutional assembly, many of them low-ranking party members. The U.S. did not say whether it would sanction Venezuelan oil imports, a measure with the potential to destabilize Maduro's government and deepen the country's humanitarian crisis.



Voters wait outside of a poll station to enter to cast their ballot during the election for a constitutional assembly in Caracas, Venezuela, Sunday, July 30, 2017. President Nicolas Maduro asked for global acceptance on Sunday as he cast an unusual pre-dawn vote for an all-powerful constitutional assembly that his opponents fear he'll use to replace Venezuelan democracy with a single-party authoritarian system. (AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos)

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Maduro said he had received congratulations from the governments of Cuba, Bolivia and Nicaragua, among others.

Across this capital of more than 2 million people, dozens of polling places were virtually empty Sunday, including many that over the last two decades saw hours-long lines of thousands voting to keep the government in power.

At the Poliedro sports and cultural complex in western Caracas, several thousand people waited about two hours to vote, many drawn from opposition-dominated neighborhoods where polling places were closed. But at least three dozen other sites visited by The Associated Press had no more than a few hundred voters at any one time, with many virtually empty.

Opposition leaders had called for a boycott of the vote, declaring it rigged for the ruling party, and by late afternoon they were declaring the apparent low turnout to be a resounding victory. Ahead of the vote, the opposition organized a series of work stoppages as well as a July 16 protest vote that it said drew more than 7.5 million symbolic votes against the constitutional assembly.

"It's very clear to us that the government has suffered a defeat today," said Julio Borges, president of the opposition-controlled but largely powerless National Assembly. "This vote brings us closer to the government leaving power."

Maduro called the vote for a constitutional assembly in May after a month of protests against his government, which has overseen Venezuela's descent into a devastating crisis during its four years in power. Due to plunging oil prices and widespread corruption and mismanagement, Venezuela's inflation and homicide rates are among the world's highest, and widespread shortages of food and medicine have citizens dying of preventable illnesses and rooting through trash to feed themselves.

The winners among the 5,500 ruling-party candidates running for 545 seats in the constituent assembly will have the task of rewriting the country's constitution and will have powers above and beyond other state institutions, including the opposition-controlled congress.

Maduro made clear in a televised address Saturday that he intends to use the assembly not just to rewrite the country's charter but to govern without limitation. Describing the vote as "the election of a power that's above and beyond every other," Maduro said he wants the assembly to strip opposition lawmakers and governors of constitutional immunity from prosecution — one of the few remaining checks on ruling party power.

Declaring the opposition "already has its prison cell waiting," Maduro added: "All the criminals will go to prison for the crimes they've committed."

He said the new assembly would begin to govern within a week, with its first task in rewriting the constitution to be "a total transformation" of the office of Venezuela's chief prosecutor, a former government loyalist who has become the highest-ranking official to publicly split from the president.

"People aren't in agreement with this," Daniel Ponza, a drywall contractor, said Sunday as he watched a few dozen people outside a polling place in El Valle, a traditional stronghold of the ruling Chavista movement in western Caracas. "People are dying of hunger, looking for food in the trash. And I think this is just going to make things worse."

Still, for many others, the looming likelihood of authoritarian government was appealing after months of street blockades and street clashes.

Sculptor Ricardo Avendano traveled from the opposition-dominated eastern neighborhood of Las Mercedes to vote at the Poliedro complex, saying the government needed total power to control food prices and shut down protests.

"The most important thing is imposing order," he said. "If I'd been president there wouldn't be protesters in the streets. They'd be prisoners."

Associated Press writers Christine Armario and Fabiola Sanchez contributed to this report.

Michael Weissenstein on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mweissenstein>

Afghan police: Car bombing targets Iraq Embassy in Kabul

By AMIR SHAH, Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — A car bombing targeted the Iraqi Embassy in central Kabul on Monday, followed by gunfire, Afghan police officials said. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

The attack was still underway as witnesses reported hearing gunshots and several subsequent explosions in the area of the embassy. Details were sketchy as police cordoned off the area of the fire.

Two police officials told The Associated Press that the car bomb exploded outside the embassy, followed by an attempt by gunmen to enter the building, which is located in the center of the Afghan capital. The two officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Interior Minister spokesman Najib Danish told the AP that the Iraqi diplomats were safe and had been rescued. He said it's believed three gunmen were involved in the attack.

A police officer in the area, who identified himself only as Abdullah, said the gunfire was initially intense but was now sporadic. The area was surrounded by armored vehicles and a large contingent of police and Afghan soldiers.

More than an hour later, witnesses reported hearing another powerful explosion and saw black smoke billowing skyward. It wasn't immediately clear what had caused the last explosion.

At least one eyewitness, a store owner who goes by the name of Hafizullah — many Afghans use only one name — said he saw the bodies of two policemen on the ground before armored personnel carriers and police arrived to cordon off the area.

"The explosion was so strong. I was so afraid," said Maryam, a woman crying near the site of the attack said. She said she works at the nearby office of Afghanistan's National Airline Ariana.

The Iraq Embassy is located in a part of the city known as Shahr-e-Now, which lies outside the so-called "green zone" where most foreign embassies and diplomatic missions are located and which is heavily fortified with a phalanx of guards and giant cement blast walls.

By comparison, the Iraqi Embassy is located on a small street in a neighborhood dominated by markets and businesses.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, though both the Taliban and an Islamic State affiliate have previously carried out such attacks in Kabul.

After Iraqi forces, backed by a U.S.-led coalition, recaptured the city of Mosul from the Islamic State group earlier in July, the Iraq Embassy had called reporters to its offices in Kabul to express concerns that the local IS affiliate might stage large-scale attacks elsewhere to draw away attention from the militant group's losses in Iraq.



Afghan security forces arrive at the site of complex attack in Kabul, Afghanistan, Monday, July 31, 2017. Afghan police say a car bombing has targeted the Iraqi Embassy in central Kabul, followed by gunfire, and that the attack is still underway. (AP Photo/ Rahmat Gul)

Trump's new chief of staff takes over a White House in chaos

By CATHERINE LUCEY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's new chief of staff is entering a West Wing battered by crisis.

Retired Gen. John Kelly, previously the Homeland Security secretary, takes over Monday from the ousted Reince Priebus. Trump hopes Kelly can bring some military order to an administration weighed down by a stalled legislative agenda, a cabal of infighting West Wing aides and a stack of investigations.

Still, Kelly's success in a chaotic White House will depend on how much authority he is granted and whether Trump's dueling aides will put aside their rivalries to work together. Also unclear is whether a new chief of staff will have any influence over the president's social media histrionics.

Former Trump campaign manager Cory Lewandowski, who was ousted from the campaign in June 2016, said on NBC's "Meet the Press" that he expected Kelly would "restore order to the staff" but also stressed that Trump was unlikely to change his style.

"I say you have to let Trump be Trump. That is what has made him successful over the last 30 years. That is what the American people voted for," Lewandowski said. "And anybody who thinks they're going to change Donald Trump doesn't know Donald Trump."

Kelly's start follows a tumultuous week, marked by a profane tirade from the new communications director, Trump's continued attacks on his attorney general and the failed effort by Senate Republicans to overhaul the nation's health care law.

In addition to strain in the West Wing and with Congress, Kelly starts his new job as tensions escalate with North Korea. The United States flew two supersonic bombers over the Korean Peninsula on Sunday in a show of force against North Korea, following the country's latest intercontinental ballistic missile test. The U.S. also said it conducted a successful test of a missile defense system located in Alaska.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., said on CBS' "Face the Nation" that she hopes Kelly can "be effective," and "begin some very serious negotiation with the North and stop this program."

Another diplomatic fissure opened Sunday when Russian President Vladimir Putin said the U.S. would have to cut its embassy and consulate staff in Russia by several hundred under new sanctions from Moscow. In a television interview, Putin indicated the cutback was retaliation for new sanctions in a bill passed by Congress and sent to Trump.

Trump plans to sign the measure into law, the White House has said. After Putin's remarks, the State Department deemed the cutbacks "a regrettable and uncalled for act" and said officials would assess the impact and how to respond to it.

While Trump is trying to refresh his team, he signaled that he does not want to give up the fight on



In this May 17, 2017, file photo, President Donald Trump talks with Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly during commencement exercises at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn. Trump named Kelly as his new Chief of Staff on July 28, ousting Reince Priebus. (AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

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health care. On Twitter Sunday, he said: "Don't give up Republican Senators, the World is watching: Repeal & Replace."

The protracted health care fight has slowed Trump's other policy goals, including a tax overhaul and infrastructure investment. But Trump aides made clear that the president still wanted to see action on health care. White House budget director Mick Mulvaney said on CNN's "State of the Union," that senators "need to stay, they need to work, they need to pass something."

Asked if nothing should be voted on in Congress until the Senate votes again on health care, Mulvaney said: "well, think — yes. And I think what you're seeing there is the president simply reflecting the mood of the people."

On Saturday, Trump threatened to end required payments to insurance companies unless lawmakers repeal and replace the Obama-era health care law. He tweeted that if "a new HealthCare Bill is not approved quickly, BAILOUTS for Insurance Companies and BAILOUTS for Members of Congress will end very soon!"

The payments reduce deductibles and co-payments for consumers with modest incomes. Trump has guaranteed the payments through July, but has not made a commitment going forward.

White House counselor Kellyanne Conway said on "Fox News Sunday" that Trump would make a decision on the payments this week.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, who opposed the efforts to move a health bill forward this week, said on CNN that cutting the payments would "be detrimental to some of the most vulnerable citizens" and that the threat has "contributed to the instability in the insurance market."

The House has begun a five-week recess, while the Senate is scheduled to work two more weeks before a summer break.

Venezuela: more than 8 million grant government more power

By MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN, Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuelan electoral authorities said more than 8 million people voted Sunday to create a constitutional assembly endowing President Nicolas Maduro's ruling socialist party with virtually unlimited powers — a report more than double the estimates of independent experts and opposition leaders who met the announcement with fury and derision.

National Electoral Council President Tibisay Lucena announced just before midnight that turnout was 41.53 percent, or 8,089,320 people. Members of the opposition said they believed between 2 million and 3 million people voted and one well-respected independent analysis put the number at 3.6 million.

The electoral council's vote counts in the past have traditionally been seen as reliable and generally accurate, but Sunday's widely mocked announcement appeared certain to escalate the polarization and political conflict paralyzing the country.

"The people have delivered the constitutional assembly," Maduro said on national television. "More than 8 million in the middle of threats ... it's when imperialism challenges us that we prove ourselves worthy of the blood of the liberators that runs through the veins of men, women, children and young people."

Across the capital, Venezuelans had appeared to be staying away from the polls in huge numbers in a show of protest against the vote. Venezuela's chief prosecutor's office reported 10 deaths in new rounds of the clashes between protesters and police that have killed at least 125 and wounded nearly 2,000 since protests began in April. Seven police officers were wounded when a fiery explosion went off as they drove past piles of trash that had been used to blockade a street in an opposition stronghold in eastern Caracas.

"If it wasn't a tragedy ... if it didn't mean more crisis, the electoral council's number would almost make you laugh," opposition leader Freddy Guevara said on Twitter. Maduro has threatened that one of the constitutional assembly's first acts would be jailing Guevara for inciting violence.

An estimated 3.6 million participated in the vote, according to one exit poll based on surveys from 110 voting centers conducted by New York investment bank Torino Capital and a Venezuela public opinion company. That number equates to about 18.5 percent of registered voters.

"The results thus suggest that the government maintains an important loyal core of supporters that

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it can mobilize in both electoral and non-electoral scenarios," the report concluded.

The same exit poll also noted that Venezuela has an estimated 2.6 million government employees, "suggesting that a large fraction of the votes could have not been voluntary."

A list of nations including Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Spain, Britain and the United States said they would not recognize Sunday's vote. The Trump administration again promised "strong and swift actions" against Venezuelan officials, including the 545 participants in the constitutional assembly, many of them low-ranking party members. The U.S. did not say whether it would sanction Venezuelan oil imports, a measure with the potential to destabilize Maduro's government and deepen the country's humanitarian crisis.

Maduro said he had received congratulations from the governments of Cuba, Bolivia and Nicaragua, among others.

Across this capital of more than 2 million people, dozens of polling places were virtually empty Sunday, including many that in previous elections saw hours-long lines of thousands voting to keep the government in power over the last two decades.

At the Poliedro sports and cultural complex in western Caracas, several thousand people waited about two hours to vote, many drawn from opposition-dominated neighborhoods where polling places were closed. But at least three dozen other sites visited by The Associated Press had no more than a few hundred voters at any one time, with many virtually empty.

Opposition leaders had called for a boycott of the vote, declaring it rigged for the ruling party, and by late afternoon they were declaring the apparent low turnout to be a resounding victory. Ahead of the vote, the opposition organized a series of work stoppages as well as a July 16 protest vote that it said drew more than 7.5 million symbolic votes against the constitutional assembly.

"It's very clear to us that the government has suffered a defeat today," said Julio Borges, president of the opposition-controlled but largely powerless National Assembly. "This vote brings us closer to the government leaving power."

Opposition leader Henrique Capriles urged Venezuelans to protest again Monday.

Maduro called the vote for a constitutional assembly in May after a month of protests against his government, which has overseen Venezuela's descent into a devastating crisis during its four years in power. Thanks to plunging oil prices and widespread corruption and mismanagement, Venezuela's inflation and homicide rates are among the world's highest, and widespread shortages of food and medicine have citizens dying of preventable illnesses and rooting through trash to feed themselves.

The winners among the 5,500 ruling-party candidates running for 545 seats in the constituent assembly



In this photo released by Miraflores Press Office, Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro shows his ballot after casting a vote for a constitutional assembly in Caracas, Venezuela on Sunday, July 30, 2017. Maduro asked for global acceptance on Sunday as he cast an unusual pre-dawn vote for an all-powerful constitutional assembly that his opponents fear he'll use to replace Venezuelan democracy with a single-party authoritarian system. (Miraflores Press Office via AP)

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will have the task of rewriting the country's constitution and will have powers above and beyond other state institutions, including the opposition-controlled congress.

Maduro made clear in a televised address Saturday that he intends to use the assembly not just to rewrite the country's charter but to govern without limitation. Describing the vote as "the election of a power that's above and beyond every other," Maduro said he wants the assembly to strip opposition lawmakers and governors of constitutional immunity from prosecution — one of the few remaining checks on ruling party power.

Declaring the opposition "already has its prison cell waiting," Maduro added: "All the criminals will go to prison for the crimes they've committed."

He said the new assembly would begin to govern within a week, with its first task in rewriting the constitution to be "a total transformation" of the office of Venezuela's chief prosecutor, a former government loyalist who has become the highest-ranking official to publicly split from the president.

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Still, for many others, the looming likelihood of authoritarian government was appealing after months of street blockades and street clashes.

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"The most important thing is imposing order," he said. "If I'd been president there wouldn't be protesters in the streets. They'd be prisoners."

Associated Press writer Fabiola Sanchez contributed to this report.

Michael Weissenstein on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mweissenstein>

US bombers fly over South Korea after North's 2nd ICBM test

By KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The United States flew two supersonic bombers over the Korean Peninsula on Sunday in a show of force against North Korea following the country's latest intercontinental ballistic missile test. The U.S. also said it conducted a successful test of a missile defense system located in Alaska.

The B-1 bombers were escorted by South Korean fighter jets as they performed a low-pass over an air base near the South Korean capital of Seoul before returning to Andersen Air Force Base in Guam, the U.S. Pacific Air Forces said in a statement.

It said the mission was a response to North Korea's two ICBM tests this month. Analysts say flight data from the North's second test, conducted Friday night, showed that a broader part of the mainland United States, including Los Angeles and Chicago, is now in range of Pyongyang's weapons.

Vice President Mike Pence said Sunday during a visit to Estonia that the U.S. and its allies plan to increase pressure on North Korea to end its nuclear program.

"The continued provocations by the rogue regime in North Korea are unacceptable and the United States of America is going to continue to marshal the support of nations across the region and across the world to further isolate North Korea economically and diplomatically," Pence said. "But the era of strategic patience is over. The president of the United States is leading a coalition of nations to bring pressure to bear until that time that North Korea will permanently abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile program."

"The time for talk is over," U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said in a statement. She denied reports that Washington would seek an emergency session of the U.N. Security Council, saying that new sanctions that fail to increase pressure would be "worse than nothing."

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Haley said a weak resolution would show North Korean leader Kim Jong Un that "the international community is unwilling to challenge him," and singled out China, the North's biggest trading partner, as a country that must change its approach.

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said he and President Donald Trump spoke by phone Monday morning Asia time and have agreed to take further action against North Korea. Abe said Trump pledged to "take all necessary measures to protect" Japan and that Abe praised his commitment to do so.

Abe said Japan would pursue concrete steps to bolster defense system and capabilities under the firm solidarity with the U.S. and do utmost to protect the safety of the Japanese people.

Gen. Terrence J. O'Shaughnessy, Pacific Air Forces commander, called North Korea "the most urgent threat to regional stability."

"Diplomacy remains the lead. However, we have a responsibility to our allies and our nation to showcase our unwavering commitment while planning for the worst-case scenario," O'Shaughnessy said. "If called upon, we are ready to respond with rapid, lethal, and overwhelming force at a time and place of our choosing."

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, a California Democrat, told CBS' "Face the Nation" that North Korea's latest test presents a clear and present danger to the United States.

"I've spent time on the intelligence and at the briefings, and done as much reading as I possibly could," said Feinstein, a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee. "And I'm convinced that North Korea has never moved at the speed that this leader has to develop an ICBM."

Feinstein said the situation shows the danger of isolating a country.

"I think the only solution is a diplomatic one," she said. "I'm very disappointed in China's response, that it has not been firmer or more helpful."

The United States often sends powerful warplanes in times of heightened tensions with North Korea. B-1 bombers have been sent to South Korea for flyovers several times this year in response to the North's banned missile tests, and also following the death of a U.S. college student last month after he was released by North Korea in a coma.

The Hwasong-14 ICBM, which the North first tested on July 4, is the highlight of several new weapons systems Pyongyang launched this year. They include an intermediate range missile that North Korea says is capable of hitting Alaska and Hawaii, and a solid-fuel midrange missile, which analysts say can be fired faster and more secretly than liquid-fuel missiles.

Gen. Lori Robinson, commander of the North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command, responsible for homeland defense, said in a statement that the ICBM launched Friday "served



In this photo released by Japan Air Self Defense Force, U.S. Air Force B-1B bombers, top, fly with a Japan Air Self Defense Force F-2 fighter jet over Japan's southern island of Kyushu, just south of the Korean Peninsula, during a Japan-U.S. joint exercise Sunday, July 30, 2017. Japan's Defense Ministry reported the U.S. supersonic bombers flown from the Anderson Air Force Base in Guam conducted a joint exercise with South Korean Air Force over the Korean Peninsula later in the day. The U.S. Pacific Air Forces said in a statement that the mission was a response to consecutive intercontinental ballistic missile tests by North Korea this month. (Japan Air Self Defense Force via AP)

as yet another reminder of North Korea's continued threat to the United States and our allies." She said the command "remains unwavering in our confidence that we can fully defend the United States against this ballistic missile threat."

The U.S. Missile Defense Agency said a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, system located in Kodiak, Alaska, was successfully tested on Saturday night, Alaska time. It said that a medium-range ballistic missile was air-launched over the Pacific, and that the THAAD system detected, tracked and intercepted the target.

Hall of Fame ceremony an emotional time for inductees

By JOHN KEKIS, AP Sports Writer

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. (AP) — "Pudge" Rodriguez stared out at his father, wiping away tears as he spoke.

"I love you with all of my heart," Rodriguez said. "If I'm a Hall of Famer, you're a Hall of Famer — double."

Those words punctuated Rodriguez's speech as he was inducted Sunday into the Baseball Hall of Fame. Jeff Bagwell and Tim Lincecum, along with former commissioner Bud Selig and front-office guru John Schuerholz also were enshrined on a picture-perfect summer day in front of over 27,000 fans.

"It's always emotional when you see the fans cheering for you, and my whole family in front of me," Bagwell said. "I'm an emotional person. It's a dream just to be part of this beautiful group. Now I have that plaque forever. It's unbelievable."

Before he started, Rodriguez received a standing ovation from hundreds of fans, many wearing red-and-white jerseys with Puerto Rico emblazoned on the front, and proceeded to give half his speech in Spanish.

"This is such an incredible honor for me," Rodriguez said. "A little kid from Puerto Rico with a big dream. Never let them take your dream away from you."

The 45-year-old Rodriguez holds major league records for games caught (2,427) and putouts by a catcher (12,376). He hit 311 homers and batted .296 in his career. He's also only the second catcher elected on the first ballot, following in the footsteps of his childhood idol, Cincinnati Reds star Johnny Bench, who was seated on the dais behind him.

After speaking in Spanish, Rodriguez went back and repeated in English, concentrating on a message to youth.

"You have the right to dream," he said. "Everything in life is possible. I speak from experience."

Bagwell, who played his entire 15-year career in Houston, took the dais to an extended applause from the Astros fans who made the trip.

"You know I don't like attention," Bagwell said with a tinge of nervousness. "I'm so humbled to be here. I'm just really trying to figure out what's going on."

Bagwell started his speech by thanking his family, singling out his parents and wife.



Hall of Fame president Jeff Idelson, left, presents National Baseball Hall of Fame inductee Jeff Bagwell with his Hall of Fame plaque during an induction ceremony at the Clark Sports Center, Sunday, July 30, 2017, in Cooperstown, N.Y. (AP Photo/Hans Pennink)

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"Mom, you are just the most amazing person in the world," he said. "You've been a pillar for me. I can't tell you how much I love you and what you mean to me. My father, Bob. There's something about a dad. You brought me to love this game of baseball. Something my father instilled in me was to never quit. Deep inside, I just never gave up. That drive got me a long way."

The 48-year-old Bagwell was one-third of the famed "Killer B's" of the Astros, along with Hall of Famer Craig Biggio and Lance Berkman. Together they helped transform the Astros from a last-place team to the World Series in 2005, the first team from Texas to do so. Elected in his seventh year on the ballot, Bagwell is the only first baseman in history with 400 career home runs and 200 stolen bases.

"I tried to do everything well," he said. "I wanted to score for my team and for my other players. I enjoy the stolen bases more than anything else. For a little guy with not much speed, I truly appreciate that. I could help us win in different ways."

Bagwell ended his career with 449 home runs and from 1996-2001 had at least 30 home runs, 100 runs scored and 100 RBIs per season, only the sixth player in major league history to reach those marks in at least six straight years.

Raines was greeted by scores of fans from Canada, many of whom came aboard several buses. He thanked his mom and dad, who were seated in the front row and later focused on Hall of Famer Andre Dawson, his teammate with the Montreal Expos when he first broke into the major leagues in the early 1980s.

"Without Andre Dawson there's no telling where I'd be," said Raines, who fought cocaine problems early in his career. "I wanted to kind of be like you and he finally accepted and I followed. Thank you so much for making me the player I became."

The 57-year-old Raines, a switch-hitter, batted .294 and had a .385 on-base percentage in his 23-year career, finishing with 2,605 hits, 1,571 runs and 808 stolen bases. His stolen base total is the fifth-highest in major league history and included 70 or more steals in each season from 1981-86, a streak that stands alone in baseball history. And his 84.7 percent success rate tops the list among players with at least 400 steal attempts.

Raines also cited former Kansas City Royals star George Brett and base-stealing king Rickey Henderson, both Hall of Famers who were seated behind him on the stage.

For Selig, who was celebrating his 83rd birthday, it was a reversal of roles. For more than two decades he gave out the Hall of Fame plaques on induction day.

"It's an overwhelming, stunning feeling," said Selig, who dropped his speech midway through it but never skipped a beat. "You're getting the highest honor."

Selig left a large imprint during more than 22 years as the leader of the game. He was instrumental in the approval of interleague play, the expansion of the playoffs, splitting each league into three divisions with wild cards, instituting video review and revenue-sharing in an era that saw the construction of 20 new ballparks.

His tenure also included the Steroids Era and the cancellation of the 1994 World Series amid a players' strike, but he left baseball in excellent shape economically — without labor strife and with a strict drug-testing policy that has helped clean up the game.

In 26 years as a GM for the Kansas City Royals and Atlanta Braves, Schuerholz stood alone. His teams won 16 division titles, six pennants and two World Series, one in each league, a first. He credited divine providence and fate for his good fortune, starting with a case of German measles that left him deaf in his right ear at age five, which he said forced him to be more attentive.

Schuerholz, who played second base at Towson University, said he quickly figured out where he should concentrate his future in baseball after a two-day tryout when he was told to time the players on the second day instead of taking the field.

"The message was delivered," Schuerholz said. "I'd better concentrate someplace other than trying to be a professional baseball player. Divine providence. Fate. I truly believe so."

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___ Reach Kekis on Twitter: www.twitter.com/Greek1947

Beltre doubles for 3,000th hit, 1st from Dominican to do it

By STEPHEN HAWKINS, AP Sports Writer

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Adrian Beltre had a feeling like none other he has experienced on a baseball field when he saw his three children coming toward him. Then they kept running to the wall in right-center field.

Only after helping unveil a logo commemorating Beltre's 3,000th career hit did the kids return to hug their father, the 38-year-old Texas Rangers third baseman who had just become the first player from the Dominican Republic, and 31st overall, in the major leagues to do that.

"What happened today after the hit, it was the best moment in my life," Beltre said. "When I saw that, I felt like I was in the cloud, because I really saw the joy in their faces. It was a nice moment to enjoy with them, my family, my wife."

Beltre reached the milestone in the fourth inning of a 10-6 loss Sunday to Baltimore Orioles, who got homers from Jonathan Schoop and Welington Castillo in a five-run fifth.

"It's an honor to be here for it. Especially, we couldn't have drawn it up better where we win and we get a chance to see that," Orioles manager Buck Showalter said. "Everybody in the game has a lot of respect for him, not only statistically but the way he's handled success over the years."

The Rangers were already down 4-0 when Beltre, who finished his 2,771st career game 1 for 5, had a hard hit down the line — fittingly past third base — for a double.

A banner was unfurled high above straightaway center field congratulating him. His teammates, who had crowded on the rail of the first-base dugout to be as close as possible to the historic moment, flooded onto the field to celebrate with him.

Beltre's two daughters and 10-year-old son Adrian Jr. left their front-row seats near the dugout they had shared with family members, including Beltre's parents.

"We have a lot of great baseball players in the Dominican Republic, and I'm proud to be one of them," Beltre said, calling the moment even more special being able to share it with his father on what was Father's Day in the Dominican Republic.

Now in his 20th big league season, he is only the third player who is primarily a third baseman in the 3,000-hit club, joining Hall of Famers George Brett and Wade Boggs.

The milestone came only minutes after former Rangers catcher Ivan Rodriguez finished his induction speech at the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. Barring unusual circumstances, getting 3,000 hits has traditionally been a ticket to the Hall.

Rangers manager Jeff Banister, who referred to Beltre as the "next Hall of Famer" said July 30 will forever be one that Texas fans will remember as "Ranger Day."

"Like we told him earlier, he means so much to this organization, to this team, a mentor to every single player and coach," Banister said. "We thanked him for allowing us to tag along this journey with him, and



Texas Rangers' Adrian Beltre tips his helmet as he acknowledges cheers after hitting a double for his 3,000th career hit that came off a pitch from Baltimore Orioles' Wade Miley in the fourth inning of a baseball game, Sunday, July 30, 2017, in Arlington, Texas. (AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez)

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be part of it.”

A pre-recorded message from Rodriguez in Cooperstown congratulating Beltre for 3,000 hits was played on the stadium video boards after the fourth ended.

“I just think it’s amazing,” said Jeff Bagwell, who was inducted with Rodriguez. “He’s just an amazing baseball player, arguably one of the best third basemen of all time. He can do everything. He plays hurt, he hits for average, he hits for power, drives in runs. He’s a great, great player.”

The only other current active player in the 3,000-hit club is Miami Marlins outfielder Ichiro Suzuki, who is tied with Hall of Fame player Craig Biggio for 22nd all-time at 3,060 hits.

Beltre is tied for 30th place on the hits list with Roberto Clemente. Al Kaline (3,007) and Boggs (3,010) are next up on the list.

Wade Miley (5-9) went five innings and one of the four hits he allowed being to Beltre, who grounded a 3-0 pitch that went past the bag and then ricocheted off the side wall into left field. The Orioles lefty also got one of his five strikeouts when Beltre went down swinging in the second inning.

“As a fan of the game, what a career that guy’s had. I wasn’t trying to let him get a hit by any means, but at the same time as a fan, this had to happen,” said Miley, who joined his teammates on the field applauding for Beltre. “He’s one of those guys that as a kid you watch. That’s the kind of respect I have for him.”

Rougned Odor homered twice and drove in five runs for Texas. His two-run single in the fourth scored Beltre, who reached on a wild pitch after striking out in the eighth before Odor’s second homer. Nomar Mazara also went deep.

Orioles closer Zach Britton came on with two on in the ninth, striking out Mazara and getting Beltre on a fielder’s choice grounder to end the game . Britton has converted an AL-record 57 consecutive save opportunities, eight this season.

Beltre’s first hit came as a 19-year-old rookie with the Los Angeles Dodgers on June 24, 1998, four years after they had signed him. After seven seasons with the Dodgers, he spent five years in Seattle and one in Boston before joining the Rangers as a free agent in 2011, the year he finally made it to a World Series.

The double was Beltre’s 1,111th hit with the Rangers, after 949 with the Dodgers, 751 with the Mariners, and 189 in his only season with the Red Sox before going to Texas as a free agent. A power guy, he has never bunted for a hit.

It was Beltre’s 605th career double, matching Paul Molitor for 14th all-time. That also matched Mel Ott for 20th with 5,041 total bases; and Beltre’s 454 homers are 38th on that list. He is also a five-time Gold Glove winner who had a career-best and franchise-record 62 consecutive games at third base without an error before a throwing error Saturday night — and another Sunday.

“Never in my life did I think about collecting 3,000 hits, playing 20 years, hitting 400-plus homers. I never expected that, I never saw myself doing that,” Beltre said. “When you play every day ... and do the best you can to help your ball club, sometimes you accumulate numbers.”

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Son of Nashville mayor dies of apparent drug overdose

By JOHN RABY, Associated Press

The only son of Nashville Mayor Megan Barry - whom her office described as “a kind soul full of life” - has died of an apparent drug overdose, and she asked for privacy as she and her husband face life “without his laughter and love.”

The office released a statement Sunday from Barry and her husband, Bruce, saying 22-year-old Max Barry died Saturday night in Denver.

“Early this morning, we received news that no parents should ever have to hear,” the couple said. “Our son Max suffered from an overdose and passed away. We cannot begin to describe the pain and heart-

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break that comes with losing our only child. Our son was a kind soul full of life and love for his family and friends."

Max Barry graduated in June from the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington.

"Our family would greatly appreciate your thoughts and prayers, and would respectfully ask for privacy as we mourn the loss of our child and begin to understand a world without his laughter and love in our lives," the statement said.

Funeral arrangements are pending. The Tennessean reported a visitation is set for Monday evening at Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music, and a memorial service is scheduled for Tuesday morning at the Belcourt Theatre in Nashville.

Denver police spokeswoman Raquel Lopez declined to search the department's records and logs for the police report of Barry's death, saying that would violate the department's policy of not identifying victims.

Investigator Melinda Rose of the Jefferson County Coroner's Office in Denver told the newspaper that an official cause or manner of death would not be declared until after the results of an autopsy, which was planned for Sunday.

The newspaper reported Max Barry had recently moved to Denver. Jefferson County Sheriff's Office spokeswoman Jenny Fulton told The Denver Post that Barry died at a private residence in the county. Fulton added the death is not considered suspicious.

Megan Barry was sworn in as Nashville's first female mayor in September 2015 with her husband and son by her side. Max Barry bear-hugged his mom after the oath of office, sat just to her right as she gave her inaugural speech and kissed her afterward.

Tennessee Court of Appeals Judge Richard H. Dinkins, who issued the oath, said his son and Max Barry started school together in kindergarten and the judge coached both on youth basketball and baseball teams.

Dinkins said the Barry family would host an annual holiday party with a houseful of kids.

Max Barry "had a loving environment," Dinkins said in a telephone interview Sunday. "He was not pampered and spoiled. He was very grounded, had a very happy childhood."

Metro Council Member Fabian Bedne said Barry attended the same high school as his son, and saw him often.

"He seemed like a good kid, nice friendly attitude," Bedne said in a Facebook message Sunday. "When I served with the Mayor in the Council and visited her home they seemed to have a great relationship at home as well. It is a devastating loss to all of Nashville, we love our Mayor and her family."

Condolences for the Barry family poured in on social media.

"No parent should ever live to see the passing of a child," Nashville Sheriff Daron Hall said on Twitter.

The Tennessee Titans posted a statement of sympathy on its website.

"Our organization's thoughts and prayers are with Mayor Barry and her family during this difficult time."



In this Sept. 25, 2015, photo, Nashville Mayor Megan Barry, center, is hugged by her son, Max, as her husband, Bruce, left, applauds after she was sworn into office in Nashville, Tenn. A statement released Sunday, July 30, 2017, from Megan and Bruce Barry, said their only child, Max Barry, died Saturday night in Denver from an apparent drug overdose. (AP Photo/Mark Humphrey, File)

Raby reported from Charleston, West Virginia. AP writer Tamara Lush contributed from Tampa, Florida.

Israeli court upholds sentencing of soldier's fatal shooting

JERUSALEM (AP) — An Israeli military court on Sunday upheld the 18-month sentence of a soldier convicted of fatally shooting a Palestinian attacker who lay on the ground wounded after stabbing and wounding another soldier, in a case that divided the country where military service is mandatory.

Sgt. Elor Azaria, an army combat medic, was recorded on a cellphone video as he fatally shot a badly wounded Palestinian who had previously attacked a soldier with a knife, wounding him. The Palestinian, Abdel Fattah al-Sharif, was lying on the ground unarmed when Azaria shot him in the head.

The 2016 incident occurred in the volatile West Bank city of Hebron at a time of frequent Palestinian attacks.

Israel's top generals pushed for the prosecution of the soldier they say violated the military's code of ethics they hold dear.

Large segments of the public, including politicians on Israel's nationalist right, sided with Azaria. Some called him a hero who was being wrongly persecuted.

In Israel, military service is compulsory for most Jewish men, and soldiers enjoy widespread sympathy and support as they operate in complex scenarios.

The verdict said "unnecessary taking human life, even if it is of a terrorist, is morally forbidden and contradicts the ethics of the Israeli army."

It called the soldier's actions "grave, forbidden and immoral" and in sharp contrast to the military's strict "purity of arms" code of conduct.

The soldier will enter prison on August 9th, unless there is another appeal.

"All the terrorists are laughing at us," the soldier's mother, Oshra, cried after the verdict.

Israel's Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman issued a statement urging the soldier's family not to continue appealing. "It's a difficult day," he said adding the ruling must be respected. He said the military's Chief of Staff should be asked to pardon him. "I have no doubt he will take into consideration the difficult circumstances," he said.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu tweeted that he will recommend a pardon.

Israel's military Chief of Staff later said if a request for pardon is submitted he would "seriously consider" it.

Fathi al-Sharif, an uncle of the Palestinian killed, said "if the killer was Palestinian and the victim was Israeli, the sentence would have been life term in jail."

"We are against any violence from any side," he said, "the only way out of this violence is peace."

Human Rights Watch welcomed the court decision. "Upholding the conviction of a soldier convicted of fatally shooting a man who posed no threat sends an important message about restrictions on lethal use of force," said Sari Bashi, the Israel and Palestine advocacy director at Human Rights Watch.

Israel has been coping with a wave of Palestinian violence that erupted in 2015. Attacks at times were a daily occurrence.

Since then, Palestinians have killed 48 Israelis, two visiting Americans and a British tourist in stabbings, shootings and car-ramming attacks targeting civilians and soldiers.

During that same period, Israeli forces have killed more than 256 Palestinians; Israel has said that most of them were attackers, others died in clashes.

Rights groups have accused Israel of using excessive force in some of the confrontations.

Israel blames the violence on incitement by Palestinian religious and political leaders compounded on social media sites that glorify violence and encourage attacks. Palestinians say the attacks stem from anger and frustration at decades of Israeli rule in territories they claim for a state.

The Azaria case bore a resemblance to the murder conviction in Britain of Alexander Blackman, a Royal Marine who was sentenced to a minimum 10 years by a military court for killing a wounded Taliban fighter in Afghanistan in 2011. Such a conviction for a serving soldier is extremely rare in Britain, and supporters

said Blackman was under extreme stress after heavy fighting and losing close comrades. He was released from prison in England earlier this year.

Pakistan: Ahead of PM vote, Islamabad crowds root for Khan

By ZARAR KHAN, Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistan's parliament will meet Tuesday to elect a new prime minister after the disqualification of three-term prime minister Nawaz Sharif, as thousands gathered in the capital Islamabad Sunday to voice support for opposition leader Imran Khan.

Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League party, which enjoys a comfortable majority in parliament, nominated Sharif's longtime loyalist Shahid Khaqan Abbasi for the top slot on Saturday. Sharif proposed Abbasi as interim prime minister until his brother Shahbaz Sharif, who is the chief minister of Punjab province, can contend in a by-election for the seat left vacant by his brother's disqualification.

The opposition is expected to name a candidate to challenge Abbasi in a vote in parliament, but the six-time lawmaker is expected to win.

Sharif's party holds 188 of 342 seats in parliament's lower house and with additional votes from its allies is expected to obtain 214 votes. To win the top slot, Abbasi needs only 172 votes.

Pakistan's Supreme Court disqualified Sharif from office on Friday for not being honest and concealing assets. The probe against him began after his children were named in the leaked so-called Panama papers for owning off-shore accounts and properties.

Sharif's party has resolved to file a review petition in the Supreme Court to reverse the disqualification. The probe was triggered by petitions filed by the conservative Jamaat-e-Islami party and cricket player-turned-politician Imran Khan.

Celebrating the Supreme Court verdict of ousting Sharif from premiership, Khan said Sunday in Islamabad that the court verdict has given the nation hope and "laid the foundation for a new Pakistan".

Thousands of Khan's jubilant supporters, chanting slogans and dancing to drum beats at a vast arena, raised placards reading 'Prime Minister Imran Khan'.

Addressing the crowd, Khan said: "This nation is awakening now and determined to make Pakistan a great country free of corruption."

Sharif has had a history of rocky relations with Pakistan's powerful military and he has been removed from office three times.

He was first elected as prime minister in 1990 and was hardly half way through his five-year tenure when he was removed from office by the army's hand-picked president in 1993. Sharif made a comeback in the 1997 elections but again his government was toppled by then-army chief Gen. Pervez Musharraf in



A female supporter of opposition party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf claps while she with others attend a rally in Islamabad, Pakistan, Sunday, July 30, 2017. Thousands of supporters of opposition party Tehreek-e-Insaf rallied in the Pakistani capital Islamabad to celebrate the removal of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. (AP Photo/Anjum Naveed)

a bloodless coup in October 1999. Sharif was tried for alleged hijacking, convicted and given a life prison sentence but later was exiled to Saudi Arabia. He returned to the country in 2007 after Benazir Bhutto struck a deal with Musharraf and returned from exile. She was assassinated in December 2007 after an election rally in Rawalpindi.

In seven decades, no civilian government has ever completed its term in Pakistan. The country has been ruled by military generals for more than half of its 70-year history and the military unwilling to see its influence challenged.

White House to Senate: Pass health bill now or else

By HOPE YEN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House stepped up demands Sunday for revived congressional efforts on health care and suggested senators cancel their entire summer break, if needed, to pass legislation after failed votes last week.

Aides said President Donald Trump is prepared in the coming days to end required payments to insurers under the Affordable Care Act as part of a bid to let "Obamacare implode" and force the Senate to act.

It was all part of a weekend flurry of Trump tweets and other statements insisting the seven-year GOP quest to repeal former President Barack Obama's signature legislative achievement was not over.

"The president will not accept those who said it's, quote, 'Time to move on,'" White House adviser Kellyanne Conway said. Those were the words used by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., after the early Friday morning defeat of the GOP proposal.

Conway said Trump was deciding whether to act on his threat to end cost-sharing reduction payments, which are aimed at trimming out-of-pocket costs for lower-income people. "He's going to make that decision this week, and that's a decision that only he can make," Conway said.

For seven years, Republicans have promised that once they took power, they would scrap Obama's overhaul and pass a replacement. But that effort crashed most recently in the Senate Friday, and that's when McConnell said it was time to focus on other policy matters.

Republicans hold a 52-48 majority in the Senate, where no Democrats voted for the GOP bill and three Republicans defected in the final vote Friday. One of the GOP defectors, Sen. John McCain, has since returned to Arizona for treatment for brain cancer,

"Don't give up Republican senators, the World is watching: Repeal & Replace," Trump said in a tweet.



In this Thursday, July 20, 2017, file photo, Budget Director Mick Mulvaney gestures as he speaks during the daily press briefing at the White House in Washington. The White House is stepping up demands that the Senate resume efforts to repeal and replace former President Barack Obama's health care law. Asked if no other legislative business should be taken up until the Senate acts again on health care, Mulvaney on Sunday, July 30, responded "yes" and suggested the Senate continue working through August if necessary. (AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais, File)

"He's going to make that decision this week, and that's a decision that only he can make," Conway said.

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White House budget director Mick Mulvaney, when asked Sunday if no other legislative business should be taken up until the Senate acts again on health care, responded "yes."

While the House has begun a five-week recess, the Senate is scheduled to work two more weeks before a summer break. McConnell has said the unfinished business includes addressing a backlog of executive and judicial nominations, coming ahead of a busy agenda in September that involves passing a defense spending bill and raising the government's borrowing limit.

"In the White House's view, they can't move on in the Senate," Mulvaney said, referring to health legislation. "They need to stay, they need to work, they need to pass something."

Trump warned over the weekend that he would end federal subsidies for health care insurance for Congress and the rest of the country if the Senate didn't act soon. He was referring in part to a federal contribution for lawmakers and their staffs, who were moved onto Obamacare insurance exchanges as part of the 2010 law.

"If a new HealthCare Bill is not approved quickly, BAILOUTS for Insurance Companies and BAILOUTS for Members of Congress will end very soon!" Trump tweeted.

The subsidies, totaling about \$7 billion a year, help reduce deductibles and copayments for consumers with modest incomes. The Obama administration used its rule-making authority to set direct payments to insurers to help offset these costs. Trump inherited the payment structure, but he also has the power to end them.

The payments are the subject of a lawsuit brought by House Republicans over whether the health law specifically included a congressional appropriation for the money, as required under the Constitution. Trump has only guaranteed the payments through July, which ends Monday.

Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, one of the three Republican senators who voted against the GOP health bill on Friday, said she's troubled by Trump's claims that the insurance payments are a "bailout." She said Trump's threat to cut off payments would not change her opposition to the GOP health bill and stressed the cost-sharing reduction payments were critical to make insurance more affordable for low-income people.

"The uncertainty about whether that subsidy is going to continue from month to month is clearly contributing to the destabilization of the insurance markets, and that's one thing that Congress needs to end," said Collins, who wants lawmakers to appropriate money for the payments.

"I certainly hope the administration does not do anything in the meantime to hasten that collapse," she added.

Trump previously said the law that he and others call "Obamacare" would collapse immediately whenever those payments stop. He has indicated a desire to halt the subsidies but so far has allowed them to continue on a month-to-month basis.

Conway spoke on "Fox News Sunday," Mulvaney appeared on CNN's "State of the Union" and Collins was on CNN as well as NBC's "Meet the Press."

Trump's travel ban keeps orphan kids from US foster families

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER, Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Tianna Rooney has already bought the poster board for the sign she'll wave when the 16-year-old refugee boy her family is taking in arrives in the United States. Rooney knows the exact words of welcome she'll write on it, in the teenager's native language from the African country of Eritrea.

But Rooney's family is leaving the sign blank, for now. She and her husband, Todd, fear actually writing the words "Welcome Home" could break her heart.

The foster son they're waiting for is part of a small, three-decade-old U.S. program for so-called unaccompanied refugee minors that has been halted by a series of new refugee bans and travel limits imposed by the Trump administration in the name of fighting terrorism.

By blocking the program, the U.S. travel bans have stranded more than 100 refugee children who were already matched to waiting American foster families. Without parents or other adult relatives, those kids

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are living on their own in countries of temporary refuge, in limbo while their U.S. foster parents hope for a court ruling that will allow the children to finish their journeys.

Since the June day a refugee agency matched the Rooneys with their foster son, which turned out to be the same day of the first Supreme Court ruling barring him, "we have experienced this very unexpected ride of grief in our family," says Rooney, a 39-year-old family therapist and mother of two from Brighton, a suburb of Detroit.

Meanwhile, the boy who fled his home country at 13 to avoid widespread forced military conscription of children continues to fend for himself on the streets in his temporary refuge in another African capital, with no phone or internet for the Rooneys to reach him to explain the delay.

"There's part of me that really hopes he knows a family wants him," Tianna Rooney says.

Since the 1980s, the program for orphaned refugee children has brought in more than 6,000 refugee children, including 203 last year.

"These are kids on their own, and struggling to survive," said Elizabeth Foydel, policy counsel with the International Refugee Assistance Project, a Washington, D.C., legal-aid group for refugees.

"How long do you feel comfortable with your child not having a caregiver?" Foydel says she asks other Americans. "Trying to manage for themselves?"

The program for orphaned refugee children from around the world is different from one started by the Obama administration in 2014 for Central American children fleeing a surge in violence there.

In the program for unaccompanied refugee children, kids eking out a living by themselves in a refugee camp or elsewhere must first come to the attention of a U.N. agency, which may choose to refer them for the U.S foster program, especially if the children are deemed to be particularly vulnerable wherever they are now. The children must then pass U.S. security screenings and other requirements, and win a match with an American foster family or group home.

But a series of Trump administration orders, and court rulings interpreting them, are now barring refugees with no close family in the United States. That requirement shuts out the refugee children in the foster program, who have no relatives they can turn to anywhere.

The child refugees newly blocked from waiting American foster families include five Ethiopian sisters, ages 9 to 16. The girls lost both parents in 2009, and have faced abuse alone in the war zone of neighboring South Sudan and in Sudanese cities, said Jessica Jones, policy counsel for the Baltimore-based Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. Along with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Lutherans are one of two U.S. groups running the program on behalf of the U.S. State Department.

Other waiting children include a 17-year-old couple originally from the Asian country of Myanmar and



In this July 14, 2017 photo, Julie Rajagopal, facing, hugs her 16-year-old foster child from Eritrea after posing for photos at Dolores Park in San Francisco. When he landed in March, he was among the last refugee foster children to make it into the U.S. Trump administration travel bans declared to block terrorists also are halting a small, three-decade-old program bringing orphan refugee children to waiting foster families in the United States. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)

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the baby they had together in a refugee camp, after fleeing attacks on their Rohingya religious minority in Myanmar.

In her home in another Detroit suburb, Sharon Martin, 64, has bought a crib for the young refugee family from Myanmar. But the children's books she bought, Martin said, are really for her. "If they come, I can finally read to a child again," Martin says.

Refugee workers say the family faces forced return to Myanmar if their U.S. arrangements fall through.

In San Francisco, meanwhile, web designer Julie Rajagopal and husband Mike Gougherty, a senior planner for a regional ferry system, are two of the lucky ones.

The 16-year-old boy they are fostering also fled a lifetime of forced military service in Eritrea, at 13. When he landed in March, a slight youth coming off the plane in an ill-made tracksuit, he was among the last refugee foster children to make it into the U.S.

Rajagopal, 35, often had stayed up through the night calling government workers and charity officials in the faraway African hub of Cairo to speed her new foster son's paperwork.

On a clear day this summer, the teen strolled with the couple at a park overlooking San Francisco. In the city's hip Mission District, he blended seamlessly in a red sweater and shoes he carefully matched himself, and jeans he insisted on lovingly ironing with each wear.

Meanwhile, in Brighton, the Rooneys and their 10- and 12-year-old sons stack new socks and T-shirts in the bedroom they've set aside for the boy they nicknamed "Five," meaning the eagerly awaited fifth member of their family.

Tianna Rooney recently got out the poster board, thinking to work on the welcome sign. After a concerned look from her husband, she put it away.

"We want to think positive thoughts" that their foster son will come safely, Todd Rooney said. "But without endangering ourselves. Without setting ourselves up for a heartache."

Clinton lost, but Republicans still want to investigate her

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrat Hillary Clinton lost the 2016 election to President Donald Trump, but some Republicans in Congress are intensifying their calls to investigate her and other Obama administration officials.

As investigations into Russian meddling and possible links to Trump's campaign have escalated on both sides of the Capitol, some Republicans argue that the investigations should have a greater focus on Democrats.

Democrats who have pushed the election probes "have started a war of investigative attrition," said GOP Rep. Steve King of Iowa, a member of the House Judiciary Committee.

Several officials from former President Barack Obama's administration and Clinton's campaign have appeared before or been interviewed by the House and Senate Intelligence Committees as part of the Russia investigation, along with Trump campaign officials. The GOP-led committees are investigating whether Trump's campaign had any links to Russian interference in last year's election.

The chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif., has continued a separate investigation into whether Obama administration officials inappropriately made requests to "unmask" identities of Trump campaign officials in intelligence reports.

The House Judiciary Committee, which has declined to investigate the Russian meddling, approved a resolution this past week to request documents related to the FBI's now-closed investigation of Clinton's emails. In addition, Republican on that committee wrote the Justice Department on Thursday and asked for a second special counsel, in addition to Special Counsel Robert Mueller, to investigate "unaddressed matters, some connected to the 2016 election and others, including many actions taken by Obama administration."

"The American public has a right to know the facts — all of them — surrounding the election and its aftermath," the lawmakers wrote.

Republicans want to investigate the unmasking issue and also Clinton's email scandal that figured prominently in the campaign. They also frequently bring up former Attorney General Loretta Lynch, and former FBI Director James Comey's testimony that she told him to call the Clinton email investigation a "matter" instead of an investigation during the campaign.

Nunes wrote his own letter to Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats last week, saying that his committee has learned that one Obama administration official had made "hundreds" of the unmasking requests.

Even though he remains committee chairman, Nunes stepped back from the Russia investigation earlier this year after he was criticized for being too close to the White House. Rep. Mike Conaway, R-Texas, took over the leading role.

The committee has conducted bipartisan interviews of witnesses; Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner appeared on Tuesday, a day after talking to Senate staff. But partisan tensions have been evident.

GOP Rep. Pete King of New York, who's on the House Intelligence Committee, said after the Kushner interview that the committee investigation into Russian meddling is a "sham."

"To me there is nothing to this from the beginning," he said of his committee's own probe. "There is no collusion ... it's the phoniest investigation ever."

Both the Senate and House committees have interviewed or expressed interest in interviewing a series of Democratic witnesses, including Obama's former national security adviser, Susan Rice, and former U.N. Ambassador Samantha Power — both of whom Republicans have said may be linked to the unmasking. Rice met with staff on the Senate Intelligence Committee earlier this month, and Power met with the panel Friday.

"Ambassador Power strongly supports any bipartisan effort to address the serious threat to our national security posed by Russia's interference in our electoral process, and is eager to engage with the Senate and House committees on the timeline they have requested," Power's lawyer, David Pressman, said in a statement.



In this June 5, 2017 file photo, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaks in Baltimore. Clinton lost the 2016 election to President Donald Trump, but some Republicans in Congress are intensifying their calls to investigate her and other Obama administration officials. (AP Photo/Patrick Semansky, File)

AP Explains: What's behind Venezuela's constituent assembly?

By **CHRISTINE ARMARIO, Associated Press**

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has provoked international criticism and enraged his political opponents by pushing for a special assembly to rewrite the troubled South American nation's constitution.

Sunday's election of delegates to the assembly comes after nearly four months of political upheaval that have resulted in more than 100 deaths and left thousands injured and detained.

Few specifics have been disclosed on what constitutional changes might be in store. But allies of the socialist president say the assembly will target opposition leaders, stirring warnings Maduro will use the as-

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sembly to install an autocratic regime.

Maduro's mentor, the late President Hugo Chavez, similarly called for a constitution rewrite shortly after taking office in 1999, but unlike Maduro he held a referendum first to get Venezuelans' blessing. Even some "Chavistas" have rejected the drive to change the constitution, which has further polarized an already deeply divided country.

HOW WILL DELEGATES BE CHOSEN?

Venezuela's government-stacked National Electoral Council created an unorthodox voting system that opponents say heavily favors the ruling party.

A total of 364 delegates will be selected according to geography: In each of Venezuela's 23 states, one delegate will be allotted per municipality while state capitals get two.

But some of the most populated states have relatively few municipalities, while some smaller ones have many. That means a state like Miranda, population nearly 3 million, will get four fewer delegates than Falcon, which is home to about 1 million people.

Critics say that unfairly favors rural areas where Maduro is more popular over opposition-friendly cities such as Caracas, the capital.

An additional 173 delegates will come from various categories of social groups including laborers, students, farmers and fishermen. Eight slots are reserved for indigenous communities. How the government determined who qualifies in each category has not been disclosed, but all of those sectors traditionally have strong ties to Chavez and Maduro's leftist political movement.

The opposition is boycotting the election, so the majority of candidates represent the ruling socialist party.

WHAT CHANGES HAS THE GOVERNMENT VOWED TO MAKE?

Maduro has talked about the constituent assembly only in fuzzy terms, characterizing it as a lofty solution for Venezuela's long list of political and economic woes. But some of his closest associates have provided a hint at what might come.

On Wednesday, first lady Cilia Flores, who Maduro calls Venezuela's "First Combatant," said the assembly will create a peace and justice commission that will ensure those responsible for the current political upheaval "pay and learn their lesson."

Diosdado Cabello, first vice president of Venezuela's socialist party, says the assembly will strip legislators in the opposition-controlled National Assembly of their immunity from prosecution. He adds that the office of Venezuela's chief prosecutor, who has recently become one of Maduro's most outspoken critics, will be "turned upside down."



A supporter of Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro holds a doll of the late President Hugo Chavez holding a sign that reads in Spanish "Constituent Assembly, Yes it's going" during a political rally with Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro, in Caracas, Venezuela, Thursday, July 27, 2017. President Maduro has provoked international outcry and enraged an opposition demanding his resignation with his push to elect an assembly that will rewrite the troubled South American nation's constitution. Sunday's election will cap nearly four months of political upheaval that has left thousands detained and injured and at least 100 dead. (AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos)

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The assembly is certain to continue the socialist policies first installed by Chavez.

Aside from rewriting the constitution, the National Constituent Assembly could function as a sort of super-body that assumes the powers of the National Assembly, the only government branch not controlled by Maduro.

WHAT DO VENEZUELANAS THINK OF THE PLAN?

A June survey by Venezuelan polling firm Datanalisis said just 23 percent favor the constituent assembly. Only 19 percent said they thought a new constitution would "guarantee the peace of stability of the country," as Maduro has asserted. Nearly half said they believe the purpose of the assembly is to ensure Maduro stays in power.

Earlier this month, more than 7.5 million Venezuelans voted in an unofficial opposition referendum rejecting the constitution rewrite.

But those numbers do not mean Venezuelans are unlikely to show up at polling stations Sunday. Aside from government loyalists, groups of state workers and government organization are being mobilized and pressured to cast ballots.

Luis Vicente Leon, president of Datanalisis, said that because the government has access to data showing who does and does not vote, many people are likely to feel obligated to participate or risk losing their jobs in a country with severe food shortages and triple-digit inflation.

"If this was a free election, without pressure, about a third of the number that participated in the popular consult would vote," he said, referring to the opposition referendum.

WHAT IS AT STAKE FOR THE GOVERNMENT?

Its survival.

Recent breaks with Maduro by high-level officials including longtime government loyalist Luisa Ortega Diaz, the chief prosecutor, and a string of former Cabinet ministers under Chavez indicate discord already exists within the ruling party.

Radical changes in the 1999 constitution, which was crafted by Chavez and considered one of his crowning legacies, could cause even greater division, said John Magdaleno, director of the Caracas-based consulting firm POLITY.

"It's not just a matter of whether the constituent assembly is put in place or not," he said. "It's what impact its creation could have."

Foreign governments including the United States have threatened to further isolate the government.

President Donald Trump has said the U.S. will take "strong and swift economic actions" if the constituent assembly election proceeds. That could potentially include reducing U.S. imports of Venezuelan oil, a move that could cripple the economy. The government relies heavily on the U.S. as a source of hard currency, because its oil exports to other major trade partners like China are paying off debts.

HOW IS THE OPPOSITION LIKELY TO RESPOND?

The conflict between the government and the opposition won't end Sunday.

A coalition of Venezuelan opposition parties proposed but then appeared to back away from its call to form an alternative "government of national unity." Nonetheless, a recent move by the opposition-controlled National Assembly to appoint 33 magistrates to replace the government-stacked Supreme Court again raised the specter of a potential parallel government.

"The question is whether that parallel government could govern," said Leon, the pollster.

For now, any alternative officials named by the opposition remain purely symbolic. Three of the 33 opposition-appointed magistrates have been detained, while the others have been threatened with arrest and are unable to fill their posts.

A prolonged conflict appears increasingly likely. Third parties have sought unsuccessfully to forge negotiations between the administration and its foes.

The next presidential election is now set for next year, but the constituent assembly could change that and further anger the opposition.

"We're talking about a conflict that will last until there are elections," said Benigno Alarcon, director of the Center of for Political Students at Andres Bello Catholic University in Caracas.

Trump threat: End health payments unless there's an overhaul

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Saturday threatened once more to end required payments to insurance companies unless lawmakers repeal and replace the Obama-era health care law.

In apparent frustration over Friday's failure by the Senate Republican majority to pass a bill repealing parts of the Affordable Care Act, Trump tweeted: "If a new HealthCare Bill is not approved quickly, BAILOUTS for Insurance Companies and BAILOUTS for Members of Congress will end very soon!"

No Democrats voted for the GOP bill.

Repeal-and-replace has been a guiding star for Republicans ever since President Barack Obama enacted the law in 2010. That goal, which Trump turned into a top campaign promise, remains out of reach even with Republicans controlling both the White House and Congress. The issue has dominated the opening months of Trump's presidency.

But Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said after the bill failed early Friday that he would move to other legislative business in the upcoming week.

Trump also tweeted: "Unless the Republican Senators are total quitters, Repeal & Replace is not dead! Demand another vote before voting on any other bill!"

The subsidies, totaling about \$7 billion a year, help reduce deductibles and copayments for consumers with modest incomes.

The Obama administration used its rule-making authority to set direct payments to insurers to help offset these costs. Trump inherited the payment structure, but he also has the power to end them.

The payments are the subject of a lawsuit brought by House Republicans over whether the Affordable Care Act specifically included a congressional appropriation for the money, as required under the Constitution. Trump has only guaranteed the payments through July, which ends Monday.

Trump previously said the law that he and others call "Obamacare" would collapse immediately whenever those payments stop. He has indicated a desire to halt the subsidies but so far has allowed them to continue on a month-to-month basis.

Without the payments, analysts have said, more insurers might drop out of the system, limiting options for consumers and clearing the way for the insurers who stay to charge more for coverage.



Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of N.Y., speaks to reporters on Capitol Hill in Washington, Friday, July 28, 2017, after the Republican-controlled Senate was unable to fulfill their political promise to repeal and replace "Obamacare." (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

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The Senate's Democratic leader, Chuck Schumer of New York, cautioned such a step, saying it would make health care more expensive.

"If the president refuses to make the cost sharing reduction payments, every expert agrees that premiums will go up and health care will be more expensive for millions of Americans," Schumer said Saturday in a written statement. "The president ought to stop playing politics with people's lives and health care, start leading and finally begin acting presidential."

Follow Darlene Superville on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap>

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Monday, July 31, the 212th day of 2017. There are 153 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 31, 1777, during the Revolutionary War, the Marquis de Lafayette, a 19-year-old French nobleman, was made a major-general in the American Continental Army.

On this date:

In 1556, St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus, died in Rome.

In 1875, the 17th president of the United States, Andrew Johnson, died in Carter County, Tennessee, at age 66.

In 1919, Germany's Weimar (VY'-mahr) Constitution was adopted by the republic's National Assembly.

In 1930, the radio character "The Shadow" made his debut as narrator of the "Detective Story Hour" on CBS Radio.

In 1942, Oxfam International had its beginnings as the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief was founded in England.

In 1954, Pakistan's K2 was conquered as two members of an Italian expedition, Achille Compagnoni (ah-KEE'-lay kohm-pahn-YOH'-nee) and Lino Lacedelli (LEE'-noh lah-chee-DEHL'-ee), reached the summit.

In 1957, the Distant Early Warning Line, a system of radar stations designed to detect Soviet bombers approaching North America, went into operation.

In 1964, the American space probe Ranger 7 reached the moon, transmitting pictures back to Earth before impacting the lunar surface.

In 1972, Democratic vice-presidential candidate Thomas Eagleton withdrew from the ticket with George McGovern following disclosures that Eagleton had once undergone psychiatric treatment.

In 1989, a pro-Iranian group in Lebanon released a grisly videotape showing the body of American hostage William R. Higgins, a Marine lieutenant-colonel, dangling from a rope.

In 1991, President George H.W. Bush and Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty in Moscow.

In 1992, the former Soviet republic of Georgia was admitted to the United Nations as its 179th member. Thai Airways Flight 311, an Airbus A310, crashed while approaching Tribhuvan International Airport in Nepal; all 113 people aboard died.

Ten years ago: The Army censured retired three-star Lt. Gen. Philip Kensinger for a "perfect storm of mistakes, misjudgments and a failure of leadership" after the 2004 friendly-fire death in Afghanistan of Army Ranger Pat Tillman. The U.N. Security Council unanimously approved a 26,000-strong peacekeeping force for Sudan's Darfur region.

Five years ago: Three Indian electric grids collapsed in a cascade, cutting power to 620 million people in the world's biggest blackout. Wrapping up an overseas trip, Republican presidential contender Mitt Romney said in Warsaw that Poland's economy was a model of small government and free enterprise that other nations should emulate. At the London games, the team of Gabrielle Douglas, McKayla Maroney, Aly Raisman (AL'-ee RAYS'-mihn), Kyla Ross and Jordyn Wieber won the first U.S. Olympic team title in women's

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gymnastics since 1996. Michael Phelps broke the Olympic medals record with his 19th as the United States romped to a dominating win in the 4x200-meter freestyle relay. Author, playwright, politician and commentator Gore Vidal, 86, died in Los Angeles.

One year ago: Pope Francis told young people who had flocked by the hundreds of thousands to a Catholic jamboree near Krakow, Poland, that they needed to "believe in a new humanity" stronger than evil, and cautioned against concluding that one religion is more violent than others. Ariya Jutanugarn (ahr-EE'-uh juh-TAN'-uh-garn) won the Women's British Open at Woburn for her first major championship and fourth LPGA Tour victory of the year.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Don Murray is 88. Jazz composer-musician Kenny Burrell is 86. Actress France Nuyen is 78. Actress Susan Flannery is 78. Singer Lobo is 74. Actress Geraldine Chaplin is 73. Former movie studio executive Sherry Lansing is 73. Singer Gary Lewis is 72. Actor Lane Davies is 67. International Tennis Hall of Famer Evonne Goolagong Cawley is 66. Actor Barry Van Dyke is 66. Actor Alan Autry is 65. Jazz composer-musician Michael Wolff is 65. Actor James Read is 64. Actor Michael Biehn is 61. Rock singer-musician Daniel Ash (Love and Rockets) is 60. Actor Dirk Blocker is 60. Entrepreneur Mark Cuban is 59. Rock musician Bill Berry is 59. Actor Wally Kurth is 59. Actor Wesley Snipes is 55. Country singer Chad Brock is 54. Musician Fatboy Slim is 54. Rock musician Jim Corr is 53. Author J.K. Rowling (ROHL'-ing) is 52. Actor Dean Cain is 51. Actor Jim True-Frost is 51. Actor Ben Chaplin is 48. Actor Loren Dean is 48. Actress Eve Best is 46. Retired NFL quarterback Gus Frerotte is 46. Actress Annie Parisse (pah-REES') is 42. Actor Robert Telfer is 40. Country singer-musician Zac Brown is 39. Actor-producer-writer B.J. Novak is 38. Actor Eric Lively is 36. Country singer Blaire Stroud (3 of Hearts) is 34. Singer Shannon Curfman is 32. Actor Reese Hartwig is 19. Actor Rico Rodriguez is 19.

Thought for Today: "History is idle gossip about a happening whose truth is lost the instant it has taken place." — Gore Vidal (1925-2012).