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The American flag is the symbol of our freedom, national pride and history.

Mike Fitzpatrick



Chicken Soup
for the Soul

CLOSED: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

Swimming Pool Hours

Open Swim Daily: 1 p.m. to 4:50 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 8:50 p.m.

Fun Night is every Friday from 6:30 p.m. to 8:50 p.m.

Adult Water Aerobics: Monday through Thursday: 8 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. to 6:15 pm

Adult Lap Swim: Monday through Friday: 7 a.m. to 8 a.m.; Monday through Thursday: 5:30 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.; Friday-Sunday: 4:50 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Swimming Lessons: First Session: June 17-27

Thursday, July 4

Olive Grove: 10 am Couples Firecracker Tournament, Shotgun start, 18 holes
Pool hours: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunday, July 7

2:00 p.m.: Legion at Redfield, (DH)
2:00 p.m.: U12 Midgets vs. Backous & Pierre at Manor Park

Monday, July 8

5:00 p.m.: Junior Teeners host Sisseton, (DH)
6:00 p.m.: U8 Pee Wees at Webster, (DH)s (R,B)
6:00 p.m.: Junior Legion at Northville, (DH)
6:00 p.m.: T-Ball Scrimmage (both)
Softball at Mellette (U8 at 5 p.m. (1 game), U10 at 6 p.m. (1 game), U14 at 7 p.m. (2 games)

Tuesday, July 9

5:30 p.m.: Legion hosts Aberdeen, (DH)
5:30 p.m.: U8 Pee Wees vs. Borge at Manor Park (R)
6:30 p.m.: U12 Midgets vs. Borge at Manor Park
Softball U14 hosts Frankfort, (DH), 6 p.m.

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The Duane and Rhonda Flihs yard at 229 E. 4th Ave. has been chosen as this week's Yard of the Week. The Yard of the Week is chosen by members of the Groton Garden Club. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Position available for full-time Police Officer

"Position available for full-time Police Officer. Experience and SD Certification preferred. Salary negotiable DOE. Please send application and resume to the City of Groton, PO Box 587 Groton, SD 57445. This position is open until filled. Applications may be found at <https://city.grotonsd.gov/forms/ApplicationForCityEmployee.pdf> For more information, please call 605-397-8422 Equal opportunity employer."

(0704.0710)



2 bedroom apt
\$750/month plus utilities
attached garage
major appliances furnished

480-980-8513

or

605-397-7118

June 2019 Weather In Review

June 2019 featured near normal temperatures on a whole across the area, but it finished on a hot note. Widespread highs in the 90s were observed on both the 28th and 29th, and Pierre, Murdo and Gann Valley reached the century mark on the 29th. Unfortunately, this heat combined with a very muggy air mass of 70-80° dewpoints on the 29th, and heat index values soared well into the 100s as a result. Some heat index values include: 106° in Watertown, 109° in Aberdeen and Pierre, and 114° in Mobridge. Not much relief arrived with nightfall either. Daily record warm low temperatures were tied on the 29th at both Watertown and Sisseton with 72° (also in 1931) and 70° (also in 2018) respectively.

This June finished between 1 to 2 inches above and below normal for precipitation as well, depending on where you were. While Aberdeen picked up 4.7" of moisture, Kennebec had just 0.84". These discrepancies happen during the summer months, due to the often scattered nature of thunderstorms. And indeed, several days this June featured afternoon, generally disorganized, thunderstorm development. Only one daily rainfall record was set at any of our Automated Surface Observation System (ASOS) sites (Aberdeen, Sisseton, Watertown, Pierre and Mobridge): 2.06" at Mobridge on the 19th (1.09" in 1951).

Despite a couple overnight thunderstorm squall lines late in the month, and a few other relatively isolated events, severe weather was remarkably absent in June (the climatologically most active month for South Dakota and Minnesota). This, mind you, on the heels of a similarly inactive May. Year-to-date, NWS Aberdeen has only issued 34 Severe Thunderstorm/Tornado warnings. This ranks in the bottom 5 for most warnings since 1986. Despite the relative inactivity, a rare anticyclonic tornado developed just north of Estelline, SD. Only about one in 700-1000 tornadoes rotate anticyclonically/clockwise.

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**AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION
COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS, COURTHOUSE ANNEX
25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD**

**TUESDAY
JULY 9, 2019**

8:45a.m. - 8:55a.m. – Ted Dickey, NECOG – SDDOT Community Access Grant

8:55a.m. – 9:00a.m. – Judy Dosch, Building Superintendent – Discuss 2020 Budget

- Approve General Meeting Minutes from July 2, 2019
- Claims/Payroll
- HR Report
- Fair Contracts
- Authorize Chairman to sign Community Access Grant Resolution
- Uncollectable Tax List
- 1st & 2nd Quarterly Interest Reports
- Abatements
- Leases
- 3rd Quarter EM State & Local Agreement

Any other matters to come before the Commission for discussion

Budget Work Session following the meeting

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Independence
Day



Mostly Cloudy
then Slight
Chance
T-storms

High: 79 °F

Tonight



Chance
T-storms then
Showers
Likely

Low: 64 °F

Friday



Chance
Showers

High: 79 °F

Friday
Night



Chance
T-storms

Low: 61 °F

Saturday



Slight Chance
T-storms

High: 77 °F

Cooler Today

Highs in the 70s to
Lower 80s

Chance of
Thunderstorms Late
This Afternoon and
This Evening

No Severe Weather
Expected

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

weather.gov/abr

Graphic Created
7/4/2019 4:16 AM

Published on: 07/04/2019 at 12:19AM

Temperatures will be cooler across the area today, with highs in the 70s to lower 80s. There is a small chance for thunderstorms late this afternoon and this evening. No severe weather is expected.

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Today in Weather History

July 4, 1936: Several record highs were seen on this day, including; 113 degrees 4NW of Gann Valley; 111 in Murdo; 107 in Castlewood; 106 in Clark and Highmore; 105 near Onida; 104 in Faulkton and Miller; 103 degrees 6SE of McIntosh; 101 in Pollock.

July 4, 1988: Several record highs were set on this day, including; 103 degrees in Ipswich and Britton; 102 in Webster; 101 in Summit and Artichoke Lake, MN; 99 in Leola; 98 degrees in Clear Lake and Waubay.

1776: Thomas Jefferson purchased a thermometer from a local merchant before signing the Declaration of Independence. According to his weather memorandum book, at 1 PM it was cloudy and 76 degrees.

1911: Record temperatures are set in the northeastern United States as a deadly heat wave hits the area that would go on to kill 380 people. In Nashua, New Hampshire, the mercury peaked at 106 degrees. Other high-temperature records were set all over New England during an 11-day period.

1956 - A world record for the most rain in one minute was set at Unionville, MD, with a downpour of 1.23 inches. (The Weather Channel) (The National Severe Storms Forecast Center)

1987 - Thunderstorms around the country provided extra fireworks for Independence Day. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 82 mph at Clearwater, KS, eight inches of rain in four hours at Menno SD, and three inches of rain in just fifteen minutes at Austin, KY. Morning thunderstorms drenched Oneonta AL with 8.6 inches of rain, their greatest 24 hour total in thirty years of records. The heavy rain caused mudslides and serious flooding, claiming two lives. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced heavy rain over the Central Gulf Coast Region for the second day in a row. Monroe, LA, was deluged with 3.75 inches in two hours. Aberdeen and Rapid City, SD, reported record high temperatures for the date, with readings of 105 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Independence Day was hot as a firecracker across parts of the country. Nineteen cities, mostly in the north central U.S., reported record high temperatures for the date, including Williston ND with a reading of 107 degrees. In the southwestern U.S., highs of 93 at Alamosa, CO, 114 at Tucson, AZ, and 118 at Phoenix, AZ, equalled all-time records for those locations. (The National Weather Summary)

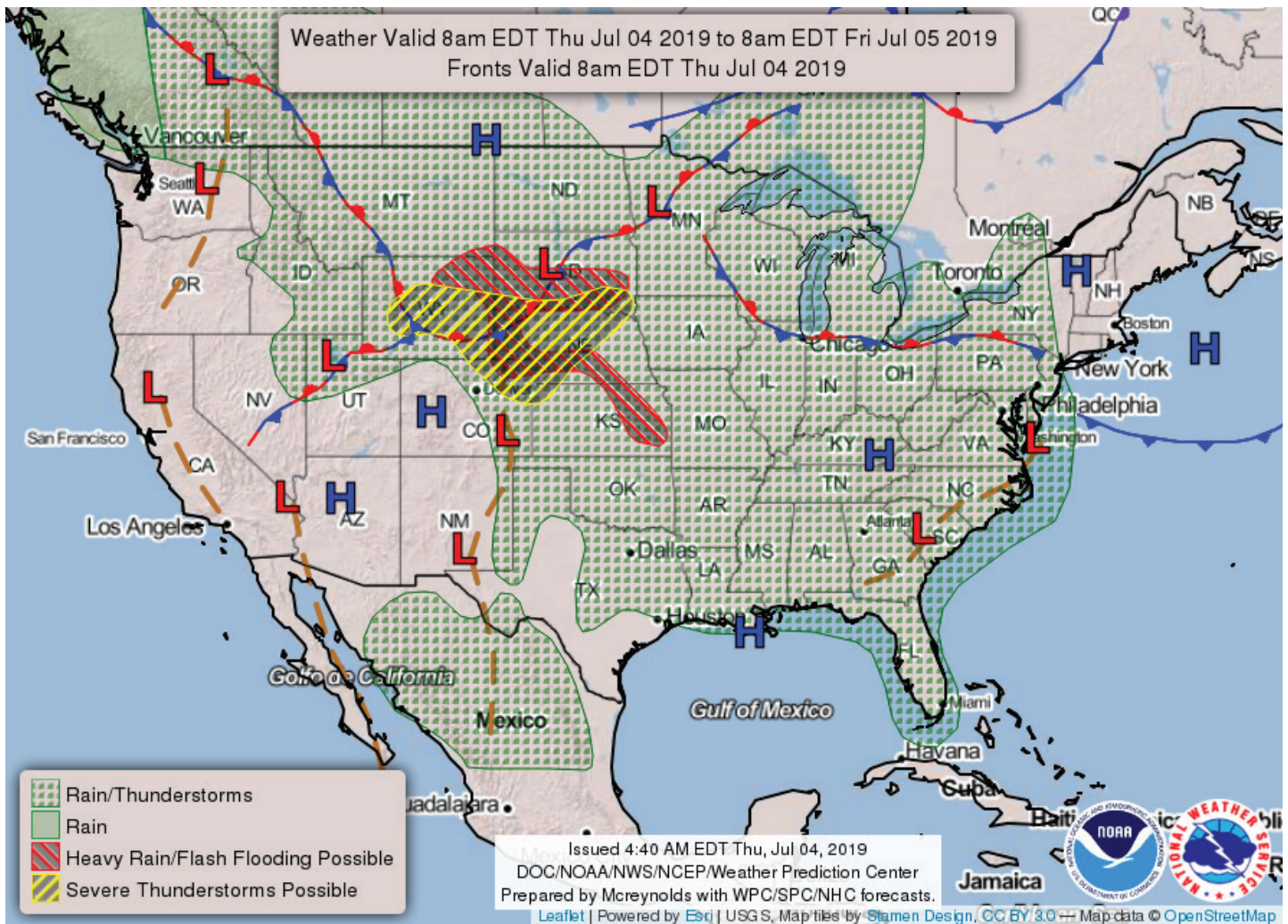
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 90 °F at 7:34 PM
Low Temp: 67 °F at 7:22 AM
Wind: 22 mph at 3:27 PM
Day Rain: 0.73

Record High: 105° in 1988
Record Low: 40° in 1967
Average High: 82°F
Average Low: 58°F
Average Precip in July.: 0.31
Precip to date in July.: 0.73
Average Precip to date: 11.15
Precip Year to Date: 13.45
Sunset Tonight: 9:25 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:52 a.m.



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ITS SIMPLY WRONG!

Unfortunately, most of us do it without thinking about it. It has become part of our nature and we do it constantly - much to the displeasure of God. The It? Rewarding the undeserving.

Our hearts go out to them: the unfortunates - because we think of them as being unfortunate. Or incapable. Or unable. Or not having had opportunities. Or not having a teacher or mentor or who or whatever it took to get what they are or got. But if they were or are capable of getting what they got according to Solomon, the it is not fitting. Rarely do we think of them as being what we must come to accept: the unwilling. This is a category that we have allowed to become eroded in our thinking and behavior.

It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury, wrote Solomon. Perhaps we need to look at it is not fitting more closely. It is more accurately translated inappropriate. This is the point he wants us to understand, accept and apply. Unearned gifts to others, no matter how deserving we may think the recipient is, do not reflect Gods wisdom. Those gifts, the its of life, are not a result of a person living according to the teachings of Gods Word or the application of His wisdom. Our skills and talents are gifts from God - and what we do with them is our gift to God. Developing our skills and talents to enjoy the luxuries of life is important and most of all, God-honoring.

Receiving an inheritance or winning the lottery or receiving any gift that is unearned often reveals a persons flawed character. Unearned gifts are often squandered in the pursuit of selfish and self-centered luxuries that are unneeded, unnecessary and ungodly.

There is nothing essentially wrong with having luxuries. But there is something wrong with not earning them by honoring Gods ways and wisdom. The wealth that comes from hard work honors God because we learn the value of earning the luxuries that He gives us as rewards.

Prayer: Work began in Creation. It is something You did willingly and nobly and set the example for us to follow. May we honor You and then enjoy the fruits of our labor. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 19:10 It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury - how much worse for a slave to rule over princes!

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 01/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 03/17/2019 Legion Post #39 Spring Fundraiser (Sunday closest to St. Patrick's Day, every other year)
- 04/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/27/2019 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 05/04/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/27/2019 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program (Memorial Day)
- 06/13/2019 Transit Fundraiser (Thursday Mid-June)
- 06/14/2019 SDSU Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 06/15/2019 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 06/21/2019 Best Ball Golf Tourney
- 06/22-23/2019 Groton Junior Legion Tournament
- 06/29/2019 Groton U10/U12 Round Robin Tournament
- 07/04/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 07/14/2019 Summer Fest/Car Show (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/18/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Tournament
- 07/21/2019 Granary Ice Cream Social & Family Music Fest
- 08/02/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Wine on Nine
- 08/09-11/2019 State Junior Legion Tournament in Groton
- 08/22/2019 First Day of School
- 09/07/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/08/2019 Sunflower Classic at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/08/2019 Granary Living History Fall Festival
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2019 Trunk or Treat/Halloween on Main (Halloween)
- 11/09/2019 Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/07/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Holiday Party
- 12/07/2019 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
- Bingo: every Wednesday at the Legion Post #39

2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 4/4/2020 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 4/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 5/2/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)

News from the Associated Press

Industrial mower kills man with South Dakota connection

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A man with connections to South Dakota is dead after an industrial mower hit him alongside an Oregon highway.

The Sioux Falls Argus Leader reports that 49-year-old Keith Ericson was sleeping along a highway Tuesday in Douglas County, Oregon, when a state Department of Transportation worker mowing along the shoulder hit him.

Oregon Department of Transportation official Angela Beers-Seydel says it was a "horrific accident." Ericson was pronounced dead after police arrived.

The agency mows the grass along highways about three times a year and each workers are told to search the grass for obstacles but somehow Ericson's body was overlooked.

Ericson's last known addresses were Rapid City and Santa Monica, California.

Rapid City priest pleads not guilty to stealing donations

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Rapid City priest accused of stealing more than \$150,000 in church donations is pleading not guilty.

The Rapid City Journal reports Marcin Garbacz entered the plea Wednesday in federal court to 60 charges, including 50 counts of wire fraud, nine counts of money laundering and one count of transporting stolen money. He was ordered detained until his trial.

According to court documents, Garbacz stole more than \$150,000 between 2004 and 2012 from various parishes. Federal agents intercepted him at the Seattle airport May 10. He had booked a one-way ticket to Poland, his homeland.

He pleaded guilty in October 2018 to petty theft for stealing donations after police say security cameras caught him stealing roughly \$600 from Saint Therese Church. He was suspended from the ministry that year.

This story has been updated to correct that the Rapid City Journal reported the priests' plea.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Wednesday:

Dakota Cash

01-08-12-16-33

(one, eight, twelve, sixteen, thirty-three)

Estimated jackpot: \$20,000

Lotto America

07-12-19-36-48, Star Ball: 2, ASB: 2

(seven, twelve, nineteen, thirty-six, forty-eight; Star Ball: two; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$21.24 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$95 million

Powerball

40-43-45-50-61, Powerball: 25, Power Play: 3

(forty, forty-three, forty-five, fifty, sixty-one; Powerball: twenty-five; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$150 million

Yankton man identified as motorcyclist who died in crash

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have released the name of a motorcyclist who died in a crash in Yankton last week.

The South Dakota State Patrol says 55-year-old James Schirmacher of Yankton died last Thursday when a car driven by a 16-year-old girl collided with his motorcycle.

The patrol says the 16-year-old driver was westbound on state Highway 50 when she attempted a left-hand turn and collided with the eastbound motorcycle.

Schirmacher was not wearing a helmet. Charges against the girl are pending.

Some big farms collect big checks from Trump aid package

By **STEVE KARNOWSKI** and **BALINT SZALAI** Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — When President Donald Trump's administration announced a \$12 billion aid package for farmers struggling under the financial strain of his trade dispute with China, the payments were capped. But many large farming operations had no trouble finding legal ways around them, records provided to The Associated Press under the Freedom of Information Act show.

The government paid nearly \$2.8 million to a Missouri soybean operation registered as three entities at the same address. More than \$900,000 went to five other farm businesses, in Indiana, Illinois, Tennessee and two in Texas. Three other farming operations collected more than \$800,000, and 16 others collected over \$700,000.

Recipients defended the payouts, saying they didn't cover their losses from the trade war and they were legally entitled to them. Department of Agriculture rules let farms file claims for multiple family members or other partners who meet the department's definition of being "actively engaged in farming."

But U.S. Sen. Charles Grassley, an Iowa Republican who has long fought for subsidy limits, and other critics say it's the latest example of how loopholes let large farms collect far more than the supposed caps.

Grassley said in a statement to AP that some of the nation's largest farms are receiving huge subsidies "through underhanded legal tricks. They're getting richer off the backs of taxpayers while young and beginning farmers are priced out of the profession. This needs to end. The Department of Agriculture needs to re-evaluate its rules for awarding federal funds and conduct more thorough oversight of where it's funneling taxpayer dollars."

USDA officials said they believe its rules are being followed and that procedures are in place to audit recipients.

About 83 percent of the aid under the Market Facilitation Program has gone to soybean farmers because they've suffered most under China's retaliatory tariffs. The program sets a \$125,000 cap in each of three categories of commodities: one for soybeans and other row crops, one for pork and dairy, and one for cherries and almonds. But each qualified family member or business partner gets their own \$125,000 cap for each category. Farmers who produce both soybeans and hogs, for example, would have separate caps for each and could thus collect \$250,000.

But there are legal ways around those caps.

USDA data show the biggest beneficiary has been DeLine Farms Partnership and two similarly named partnerships registered at the same address in Charleston, Missouri, that collected nearly \$2.8 million. They're led by Donald DeLine and his wife, Lisa DeLine. Their attorney, Robert Serio, said the partnerships qualified legally and probably could have qualified for more if not for the caps. He said each partnership farms around 27,000 acres and is made up of eight or nine partners who all meet the "actively engaged" requirement.

USDA spokesman Dave Warner said the department couldn't comment on the specifics of the DeLines' operations but that such a large claim was likely audited to ensure eligibility.

At Peterson Farms in Loretto, Kentucky, eight members of the family partnership collected a total \$863,560 for crops grown on over 15,000 acres, including wheat and corn used at the nearby Maker's Mark bourbon distillery.

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Co-owner Bernard Peterson said it didn't make up for all their losses at a time when it was already hard to be profitable. The \$1.65 per bushel aid payments for soybeans fell well short of losses he estimated at \$2 to \$2.50 per bushel.

"It's a big number but there are a big number of people directly depending on the success of our operation in the community," he said.

The numerous ways around the caps mean that millions of subsidy dollars flow to "city slickers who are stretching the limits of the law," said Scott Faber, senior vice president of government affairs at the Environmental Working Group, which has criticized federal farm subsidy programs as biased toward big producers and promoting environmentally damaging farming practices. Urban dwellers might play only a small role in an operation without ever setting foot on the farm because of the loose definitions for who qualifies, he said.

Matt Keller, a pork producer in Kenyon, Minnesota, said he appreciated the \$143,820 he got. It didn't cover all his losses but helped with cash flow, he said. He reached the \$125,000 cap on his hogs, and the remaining money was for his soybeans and corn.

Keller said his wife and other family members are all involved in his operation, which produces about 29,000 pigs per year. He doesn't blame the trade wars for depressed hog prices, but said the tariffs, on top of oversupply, have made things even tougher.

"It was kind of a relief, I guess, that we had a little support from the president and the country," Keller said.

Szalai and AP reporter Riin Aljas contributed to this story from Washington. Dylan Lovan contributed from Loretto, Kentucky.

AP Analysis: Europe squeezed in Iran-US nuclear deal dispute

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — When it comes to saving Iran's nuclear deal, Europe finds itself in the impossible situation of trying to salvage an accord unraveling because of the maximalist U.S. sanctions campaign.

Since President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the accord over a year ago, a slow fuse has burned through Iran. At first, it appeared Iranian officials thought they might be able to wait out Trump. They spoke about "strategic patience" as the U.S. 2020 presidential election loomed.

That talk faded as U.S. sanctions choked off Iran's vital crude oil sales abroad and then began targeting its paramilitary Revolutionary Guard and officials including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Soon, the talk changed to "strategic action" and making threats to the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial global oil supply point.

That action has seen Iran break the limit put on its stockpile of low-enriched uranium under its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. President Hassan Rouhani says that starting Sunday, Iran will begin enriching uranium to "any level we think is necessary and we need."

Those steps combined could see Iran narrow the one-year window it needs to have enough material ready to potentially build a nuclear weapon, something Iran denies it wants to do but the atomic accord prevented.

To Iran, the only people who now can prevent further escalation in the crisis are in Europe. Among the parties to the deal are Britain, France and Germany, while the European Union also has aided in the diplomacy.

In public comments, it is Europe that Iran keeps targeting.

The "actions of the Europeans have not been enough so the Islamic Republic will move ahead with its plans as it has previously announced," Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Monday.

Maja Kocijancic, a spokeswoman for EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, said Thursday that Europe "called on Iran to reverse these steps and to refrain from further measures that would undermine the nuclear agreement."

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But what, if anything, the Europeans can offer remains in question. They've pointed to INSTEX, a trading vehicle that allows European and Iranian firms to send goods abroad and be paid locally to avoid American sanctions. However, questions remain if Iran will set up a matching system itself to facilitate the trade. The EU says from its side that INSTEX "is now operational and its first transactions are being processed."

For Iran, being able to sell oil through INSTEX remains its most important concern.

"Without (an) oil deal, it's very clear INSTEX will not work," Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zangeneh told Bloomberg this week. However, Iran may have been able to export some oil to China last week despite sanctions.

The U.S. appears poised to potentially sanction INSTEX if it moves outside the bounds of food and medicine, which America still allows to be sold into Iran. And even if it did, there's no sign that any major company would be willing to risk U.S. sanctions in the name of European diplomacy, something the Trump administration seems all too happy to point out.

"We just don't see any corporate demand for it because if a corporation is given a choice between doing business in the United States or doing business in Iran, it's going to choose the United States every single time," said Brian Hook, the U.S. special representative for Iran, in May.

Trump himself increasingly has criticized Iran over it not adhering to the deal he abandoned.

"Be careful with the threats, Iran," Trump wrote early Thursday on Twitter. "They can come back to bite you like nobody has been bitten before!"

But Iran can bite as well. Already amid the crisis, Iran shot down U.S. military surveillance drone worth over \$100 million that it said illegally entered its territorial airspace. The U.S. denies that, saying an Iranian missile hit the drone over international airspace in the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20% of the world's oil passes.

Iran repeatedly has threatened to close off the strait if it can't sell its oil. In the last two months, mysterious attacks struck oil tankers near the strait. Iran denies being involved, while the U.S. accuses Tehran of using limpet mines on the vessels.

While the strait remains open, insurance premiums for oil tankers have risen. While 80% of the oil passing through the strait goes to Asia, Saudi and Iraqi oil does find its way to Europe. Any impact to that flow through the strait likely will see global prices rise, hurting European consumers.

"The military confrontation between Iran, the U.S., and the Arab Gulf states over everything from the (nuclear deal) to Yemen can easily escalate to hybrid warfare that has far more serious forms of attack," said Anthony H. Cordesman, an analyst at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies. "Such attacks can impact critical aspects of the flow of energy to key industrial states and exporters that shape the success of the global economy."

Europe now finds itself directly involved in halting the flow of Iranian crude oil abroad. On Thursday, authorities in Gibraltar stopped an oil tanker believed to be carrying Iranian crude to Syria. While Gibraltar said it made the seizure with British assistance over EU sanctions on Syria, the timing likely will not go unnoticed by officials in Tehran.

Spain's claim the seizure came at the request of the U.S. undoubtedly will get attention as well.

As Rouhani warned in December: "If someday, the United States decides to block Iran's oil, no oil will be exported from the Persian Gulf."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Jon Gambrell, the news director for the Gulf and Iran for The Associated Press, has reported from each of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Iran and other locations across the world since joining the AP in 2006. Follow him on Twitter at www.twitter.com/jongambrellAP.

Associated Press writer Lorne Cook in Brussels contributed.

Coney Island hot dog eaters gear up to chow down

NEW YORK (AP) — The dog days of summer are upon us.

Competitive eaters will scarf down dozens of hot dogs and buns Thursday at the annual Nathan's Famous July Fourth hot dog eating contest on New York's Coney Island boardwalk.

California native and 11-time champion Joey "Jaws" Chestnut will face off against 17 opponents to defend last year's record of 74 wieners and buns in 10 minutes.

Miki Sudo (MIHK'-ee SOO'doh), of Las Vegas, hopes to win her sixth consecutive women's title. She ate 37 franks last year.

Thousands gather to watch the spectacle every year, with millions more tuning in on television.

ESPN released a documentary Tuesday featuring the rivalry between Chestnut and his longtime foe, Japan's Takeru Kobayashi, who no longer takes part in the contest.

Migrants say Libya militias conscripted them to clean arms

By MAGGIE MICHAEL Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Migrants who survived the deadly airstrike on a Libyan detention center said Thursday they had been conscripted by a local militia to work in an adjacent weapons workshop.

The decision to store weapons at the facility in Tajoura, to the east of Tripoli, may have made it a target for the self-styled Libyan National Army, which is at war with an array of militias allied with a weak, U.N.-recognized government in the capital.

The Tripoli government has blamed Wednesday's pre-dawn strike, which killed at least 44 migrants and wounded more than 130, on the LNA and its foreign backers. The LNA, led by Field Marshal Khalifa Hifter, says it targeted a nearby militia position but denies striking the hangar where the migrants were being held.

Hifter, whose forces control much of eastern and southern Libya, has received aid from Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Russia.

The U.N. and aid groups have meanwhile blamed the tragedy in part on the European Union's policy of partnering with Libyan militias to prevent migrants from crossing the Mediterranean Sea to seek a better life in Europe. Critics of the policy say it leaves migrants at the mercy of brutal traffickers or confined in detention facilities near the front lines that often lack adequate food and water.

The dangers facing desperate migrants were highlighted further Thursday as the U.N.'s migration agency reported that a boat carrying 86 migrants from Libya sank in the Mediterranean Sea overnight and only three people were confirmed as survivors.

The International Organization for Migration said 82 were missing from the shipwreck late Wednesday off the Tunisian city of Zarzis. Earlier this week, another boat from Libya made it to the Tunisian port of Sfax with 65 people on board.

Around 6,000 migrants, most from elsewhere in Africa, are being held in Libya's detention centers after being intercepted by the EU-funded coast guard. In Tajoura, hundreds of migrants are held in several hangars next to what appears to be a weapon cache.

Two migrants told The Associated Press that for months they were sent day and night to the workshop inside the detention center.

"We clean the anti-aircraft guns. I saw a large amount of rockets and missiles too," said a young migrant who has been held at Tajoura for nearly two years.

Another migrant recounted a nearly two-year odyssey in which he fled war in his native country and was passed from one trafficker to another until he reached the Libyan coast. He boarded a boat that was intercepted by the coast guard, which later transferred him to Tajoura, where he was wounded in Wednesday's airstrike.

"I fled from the war to come to this hell of Libya," he said. "My days are dark."

The migrants requested that their names and nationalities not be published, fearing reprisal.

Many of those who died in the attack were crushed under debris as they slept. Pictures shared by the

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migrants show the hangar reduced to a pile of rubble littered with body parts. More than 48 hours after the strike, relief workers were still pulling bodies from the rubble while the wounded lay on bloody mattresses in a courtyard, receiving medical aid.

The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid said Thursday that it received reports of guards firing on the migrants as they tried to flee after the airstrikes. A migrant told the AP it was not clear if the guards fired at the migrants or in the air.

Despite the international outrage following the airstrike, aid groups said there are no plans to evacuate the migrants and that nowhere in Tripoli is safe.

"We are not aware of plans to relocate the migrants that remain in Tajoura," said Safa Mshli, a International Organization for Migration spokeswoman. "Migrants intercepted or rescued at sea should not be returned to Libya, where they will face the same inhumane conditions."

Associated Press writers Jamey Keaten in Geneva and Lori Hinnant in Paris contributed to this report.

Fourth of July in Washington to come with a twist from Trump

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A reality TV host at heart, President Donald Trump is promising the "show of a lifetime" for the hundreds of thousands of revelers who flock to the National Mall every year on the Fourth of July. The tanks are in place for the display of military muscle, and protesters are ready to make their voices heard.

It's been nearly seven decades since a president spoke there on Independence Day. The U.S. was at war in Korea when Harry Truman addressed a large gathering on the Washington Monument grounds, marking the 175th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

There's no such historical marker Thursday for Trump, who for the past two years has sought a moment to orchestrate a display of America's military prowess.

He's calling his event a "Salute to America," honoring the armed forces, and he said in a tweet early Thursday that he "will speak on behalf of our great Country!"

His remarks at the Lincoln Memorial are set to come in front of a ticket-only, VIP crowd of Republican donors, administration and campaign officials, family members and those who flock to see him or protest what they see as a divisive intrusion on a traditionally unifying national holiday.

Trump sounded a defensive note Wednesday, tweeting that cost "will be very little compared to what it is worth."

"We own the planes, we have the pilots, the airport is right next door (Andrews), all we need is the fuel," he said, referring to Maryland's Joint Base Andrews, home for some of the planes that are to fly over the Mall on Thursday. "We own the tanks and all. Fireworks are donated by two of the greats."

Trump glossed over the expense of shipping tanks and fighting vehicles to Washington by rail and guarding them for several days, and other costs.

Some of the Republican president's supporters welcomed his stamp on the holiday.

Rachel McKenna, a Trump supporter from McKinney, Texas, said her relatives have served in the military and she thought it was important to say "We love you guys, we appreciate everything you do," and I love the fact I can see that," as she pointed to the Bradley fighting vehicle positioned near the Lincoln Memorial.

"I've never ever seen one," she said. "I just think it's so cool."

Under White House direction, the Pentagon was arranging for an Air Force B-2 stealth bomber and other warplanes to conduct flyovers. There will be Navy F-35 and F-18 fighter jets, the Navy Blue Angels aerobatics team, Army and Coast Guard helicopters and Marine V-22 Ospreys.

The White House referred questions about the cost of the military participation to the Pentagon, which said it did not have the answer.

The Air Force said it costs \$122,311 an hour to fly a B-2 bomber, which is making the round trip from its home at Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri. Officials said the flight will be considered a training event,

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with the cost already budgeted. The per-hour flying cost of the F-22 fighter is \$65,128.

Two Bradley fighting vehicles were in place Wednesday at the Lincoln Memorial, where Trump will speak. In addition, two 60-ton Army Abrams battle tanks were sent to Washington by rail to be positioned on or near the National Mall, to the dismay of District of Columbia officials.

The presidential Air Force One and Marine One aircraft are also slated to make aerial appearances.

Kevin Donahue, District of Columbia deputy mayor for public safety, told The Associated Press the city expects the federal government to pay for any damage to streets or bridges from moving the tanks. Civil engineers will assess roads and bridges after July 4 to determine if there's been damage.

Donahue said the city doesn't have the jurisdiction to reject the use of tanks and other heavy equipment.

In a separate tweet Wednesday, Trump promised the Lincoln Memorial program "will be the show of a lifetime!" White House officials have stressed that Trump's remarks will be patriotic, but the president often finds it difficult to stay on any kind of script.

But Tracie Lenihan of Spokane, Washington, an independent, said she didn't understand why military equipment is part of the festivities. "I think it cost a lot of money and I'm not sure what it really has to do with the Fourth of July," she said. "I don't hate it. I'm just confused."

Medea Benjamin, co-founder of the Codepink anti-war group, said use of the Bradley fighting vehicles reflected the "politicization of July Fourth and the militarization of July Fourth and we resent this."

"We want it to be a holiday where people are having their picnics and they're watching their fireworks and it's all peaceful and united," she said.

Instead, her group will be fielding a balloon depicting Trump as an angry, diaper-clad baby. But because of flight restrictions, officials would not let the group pump it with helium to make it fly higher and be more visible.

Rep. Betty McCollum, D-Minn., who is among lawmakers overseeing the Interior Department, which has jurisdiction over the National Mall and federal parks, said it was "absolutely outrageous" that the administration will use park money to help defray Thursday's event costs. The National Park Service plans to use nearly \$2.5 million intended to help improve parks nationwide, The Washington Post reported late Tuesday, citing anonymous sources.

"These fees are not a slush fund for this administration to use at will," McCollum said in a statement. She promised a congressional hearing.

Two outside groups, the National Parks Conservation Foundation and Democracy Forward, want the department's internal watchdog to investigate what they say may be a "potentially unlawful decision to divert" national parks money to Trump's "spectacle."

Trump and the event's organizers could be on the hook to reimburse the government millions of dollars if he goes into campaign mode, in violation of federal appropriations law and the Hatch Act, which bars politicking on government time, said Walter Shaub, who left the Office of Government Ethics in 2017 after clashing with the White House over ethics and disclosure issues.

"There's not a history of disciplined speaking engagements where he sticks to a script," Shaub said of Trump.

Trump originally wanted a parade with military tanks and other machinery rolling through downtown Washington ever since he was enthralled by a two-hour procession of French military tanks and fighter jets in Paris on Bastille Day in July 2017.

Later that year Trump said he'd have a similar parade in Washington on the Fourth of July, 2018, and would "top" the Paris show. The event ended up being pushed to Veterans Day, which conflicted with one of Trump's trips abroad, before it was scuttled after cost estimates exceeding \$90 million were made public.

In February, Trump tweeted for the public to "HOLD THE DATE!" for this Fourth of July.

Washington has held an Independence Day celebration for decades, featuring a parade along Constitution Avenue, a concert on the Capitol lawn with music by the National Symphony Orchestra and fireworks beginning at dusk near the Washington Monument.

Trump altered the lineup by adding his speech, moving the fireworks closer to the Lincoln Memorial and

summoning the tanks and warplanes.

Associated Press writers Matthew Daly, Ellen Knickmeyer and Chris Rugaber contributed to this report.

Follow Darlene Superville and Kevin Freking on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap> and <http://www.twitter.com/APkfreking>

Australian student released in North Korea says 'I'm OK'

By EMILY WANG and ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — An Australian student released after a week in detention in North Korea described his condition to reporters in Beijing on Thursday as "very good," without saying what happened.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced to Parliament that Alek Sigley, 29, had been released hours earlier following intervention from Swedish diplomats on Wednesday, and had been taken to the Australian Embassy in Beijing.

Sigley looked relaxed and gave a peace sign when he arrived at Beijing's airport. He did not respond to reporters' questions about what had happened in Pyongyang.

"I'm OK, I'm OK, I'm good. I'm very good," Sigley said. Asked how he was feeling, Sigley replied, "Great."

His father, Gary Sigley, a professor of Asian studies at the University of Western Australia, said his son would soon be reunited with his Japanese wife Yuka Morinaga in Tokyo.

Later Thursday, Sigley entered the departure area at Beijing airport, apparently on his way to Tokyo.

"He's fine. He's in very good spirits. He's been treated well," his father told reporters in his hometown of Perth.

Sigley's friend and fellow student of North Korea, University of Technology Sydney academic Bronwen Dalton, said she had spoken to Sigley's wife, who was thrilled by the news.

"We were jumping up and down and we love Sweden," Dalton said.

"He's a fine, young, emerging Asian scholar, he is very applied to his studies. I really doubted whether he did actually anything wrong by the regime," Dalton added.

Swedish diplomats had raised concerns about Sigley with North Korean authorities in Pyongyang, where Australia does not have an embassy.

"Alek is safe and well. Swedish authorities advised the Australian government that they met with senior officials from the DPRK yesterday and raised the issue of Alek's disappearance on Australia's behalf," Morrison said, using the official acronym for North Korea.

Morrison thanked Swedish authorities for "their invaluable assistance in securing Alek's prompt release."

"This outcome demonstrates the value of discrete behind-the-scenes work of officials in resolving complex and sensitive consular cases in close partnership with other governments," Morrison said.

In an interview with Swedish public radio Thursday, Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom said she had been in contact with Australia and Sweden's special envoy to North Korea, Kent Harstedt. She said Sweden had "raised the issue of this case at highest level" in North Korea and the release happened during Harstedt's visit to Pyongyang.

"Happy for the release of Australian citizen Alek Sigley today! Sweden has done its utmost to work for Mr Sigley under our bilateral agreement with Australia. Relieved that the situation was resolved," Wallstrom tweeted. She also welcomed "Korean authorities' rapid action in connection with the visit of Sweden's special envoy for the Korean Peninsula," according to the Swedish Foreign Ministry.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said the Swedish delegation led by Harstedt headed back home on Thursday after a four-day visit. It said the Swedes visited a stamp museum and shoe factory during their stay in North Korea, but made no mention of Sigley.

The Pyongyang university student and tour guide had been out of contact with family and friends in Japan and Australia since Tuesday last week. He had been active on social media about his experiences in North Korea and had boasted about the extraordinary freedom he had been allowed as one of the few

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foreign students living in Pyongyang.

Morrison's announcement was the first confirmation that he had been detained.

Morrison said he discussed Sigley's disappearance with other world leaders attending the Group of 20 summit in Japan last week and accepted offers to find out what happened to him. Morrison dined with President Donald Trump in Osaka but declined to say with whom he discussed Sigley's disappearance.

North Korea has been accused in the past of detaining Westerners and using them as political pawns to gain concessions. Australia advises people to reconsider their need to travel to North Korea and warns that foreigners have been subject to arbitrary arrests and long detentions.

Leonid Petrov, an Australian National University expert on North Korea and a friend of Sigley, last week speculated that Sigley had been "deliberately cut off from means of communications" temporarily because Trump was in the region.

Petrov said on Thursday that he had not been able to contact Sigley since he had been freed, but still suspected his disappearance was linked to Trump's meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Sunday.

"It was a time of sensitivity in North Korea after the visit of (Chinese President Xi Jinping) and before the visit by Donald Trump," Petrov said.

"I expected this to happen a couple of days earlier, but it was a good thing to see the Swedish government delegation arrive on Monday just after the summit. It was the right time to be there," Petrov added.

McGuirk contributed from Canberra, Australia. Associated Press writers Kim Tong-hyung in Seoul, South Korea, and Jan M. Olsen in Copenhagen, Denmark, also contributed to this report.

EU chief struggles to sell job winners to hostile lawmakers

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — European Council President Donald Tusk appealed Thursday to hostile lawmakers to endorse a raft of nominees for some of the EU's most coveted jobs amid accusations that he and the bloc's leaders hand-picked the candidates in a series of shady backroom deals.

Two days after one of the longest-ever EU summits — beating even the all-nighters that marked the Greek debt crisis — Tusk struggled to convince the European Parliament of the credentials of candidates chosen more for political reasons than for their competence.

German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen was nominated to take over as head of the EU's powerful executive arm, the European Commission, which proposes and enforces EU laws. It's the first time a woman has been picked for the job, and would mark the first time a German has led the commission in decades.

"We managed to make these decisions on time," Tusk said, as part of his effort to persuade the lawmakers meeting in Strasbourg, France, that von der Leyen and the three other nominees pass muster. "I believe they are good choices."

He urged them to back the appointments package given the tough choices the leaders faced in finding candidates who came from the right blend of political affiliations, countries and a mix of genders. Von der Leyen faces a confirmation vote, probably on July 15, and her chances of taking the top seat in Brussels aren't assured.

"Only when we are united, can we counterbalance the most powerful global players," Tusk warned. The leaders, he said, also united around the names. "It took us three days, because I wanted to be sure that every member state, big or small, from every corner of Europe, was on board when it came to the future leadership of the Union."

But many lawmakers regretted the way the decisions was made, particularly as voters had just turned out in record numbers for bloc-wide elections in May, bringing fresh legitimacy to the European project.

"The future of European Union can no longer be decided behind closed doors and through secret plots," said Spanish lawmaker Esteban Gonzalez Pons, whose criticism must have hurt even more given that he

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comes from the same political family as Tusk, the European People's Party, the biggest group in the assembly.

Von der Leyen was nominated Tuesday along with Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Borrell as the EU's top diplomat, Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel as Council president — taking over from Tusk — and International Monetary fund chief Christine Lagarde as European Central Bank president.

The decision was taken verbally. No vote was held, although it was acknowledged that German Chancellor Angela Merkel would abstain because of tensions in her governing coalition over von der Leyen, who held talks in Brussels Thursday with Juncker, the man she would replace.

The lawmakers' anger was understandable. None of the candidates appeared real contenders just a week ago. Despite public insistence from leaders like French President Emmanuel Macron that only the best be chosen, the nominees' professional credentials were low on the list of priorities. Indeed, leaders variously said the process wasn't "a beauty contest" and that they were not "a recruiting agency."

One lead candidate backed by the assembly — Dutch socialist Frans Timmermans, currently vice president of the commission — was knocked out of the reckoning by the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland, with help from Italy. They see him as the face of immigrant quotas and EU legal action to enforce the rule of law in Hungary and Poland.

"You are supporting the euroskeptics and even nationalists," Gonzalez Pons told Tusk, referring to the governments in those five countries.

Former parliament chief Martin Schulz, who was roundly beaten by Chancellor Angela Merkel in the last German election, also called von der Leyen's nomination "a victory for (Hungarian Prime Minister) Viktor Orban and his allies."

Tusk also played the gender card in an attempt to mollify the assembly. "For the first time, we achieved perfect gender balance in the top positions. Europe is not only talking about women, it is choosing women," he said.

Should von der Leyen fall, it's possible that the package of nominations would have to be reassessed, but it remains unclear whether any other solution to this very particular European jigsaw would be possible. Only Michel was directly elected by the leaders and he faces no confirmation process.

AP Writer Frank Jordans in Berlin contributed to this report.

'Desperate:' Hong Kong protesters detail legislature assault

By **DAKE KANG** Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — It was almost noon on Monday when hundreds of protesters outside Hong Kong's legislature voted to break in.

Watching from the side, one protester disagreed. They were too few, 19-year-old Daisy Chan worried, and the police presence was heavy.

As hours passed, thousands more trickled into the plaza and a nearby roundabout. The police retreated into the building. Angry protesters shattered windows with carts, sledgehammers and metal barricades.

Chan thought of three protesters who had died and of the Hong Kong leader's refusal to meet the activists. Though she didn't want to break in, she wanted to support the others.

By 9 p.m., when they finally pried open a metal security curtain that led inside, Chan believed nothing could assuage their anger.

"You've been standing at the entrance for eight hours!" she recalled shouting at other protesters perched on a fence by a second entrance. "The police have already retreated. If you want to get in, if you want to do what you want to do, you should get in now!"

Chan and three other protesters, including two who aided others outside the building but didn't enter, told their story to The Associated Press this week. They said years of feeling ignored drove them to desperation in the city of 7.4 million, a semi-autonomous Chinese territory whose independent legal system is guaranteed for 28 more years and already faces threats. They explained why, on the same day that

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hundreds of thousands of others marched in a peaceful protest, they were driven to wreak havoc inside Hong Kong's legislature in scenes that shocked the world. Now they await the consequences.

A HISTORIC DAY

Monday was the 22nd anniversary of the former British colony's return to China. The protesters were angry. For three weeks, they had tried to get the government's attention by blocking streets, defacing police headquarters and occupying government offices. Along with more peaceful demonstrators, they opposed the government's attempt to change extradition laws to allow suspects to be sent to China for trial, but felt ignored.

That morning, Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam had clinked champagne glasses in a televised ceremony celebrating the anniversary, her first public appearance in two weeks. Her refusal to back down on activist demands and her silence over the deaths of the three protesters turned grief into simmering rage. One fell after hanging a banner; at least one other, in an apparent suicide, left a message on a wall asking others to keep up the fight.

As demonstrators began assaulting the complex, Chan grabbed futilely at those rushing to tackle pro-democracy lawmakers blocking the entrances.

She and the lawmakers were worried. Public opinion could turn against the protesters. Someone could get hurt. Chan had been staffing aid stations and handing out food and water, all for one goal: "Safety first."

THE BREACH

Protesters smashed glass and poured into the Legislative Council, joining others who flooded in from a second breach.

Chan swung into action. Two weeks earlier, during marches in mid-June, she had formed a "resource station" team with about a dozen protesters, one of many that coalesced to help with protest logistics. They coordinated on Telegram, an encrypted messaging app.

Chan wanted to know how to direct her group next. She called a Hong Kong legislator — whose name she wouldn't disclose — and got floor plans and a warning to leave lawmaker offices and the library untouched.

Chan walked into the complex with another member of her team, Nick, and began scouting the second floor for police. After finding none, she shouted orders on a walkie-talkie to her team: Smash security cameras, shatter hard drives. Seize the control room. And protect the library, which contained priceless historical artifacts.

"Destroy what is needed. Keep what is needed," said Nick, explaining they wanted to minimize damage while making their point and protect protesters from surveillance. "We attacked only things that are iconic. We know what we are fighting for."

They scouted up to the fifth floor, then headed to the control room on the ground floor. They stopped by the library and left a note asking protesters to leave it unharmed.

Other protesters tore down portraits of pro-Beijing lawmakers. They spray-painted Hong Kong's emblem black, smashed elevators, plucked cameras out of ceilings and scrawled slogans calling for free elections.

"You taught me that peaceful protests are useless," read one, sprayed by the entrance to the council's main chamber.

POLITICAL AWAKENING

Chan, Nick and two others in the resource station interviewed by AP didn't always think peaceful protests were useless. The failure of Hong Kong's pro-democracy Umbrella Movement, which all four participated in, changed their minds.

Chan was 14 when she saw violence erupt on her family television screen: masked police firing tear gas into crowds of students in September 2014.

Until then, Chan had been a regular Hong Kong schoolgirl. She liked baking pastries and dreamed of being a chef. Her parents ran a grocery store. She didn't think much about politics.

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The images of police pepper-spraying protesters shocked her.

"I thought it was very insane," Chan said. "They were just sitting."

Days later, she was on the streets, participating in her first demonstration.

Nick, who only gave his first name because of concerns about being arrested, was a freshman in college. His father owned a car dealership, enough for a middle-class living. Classmates buzzed about the movement on social media. Anger at Beijing's decision to pre-screen candidates for the most recent Hong Kong elections spoke to Nick, who felt the Chinese government ignored the desires of the city's people. He hit the streets, cutting class and camping out for weeks.

When the Umbrella Movement ended with no changes after 79 days, they were crushed.

"It showed that even if you play peaceful, sitting on the streets, the government won't care about it," Nick said. "In their point of view, you're just a bunch of people sitting on the streets."

After graduating in 2016, Nick found a job as a nurse at a weight-loss clinic, then one at a call center, then another at a PR agency. The pay was terrible, a little over \$1,300 a month in one of the most expensive cities in the world. He quit last year and became a freelance photographer, shooting weddings and concerts.

Nick wanted to live freely, to forget about politics and live his life. He dreamed of opening his own artist commune in an abandoned industrial building.

But he was struggling to survive, let alone thrive.

"There's not much hope left in Hong Kong," said Nick, now 24. "We just want a small place as our home, but we can't afford it. We're desperate."

Year after year, they felt the walls close in: the disappearance of five booksellers specializing in sensitive topics forbidden on the mainland. Chinese immigration officers in a Hong Kong train station, the terminus of a new high-speed rail link with China. A draft law criminalizing disrespect for the Chinese national anthem.

The proposed changes to the extradition laws were the last straw. The draft legislation said it wouldn't extradite for political crimes, that it was limited to serious offenses punishable by seven years in prison. But to Nick, Lam's promises ran hollow.

"I can't trust the government," he said. "They give whatever China wants."

By the time protests erupted again this year, their resolve had hardened.

This time, they donned masks and helmets, and braced themselves for demonstrations more violent than the Umbrella Movement.

"In China ... you just speak one thing wrong, you will be put in jail," Chan said. "Can you imagine in 28 years, what will Hong Kong be? Nobody knows."

THE ESCAPE

It was almost midnight on Monday when Chan and Nick heard others cry out, "The police are coming!"

Nick wanted to stay and occupy the council chambers. Other protesters had started building barricades and stockpiling food, preparing for a prolonged battle with police.

But there were too few of them. In the chamber, the protesters voted to leave. Chan headed outside to keep watch. Nick ran from room to room looking for protesters, yelling at them, "police are coming, don't be left behind!"

They fled the ransacked building as police closed in and caught a minibus across Hong Kong's harbor. Some found rooms in a hostel, while others headed home.

At 4 a.m., they watched on their phones as Lam stepped out for a news conference, condemning the break-in as an "extreme use of violence" that stood in contrast to a separate, largely peaceful march the same day.

Nick was expecting Lam's response. What he wasn't expecting was how upset some of the reporters seemed to him, one asking Lam if she thought she had a place in heaven after ignoring the three deaths. He said she brushed off the question.

"They're blaming the protesters" for breaking windows, Nick said. "But there are three people dead. . If

you put it on a scale, I think three lives are more important than three (pieces of) glass.”

China’s foreign ministry later condemned the occupation and vandalization of the legislature as “serious illegal acts that trample on the rule of law and endanger social order.”

Since then, the group has moved from one friend’s house to another to avoid police while contacting lawyers, preparing themselves for arrest. The members of their resource station met at a hotel restaurant on Tuesday evening and decided to speak to the press.

Yes, they were scared. Yes, they might get caught. But for five years they felt they had tried everything, and concluded the only tactic that worked was force.

“We’ve got nothing to lose at all,” Nick said. “That’s why we start to fight back.”

Trump says officials working on holiday on census dispute

By **MARK SHERMAN and JILL COLVIN** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said administration officials were working on Independence Day in hopes of finding a way to have the 2020 census include a citizenship question even though the government has begun the process of printing the questionnaire without it.

“So important for our Country that the very simple and basic ‘Are you a Citizen of the United States?’ question be allowed to be asked in the 2020 Census,” Trump said in his first tweet of the holiday.

Trump’s administration has faced numerous roadblocks to adding the question, including last week’s Supreme Court ruling that blocked its inclusion, at least temporarily. The Justice Department had insisted to the Supreme Court that it needed the matter resolved by the end of June because of a deadline to begin printing census forms and other materials.

But on Wednesday, department officials told a federal judge in Maryland they believed there could be a way to meet Trump’s demands.

“There may be a legally available path,” Assistant Attorney General Joseph Hunt told U.S. District Judge George Hazel during a conference call with parties to one of three census lawsuits. The call was closed to reporters; a transcript was made available soon after.

A department spokeswoman had confirmed on Tuesday that there would be “no citizenship question on the 2020 census” amid signs that the administration was ending the legal fight. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said in a statement that day that the “Census Bureau has started the process of printing the decennial questionnaires without the question.”

It was a Trump tweet on Wednesday — “We are absolutely moving forward” — that sowed enough confusion that Hazel and U.S. District Judge Jesse Furman, overseeing a census lawsuit in New York, demanded clarification.

“I don’t know how many federal judges have Twitter accounts, but I happen to be one of them, and I follow the President, and so I saw a tweet that directly contradicted the position” that a Justice Department lawyer took in a hearing Tuesday, Hazel said.

Fear and confusion among immigrants might just be the Republican president’s aim, a lawyer for opponents of the question said, because the Census Bureau’s own experts have said asking about citizenship would depress participation by immigrants and people who are in the country illegally.

“The President’s tweet has some of the same effects that the addition of the question would in the first place and some of the same effects on the 18-month battle that was just waged over the citizenship question,” Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund lawyer Denise Hulett said. “It leaves the immigrant communities to believe that the Government is still after information that could endanger them.”

In the short term, work on the census probably won’t be affected. The company with a \$114 million contract to print census questionnaires had been instructed to start printing forms without the citizenship question.

Joshua Gardner, a second Justice Department lawyer on the conference call, confirmed that “the Census Bureau is continuing with the process of printing the questionnaire without a citizenship question, and that process has not stopped.”

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Gardner, a 16-year Justice Department lawyer, said he was as surprised by Trump's Wednesday tweet as anyone.

"The tweet this morning was the first I had heard of the President's position on this issue, just like the plaintiffs and Your Honor," he said. "I do not have a deeper understanding of what that means at this juncture other than what the President has tweeted."

Hazel moved up to Friday from Monday a deadline for the government to stipulate that it is no longer seeking to put the question on the 2020 census. Otherwise, he said, he would move ahead with reopening the case to pursue a new issue. Opponents of the question say evidence from the computer files of a Republican redistricting consultant who died last year shows that discrimination against Hispanics was behind the push for the citizenship question.

That might be a separate basis for blocking the citizenship question.

The Trump administration had said the question was being added to aid in enforcement of the Voting Rights Act, which protects minority voters' access to the ballot box. But in the Supreme Court's decision last week, Chief Justice John Roberts joined the court's four more liberal members in saying the administration's current justification for the question "seems to have been contrived."

Opponents of the citizenship question said it would result in inaccurate figures for a count that determines the distribution of some \$675 billion in federal spending and how many congressional districts each state gets.

Even though the Census Bureau is relying on most respondents to answer the questionnaire by the internet next year, hundreds of millions of printed postcards and letters will be sent out next March reminding residents about the census, and those who don't respond digitally will be mailed paper questionnaires.

Associated Press writers Michael Schneider in Orlando, Florida, and Larry Neumeister in New York contributed to this report.

Gibraltar detains Syria-bound super tanker with Iranian oil

By ARITZ PARRA and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Authorities in Gibraltar said they intercepted Thursday a super tanker believed to be breaching European Union sanctions by carrying a shipment of Iranian crude oil to war-ravaged Syria, while a senior Spanish official said the operation was requested by the United States.

Gibraltar port and law enforcement agencies, assisted by Britain's Royal Marines, boarded the Grace 1 early Thursday, authorities on the British overseas territory at the tip of Spain said in a statement.

It added that the vessel was believed to be headed to the Baniyas Refinery in Syria, which is a government-owned facility under the control of Syrian President Bashar Assad and subject to the EU's Syrian Sanctions Regime.

The EU, and others, has imposed sanctions on Assad's government over its continued crackdown against civilians. They currently target 270 people and 70 entities.

Spain's caretaker foreign minister said the tanker was stopped by British authorities after a request from the United States.

Josep Borrell told reporters in Madrid that Spain is assessing the implications of the operation because the detention took place in waters it considers its own.

Britain insists Gibraltar is part of the United Kingdom but Spain argues that it is not, and the tanker operation risks offending the Spanish.

"We're looking into how this (operation) affects our sovereignty," said Borrell, who was nominated earlier this week to become the EU's foreign policy chief.

The Spanish claim that the U.S. requested the operation switched attention to whether the tanker was carrying Iranian crude.

The Gibraltar authorities didn't confirm the origin of the ship's cargo but Lloyd's List, a publication specialized in maritime affairs, reported this week that the Panama-flagged large carrier was laden with

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Iranian oil. Experts were said to have concluded that it carried oil from Iran because the tanker wasn't sending geographic information while in Iranian waters. According to a U.N. list, the ship is owned by the Singapore-based Grace Tankers Ltd.

According to the data firm Refinitiv, the vessel likely carried just over 2 million barrels of Iranian crude oil. Tracking data showed that the tanker made a slow trip around the southern tip of Africa before reaching the Mediterranean.

The tanker's detention comes at a particularly sensitive time as tensions between the U.S. and Iran grow over the unraveling of a 2015 nuclear deal, which President Donald Trump withdrew from last year. Trump has also slapped sanctions onto Iran and recently approved the passage of a carrier group, bombers and fighter jets to the Persian Gulf.

In recent days, Iran has broken through the limit the deal put on its stockpile of low-enriched uranium and plans on Sunday to boost its enrichment. Meanwhile, oil tankers near the Strait of Hormuz have been targeted in mysterious attacks as Iranian-backed rebels in Yemen launch bomb-laden drones into Saudi Arabia. The U.S. has rushed thousands of additional troops, an aircraft carrier, B-52 bombers and F-22 fighters to the region, raising fears of a miscalculation sparking a wider conflict. Last month Iran shot down a U.S. surveillance drone, further stoking those fears.

Iran's intelligence minister said Thursday that any negotiations with the U.S. would have to be approved by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and would require the lifting of U.S. sanctions. Khamenei has until now ruled out talks with the U.S., saying that Washington cannot be trusted.

On Thursday, the official IRNA news agency quoted Information Minister Mahmoud Alavi as saying "if the supreme leader permits, negotiations between Iran and the United States will be held." He added, however, that Tehran would not negotiate under pressure.

There was no immediate reaction to the tanker's detention from Syria, which has suffered severe fuel shortages as a result of the civil war and Western sanctions that have crippled the country's oil industry, once the source of 20 percent of government revenues.

Iran, which has provided vital military support to Assad, extended a \$3 billion credit line for oil supplies beginning in 2013 but the Iranian aid dwindled as Washington restored tough sanctions. In November, the U.S. Treasury Department added a network of Russian and Iranian companies to its blacklist for shipping oil to Syria and warned of "significant risks" for those violating the sanctions.

Fabian Picardo, Chief Minister of Gibraltar, which has in the past been a transit port for energy shipments without known buyers, said he has informed the EU about developments.

In a statement, the British government welcomed the "firm action" by authorities in Gibraltar.

Jon Gambrell reported from Tehran. AP reporters Zeina Karam in Beirut and Danica Kirka in London contributed to this report.

AP FACT CHECK: Trump often is wrong about military matters

By CALVIN WOODWARD, HOPE YEN AND ROBERT BURNS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In his Fourth of July remarks, President Donald Trump will be celebrating the armed forces and showcasing what he's done for them. But in recent days, he has falsified his record on military matters on several fronts.

He's claimed, for example, that he came up with the "genius idea" of giving veterans private health care so they don't have to wait for Veterans Affairs appointments, only to find out that others had thought of it but failed to get it done.

President Barack Obama signed the law getting it done in 2014.

Trump also made the flatly false statement that he won troops their first raise in a decade, suggested he's made progress reducing veteran suicides that is not backed up by the numbers, and contradicted the record in claiming that North Korea is cooperating on the return of the remains of U.S. troops.

A look at his statements on military matters and personnel, some of which may be heard from the stage

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Thursday or in tweets:

MILITARY PAY

TRUMP, addressing military members: "You also got very nice pay raises for the last couple of years. Congratulations. Oh, you care about that. They care about that. I didn't think you noticed. Yeah, you were entitled. You know, it was close to 10 years before you had an increase. Ten years. And we said, 'It's time.' And you got a couple of good ones, big ones, nice ones." — remarks Sunday at Osan Air Base, South Korea.

THE FACTS: He's been spreading this falsehood for more than a year, soaking up cheers from crowds for something he didn't do. In May 2018, for example, he declared to graduates of the U.S. Naval Academy: "We just got you a big pay raise. First time in 10 years."

U.S. military members have received a pay raise every year for decades.

Trump also boasts about the size of the military pay raises under his administration, but there's nothing extraordinary about them.

Several raises in the last decade have been larger than service members are getting under Trump — 2.6% this year, 2.4% last year, 2.1% in 2017.

Raises in 2008, 2009 and 2010, for example, were all 3.4% or more.

Pay increases shrank after that because of congressionally mandated budget caps. Trump and Congress did break a trend that began in 2011 of pay raises that hovered between 1% and 2%.

VETERANS SUICIDE

TRUMP: "On average, 20 veterans and members take their own lives every day. ... We're working very, very hard on that. In fact, the first time I heard the number was 23, and now it's down somewhat. But it's such an unacceptable number." — call on June 25 with military veterans.

THE FACTS: Trump incorrectly suggests that he helped reduce veterans' suicide, noting that his administration was working "very, very hard" on the problem and that in fact the figure had come down. But no decline has been registered during his administration. There was a drop during the Obama administration, but that might be due to the way veterans' suicides are counted.

The Veterans Affairs Department estimated in 2013 that 22 veterans were taking their lives each day on average (not 23, as Trump put it). The estimate was based on data submitted from fewer than half of the states. In 2016, VA released an estimate of 20 suicides per day, based on 2014 data from all 50 states as well as the Pentagon.

The estimated average has not budged since.

Trump has pledged additional money for suicide prevention and created in March a Cabinet-level task force that will seek to develop a national roadmap for suicide prevention, part of a campaign pledge to improve health care for veterans.

Still, a report by the Government Accountability Office in December found the VA had left millions of dollars unspent that were available for suicide prevention efforts. The report said VA had spent just \$57,000 out of \$6.2 million available for paid media, such as social-media postings, due in part to leadership turmoil at the agency.

NORTH KOREA

TRUMP, on North Korea's help in returning the remains of U.S. troops from the Korean War: "The remains are coming back as they get them, as they find them. The remains of our great heroes from the war. And we really appreciate that." — remarks Sunday to Korean business leaders in Seoul.

TRUMP: "We're very happy about the remains having come back. And they're bringing back — in fact, we were notified they have additional remains of our great heroes from many years ago." — remarks June 28 in Japan.

THE FACTS: His account is at odds with developments.

No remains of U.S. service members have been returned since last summer and the U.S. suspended

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efforts in May to get negotiations on the remains back on track in time to have more repatriated this year. It hopes more remains may be brought home next year.

The Pentagon's Defense POW-MIA Accounting Agency, which is the outfit responsible for recovering U.S. war remains and returning them to families, "has not received any new information from (North Korean) officials regarding the turn over or recovery of remains," spokesman Charles Prichard said Wednesday.

Prichard said his agency is "still working to communicate" with the North Korean army "as it is our intent to find common ground on resuming recovery missions" in 2020.

Last summer, in line with the first summit between Trump and North Korea's Kim Jong Un that June, the North turned over 55 boxes of what it said were the remains of an undetermined number of U.S. service members killed in the North during the 1950-53 war. So far, six Americans have been identified from the 55 boxes.

U.S. officials have said the North has suggested in recent years that it holds perhaps 200 sets of American war remains. Thousands more are unrecovered from battlefields and former POW camps.

The Pentagon estimates that 5,300 Americans were lost in North Korea.

HEALTH CARE

TRUMP, on approving private-sector health care for veterans: "I actually came up with the idea. I said, 'Why don't we just have the veterans go out and see a private doctor and we'll pay the cost of the doctor and that will solve the problem?' Because some veterans were waiting for 2 weeks, 3 weeks, 4 weeks, they couldn't get any service at all. I said, 'We'll just send them out.' And I thought it was a genius idea, brilliant idea. And then I came back and met with the board and a lot of the people that handled the VA. ... They said, 'Actually, sir, we've been trying to get that passed for 40 years, and we haven't been able to get it.' ... I'm good at getting things done. ... It's really cut down big on the waits." — call on June 25 with military veterans.

TRUMP: "We passed VA Choice and VA Accountability to give our veterans the care that they deserve and they have been trying to pass these things for 45 years." — Montoursville, Pennsylvania, rally on May 20.

THE FACTS: Trump did not invent the idea of giving veterans the option to see private doctor outside the Department of Veterans Affairs medical system at government expense. Nor is he the first president in 40 years to pass the program.

Congress approved the private-sector Veterans Choice health program in 2014 and Obama signed it into law. Trump expanded it.

Under the expansion which took effect last month, veterans still may have to wait weeks to see a doctor. The program allows veterans to see a private doctor if their VA wait is 20 days (28 for specialty care) or their drive is only 30 minutes.

Indeed, the VA says it does not expect a major increase in veterans seeking care outside the VA under Trump's expanded program, partly because waiting times in the private sector are typically longer than at VA.

"The care in the private sector, nine times out of 10, is probably not as good as care in VA," VA Secretary Robert Wilkie told Congress in March.

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US still seeks a way to ask about citizenship on the census

By MARK SHERMAN and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department says it's still looking for a way to include a citizenship question on the 2020 census, even though the government has started the process of printing the questionnaire without it.

The abrupt shift from the Justice Department on Wednesday came hours after President Donald Trump

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insisted he was not dropping his efforts to ask about citizenship in next year's nationwide survey. On Twitter he declared, "We are absolutely moving forward."

The administration has faced numerous roadblocks to adding the citizenship question, including last week's Supreme Court ruling that blocked its inclusion, at least temporarily. The Justice Department had insisted to the Supreme Court that it needed the matter resolved by the end of June because it faced a deadline to begin printing census forms and other materials.

But on Wednesday, officials told a Maryland judge they believed there may still be a way to meet Trump's demands.

"There may be a legally available path," Assistant Attorney General Joseph Hunt told U.S. District Judge George Hazel during a conference call with parties to one of three census lawsuits. The call was closed to reporters, but a transcript was made available soon after.

A day earlier, a Justice Department spokeswoman confirmed that there would be "no citizenship question on the 2020 census" amid signs that the administration was ending the legal fight. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said in a statement Tuesday that the "Census Bureau has started the process of printing the decennial questionnaires without the question."

Trump's tweet sowed enough confusion to prompt Hazel and U.S. District Judge Jesse Furman, overseeing a census lawsuit in New York, to demand clarification by the end of the day.

"I don't know how many federal judges have Twitter accounts, but I happen to be one of them, and I follow the President, and so I saw a tweet that directly contradicted the position" that a Justice Department lawyer took in a hearing Tuesday, Hazel said.

Fear and confusion among immigrants might just be the president's aim, a lawyer for opponents of the question said, since the Census Bureau's own experts have said asking about citizenship would depress participation by immigrants and people who are in the country illegally.

"The President's tweet has some of the same effects that the addition of the question would in the first place and some of the same effects on the 18-month battle that was just waged over the citizenship question. It leaves the immigrant communities to believe that the Government is still after information that could endanger them," Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund lawyer Denise Hulett said.

In the short term, work on the census probably won't be affected. The company with a \$114 million contract to print census questionnaires had been instructed to start printing forms without the citizenship question.

Joshua Gardner, a second Justice Department lawyer on the conference call, confirmed that "the Census Bureau is continuing with the process of printing the questionnaire without a citizenship question, and that process has not stopped."

Gardner, a 16-year Justice Department lawyer, said he was as surprised by Trump's tweet as anyone. "The tweet this morning was the first I had heard of the President's position on this issue, just like the plaintiffs and Your Honor. I do not have a deeper understanding of what that means at this juncture other than what the President has tweeted," he said.

Hazel moved up to Friday from Monday a deadline for the government to stipulate that it is no longer seeking to put the question on the 2020 census. Otherwise, he said, he would move ahead with reopening the case to pursue a new issue. Opponents of the question say evidence from the computer files of a Republican redistricting consultant who died last year shows that discrimination against Hispanics was behind the push for the citizenship question.

That might be a separate basis for blocking the citizenship question.

The administration had said the question was being added to aid in enforcement of the Voting Rights Act, which protects minority voters' access to the ballot box. But in the Supreme Court's decision last week, Chief Justice John Roberts joined the court's four more liberal members in saying the administration's current justification for the question "seems to have been contrived."

Opponents of the citizenship question said it would discourage participation by immigrants and people who are in the country illegally, resulting in inaccurate figures for a count that determines the distribution of some \$675 billion in federal spending and how many congressional districts each state gets.

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On Twitter Tuesday night, Trump wrote that the Supreme Court ruling marked a "very sad time for America." He also said he had asked the Commerce and Justice departments "to do whatever is necessary to bring this most vital of questions, and this very important case, to a successful conclusion." He did not elaborate.

Even though the Census Bureau is relying on most respondents to answer the questionnaire by internet next year, hundreds of millions of printed postcards and letters will be sent out next March reminding residents about the census, and those who don't respond digitally will be mailed paper questionnaires.

Associated Press writers Michael Schneider in Orlando, Florida, and Larry Neumeister in New York contributed to this report.

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Associated Press writers Michael Schneider in Orlando, Florida, and Larry Neumeister in New York contributed to this report.

Presidents on July 4: Some chill, some get in your face

By CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Through history, the Fourth of July has been a day for some presidents to declare their independence from the public. They’ve made tracks to the beach, the mountains, the golf course, the farm, the ranch. In the middle of the Depression, Franklin Roosevelt was sailing to a Hawaii vacation.

It’s also been a day for some presidents to insert themselves front and center in the fabric of it all, as Donald Trump plans to do Thursday with his speechifying and showmanship. Teddy Roosevelt drew crowds in the hundreds of thousands for his oratory and Richard Nixon enraged the anti-war masses without even showing up.

In modern times, though, presidents have tended to stand back and let the people party. George W. Bush had a ceremony welcoming immigrants as new citizens. Barack Obama threw a South Lawn barbecue for troops. Trump’s plan to command center stage with his words and American military might has the capital cleaving along political lines.

As the anti-Nixon demonstrations of 1970 showed, Independence Day in the capital isn’t always just fun and games. It has a tradition of red, white and boo, too.

And when protesters make their presence felt Thursday, that will be as American as the cherries and milk that apparently soured Zachary Taylor’s gut when he wolfed them down July 4, 1850, and died five days later.

A look at what some presidents have done on the Fourth of July:

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1777: On the first anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, with the Revolutionary War underway, future president John Adams describes a day and night of spontaneous celebration in Philadelphia in a letter to his wife, Abigail. After hours of parading troops, fireworks, bonfires and music, he tells her he strolled alone in the dark.

"I was walking about the streets for a little fresh air and exercise," he writes, "and was surprised to find the whole city lighting up their candles at the windows. I walked most of the evening, and I think it was the most splendid illumination I ever saw; a few surly houses were dark; but the lights were very universal. Considering the lateness of the design and the suddenness of the execution, I was amazed at the universal joy and alacrity that was discovered, and at the brilliancy and splendour of every part of this joyful exhibition."

1791: Two years after becoming the first president, George Washington celebrates in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, "with an address, fine cuisine, and walking about town," says the National Park Service. Philadelphia was the interim capital as Washington, D.C., was being readied; Lancaster had hosted the Continental Congress for a quick, on-the-run session during the revolution.

1798: Now president, John Adams reviews a military parade in Philadelphia as the young nation flexes its muscle.

1801: Thomas Jefferson presides over the first Fourth of July public reception at the White House.

1822: James Monroe hangs out at his farm in Virginia.

1826: Adams, the second president, and Jefferson, the third, both die on this July 4.

1831: James Monroe, who was the fifth president, dies on this July 4.

1848: James Polk witnesses the laying of the cornerstone of the Washington Monument with Abraham Lincoln, then an Illinois congressman, attending. A military parade follows.

1850: Zachary Taylor attends festivities at the grounds of the Washington Monument and falls ill with stomach cramps after eating cherries and drinking iced milk and water. He dies July 9. A theory that someone poisoned him with arsenic was debunked in 1991 when his body was exhumed and tested.

1861: Abraham Lincoln sends a message to Congress defending his invocation of war powers, appealing for more troops to fight the South and assailing Virginia for allowing "this giant insurrection to make its nest within her borders." He vows to "go forward without fear."

1868: Post-war, Andrew Johnson executes a proclamation granting amnesty to those who fought for the Confederacy.

1902: Teddy Roosevelt speaks to 200,000 people in Pittsburgh. He liked to get in people's faces on the holiday.

1914: "Our country, right or wrong," Woodrow Wilson declares at Independence Hall in Philadelphia.

1928: Calvin Coolidge (born July 4, 1872) goes trout fishing in Wisconsin.

1930: Herbert Hoover vacations by the Rapidan River in Virginia.

1934: Franklin Roosevelt is in or near the Bahamas after leaving Annapolis, Maryland, on a monthlong voyage and visit to Hawaii via the Panama Canal. On July 4, the U.S.S. Houston's log refers to the "fishing party" leaving the ship for part of the day.

1946: With World War II over the year before, Harry Truman relaxes in Maryland's Catoctin Mountains at Roosevelt's Shangri-La retreat, later renamed Camp David.

1951: With the U.S. at war in Korea, Truman addresses a huge crowd at the Washington Monument grounds, marking the 175th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

1953 and 1957: Dwight Eisenhower = golf.

1968: Lyndon Johnson, who favored his Texas ranch on the holiday, speaks in San Antonio about the lack of independence for the poor, minorities, the ill, people "who must breathe polluted air" and those who live in fear of crime, "despite our Fourth of July rhetoric."

1970: Richard Nixon, in California, tapes a message that is played to crowds on the National Mall at an "Honor America Day" celebration organized by supporters and hotly protested by anti-war masses and civil rights activists. Tear gas overcomes protesters and celebrants alike, Viet Cong flags mingle with the Stars and Stripes, and demonstrators plunge into the reflecting pool, some naked.

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1976: As the U.S. turns 200, Gerald Ford speaks at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, then Independence Hall, and reviews the armada of tall ships in New York harbor.

1987: Ronald Reagan, at Camp David, makes a straight political statement in his July 4 radio address, pitching an economic "bill of rights" and Robert Bork for the Supreme Court. On a Saturday, it served as his weekly radio address, which he and other modern presidents used for their agendas.

2008: George W. Bush, like several presidents before him, hosts a naturalization ceremony. More than 70 people from 30 countries are embraced as new citizens.

2010: Barack Obama brings 1,200 service members to the South Lawn for a barbecue. The father of a July 4 baby, Malia, he would joke that she always thought the capital fireworks were for her.

2012: Obama combines two Fourth of July traditions — celebrating troops and new citizens — by honoring the naturalization of U.S. military members who came to the country as immigrants.

2017: Trump goes to his golf club, then hosts a White House picnic for military families.

2018: Another White House picnic for military families, with thousands also invited to see the fireworks.

Associated Press writer Darlene Superville contributed to this report.

Trump vows July 4 'show of a lifetime' as protesters gather

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A reality TV host at heart, President Donald Trump is promising the "show of a lifetime" for the hundreds of thousands of revelers who flock to the National Mall every year on the Fourth of July. The tanks are in place for the display of military muscle and protesters are ready to make their voices heard.

It's been nearly seven decades since a president spoke there on Independence Day. The U.S. was at war in Korea when Harry Truman addressed a large gathering on the Washington Monument grounds, marking the 175th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

There's no such historical marker Thursday for Trump, who for the past two years has sought a moment to orchestrate a display of America's military prowess.

He's calling his event a "Salute to America," honoring the armed forces, and he'll speak at the Lincoln Memorial in front of a ticket-only, VIP crowd of Republican donors, administration and campaign officials, family members and those who flock to see him or protest what they see as a divisive intrusion on a traditionally unifying national holiday.

Trump sounded a defensive note Wednesday, tweeting that cost "will be very little compared to what it is worth."

"We own the planes, we have the pilots, the airport is right next door (Andrews), all we need is the fuel," he said, referring to Maryland's Joint Base Andrews, home for some of the planes that are to fly over the Mall on Thursday. "We own the tanks and all. Fireworks are donated by two of the greats."

Trump glossed over the expense of shipping tanks and fighting vehicles to Washington by rail and guarding them for several days, and other costs.

Some of the president's supporters welcomed Trump's stamp on the holiday.

Rachel McKenna, a Trump supporter from McKinney, Texas, said her relatives have served in the military and she thought it was important to say "We love you guys, we appreciate everything you do, and I love the fact I can see that," as she pointed to the Bradley fighting vehicle positioned near the Lincoln Memorial.

"I've never ever seen one," she said. "I just think it's so cool."

Trump's upcoming spectacle even caught the attention of the Rolling Stones, performing at nearby FedEx Field on Wednesday night. Mick Jagger took note that this year's Fourth wouldn't be "just fireworks."

"Now we've got tanks on the lawn as well ... and some inspirational speeches," he said wryly.

Keith Richards chimed to wish people "a happy fourth, tanks and all."

Under White House direction, the Pentagon was arranging for an Air Force B-2 stealth bomber and other warplanes to conduct flyovers. There will be Navy F-35 and F-18 fighter jets, the Navy Blue Angels

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aerobatics team, Army and Coast Guard helicopters and Marine V-22 Ospreys.

The White House referred questions about the cost of the military participation to the Pentagon, which said it did not have the answer.

The Air Force said it costs \$122,311 an hour to fly a B-2 bomber, which is making the round trip from its home at Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri. Officials said the flight will be considered a training event, with the cost already budgeted. The per-hour flying cost of the F-22 fighter is \$65,128.

Two Bradley fighting vehicles were in place Wednesday at the Lincoln Memorial, where Trump will speak. In addition, two 60-ton Army Abrams battle tanks were sent to Washington by rail to be positioned on or near the National Mall, to the dismay of District of Columbia officials.

The presidential Air Force One and Marine One aircraft are also slated to make aerial appearances.

Kevin Donahue, District of Columbia deputy mayor for public safety, told The Associated Press the city expects the federal government to pay for any damage to streets or bridges from moving the tanks. Civil engineers will assess roads and bridges after July 4 to determine if there's been damage.

Donahue said the city doesn't have the jurisdiction to reject the use of tanks and other heavy equipment.

In a separate tweet Wednesday, Trump promised the Lincoln Memorial program "will be the show of a lifetime!" White House officials have stressed that Trump's remarks will be patriotic, but the president often finds it difficult to stay on any kind of script.

But Tracie Lenihan of Spokane, Washington, an independent, said she didn't understand why military equipment is part of the festivities. "I think it cost a lot of money and I'm not sure what it really has to do with the Fourth of July," she said. "I don't hate it. I'm just confused."

Medea Benjamin, co-founder of the Codepink anti-war group, said use of the Bradley fighting vehicles reflected the "politicization of July Fourth and the militarization of July Fourth and we resent this."

"We want it to be a holiday where people are having their picnics and they're watching their fireworks and it's all peaceful and united," she said.

Instead, her group will be fielding a balloon depicting Trump as an angry, diaper-clad baby. But because of flight restrictions, officials would not let the group pump it with helium to make it fly higher and be more visible.

Rep. Betty McCollum, D-Minn., who is among lawmakers overseeing the Interior Department, which has jurisdiction over the National Mall and federal parks, said it was "absolutely outrageous" that the administration will use park money to help defray Thursday's event costs. The National Park Service plans to use nearly \$2.5 million intended to help improve parks nationwide, The Washington Post reported late Tuesday, citing anonymous sources.

"These fees are not a slush fund for this administration to use at will," McCollum said in a statement. She promised a congressional hearing.

Trump and the event's organizers could be on the hook to reimburse the government millions of dollars if he goes into campaign mode, in violation of federal appropriations law and the Hatch Act, which bars politicking on government time, said Walter Shaub, who left the Office of Government Ethics in 2017 after clashing with the White House over ethics and disclosure issues.

"There's not a history of disciplined speaking engagements where he sticks to a script," Shaub said of Trump.

Trump originally wanted a parade with military tanks and other machinery rolling through downtown Washington ever since he was enthralled by a two-hour procession of French military tanks and fighter jets in Paris on Bastille Day in July 2017.

Later that year Trump said he'd have a similar parade in Washington on the Fourth of July, 2018, and would "top" the Paris show. The event ended up being pushed to Veterans Day, which conflicted with one of Trump's trips abroad, before it was scuttled after cost estimates exceeding \$90 million were made public.

In February, Trump tweeted for the public to "HOLD THE DATE!" for this Fourth of July.

Washington has held an Independence Day celebration for decades, featuring a parade along Constitution Avenue, a concert on the Capitol lawn with music by the National Symphony Orchestra and fireworks

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beginning at dusk near the Washington Monument.

Trump altered the lineup by adding his speech, moving the fireworks closer to the Lincoln Memorial and summoning the tanks and warplanes.

Associated Press writers Matthew Daly, Ellen Knickmeyer and Chris Rugaber contributed to this report.

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Asian shares climb after US benchmarks hit record highs

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Shares opened higher in Asia on Thursday, tracking the ascent by major U.S. indexes to record highs.

The rally follows a slight easing of trade tensions between the U.S. and China after they agreed to refrain from new tariffs pending a new round of negotiations. That has relieved some pressure on markets, though the trade war still overshadows the global economic outlook.

Japan's Nikkei 225 index added 0.3% to 21,707.65, while the Shanghai Composite index edged 0.1% higher to 3,017.26. In Hong Kong, the Hang Seng gained 0.4% to 28,985.55, while the S&P ASX 200 in Australia rose 0.6% to 6,724.40.

Shares rose in Taiwan, Singapore and Indonesia in Malaysia.

On Wall Street, investors extended a rally through a holiday-shortened day, with the S&P 500 index gaining 0.8% to close at 2,995.82, the third record high close in as many days.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average also reached a record, gaining 0.7% to close at 26,966. A rally in technology shares pushed the tech-heavy Nasdaq composite 0.8% higher to 8,170.23.

The market will be closed Thursday for the Independence Day holiday.

"Clearly the trade truce with China has been a catalyst for the market even though there remain uncertainties," said Quincy Krosby, chief market strategist at Prudential Financial.

Technology companies, which tend to do a lot of business with China, have been particularly sensitive to the trade war between the U.S. and China. The sector has been broadly higher this week.

White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow told reporters in Washington that he expected to announce a new round of negotiations soon. "They're on the phone," he said. "There's lots of communication."

"We're not done yet, but we're hopeful," he said.

Every sector in the S&P 500 made gains on Wednesday, and the records are adding up to a yearlong rally. The S&P 500 is up more than 19% so far, while the Dow is up more than 15%. The Nasdaq is now up 23% for the year.

Investors will be watching for the U.S. government's closely watched monthly jobs report on Friday. The results of that report will likely be a factor in the Federal Reserve's meeting later this month. The central bank has already said it is prepared to cut rates to shore up the U.S. economy if trade disputes crimp growth.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury note fell to 1.95% from 1.97% Tuesday.

In commodities trading, benchmark U.S. crude oil lost 39 cents to \$56.95 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It rose \$1.09 on Wednesday to settle at \$57.34 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, gave up 47 cents to \$63.35 per barrel. It rose \$1.42 overnight to close at \$63.82 a barrel. It

The dollar slipped to 107.75 Japanese yen from 107.83 yen on Wednesday. The euro rose to \$1.1289 from \$1.1279.

AP Business Writer Damien J. Troise contributed.

2 judges' comments, handling of rape cases draw criticism

By MARYCLAIRE DALE Associated Press

Two New Jersey judges have come under fire for their handling of rape cases, one for asking whether a 16-year-old Eagle Scout "from a good family" should face serious consequences over a video-recorded assault on an intoxicated teenager.

Another judge asked whether a 12-year-old girl's loss of virginity constituted serious harm.

The comments, which follow other cases of perceived leniency toward sex offenders from privileged backgrounds, led victim advocates to question whether judges are sufficiently qualified and trained to handle sex assault cases in the #MeToo era.

"Survivors' worst fears are coming to life. They're fearful of victim blaming or having the crimes committed against them be minimized," said Patricia Teffenhart, executive director of the New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

Monmouth County Judge James Troiano said in his opinion that the Eagle Scout charged with assaulting a 16-year-old girl at a pajama party had good test scores and was on track to attend a top college.

According to an appeals court decision last month, the teenager sent friends a video of him having sexual intercourse with the girl, along with a text, saying: "(w)hen your first time having sex was rape."

Troiano called the encounter different from "the traditional case of rape," where "two or more males" attack someone at gunpoint. And he attributed the text to "a 16-year-old kid saying stupid crap to his friends."

The judge wrote that the "young man comes from a good family who put him into an excellent school where he was doing extremely well. ... He is clearly a candidate for not just college but probably for a good college. His scores for college entry were very high."

Lawyer Debra Katz said Troiano was redefining the legal standard for rape and should be removed from the bench.

Troiano, a retired judge who serves part time, did not return calls seeking comment made to his home Wednesday by The Associated Press. A message left with a court spokesman was not returned.

Troiano has drawn comparisons to Aaron Persky, the California judge who presided over a notorious rape case against a Stanford University student and who lost his job in a recall election last year. Persky had sentenced swimmer Brock Turner to six months in jail for sexually assaulting an unconscious woman near a dumpster. Turner ended up serving just three months.

"I think that what we saw clearly with Judge Persky last year is that people who come from privilege are given a pass in very serious cases of rape," said Katz, who represented Christine Blasey Ford in her Senate testimony against Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh. "What's so remarkable in this case is ... it was a clear admission, and of course there was a videotape."

In the other recent New Jersey case, Middlesex County Judge Marcia Silva said the alleged sexual assault of a 12-year-old girl by a 16-year-old was "not an especially heinous or cruel offense."

According to an appeals court ruling, the judge wrote that the victim said the 16-year-old pushed her, grabbed her hands, removed her clothing and penetrated her without consent, causing her to lose her virginity. The judge continued: "However, beyond losing her virginity, the State did not claim that the victim suffered any further injuries, either physical, mental or emotional."

Silva did not return a message left with her office Wednesday. In both cases, the judges ordered the boys tried in juvenile court, before the appeals court sent them back for reconsideration.

Teresa Younger, the president and chief executive officer of the Ms. Foundation for Women, said cases like these show the deference often shown to defendants over victims - even when the judge, like Silva, is female.

"There's no comment about whether she came from a good family," Younger said of the pajama party victim. "(And) she may not get great grades because she's carrying this trauma in her body."

According to Teffenhart, there's no mandatory training for New Jersey judges on sex assault cases, despite changing laws, including one this year that gave victims more time to sue.

The judges' comments, she said, retraumatize victims and "tend to have a chilling effect on all survivors

contemplating coming forward.”

Marsha Levick, co-founder of the Juvenile Law Center, called Troiano’s comments “ignorant and sexist and appalling,” but she does not necessarily think the case belongs in adult court.

She believes that rape and other serious cases can be fairly adjudicated in juvenile court if judges are properly trained. In most states, juvenile offenders can be detained or supervised until age 21, while they might face much longer terms for sexual assault in adult court.

“This case may also underscore how important it is to have judges serve in juvenile court (who are) well trained in aspects of adolescent development, and the many ways we can hold young people accountable for their crimes,” she said.

Arrests made over Hong Kong protests, legislature break-in

By JOHNSON LAI Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Police said they had arrested 13 people after the protests on Monday’s anniversary of Hong Kong’s return to China, including one man accused of storming the legislature building in a break-in involving hundreds of pro-democracy protesters who vandalized offices and the main chamber.

The local man surnamed Poon was arrested in Mong Kok and accused of assaulting police, criminal destruction, misconduct in public places and forced entry of the Legislative Council Complex, police said late Wednesday night.

Eleven men and a woman were arrested in connection with a different protest that took place Monday morning. They face various charges including possession of offensive weapons, unlawful assembly, assaulting a police officer, obstructing a police officer and failing to carry an identity document. The brief statement did not describe the offensive weapons or provide further details.

Pro-democracy protesters rushed police barricades around the time of a morning flag-raising ceremony marking the 22nd anniversary of the former British colony’s handover to China in 1997. Police used shields, batons and pepper spray to drive them back.

That afternoon, while hundreds of thousands of people were participating in a peaceful march marking the anniversary, a few hundred protesters began trying to break into the locked legislative building by smashing thick glass walls and prying open metal security curtains. When they poured into the building late that night, they spray-painted slogans on the walls and caused extensive damage.

In shocking scenes Monday and early Tuesday, the protesters vented their anger and frustration at a government that hasn’t responded to their demands. They stood on the desks in the legislature’s main chamber and climbed high to cover the city’s official emblem with black spray paint.

On Wednesday, workers boarded up shattered windows and police carted away evidence for the criminal investigation. The government showed journalists the extent of the damage on a tour of the first two floors of the building.

At almost every turn, slogans had been spray-painted on the walls in Chinese and English. “Destroy the Chinese Communist Party,” read one. “Hong Kong is not China” said another.

Papers, rubbish and umbrellas — a protest symbol in Hong Kong used to ward off sun, rain and pepper spray — were strewn in lobbies and rooms. Parts of wooden picture frames were all that remained of portraits of legislative leaders that hung on the wall.

Steve Vickers, a former head of criminal intelligence for the Royal Hong Kong Police, predicted a severe crackdown that will result in long jail terms.

“I am personally sympathetic to the great majority of the Hong Kong demonstrators and their motivation, but the hardcore elements and agitators involved are becoming increasingly desperate,” said Vickers, who heads Steve Vickers and Associates, a political and corporate risk consultancy. “Their actions are counterproductive to many Hong Kong peoples’ genuine democratic aspirations.”

Police also announced two other sets of arrests Wednesday.

They said five men and one woman were arrested for various incidents during a public meeting on Sunday, when supporters of police staged a large rally. Some clashed with anti-government protesters and

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members of the media. They were charged with possession of offensive weapons, assault causing bodily harm, common assault and fighting in a public place.

Also Wednesday, police said six men and two women had been arrested for posting personal data about police officers on the internet.

Officers and their family members have been threatened since their addresses and official ID card numbers were published, Superintendent Mohammed Swalikh of the Cyber Security bureau said.

He did not say whether police believe the disclosures were related to the protests, which were set off by proposed legislation to change Hong Kong's extradition laws and have broadened into a demonstration of Hong Kong residents' fears of growing Chinese control in the territory.

Protesters also are demanding an independent investigation into a crackdown on demonstrations June 12 in which officers used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse crowds blocking major city streets. The tactics used were harsher than usual for Hong Kong, which police have said were justified after some protesters turned violent. Dozens were injured in the clashes, both protesters and police.

The extradition legislation would allow criminal suspects to be extradited to mainland China to face what critics fear would be unfair and politicized trials and would target opponents of China's ruling Communist Party. The law's opponents see it as an erosion of the rights guaranteed to Hong Kong for 50 years after the handover.

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam suspended the bill and apologized for how it was handled, but protesters want it to be formally withdrawn and for Lam to resign.

In Beijing, the Chinese government lashed back at remarks by British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt on the causes of the anti-government protests in Hong Kong.

Foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said Hunt appeared to be "basking in the faded glory of British colonialism and obsessed with lecturing others."

Hunt had said that Hong Kong authorities should not use the vandalism in the legislative building as a "pretext for repression." He said the authorities need to "understand the root causes of what happened, which is a deep-seated concern by people in Hong Kong that their basic freedoms are under attack."

Geng said Britain has no authority to discuss matters in the territory. He noted Hong Kong was under British rule for 155 years, run by governors appointed by the British crown, rather than being an autonomous democracy.

The protesters in Hong Kong are demanding direct election of the city's leader. Lam was chosen by an elite committee of mainly pro-Beijing electors.

"The U.K. considers itself as a guardian which is nothing but a delusion," Geng said. "It is just shameful to say that Hong Kong's freedoms are negotiated for them by the British side."

Associated Press journalists Ken Moritsugu and Katie Tam in Hong Kong and Sally Ho in Seattle, Washington, contributed to this report.

Rouhani: Iran will enrich uranium to 'any amount we want'

By JON GAMBRELL and NASSER KARIMI Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran's president warned that Tehran will increase its enrichment of uranium to "any amount that we want" beginning on Sunday, putting further pressure on European nations to save its faltering nuclear deal and offer a way around intense U.S. sanctions.

President Hassan Rouhani's threat, combined with Iran surpassing the stockpile limits of the 2015 atomic accord, could narrow the estimated one-year window it would need to produce enough material for a nuclear weapon, something Iran denies it wants but the deal sought to prevent.

But as tensions rise a year after President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the deal, it looks unlikely that Europe can offer Iran a way to sell its oil on the global market despite U.S. sanctions.

All this comes as the U.S. has rushed an aircraft carrier, B-52 bombers and F-22 fighters to the region and Iran recently shot down a U.S. military surveillance drone. "Be careful with the threats, Iran. They

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can come back to bite you like nobody has been bitten before!" Trump tweeted in response to Rouhani's warning.

On Wednesday, Iran also marked the anniversary of the U.S. Navy shooting down an Iranian passenger jet in 1988, a mistake that killed 290 people and shows the danger of miscalculation in the current crisis.

"The Trump administration is pushing the center of Iranian politics to the right at the detriment of the Iranian people and the entire region," said Ali Vaez, an Iran analyst for the International Crisis Group. "Rouhani is clearly at the end of his rope and has no choice other than green lighting further escalation."

Rouhani, still viewed inside Iran as a relatively moderate cleric in the country's Shiite theocracy, has taken an increasingly hard-line tone in his remarks to the West. Particularly, he and others in his administration target European signatories to the nuclear deal for not doing enough to ease restrictions on Iran's oil and financial sectors.

That continued Wednesday in a televised address to his Cabinet. His remarks seemed to signal that Europe has yet to offer Iran anything to alleviate the pain of the renewed U.S. sanctions targeting its oil industry and top officials.

The deal saw Iran agree to limit its enrichment of uranium to 3.67%, which is enough for nuclear power plants but far below the 90% needed for weapons. It also limited its stockpile of enriched uranium to 300 kilograms (661 pounds). In exchange, Iran saw crippling economic sanctions lifted.

But after Trump withdrew from the deal, those sanctions and even more-stringent newer ones took effect. On Monday, both Iran and the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog agency confirmed that Tehran had breached that stockpile limit.

Rouhani some two months earlier set the Sunday deadline that Iran would increase its enrichment of uranium. Wednesday's remarks underlined that.

"From July 7 onward, the level of our enrichment will not be at 3.67% anymore," Rouhani said. "We will put aside this commitment as much as we want to and to any level we think is necessary and we need."

However, Rouhani's remarks, while strident, seemed to still insist last-minute diplomacy could be possible.

"Our advice to Europe and the United States is to go back to logic and to the negotiating table," he said. "Go back to understanding, to respecting the law and resolutions of the U.N. Security Council. Under those conditions, all of us can abide by the nuclear deal."

There was no immediate reaction in Europe, where the EU just the day before finalized nominations to take over the bloc's top posts.

On Tuesday, European powers separately issued a statement on Iran breaking through its stockpile limit, calling on Tehran "to reverse this step and to refrain from further measures that undermine the nuclear deal."

Vaez, the Iran analyst, said the current state of the deal forced Rouhani to shift right, while also highlighting the limitations faced by Europe.

"It is a pity that despite its goodwill and efforts, Europe fell short of preserving an agreement that incarnates European belief in multilateralism," he said.

The heightened tensions between the U.S. and Iran have seen a series of incidents spiral across the wider Persian Gulf. Mysterious attacks have struck oil tankers near the Strait of Hormuz, which the U.S. and Israel blame on Iran, although Tehran denies involvement.

Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi rebels have launched a series of bomb-laden drone attacks on Saudi Arabia. Iran also shot down an over \$100 million U.S. military surveillance drone on June 20, nearly sparking a retaliatory American strike.

Iranian state TV reported that the powerful Imam Reza Foundation, a religious body that manages vast endowments and businesses across Iran, awarded medals to those who shot down the U.S. drone.

Meanwhile, relatives of those killed the 1988 downing of Iran Air Flight 655 by the U.S. Navy marked the day by visiting the site in the Strait of Hormuz where its debris fell.

Iranian TV showed video of the mourners as armed Iranian Revolutionary Guard fast boats patrolled around them. They tossed gladiolas and roses into the strait from the boat and by helicopter as some wept.

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"Thirty years of being an orphan!" one woman screamed. Others chanted: "Death to America!"

Just after dawn on July 3, 1988, the USS Vincennes chased Iranian speedboats into Iranian territorial waters after they allegedly shot at an American helicopter. It began firing at the Iranian vessels there.

The Vincennes then mistook Iran Air flight 655, which had taken off from Bandar Abbas, Iran, heading for Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, for an Iranian fighter jet. It fired missiles, killing all 290 people on board.

The U.S. later would give USS Vincennes Capt. William C. Rogers the country's Legion of Merit award, further angering Iran.

The downing of the flight remains one of the moments the Iranian government points to in its decades-long distrust of America. They rank it alongside the 1953 CIA-backed coup that toppled Iran's elected prime minister and secured Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's absolute power until he abdicated the throne before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif marked the holiday by writing on Twitter: "US aggression against Iran did not begin with @realdonaldtrump."

Jury sentences Navy SEAL for posing with Iraq war casualty

By JULIE WATSON and JOHN ANTCZAK Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A decorated Navy SEAL acquitted of murder in the killing of a wounded Islamic State captive in Iraq but convicted over posing with the corpse was given a demotion by a military jury Wednesday after the Bronze Star recipient acknowledged making ethical and moral mistakes.

Special Operations Chief Edward Gallagher, 40, was also handed the maximum penalty for the offense of four months in confinement, though he will serve no jail time because it is less than the time he spent in custody before the trial.

After the court announced the sentence includes a reduction in rank, Gallagher turned to his wife, shook his head and pretended to unpin his "anchors" — the insignia of a chief — and fling them across the courtroom. He then smiled and hugged her.

The sentence will not go into effect until it is approved by the commanding officer overseeing the court-martial.

Gallagher's lawyers said they plan to appeal the punishment that will affect his pension and benefits just as the 19-year veteran plans to retire from the service.

Earlier, Gallagher addressed the jury that acquitted him Tuesday of premeditated murder in the death of the captive and attempted murder and other charges in the shootings of civilians during a 2017 deployment to Iraq. He also was cleared on charges of impeding the investigation and retaliating against the SEALs who reported him.

The platoon chief told the jury he was fully responsible for his actions on the day he took photos with the body of the 17-year-old militant.

"I put a black eye on the two communities that I love — the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Navy — specifically the SEAL community," Gallagher said.

He said he tried to lead by example but didn't always succeed.

"I've made mistakes throughout my 20-year career — tactical, ethical, moral — I'm not perfect but I've always bounced back from my mistakes. I'm ready to bounce back from this," he said.

The jury called for reducing Gallagher's rank by one grade to petty officer 1st class and ordered his monthly pay cut by \$2,697 for four months.

But the judge capped the pay cut at two months and gave Gallagher 60 days' credit for being held in overly harsh conditions before being tried and being briefly deprived of treatment for a traumatic brain injury.

Gallagher also got credit for 201 days of pretrial confinement.

A Navy prosecutor had asked only for a reduction in rank, not confinement. The defense recommended no punishment.

The prosecutor, Lt. Brian John, said Gallagher was the platoon chief and should not have been the centerpiece of the photos in which nearly all the members posed with the body. John said Gallagher should have stopped the photos from being taken.

"For that reason, he no longer deserves to wear anchors," the prosecutor said.

John also said the photos had the potential to be used as propaganda by Islamic State and be harmful to U.S. forces overseas.

The photos were taken after Gallagher and other SEAL medics provided treatment for the captive who was wounded in an airstrike in 2017 and handed over by Iraqi forces.

One image shows him clutching the hair of the corpse with one hand and holding a knife in another. Prosecutors used the images and text messages that included "got him with my hunting knife" to build a murder case against Gallagher.

Gallagher could have faced life in prison if convicted of murder. The verdict was met with tears and hugs.

President Donald Trump, who intervened earlier this year to have Gallagher moved from the brig to less restrictive confinement, tweeted congratulations to the SEAL and his family.

"You have been through much together. Glad I could help!" the president wrote.

The outcome delivered a major blow to one of the Navy's most high-profile war crimes cases and exposed a generational conflict within the ranks of the elite special operations forces.

Asked in an interview Wednesday on Fox & Friends what his message might be to future Navy SEALs, Gallagher said he would tell them that "loyalty is a trait that seems to be lost. ... You're there to watch your brother's back, and he's there to watch your back."

Speaking of his accusers, Gallagher said, "this small group of SEALs that decided to concoct this story in no way, shape or form represent the community that I love."

Seven SEALs from his platoon testified that Gallagher unexpectedly stabbed the war prisoner in the neck, and later posed with the body in photos. The defense said Gallagher was framed by junior SEALs who fabricated the allegations to oust a chief who was tough on them.

They said no corpse was found and there was no physical evidence to support the allegations.

The defense said the text and photos were gallows humor and pointed out that almost all platoon members who testified against him also posed with the corpse.

The jury of five Marines and two sailors, including a SEAL, was comprised mostly of combat veterans who served in Iraq. Several lost friends in war.

Antczak and AP writer Brian Melley contributed to this report from Los Angeles.

Airstrike kills 44 migrants in Libyan detention center

By RAMI MUSA and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

BENGHAZI, Libya (AP) — An airstrike hit a detention center for migrants near the Libyan capital of Tripoli early Wednesday, killing at least 44 people and wounding dozens of others in an attack that the U.N. human rights chief said could amount to a war crime.

The Tripoli-based government blamed the attack on forces associated with Gen. Khalifa Hifter, whose Libyan National Army has been waging an offensive against rival militias in the capital of the war-torn North African country since April.

It refocused attention and raised questions about the European Union's policy of cooperating with the militias that hold migrants in crowded and squalid detention centers to prevent them from crossing the Mediterranean to seek better lives in Europe. Most of them were apprehended by the Libyan coast guard, which is funded and trained by the EU to stem the flow of migrants.

At the United Nations, the Security Council held a closed emergency session on the airstrike in Tripoli's Tajoura neighborhood, and Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for an independent investigation.

Hifter's forces said they were targeting a nearby military site, not the detention center. There also were suspicions of involvement by foreign countries allied with his forces. Countries assisting Hifter include

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Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Russia.

Two migrants interviewed by The Associated Press said the airstrike hit a compound that houses a weapons warehouse and an adjacent detention center holding about 150 migrants, including several Sudanese and Moroccans. The two spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal.

Online video purported to be from inside the detention center showed blood and human remains mixed with rubble and the belongings of the victims.

The U.N. gave an initial figure of 44 dead and more than 130 wounded. But the two migrants told the AP that three or four escaped harm and about 20 were wounded. They said the rest were killed, indicating the final death toll could be much higher. A Moroccan consular official said 15 Moroccans were in the center and at least three were slightly injured. The fate of the others was unclear. The official was not authorized to be publicly named according to government policy.

Prince Alfani, the Libya medical coordinator for Doctors Without Borders, visited the detention center hours before the airstrike and said it had held 126 migrants. Survivors fear for their lives, he said, urging their immediate evacuation.

Charlie Yaxley, a spokesman for the U.N. refugee agency, said the detention center's proximity to the weapons depot "made it a target for the airstrikes."

"Coordinates of this detention center were well-known to both sides of the conflict," Yaxley said. "It was known that there were 600 people living inside. So there can be no excuse for this center having been hit."

He said the agency had warned less than two months ago that anyone in the complex could be caught in the fighting and an earlier airstrike nearby had wounded two migrants. The UNHCR is sending medical teams to the site, he added.

U.N. human rights chief Michelle Bachelet said the attack "may, depending on the precise circumstances, amount to a war crime."

The attack "killed by surprise innocent people whose dire conditions forced them to be in that shelter," said U.N. envoy for Libya Ghassan Salame.

Magdalena Mughrabi, deputy Middle East and North Africa director for Amnesty International, said the attack "must be investigated as a war crime" by the International Criminal Court. The deaths are the "consequences of Libya and Europe's callous migration policies," she said.

The group said its research indicated a weapons storage warehouse was in the same compound as the detention center and some of the migrants were forced to work at the military site.

The Tripoli-based Government of National Accord, which is backed by the U.N., called for an investigation by the world body.

Libya became a major crossing point for migrants to Europe after the overthrow and death of longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi in 2011, when the North African nation was thrown into chaos, armed militias proliferated and central authority collapsed.

At least 6,000 migrants from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and other nations are locked in dozens of detention facilities in Libya run by militias accused of torture and other abuses. There is limited food and other supplies for the migrants, who often end up there after arduous journeys at the mercy of abusive traffickers who hold them for ransom from their families. More than 3,000 migrants are in danger because they are held in detention centers near the front lines, the U.N. refugee agency said.

"This incident underscores the urgency to provide all refugees and migrants with safe shelter until their asylum claims can be processed or they can be safely repatriated," U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

Gen. Khaled el-Mahjoub, a spokesman for Hifter's LNA forces, denied targeting the detention center, saying it was the militia camp in the Tajoura neighborhood that was the target. He did not deny, however, that the migrant detention center was hit.

"We didn't give orders to target the shelter," he said.

Later Wednesday, LNA spokesman Ahmed al-Mesmari also denied that its forces targeted the detention center and said the U.N. should investigate. He also blamed another militia in Misrata for airstrikes south of Tripoli that killed children in what he termed "a terrorist operation."

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The EU urged Libyan authorities to better protect migrants, with its top diplomat and two top policy commissioners saying the attack highlights “the dire and vulnerable situation of migrants caught up in the spiral of violence.”

Although the attack could increase greater Western pressure on Hifter, Claudia Gazzini, a Libya expert at the International Crisis Group, said it was highly unlikely to change the course the fighting in and around Tripoli.

“For both Hifter-led forces and those loyal to the Tripoli-based government, this is an existential war that sees little room for compromise,” she said.

She did not expect any actions other than a “verbal condemnation” of Hifter’s forces if it is proven they were behind the airstrike.

Hifter, who receives support from Egypt, the UAE and Saudi Arabia, says he is determined to restore stability to the North African country. His rivals, mainly Islamists, are supported by Turkey and Qatar.

His forces control much of Libya’s east and south but suffered a significant blow last week when militias allied with the Tripoli government reclaimed Gharyan, a town about 100 kilometers (62 miles) from the capital and a key LNA supply route.

On Monday, the LNA said it had begun an air campaign on rival forces in Tripoli. El-Mesmari, the LNA spokesman, said air forces had destroyed the main control room for drones at Mitiga airbase in Tripoli. Mitiga airport, the capital’s only functioning airport, said earlier it had suspended civilian traffic following an airstrike.

Fathi Bashagha, interior minister of the Tripoli-based government, alleged that Hifter’s foreign allies were behind the airstrike at the detention center and told the AP that they “went mad” after his forces lost Gharyan. He did not identify any countries or provide any supporting evidence. He also denied weapons were stored at the detention facility complex.

Security analyst Oded Berkowitz said the LNA has “a handful of obsolete aircraft” in poor condition. He said it has received spare parts and decommissioned aircraft from Egypt and possibly Russia.

“Egypt and the UAE have been conducting air operations on behalf of the LNA, but there are no indications that the UAE transferred aircraft to the LNA,” he said.

The fighting for Tripoli has threatened to plunge Libya into another bout of violence on the scale of the conflict that ousted Gadhafi.

Hifter’s campaign against Islamic militants across Libya since 2014 won him growing support from world leaders concerned that Libya has become a haven for armed groups and a major conduit for migrants. But critics view him as an aspiring autocrat and fear a return to one-man rule.

Magdy reported from Cairo. Associated Press writers Maggie Michael in Cairo, Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations and Angela Charlton and Lori Hinnant in Paris contributed.

Angels try to get handle on raw emotion after Skaggs death

By SCHUYLER DIXON AP Sports Writer

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Mike Trout led a parade of Los Angeles Angels into the interview room of the Texas Rangers for the first interaction with reporters since teammate Tyler Skaggs died.

The two-time AL MVP tried to smile when it was his turn to talk, only to find himself fighting back tears almost immediately. Trout wasn’t alone following a 9-4 win over the Texas Rangers on Tuesday night, a day after the 27-year-old Skaggs was found unresponsive in his room at the team hotel.

Andrew Heaney, a starter alongside Skaggs who said the fellow left-hander was his best friend, choked back sobs before finding his composure.

It was the opposite for Justin Upton, who started with a smile talking about how Skaggs’ reaction to the victory would be to say, “We’re nasty!” Soon, though, the outfielder dropped his head and stopped in the middle of a sentence, getting a squeeze on the shoulder from Trout.

The emotion was just as raw in that same room a few hours earlier with manager Brad Ausmus and

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general manager Billy Eppler.

"It's just a tough 24 hours," Trout said as he sniffed and gained a handle on his emotions. "Like Brad said earlier, Skaggs wouldn't want us to take another day off. The energy he brought to the clubhouse, every time you saw him, just pick me up."

Before Wednesday's game, the Angels clubhouse was open to reporters for the first time since Skaggs' death. His No. 45 jersey was hanging in his locker along with the equipment that had come with him for the road trip, including his glove.

Trout and three-time NL MVP Albert Pujols didn't appear while reporters were allowed in, and others milled about as the baseball routine began to kick in again.

"The guys all believe that we'll get through it," Ausmus said in the LA dugout before Wednesday's game. "It'll help being together getting through it. Today is probably the very first small step in that direction, but it's going to take time."

Tommy La Stella was on crutches the day after fouling a 97 mph fastball off his lower right leg and fracturing a tibia. The AL All-Star had to be replaced and is likely to miss at least two months. But losing out on his first All-Star chance two days after being selected as a reserve didn't matter much to La Stella with Skaggs on his mind.

"With what we're all dealing with right now, this is pretty meaningless," he said.

There was some question whether Trout and his teammates would talk to reporters after Tuesday's game — until just about every one of them showed up in a room normally occupied only by the home team's manager after each game.

Ausmus, much more composed than he was in a pregame meeting with reporters that included Eppler, owner Arte Moreno and team president John Carpino, said he would take questions about the game before turning it over to the players.

There was one question each for five players, including Kole Calhoun after his two-run homer that included a heartfelt celebration at home plate when he pointed skyward and had a message for his fallen teammate.

Justin Bour, who had a two-run single on the only pitch he saw as a pinch-hitter after La Stella was injured and had to leave the game on a 3-2 count, finished off the interview session.

Bour went through the same thing three years ago with the Miami Marlins, when pitcher José Fernández was killed in a boating accident late in the season.

"Like the guys say, reserve your sorrow for Skaggs' family, his wife," Bour said. "We're going to keep grinding every day and playing hard and playing with a spirit."

Heaney was singled out for a question among the couple of dozen players because of his close relationship with Skaggs, a Southern California native remembered as a fun-loving teammate.

The day before he died, Skaggs posted a picture on Instagram of him and the Angels in cowboy hats and other western clothing outside their plane. Skaggs organized the effort because the club was stopping in both major league cities in Texas. LA goes to Houston next.

"There's probably about 100 other people out there that would say he was their best friend too," Heaney said as he tried to control his sobs. "Because he treated everybody like that. He just had such an infectious personality."

The team will remember the energy he brought to the clubhouse.

"He was magnetic," Eppler said. "He was generous and kind, and our team will never be the same without him. But forever we've been made better by him."

And the Angels will be playing for him, probably for the rest of the season.

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Jarring images of border cells surface ahead of July 4

By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

"Inhumane." "Shameful." "Intolerable." "Brutal." Mounting revelations about squalid and dangerously overcrowded conditions at Border Patrol holding centers have fueled public outrage heading into the Fourth of July weekend, with protesters taking to the streets and social media to decry the situation as un-American and unacceptable.

The swelling furor over President Donald Trump's immigration policies comes as the administration said Wednesday that it is looking for more properties to permanently hold unaccompanied children who cross the border. Jerry Gonzalez, executive director of the Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials, called that troublesome given the government's "track record on abuses and child neglect that we have seen nationally." Atlanta is one of five potential locations for new facilities to hold up to 500 children.

"I don't think that this administration is capable of administering a program in a humane way," Gonzalez said.

Headlines and searing images made public in past days and weeks have served as a stark reminder for Americans far from the border of a crisis for which solutions seem scarce: An immigrant father and daughter drowned in the Rio Grande. Reports that infants, children and teens have been locked up without adequate food and water. Revelations that five children have died in Border Patrol custody since December.

The Homeland Security Department's internal watchdog provided new details Tuesday about severe overcrowding in Texas' Rio Grande Valley, the busiest corridor for illegal crossings, noting children at three facilities had no access to showers and that some children under age 7 had been held in jammed centers for more than two weeks. Some cells were so cramped that adults were forced to stand for days on end.

Government inspectors described an increasingly dangerous situation, both for migrants and agents, with escape attempts and detainees clogging toilets with socks to get released during maintenance. A "ticking time bomb," in the words of one facility manager.

The report echoed findings in May by the department's inspector general about holding centers in El Paso, Texas: 900 people crammed into a cell with a maximum capacity of 125; detainees standing on toilets to have room to breathe; others wearing soiled clothing for days or weeks.

All of that is reverberating: Hundreds have protested this week from Rhode Island and Vermont to Texas and California, as cries to #CloseTheCamps take root on social media. About 50 demonstrators from a Jewish group congregated Wednesday outside a jail in Orange County where immigration detainees are held. Some locked arms and blocked the facility's entrance. Then they sang and prayed for immigrant children who have died in government custody.

"The Jewish community has benefited a lot from this country as an immigrant community, and we have an obligation to make sure torture doesn't happen and that borders remain open to people who are seeking refuge from violence and poverty," said Aryeh Cohen, a rabbi and professor who joined the protest.

Still more demonstrations were planned for the July 4 holiday, including one being organized in Philadelphia by Jewish activists likening the detention of migrants to the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany.

It all comes as Trump promises the "show of a lifetime" for the hundreds of thousands of revelers who flock to the National Mall every year on the Fourth of July. Tanks are in place for the display of military muscle.

Independence Day, said Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, is "a time to celebrate the birth of our country and the founding principles for which it stands. But it's hard to believe anyone feels much pride when they see the images coming out of Border Patrol facilities. Compared to the ideals set out in our founding documents and inscribed on the base of the Statue of Liberty, the situation on our southern border feels like hypocrisy."

Trump said Wednesday that Border Patrol agents are "not hospital workers, doctors or nurses" and again blamed Democrats for rejecting his proposals to fix the immigration system.

"If illegal immigrants are unhappy with the conditions in quickly built or refitted detention centers, just tell them not to come. All problems solved!" the president tweeted.

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Customs and Border Protection reported in mid-May that it had 16,000 people in its custody, many in cells equipped with nothing more than concrete benches and an exposed toilet. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, whose facilities are built for longer-term detention, houses more than 40,000 people.

When government inspectors visited the Rio Grande Valley last month, the Border Patrol had some 8,000 detainees in custody in just five holding facilities, with 3,400 held longer than the 72 hours generally permitted. More than 800 children had been in the facilities for longer than 72 hours, with many there more than a week.

At that same time, longer-term ICE facilities, to which detainees are supposed to be moved, had some 54,000 beds occupied nationwide, though it is funded only for 42,000.

"We are concerned that overcrowding and prolonged detention represent an immediate risk to the health and safety of DHS agents and officers, and to those detained," the inspector general's report states. Included were photos showing women and children, including an infant in diapers, piled shoulder to shoulder on the floor of one holding pen. Another photo showed some 88 men crammed into a cell meant for 41, with one pressing a cardboard sign to a window reading: "Help, 40 Days Here."

On Monday, Trump signed legislation to provide \$4.6 billion aimed at improving conditions. And the Department of Health and Human Services, which takes custody of unaccompanied children from the Border Patrol, said Wednesday that additional holding sites are being assessed in and around Atlanta, Phoenix, Dallas, Houston and San Antonio, Texas. The department is seeking 20-year leases for most of the sites, signaling they don't expect challenges to fade.

Kevin McAleenan, the acting Homeland Security secretary, noted that arrests on the Mexican border were expected to drop 25% in June from a month earlier, which would end an alarming string of monthly increases in family arrivals — largely from Central America's Northern Triangle of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador — and be consistent with a seasonal trend for illegal crossings to fall during dangerously hot summer months.

Nevertheless, Trump is promising that raids to detain immigrants already in the country illegally — delayed from last month — will take place after the July 4 holiday, meaning still more space would be needed to hold still more people. ICE agents are supposedly prepped and ready for sweeps across the U.S.

"After July 4," Trump told reporters earlier this week, "a lot of people are going to be brought back out."

Associated Press Writers Jeff Martin, Amy Taxin and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar contributed.

Dem front-runner Biden trails Buttigieg in fundraising total

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Vice President Joe Biden has raised \$21.5 million since launching his White House bid in late April, his campaign said Wednesday. While Biden's haul will put him in the top tier of Democratic fundraisers, he lags behind Pete Buttigieg, a 37-year-old Indiana mayor who was virtually unknown a few months ago.

Buttigieg's campaign announced earlier in the week that he posted an eye-popping \$24.8 million second-quarter haul — a stunning sum for any candidate, let alone one who is so new to the national political stage.

Biden's fundraising numbers underscore that he is a fragile front-runner. He sits atop most early polls and will have the money he needs to compete aggressively throughout the primary. But his standing as the party's elder statesman hasn't scared off his rivals, and it's clear voters are still open to other options.

Some Democratic strategists anticipated a larger fundraising number from Biden, given the connections he forged during his years as vice president and as a long-serving U.S. senator. The fact that he lagged behind expectations — and Buttigieg — will likely deepen Democratic worries that the party could be in for a prolonged primary fight at a time when President Donald Trump is making his case to voters and his reelection effort posted a massive \$105 million second-quarter haul.

Still, the former vice president's supporters say they aren't worried.

"When you are the far and away front-runner, everybody is shooting at you," said Steve Westly, a Sili-

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con Valley venture capitalist who is raising money for Biden. "One thing you have to keep in mind is this campaign is a marathon."

In addition to Biden and Buttigieg, who is the mayor of South Bend, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders also reported a large figure, pulling in \$18 million. Yet to be seen are highly anticipated figures from Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren and California Sen. Kamala Harris, who saw a fundraising surge after her breakout performance during last week's Democratic debates .

Sanders led Democrats in fundraising during the first quarter of the year. Faiz Shakir, his campaign manager, attributed his current position further back in the pack to his rejection of high-dollar fundraisers, which Buttigieg and Biden have embraced. Instead, Sanders' campaign is fueled by small-dollar online donations from a working-class base, he said.

"It is the kind of support that we would take any day of the week over cushy, closed-door, high-dollar fundraisers in New York City, in which people eat Parmesan-encrusted salmon on a toothpick," Shakir said.

When it comes to fundraisers, Biden opens his big-dollar events to members of the media; Buttigieg does not. His campaign spokesman, Chris Meagher, declined to comment about whether that may change. He added that Buttigieg holds "grassroots" fundraisers that typically cost \$25 and are open to all.

Biden is coming off several shaky weeks, including a dramatic moment on the debate stage during which he struggled to respond to pointed questions from Harris about his past positions on school busing.

A member of his finance team, California attorney Thomas McInerney, withdrew his support, pointing to Biden's recent comments highlighting his work with segregationists in the Senate .

Biden's campaign has tried to frame his \$21.5 million intake as a big win. His campaign said in an email to supporters on Monday that they "blew our fundraising goal out of the water."

In the end, though, Buttigieg packed in more fundraisers, often doing a handful of events in a day. As the first openly gay man to launch a major bid for the presidency, he also received an outpouring of financial support from the LGBT community.

Biden kept a lighter fundraising schedule.

Rufus Gifford, who was finance director of President Barack Obama's 2012 reelection campaign, praised Buttigieg's moxie.

"They are seizing on opportunities, they are building infrastructure, hiring staff and working their butts off," he said.

To be sure, fundraising success does not equate to votes, and the race is still in the early stages. Buttigieg, for example, is winning favor among donors but has struggled with black voters, a key constituency for any winning Democratic presidential campaign.

On Tuesday during a campaign appearance in Chicago, he acknowledged the need to meet more voters in the black community, suggesting they may warm to him if they "see me in action for a longer period of time."

A clearer picture of the race will emerge once the numbers are reported on July 15, laying bare the relative health of the candidates' campaigns. Candidates must reach 2% in at least four polls in addition to collecting contributions from at least 130,000 donors to appear on the September debate stage.

At least a dozen of the more than 20 campaigns are trying to lure in new donors to qualify for the fall round of debates. But the dry summer months, when fundraising is difficult, lie ahead.

Former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper is one of the most vulnerable candidates, in part because of his trouble raising money. He's resisting pressure from his staff to scrap his flagging presidential campaign and instead run for Senate in his home state.

Fellow Coloradoan Sen. Michael Bennet said Wednesday that he raised \$2.8 million, a drop compared to the totals of his rivals.

Associated Press writers Sara Burnett in Chicago and Nicholas Riccardi in Denver contributed to this report.

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Dem debates fuel race for support from Black Caucus members

By LAURIE KELLMAN AND ERRIN HAINES WHACK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Kamala Harris called twice.

In her first conversation with Rep. Bobby Rush, a veteran member of the Congressional Black Caucus, Harris was explicit about what she wanted: his endorsement in the Democratic presidential primary. Rush demurred, not yet ready to pick a side in the most crowded Democratic race in modern political history.

Still, Rush was impressed with Harris and watched her closely in last week's debate. When she called again after the face-off, the Illinois congressman said he was ready to back her campaign.

Harris' courting of Rush is a snapshot of the broader, behind-the-scenes effort underway to win over the 55 members of the CBC — a primary-within-the-primary for support of the nation's most influential black lawmakers. It reflects both the increasing power of black leaders within the Democratic Party and the importance of the communities they represent to those jostling to become the party's White House nominee.

It also puts the CBC in the awkward position of having to choose between some of its own members — New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker and Harris, a California senator — and other longtime allies of the influential caucus, including former Vice President Joe Biden.

"It is beautifully uncomfortable to be in this spot," said Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, D-Mo., who's received calls for support since the debates from two top-tier candidates. It's a departure, Cleaver said, from the years when "the CBC members had one choice and it was the person who had strong civil rights credentials."

With seven months to go before the first primary votes are cast, most CBC members are still undecided, including powerful and influential lawmakers like Financial Services Committee Chairwoman Maxine Waters of California, House Oversight Chairman Elijah Cummings of Maryland, Majority Whip James Clyburn of South Carolina and civil rights icon John Lewis of Georgia.

Those who have endorsed candidates have split chiefly between two: Harris and Biden, who has deep ties to the African American community. As of Wednesday, Harris had seven endorsements from CBC members and Biden had five. Booker had the backing of two CBC members from his home state of New Jersey.

Harris, Biden and others have been wooing CBC members through formal phone calls and in-person meetings, as well as casual conversation in the halls of Congress, according to interviews with lawmakers and their allies. Biden met with the CBC members on June 20 to discuss criminal justice policies. Harris and Booker have both attended some of the weekly CBC meetings in the Capitol.

The CBC has faced tough choices before. In the 2008 Democratic primary, some members were caught between Hillary Clinton, who had strong personal ties to the caucus, and Barack Obama, a caucus member who held the prospect of becoming the first black president. Several members, including Lewis, initially viewed Clinton as most electable and endorsed her campaign before ultimately backing Obama.

Questions of electability and loyalty are again driving the CBC members' decisions.

Harris has seen an uptick in CBC support since the debate, when she challenged Biden over his comments about working with segregationists and his opposition to busing, noting her own experience as a child who was bused as part of desegregation efforts.

"In that moment, I knew exactly what she was talking about — she was talking about access to opportunity that would otherwise change the trajectory of her life," Rep. Jahana Hayes, a freshman CBC member from Connecticut, wrote in her endorsement Wednesday. "That resonated with me. That was me."

Rush said the moment stood out to him as an example of how Harris might take on President Donald Trump in a general election debate. He concluded: "She is electable."

Biden's support from CBC members is rooted in part on his decades working alongside many of them on Capitol Hill, as well as his eight years as Obama's vice president. Biden has been making regular calls to lawmakers in the caucus, according to advisers.

"The CBC is a powerful voice that deserves respect," said Rep. Cedric Richmond of Louisiana, Biden's campaign chairman and a CBC member himself. "And it's not something a campaign chairman or a surrogate would do. You have to do it yourself."

Rep. Don McEachin, D-Va., didn't need a call from Biden to endorse him in May, though he got one anyway. McEachin said his support for Biden only increased after the debate due to what he considered "unfair" attacks on the former vice president over issues of race.

The split in the CBC thus far between Harris and Biden roughly reflects the divide among voters.

Biden remains atop the field of Democratic candidates in several post-debate polls, but Harris enjoyed an increase in support from voters. Among black Democratic voters in particular, support for Biden and Harris is roughly equal in a Quinnipiac poll following the debates, 31% and 27%, respectively.

But Democrats, including African American Democrats, are still most likely to call Biden the contender best suited to defeat Trump. The Quinnipiac poll found 42% of Democratic voters, and 53% of black Democratic voters, saying Biden had the best chance to beat Trump of the two dozen or so candidates.

CBC members believe their endorsements mean more than the stamp of approval from members of the Washington establishment. Former Maryland Rep. Donna Edwards said her one-time colleagues at the CBC are pushing candidates to directly address the conditions of black America and the issues that matter most to African Americans, including racial inequality, ballot access, police shootings of unarmed blacks and mass incarceration.

"What they will be able to do is go out and validate, they co-sign," Edwards said.

Associated Press writers Tom Beaumont in Des Moines, Iowa; Sara Burnett in Chicago; and Hannah Fingerhut in Washington contributed to this report.

Follow Errin Haines Whack on Twitter at www.twitter.com/EMarvelous and Laurie Kellman at <http://www.twitter.com/APLaurieKellman>.

Funeral held for detective who fought for 9/11 victims

By ALI SWENSON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A former police detective who fought until his final days for the extension of health benefits for Sept. 11 responders was hailed as a hero Wednesday by family, fellow officers and political figures who pledged to advance his message.

"These heroes responded to calls for help. They did not hesitate; That's who they were and still are," Police Commissioner James O'Neill said at the funeral for Detective Luis Alvarez, 53. "He and they viewed their efforts as an obligation that they promised long ago to the people we serve."

Alvarez's life was "a testament to American heroism," New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said outside the Immaculate Conception Church.

For many of the mourners, the loss also was a deeply personal one.

"Before he became an American hero, he was mine," said Alvarez's son, David.

The Star-Spangled Banner played as hundreds of uniformed officers stood at attention outside and police helicopters soared overhead. Officers waited in formation as a hearse carrying Alvarez's flag-draped coffin slowly drove away.

Alvarez died Saturday after a three-year battle with colorectal cancer. He attributed his illness to the three months he spent digging through rubble at the World Trade Center's twin towers after the terrorist attack.

Researchers continue to study whether there is a link between cancer and toxins present during the cleanup.

In June, a frail Alvarez appeared before the House Judiciary Committee with former "Daily Show" host Jon Stewart to request the extension of the Sept. 11 Victim Compensation Fund, which has been largely depleted. Stewart was among those at the service Wednesday.

"I did not want to be anywhere else but ground zero when I was there," Alvarez said at the hearing. "Now the 9/11 illnesses have taken many of us, and we are all worried about our children, our spouses and our families and what happens if we are not here."

O'Neill said more than 200 police who responded to 9/11 have died from serious illnesses in the years

since the terrorist attacks.

"Tomorrow, that number could rise," he said. "In the years ahead, it surely will."

Alvarez's survivors include his parents, wife, three sons and three siblings.

On the night before he died, Alvarez "told me he had been walking, and walking, and walking," his sister Aida Lugo recalled.

When asked where he had been walking, she said, "My brother responded, 'I was walking to find first responders to make sure they get help.'"

"How we walk with the broken speaks louder than how we sit with the greatest," Lugo said.

Fighting for other first responders through the Victim Compensation Fund, Lugo said, became his "dying wish."

After Alvarez and Stewart's emotional testimony before Congress, the House Judiciary Committee voted in support of a bill that would extend funding through fiscal year 2090.

Lugo said her brother was grateful to hear of the committee's support. The bill awaits a full House and Senate vote. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Republican, told advocates the chamber would work to vote on the bill by August.

"Luis could have spent his last days and weeks and hours with his family and loved ones," advocate John Feal said outside the church. "He chose to spend them making a difference. We're here to mourn today, but tomorrow we're back to fighting again."

Charles Cook, 79, a fellow 9/11 responder, attended the service.

"I'm sick," Cook said. "I still have cancer. They need to respect us, and they're not doing that right now."

Alvarez was born in Havana and raised in the New York City borough of Queens. He served in the Marines before joining the New York Police Department in 1990 and spent time in the narcotics division and the bomb squad.

"As one of my brother's beloved previous partners once shared with me, 'Louie was the quietest man I worked with but in the end he made the most noise,'" Lugo said.

The Rev. John Harrington cited the legacy Alvarez wanted to leave behind for his sons.

"Never quit on yourself," the priest recalled Alvarez as saying. "Your word is your bond."

Orange fireball lighting Florida sky was Chinese space junk

By KELLI KENNEDY Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Conspiracy theorists took to social media in a flurry of excitement Wednesday after a mysterious flying object resembling an orange fireball streaked across the Florida sky.

The American Meteor Society reported two dozen sightings from Jacksonville to Key West after midnight and tweeted there's "no real explanation yet."

Even the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office joined in on the fun after receiving reports about the mysterious lights, posting on social media that "we were not invaded last night by Martians, but we appreciate the level of confidence you have of us to stop intergalactic invaders."

Astrophysicist Jonathan McDowell at the Center for Astrophysics has a more logical explanation for the unusual flashes of light, with a not-so blockbuster finale. He said they were just pieces of a Chinese rocket as it re-entered the Earth's atmosphere.

Launched in January, the rocket weighed over two tons and was roughly 30 feet (9 meters) long. He said it helped put a Chinese military communication satellite in orbit, and like most space junk, was being tracked as it circled the planet.

"The stuff is moving slowly. It's breaking up into multiple pieces. It's sort of a classic space debris breakup," he told The Associated Press.

The time and location from videos posted on social media made it easy to compare with the orbital data about what debris was slated for reentry around that time.

McDowell said reentries' like this are fairly common and happen about once a month, but they don't often "happen at night over the United States where lots of people see it, so that's what was unusual."

One 911 caller gasped that it was the biggest thing he'd ever seen in the sky, telling the operator he was walking out of a doughnut shop in Lantana when he saw the fireball separate into two parts in a burst of flames and sparkles.

"I don't know if it was as plane crash or a comet or a shooting star or what, but something came down out of the sky in a fireball," said the unidentified man in a call provided by the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office.

Just 18, 'FAA' taking flight at Wimbledon; Gauff wins again

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Dealing with jitters early in a match is nothing new to Felix Auger-Aliassime. Being among the favorites to win Wimbledon? Considering the Canadian is just 18 and never had won so much as one Grand Slam match until this week, well, yes, that's not the sort of thing he is used to.

One more victory, and the kid known to many by his initials, "FAA," could be taking on defending champion Novak Djokovic. Not that he's worrying about that just yet.

The first player born in the 2000s to win a men's match at a major, the 19th-seeded Auger-Aliassime progressed to the third round in his debut at the All England Club with a 6-3, 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 victory over French qualifier Corentin Moutet on Wednesday.

"I can recall being 10 years old and playing (for) the first time away from home and being very nervous. Since (I was) very young, you kind of learn how to deal with this pressure, with the stress," he said. "But at different stages of your career, you face different times. Now it's Grand Slams. Maybe one day I'll play finals of these events and I'll be, for sure, extremely nervous. I think it's emotions you can't go against. It comes — and then it all depends on how you deal with it. Today, I was able to deal with it in a good way."

Auger-Aliassime is hardly the only one contemplating the possibility that he could play for a major championship in the not-too-distant future. Much like Coco Gauff, the 15-year-old American who beat Venus Williams on Monday and won again Wednesday, Auger-Aliassime is fascinating folks because of his play, but also his age.

Tennis has been waiting for quite some time to discover a worthy successor to the Big Three of Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Djokovic, who have won the past 10 major titles and 53 of the last 64. So there is a bit of irrational exuberance whenever some youngster comes along with the sort of talent and poise Auger-Aliassime seems to possess in abundance.

As of Wednesday evening, British bookmakers were listing Auger-Aliassime at 25-1 odds to lift the Wimbledon trophy, behind only the top three seeds: No. 1 Djokovic, No. 2 Federer and No. 3 Nadal.

That's remarkable. The Montreal native only played one Grand Slam match, and lost it, until this tournament. He had never been ranked above 108th until this season.

But who else is there to rate right behind the game's dominant figures? It's just three days into the fortnight and the guys ranked Nos. 4-6 — Dominic Thiem, Alexander Zverev and Stefanos Tsitsipas, guys in their 20s all touted as up-and-comers — already are gone, as is three-time major champion Stan Wawrinka, who lost to 21-year-old Reilly Opelka of the U.S. in five sets.

"I understand that people want to see a new winner of a Grand Slam. They don't want to see three of us dominating the Slam titles. Eventually it's going to come," Djokovic said, then waited a comedic beat before adding with a smile: "in about 25 years."

Djokovic moved into the third round by dismissing Denis Kudla of the United States 6-3, 6-2, 6-2.

"There were some moments in the match," Djokovic said, "where maybe I could have done better."

Whatever you say, Novak.

He will face 22-year-old Hubert Hurkacz of Poland on Friday; Auger-Aliassime takes on 21-year-old Ugo Humbert of France.

"I know if I win, I could play Novak. But then there is a match to play. Once the match gets going, you're already in enough trouble in the court," Auger-Aliassime said, "you don't really think of what could happen."

He boasts a big serve that reached 131 mph on Wednesday and helped him save 12 of 14 break points.

His forehand can end a point when he needs it to. So can his backhand. And his returns were good enough to win the first point in 11 of Moutet's 18 service games.

After losing to him at a grass-court tuneup event last month, Tsitsipas called Auger-Aliassime "the most difficult opponent I've ever faced," agreed with the premise that he could go deep at Wimbledon this year and offered this prediction for down the road: "He can win Grand Slams, to be honest with you."

Auger-Aliassime is trying not to pay too much attention to that kind of talk, saying that he cares more about his own goals and self-belief than any outside views.

When a reporter asked about the idea that he might be looked upon to "carry the sport forward," Auger-Aliassime replied: "Carry the sport' is a bit much. Obviously, yeah, there's a bit of a pressure. I think it's quite funny, because I think for a lot of players, when they play their first Grand Slam, they have zero expectations. No one talks about them."

With him, that's not the case. Not at all.

Follow Howard Fendrich on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/HowardFendrich>

More AP tennis coverage: <https://www.apnews.com/apf-Tennis> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Acting Homeland Security boss decries 'vile' Facebook posts

By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Before the rise of social media, Border Patrol agents gathered in parking lots at the end of their shifts for what was known as "choir practice" — a chance to share what they saw that day and anything else on their minds.

T.J. Bonner, who led the National Border Patrol Council during much of his 32-year career as an agent, recalled the defunct tradition while trying to explain a secret Facebook group for agents that included sexually explicit posts about Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and questioned the authenticity of a recent photo of a father and daughter who drowned in the Rio Grande.

"That outlet faded away and was replaced by social media, where people thought they had a safe place they could vent and process," said Bonner, whose career ended in 2010 and who does not belong to the group. "That would explain some of the callous comments. The vile stuff? There's no excuse. I'm certainly not going to try to defend it."

Billed as "fun, serious and just work related," the group boasts about 9,500 members. "We are family, first and foremost," it states, according to ProPublica, which reported its existence on Monday, igniting fierce outcry.

A former agent who belongs to the group said Tuesday that members had to provide the administrator with their graduating class number from the Border Patrol Academy and have a current member vouch for their credentials. The agent, who retired last year in San Diego, spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because he feared a public backlash.

The agent likened the forum to a bar where agents would gather after work and swap stories. He said any agent active on Facebook would have likely received an invitation to join.

Some posts were graphic, doctored images of Ocasio-Cortez, including one that shows a smiling President Donald Trump forcing her head toward his crotch, according to screenshots obtained by ProPublica. Other comments refer to Ocasio-Cortez and fellow Democratic Rep. Veronica Escobar of Texas as "hoes," and one member encouraged agents to throw a "burrito at these bitches."

A news story about a 16-year-old Guatemalan migrant who died in Border Patrol custody in May elicited a response from one member, "If he dies, he dies." Another member posted a GIF of the "Sesame Street" character Elmo with the quote "Oh well."

The posts threaten to tarnish the Border Patrol's image at one of the most challenging times in its 95-year history. On Wednesday, Acting U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Kevin McAleenan called the posts "disturbing" and "inexcusable" in a tweet and reiterated that an investigation into the page was planned.

"Most importantly, the words of these few individuals directly undermine public trust in the Border Patrol and the dedication and compassion with which the rest of you undertake your duties each and every day," Provost wrote to staff.

George Allen, who retired in 2017 after a 31-year career, most recently as an assistant chief of the Border Patrol's Tucson, Arizona, sector, said he had heard of the group, which is named "I'm a 10-15," a reference to the agency's internal code for "aliens in custody." Although he was not a member, he belongs to another Facebook forum where the group has occasionally been mentioned.

"I've heard other agents talk about it," Allen said. "The ones that talk about it talk about it in a negative manner. Some of the posts really bash the older agents."

The political fallout revived criticism of the agency's culture, which was a subject of extensive news coverage after a string of migrant deaths in Barack Obama's presidency but faded from public view after Trump took office.

The National Border Patrol Council, an early supporter of Trump's presidential bid whose leader, Brandon Judd, advises the White House on immigration, said Monday that it "strongly condemns" the posts and that they do a "great disservice to all Border Patrol agents, the overwhelming majority of whom perform their duties honorably."

The union produces a radio show, "The Green Line," that mixes discussions about border security with shoptalk and freewheeling news commentary. The hosts alternate between workplace gripes like radios that don't work in remote areas and topics in the news. They have called the Black Lives Matter activists "domestic terrorists" and Mexico "a corrupt country."

Gil Kerlikowske, who was commissioner of parent agency U.S. Customs and Border Protection from 2014 to 2017, riled the union by recruiting Mark Morgan from the FBI to be the first outsider to run the Border Patrol. Morgan was ousted during Trump's first week in office but impressed Trump as a television commentator and was recently named acting commissioner of Customs and Border Protection, with union support this time.

"Changing culture is pretty difficult," Kerlikowske said. "You can change the behavior to some extent. You can punish, suspend people. You can terminate people."

Judge blocks Ohio abortion law, clinics to remain open

By **JULIE CARR SMYTH** and **KANTELE FRANKO** Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — A federal judge temporarily blocked an Ohio law banning abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected on Wednesday, siding with abortion clinics that had argued the law would effectively end the procedure in the state.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Michael Barrett halts the July 11 enforcement of the so-called heartbeat bill law that opponents argued would effectively ban the procedure. That's because a fetal heartbeat can be detected as early as six weeks into pregnancy, before many women know they're pregnant.

Ohio is among a dozen states that have considered similar legislation this year, as abortion opponents have pursued a national anti-abortion strategy to overturn the landmark Roe v. Wade decision fueled by a conservative swing on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Courts have already blocked substantially similar laws in Kentucky and Mississippi. Abortion providers also have sued in Alabama and Georgia.

However, Barrett said it is his opinion that Planned Parenthood and abortion clinics represented by the American Civil Liberties Union and other civil rights attorneys that sued to stop the law "are certain to succeed on the merits of their claim that (the bill) is unconstitutional on its face."

"The law is well-settled that women possess a fundamental constitutional right of access to abortions," he wrote.

Republican Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signed the Ohio law in April, after predecessor John Kasich, a fellow Republican, twice vetoed it.

His spokesman, Dan Tierney said: "Gov. DeWine has long believed that this issue would ultimately be

decided by the U.S. Supreme Court.”

Freda Levenson, legal director for the ACLU of Ohio, said in an emailed statement the decision “upheld the clear law: women in Ohio (and across the nation) have the constitutional right to make this deeply personal decision about their own bodies without interference from the state.”

Ohio Right to Life, the state’s oldest and largest anti-abortion group, called the judge’s decision disappointing but not surprising.

“The heartbeat bill has the potential to be the vehicle that overturns Roe v. Wade,” Mike Gonidakis, the group’s president, said in a statement. “We know that this temporary restraining order is just a step in the process to finally seeing Roe reconsidered.”

Abortion rights advocates praised the decision.

“With Gov. DeWine’s attack on abortion rights now blocked, the doctors, nurses, staff, and volunteers at nine facilities across the state can continue to assist patients in safely terminating a pregnancy,” NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio Deputy Director Jaime Miracle said in an emailed statement.

Ohio Democratic Chairman David Pepper noted that Barrett, who joined the court in 2006, was nominated by Republican President George W. Bush.

“Year after year, Ohio Republicans have continued to push plainly unconstitutional legislation, and now a federal judge — a Republican appointee — has blocked their latest attempt to ban abortion and punish doctors in the state. The Ohio GOP is wasting taxpayer resources, and they are putting Ohioans’ lives in danger with their attacks on reproductive health care.”

___ Follow Julie Carr Smyth at <https://twitter.com/jcarrsmyth>.

3-D printing recreates ancient sculpture destroyed by ISIS

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A figure of a roaring lion, about the size of a loaf of bread, is the latest step in the fight to preserve culture from conflict.

The sculpture is a replica of a colossal 3,000-year-old statue from the Temple of Ishtar in Nimrud, in what’s now Iraq. The stone statue was one of many artifacts from the Mosul Museum destroyed by the Islamic State group after it overran the city in 2014.

The replica Lion of Mosul, which can be viewed online, was modelled from crowd-sourced photos taken by Mosul Museum visitors in happier times and 3-D printed as part of Google’s digital arts and culture project.

It’s going on display at London’s Imperial War Museum in an exhibition that looks at how war devastates societies’ cultural fabric — and at the ingenious and often heroic steps taken to preserve it.

Chance Coughenour, digital archaeologist at Google Arts and Culture, said the exhibition “highlights the potential of technology — both in terms of digitally preserving culture and telling these amazing stories in engaging new ways.”

It also illustrates a grim truth: culture has long been a casualty of conflict. Museums, monuments and even music are often deliberately targeted by combatants.

“The destruction of culture is sort of an accepted sideline to war,” Imperial War Museum curator Paris Agar said Wednesday. “One of the main reasons for destroying culture is to send a message: We have victory over you. We have power over you. It’s because culture means so much to us; if we didn’t care it wouldn’t be a tool.”

The horror that rippled around the world in April at the sight of Paris’s Notre Dame cathedral in flames is proof of the powerful attachment we have to buildings and artworks.

The most shocking parts of the exhibition are the records made by the destroyers: meticulous Nazi lists of artworks they’d stolen; video of the Taliban blowing up Afghanistan’s 1,000-year-old Bamiyan Buddhas; footage of IS militants methodically sledgehammering statues in the Mosul museum.

The show covers a century of destruction, from the German army’s World War I destruction of the university and library of Louvain, Belgium to the shelling of the National and University Library in Sarajevo during the Bosnian war in 1992.

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The 1940 devastation of England's Coventry Cathedral by Germany's Luftwaffe is shown alongside the destruction of the Frauenkirche in Dresden by Allied bombing in 1945.

Both were later rebuilt, in very different ways: Coventry with a modern cathedral beside the ruins of the old, Dresden brick by brick from the original plans.

Images of destruction sit alongside stories of resistance and rescue. The show features the work of the World War II Monuments Men, who saved Nazi-looted artworks, and tells the story of Khaled al-Asaad, a scholar who devoted his life to studying Syria's ancient site of Palmyra and was murdered by IS in 2015.

Some militaries have made efforts to prevent looting and destruction. The British Army recently set up a Cultural Property Protection Unit — modern-day monuments men and women — and the exhibition includes a pack of "archaeology awareness playing cards" distributed to U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Internationally backed projects to train craftspeople and archaeologists in Syria and Iraq may help those countries recreate what has been lost. And the law has made small steps toward bringing cultural vandals to justice. In 2016, Islamic extremist Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi was convicted of destroying World Heritage cultural sites in Timbuktu, Mali — the first war-crimes conviction by the International Criminal Court for cultural destruction.

"It has always been part of warfare," Agar said. "All that has changed in recent years is the awareness and attempt to stop it."

The display is one of three linked exhibitions at the museum under the heading Culture Under Attack. The second looks at how British museums evacuated their treasures from London to keep them safe during World War II — and what they left behind. The third, Rebel Sounds, explores music as resistance, focusing on clandestine jazz fans in Nazi Germany, punks fighting for the right to party during Northern Ireland's violent "Troubles," a Belgrade radio station that championed free speech and Serbian techno in the war-torn 1990s, and musicians from Mali who defied an Islamist ban on music.

Culture Under Attack opens Friday and runs to January 5. Admission is free.

___ Follow Jill Lawless on Twitter at <http://Twitter.com/JillLawless>

Reports of unwanted sexual contact up at Coast Guard Academy

By JENNIFER McDERMOTT Associated Press

Almost half of female cadets at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy said they were sexually harassed, and about one in eight women reported experiencing unwanted sexual contact, according to a Pentagon survey released Wednesday.

The anonymous 2018 gender relations survey completed by cadets at the school in New London, Connecticut, shows that 45% of women and 17% of men said they experienced sexual harassment, up from 36% and 11%, respectively, in 2016.

And 12.4% of women said they experienced unwanted sexual contact, up from 8% in 2016.

The percentage of men saying they experienced unwanted sexual contact, including sexual assault, attempted sexual assault and unwanted sexual touching, was 3.6%, up from 1% in 2016.

The percentage of cadets experiencing unwanted sexual contact is the highest since the survey began a decade ago. Officials noted that the increases could at least partially reflect a greater willingness to report misconduct as a result of the Coast Guard's focus on the problem and new training programs.

The survey, conducted every two years, comes after an already tough year for the Coast Guard Academy. Lawmakers have criticized its handling of racial discrimination and harassment, and the college is the subject of a congressional investigation into harassment, bullying and discrimination against minority cadets.

All the U.S. military academies are "facing a sexual assault crisis, and we are asleep at the wheel," Rep. Jackie Speier, a California Democrat, said in June. She is trying to create a four-year pilot program for independent prosecutorial review of all sexual assault reports at the academies.

Most instances of unwanted sexual contact at the Coast Guard Academy involved cadets in the same class year, with 65% of women and 85% of men saying the alleged offender was a classmate, according to the survey. Most occurred in a dorm or living area at the academy. Seventy percent of women and 92% of men didn't report what happened to authorities, the survey said.

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About 1,100 cadets attend the academy, and 77% of them filled out the survey in March 2018. It asked about their academy experiences since June 2017.

The academy released the survey, which was conducted by the Defense Department's Office of People Analytics. The numbers are in line with data released this year from the other military academies.

That earlier survey found that among female students at the Army, Navy and Air Force academies, 15.8% said they experienced unwanted sexual contact in the past year, up from 12.2% in 2016, and that 2.4% of men experienced unwanted sexual contact, up from 1.7%. An estimated 50% of women and 16% of men experienced sexual harassment in the past year, similar to 2016.

The Coast Guard Academy survey showed that 30% of women who experienced unwanted sexual contact reported it, marking the first time the reporting rate among women climbed above 10%. Men had an 8% reporting rate. In past years, the reporting rate for men was so low it couldn't be counted.

The academy's sexual assault response coordinator, Shannon Norenberg, credited the growing rate to growth in the school's Cadets Against Sexual Assault club, which typically includes about 20% of the student population. Cadets who join are trained to receive reports of sexual assault and be a resource for their peers.

A 2018 campaign to educate cadets about what sexual harassment is may have contributed to the increase in sexual harassment reports, she added. Norenberg, however, said the numbers still concern her.

She talks to all incoming freshmen about how to report sexual assault. Last year, she began also talking to them about what sexual consent means and discussing healthy relationships with juniors.

"I think we're focusing our efforts in the right direction and in the right way," she said.

The head of the Coast Guard, Adm. Karl Schultz, told The Associated Press in March that unwanted sexual contact throughout the service is "unacceptable." Schultz said he had discussed the preliminary survey results with the academy's superintendent, which showed the same increases as the final report.

The Coast Guard, he said, is trying to create an "environment of intolerance" toward sexual misconduct, where no one is allowed to be a bystander.

"Am I concerned about the 12.4% increase? Absolutely. Because I want to drive sexual assault, unwanted sexual contact to zero in the Coast Guard," Schultz said. "Will we do that in my lifetime? I don't know, but we're going to continue to lean in from a leadership standpoint."

The report also showed that 28% of female cadets reported experiencing gender discrimination in 2018, up from 11% in 2016, while 6% of male cadets reported experiencing gender discrimination, up from 4% in 2016.

On a positive note, the vast majority of cadets reported intervening if they observed a potentially risky situation, and there were fewer cases of unwanted sexual contact involving alcohol than in 2016.

Most cadets, 62% of women and 76% of men, believe the academy's senior leadership make honest and reasonable efforts to stop unwanted sexual contact and sexual harassment, though those percentages are down from 80% and 86%, respectively, in the 2016 survey.

Rear Adm. William Kelly, the new academy superintendent, said officials are focused on providing the safest environment possible and will use the insight from the Office of People Analytics and the Coast Guard's sexual assault prevention experts to eradicate such behaviors and threats from campus.

___ Associated Press writer Lolita C. Baldor in Washington contributed to this report.

Putin meets pope, Italian leaders on one-day visit to Rome

ROME (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasized historically strong ties with Italy before starting a one-day visit Thursday to Rome that includes a meeting with Pope Francis.

Putin said in an interview published in Corriere della Sera that "we have a special relationship, tested by time, with Italy," and he welcomed the populist government's position that EU sanctions against Russia should be lifted.

The Russian president, on his first visit to Italy in four years, said in written responses to the Milan daily that Moscow didn't want to extend countermeasures against European Union sanctions to Italy, but that it couldn't react selectively within the World Trade Organization.

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Putin said that economic relations with Italy, Russia's fifth-largest trading partner, are expanding despite the sanctions, growing by 12.7% in 2018 to \$26.9 billion. Italian investments in Russia so far this year have reached \$4.7 billion, while Russian investments in Italy in the same period were \$2.7 billion.

Putin, who arrived in Rome in the late morning, opened the visit at the Vatican, where he is meeting Francis for the third time in what some observers believed could be a prelude to a papal visit to Russia. No pope has ever set foot in Russia, but Putin's foreign affairs adviser said the issue wasn't on the agenda for the visit.

The meeting comes the day before Catholic leaders from Ukraine gather at the Holy See to discuss the continuing conflict there and the fallout from the schism between the Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox Churches. The Vatican said the aim is to lend support "in the delicate situation in which Ukraine finds itself."

Last year, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine formally split from the Russian Orthodox Church in a schism recognized by the spiritual leader of the world's Orthodox Christians. The push for a full-fledged and independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church was bolstered by fighting in eastern Ukraine between government forces and Russia-backed rebels.

Putin later meets with Italian President Sergio Mattarella followed by a Russia-Italy forum with Premier Giuseppe Conte and Italian Foreign Minister Enzo Moavero. He will meet privately with a long-time friend, former Premier Silvio Berlusconi, before returning to Moscow.

Deputy Premier Matteo Salvini, who has made no secret of his admiration for Putin, will attend a dinner with Putin at Villa Madama. The two met face-to-face in Milan during Putin's visit in 2014, in Salvini's role as leader of the then-Northern League.

"The League and its leader Salvini are active supporters of a restoration of full cooperation between Russia and Italy. They have spoken for a quicker abolition of anti-Russia sanctions introduced by the U.S. and EU. Here our points of view are aligned," Putin said.

Putin has acknowledged that U.S. and EU sanctions have cost Russia an estimated \$50 billion since 2014, but he claims that the bloc's nations have suffered even greater damage because of the restrictions.

___ This story has corrected a quote by Putin to "full cooperation between Russia and Italy," not Russia and Moscow. A previous version of this story corrected the day to Thursday, not Friday, and the economic relations figure to dollars, not euros.

Japan export curbs take effect as SKorean officials protest

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Tightened Japanese controls on exports of key materials used to make semiconductors and displays took effect Thursday, as South Korean officials vowed to fight back.

The Japanese government ordered the more stringent approval process for shipments of photoresists and other key chemicals as relations with its neighbor and fellow U.S. ally deteriorated due to issues related to forced labor during World War II.

The president's office said South Korea's National Security Council met Thursday in Seoul, with members vowing to pursue diplomatic countermeasures.

It said the move is viewed as an "explicit breach of international law, including World Trade Organization regulations."

Japanese officials insist the decision to end preferential treatment for such exports to South Korea was required because of a lack of trust that poses a risk to national security.

Yoo Myung-hee, minister for trade at South Korea's Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy, said the revised rules not only hurt ties with Japan but also might disrupt global supply chains.

"Japan's move to impose stronger export restrictions based on an arbitrary claim of 'damaged trust' fully goes against the spirit of the (international arrangement) to control exports of strategic commodities," Yoo said in a meeting with trade and technology industry officials on Thursday.

She said the Japanese measures go against both WTO rules and an agreement called the Wassenaar Arrangement, a 42-country arms-control pact aimed at governing weapons trade and the dissemination

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of sensitive technologies that can be used both for civilian and military purposes.

Japan and South Korea both are members of the pact, which requires that export restrictions should not be directed against a specific country and also not impede "bona fide civil transactions," the ministry said.

The ministry earlier said the Seoul government plans to file a complaint with WTO over the Japanese measures.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry spokesman Kim In-chul on Thursday reiterated Seoul's demand for Tokyo to "immediately" withdraw the trade restrictions.

"The measure is an irrational economic retaliation and goes against common sense," Kim said. "It's very regrettable (that the measure went into effect)."

A Japanese government spokesman reiterated Tokyo's insistence that the tighter controls were needed on national security grounds, even though officials have not given any examples of specific problems.

"Export controls with South Korea have been challenging. Inaccurate and inappropriate cases have occurred, so stricter, tougher export controls are needed," Yasutoshi Nishimura, a deputy chief cabinet secretary said.

South Korean tech company LG Display said it's not affected by the Japanese trade restrictions. But officials from Samsung Electronics, the world's biggest maker of memory chips and smartphones that competes closely with LG for the top spot in displays, and SK Hynix, another major chipmaker, said the companies were assessing the potential impact to their businesses.

The export restrictions on fluorinated polyimides, which are used in organic light-emitting diode (OLED) screens for TVs and smartphones, and photoresist and hydrogen fluoride, which are used for making semiconductors, will not have a major impact on South Korean companies.

Analysts said Samsung and SK Hynix both have sufficient supplies of the materials for now, given the slowdown in demand for semiconductors. The trade curbs may give them a chance to reduce their chip inventories and negotiate better prices, said Kim Yang-jae, an analyst at South Korea's KTB Investment and Securities.

One concern is that Japan might expand the restrictions to include other key semiconductor materials, such as wafers and "blank masks," which are also predominantly produced in Japan, Park Yu-ak, an analyst from South Korea's Kiwoom Securities, said in a report Thursday.

Japanese companies account for more than 50 percent of the world supplies for wafers, which are used in both memory and non-memory chips. A supply disruption of blank masks, manufactured by Japanese companies such as Hoya Corp., would hurt the South Korean companies' plan to strengthen their non-memory production, Park said.

In January-May, 94% of South Korea's imports of fluorinated polyimide and 92% of its imports of photoresist were from Japan, according to a report by Moody's Investors Service, which cited data from the Korea Trade Association. Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix accounted for 73% of the global DRAM market and 40% of the global NAND market by revenue in the first quarter of 2019, according to market researcher DRAMeXchange.

AP Business Writer Elaine Kurtenbach in Tokyo contributed.

Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, July 4, the 185th day of 2019. There are 180 days left in the year. This is Independence Day.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 4, 1826, 50 years to the day after the Declaration of Independence was adopted, former presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died.

On this date:

In 1776, the Declaration of Independence was adopted by delegates to the Second Continental Congress

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in Philadelphia.

In 1802, the United States Military Academy officially opened at West Point, New York.

In 1817, ground was broken for the Erie Canal in Rome, New York. The middle section of the waterway took three years to complete; the entire canal was finished in 1825.

In 1831, the fifth president of the United States, James Monroe, died in New York City at age 73.

In 1872, the 30th president of the United States, Calvin Coolidge, was born in Plymouth, Vermont.

In 1910, in what was billed as "The Fight of the Century," black world heavyweight boxing champion Jack Johnson defeated white former champ James J. Jeffries in Reno, Nevada.

In 1939, Lou Gehrig of the New York Yankees delivered his famous farewell speech in which he called himself "the luckiest man on the face of the earth."

In 1982, the space shuttle Columbia concluded its fourth and final test flight with a smooth landing at Edwards Air Force Base in California. Heavy metal rocker Ozzy Osbourne married his manager, Sharon Arden, in Maui, Hawaii.

In 1987, Klaus Barbie, the former Gestapo chief known as the "Butcher of Lyon", was convicted by a French court of crimes against humanity and sentenced to life in prison (he died in September 1991).

In 1997, NASA's Pathfinder spacecraft landed on Mars, inaugurating a new era in the search for life on the red planet. CBS newsman Charles Kuralt died in New York at age 62.

In 2013, Egypt's interim president, Adly Mansour, was sworn in following the ouster of Mohammed Morsi, the Islamist leader overthrown by the military after just one year in office.

In 2017, the United States confirmed that North Korea had launched an intercontinental ballistic missile, as the North had boasted and the U.S. and South Korea had feared. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson called it a "new escalation of the threat" to the U.S.

Ten years ago: Former Tennessee Titans quarterback Steve McNair was fatally shot in a Nashville condo by his mistress, Sahel Kazemi, who then killed herself. North Korea launched seven ballistic missiles into waters off its east coast. The Statue of Liberty's crown was reopened to tourists for the first time since September 11, 2001. Serena Williams beat her big sister, Venus, 7-6 (3), 6-2 for her third Wimbledon title and 11th Grand Slam championship.

Five years ago: Germany summoned the U.S. ambassador in Berlin after the arrest of a man reported to have spied for the United States, heightening friction between the two countries over alleged U.S. eavesdropping in Germany. Richard Mellon Scaife, 82, the billionaire heir to the Mellon banking and oil fortunes and a newspaper publisher who funded libertarian and conservative causes and various projects aimed at discrediting President Bill Clinton, died in Pittsburgh.

One year ago: British police said two Britons who fell critically ill in the town of Amesbury were exposed to nerve agent Novichok, the same material used to poison a former Russian spy in a nearby area months earlier. A protest against U.S. immigration policy forced the evacuation of the Statue of Liberty on the Fourth of July, with a group unfurling a banner from the pedestal and a woman holding police at bay for hours after she climbed the base.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Eva Marie Saint is 95. Actress Gina Lollobrigida is 92. Country singer Ray Pillow is 82. Singer Bill Withers is 81. Actor Ed Bernard is 80. Actress Karolyn Grimes is 79. Rhythm and blues singer Annette Beard (Martha and the Vandellas) is 76. Broadcast journalist Geraldo Rivera is 76. Vietnam War veteran and peace activist Ron Kovic is 73. Rhythm and blues musician Ralph Johnson (Earth, Wind and Fire) is 68. Rock musician Domingo Ortiz (Widespread Panic) is 67. Singer John Waite is 67. Rock musician Kirk Pengilly (INXS) is 61. Country musician Teddy Carr is 59. Rock DJ Zonka is 57. International Tennis Hall of Famer Pam Shriver is 57. Rock musician Matt Malley is 56. Christian rock singer Michael Sweet is 56. Actor-playwright-screenwriter Tracy Letts is 54. Actor Al Madrigal is 48. Actress Jenica Bergere is 45. Actor-singer John Lloyd Young is 44. Singer Stephen "Ste" McNally (BBMak) is 41. Actress Becki Newton is 41. Actor Mo'Nique is 37. TV personality Mike "The Situation" Sorrentino is 37. Rhythm and blues singer Melanie Fiona is 36. Malia Obama is 21.

Thought for Today: "All progress has resulted from people who took unpopular positions." — Adlai E. Stevenson, American diplomat and politician (1900-1965).