

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

### 26 - Thursday

10 a.m.: Boys Golf at Sisseton  
4 p.m.: Boys Soccer at James Valley Christian  
6 p.m.: Volleyball at Roncalli (7th/C matches at 5 p.m., 8th/JV matches at 6 p.m.; varsity to follow around 7:15 p.m.)

**Breakfast:** Breakfast Pizza

**Lunch:** Corn Dog, Tater Tots

**Senior Menu:** Baked pork chop, sweet potato, lettuce salad with dressing, Ambrosia fruit salad, whole wheat bread.

### **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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It's Volleyball Action on [GDILIVE.COM](http://GDILIVE.COM)



**Roncalli  
Cavaliers** VS



**Groton Area Tigers**

Thursday, Sept. 26, 2019  
7:15 p.m. at Aberdeen Roncalli

It's **JV** Volleyball Action on [GDILIVE.COM](http://GDILIVE.COM)



**Roncalli  
Cavaliers** VS

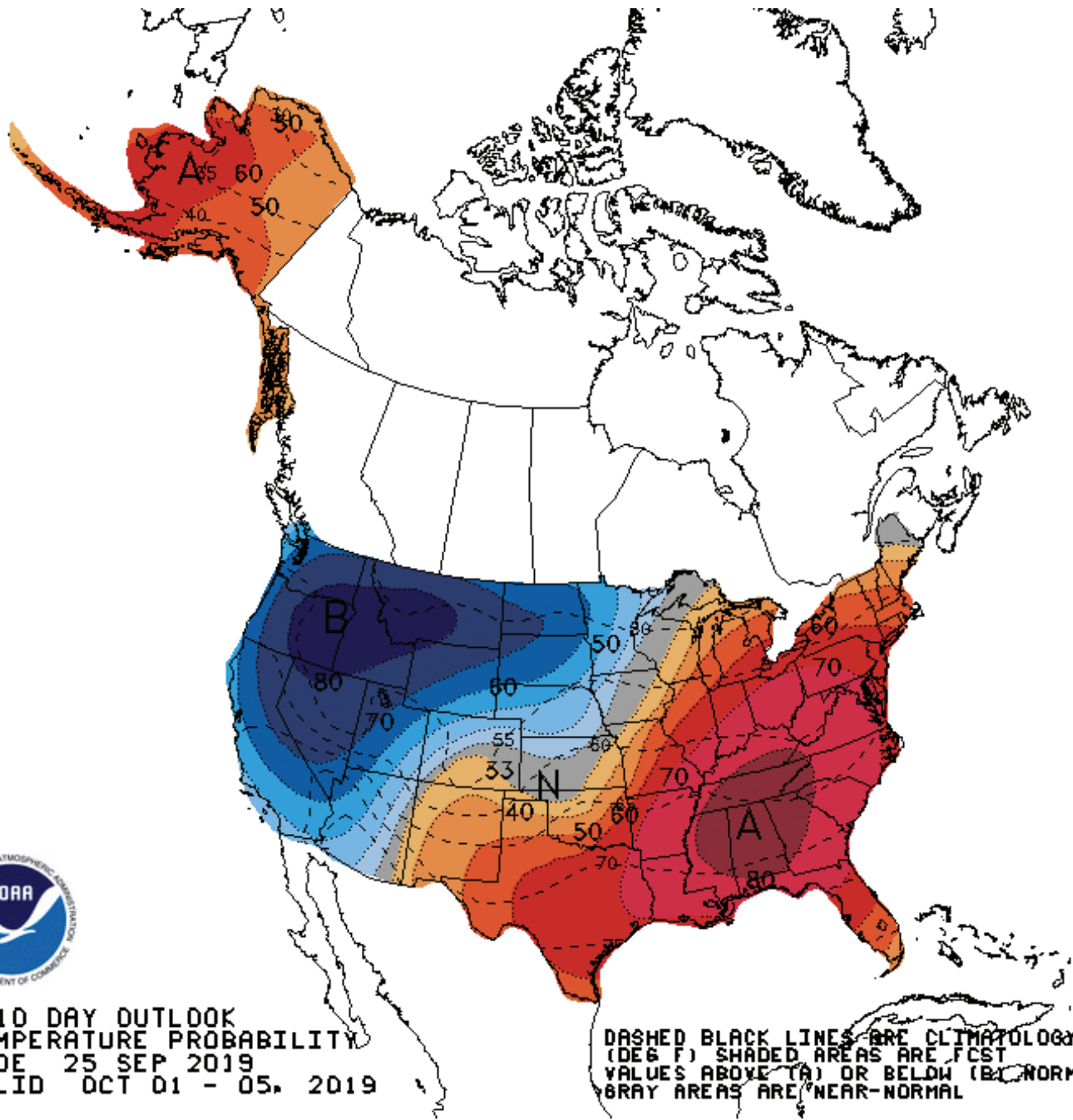


**Groton Area Tigers**

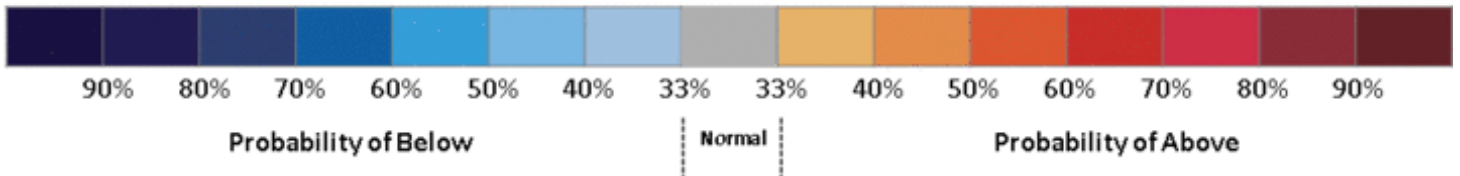
Thursday, Sept. 26, 2019  
6:00 p.m. at Aberdeen Roncalli

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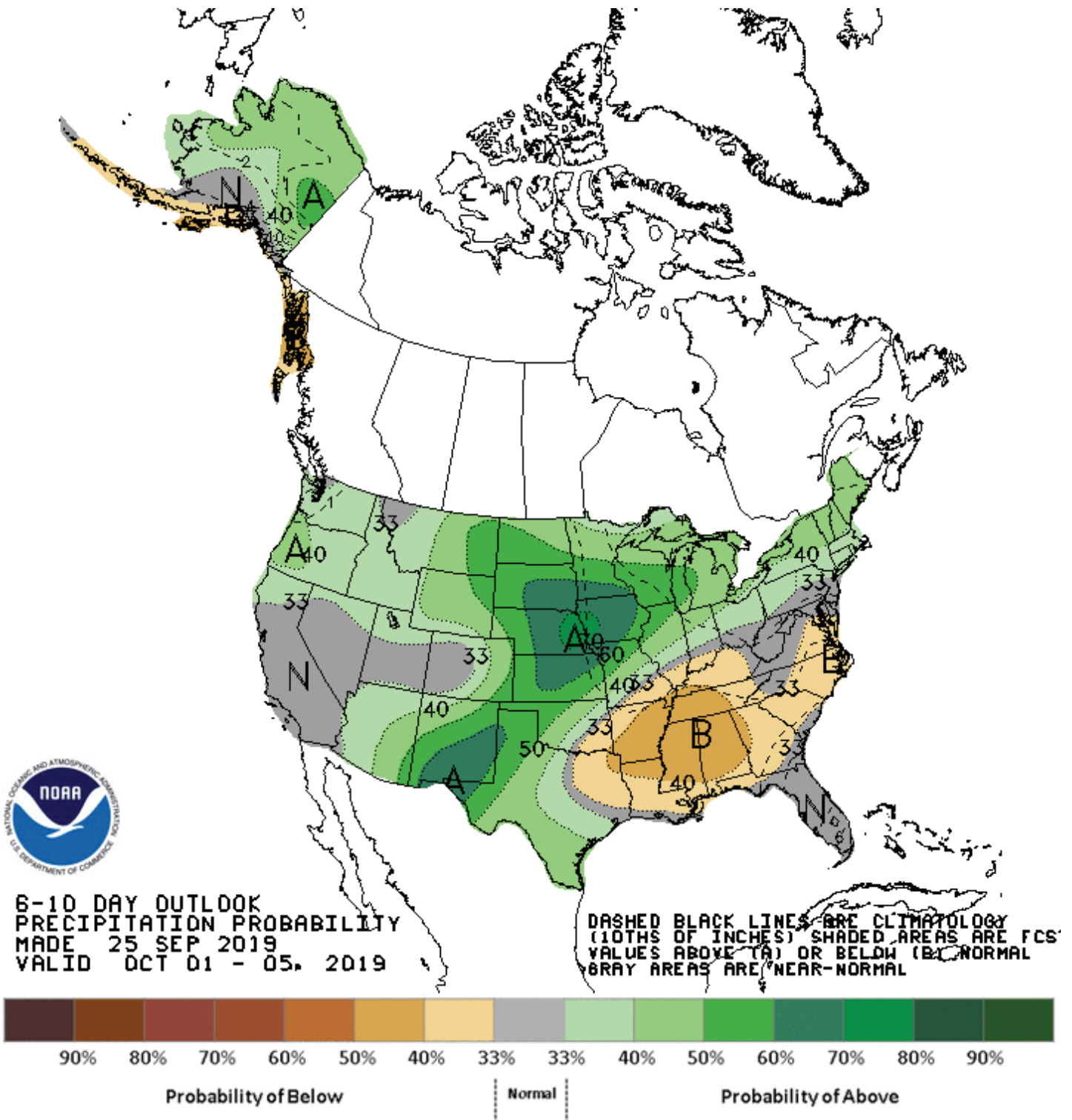


6-10 DAY OUTLOOK  
TEMPERATURE PROBABILITY  
MADE 25 SEP 2019  
VALID OCT 01 - 05, 2019



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## Thune Statement on Trade Deal With Japan

"Any day that we can create more opportunities for U.S. companies to reach new or expanded markets around the world is a good day, and I can say with confidence that today is a good day."

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.), a longtime member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, today issued the following statement after President Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced a limited trade agreement between the two countries. The agreement will result in lower tariffs on U.S. agricultural products and streamline rules with respect to digital trade between the United States and Japan. Thune has been a strong advocate of a bilateral trade agreement with Japan ever since the United States announced it would withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a multilateral trade deal that would have included Japan.

"Amid what seems like a tidal wave of obstacles this year, this is exactly the kind of news farm country has been waiting for, and I expect this deal, once approved by Japan, will have a direct and positive effect on the U.S. agriculture industry," said Thune. "In addition to helping beef and pork producers, this agreement will boost America's dairy, ethanol, and wheat industries. Any day that we can create more opportunities for U.S. companies to reach new or expanded markets around the world is a good day, and I can say with confidence that today is a good day. I look forward to more deals that will open new markets around the world."



## Pierpont Firemen Recognized

**The Pierpont Volunteer Fire Department recently recognized three individuals with their years of service to the department. Tim Ronshaugen has put in 45 years, John Severson has put in 40 years and Phil Ronshaugen has put in 45 years.** (Photo from Pierpont

SD Facebook page)

Granary Rural Cultural Center

# LIVING HISTORY FALL FESTIVAL



*The Past Comes Alive!*

**Saturday**  
**Sept. 28, 2019**  
**11 am - 5 pm**

**FREE ADMISSION**

at the **GRANARY**

Physical Address: 40161 128th St - Groton, SD

**FEATURED MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT:**

*Eliza Blue*

**SHOWS at**  
**12 pm & 3 pm**

**SOUTH DAKOTA FOLK MUSICIAN**  
Singer, Songwriter & Multi-Instrumentalist  
As Seen on South Dakota Public Broadcasting

**Special Guest: John Timm**  
**as Governor Mellette**

*Chautauqua: South Dakota's 1st Governor*  
**Speech at 2 pm - Putney Hall Stage**  
*Courtesy of the SD Humanities Council*



**FREE Festival Trolley**

FREE Rides Between Aberdeen's Dacotah Prairie Museum & The Granary Rural Cultural Center (30 Min. Duration One Way)  
First Trolleys Leave Museum at: 10:20 & 10:35 am  
Service Between Museum & Granary Continues During  
Festival Hours Approximately Every 1/2 Hour

Trolley Courtesy of Dacotah Prairie Museum Foundation  
See Museum Website for Details.



*Celebrate History... Step Back in Time*

**OPENING CEREMONY at the Flag Poles 11 a.m.**

Historical Demonstrations & Re-enacting • Food • Gift Shop

Kid's Spelling Bee 1:30 p.m. • Pioneer Life • Kid's Activities

Aberdeen Area Humane Society Dogs Meet & Greet

One Room School • Art/Quilt Exhibits • Pumpkins • Trading Post

John Graves Fiddle Music 11:30 am & 4 pm • And Much More!

**Festival Closing Ceremony, Flags & Salute 5 p.m.**

**COME DRESSED IN FRONTIER COSTUME - GET A PRIZE AT THE GATE**



This Festival is a Program of Dacotah Prairie Museum & The Granary

Museum: [www.dacotahpraiiemuseum.com](http://www.dacotahpraiiemuseum.com) ♦ Granary: [granaryfinearts.org](http://granaryfinearts.org)

The GRANARY is 5 mi. N of US Hwy 12 - Between Aberdeen & Groton - Driving Directions on Website



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Today



Mostly Sunny  
then Mostly  
Cloudy and  
Breezy

**High: 72 °F**

Tonight



Chance  
Showers

**Low: 50 °F**

Friday



Partly Sunny

**High: 61 °F**

Friday  
Night



Mostly Clear

**Low: 39 °F**

Saturday



Partly Sunny  
then Chance  
Showers

**High: 58 °F**

NWS ABERDEEN

## Warm and Breezy Then Cooler

<b>TODAY</b> Mostly sunny/breezy. Warmest over Missouri River valley <b>HIGHS: 67-78°</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b> Partly cloudy & cooler. Breezy northwest winds. <b>HIGHS: 58-63°</b>
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NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION  
Aberdeen, SD 9/26/2019 4:07 AM

WEATHER.GOV/ABR

Published on: 09/26/2019 at 12:10AM

Southerly breezes will bring warmer temperatures today. As low pressure moves through tonight, a few showers will be possible. Cooler temps are in store Friday behind the low.

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## Today in Weather History

September 26, 1965: A hard freeze hit most of Minnesota in the early morning causing the loss of millions of bushels of corn and soybeans. Temperatures fell below 20 degrees in the northern part of the state.

September 26, 1981: A tornado touched down in the early morning hours several times east of Vermillion. Two barns received extensive damage.

1898: A school teacher saved 32 children from death in Merritton, Ontario, when she spotted an approaching tornado and led her students to a safe corner. Unfortunately, falling debris killed one of the children and injured several others.

1936: A forest fire burned several miles east of the town of Brandon, Oregon. The fire was far enough away that residents were not particularly worried. A sudden shift in the winds drove the flames westward and through town. The fire, caused by summer drought and fueled by the abundant Gorse Weed found in many of the empty spaces between buildings in Brandon, caused so much destruction that only a handful of structures were left standing when the fire finally died down.

1936: The heaviest snowfall ever recorded in September and the heaviest snowfall ever recorded so early in the season dumped a total of 16.5 inches of snow on downtown Denver and 21.3 inches at Denver Municipal Airport. The 15.0 inches of snow measured from 6:00 PM on the 27th to 6:00 PM on the 28th is the greatest 24-hour snowfall ever recorded in September. This was the first snow of the season. The snow was intermittent on the 26th, but continuous from early afternoon on the 27th to around midnight on the 28th, except for a period of rain during the afternoon of the 28th.

1955: On this date, the Atlantic reconnaissance aircraft, "Snowcloud Five" went down while investigating Hurricane Janet and was never heard from again. Lt. Comdr. Windham with a crew of 8 and two newspapermen reported that they were about to begin penetrating the central core of the hurricane. Hurricane Janet made landfall at peak intensity near Chetumal, Mexico on September 29th. Janet's landfall as a Category 5 hurricane on the Yucatán Peninsula was the first recorded instance that a storm of such intensity in the Atlantic made landfall on a continental mainland; prior to Janet, landfalls of Category 5 intensity were only known to have taken place on islands.

1971: Project Stormfury was an attempt to weaken tropical cyclones by flying aircraft into them and seeding with silver iodide. The project was run by the United States Government from 1962 to 1983. Hurricane Ginger in 1971 was the last hurricane Project Stormfury seeded.

1998: There were four hurricanes were spinning simultaneously in the Atlantic basin: Georges, Ivan, Jeanne, and Karl. That was the first time this had happened since 1893.



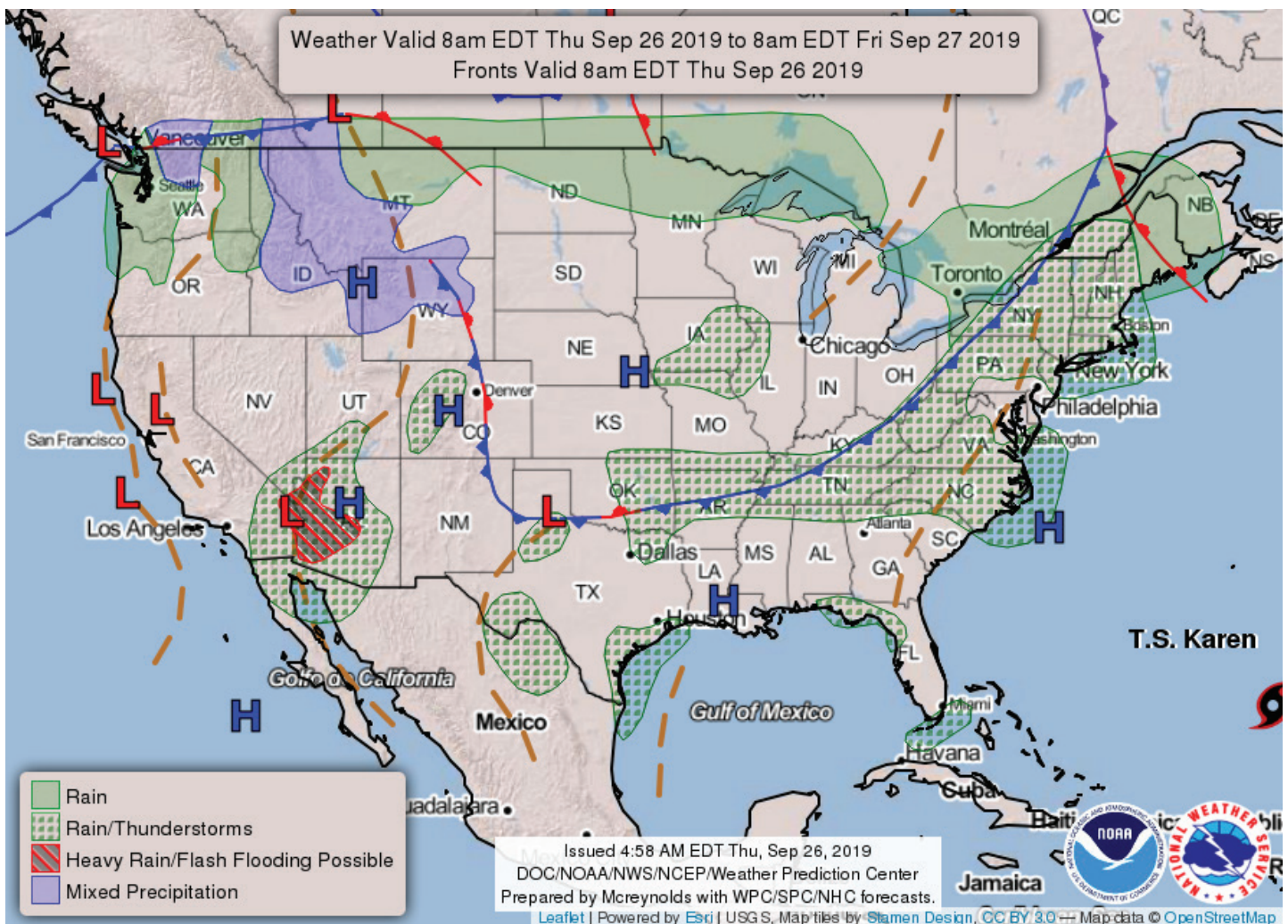
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp: 66 °F at 4:55 PM**  
**Low Temp: 46 °F at 7:23 AM**  
**Wind: 27 mph at 12:56 PM**  
**Day Rain: 0.00**

**Record High: 97° in 1974**  
**Record Low: 17° in 1939**  
**Average High: 67°F**  
**Average Low: 41°F**  
**Average Precip in Sept.: 1.83**  
**Precip to date in Sept.: 5.18**  
**Average Precip to date: 18.12**  
**Precip Year to Date: 24.90**  
**Sunset Tonight: 7:24 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:27 a.m.**



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## WHERE AM I GOING?

A well-respected theologian was leaving London for a lecture series in another city. As he sat looking out the window, the conductor asked for his ticket.

Searching frantically through his pockets, he discovered that he had lost it.

Wanting to be helpful, the conductor said, "It's alright. Don't worry."

"No, it's not alright," said the theologian. "I don't know where I'm going."

Many have the same problem. They start on life's journey not knowing where they are going or where or when it will end. In fact, a dear friend once said to me, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there." He realized I was without a plan.

Not David. He knew where to find directions. In Psalm 25 he said, "Show me the path I should walk, O Lord, point out the right road for me to follow."

With all of his knowledge and wisdom, success and power, David still waited on the Lord for direction. He constantly looked to God for guidance no matter where he was or what he was doing. How wise!

If it was important for David to do this, how much more so for us. When he realized that he needed God's guidance, he would discovered it by meditating on His Word, going to Him in prayer and listening for His voice. Instead of demanding answers, he waited for His directions.

Prayer: We pray, Father, that we will patiently look to You to lead us, guide us, and guard us in paths of righteousness for Your sake and our success! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Psalm 25:1-5 Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths.

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## 2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 09/07/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/08/2019 Sunflower Classic at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/12/2019 St. John's Lutheran Luncheon
- 09/20/2019 Presbyterian Luncheon
- 09/28/2019 Granary Living History Fall Festival
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 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

- 01/26/2020 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 04/04/2020 Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt, 10 a.m. Sharp (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 05/02/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/8-10/2020 St. John's VBS
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)  
Groton Hosting State B American Legion Baseball Tournament
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/14/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)

## News from the Associated Press

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

03-11-21-30-32

(three, eleven, twenty-one, thirty, thirty-two)

Estimated jackpot: \$150,000

Lotto America

10-24-40-42-49, Star Ball: 9, ASB: 3

(ten, twenty-four, forty, forty-two, forty-nine; Star Ball: nine; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$3.05 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$40 million

Powerball

37-43-44-45-53, Powerball: 25, Power Play: 3

(thirty-seven, forty-three, forty-four, forty-five, fifty-three; Powerball: twenty-five; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$40 million

### Kansas man sentenced for dealing meth at Standing Rock

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Kansas man has been sentenced to nearly 11 years in federal prison for dealing massive amounts of methamphetamine on the Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation in South Dakota and North Dakota.

Forty-five-year-old Steven McMullen Jr. pleaded guilty in June to conspiracy to distribute meth. Authorities say he delivered or had plans to deliver at least 500 grams of the drug on the reservation.

U.S. District Judge Charles Kornmann on Monday sentenced McMullen, of Wichita, Kansas, to 130 months in prison, to be followed by five months of supervised release.

The case was investigated by various law enforcement agencies in the Dakotas.

### Bookkeeper ordered to pay back nearly \$200,000 to boys ranch

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A federal judge say a South Dakota woman accused of embezzlement must serve prison time and pay back nearly \$200,000 to a facility for troubled youth where she worked as a bookkeeper.

Forty-two-year-old Crystal Nelson, an accountant for the McCrossan Boys Ranch in Sioux Falls, pleaded guilty in June to wire fraud. Court documents accuse her of inflating her own payroll checks, using the ranch's credit card for personal expenses and stealing money from client fund accounts.

Investigators say the thefts began in December 2013 and continued through September 2018.

U.S. District Judge Lawrence Piersol on Monday ordered Nelson, of Brandon Valley, to serve 12 months and one day in prison, to be followed by three years of supervised release.

### Army Corps delays plan to charge for US reservoir water

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The Trump administration has delayed an Obama-era proposal that could allow the federal government to charge for water drawn from reservoirs it manages.

Army Assistant Secretary for Civil Works R.D. James says in a memo Monday that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will delay the Water Supply Rule "for a minimum of six months to better integrate input from

stakeholders.”

Attorneys general from a dozen western states sent a letter last month to the Trump administration asking that the proposal be withdrawn.

North Dakota Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem headed the effort backed by attorneys general from Idaho, Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

Stenehjem says the rule usurps states’ authority over their own water.

## State declines tribal request for National Guard flood aid

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — The Yankton Sioux Tribe won’t be getting National Guard assistance to bolster flood relief efforts at rain-swollen Lake Andes, at least for now.

The South Dakota Department of Public Safety said Tuesday that it recommended declining the request because the tribe has other options available. However, the state said it is willing to provide other aid in the meantime.

Flooding has cut off Highway 18/50/281 east of Lake Andes, the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan reported Wednesday. The road has been mostly closed since March. The state Department of Transportation responded by raising the highway several feet. The road re-opened for about two weeks, only to close again following more flooding two weeks ago.

Tribal leaders told KSFY-TV that the two rounds of flooding have taken taking a toll on members, cutting off a housing unit from the town and straining tribal resources.

“We have a little too much of that water, and it’s creating distress,” Tribal Chairman Robert Flying Hawk told the station. “The moisture is creating mold in the homes and affecting our breathing.”

Flying Hawk wrote to Gov. Kristi Noem last week asking for National Guard assistance, however DPS Cabinet Secretary Craig Price replied to Flying Hawk in a letter Monday, saying National Guard help didn’t appear necessary in this case.

“Your letter notes you are requesting any and all assistance from the South Dakota National Guard; however, your letter has not identified a specific task for the Guard to perform,” Price wrote. “Governor Noem has reiterated many times that she would use the National Guard judiciously and only as a last resort.”

Noem visited Lake Andes to inspect flooding last July. She also included the county in a federal disaster declaration that covers the Yankton Sioux Tribe.

Prospects don’t look good for quickly re-opening the flooded highway, according to Craig Smith, a regional engineer with the transportation department.

“The highway was closed due to the heavy rain events a couple weeks ago and remains closed. At this time, DOT will monitor the water levels to assess when the roadway can be re-opened to traffic,” Smith said. “Once the water recedes, we will assess if any damage occurred and make repairs as needed.”

According to one local, the water this week stood two feet above the raised highway and about six feet above the original highway.

Transportation department staffers met Friday with tribal and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officials to discuss building a berm. Price said in his letter that the Corps provided instructions and technical advice. He said they presume the tribe wants the National Guard to construct the berm, but that the tribe should tap other resources, since tribal officials indicated they had access to Bureau of Indian Affairs materials and tribally owned construction equipment.

But Tribal Vice Chairman Jason Cook told KSFY that tribal members don’t necessarily have the expertise to carry out the work.

## Ex-French President Chirac, who stood up to US, dies at 86

By ELAINE GANLEY Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Jacques Chirac, a two-term French president who was the first leader to acknowledge France's role in the Holocaust and defiantly opposed the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, died Thursday at age 86.

His son-in-law Frederic Salat-Baroux told The Associated Press that Chirac died "peacefully, among his loved ones." He did not give a cause of death, though Chirac had had repeated health problems since leaving office in 2007.

Chirac was long the standard-bearer of France's conservative right, and mayor of Paris for nearly two decades. He was nicknamed "Le Bulldozer" early in his career for his determination and ambition. As president from 1995-2007 he was a consummate global diplomat but failed to reform the economy or defuse tensions between police and minority youths that exploded into riots across France in 2005.

Yet Chirac showed courage and statesmanship during his presidency.

In what may have been his finest hour, France's last leader with memories of World War II crushed the myth of his nation's innocence in the persecution of Jews and their deportation during the Holocaust when he acknowledged France's part.

"Yes, the criminal folly of the occupiers was seconded by the French, by the French state," he said on July 16, 1995. "France, the land of the Enlightenment and human rights ... delivered those it protects to their executioners."

With words less grand, the man who embraced European unity — once calling it an "art" — raged at the French ahead of their "no" vote in a 2005 referendum on the European constitution meant to fortify the EU. "If you want to shoot yourself in the foot, do it, but after don't complain," he said. "It's stupid, I'm telling you." He was personally and politically humiliated by the defeat.

His popularity didn't fully recover until after he left office in 2007, handing power to protege-turned-rival Nicolas Sarkozy.

Chirac ultimately became one of the French's favorite political figures, often praised for his down-to-earth human touch rather than his political achievements.

In his 40 years in public life, Chirac was derided by critics as opportunistic and impulsive. But as president, he embodied the fierce independence so treasured in France: He championed the United Nations and multipolarism as a counterweight to U.S. global dominance, and defended agricultural subsidies over protests by the European Union.

Chirac was also remembered for another trait valued by the French: style.

Tall, dapper and charming, Chirac was a well-bred bon vivant who openly enjoyed the trappings of power: luxury trips abroad and life in a government-owned palace. His slicked-back hair and ski-slope nose were favorites of political cartoonists.

Yet he retained a common touch that worked wonders on the campaign trail, exuding warmth when kissing babies and enthusiasm when farmers — a key constituency — displayed their tractors. His preferences were for western movies and beer — and "tete de veau," calf's head.

After two failed attempts, Chirac won the presidency in 1995, ending 14 years of Socialist rule. But his government quickly fell out of favor and parliamentary elections in 1997 forced him to share power with Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin.

The pendulum swung the other way during Chirac's re-election bid in 2002, when far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen took a surprise second place behind Chirac in first-round voting. In a rare show of unity, the moderate right and the left united behind Chirac, and he crushed le Pen with 82 percent of the vote in the runoff.

"By thwarting extremism, the French have just confirmed, reaffirmed with force, their attachment to a democratic tradition, liberty and engagement in Europe," Chirac enthused at his second inauguration.

Later that year, an extreme right militant shot at Chirac — and missed — during a Bastille Day parade in 2002. Inspecting troops, the president was unaware of the drama.

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While he had won a convincing mandate for his anti-crime, pro-Europe agenda at home, Chirac's outspoken opposition to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 rocked relations with France's top ally, and the clash weakened the Atlantic alliance.

Angry Americans poured Bordeaux wine into the gutter and restaurants renamed French fries "freedom fries" in retaliation.

The United States invaded anyway, yet Chirac gained international support from other war critics.

Troubles over Iraq aside, Chirac was often seen as the consummate diplomat. He cultivated ties with leaders across the Middle East and Africa. He was the first head of state to meet with U.S. President George W. Bush after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Chirac was greeted by adulating crowds on a 2003 trip to Algeria, where he once battled Algerians fighting for independence from France.

At home, myriad scandals dogged Chirac, including allegations of misuse of funds and kickbacks during his time as Paris mayor.

He was formally charged in 2007 after he left office as president, losing immunity from prosecution. In 2011, he was found guilty of misuse of public money, breach of trust and illegal conflict of interest and given a two-year suspended jail sentence.

He did not attend the trial. His lawyers explained he was suffering severe memory lapses, possibly related to a stroke. While still president in 2005, Chirac suffered a stroke that put him in the hospital for a week. He had a pacemaker inserted in 2008.

Jacques Chirac was born in Paris on Nov. 29, 1932, the only child of a well-to-do businessman. A lively youth, he was expelled from school for shooting paper wads at a teacher. He sold the Communist daily "L'Humanite" on the streets for a brief time.

Chirac traveled to the United States as a young man, and as president he fondly remembered hitchhiking across the country. He worked as a fork-lift operator in St. Louis and a soda jerk at a Howard Johnson's restaurant while attending summer school at Harvard University.

Chirac served in Algeria during the independence war, which France lost, and enrolled at France's Ecole Nationale d'Administration, the elite training ground for the French political class.

In 1956, just before heading to Algeria, Chirac married Bernadette Chodron de Courcel, the niece of a former de Gaulle aide and herself involved in local politics in the central farming region of Correze, where Chirac spent much of his youth. They had two daughters, Laurence and Claude, who became his presidential spokeswoman.

He worked his way up the political ladder and was named premier in 1974 by President Valery Giscard d'Estaing at the age of 41.

A personality clash with Giscard d'Estaing led Chirac to resign, but he quickly assumed the presidency of the conservative political party he refounded as the Rally for the Republic. He became mayor of Paris in 1977 and used the highly visible office as a power base for the next 18 years.

Chirac lost the 1981 presidential election to Socialist Francois Mitterrand, a scenario repeated in 1988. He became president at last in 1995.

Two painful setbacks in his career involved student protests: In 1986, a student was killed during protests over university reforms while Chirac was prime minister, prompting him to abandon the measure. In 2006, Chirac withdrew a measure that would have made hiring and firing young people easier after weeks of nationwide student action. He failed repeatedly in efforts to reform France's labor rules and economy.

In recent years, Chirac was very rarely seen in public. He was visibly weak and walked with a cane at a November 2014 award ceremony of his foundation, which supports peace projects.

Chirac is survived by his wife and younger daughter, Claude. His daughter, Laurence, died in 2016 after a long illness that Chirac once said was "the drama of my life."

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Associated Press writer Angela Charlton contributed to this report.

## 10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

### 1. ACTING INTEL BOSS TO SPEAK

Joseph Maguire is set to testify to Congress about a whistleblower complaint involving Trump. House Democrats who have seen the complaint call it "deeply disturbing."

### 2. DEMOCRATS DEFY IMPEACHMENT RISKS

Democrats are plunging headfirst into an investigation that could jeopardize their House majority, but an emerging consensus is that the risks are worth it.

### 3. UK LEADER FACES BACKLASH OVER CONFRONTATIONAL TONE

Lawmakers are furious with Boris Johnson over his use of confrontational language in Parliament about opponents of his Brexit plan.

### 4. AFTER UN VISIT, IRAN FACES DIMINISHING CHOICES

Iran's forceful defiance since its 1979 revolution has hampered it on the global stage in the face of crippling economic sanctions.

### 5. MARIJUANA VAPES TAKE HIT FROM HEALTH SCARE

Unsolved health illnesses are harming the high-flying market, which is looking to reassure customers as the number of those sickened grows.

### 6. AS ATTACK DRONES MULTIPLY, ISRAELI FIRMS DEVELOP DEFENSES

A host of Israeli companies develop defense systems they say can detect or destroy incoming drones. But obstacles remain, particularly when operating in crowded urban airspaces.

### 7. GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR WIDENS

The Census Bureau reports that the gap between the haves and have-nots in the U.S. grew last year to its highest level in more than 50 years.

### 8. 'OK' HAND GESTURE, 'BOWLCUT' ADDED TO HATE SYMBOLS DATABASE

A Jewish civil rights group adds dozens of new entries to its online database of hateful symbols, slogans and memes that white supremacists have adopted and spread.

### 9. WALMART'S SAM'S CLUB LAUNCHES HEALTH CARE PILOT

The retail giant is teaming up with several health care companies to offer discounts on everyday care its customers might delay or skip because of the cost.

### 10. 'WHAT BEER NORTH KOREANS DRINK AND WHAT COOKIES THEY EAT'

In South Korea, a handful of young North Korean refugees launch YouTube channels to offer a rare glimpse into everyday life in their isolated country.

## Acting intel boss to speak; Dems call complaint 'disturbing'

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Acting Director of National Intelligence Joseph Maguire is set to speak publicly for the first time about a secret whistleblower complaint involving President Donald Trump as House Democrats who have read the document say it is "deeply disturbing."

House Democrats who are now mulling Trump's impeachment are hoping that Maguire will explain why he withheld the intelligence community whistleblower's complaint from Congress for weeks. Maguire will then go behind closed doors to speak to the Senate intelligence panel.

There were signs that the document, now at the center of a firestorm about Trump's handling of Ukraine, could be made public as soon as Thursday. Shortly before midnight on Wednesday, Utah Rep. Chris Stewart, a GOP member of the House intelligence committee, tweeted: "BREAKING NEWS: The whistleblower complaint has been declassified. I encourage you all to read it."

He did not say when it might be released, and a spokesman for the panel did not return a request for comment. New York Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, a member of Democratic leadership, said Wednesday evening



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that he expects the complaint would be made public "sooner rather than later."

The document was made available to members of House and Senate intelligence committees Wednesday after Maguire had initially determined they couldn't see it. The complaint is at least in part related to a July phone call between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy in which Trump prodded Zelenskiy to investigate Democratic political rival Joe Biden. The White House released a rough transcript of that call Wednesday morning.

House Democrats emerging from a secure room would not divulge details of the classified document but described it as disturbing and urgent. House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., said it "exposed serious wrongdoing" and "certainly provides information for the committee to follow up with others."

California Rep. Eric Swalwell told CNN that the whistleblower "laid out a lot of other documents and witnesses who were subjects in this matter."

The complaint showed the whistleblower learned details of the call from White House officials, according to one person familiar with the complaint who was granted anonymity to discuss it.

Another such person said the lawmakers did not learn the identity of the whistleblower.

A Democratic member of the panel, Illinois Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, said the whistleblower "lays out the situation very logically" and "is both acknowledging the things that he or she knows and doesn't know, which is a hallmark of a credible document."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi — who on Tuesday fully endorsed an impeachment investigation in light of the Ukraine revelations — and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer also viewed the complaint. Schumer said he is even "more worried" now than he was before reading it and "there are huge numbers of facts crying out for investigation."

Most Republicans were quiet or defended the president as they left the secure rooms. But at least one Republican said he was concerned by what he had read.

"Republicans ought not to be rushing to circle the wagons and say 'there's no there there' when there's obviously a lot that's very troubling there," said Nebraska Sen. Ben Sasse, a GOP member of the Senate intelligence panel who has been an occasional critic of Trump.

He added that "Democrats ought not be using words like 'impeach' before they knew anything about the actual substance."

Trump, whose administration had earlier balked at turning over the complaint, said Wednesday afternoon that "I fully support transparency on the so-called whistleblower information" and that he had communicated that position to House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.

The rough transcript released by the White House on Wednesday showed that Trump prodded Zelenskiy to work with the U.S. attorney general and Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani to investigate Biden.

Zelenskiy said his comments in the conversation with Trump shouldn't have been publicly released, and he played down Ukraine's investigation of Biden, a former vice president who's now a 2020 presidential candidate.

Lawmakers said they needed to see the complaint, not just the memo about the call, as they investigate the Republican president and whether his actions were inappropriate. Pelosi on Tuesday said that if Trump abused his presidential powers, it would mark a "betrayal of his oath of office."

The unidentified whistleblower first submitted a complaint to Michael Atkinson, the U.S. government's intelligence inspector general, in August. Maguire then blocked release of the complaint to Congress, citing issues of presidential privilege and saying the complaint did not deal with an "urgent concern." Atkinson disagreed but said his hands were tied.

Atkinson, who met privately with House lawmakers last week, will talk behind closed doors to the Senate intelligence panel Thursday.

The House and Senate committees have also invited the whistleblower to testify, but it is uncertain whether the person will appear and whether his or her identity could be adequately protected without Maguire's blessing. Schiff said Wednesday morning that Maguire still had not provided any instructions on how that could happen.

The whistleblower is prepared to speak privately before the Senate and House intelligence committees

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but the person's lawyers want to first ensure that they have the appropriate security clearances so that they can be present for any meeting, according to correspondence reviewed by The Associated Press.

"Legal representation is imperative in these matters," Andrew Bakaj wrote in a letter Wednesday to Maguire.

A separate letter to Maguire from House Intelligence Committee Chairman Rep. Adam Schiff makes a similar request for "appropriate security clearances" for the lawyers.

Associated Press writers Eric Tucker, Michael Balsamo, Lisa Mascaro, Laurie Kellman and Alan Fram contributed to this report.

## 'OK' hand gesture, 'Bowlcut' added to hate symbols database

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

COLLEGE PARK, Md. (AP) — The "OK" hand gesture, a mass killer's bowl-style haircut and an anthropomorphic moon wearing sunglasses are among 36 new entries in a Jewish civil rights group's online database of hate symbols used by white supremacists and other far-right extremists.

The Anti-Defamation League has added the symbols to its online "Hate on Display" database, which already includes burning crosses, Ku Klux Klan robes, the swastika and many other of the most notorious and overt symbols of racism and anti-Semitism.

The New York City-based group launched the database in 2000 to help law enforcement officers, school officials and others recognize signs of extremist activity. It has grown to include nearly 200 entries.

"Even as extremists continue to use symbols that may be years or decades old, they regularly create new symbols, memes and slogans to express their hateful sentiments," Anti-Defamation League CEO Jonathan Greenblatt said in a statement.

Some of the new entries started as trolling campaigns or hateful memes on internet message boards such as 4chan, 8chan and Reddit, before migrating to Facebook, Twitter and other mainstream platforms, and to public forums and fliers.

The ADL has updated its database to include the "OK" hand symbol, which became fodder for a 4chan trolling campaign to dupe viewers into thinking the fingers formed the letters "W" and "P" to mean "white power." But the ADL says extremists also are using it as a sincere expression of white supremacy.

Brenton Tarrant, the Australian man charged with killing 51 people at mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, in March, flashed the "OK" symbol during a courtroom appearance after his arrest. Tarrant also had the number 14 written on his rifle, a possible reference to the "14 Words," a white supremacist slogan, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Oren Segal, director of the ADL's Center on Extremism, said context is key to interpreting whether an "OK" symbol is hateful or harmless. He said the ADL had been reluctant to add it to the database "because 'OK' has meant just 'OK' for so long."

"At this point, there is enough of a volume of use for hateful purposes that we felt it was important to add," Segal said.

An earlier addition to the database was Pepe the Frog, a cartoon character that became hijacked by online extremists who superimposed the frog with Nazi symbols and other hateful imagery. The ADL branded Pepe as a hate symbol in September 2016 and supported cartoonist Matt Furie's efforts to reclaim the character he created.

The "Happy Merchant," one of the new database entries, is an anti-Semitic meme that depicts a stereotypical image of a bearded Jewish man rubbing his hands together. Another addition, the "Moon Man" meme, is derived from "Mac Tonight," a character in a McDonald's advertising campaign during the 1980s. Internet trolls transformed the sunglasses-wearing cartoon moon into a vehicle for rap songs with racist and violent lyrics.

The ADL also added the "Dylann Roof Bowlcut," an image of the hairstyle worn by the white supremacist who shot and killed nine black people in 2015 at a church in Charleston, South Carolina.

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Roof's bowl-style hair became an avatar for extremists, including a Washington, D.C., man whose relatives contacted the FBI to report concerns about his behavior and far-right extremist rhetoric after last year's Pittsburgh synagogue massacre. Jeffrey Clark's username on the Gab social media platform was "DC Bowl Gang," an FBI agent wrote in a court filing for gun charges against Clark.

Logos of white nationalist groups including the Rise Above Movement and the American Identity Movement also are among the new ADL database entries.

The recently formed American Identity Movement is the successor to the now-dissolved Identity Evropa, which frequently plastered its white nationalist propaganda on college campuses and is one of the groups that has been sued over the violence that erupted at a white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017.

Four members of the California-based Rise Above Movement pleaded guilty this year to attacking counterprotesters at the Charlottesville rally. A federal judge sentenced three of them to prison terms ranging from 27 months to 37 months.

Follow Michael Kunzelman on Twitter at: <https://twitter.com/Kunzelman75>.

## UK leader Johnson faces backlash over confrontational tone

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson faced a backlash from furious lawmakers on Thursday over his use of charged and confrontational language in Parliament about opponents of his Brexit plan, as the Speaker of the House of Commons warned that the country's political culture had turned "toxic."

In a raucous and bad-tempered debate on Wednesday, Johnson characterized an opposition law ordering a Brexit delay as a "surrender act" and a "humiliation bill," said delaying Brexit would "betray" voters and brushed off concerns that his language might endanger legislators as "humbug."

Johnson took power two months ago with a "do or die" promise that Britain will leave the European Union on the scheduled date of Oct. 31, with or without a divorce deal. He's pitting himself against lawmakers determined to avoid a no-deal exit, which economists say would disrupt trade with the EU and plunge the U.K. into recession.

Opponents accuse him of fomenting extremism with his people-versus-politicians rhetoric.

Some in Parliament warned Johnson to be more cautious given the 2016 killing of legislator Jo Cox. The Labour lawmaker was murdered a week before Britain's European Union membership referendum by a far-right attacker shouting "death to traitors."

Labour lawmaker Paula Sherriff brought up the death of Cox — and the death threats many legislators still face — and implored the prime minister to stop using "pejorative" language.

There was uproar in the Commons after Johnson replied: "I've never heard such humbug in all my life."

Cabinet minister Nicky Morgan tweeted that "we all need to remind ourselves of the effect of everything we say on those watching us."

Johnson was criticized by members of several parties and by Cox's widower. Brendan Cox said he felt "a bit sick" at the way her name was being used.

"The best way to honor Jo is for all of us (no matter our views) to stand up for what we believe in, passionately and with determination. But never to demonize the other side and always hold onto what we have in common," he tweeted.

Wednesday's fiery session of Parliament came a day after Britain's Supreme Court unanimously ruled that Johnson's attempt to suspend Parliament for five weeks until Oct. 14 had the effect of stymieing its scrutiny of the government over Brexit. The court declared the suspension void.

Emotions spilled over as opposition legislators demanded Johnson apologize and resign for breaking the law. But Johnson ignored calls to step down or say sorry, showing no sign of contrition and redoubling his attacks on lawmakers he accused of blocking Brexit.

As lawmakers returned Thursday, Commons Speaker John Bercow urged moderation.

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"There was an atmosphere in the chamber worse than any I've known in my 22 years in the House," Bercow said. "The culture was toxic."

Bercow implored members of Parliament to "treat each other as opponents, not as enemies."

Johnson says he wants to strike an agreement with the bloc, but the EU says it is still waiting for useful proposals to come from Britain to unblock stalled negotiations.

EU Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier said Thursday that he is "still ready to work on any new legal and operational proposal" from Johnson, but indicated insufficient progress had been achieved in the past few weeks.

"We are still waiting," he said.

The EU already had a deal with the U.K. on departure terms, but it was rejected in the British parliament. Johnson now wants to drastically renegotiate the agreement or leave without a deal on Oct. 31.

Raf Casert in Brussels, and Gregory Katz in London, contributed to this report.

Follow AP's full coverage of Brexit and British politics at: <https://www.apnews.com/Brexit>

## Washington plunges into Trump impeachment investigation

By **LISA MASCARO, MARY CLARE JALONICK and JULIE PACE** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump pressed the leader of Ukraine to "look into" Joe Biden, Trump's potential 2020 reelection rival, as well as the president's lingering grievances from the 2016 election, according to a rough transcript of a summer phone call that is now at the center of Democrats' impeachment probe.

Trump repeatedly prodded Volodymyr Zelenskyy, new president of the East European nation, to work with U.S. Attorney General William Barr and Rudy Giuliani, Trump's personal lawyer. At one point in the July conversation, Trump said, "I would like for you to do us a favor."

The president's request for such help from a foreign leader set the parameters for the major U.S. debate to come — just the fourth impeachment investigation of an American president in the nation's history. The initial response highlighted the deep divide between the two parties: Democrats said the call amounted to a "shakedown" of a foreign leader, while Trump - backed by the vast majority of Republicans - dismissed it as a "nothing call."

The call is one part of a whistleblower complaint about the president's activities that have roiled Washington and led Democrats to move ahead with an impeachment inquiry of the Republican president on the cusp of the 2020 campaign.

After being stymied by the administration, members of the House and Senate intelligence committees took their first look at the complaint late Wednesday. Republicans kept largely quiet, but several Democrats, including Intelligence committee chairman Adam Schiff, called the classified account "disturbing."

Some from both parties want it to be made public. Congress is also seeking an in-person interview with the whistleblower, who remains anonymous.

Trump spent Wednesday meeting with world leaders at the United Nations, a remarkable TV split screen even for the turbulence of the Trump era. Included on his schedule: a meeting with Zelenskyy.

In a light-hearted appearance before reporters, Zelenskyy said he didn't want to get involved in American elections, but added, "Nobody pushed me." Trump chimed in, "In other words, no pressure."

The next steps in the impeachment inquiry were quickly developing a day after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi launched the probe. A rush of lawmakers, notably moderate Democrats from districts where Trump remains popular, set aside political concerns and urged action.

One option Pelosi is considering, pressed by some lawmakers, is to focus the impeachment inquiry specifically on the Ukraine issues rather than the many others Congress has already been investigating.

"For me, that's what's important," said Rep. Elissa Slotkin, D-Mich., among the new lawmakers in Con-

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gress with national security backgrounds. She said it's "just an egregious idea that the president of the United States can contact a foreign leader and influence him for dirt on a political opponent. ... That can't be normalized."

Pelosi announced the impeachment probe Tuesday after months of personal resistance to a process she has warned would be divisive for the country and risky for her party. But after viewing the transcript on Wednesday, Pelosi declared: "Congress must act."

Trump, who thrives on combat, has all but dared Democrats to move toward impeachment, confident that the specter of an investigation led by the opposition party will bolster rather than diminish his political support.

"It's a joke. Impeachment, for that?" Trump said during a news conference in New York. He revived the same language he has used for months to deride the now-finished special counsel investigation into election interference, declaring impeachment "a hoax" and the "single greatest witch hunt in American history."

Republicans largely stood by the president and dismissed the notion that the rough transcript revealed any wrongdoing by Trump.

"I think it was a perfectly appropriate phone call, it was a congratulatory phone call," said Rep. Liz Cheney, the No. 3 House Republican. "The Democrats continually make these huge claims and allegations about President Trump, and then you find out there's no there there."

The Trump administration also continued to raise questions about the whistleblower's motives. According to a Justice Department official, the intelligence community's inspector general said in letter to the acting director of national intelligence that the whistleblower could have "arguable political bias."

The memo released by the White House was not a verbatim transcript, but was instead based on the records of officials who listened to the call. The conversation took place on July 25, one day after special counsel Robert Mueller testified on Capitol Hill about his investigation into Russia's 2016 election interference.

In the 30-minute phone call with Zelenskiy, Trump encourages the Ukrainian leader to talk with Giuliani and Barr about Biden and his son Hunter, who served on the board of a Ukrainian gas company. Immediately after saying they would be in touch, Trump references Ukraine's economy, saying: "Your economy is going to get better and better I predict. You have a lot of assets. It's a great country."

At another point in the conversation, Trump asked Zelenskiy for a favor: his help looking into a cybersecurity firm that investigated the 2016 hack of the Democratic National Committee and determined it was carried out by Russia. Trump has falsely suggested CrowdStrike was owned by a Ukrainian.

In the days before the call, Trump ordered advisers to freeze \$400 million in military aid for Ukraine — prompting speculation that he was holding out the money as leverage for information on the Bidens. Trump has denied that charge and the aid package does not come up in the conversation with Zelenskiy.

Trump has sought to implicate Biden and his son in the kind of corruption that has long plagued Ukraine. Hunter Biden served on the gas company's board at the same time his father was leading the Obama administration's diplomatic dealings with Kyiv. Though the timing raised concerns among anti-corruption advocates, there has been no evidence of wrongdoing by either the former vice president or his son.

Biden said it was "tragedy" that Trump was willing to "put personal politics above his sacred oath." He singled out Trump's attempts to pull Barr and the Justice Department into efforts to investigate Biden, calling it "a direct attack on the core independence of that department, an independence essential to the rule of law."

While the possibility of impeachment has hung over Trump for many months, the likelihood of a probe had faded after special counsel Robert Mueller's Trump-Russia investigation ended without a clear directive for lawmakers.

Since then, the House committees have revisited aspects of the Mueller probe while also launching new inquiries into Trump's businesses and various administration scandals that all seemed likely to drag on for months.

Details of Trump's dealings with Ukraine prompted Democrats to quickly shift course. By the time Pelosi announced the probe, two-thirds of House Democrats had announced moving toward impeachment probes.

The burden will probably now shift to Democrats to make the case to a scandal-weary public. In a highly

polarized Congress, an impeachment inquiry could simply showcase how clearly two sides can disagree when shown the same evidence rather than approach consensus.

Associated Press writers Michael Balsamo, Laurie Kellman, Andrew Taylor, Eric Tucker and Zeke Miller in Washington and Jonathan Lemire and Deb Riechmann in New York contributed to this report.

## High-flying marijuana vapes take hit from health scare

By GILLIAN FLACCUS and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Vaping products, one of the fastest-growing segments of the legal marijuana industry, have taken a hit from consumers as public health experts scramble to determine what's causing a mysterious and sometimes fatal lung disease among people who use e-cigarettes.

The ailment has sickened at least 530 people and killed nine. Some vaped nicotine, but many reported using oil containing THC, marijuana's high-inducing ingredient, and said they bought products from pop-up shops and other illegal sellers. The only death linked to THC vapes bought at legal shops occurred in Oregon.

Amid the health scare, the amount of the legal pot industry's revenue that comes from vape products has dropped by 15% nationwide, with some states, including Oregon, seeing decreases of more than 60%.

Health officials in California, home to the world's largest legal marijuana marketplace, this week issued an advisory urging people to stop all forms of vaping until a cause is determined. Massachusetts, which like California allows so-called recreational use of marijuana by people 21 and older, went further than any other state, issuing a four-month ban on vape sales.

Vaping THC is popular for those who want a quick high but don't want the smoke that comes from lighting up a joint. Marijuana companies are trying to boost the public's confidence by promoting that their vaping products are tested by the government, demanding ingredient lists from their vendors and in some cases pulling items from shelves. Some also are scrambling to get liability insurance.

Still, many have seen notable declines in sales in the few weeks since the health scare emerged on a national scale.

"It's having an impact on how consumers are behaving," said David Alport, owner of Bridge City Collective in Portland, which in two weeks saw a 31% drop in sales of vape cartridges that hold the oil that vaporizes when heated. "People are concerned, and we're concerned."

In the United States' booming legal cannabis market, vaping products have exploded in popularity. In roughly two years, they have grown from a small fraction of overall sales to about one-third, with \$9.6 billion in sales between 2017 and 2019, according to New Frontier Data, an economic analysis firm that tracks the industry. About one-fifth of U.S. cannabis consumers report using them.

New Frontier found a 15% decline in the market share for vape sales nationwide during the first week of September and saw no rebound in data collected through Sept. 18. At the state level, New Mexico, Massachusetts, Nevada and Montana all saw drops of one-third or more, while California fell by 6%.

Oregon, which announced its death at the beginning of the month and said it was from a vape purchased at a regulated dispensary, saw one of the biggest drops in market share for vape revenue — 62%, said John Kagia, the firm's chief knowledge officer.

Analysts are watching to see if further erosion occurs following congressional testimony Tuesday by Dr. Anne Schuchat, principal deputy director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, who said the number of lung illnesses could soon climb by the hundreds.

"This is a very, very fast-moving issue, and it will likely be a couple more weeks, if not months, before we understand the impact it's really had on the retail ecosystem and on consumers' attitudes," Kagia said.

In an explosively growing market, "it's not unexpected that something would come up that would be disruptive," he said. "But the question is, how quick is the industry's response and how agile is that response to assure the public and regulators that this issue is being addressed and there's robust self-governance?"

Doctors have said the illnesses resemble an inhalation injury, with the lungs apparently reacting to a

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caustic substance. So far, no single vaping product or ingredient has been linked to the illnesses. Some patients who have vaped only nicotine also have gotten ill.

Health officials in New York are focusing on vitamin E acetate, a viscous solution that's sometimes added to marijuana oils. Retailers in some markets are pulling products from their shelves that contain that and other additives. Other companies have proactively released public statements saying their vape oils contain only pure THC.

In Illinois, a message board for medical marijuana patients banned posters from sharing home vape recipes.

"I just do THC. No flavor additives. I won't even take that chance," said Lisa Haywood, a medical marijuana card holder who lives outside Chicago and follows the board for advice and support.

Other medical marijuana users are worried about restrictions on vaping.

If there's a ban, "what does it do for all these people who have been seeing relief? ... It is going to really impact patients and the industry that we've fought" to create, said Melanie Rose Rodgers, a Colorado medical cannabis patient and a leader of the state's chapter of Americans for Safe Access, which advocates for medical marijuana patients.

State regulators track the cannabis sold to consumers but don't monitor what additives, if any, are in marijuana oil vapes. That's led states to begin discussions of how to tighten restrictions on vaping products even as retailers themselves try to determine which of the products on their shelves contain so-called cutting agents.

"We haven't evolved our system that far to think about what we would test for in those products. A lot of these additives were conceptual at the time when the (marijuana legalization) law passed and the program came into place," said Steve Marks, executive director of the Oregon Liquor License Commission, which oversees the state's cannabis industry.

"Figuring that out is part of the evolution that we have to do as a consumer protection agency," he said. "Science is not going to guide us because science is lagging."

Hilary Bricken, a Los Angeles-based attorney whose firm specializes in cannabis business law and regulatory issues, said the legal marijuana industry is moving so fast that many states are "literally making this up as they go," and the vaping scare has stripped away the sense of security that consumers get from buying from a licensed dispensary.

The vaping crisis will undoubtedly hasten tighter regulation at the state level and force the industry to patrol itself better to avoid crippling lawsuits, she said.

Bobby Burlison, an analyst with Toronto-based investment and financial services company Canaccord Genuity, said the initial problems for the vape segment of the cannabis industry should moderate, and the health scare may in the end help the legal marijuana industry.

The crisis "should ultimately accelerate the shift away from the black market for cannabis products in the U.S.," he said.

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Flaccus and Peltz, who reported from New York City, are members of AP's marijuana beat team. Follow the AP's complete marijuana coverage: <https://apnews.com/Marijuana> .

## **Analysis: After UN visit, Iran faces diminishing choices**

**By AYA BATRAWY Associated Press**

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Iran has long prided itself on its forceful defiance of the United States and Israel, a resistance that has defined the Shiite-led Islamic Republic for the 40 years since its revolution.

But the limits of Iran's ability to go it alone were on display at the United Nations this week as it engaged in a flurry of diplomatic outreach amid increasingly crippling isolation by U.S. sanctions that are eating into its economy and its ability to sell its oil.

For months, the European nations that signed Iran's nuclear accord have been trying — unsuccessfully — to find ways around U.S. sanctions that were imposed after President Donald Trump pulled the U.S.

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out of the agreement last year. Trump argues the deal, completed under the Obama administration, fell far short of the curbs needed to block Tehran's regional ambitions.

Addressing world leaders Wednesday, Rouhani's message pointed a clear way toward easing tensions and resuming negotiations: "Stop the sanctions."

But before getting to that, he opened his speech by paying homage "to all the freedom-seekers of the world who do not bow to oppression and aggression." He also slammed "U.S.- and Zionist-imposed plans" against the Palestinians. Such language characterizes Iran's self-styled championing of Islamic causes worldwide.

Away from the podium this week, Iran has been engaging in nothing short of a public relations blitz with America's biggest news outlets. Rouhani met with leaders of media organizations including The Associated Press and granted an interview to Fox News, where Trump and his Iran policies enjoy vehement support.

The Tehran government's fraught history with the U.S. has essentially locked it out of the global financial system, making it difficult to find partners, allies and countries willing or even able to do business with it.

Rouhani accused the U.S. of engaging in "merciless economic terrorism" against his country, saying America had resorted to "international piracy by misusing the international banking system" to pressure Iran.

As Iran's nuclear deal with world powers unravels under the weight of Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign, previously unimaginable alliances are emerging between Gulf Arab states and Israel, united by what they see as a common threat.

Across the Middle East, Iran's reach is consequential in Syria, Iraq and Yemen, where proxy wars have taken on a sectarian tone that pits Iran-supported Shiites against Saudi-backed Sunnis.

On the battlefields, Tehran's rivals see it as a menacing and destabilizing force that has exploited failed uprisings, military interventions and chaos to expand its foothold in Arab states.

Iran counters that it was the U.S. that invaded Iraq and Saudi Arabia that invaded Yemen. In his U.N. speech, Rouhani pointed to Iran's role in fighting Sunni Muslim extremist groups like the Islamic State and al-Qaida. He described Iran as a "pioneer of freedom-seeking movements in the region."

Iran's elite paramilitary force has led that charge, cementing Tehran's footprint far beyond the country's borders.

The Revolutionary Guard Corps, created after Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution in parallel to the country's armed forces, is effectively a corps of soldiers charged with preserving and advancing the principles of the uprising that created modern Iran.

It answers only to the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and its power is not just theoretical but very real: The force directly oversees the country's ballistic missile program.

It is the Guard Corps that has become a major sticking point in Iran's relations, or lack thereof, with the United States under Donald Trump.

The Trump administration, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Israel say Iran used money from sanctions relief under the nuclear accord to increase the Revolutionary Guard's budget.

Those nations say any new negotiations must include discussion about the Guard's activities in the region and its missile program, and support for that notion seems to be gaining traction.

This week, Britain, France and Germany joined the U.S. and other allies in blaming Iran for an attack on Saudi oil sites earlier this month. The implication: That because missiles were involved in those attacks, so was the Guard.

Speaking at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York this week, a top Saudi diplomat described Iran as being "obsessed with trying to restore the Persian Empire and trying to take over the region."

"Their constitution calls for the export of the revolution," Adel al-Jubeir said. "They believe that every Shiite belongs to them. They don't respect the sovereignty of nations."

"Iran," he said, "has to decide: Are you a revolution or are you a nation-state?"

As Rouhani departs a city that is effectively enemy territory and goes back home this week, he and Tehran's clerical leadership must decide which of those paths to take: Will they merely confront, as the 1979 revolution did? Or, as nation-states do, will they sit down and talk as well?



Aya Batrawy covers the Persian Gulf for The Associated Press and has reported from the Middle East for the past 15 years.

Follow Aya Batrawy on twitter at <https://twitter.com/ayaelb>

## Census: Inequality grew, including in heartland states

By **MIKE SCHNEIDER** Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — The gap between the haves and have-nots in the United States grew last year to its highest level in more than 50 years of tracking income inequality, according to Census Bureau figures.

Income inequality in the United States expanded from 2017 to 2018, with several heartland states among the leaders of the increase, even though several wealthy coastal states still had the most inequality overall, according to figures released Thursday by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The nation's Gini Index, which measures income inequality, has been rising steadily over the past five decades.

The Gini Index grew from 0.482 in 2017 to 0.485 last year, according to the bureau's 1-year American Community Survey data. The Gini Index is on a scale of 0 to 1; a score of "0" indicates perfect equality, while a score of "1" indicates perfect inequality, where one household has all the income.

The increase in income inequality comes as two Democratic presidential candidates, U.S. Sens. Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, are pitching a "wealth tax" on the nation's richest citizens as a way to reduce wealth disparities.

The inequality expansion last year took place at the same time median household income nationwide increased to almost \$62,000 last year, the highest ever measured by the American Community Survey. But the 0.8% income increase from 2017 to 2018 was much smaller compared to increases in the previous three years, according to the bureau.

Even though household income increased, it was distributed unevenly, with the wealthiest helped out possibly by a tax cut passed by Congress in 2017, said Hector Sandoval, an economist at the University of Florida.

"In 2018 the unemployment rate was already low, and the labor market was getting tight, resulting in higher wages. This can explain the increase in the median household income," Sandoval said. "However, the increase in the Gini index shows that the distribution became more unequal. That is, top income earners got even larger increases in their income, and one of the reasons for that might well be the tax cut."

A big factor in the increase in inequality has to do with two large population groups on either end of the economic spectrum, according to Sean Snaith, an economist at the University of Central Florida.

On one side, at the peak of their earnings, are baby boomers who are nearing retirement, if they haven't already retired. On the other side are millennials and Gen Z-ers, who are in the early stages of their work life and have lower salaries, Snaith said.

"I would say probably the biggest factor is demographics," he said. "A wealth tax isn't going to fix demographics."

The area's with the most income inequality last year were coastal places with large amounts of wealth — the District of Columbia, New York and Connecticut, as well as areas with great poverty — Puerto Rico and Louisiana.

Utah, Alaska, Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota had the most economic equality.

Three of the states with biggest gains in inequality from 2017 to 2018 were places with large pockets of wealth — California, Texas and Virginia. But the other six states were primarily in the heartland — Alabama, Arkansas, Kansas, Nebraska, New Hampshire and New Mexico.

A variety of factors were at play, from a slowdown in agricultural trade and manufacturing to wages that haven't caught up with other forms of income, economists say.

While some states have raised the minimum wage, other states like Kansas haven't. At the same time,

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the sustained economic growth from the recession a decade ago has enriched people who own stocks, property and other assets, and have sources of income other than wages, said Donna Ginther, an economist at the University of Kansas.

"We've had a period of sustained economic growth, and there are winners and losers. The winners tend to be at the top," Ginther said. "Even though we are at full employment, wages really haven't gone up much in the recovery."

Follow Mike Schneider on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MikeSchneiderAP>

## Trump 'has got to be stopped': Dems defy impeachment risks

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Democrats are embracing an impeachment investigation that could jeopardize their House majority and alienate the very suburban voters who have warmed to the party in recent elections and will be vital to defeat President Donald Trump next fall.

But a growing consensus is emerging among anxious Democrats: The risks are worth it.

Democrats were emboldened by Wednesday's release of a rough transcript of Trump's July call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, which confirmed that the Republican president repeatedly asked a foreign power to investigate his leading Democratic political rival, Joe Biden.

"The guy has got to be stopped," said Democratic former Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, who had previously urged Democrats to move cautiously on impeachment because the Republican-led Senate would almost certainly reject articles of impeachment.

"This is a president using presidential power to invite a foreign government to come into our country and interfere with our democracy," McAuliffe continued. "This is too much."

Democrats will face tremendous political peril over the next year, however — a fact underscored by a far more cautious approach from the Democratic governors of Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, who declined Wednesday to endorse House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's approach.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, a former congressman, called details of Trump's phone call "deeply troubling," but said impeachment may not be the way to go.

"It may not be politically good to do because I think at this point I, like many Minnesotans, am so sick and tired of the dysfunction in D.C.," he told reporters.

While Congress' timeline is yet unclear, the impeachment inquiry may well run simultaneously with the Democratic Party's primary election calendar. The first primary votes are scheduled in early February and will run through the party's national convention in July.

More broadly, the impeachment proceedings will serve as a constant reminder to voters across the political spectrum that Democrats are actively using one of Congress' most sacred powers to pursue Trump.

The move is justified but inherently "dangerous," said Bill Burton, a former adviser to President Barack Obama.

"Nobody knows how the politics are going to play out, which is why it's so honorable that Speaker Pelosi is moving forward," Burton said. "There comes a tipping point where Congress needs to do its job when there's such blatant abuse of power."

Strategists in both parties pointed to the electoral backlash against the GOP after House Republicans voted to impeach President Bill Clinton in 1998 for obstructing the investigation into his extramarital affair.

Republicans nearly lost their House majority in the next election.

And Democrats, having won a narrow House majority less than two years ago, must now spend the next 14 months protecting vulnerable freshmen in pro-Trump districts to preserve their grip on at least one chamber of Congress.

The inexperienced freshmen will be forced to explain the impeachment investigation to skeptical constituents over and over. At the same time, they will be forced to answer for Democratic presidential contenders, who have almost unanimously embraced impeachment and policy prescriptions that are sometimes out

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of step with moderate voters.

Biden, one of the few former holdouts on impeachment, said Tuesday that Trump "will leave Congress ... with no choice but to initiate impeachment" if he doesn't cooperate with congressional investigators. The former vice president came out with an even stronger message on Wednesday, insisting that the transcript revealed Trump had jeopardized national security.

"It is a tragedy for this country that our president put personal politics above his sacred oath," Biden said. He added, "Congress must pursue the facts and quickly take prompt action to hold Donald Trump accountable."

Despite the strong words, polling on impeachment has never been with the Democrats' new position.

Multiple polls show that a majority of Americans have consistently opposed impeaching Trump. A Quinnipiac University poll released in mid-July, for example, found that 60% of registered voters opposed impeachment proceedings that could lead to Trump's removal from office; the opposition included 29% of Democrats and 62% of independents.

The context has changed, however.

Previous polling was generally related to the exhaustive investigation into whether Trump conspired with Russia to influence the 2016 election. This one hinges on Trump's effort to do the same with Ukraine heading into 2020.

The rough transcript released Wednesday leaves no doubt that Trump was asking the Ukrainian president to investigate Biden and Biden's son, who served on the board of a Ukrainian energy company while Biden was vice president.

And while Democrats were outraged by details of the call, the new facts did little to sway Republican officials, who have stood behind Trump through multiple scandals and have little appetite to upset his passionate political base on the eve of the next election.

Utah Sen. Mitt Romney, who is not up for reelection until 2024, was among the only high-profile Republicans on Capitol Hill to raise concerns. He said he found the rough transcript "deeply troubling."

The vast majority of his Republican colleagues defended Trump's behavior. South Carolina Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, who has been critical of Trump at times, said it was "very appropriate."

Beyond Washington, there was evidence of continued anxiety among some longtime Democratic leaders.

Don Fowler, who served as Democratic National Committee chairman under President Bill Clinton, vividly recalls how impeachment bit the party that pursued it last time around.

"The Republicans did themselves a lot of harm by pursuing impeachment for Clinton. We Democrats face that same prospect with Donald Trump," Fowler said. "You can have all sorts of inquiries about malfeasance in office and being stupid and mean and dirty and nasty, but that last step, impeachment, I don't think I would take."

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Associated Press writers Steve Karnowski in Minneapolis, Marc Levy in Harrisburg, Pa., David Eggert in Lansing, Mich., and Hunter Woodall in Keene, N.H., contributed to this report.

## Democrats call whistleblower complaint 'deeply disturbing'

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats who reviewed a secret whistleblower complaint involving President Donald Trump Wednesday called it "deeply disturbing" and said it gives them new leads to pursue as they consider impeachment.

The complaint from an intelligence community whistleblower, the document at the center of a firestorm about Trump's handling of Ukraine, was made available to members of House and Senate intelligence committees Wednesday after weeks of delay. Lawmakers were allowed to see the complaint the evening before acting Director of National Intelligence Joseph Maguire was set to testify to Congress about it.

The complaint is at least in part related to a July phone call between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in which Trump prodded Zelenskyy to investigate Democratic political rival Joe Biden.

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The White House released a rough transcript of that call Wednesday morning.

House Democrats emerging from a secure room would not divulge details of the complaint, but described it as disturbing and urgent. House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., said it "exposed serious wrongdoing" and "certainly provides information for the committee to follow up with others."

California Rep. Eric Swalwell told CNN that the whistleblower "laid out a lot of other documents and witnesses who were subjects in this matter."

The complaint showed the whistleblower learned details of the call from White House officials, according to one person familiar with the complaint who was granted anonymity to discuss it.

Another such person said the lawmakers did not learn the identity of the whistleblower.

A Democratic member of the panel, Illinois Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, said the whistleblower "lays out the situation very logically" and "is both acknowledging the things that he or she knows and doesn't know, which is a hallmark of a credible document."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi — who on Tuesday fully endorsed an impeachment investigation in light of the Ukraine revelations — and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer also viewed the complaint. Schumer said he is even "more worried" now than he was before reading it and "there are huge numbers of facts crying out for investigation."

Most Republicans were quiet or defended the president as they left the secure rooms. But at least one Republican said he was concerned by what he had read.

"Republicans ought not to be rushing to circle the wagons and say there's no 'there there' when there's obviously a lot that's very troubling there," said Nebraska Sen. Ben Sasse, a GOP member of the Senate intelligence panel who has been an occasional critic of Trump. He added that "Democrats ought not to be using words like 'impeach' before they knew anything about the actual substance."

Trump, whose administration had earlier balked at turning over the complaint, said Wednesday afternoon that "I fully support transparency on the so-called whistleblower information" and that he had communicated that position to House Minority Leader Rep. Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.

The rough transcript released by the White House on Wednesday showed that Trump prodded Zelenskyy to work with the U.S. attorney general and Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani to investigate Democratic political rival Joe Biden.

Lawmakers said they needed to see the complaint, not just the memo about the call, as they investigate the president and whether his actions were inappropriate. Pelosi on Tuesday said that if Trump abused his presidential powers, it would mark a "betrayal of his oath of office."

It is unclear if the complaint will eventually be made public. Both Republicans and Democrats have called for it to be released.

New York Rep. Elise Stefanik, a GOP member of the House panel, tweeted that "it should be immediately declassified and made public for the American people to read." New York Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, a member of Democratic leadership, agreed, saying he expects it will be made public "sooner rather than later."

The House and Senate committees have also invited the whistleblower to testify, but it is uncertain whether the person will appear and whether his or her identity could be adequately protected without Maguire's blessing. Schiff said Wednesday morning that Maguire still had not provided any instructions on how that could happen.

The unidentified whistleblower submitted a complaint to Michael Atkinson, the U.S. government's intelligence inspector general, in August. Maguire then blocked release of the complaint to Congress, citing issues of presidential privilege and saying the complaint did not deal with an "urgent concern." Atkinson disagreed, but said his hands were tied.

Maguire is testifying publicly before the House Intelligence Committee on Thursday and privately before the Senate panel. Atkinson, who met privately with House lawmakers last week, will also talk privately to the Senate committee Thursday.

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Associated Press writers Eric Tucker, Michael Balsamo, Lisa Mascaró, Laurie Kellman and Alan Fram contributed to this report.

## Walmart's Sam's Club launches health care pilot to members

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO and TOM MURPHY AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Walmart's Sam's Club is teaming up with several health care companies to offer discounts on everyday care its customers might delay or skip because of the cost.

Starting early October, Sam's Club members in Michigan, Pennsylvania and North Carolina, will be able to buy one of four bundles of health care services ranging in annual fees from \$50 for individuals to \$240 for a family of up to six members. The pilot program could potentially be rolled out to members in all the states, says Lori Flees, senior vice president of Sam's Club Health and Wellness.

The move comes as health care expenses place a growing strain on the budgets of many families and individuals, even those that have coverage. Sam's Club emphasized that the new initiative is not a health insurance plan but a discount health program that can supplement insurance and bring down out-of-pocket costs.

Annual deductibles for single coverage in employer-sponsored health plans have doubled over the past decade and now average \$1,655 among plans that have deductibles, according to the nonprofit Kaiser Family Foundation. These deductibles, which a patient has to pay before most coverage starts, can be much higher for families and for individual plans purchased outside an employer.

Sam's Club says its program is designed to cater to members — individuals, business owners and families who are delaying or skipping basic care because of high deductibles.

"We are lowering the barrier for people to take care of themselves," Flees said.

Each bundle offers savings on dental services with a network of providers through the health insurer Humana as well as unlimited telehealth for \$1 per visit through a Seattle-based company called 98point6. The bundles also offer discounted vision exams and optical products, and free prescriptions on certain generic medications. The number of free generics range from 5 to 20 of the most popular medications, depending on what the member chooses.

For example, the family bundle, at \$240 per year includes access to a preventative lab screening that measures health indicators like diabetes, up to a 30% discount on chiropractic, massage therapy and acupuncture services and a 10% discount on hearing aids. Each bundle also offers prepaid health debit cards to be used within the health services network.

With this program, Sam's Club will be introducing customers to a new form of care from 98point6 where patients can be diagnosed and treated without talking to or seeing the doctor. Patients who click on the 98point6 app first tell their symptoms to a chatbot or automated assistant that uses artificial intelligence. The information then get passed along to a doctor for diagnosis and treatment, often just through secure messaging. Video and phone conversations also are available through this service if needed.

Insurers and many employers like Walmart and Amazon have been touting video telemedicine visits as a way to give their employers or customers fast, convenient access to help. But benefits experts say people have been slow to start using the new technology. Some forget about it because they may not have a need until long after they learn about it.

Flees says that Sam's Club will be offering both video and text services to its members. She acknowledged that usage of telemedicine has been slow.

AP Health Writer Tom Murphy reported from Indianapolis.

## Mideast conflicts, Brexit to take center stage at UN

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the threat posed by Iran and Britain's fraught exit from the European Union are likely topics Thursday as world leaders gather for a third day of speeches at the United Nations.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and diplomats from Israel and Saudi Arabia, which blames Tehran for an attack on its key oil sites, are expected to push their causes.

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Iran has denied any involvement in the Saudi strike, which jolted global oil prices and temporarily knocked out nearly 6% of daily global crude oil production.

Saudi Arabia insists Iranian weapons were used and has invited U.N. investigators to assess where the strikes were launched from. The U.S., France, Britain and Germany also blame Iran.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani did not refer to the attacks in his speech on Wednesday. He has scheduled a news conference for Thursday.

Israel considers Iran to be its greatest enemy and has been a leading opponent to the 2015 international nuclear deal with Iran. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says Tehran is trying to build a nuclear bomb — which Iran denies — and has accused the Iranians of violating provisions of the agreement.

Israel, meanwhile, finds itself in a political deadlock after national elections in which neither Netanyahu's Likud party nor Benny Gantz's centrist Blue and White secured the required parliamentary majority needed to form a government.

Since Netanyahu's 2009 election, the Palestinians have refused to negotiate with Israel, which has expanded its settlements and won U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

The outgoing president of the European Council, Donald Tusk, also is scheduled to speak as the EU steels itself for the possibility that Britain could crash out of the bloc without a deal on Oct. 31.

Britain's embattled prime minister, Boris Johnson, did not touch on his country's crisis in his inaugural address to the world body late Tuesday, when he delivered a frenetic speech on the dangers and merits of technology.

Leaders from small countries struggling with war, poverty and inequality also will have their say before the world body.

## **Pelosi, Trump and impeachment: How the speaker got to 'yes'**

**By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Mr. President, she told him, "Undo it."

With those two words, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi offered Donald Trump one last chance to avoid becoming only the fourth president in office to face impeachment proceedings .

By then, it was too late.

The night before, she already had started handwriting a draft of the speech she would deliver to the nation.

This account of the turn of events of recent days is based on interviews with lawmakers and aides. Some spoke on condition of anonymity because they were unauthorized to detail private conversations and events.

Pelosi's decision to launch an impeachment inquiry Tuesday was set in motion even before that early morning phone call, the inevitable response to an administration that repeatedly defied Congress before refusing to turn over a whistleblower's complaint against the president.

Trump pleaded innocence when he called Pelosi, D-Calif., shortly after 8 a.m. Tuesday, dashing to deliver his address at the United Nations.

At first he wanted to talk about gun violence legislation. Then the conversation turned to the fallout from a whistleblower's complaint that he pushed Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden, a current Democratic presidential candidate.

"You know, I don't have anything to do with that," Trump said about the administration's refusal to turn over the complaint to Congress.

Pelosi took the call at her apartment in Washington as she was preparing for work. She responded that by withholding the complaint, Trump was asking his acting director of national intelligence to break the law.

The speaker never tipped her hand that the impeachment announcement was coming later that afternoon, when she would stand before American flags and address the nation from her balcony in the Capitol.

But she may have led Trump to believe what was coming. She had been thinking and planning for this moment for some time, and she let Trump know the gravity of the situation before they both hung up. She was late for her morning meetings.

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Pelosi has been the voice of restraint in the House, declining to take up the cause of impeachment as the House pursued its oversight of the administration in the aftermath of former special counsel Robert Mueller's report.

Her approach was always a bit incongruent for the congresswoman from liberal San Francisco, where so many of her own constituents wanted to see Trump impeached long ago.

But for Pelosi, who wore an American flag pin, rather than her speaker's mace brooch, on her blue dress Tuesday, impeachment was always a last resort. She had lived through the impeachment of one president, Bill Clinton, and fended off calls to impeach another, George W. Bush, the last time Democrats had the majority and she was speaker.

She viewed impeachment as too political, too divisive. Behind her calculus was a desire to protect dozens of centrist lawmakers, those who won elections last fall in previously Republican districts where Trump remains popular.

But her position was becoming untenable.

It wasn't just the allegation of Trump turning to a foreign leader for election help that turned the tide toward impeachment. Even more alarming to lawmakers was the administration's refusal to turn over the complaint, as expected by law.

Pelosi, who helped write the whistleblower statutes and create the office of the director of national intelligence after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, understood the stakes as much as anyone.

This is part of "her own DNA," said Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas.

Pelosi had worked the phones all weekend, talking to Democrats in between delivering remarks at memorial services Saturday for journalist Cokie Roberts in Washington and Sunday for Rep. James Clyburn's wife, Emily, in South Carolina, as news reports unspooled more details of the Ukraine call.

Pelosi started telling some veteran lawmakers who had been withholding their views to go ahead and get out in front of her. She talked with Chuck Schumer, the Democratic leader in the Senate, and told the New Yorker where she was headed.

At the same time, a group of freshman lawmakers with national security backgrounds started working the phones. They were calling and texting one another over the weekend wanting to make their own statement in support of impeachment proceedings.

By Monday, they reached out to Pelosi and told her, in a 5 p.m. phone call, that their opinion article backing an impeachment inquiry was about to be published in The Washington Post. She was not surprised.

Pelosi had been in New York all day and was attending a dinner as part of the U.N. General Assembly session.

On a 9 p.m. flight back to Washington that night, Pelosi started handwriting her own thoughts. It was the speech she would deliver to the American public the next day.

As the House prepared to gavel in Tuesday, more and more members started adding their names to the impeachment calls. Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., the influential civil rights leader, was about to deliver a speech saying it was time.

And then the president called.

## AP FACT CHECK: Trump's thin rationale on Ukraine aid

By CALVIN WOODWARD and PAUL HARLOFF Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Explaining circumstances that sparked a Democratic impeachment inquiry, President Donald Trump said Wednesday he froze U.S. aid to Ukraine earlier this year because he's tired of his country being the only one helping there. His rationale rings hollow — other allies pitch in plenty.

Trump also pointed to developments in the stock market as evidence that the financial world, at least, thinks the impeachment episode is overblown. That, too, was off base.

Under pressure Wednesday, the White House released its account of a phone conversation Trump had in July with Ukraine's new president, asking him to "do us a favor" and subject Democratic presidential

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contender Joe Biden and his businessman-son to a corruption investigation. The prospect that Trump sought foreign help to advance his re-election prospects had prompted Democrats a day earlier to move ahead with a formal impeachment inquiry.

It's illegal to seek foreign government assistance for U.S. elections.

Days before that phone call, Trump ordered a freeze on a package of military assistance to Ukraine that had been approved by Congress. Democrats want to know if the money was held back to coerce President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to order the investigation of the Bidens. Hunter Biden was doing business in Ukraine when his father was vice president.

A look at some of Trump's comments:

TRUMP: "I want to see other countries helping Ukraine also, not just us. As usual the United States helps and nobody else is there. So I want to see other countries help." — remarks to reporters Wednesday.

TRUMP: "I'd withhold again, and I'll continue to withhold until such time as Europe and other nations contribute to Ukraine. Because they're not doing it; it's the United States. ... Why is it only the United States putting up the money?" — remarks to reporters Tuesday.

THE FACTS: It isn't only the U.S. putting up money. It's false to say "nobody else is there."

European Union institutions have provided far more development assistance than the U.S: \$425 million in 2016-2017 compared with \$204 million from the U.S. EU members, Japan and Canada also contribute significantly. Since 2014, the EU and European financial institutions have mobilized more than \$16 billion to help Ukraine's economy, counter corruption, build institutions and strengthen its sovereignty against further incursions by Russia after its annexation of Crimea.

The U.S. is indeed a heavy source of military assistance. The aid package held back by Trump, and recently released, amounted to nearly \$400 million in such aid. But NATO also contributes a variety of military-assistance programs and trust funds for Ukraine. In most such cases, the programs are modest and NATO countries other than the U.S. take the lead.

TRUMP: "The stock market went up when they saw the nonsense. All of a sudden the stock market went down very substantially when they saw a charge. After they read the charge, the stock market went up very substantially." — remarks to reporters in New York on Wednesday.

THE FACTS: He's not actually charged with anything. He's saying the market went down Tuesday when the impeachment drive was announced and up after the White House memo on his phone call with Ukraine's president came out. That's roughly right, but it's wrong to tie the market fluctuations solely — or even primarily — to the impeachment episode.

The market cares even more about the economy, and currently the biggest wild card for the U.S. economy is how much Trump's trade war with China could curtail growth. Since it began last year, the stock market has fallen with each escalation of tensions and risen when the two sides appeared close to resolving the dispute.

The 142-point drop in the Dow Jones Industrial Average on Tuesday was partly due to the impeachment developments but was also tied to Trump taking a hard line on China in a speech to the United Nations, which seemed to dim the prospects that coming talks would resolve the trade standoff. And while the market did move higher Wednesday after the release of the memo, the Commerce Department released some solid numbers on the housing market around the same time.

Moreover, just after the comment on the stock exchange, Trump told reporters a deal with China "could happen sooner than you think," and the Dow quickly doubled its gain.

The economic-political dynamic was evident in the impeachment inquiries of Presidents Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton. After the initial inquiry of Nixon in October 1973, the S&P 500 index fell 33% the next year. But the S&P 500 gained 39% after the Clinton impeachment inquiry started in October 1998. The difference: The economy was headed toward a recession in the mid-1970s, while the economy was growing strongly in the late 1990s. For Trump, the U.S. economy slowed to growth of about 2% in the second quarter from 3% in the first quarter and current estimates are for 2% growth in the third quarter.



Harloff reported from New York.

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## Second man arrested in probe of Mac Miller's overdose death

By **ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — An Arizona man has become the second person arrested on drug charges as authorities investigate the overdose death of rapper Mac Miller.

Police gave no details on the connection between him and 26-year-old Miller, who died a year ago in his Los Angeles home of an accidental overdose of cocaine, alcohol and fentanyl, a powerful opioid that's contributed to a deadly epidemic in the U.S. and claimed other musicians, like Prince.

Ryan Reavis, 36, was charged this week with possessing marijuana and prescription drugs as well as weapons offenses and fraud but has not been directly accused of causing Miller's death. Neither has Cameron James Pettit, 28, who was charged this month with selling drugs to Miller shortly before his death.

Authorities in Arizona and federal agents served a search warrant Monday at Reavis' home in Lake Havasu City, where they said they seized prescription pills, marijuana, a doctor's prescription pad, a pistol and two shotguns, large amounts of ammunition and a homemade firearm suppressor similar to a silencer.

Reavis was being held on \$50,000 bail, and police did not know if he had an attorney who could comment on his behalf.

Pettit, who was charged in federal court on Sept. 4, has not yet entered a plea, and his attorney has declined comment. He's scheduled to be arraigned Oct. 10.

Miller's rhymes included frank discussion of his depression and drug use, earning him fans among some of the biggest names in hip-hop.

A Pittsburgh native whose real name was Malcolm James Myers McCormick, Miller was also in a two-year relationship with singer Ariana Grande that ended earlier in 2018. After his death, she posted an affectionate video of him on her Instagram page and released a song, "Thank U Next," that lovingly mentioned him.

Miller is among the musicians whose deaths have been linked in recent years to a national wave of opioid abuse. Prince died in 2016 when he took counterfeit pills laced with fentanyl that looked like a generic version of the painkiller Vicodin.

Matthew Roberts, guitarist for the band 3 Doors Down, also died of an overdose in 2016 and had fentanyl and hydrocodone in his system.

This story has been corrected to show the name of the city is Lake Havasu City, not Havasu City.

Follow AP Entertainment Writer Andrew Dalton on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/andyjamesdalton> .

## From focus to forgotten: Why no N. Korea spotlight at UN?

By **FOSTER KLUG Associated Press**

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Two years ago, Donald Trump used the spotlight of the annual U.N. conclave of world leaders to insult North Korea's leader ("Rocket Man") and threaten his nation with annihilation.

Last year, Trump basked in the glow of diplomacy that suggested a genuine chance for detente with the North, a surreal notion in a corner of the world that has been in a technical state of war since the 1950s.

This year?

North Korea warranted no more than a passing mention in Trump's address, and, aside from his hints to reporters of another possible summit with leader Kim Jong Un, the issue has been largely overshadowed by other standoffs and scandals: Iran, for instance, and talk of Trump's impeachment. The North, for its part, is reportedly sending only an ambassador, not its foreign minister, to take the General Assembly

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stage Monday — well after most world leaders have gone home.

The shift from dramatic threats to high-stakes diplomacy to virtual afterthought at the United Nations reflects the strange, muddled state of affairs on the Korean Peninsula.

North Korea is still making threats in its state media. It's still conducting banned weapons tests as it looks to put pressure on the United States ahead of any resumption of stalled nuclear talks.

But the threats aren't particularly salty, at least by North Korea's vivid standards. And the weapons being tested are meant to target South Korea and Japan, not the U.S. mainland, something Trump has repeatedly mentioned while downplaying the tests.

The low-key approach by Washington and Pyongyang at the United Nations may reflect a diplomatic waiting game as the two sides jockey for position ahead of any resumed talks.

"It certainly looks like neither side wants to stir the pot," said Vipin Narang, a North Korea expert at MIT.

He is optimistic that lower-level nuclear talks could start soon, because of a recent break in weapons tests, Trump's firing of his hawkish national security adviser, John Bolton, and the U.S. president's need for a win as lawmakers pursue impeachment. North Korea, he said, wants to do a deal with Trump rather than navigate a more hawkish Democratic administration should Trump lose the 2020 presidential election.

"Incentives align on both sides," Narang said. "That makes me think the low-key mention of North Korea, and the emphasis on Iran, was designed to keep the window wide open for working-level talks."

The relative silence on the North Korea nuclear standoff is all the more striking because it has played such a key part in recent U.N. General Assemblies.

In 2017, Trump arrived for the gathering as Pyongyang was making a run of increasingly powerful weapons tests that put the North closer than ever to backing up its claim to be a full-fledged nuclear power. Those tests, and Trump's belligerent reaction, had some fearing war.

Standing at the U.N. podium that year, Trump belittled Kim Jong Un as "Rocket Man" and threatened to "totally destroy" his country. The North's top diplomat later said that a Trump tweet that Kim Jong Un "won't be around much longer" amounted to a declaration of war.

After South Korea's president used the 2018 Winter Olympics in the South to reach out to Kim, an astonishing run of diplomacy took hold, and Trump and Kim made history with a meeting in Singapore in June of that year. That first summit was criticized because Trump and Kim issued a vague statement about a nuclear-free peninsula without describing when and how it would occur.

Still, at the U.N. meetings in late September, Trump touted "the wonderful relationship" with Kim and noted that "missiles and rockets are no longer flying" from North Korea.

North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho urged the United States to keep moving past what he called seven decades of entrenched hostility.

The second Trump-Kim summit, which happened early this year in Hanoi, ended in failure as Trump balked at North Korean demands for sanctions relief in return for what was seen as too little movement on nuclear disarmament. Hopes rose again when the leaders met again in June at the Koreas' tense border, but North Korea then turned to repeated short-range weapons tests.

Which brings us to this year's General Assembly — and the North's uncharacteristic vanishing act.

"Part of it might be that there's simply less to talk about this year," Mintaro Oba, a former U.S. diplomat specializing in the Koreas, said. "U.S.-North Korea diplomacy has been sputtering along without any huge achievements to highlight, and President Trump has no desire to go in the opposite direction and return to 'fire and fury' bombast."

Trump, Oba said, may have missed an opportunity at the United Nations.

"The North Koreans are masters of shaping the public narrative and putting the burden of action on the United States," he said. "President Trump had a chance to flip the script by making some sort of creative proposal to advance U.S.-North Korea talks from the podium, thus very publicly putting the onus on North Korea" to either accept the proposal or suggest another way.

Instead, Oba said, "Trump stuck to the same old talking points. And the end result is that North Korea remains fully in control of the timing and the public narrative surrounding diplomacy heading toward the

end of year.”

Foster Klug, AP’s news director for the Koreas, Japan, Australia and the South Pacific, has covered North Korea since 2005. Follow him on Twitter at @APKlug.

## **Memo: Trump prodded Ukraine leader to investigate Bidens**

**By MICHAEL BALSAMO and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than once, President Donald Trump brought up how much the U.S. has done for Ukraine.

Time and again, he asked Ukraine’s president for help.

There was no explicit quid pro quo in Trump’s half-hour phone call with Volodymyr Zelenskyy last July. But it wouldn’t have been a stretch to make a connection between Trump’s pleas for help and his mentions of U.S. assistance.

“We do a lot for Ukraine,” Trump said at one point.

“Do us a favor,” he asked at another.

The White House released a rough transcript of the two leaders’ phone call Wednesday, and it showed that Trump repeatedly prodded Zelenskyy to work with the U.S. attorney general and lawyer Rudy Giuliani to investigate Democratic political rival Joe Biden.

Trump raised allegations, without citing any evidence, that the former vice president sought to interfere with a Ukrainian prosecutor in regard to son Hunter.

“Whatever you can do with the attorney general would be great,” Trump told Zelenskyy, asking for help in investigating Biden. He referred to Giuliani, his personal attorney and trusted adviser, as a “highly respected man” and said, “I will ask him to call you along with the attorney general.”

After saying Giuliani and Barr would be in touch, Trump referenced Ukraine’s economy, saying: “Your economy is going to get better and better I predict. You have a lot of assets. It’s a great country.”

Zelenskyy had earlier brought up his desire to purchase more Javelin anti-tank missiles from the U.S.

The July 25 conversation between the two leaders is part of a whistleblower’s complaint that is central to the formal impeachment inquiry launched Tuesday by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

The White House account reveals that Trump was willing to engage a foreign leader to dig up dirt on a political foe and that he went so far as to volunteer his attorney general to help.

Days before the call, Trump froze nearly \$400 million in aid to Ukraine. It was not clear from the summary whether Zelenskyy was aware of that, and the White House did not respond to requests to clarify. The president has insisted he did nothing wrong and has denied that any request for help was tied to the aid freeze.

During a meeting with Trump Wednesday on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly, Zelenskyy said he felt no pressure to act on his call with Trump.

“Nobody pushed me,” he said.

It’s illegal under federal law to seek foreign government assistance for U.S. elections.

The release of the rough transcript sets the framework of the political debate to come. Trump, at the U.N. on Wednesday, dismissed it and said as he often does that’s he’s the victim of “the single greatest witch hunt in American history.” Democrats say it lays the groundwork for the congressional impeachment inquiry.

Trump aides believed that his oblique, message-by-suggestion style of speaking would not lend itself to the discovery of a “smoking gun” in Wednesday’s summary. His previous messages to his staff were at the center of special counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation into obstruction of justice in the Trump-Russia case.

Trump’s “favor” for Zelenskyy was seeking his help looking into a cybersecurity firm that investigated the 2016 hack of the Democratic National Committee and determined it was carried out by Russia. Trump has falsely suggested CrowdStrike was owned by a Ukrainian.

Then Trump moved to “the other thing” — raising the subject of one of his leading Democratic rivals and a Ukrainian prosecutor: “There’s a lot of talk about Biden’s son, that Biden stopped the prosecution

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and a lot of people want to find out about that.”

In the conversation, Trump doesn't distinguish between the roles of Giuliani, his personal attorney and political ally, and Barr, who as the nation's top law enforcement officer is meant to be above the political fray. Barr has been a staunch defender of Trump, most notably during the Mueller investigation.

It's not the first time Trump has sought foreign assistance to undermine a political rival. He publicly asked Russia to find missing Hillary Clinton emails in 2016, but this is his first documented time doing so while president with the weight of the U.S. government at his disposal.

The White House did not say whether there are any records of Giuliani's communications with Zelenskyy, nor did it address whether the president's personal attorney learned anything from them. The White House has also not commented on whether Trump discussed Biden on an April 21 call with the Ukrainian leader or with any other foreign power.

The president took the call from the White House residence, while officials in the Situation Room listened in and worked to keep a record of the conversation, as is standard practice. They used voice recognition software, but the call was not recorded. Trump ordered the document declassified Tuesday.

The release came against the backdrop of the president presiding over a meeting of world leaders at the United Nations, a remarkable split screen even for the turbulence of the Trump era.

The inspector general for the intelligence community wrote to the acting Director of National Intelligence in August that he believed the conversation between Trump and Ukraine's leader could have been a federal campaign finance violation because the president could have been soliciting a campaign contribution from a foreign government, a Justice Department official said.

The whistleblower — a member of the intelligence community — said in their complaint that they had heard the information from “White House officials,” but did not have firsthand knowledge of the call, the Justice Department official said.

Prosecutors from the department reviewed a transcript of the call and determined the president did not violate campaign finance law. The determination was made based on the elements of the allegation, and there was no consideration of the department's policy that a sitting president cannot be indicted, the official said.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity in order to discuss internal investigative deliberations.

Justice Department spokeswoman Kerri Kupec said the attorney general was first notified of Trump's conversation with the Ukrainian president “several weeks after the call took place,” when the department received the referral about potential criminal conduct.

“The president has not spoken with the attorney general about having Ukraine investigate anything relating to former Vice President Biden or his son. The president has not asked the attorney general to contact Ukraine -- on this or any other matter,” the spokeswoman said.

Trump has sought to implicate Biden and his son in the kind of corruption that has long plagued Ukraine. Hunter Biden served on the board of a Ukrainian gas company at the same time his father was leading the Obama administration's diplomatic dealings with Kyiv. Though the timing raised concerns among anti-corruption advocates, there has been no evidence of wrongdoing by either the former vice president or his son.

Lawmakers, who have been demanding details of the whistleblower's complaint, were to gain access to the document in a classified setting late Wednesday ahead of the testimony of acting director of national intelligence Joseph Maguire Thursday.

The complaint has set off a stunning turn of American political events, leading Pelosi to yield to mounting pressure from fellow Democrats on the impeachment inquiry.

Trump, who thrives on combat, has all but dared Democrats to take this step, confident that the specter of impeachment led by the opposition party will bolster rather than diminish his political support.

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Associated Press Writers Eric Tucker, Lisa Mascaro and Colleen Long contributed to this report.

## Iran president warns of a region 'on the edge of collapse'

By AYA BATRAWY Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Iran's president used the world's stage on Wednesday to warn that security in the Persian Gulf could unravel with a "single blunder" and its fragile peace be guaranteed only by the region's countries, not through U.S. intervention or Washington's "merciless economic terrorism."

President Hassan Rouhani accused the United States of engaging in "international piracy" against his country by re-imposing economic sanctions after Washington withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

Tehran "will never negotiate with an enemy that seeks to make Iran surrender with the weapon of poverty," Rouhani said in his highly anticipated speech at the U.N. General Assembly. "Stop the sanctions so as to open the way for the start of negotiations."

His words came shortly after U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced additional U.S. sanctions targeting Iran's ability to sell its oil, this time imposing penalties on six Chinese companies and their chief executives for continuing to transport Iranian crude.

"We're telling China and all nations, know that we will sanction every violation of sanctionable activity," Pompeo said at an event for United Against a Nuclear Iran, a lobby group opposed to the nuclear deal, a few blocks from where Rouhani was speaking at the United Nations' headquarters.

Tensions in the Middle East have risen as the nuclear deal unravels under U.S. pressure and Iran turns back to expanding its nuclear enrichment program, despite previous compliance with it for up to a year after Trump's withdrawal from the accord.

The escalating crisis has raised concerns of a direct conflict — a scenario that all parties, including bitter rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia, have stressed they want to avoid. The United States, meanwhile, has sent military reinforcements and heightened its security presence around the Persian Gulf.

In his U.N. speech on Tuesday, Trump described Iran as "one of the greatest threats" to the planet.

Rouhani said U.S. wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria had failed, with Washington "unable to resolve the more sophisticated issues" plaguing the Middle East.

"Security shall not be supplied with American weapons and intervention," he said. "Security cannot be purchased or supplied by foreign governments."

While Rouhani's manner was measured, his words were ominous.

"Our region is on the edge of collapse, as a single blunder can fuel a big fire," he said, adding that it will become secure only when U.S. troops withdraw.

The vast divide between the Washington and Tehran runs right through the narrow Strait of Hormuz, a critical shipping waterway at the mouth of the Persian Gulf where a fifth of the world's oil passes each day.

Months of lower-level attacks on oil tankers near the strait and Iran's shooting down of a U.S. surveillance drone over the waterway have been blamed on Iran.

The most stunning attack unfolded earlier this month when drones and missiles struck key oil sites in Saudi Arabia, jolting global oil prices and temporarily knocking out nearly 6% of daily global crude oil production.

Iran has denied any involvement in the attacks, and says any strikes by the U.S. or Saudi Arabia will lead to "all-out war." Saudi Arabia has invited U.N. investigators to assess where the strikes were launched from, and says Iranian weapons were used.

Rouhani used his time at the podium to appeal to Iran's neighbors, saying their destinies are intertwined. The free flow of oil "could be guaranteed," he said, when there is security for all the region's countries.

He also talked about Iran's proposal for a Coalition for Hope, or the Hormuz Peace Initiative, that Tehran envisions would be formed under a U.N. umbrella and involve Middle Eastern countries.

"Neighbor comes first; then comes the house," he said. "We are neighbors with each other and not with the United States."

Iranian state television broadcast Rouhani's speech live across the country of 80 million people, many of whom are struggling under the weight of crippling U.S. sanctions that have sent the Iranian economy

into freefall and limited Tehran's ability to sell its oil abroad.

Diplomatic efforts in Europe have scrambled to preserve the nuclear deal by searching— still unsuccessfully— for ways around the U.S. sanctions. Just before his speech, the remaining signatories to the accord — Russia, China, Britain France, Germany and Iran — stressed they are trying to preserve it.

Despite months of diplomatic frenzy, Rouhani said Iran has "only heard beautiful words."

"Europe is unable and incapable of fulfilling its commitments," he said, warning: "Our patience has a limit."

The European position appears to have shifted after the Sept. 14 attack on Saudi oil sites. In a joint statement, Britain, France and Germany joined the U.S. this week in blaming Iran for the attack and in saying that the time had come for Iran to accept negotiations on its missile program and issues of regional security. These are two key main issues Trump says the nuclear deal did not address when it was completed under the Obama administration.

In his speech at the U.N., Trump left open the possibility of diplomatic engagement with Iran. As Rouhani ended his remarks, he also suggested there was still room for diplomacy.

"Let's return to justice, to peace, to law, commitment and promise and finally to the negotiating table," he said.

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Associated Press writers Matt Lee in New York and Amir Vahdat in Tehran, Iran, contributed.

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Aya Batrawy covers the Persian Gulf for The Associated Press. Follow her on Twitter at @ayaalb.

## Prospects of war and chances for peace dominate UN speeches

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Prospects for war and peace from the Middle East to Europe, Africa and Latin America dominated the second day of the annual gathering of world leaders Wednesday, reflecting the complex global landscape where conflicts persist and terrorism is spreading.

Iran remained foremost on everyone's mind, as leaders echoed Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' warning that above all, the world faces "the alarming possibility of armed conflict in the Gulf" with consequences "the world cannot afford."

The recent attack on key Saudi oil installations — which the U.S., France, Britain and Germany blame on Iran — has exacerbated the threat.

Iran denies responsibility and its president, Hassan Rouhani, made no mention of the Saudi strikes in his address to the General Assembly where he declared: "The Middle East is burning in the flames of war, bloodshed, aggression, occupation and religious and sectarian fanaticism and extremism."

Rouhani blamed the United States for fueling conflicts in Syria, Yemen and Afghanistan, and said Iran will never negotiate with the Trump administration as long as "the harshest sanctions in history" remain in place.

Rouhani urged American troops to leave invited countries around the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz to join a new collective security coalition based on two key principles: non-aggression and non-interference.

Iraqi President Barham Saleh, whose country is squeezed between powerful regional rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia, told the assembly he will not let Iraq become a battlefield for other nations' conflicts to play out.

He called the attacks in Saudi Arabia a dangerous development, but also stressed that: "Iraq will not be a launching pad for aggression against any of our neighboring countries."

Saleh bemoaned that Iraq has long been unstable but struck a positive note, saying his country was emerging from years of conflict and looking toward economic development.

Lebanon's President Michel Aoun called the Middle East "the constant flashpoint where temperature rises or drops but never cools down and our people always pay the price, with their security, stability, peace, economy and even demographic diversity."

He appealed to world leaders to help spur the safe and voluntary return of hundreds of thousands of Syrians who fled their country's eight-year war, saying their presence in tiny Lebanon has exacerbated its

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economic crisis.

In a highly anticipated speech, Ukraine's new president Volodymyr Zelenskyy addressed the global gathering for the first time amid a fast-escalating scandal involving a phone call between him and U.S. President Donald Trump. He made no mention of if, focusing instead on the horrors of war and his country's ongoing conflict with Russia.

Ukraine and Russia have been locked in a bitter standoff since 2014, when Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula and threw its weight behind separatists in eastern Ukraine. Hopes for a solution to the separatist conflict, which has claimed more than 13,000 lives, were revived after Zelenskyy's election in April.

Ukraine seeks to "secure peace in a civilized manner," Zelenskyy told the assembly.

He called on world leaders on to help resolve the war, saying: "Every leader shares responsibility for the destiny not only of their country but of the whole world."

Addressing the situation in Colombia, where a 2016 cease-fire agreement ended more than a half century of conflict between the government and the country's largest rebel group, President Ivan Duque told the assembly that "peace with legality is firmly being built."

He hailed the work of 29 economic development projects involving nearly 2,000 former combatants with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and lauded the commitment of 13,000 former guerrillas to the peace process.

But he accused neighboring Venezuela of offering a safe haven for "criminal groups and narco-terrorists" belonging to a smaller Colombian rebel group, the National Liberation Army, that has not signed a peace agreement.

With a copy in his hand, Duque said he will give the General Assembly a 128-page dossier which he said has "authoritative and overwhelming" proof that Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's government is aiding terrorist groups plotting against Colombia.

Turning to one of Africa's nastiest conflicts in the Central African Republic which has been wracked by interreligious and intercommunal fighting since 2013, the country's president touted the signing of a peace agreement between the government and 14 armed groups in February.

President Faustin Archange Touadera said the situation "remains fragile in spite of some genuine progress" in extending government authority throughout the country and reforming the security and defense sectors.

"Armed groups continue to be supplied with weapons and ammunition through illicit routes," he said, urging the total lifting of a U.N. arms embargo that was eased earlier this month.

Looking more broadly at the world, Touadera said, "as long as one of our member states is not at peace, the entire community of nations is affected."

He added: "The challenge that we face as leaders is to have the courage to dare, to dare to question ourselves, to find innovative, efficient and effective solutions, to build peace and stability and to create a robust foundation for sustainable development."

## **APNewsBreak: Accreditor asks for info after Falwell reports**

**By SARAH RANKIN and ALAN SUDERMAN Associated Press**

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — The accrediting body that oversees Liberty University has asked the college for more information about recent news reports that have questioned President Jerry Falwell Jr.'s leadership style and personal business interests, a spokeswoman told The Associated Press.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges recently sent the Lynchburg, Virginia, university a letter asking it to "respond to the media reports," Janea Johnson said this week.

Johnson declined to provide details about the contents of the letter or any specific concerns the commission would like addressed, saying the commission doesn't divulge such communications.

"The things that are in the media are things we wanted the institution to address to us," Johnson said.

Liberty spokesman Scott Lamb said the university hadn't received any communications from the commission yet.

Liberty is the nation's highest-profile evangelical college. Falwell previously told AP that the news reports

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stemmed from an "attempted coup" orchestrated by several disgruntled former board members and employees who are leaking internal university communications to discredit him. He said he has asked the FBI to investigate what he considers a criminal conspiracy.

Falwell is the son of the late evangelist the Rev. Jerry Falwell, who founded Liberty and led the Moral Majority, a conservative, religious political action group.

The younger Falwell was among the earliest Christian conservatives to endorse President Donald Trump's campaign and has enjoyed close access to the president. He says that support has likely prompted some of the criticism of his leadership style, personal life and business investments that has surfaced in news reports recently.

The reports, some based on anonymous sources, have described Falwell as a temperamental leader who brokers no dissent and has blurred the lines between the school and his personal business.

Falwell has helped transform Liberty from a tiny Baptist college into a touchstone institution for evangelicals. Its campus is dotted with sparkling new buildings and the university is flush with cash and real estate holdings in and around Lynchburg.

The most recently available tax records show Falwell makes about \$1 million a year running the school.

Once Liberty responds to the commission's inquiry, a staff member will weigh whether any further action is necessary, Johnson said. If that staff member recommends taking action, the commission's board would consider that at its next meeting in December, she said.

Currently, Liberty is fully accredited without any sanctions, she said.

## Juul stops e-cigarette ads as teen vaping, illnesses grow

By **MATTHEW PERRONE** and **MICHELLE CHAPMAN** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Juul Labs Inc. will stop advertising its electronic cigarettes in the U.S. and replace its chief executive as mysterious breathing illnesses and an explosion in teen vaping have triggered efforts to crack down on the largely unregulated industry.

The nation's largest e-cigarette maker and other brands are fighting to survive as they face backlash from two public health debacles. Federal and state officials have seized on the recent outbreak of lung illnesses — including 10 reported deaths — to push through restrictions designed to curb underage vaping.

No major e-cigarette company has been tied to the ailments, including Juul, which said it won't fight a Trump administration proposal for a sweeping ban on e-cigarette flavors that can appeal to teens.

Michigan, New York and Rhode Island banned vaping flavors this month, while Massachusetts said it will stop sales of all vaping products for four months, the first such step in the country.

"I think this rush to judgment is extraordinary, and we might be looking at the demise of vaping," said Kenneth Warner, professor emeritus at University of Michigan's school of public health.

Warner and some other experts believe vaping has the potential to dramatically reduce the deadly toll of traditional cigarettes among adult smokers. But he said Juul made "enormous mistakes" in its early advertising campaigns, which featured young models, bright colors and youth-oriented catchphrases.

E-cigarettes have been largely unregulated since arriving in the U.S. in 2007. The Food and Drug Administration has set next May as a deadline for manufacturers to submit their products for review.

Exempt from restrictions on traditional tobacco marketing, Juul until now has advertised its e-cigarettes in print, TV, radio and online. It's also replacing its CEO with a senior executive from Altria, the maker of Marlboro cigarettes that paid \$13 billion for a 35% stake in Juul in December.

The new chief, K.C. Crosthwaite, said in a statement that Juul has long focused on providing adult smokers with alternatives but recognized that there's "unacceptable levels of youth usage and eroding public confidence in our industry."

Health experts generally consider e-cigarettes less harmful than traditional cigarettes because they don't contain all the cancer-causing byproducts of burning tobacco. But there's virtually no long-term research on the health effects of the vapor produced when e-cigarettes heat a liquid with nicotine.

Health officials are investigating hundreds of recent cases of the lung illness. Many patients said they



vaped THC, marijuana's intoxicating chemical, with bootleg devices, but officials have not yet implicated any common product or ingredient.

Meanwhile, underage vaping has reached epidemic levels, health officials say. In a government survey, more than 1 in 4 high school students reported using e-cigarettes in the previous month despite federal law banning sales to those under 18.

Former FDA commissioner, Dr. Scott Gottlieb, cautioned that the illnesses and teen vaping are separate problems that will likely require unique solutions.

"I think conflating the two is risky because it might force us down the wrong path," said Gottlieb, who stepped down in April.

He said banning legal e-cigarettes could push users toward riskier, illicit vapes.

Vaping opponents met Juul's changes with skepticism.

"Juul's announcement today is aimed at repairing its image and protecting its profits, not at solving this crisis," said Matthew Myers, president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. "Policymakers must stand up to Juul and protect our kids by banning flavored e-cigarettes."

Juul devices went on sale in 2015, and the company quickly propelled itself to the top of the market with a combination of high-nicotine pods, dessert and fruit flavors, and viral marketing. The San Francisco company now controls roughly 70% of the U.S. e-cigarette market.

In the last year, Juul tried to reposition itself as a brand for middle-age smokers looking to wean themselves off cigarettes. But the FDA warned the company this month that its product hasn't yet been approved to help smokers quit.

Juul has tried to head off a crackdown with a series of voluntary steps, including halting retail sales of several flavors and shutting down its social media presence. But political pressure has only increased.

The company faces multiple investigations from Congress, several federal agencies and state attorneys general.

"We must strive to work with regulators, policymakers and other stakeholders, and earn the trust of the societies in which we operate," Crosthwaite said in a statement.

He was chief growth officer for tobacco giant Altria and replaces Juul's CEO, Kevin Burns.

Altria and Philip Morris International said Wednesday that they were calling off merger talks a month after floating a deal that would have created the world's largest tobacco company.

Altria's stake in Juul was considered a key factor in the deal, which would have given the e-cigarette maker access to Philip Morris' global network and resources.

Tim Hubbard of University of Notre Dame said Juul has "failed spectacularly" in managing the public perception of its e-cigarettes.

"Bringing in a traditional tobacco executive who knows how to market and manage government relationships with deadly products matches the firm's needs," Hubbard said in an email.

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Chapman reported from New York.

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The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## Fast-moving glacier threatens valley in Mont Blanc massif

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

MILAN (AP) — Italian officials sounded an alarm Wednesday over climate change due to the threat that a fast-moving melting glacier is posing to a picturesque valley near the Alpine town of Courmayeur.

Courmayeur mayor Stefano Misericocchi closed down a mountain road and banned access to part of the Val Ferret, a popular hiking area outside of town on the southern side of the Mont Blanc massif. Those moves came after experts warned that a 250,000-cubic-meter mass of the Planpincieux glacier was at risk of collapsing.

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The glacier, which spreads 1,327 square kilometers (512 square miles) across the mountain, has been moving up to 50 centimeters (nearly 20 inches) a day.

"There are no models to tell us if it will fall entirely or in pieces," the mayor told Sky TG24. "We need to keep an eye on the monitoring."

He emphasized that even if a large chunk of the glacier collapses, no residents would be at risk, just the area of road that has been closed.

The glacier is located in the Alps on the Grande Jorasses peak of the Mont Blanc massif, which straddles the borders of Italy, France and Switzerland and contains the highest peak in Western Europe. Officials said unusually high temperatures during August and September had accelerated ice melt at the Planpincieux, which has been monitored by the Safe Mountain Foundation since 2013.

Environment Minister Sergio Costa said the emergency shows "the necessity and urgency of strong and coordinated action for the climate, to prevent extreme events that risk dramatic consequences."

Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte alerted world leaders to the danger in his address to the U.N. General Assembly in New York, telling them the glacier's potential collapse "is an alarm that we cannot be indifferent to."

No one has had to be evacuated in Courmayeur, town spokesman Moreno Vignolini said, adding that the closed road is used mostly to access summer homes. The mayor was meeting with residents to hear their concerns and they had some limited access to the area to check their properties.

A new special report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said Wednesday that glaciers around the world, outside of Greenland and Antarctica but including Europe, are losing 220 billion metric tons of ice a year. The report said glacier melt is happening faster than before and is accelerating.

The report projects that if nothing is done to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, these glaciers in general will shrink 36% between now and the end of the century. But smaller glaciers, like those in the Alps, could lose up to 80% of their ice by the year 2100 in a worst-case scenario.

"Many glaciers are projected to disappear regardless of future emissions," the new science report said.

Matthias Huss, a glaciologist at ETH Zurich and head of the group Glacier Monitoring Switzerland, said the loss of glacier ice in Switzerland and Europe over the last five years has been the strongest since measurements began in the 1950s. He noted that the freezing line of 0 degree Celsius (32 degrees Fahrenheit) rose above the top of Mont Blanc this summer, "which very rarely has happened."

"We have melting at an elevation of almost 5,000 meters (16,400 feet) above sea level, which is really changing the system and can support such events as glaciers falling down," he said.

Over the last 10 years, Switzerland has lost 15% of its glacier volume, with nearly 3% loss in 2017-2018 alone, Huss said. If this trend continues, Switzerland could lose all glaciers by the year 2100 if warming continues. A change in policies could save the bigger ones, he said, but smaller ones will be lost regardless.

"We hope climate prevention measures are implemented and the warming trend is slowing down," Huss said. "If we continue as we did, then there is no rescue for the glaciers in the Alps."

AP Science Writer Seth Borenstein contributed to this report.

## An unrepentant Boris Johnson faces raucous Parliament

By DANICA KIRKA and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — An unrepentant Prime Minister Boris Johnson brushed off cries of "Resign!" and dared his foes to try to topple him Wednesday at a raucous session of Parliament, a day after Britain's highest court ruled he acted illegally in suspending the body ahead of the Brexit deadline.

Amid shouts, angry gestures and repeated cries of "Order!" in the House of Commons, Johnson emphatically defended his intention to withdraw Britain from the European Union on Oct. 31, with or without a separation agreement with the EU.

"I say it is time to get Brexit done," he declared, accusing his opponents of trying to frustrate the will of the people, who in 2016 voted 52% to 48% to leave the 28-nation bloc.

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Johnson was greeted with applause from his own Conservative lawmakers and jeers from the opposition side as he arrived in the Commons, hours after cutting short a trip to the United Nations in New York.

He flew home early after Britain's Supreme Court unanimously ruled Tuesday that his attempt to suspend Parliament for five weeks had the effect of stymieing its scrutiny of the government over Brexit. The court declared the suspension void.

The leader of the main opposition Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, said the prime minister is not fit to govern and "should have done the honorable thing and resigned" after the ruling. He said Johnson "thinks he is above the law" and has shown "no shred of remorse or humility."

"Have you no shame, prime minister?" said Ian Blackford, the Scottish National Party's leader in Parliament. Labour lawmaker Jess Phillips urged Johnson "to act with some humility and contrition."

Members of Parliament accused him of showing disrespect for the rule of law and deceiving Queen Elizabeth II when he asked for her permission to prorogue, or suspend, Parliament. Over and over, they called on him to say he was sorry.

But Johnson ignored calls to step down or apologize, showing no sign of contrition during the more than three-hour question-and-answer session. He said he disagreed with the Supreme Court's 11-0 ruling, and he repeatedly refused to rule out the possibility of suspending Parliament again.

The prime minister said a new election is the only way to unblock Britain's "paralyzed Parliament."

"I think the people of this country have had enough of it. This Parliament must either stand aside and let this government get Brexit done or bring a vote of confidence and finally face the day of reckoning with the voters," he said.

A no-confidence vote could bring down his government just two months after he took office and lead to a new election.

Opposition lawmakers and some Conservative rebels have said they will back an election only if a no-deal Brexit is ruled out.

Economists have warned that leaving the EU without a deal could disrupt Britain's trade with the Continent, plunge the country into a recession and cause shortages of food and medicine.

But Britain has been unable to negotiate a separation agreement with the EU that is acceptable to Parliament. Johnson said Wednesday he still hopes to work out a deal but will pull the country out of the EU without an agreement if one isn't reached by the deadline.

Parliament has passed a law requiring Johnson to seek a Brexit extension if there is no deal, but he has said he won't do that under any circumstances. He branded the law the "Surrender Act" and the "Humiliation Bill."

Ultimately, the prime minister hopes to contest an election in which he would paint himself as the champion of the people against a recalcitrant establishment bent on disregarding the 2016 vote to leave the EU.

As Wednesday's session grew more noisy and bitter, several lawmakers urged Johnson to temper his language, saying Britain's political climate is becoming dangerously overheated. Pro-EU lawmakers have been branded "traitors" by some Brexit supporters, and police have investigated threats against several members of Parliament.

"The tone of the prime minister's speech was truly shocking," said Green Party legislator Caroline Lucas. "This populist rhetoric is not only unfitting for a prime minister, but it is genuinely, seriously dangerous."

Labour lawmaker Paula Sherriff implored the prime minister to stop using "pejorative language." She brought up the killing of Jo Cox, a legislator who was slain a week before the 2016 EU referendum by an attacker shouting, "Death to traitors!"

Sherriff said many lawmakers were "subject to death threats and abuse every single day."

"And let me tell the prime minister that they often quote his words — 'Surrender Act,' 'betrayal,' 'traitor' — and I for one am sick of it," she said. "We must moderate our language, and it has to come from the prime minister first."

The prime minister was unimpressed.

"I have to say, Mr. Speaker, I've never heard such humbug in all my life," he said.

Follow AP's full coverage of Brexit and British politics at: <https://www.apnews.com/Brexit>

## California farm region faces furry new threat: swamp rodents

By **SAMANTHA MALDONADO** and **TERRY CHEA** Associated Press

LOS BANOS, Calif. (AP) — One of the most recent threats to California's environment has webbed feet, white whiskers, shaggy fur and orange buck teeth that could be mistaken for carrots.

"Boy, they're an ugly-looking thing," said David Passadori, an almond and walnut grower in central California. "And the way they multiply — jeez."

The swamp rodents, called nutria, are setting off alarms in California. They weigh about 20 pounds (9 kilograms) each and eat the equivalent of about a fourth of their weight each day by burrowing into riverbanks and chomping into plants that emerge from the water.

The animals can destroy the wetland habitats of rare and endangered species, degrading soil, ruining crops and carrying pathogens that may threaten livestock.

Most of all, they pose a public safety risk: Left unchecked, nutria could jeopardize California's water supply, especially if they get into the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

The delta is the "heartbeat of California's water infrastructure," according to Peter Tira, spokesman for the state's Department of Fish and Wildlife. It contains a network of more than 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers) of canals and levees that protect the area from flooding, provide drinking water to millions of Californians and irrigate the lush agricultural region.

Now, armed with \$10 million in state funds, the wildlife agency is deploying new tactics to eradicate the nutria and try to prevent the widespread destruction they are known to cause.

"Over the past two years, our best efforts were trying to not even control the population but keep it from exploding while we pursued the resources needed to actually pursue eradication," said Valerie Cook, environmental program manager for Fish and Wildlife's newly established Nutria Eradication Program.

"We haven't had nutria in California for 50 years, so nobody really knows much about them," Tira said. "We've had to learn on the job as we go."

An invasive species originally from South America and brought to the U.S. at the height of the fur trade in the late 19th century, nutria were believed to have been eradicated in the state in the 1970s until one turned up in a beaver trap in 2017. Since then, more than 700 nutria have been trapped and killed, including four on Passadori's property.

Farmers, landowners and biologists in the Central Valley, an agricultural region 130 miles (210 kilometers) north of Sacramento, have been on high alert.

On a recent morning in Merced County, where the most nutria have been found, state biologists Greg Gerstenberg and Sean McCain paddled in kayaks in a wetland pond thick with cattails. Wearing waders, they trudged through chest-deep water to check surveillance cameras and cage traps where they leave sweet potato pieces to entice the invasive rodents.

Last year, wildlife officials removed almost 90 nutria from this pond. Gerstenberg and McCain have returned because they believe at least a few nutria are back. But on this morning they found only muskrats, smaller swamp-dwelling rodents, and released them back into the pond.

"Our goal is to get out here and find them and eradicate them before they become fully established throughout our Central Valley," said Gerstenberg, a senior Fish and Wildlife biologist.

The Central Valley is the United States' most productive agricultural region, responsible for more than half the nation's fruits, vegetables and nuts, including almost all its apricots, table grapes, carrots, asparagus and tree nuts. Federal Department of Agriculture figures put the market value of Central Valley agricultural production in 2017 at almost \$29 billion.

Damage to the region's soil or water infrastructure would be devastating to the economy and diet.

"It would mean no more sushi because the alternative would be to buy rice from Japan or Korea, where the price is five times higher," said Daniel Sumner, director of the Agricultural Issues Center at the University

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of California-Davis. "Kiss off carrots, or live without table grapes in the summertime."

Trail cameras and landowners have helped locate the elusive, nocturnal creatures over an area of almost 13,300 square miles (34,449 square kilometers) that wildlife officials are evaluating for nutria habitats. Live traps baited with sweet potato donated by farmers help capture them. Once identified as nutria, the animals are shot. Tira said about three-quarters of female nutria have been found pregnant — they can have up to three litters a year, allowing them to repopulate quickly.

The new attention and funding will allow Fish and Wildlife to hire 46 dedicated staff. By December, the agency will launch what's known as a Judas Nutria program that would outfit surgically sterilized nutria with radio collars and send them out in the wild. Because the animals are so social, they will lead the team to other nutria.

Before year's end, Fish and Wildlife will start genetically testing the nutria to determine where they came from. Tira said migration from Oregon or Washington is doubtful, but the team isn't sure whether the nutria were reintroduced to California or part of a remnant population.

Taking a cue from Maryland's eastern shore and parts of Delaware and Virginia, officials also will test dogs trained to sniff out the rodents' scent and scat.

"We can't be successful if we can't find every single animal," Cook said.

Besides threatening agriculture and infrastructure, nutria can harm wetlands, which play a critical role in keeping carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and helping mitigate global warming.

The Central Valley also hosts the largest concentration of migratory waterfowl on Earth, said Ric Ortega, the Grassland Water District's general manager.

"We only have so much surface water storage in California," he said. "It's not a wetland if it's not wet. The nutria complicate that."

Samantha Maldonado reported from San Francisco.

## Report: Opioids settlement won't fix areas hardest hit

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma's tentative legal settlement over the toll of the nation's opioid crisis is unlikely to reverse the consequences of the epidemic in the hardest-hit towns and regions, according to a report released Wednesday.

Purdue reached a tentative deal this month to resolve the lawsuits it faces. It could be worth up to \$12 billion over time, with a portion of the benefits coming in savings on opioid antidotes for governments rather than cash. It would be up to a bankruptcy court judge to approve the plan, which continues to face significant opposition.

So far, some key details have not been announced, including how the settlement would be divided among states and local governments. Nearly half of state attorneys general have not signed on, with many of them saying they object to the deal because it doesn't do enough to hold members of the wealthy Sackler family, which owns Purdue, accountable.

In its report, the bond rating agency Moody's Investors Service said the deal would benefit state and local governments, but not enough to make up for the costs of the opioid crisis.

It says the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated the annual cost of the crisis at \$78 billion, including \$7.7 billion for the criminal justice system and \$2.8 billion for drug treatment. Those figures are based on data that is up to six years old, and the crisis has deepened since then.

Moody's used data from counties where it rates bonds to find that places with the highest overdose rates also tend to have had slower job and wage growth as well as higher poverty rates compared with places with fewer opioid-related deaths. While the crisis has affected communities across the country, the highest overdose rates are concentrated in the Appalachian region.

In places with high overdose rates, the report found the Purdue settlement was not likely to reverse "the economic and social woes related to high levels of opioid addiction for the foreseeable future."

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Frank Mamo, one of the authors of the report, said in an interview that it's difficult to determine whether a bad economy leads to drug problems or vice versa.

"These factors are all interrelated," he said. "They compound and make it more difficult for an area to recover economically."

Winnebago, Illinois, home of Rockford, is one of a few counties in the state with an overdose rate far higher than the national average. Last year, 124 people died of overdoses — most of them involving an opioid — in a county with a population just under 300,000.

"There's tremendous social costs, tremendous community costs beyond local government," said Frank Haney, chairman of the county board. "But it has hit local governments hard, as well."

Haney said municipal fire departments have increased emergency calls, for instance. And while there has not been a full accounting of the costs for the county government, he said those costs show up in many places, including increased health insurance payments, health department costs for training on administering the overdose antidote naloxone, the jail and the coroner's office.

In more than 2,600 lawsuits over opioids, Connecticut-based Purdue has been cast as a villain for aggressively marketing OxyContin to doctors while overstating its benefits and downplaying its addiction risks.

The lawsuits claim that behavior helped change opioid prescribing, leading to a national crisis that has killed more than 400,000 people in the U.S. since 2000, including those who have fatal overdoses involving non-prescription opioids such as heroin and illicitly made fentanyl.

But the company accounted for a small portion of total legal opioid sales. Several other drugmakers, distributors and pharmacy chains are also being sued.

None of the others have announced national settlements yet, although a judge overseeing most of the lawsuits has pushed for settlements.

Follow Mulvihill at <http://www.twitter.com/geoffmulvihill>

## Entangled in US scandal, Ukraine's president speaks at UN

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Abruptly cast into the center of a political storm in the United States, Ukraine's president steered clear of the controversy Wednesday as he made his debut at the United Nations, focusing instead on the horrors of war and on his country's ongoing conflict with Russia.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy's address at the U.N. General Assembly came less than a day after a formal U.S. House impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump was launched — a development that was sparked partly by a July 25 phone call between the two leaders. It has come under scrutiny because Trump prodded Zelenskyy to investigate Trump rival and former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden.

During a meeting later in the day, both presidents told reporters that Zelenskyy wasn't pressured.

Zelenskyy had made no mention of the matter in his speech to world leaders as he called for wide international support for his country, five years after Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and Moscow threw its weight behind separatists fighting in the eastern part of his country.

He warned that in an interconnected world, "there is no more 'somebody else's war.'"

"Every leader bears his share of responsibility not only for the destiny of his own country but for the whole world," said Zelenskyy, who at one point held up a bullet to decry violence and made references to the classic World War I novels "All Quiet on the Western Front" and "A Farewell to Arms."

"Today, it depends on everyone here whether there will be life at all," Zelenskyy said.

Barely 100 days into his tenure, Zelenskyy is in a delicate spot after the phone call with Trump, the leader of one of Ukraine's most steadfast allies. The two presidents were due to meet on the sidelines of the assembly later Wednesday.

At issue is whether the Republican Trump abused his presidential powers and sought help from Ukraine to undermine Biden and help his own re-election. Biden is seeking the Democratic presidential nomination in next year's election.

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Trump repeatedly pressed Zelenskiy to investigate Biden, according to a rough transcript summarizing the call released Wednesday. The phone call came days after Trump ordered advisers to freeze \$400 million in military aid for Ukraine, prompting speculation that he was holding up the money as leverage for information on Biden.

Trump has denied that the funds were blocked as leverage for information on Biden and his son, Hunter, and says he did nothing wrong, calling the matter a "witch hunt."

As the two presidents met on the sidelines of the General Assembly, Trump said he put "no pressure" on Zelenskiy to look into Biden. Zelenskiy said it was a "good phone call" and "normal," and "nobody pushed me."

"I don't want to be involved" in American elections, he said.

The United States has given Ukraine millions of dollars in aid since a pro-Western government took power in Kyiv in 2014.

Zelenskiy, a popular 41-year-old comedian with no political experience, unseated incumbent Petro Poroshenko in an election this year in the nation of 45 million people. Zelenskiy campaigned on promises to fight corruption and engage Russia in order to end their conflict. The fighting has killed more than 13,000 people and displaced 1 million.

Russia says it annexed Crimea and supported pro-Moscow separatists in eastern Ukraine at the behest of Russian-speaking populations in the areas.

In a signal of a fresh approach from the Ukrainian side, Zelenskiy called Russian President Vladimir Putin shortly after taking office. Earlier this month, Russia and Ukraine held the largest prisoner exchange in years, releasing 70 people.

"Ending the war, recovering all occupied Ukrainian territories and restoring peace are my primary objectives," Zelenskiy told the assembly Wednesday, "but not at the cost of the lives of our citizens, freedom and right of Ukraine to make its own choices."

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Associated Press writers Jonathan Lemire in New York and Nataliya Vasilyeva in Moscow contributed.

## 'We're all in big trouble': Climate panel sees a dire future

By **SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer**

NEW YORK (AP) — Earth is in more hot water than ever before, and so are we, an expert United Nations climate panel warned in a grim new report Wednesday.

Sea levels are rising at an ever-faster rate as ice and snow shrink, and oceans are getting more acidic and losing oxygen, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said in a report issued as world leaders met at the United Nations.

It warned that if steps aren't taken to reduce emissions and slow global warming, seas will rise 3 feet by the end of the century, with many fewer fish, less snow and ice, stronger and wetter hurricanes and other, nastier weather systems.

"The oceans and the icy parts of the world are in big trouble, and that means we're all in big trouble, too," said one of the report's lead authors, Michael Oppenheimer, professor of geosciences and international affairs at Princeton University. "The changes are accelerating."

The dire effects will be felt on both land and sea, harming people, plants, animals, food, societies, infrastructure and the global economy. In fact, the international team of scientists projected for the first time that some island nations will probably become uninhabitable.

The oceans absorb more than 90% of the excess heat from carbon pollution in the air, as well as much of the carbon dioxide itself. Earth's snow and ice, called the cryosphere, are also being eroded.

"The world's oceans and cryosphere have been taking the heat for climate change for decades. The consequences for nature and humanity are sweeping and severe," said Ko Barrett, vice chair of the IPCC and a deputy assistant administrator for research at the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The report found:

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— Seas are now rising at one-seventh of an inch (3.66 millimeters) a year, which is 2.5 times faster than the rate from 1900 to 1990.

— The world's oceans have already lost 1% to 3% of the oxygen in their upper levels since 1970 and will lose more as warming continues.

—From 2006 to 2015, the ice melting from Greenland, Antarctica and the world's mountain glaciers has accelerated. They are now losing 720 billion tons (653 billion metric tons) of ice a year.

—Arctic June snow cover has shrunk more than half since 1967, down nearly 1 million square miles (2.5 million square kilometers).

—Arctic sea ice in September, the annual low point, is down almost 13% per decade since 1979. This year's low, reported Monday, tied for the second-lowest on record.

—Marine animals are likely to decrease 15%, and catches by fisheries in general are expected to decline 21% to 24%, by the end of century because of climate change.

"Climate change is already irreversible," French climate scientist Valérie Masson-Delmotte, a report lead author, said at a news conference in Monaco, where the document was released. "Due to the heat uptake in the ocean, we can't go back."

But many of the worst-case projections in the report can still be avoided, depending on how the world handles the emissions of heat-trapping gases, the report's authors said.

The IPCC increased its projected end-of-century sea level rise in the worst-case scenario by nearly 4 inches (10 centimeters) from its 2013 projections because of the increased recent melting of ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica.

The new report projects that, under the business-as-usual scenario for carbon emissions, seas by the end of the century will rise between 2 feet (61 centimeters) and 43 inches (110 centimeters), with a most likely rise of 33 inches (84 centimeters). This is slightly less than the traditional 1 meter (39 inches) that scientists often use.

And sea level will rise two to three times as much over the centuries to come if warming continues, so the world is looking at a "future that certainly looks completely different than what we currently have," said report co-author Hans-Otto Portner, a German climate scientist.

The Nobel Prize-winning IPCC requires that its reports be unanimously approved. Because of that, its reports tend to show less sea level rise and smaller harm than other scientific studies, outside experts said.

"Like many of the past reports, this one is conservative in the projections, especially in how much ice can be lost in Greenland and Antarctica," said NASA oceanographer Josh Willis, who studies Greenland ice melt and wasn't part of the report.

Willis said people should be prepared for a rise in sea levels to be twice these IPCC projections.

The world's warm water coral reefs will go extinct in some places and be dramatically different in others, the report said.

"We are already seeing the demise of the warm water coral reefs," Portner said. "That is one of the strongest warning signals that we have available."

Outside scientists praised the work but were disturbed by it.

"It is alarming to read such a thorough cataloging of all of the serious changes in the planet that we're driving," said Texas A&M University climate scientist Andrew Dessler. "What's particularly disturbing as a scientist is that virtually all of these changes were predicted years or decades ago."

The report's authors emphasized that it doesn't doom Earth to this gloomy future.

"We indicate we have a choice. Whether we go into a grim future depends on the decisions that are being made," Portner said.

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## Israel's Netanyahu given chance to form new government

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's president on Wednesday asked Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to form a new government, giving the longtime leader the difficult task of breaking a post-election deadlock that has paralyzed the country's political system.

After a divisive campaign, Netanyahu called for a "broad unity government" with his chief rival former military chief Benny Gantz. But he faces an uphill struggle, with his future clouded by a likely corruption indictment and his opponents opposed to sitting with him.

President Reuven Rivlin announced his decision late Wednesday after a second meeting aimed at brokering a unity deal between Netanyahu and Gantz ended without an agreement.

Standing alongside Rivlin, Netanyahu said it was clear that neither his Likud party nor Gantz's Blue and White could put together a coalition on its own, and that the only option was to band together.

"The two of us cannot form a government unless we are together," he said. "The order of the moment is a unity government, a broad national unity government that is formed quickly."

He said the country faced great security challenges, highlighted by Iran, economic challenges and the "great opportunity" of settling its borders when President Donald Trump presents an expected Mideast peace plan.

In a statement, Gantz appeared to rebuff Netanyahu, citing the Israeli leader's legal problems.

"Blue and White, led by me, does not agree to sit in a government whose leader is facing a severe indictment," he said. "This issue, among a number of other critical factors, is more important to us than any delegation of ministerial posts or rotation."

Rivlin said his decision was not a solution and that both candidates were responsible for resolving the political impasse.

"The Israeli people need to know that a government can be established," he said. "It is true that everyone will have to compromise. But if a government is not formed, it is the citizens of Israel who will pay the greatest price."

Rivlin said his decision was not a solution, and that both candidates were responsible for resolving the political impasse.

Although Rivlin's duties are mostly ceremonial, he is responsible for choosing the candidate he believes has the best chance of forming a coalition government.

That is usually a straightforward task. But in last week's election, neither Netanyahu's Likud party nor Gantz's centrist Blue and White secured the required parliamentary majority needed to form a government.

According to final official results announced Wednesday, Blue and White finished first with 33 seats in the 120-seat parliament, just ahead of Likud's 32 seats. Even with the support of smaller allies, both parties are short of the required 61-seat majority.

A total of 55 lawmakers have recommended that Netanyahu lead the next government, while 54 have lined up behind Gantz. Rivlin said that after exploring all options, he concluded Netanyahu had the better chance of forming a government.

Netanyahu now has a preliminary 28-day period to try to broker a deal. But his odds of success appear to be slim.

Both sides agree a unity deal is the only way out of the deadlock, but they have disagreed over who should head it.

Gantz has repeatedly said he will not sit with Likud as long as Netanyahu is at the helm. Facing a likely corruption indictment in the coming months, Netanyahu is desperate to remain as prime minister.

Israel's attorney general has recommended charging Netanyahu with bribery, fraud and breach of trust in a series of scandals.

Netanyahu, who denies any wrongdoing, is to appear at a hearing with the attorney general next week, after which a final decision on charges is expected. Legal experts say the likelihood of an indictment is high.

Although Netanyahu would not be required to step down if charged, he will face heavy pressure to do so.

Another key player throughout the process will be Avigdor Lieberman, whose Yisrael Beiteinu party controls eight seats. Lieberman refused to endorse either candidate and is pushing for a unity government.

Without a unity deal, Netanyahu will have a tough time putting together a coalition. The secular Lieberman says he will not be part of a government that includes Netanyahu's ultra-religious allies.

Netanyahu now has 28 days to form a coalition, and Rivlin having discretion to give him an additional 14 days to do so.

If Netanyahu fails, Gantz would likely be given an opportunity. And if that fails, a majority of parliament members could offer a third name to be prime minister. And if that fails, Israel would be forced into holding its third election in less than a year.

Last week's election was triggered after Lieberman refused to join Netanyahu's coalition following April elections, citing what he said was excessive influence of religious parties. Instead of giving Gantz a chance to form a government, Netanyahu dissolved parliament and ordered a new election.

Netanyahu said that if he fails this time, he will allow Rivlin to choose another candidate.

"The nation does not want another election," Rivlin said.

## Argentine orangutan Sandra to head to US great ape sanctuary

By ALMUDENA CALATRAVA Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Sandra shows little interest as she slowly shuffles past the structure of beams and ropes built for her to climb on inside her concrete enclosure in Argentina's capital. Outside are tall buildings and traffic that bear no resemblance to the lush forests where orangutans naturally live.

But the unstimulating, solitary life of the 33-year-old orangutan with gentle eyes and dark-red hair will take a turn Thursday when she leaves Buenos Aires for the United States. After a quarantine period in Kansas, she is expected to become the new resident of the Center for Great Apes in Florida, a sanctuary much better suited to her needs.

"There she will be able to spend the rest of her life in a more dignified situation," said Argentine judge Elena Liberatori, who in 2015 ruled that Sandra was legally not an animal but a non-human person who has rights, turning the orangutan who has only known limited concrete enclosures into a focus of world attention.

It has been a long journey for Sandra, who was born in a zoo in Germany and moved to Argentina a quarter century ago. She has lived most of her life in a basketball court-sized cell in the more-than-century-old Buenos Aires zoo, in conditions protested by animal rights groups as inadequate. Her release seemed possible in 2014 following a landmark court ruling that she was entitled to some legal rights enjoyed by humans and better living conditions. Then came Liberatori's ruling. Her release seemed nearer in 2016 when the Buenos Aires zoo closed its doors and officials said that hundreds of its animals would be set free as it was transformed into an eco-park.

But Sandra's caretakers argued that it might be better just to improve the conditions of her cage because sending her to a reserve abroad or releasing her into the wild would put her life at risk. Since Sandra is classed genetically as a hybrid orangutan — half Sumatran, half Bornean — experts fear she might not be able to adapt if sent to Indonesia, where most of the world's wild orangutans live and there are a number of sanctuaries. Suitable facilities might be found abroad but they would need to be reviewed carefully.

Enter the sanctuary near Wauchula, Florida, whose mission is to provide a permanent home for orangutans and chimpanzees rescued or retired from the entertainment industry, research or the exotic pet trade.

"Sandra will have bigger compounds and special caregivers" in the Center for Great Apes, which is in a more forested and humid area than Argentina's capital, said Federico Iglesias, director of the eco-park created after the closure of the Buenos Aires' zoo.

Liberatori's 2015 ruling was in response to a complaint by an Argentine animal rights group that Sandra was living in inadequate conditions.

"With that ruling I wanted to tell society something new, that animals are sentient beings and that the

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first right they have is our obligation to respect them," she told The Associated Press.

Liberatori has a large picture of Sandra in her office. On the picture is a twig that Sandra passed through the bars of her enclosure to anyone outside willing to interact with her.

In 2017, after studying the opinions of biologists and veterinarians about a list of possible destinations for Sandra, including Brazil and Spain, Liberatori decided on the Florida sanctuary, which has 21 orangutans and 31 chimpanzees. Its best-known resident is Bubbles, late singer Michael Jackson's chimpanzee.

Chuckie, Pebbles, Kiki, Pongo, Popi and Tango will be some of Sandra's companions, according to the website of the center, where she will have much more freedom and space to move about — though not complete freedom since she has never experienced it and it might be dangerous for her.

In the larger compound she will be able to interact with other animals, and run and climb more freely. A system of elevated tunnels will allow her to explore the area. In the Argentine zoo, Sandra was the only member of her species.

Officials at the Florida center have told the judge they sought to arrange the transfer of Sandra to avoid any extreme change in climate: spring in Argentina and early autumn in Florida. And the Argentine eco-park has successfully sent lions and bears to sanctuaries in the United States.

Despite the assurances, Liberatori acknowledges feeling nervous about Sandra's transfer to the United States, which will be in a ventilated metal container.

The orangutan will be inside the container for a roughly 11-hour commercial flight to the Dallas airport. From there, she will be sent by a truck on a highway to Sedgwick County Zoo in Kansas. She will be quarantined there and if her health checks out she will be sent by highway to Florida.

Her Argentine caretakers have trained her to feel comfortable inside the container and will accompany her on her voyage all the way to Florida.

Veterinarian Guillermo Wiemeyer, in charge of animal welfare at the eco-park, said the Argentines will advise those in Florida about "her types of training and preferences" and provide a known presence during her transition.

"I am happy, but a bit nervous that everything goes well," said Liberatori. "After she arrives in the sanctuary I will visit her. It is going to be a very happy moment for me."

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Associated Press journalists Leo La Valle and Natacha Pisarenko contributed to this report.

## Migrants arrive in Europe with big hopes, many questions

By RENATA BRITO Associated Press

MESSINA, Sicily (AP) — As the weary passengers aboard a rescue ship approached Sicily at the end of an agonizing journey from North Africa, 30-year-old Seke Awa called a friend back in Libya the moment she got cellphone reception.

"I told her we are on the big boat and sent her courage, that she needs to have hope. One day her suffering may end," said Awa, a native of Cameroon. "She was crying."

A total of 182 people, rescued a week ago from fragile boats off Libya's coast, arrived in Italy on Tuesday, filled with excitement and hope, but also myriad questions about what comes next.

Will they be allowed to stay in Europe? If so, in which country? And will they have a choice? Can they go to school even if they are adults? How much does a SIM card cost?

Nelson Oyedele, 37, said he fled violence and poverty in Nigeria with his wife and four small children.

"I don't know where I'm going to end up, I'm just going," he told an Associated Press reporter on the Ocean Viking, a Norwegian-flagged rescue ship run by the humanitarian organizations Doctors Without Borders and SOS Mediterranee. "My daughter says she wants to become a doctor. She could never become a doctor back in our country. Maybe here she will."

Oyedele was the only man on the ship traveling as part of a complete family. The rest had left behind wives, husbands, children and parents in their home countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa.

Abdul Kerim, 20, said he fled persecution in Togo and wants to reunite with brothers and aunts living in

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Germany. He hopes to be granted asylum and is open to any kind of work, though he dreams of having his own construction company.

"I will work for Europe and give all I have," he said. "If possible I would like my family to join me." His wife and 2-year-old son are still in Togo.

However, Kerim and others disembarking in Messina will have no control over where they end up. Their fate will be decided in negotiations among a few European countries that agreed to take them in.

Asylum is typically reserved for people fleeing war and persecution. People escaping poverty in West Africa rarely qualify. In Germany, only 6.5% of Nigerians whose asylum cases have been decided this year received some sort of protection. For Syrians, it was nearly 84%.

The migrants on the Ocean Viking came from a number of countries, including Sudan, Cameroon, Guinea, Mali, Egypt, Morocco and Bangladesh. As they arrived in Messina, their immediate worry was contacting loved ones for the first time since they left Libya, where rape, torture and abuse are widespread at the hands of smugglers demanding ransom payments from the migrants' families.

The Ocean Viking docked in Messina after receiving permission to enter Italy, a country that until a change of governments this month had closed its ports to humanitarian rescue ships, saying their activities encouraged human smuggling. Police and Red Cross workers waited for the migrants on shore.

As they approached Sicily, the passengers marveled at a gargantuan cruise ship docked on the Italian mainland across the Strait of Messina.

"Is there a hotel inside?" asked one of the men watching the floating behemoth from the deck of the much smaller rescue ship. "It's so amazing," said another. The children waved incessantly.

Italy's Interior Ministry said 124 of the migrants would be divided up and sent to France, Germany, Portugal, Ireland and Luxembourg. The remainder will be allowed to stay in Italy under the care of the Catholic Church, the ministry said.

In New York, members of the Italian government on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly called for a permanent European solution for making decisions about rescued migrants instead of the current practice of dealing with the issue ship by ship. They said they also intend to make it easier to return migrants who don't qualify for asylum or refugee protections in Europe.

Premier Giuseppe Conte said Italy will soon deliver "good news about a much more effective repatriation system at a European level. Italy is preparing for a decisive turning point."

Associated Press writers Karl Ritter and Giada Zampano in Rome and David Rising in Berlin contributed to this report.

## Asian stocks rise after Trump trade deal remark

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Major Asian stock markets followed Wall Street higher Thursday after President Donald Trump suggested a costly tariff war with China could be resolved soon.

Benchmarks in Tokyo, Hong Kong and Seoul advanced.

Stocks gained after Trump, speaking to reporters Wednesday at the United Nations, said China wants "to make a deal very badly" and it "could happen sooner than you think."

"Investors have been 'trade war' bearish for so long that any sliver of optimism is cheered," said Stephen Innes of AxiTrader in a report.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 rose 0.2% to 22,069.28 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 0.2% to 25,985.83.

Seoul's Kospi advanced 0.2% to 2,076.60, while Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 shed 0.4% to 6,682.70. Taiwan, Singapore and New Zealand retreated.

The Shanghai Composite Index sank 0.7% to 2,933.97. Chinese markets retreated as investors took profits before trading is suspended next week for the country's National Day following an extended rise in share prices, especially for tech companies.

The U.S.-Chinese dispute over Beijing's trade surplus and technology ambitions has fueled anxiety the

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global economy could tip into recession. Both sides have raised tariffs on billions of dollars of each other's goods, hurting factories and farmers on both sides.

Negotiators are due to meet next month in Washington for a 13th round of talks. Economists say a temporary deal is possible but a final settlement is unlikely this year.

Trump signed a trade deal with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan on Wednesday that covers farm, industrial and digital trade but leaves tariffs on autos and parts intact at 2.5%.

That prompted Japanese automakers to appeal to their government to do more to support the industry. The preliminary deal caps negotiations that began last year after Trump complained about huge American trade deficit against Japan and threatened higher tariffs and other measures.

"The limited deal with Japan is enormous on two fronts. First, it suggests the President is open to an 'interim' trade deal, possibly signaling he is willing to negotiate one with China," said Innes.

On Wall Street, the benchmark Standard & Poor's 500 index gained 0.6% to 2,984.87. The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 0.6% to 26,970.71. The Nasdaq climbed 1.1% to 8,077.38.

Markets rose despite the release of a summary of a July phone call between Trump and Ukraine's president that is at the center of a congressional impeachment inquiry into the American leader.

Investors "largely shrugged off Trump's impeachment proceedings," said Mizuho Bank in a report.

The broader market was coming off its worst day of the month, when a weak consumer confidence report, more trade war rhetoric and the start of the impeachment inquiry rattled investors.

The congressional probe might complicate White House efforts to resolve trade disputes with China and other nations.

**ENERGY:** Benchmark U.S. crude gained 3 cents to \$56.52 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract lost 80 cents on Wednesday to close at \$56.49. Brent crude, used to price international oils, shed 3 cents to \$61.40 per barrel in London. The contract declined 69 cents the previous session to \$61.43.

**CURRENCY:** The dollar declined to 107.66 yen from Wednesday's 107.75 yen. The euro gained to \$1.0959 from \$1.0944.

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Sept. 26, the 269th day of 2019. There are 96 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 26, 1789, Thomas Jefferson was confirmed by the Senate to be the first United States secretary of state; John Jay, the first chief justice; Edmund Randolph, the first attorney general.

On this date:

In 1777, British troops occupied Philadelphia during the American Revolution.

In 1892, John Philip Sousa and his newly formed band performed publicly for the first time at the Stillman Music Hall in Plainfield, New Jersey.

In 1907, New Zealand went from being a colony to a dominion within the British Empire.

In 1955, following word that President Eisenhower had suffered a heart attack, the New York Stock Exchange saw its worst price decline since 1929.

In 1960, the first-ever debate between presidential nominees took place as Democrat John F. Kennedy and Republican Richard M. Nixon faced off before a national TV audience from Chicago.

In 1964, the situation comedy "Gilligan's Island" premiered on CBS-TV.

In 1977, Sir Freddie Laker began his cut-rate "Skytrain" service from London to New York. (The carrier went out of business in 1982.)

In 1986, William H. Rehnquist was sworn in as the 16th chief justice of the United States, while Antonin Scalia joined the Supreme Court as its 103rd member.

In 1990, the Motion Picture Association of America announced it had created a new rating, NC-17, to

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replace the X rating.

In 1991, four men and four women began a two-year stay inside a sealed-off structure in Oracle, Arizona, called Biosphere 2. (They emerged from Biosphere on this date in 1993.)

In 1996, President Clinton signed a bill ensuring two-day hospital stays for new mothers and their babies.

In 2003, President George W. Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin (POO'-tihh) opened a two-day summit at Camp David.

Ten years ago: Film director Roman Polanski was arrested by Swiss police on an international warrant as he arrived in Zurich to receive a lifetime achievement award from a film festival. (Polanski had fled the U.S. in 1978, a year after pleading guilty to unlawful sexual intercourse with a 13-year-old girl. Polanski spent two months in a Swiss jail and served seven months of house arrest before Switzerland's government decided against extraditing him to the United States.) Pope Benedict XVI began a three-day pilgrimage to the Czech Republic.

Five years ago: Fire broke out in the basement of a suburban Chicago air traffic control center, temporarily halting operations at O'Hare and Midway airports; an FAA contract employee, Brian Howard, was accused of cutting cables and setting the fire before slashing his throat. (Howard pleaded guilty to willfully destroying an air navigation facility and using fire to commit a felony, and was sentenced to 12 1/2 years in prison.) American warplanes and drones hit Islamic State group targets in Syria and Iraq as the U.S.-led coalition expanded to include Britain, Denmark and Belgium. Former first daughter Chelsea Clinton gave birth in New York to her first child, a daughter named Charlotte.

One year ago: As Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh prepared for a public Senate hearing on an allegation from a California professor that Kavanaugh had sexually assaulted her when they were teens, a third accusation of sexual misconduct came from a woman who said she saw Kavanaugh "consistently engage in excessive drinking and inappropriate contact of a sexual nature." President Donald Trump said his view of sexual misconduct allegations against powerful men, including his Supreme Court nominee, was affected by "a lot of false charges" that he said had been made against him by women he said had been "paid a lot of money" to make those charges.

Today's Birthdays: Retired baseball All-Star Bobby Shantz is 94. Actor Richard Herd is 87. Country singer David Frizzell is 78. Actor Kent McCord is 77. Television host Anne Robinson is 75. Singer Bryan Ferry is 74. Actress Mary Beth Hurt is 73. Singer Olivia Newton-John is 71. Actor James Keane is 67. Rock singer-musician Cesar Rosas (Los Lobos) is 65. Country singer Carlene Carter is 64. Actress Linda Hamilton is 63. Country singer Doug Supernaw is 59. Rhythm-and-blues singer Cindy Herron (En Vogue) is 58. Actress Melissa Sue Anderson is 57. Actor Patrick Bristow is 57. Rock musician Al Pitrelli is 57. Singer Tracey Thorn (Everything But The Girl) is 57. TV personality Jillian Barberie is 53. Contemporary Christian guitarist Jody Davis (Newsboys) is 52. Actor Jim Caviezel (kuh-VEE'-zuhl) is 51. Actress Tricia O'Kelley is 51. Actor Ben Shenkman is 51. Actress Melanie Paxon is 47. Singer Shawn Stockman (Boyz II Men) is 47. Music producer Dr. Luke is 46. Jazz musician Nicholas Payton is 46. Actor Mark Famiglietti (fah-mihl-YEH'-tee) is 40. Singer-actress Christina Milian (MIHL'-ee-ahn) is 38. Tennis player Serena Williams is 38. Actress Zoe Perry is 36.

Thought for Today: "Pity the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." — Don Marquis, American journalist-author (1878-1937).

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