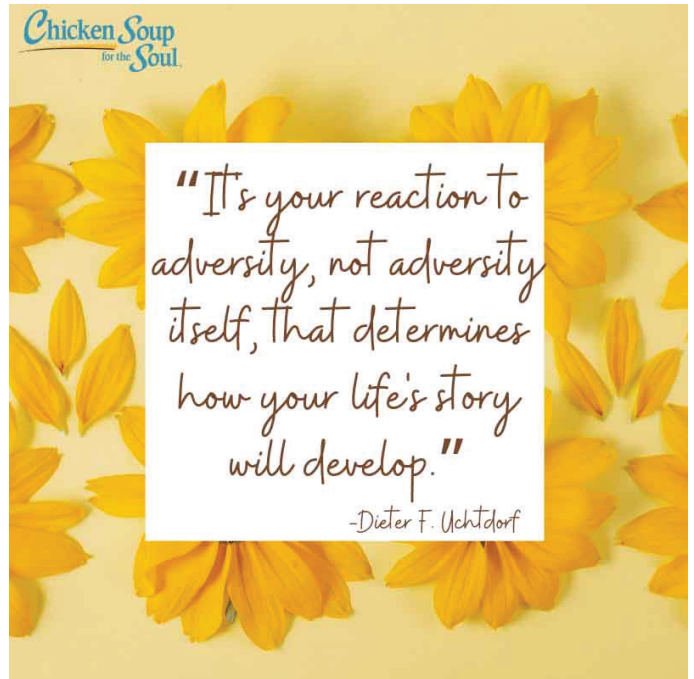


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- [2- First Round Boys Soccer Playoffs](#)
- [3- Schwan has Yard of the Week](#)
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Tuesday, October 8, 2019

- TBDGolf: Boys Varsity State Tournament vs. Spearfish @ Spearfish High School
- 1st Round Boys Soccer Playoffs: 3:00 p.m.: Groton Area hosts Vermillion
- 6:00pm Volleyball: Girls Varsity Match vs. Leola-Frederick @ Groton Area High School
- JV match starts at 6pm

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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First Round Boys Soccer Playoffs 3 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 8, at Groton Area



Pictured in back, left to right, are Assistant Coach Craig Sternhagen, Braden Freeman, Austin Jones, Jace Kroll, Piet Solling, Grady O'Neill, Evin Nehls, Steven Paulson, Cade Guthmiller, Tucker Carda and Head Coach Chance Strom; in front, left to right, are Jacob Zak, Jackson Cogley, Jayden Zak, Anthony Schinkel, Garret Schroeder, Isaac Smith, Hunter Schaller, Dragr Monson, Austin Aberle and Braxton Imrie; not pictured are Korbin Kucker and Marcos Garcia.

The following businesses wish the Groton Area Tigers Good Luck Today!

BK Custom T's & More

C & B Operations

Farmers Union Insurance - JR Johnson

Groton American Legion Post #39

Groton Vet Clinic

Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.

Olde Bank Cafe 'n More

Olson Development

Professional Management Services

Weber Landscaping



Pictured are Brett, Anna, Stella, Lydia, Ryder and Ivan.

Schwan has Yard of the Week

Brett and Anna Schwan at 237 E 2nd Ave., was chosen as the Yard of the Week for the week of September 22. The Yard of the Week is chosen by the members of the Groton Garden Club. Bev Sombke from the Groton Garden Club said, "Thanks to everyone in Groton for keeping their yards looking nice during a challenging year."

Anna Schwan said that she always wanted a boulder in her yard. "It reminds me of the Black Hills," she said. "I think it's neat that they just show up and people build things around them. Justin and Amanda Morehouse were picking rocks and Justin called and said, "Hey, I got a rock for you." I said that sounds good. We'll come and get it with the pickup. He said, "No, I'll bring it in with a tractor." He brought it in with a tractor and there it is!" (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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7th Grade Individual MathCounts Awards

First Row from the left: Annie Dvorak, Northwestern, 1st Place; Kaden Larson, Roncalli, 2nd Place; Gretchen Dinger, Groton, 3rd Place.

Second Row From Left: Reece Comstock, Holgate, 4th Place; Libby Scepaniak, Warner, 5th Place; Athena Johnson, Holgate, 6th Place (Courtesy Photo)

The Groton Area Invitational MathCounts Competition was held on Wednesday, October 2, 2019 in the high school gym.

One Hundred Thirteen students from eight Aberdeen area schools (Britton-Hecla, Gettysburg, Holgate, Northwestern, Roncalli, Simmons, Warner, and Groton) participated in the event, which was sponsored by 3M of Aberdeen. Groton student, Gretchen Dinger, earned third place in the seventh grade individual division.

MathCounts is a nationwide coaching and competition program for middle school students that promotes excellence in mathematics. The next junior high competition will be the Roncalli Invitational MathCounts Competition on Wednesday, October 30.

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Trick or Treat on Main Street!

Bring the kids down on Main Street, Groton,
for trick or treating fun!

Thursday, Oct 31 - 4pm-6pm

MANY downtown Groton businesses will be open late
and handing out Halloween Goodies to the kids!



Businesses participating:

Main St- City Hall, Bahr Spray Foam/Next Level Nutrition, Professional Management Services, Olde Bank N' Café, Midwest Masonry, The Fitness Project, The Groton Independent, Jungle Lanes & Lounge, Cheri's on Main, Bierman Farm Service, Groton American Legion, Farmer's Union Insurance, Dakota Press, Base Kamp Lodge, Elementary PAC/RC Roosters Lodge, Johnson Agency, Kolker Law Office, Karma Salon & Boutique, Wells Fargo (4-5pm use NE Door)
1st Ave- J. Simon Photography, James Valley
Railroad Ave- LW Sales, Krueger Bros

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SDFBCA Coaches Poll - Week 6

9AA

1. Bon Homme (24) 7-0 136
 2. Viborg-Hurley (4) 6-0 115
 3. Deuel 5-1 73
 4. Parker 5-1 36
 5. Arlington/Lake Preston 4-2 18
 5. Baltic 4-2 18
- Others: Hamlin 17, Lemmon-McIntosh 7

9A

1. Canistota-Freeman (17) 6-0 126
 2. Sully Buttes (6) 6-0 98
 3. Britton-Heccla (5) 6-0 88
 4. Gregory 5-1 48
 5. Howard 5-1 38
- Others: Warner 11, Burke 4

9B

1. Colman-Egan (24) 6-0 130
 2. DR St. Mary (1) 6-0 88
 3. Wolsey-Wessington (2) 4-2 77
 4. Harding County 5-1 37
 5. Herried/Selby Area 5-1 32
- Others: Faulkton Area 11, Alcester-Hudson 7

11AAA

1. SF Roosevelt (21) 5-1 126
 2. SF Lincoln (4) 5-1 113
 3. Brandon Valley (1) 4-2 71
 4. Harrisburg (1) 5-1 70
 5. O'Gorman (1) 4-2 45
- Others: SF Washington 9, RC Stevens 2

11AA

1. Pierre (29) 6-0 145
 2. Brookings 6-0 116
 3. Huron 3-3 69
 4. Mitchell 3-3 66
 5. Sturgis 2-4 30
- Others: Yankton 10

11A

1. Dell Rapids (15) 6-0 130
 2. Tea Area (14) 5-1 124
 3. Madison 3-3 74
 4. Dakota Valley 4-2 56
 5. Canton 4-2 34
- Others: Tri-Valley 8, West Central 8

11B

1. Winner (16) 7-0 132
 2. Bridgewater-Emery/Ethan (13) 6-0 125
 3. Webster 5-1 75
 4. McCook Central/Montrose 5-1 29
 5. RC St. Thomas More 5-1 28
- Others: Mobridge-Pollock 23, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 18, Sisseton 3

Groton City Council Meeting Agenda
October 8, 2019 – 7:00pm
Groton Community Center

1. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
2. Appoint Board Member for Ward 1 Vacancy
3. Minutes
4. Bills
5. Ken Heir – Clark Engineering
Change Order No. 3 – H.F. Jacobs & Son Construction
6. Department Reports
7. Planning and Zoning Update – Blackmun
Proposed Ordinance Revision
Building Inspector
Evaluate Building Permit Costs
8. 21st Annual Safety and Loss Control Training Conference – November 20&21 in Mitchell
9. Letter of Commitment as Participating Jurisdiction in Brown County Hazard Mitigation Plan
10. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
11. Adjournment

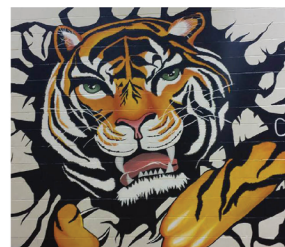
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It's Volleyball Action on GDILIVE.COM



Leola/Frederick
Titans VS



Groton Area Tigers

7:15 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 8, 2019
at Groton Area High School

It's Boys Soccer Action on GDILIVE.COM



Vermillion
Tanagers VS



Groton Area Tigers

Tuesday, Oct. 8, 2019
at Groton Area Soccer Field

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National Gas Price Average Jumps by a Dime in One Week

September 23, 2019 - Last week was the first time since early June that the national gas price average jumped more than a nickel in under a few days. On the week, it's a dime more expensive at \$2.66 with half of states seeing prices increase by 10 cents or more. However, even with the significant increase, the national average is still cheaper compared to last month (-6 cents) and last year (-19 cents).

South Dakota Gas Prices

Today \$2.61 Yesterday \$2.62 Last week \$2.56 Last month \$2.63 Last year \$2.86

Spurred by the Saudi Arabian oil facilities attacks the weekend prior, crude oil (West Texas Intermediate – WTI) increased as much as \$10/bbl at its highest point early last week to nearly \$64/bbl. Gasoline stations reacted just as swiftly as the market, raising local retail prices by as much as a quarter, which pushed the national average up six cents overnight last Tuesday. However, by the end of last week, crude was down to \$58/bbl and gas prices started to stabilize as reports surfaced that Saudi facilities should be fully operational by end of September.

"At \$2.66, the national average is a dime more expensive than last week. The good news is we are seeing downward movement with crude oil prices and stabilization at gas pumps, but Americans can expect some fluctuation through the end of the month," said Marilyn Buskohl, AAA spokesperson. "Should Saudi's crude production be back to full capacity shortly, the price spikes are likely to be temporary."

In its latest report, the Energy Information Administration (EIA) measured U.S. demand at 8.9 million b/d, which is a substantial 900,000 b/d drop from the previous week and a low reading not seen since February. The decrease in demand amid the spike in crude oil prices could help to keep gas price fluctuations more moderate through the end of the month.

Quick Stats

The nation's top 10 least expensive markets are: Mississippi (\$2.32), Louisiana (\$2.32), Arkansas (\$2.33), Alabama (\$2.34), South Carolina (\$2.35), Oklahoma (\$2.37), Virginia (\$2.37), Texas (\$2.38), Tennessee (\$2.39) and Missouri (\$2.40).

The nation's top 10 largest weekly increases are: Kentucky (+19 cents), Michigan (+18 cents), Georgia (+17 cents), Minnesota (+16 cents), Maryland (+14 cents), Iowa (+14 cents), Delaware (+14 cents), Mississippi (+14 cents), New Mexico (+13 cents) and South Carolina (+13 cents).

Great Lakes and Central States

Pump prices in the Great Lakes and Central states saw the highest volatility of any region following the drone attacks on Saudi Arabian oil facilities. Motorists in some states are paying nearly 20 cents more to fill-up as compared to last Monday. Kentucky (+19 cents), Michigan (+18 cents), Minnesota (+16 cents) and Iowa (+14 cents) saw the largest weekly increase in the region and land among the top 10 states in the country with the biggest jumps in pump prices. Most states in the region are paying more than they were a month ago, with the exception of South Dakota (-2 cents), Wisconsin (-1 cent) and Michigan (no change).

State averages range between \$2.82 - \$2.40, with three states touting an average at \$2.70 or above: Illinois (\$2.82), Michigan (\$2.73) and Ohio (\$2.70).

Gasoline stocks drew by 539 million bbl for the week ending Sept. 13, in EIA's latest report. That drops total stocks down by 52.5 million bbl, which is among the highest decreases seen in the region since April. Down 4% to 96%, regional refinery production could slow in coming weeks as refineries plan for fall maintenance. A drop in stocks amid more expensive crude oil prices would likely mean an increase in pump prices for motorists in the region.

Oil market dynamics

At the close of Friday's formal trading session on the NYMEX, WTI decreased by four cents to settle at \$58.09. Oil prices increased sharply last week, following news of attacks on two crude oil facilities in Saudi Arabia on September 14. On Monday, September 16, the first full day of trading after the attack, WTI crude oil prices experienced the largest single day price increase since August 21, 2008 and June 29, 2012, respectively, according to EIA.

In related news last week, EIA reported that total domestic crude inventories increased by 1.1 million bbl last week. They currently sit at 417.1 million bbl, which is 23 million bbl higher than where they were last year at this time.

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Today



Sunny

High: 73 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 50 °F

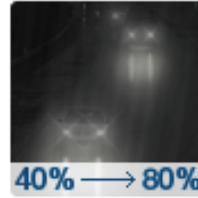
Wednesday



Increasing
Clouds

High: 66 °F

Wednesday
Night



40% → 80%

Chance Rain
then Rain and
Breezy

Low: 36 °F

Thursday



90%

Rain/Snow and
Breezy

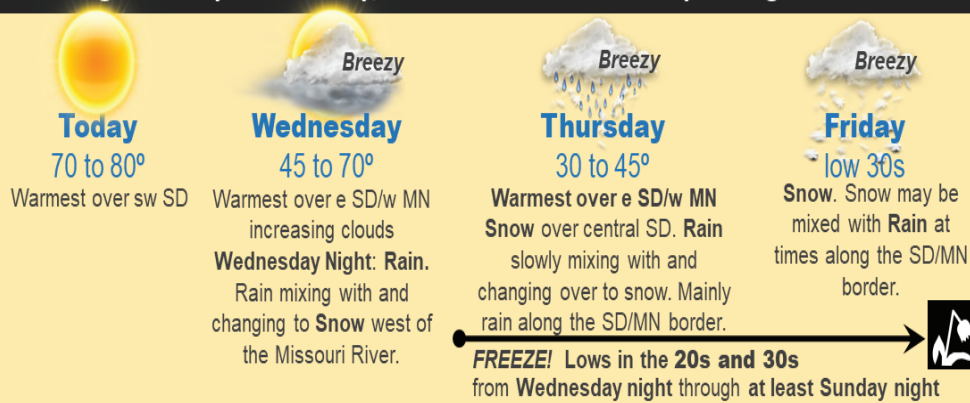
High: 38 °F

Graphic created
10/8/2019 4:06 AM

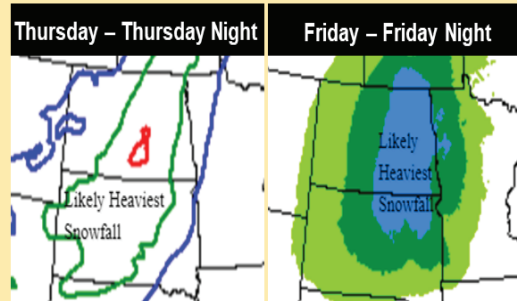
www.weather.gov/abr
National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD



Mild through the day Wednesday, then Winter Weather expanding across the area



THREATS	PREPARE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freezing Temperatures Heavy Rain, Saturated Soil Several inches of Snow possible Gusty Winds/Blowing Snow Major travel impacts possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay tuned to the latest forecast for updates! Uncertainty remains, and the main threat area may still change.



Published on: 10/08/2019 at 12:10AM

Expect deteriorating weather Wednesday evening over central South Dakota to expand across the rest of the area Thursday and Friday. Freezing temperatures will put an end to the growing season, with lows in the 20s and 30s Wednesday night through at least Sunday night. Stay tuned to the latest forecast for further updates.

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Today in Weather History

October 8, 1982: October 8th and 9th, 1982 a record-breaking snowstorm (at that time) for so early in the Fall paralyzed the northern Black Hills with three to six feet of heavy, wet snow and winds of 40 to 70 miles an hour. Some snowfall amounts included 41 inches at Galena, 36 inches at Lead, and 23 inches at Deadwood. Five to six feet of snow was typical in the higher elevations. The heavy wet snow caused numerous problems. The roof of a clothing store in Lead collapsed under the weight of the snow, and several other businesses were damaged.

The roofs of at least three trailer homes also collapsed. The combination of high winds and heavy snow broke tree branches (causing extensive timber damage), power lines and telephone poles. Damage was done to 40 miles of power lines, including 30 broken power poles. Some residents were without power for five days. The city of Deadwood was without electricity and fresh water for at least three days.

1871: The Great Chicago Fire burns much of the city to the ground, fanned by strong southwest winds. An estimated 250 were killed. On the same night, forest fires swept through Peshtigo, Wisconsin. An estimated 1,500 to possibly as many as 2,500 dies as gale-force winds push flames across town. Severe drought blamed for tinder-dry conditions. An additional 200 die in Michigan fires.

1919: An intense tornado moved through the town of Hoisington, 11 miles north of Great Bend, Kansas. It damaged or destroyed 60 homes which resulted in \$200,000 in damages. Business papers and canceled checks were found at Lincoln, 55 miles to the northeast.

1871 - Prolonged drought and desiccating winds led to the great Chicago fire, the Peshtigo horror, and the Michigan fire holocaust. Fire destroyed more than seventeen thousand buildings killing more than 200 persons in the city of Chicago, while a fire consumed the town of Peshtigo WI killing more than 1100 persons. In Wisconsin, a million acres of land were burned, and in Michigan, 2.5 million acres were burned killing 200 persons. "Tornadoes of fire" generated by intense heat caused houses to explode in fire, and burned to death scores of persons seeking refuge in open fields. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1901 - A deluge at Galveston, TX, produced nearly twelve inches of rain in about a six hour period. The rains came precisely thirteen months after the day of the famous Galveston hurricane disaster. (David Ludlum)

1982 - An unusually early snowstorm hit the northern Black Hills of Wyoming and South Dakota. The storm produced up to 54 inches of snow, and winds as high as 70 mph. The snowfall was very much dependent upon topography. Rapid City, 20 miles away, received just a trace of snow. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Unseasonably cold weather prevailed from the Upper Mississippi Valley to the southeastern U.S. Thirty cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Madison WI with a reading of 22 degrees. The low of 28 degrees at Evansville IN was the coolest of record for so early in the season. Hot weather continued in the southwestern U.S. Phoenix AZ reported a record high of 104 degrees and a record tying 116 days of 100 degree weather for the year. Tucson AZ established an all-time record with 72 days of 100 degree weather for the year. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Snow was reported across parts of northern New England. Two inches blanketed Mount Snow VT. Warm weather continued in the northwestern U.S. The afternoon high of 80 degrees at Stampede Pass WA exceeded their previous record for October by seven degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Morning lows in the 20s were reported from the Northern Plains to the Upper Great Lakes. International Falls MN and Marquette MI reported record lows of 22 degrees. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in central California as the Oakland Athletics won the American League pennant. San Luis Obispo CA reported a high of 99 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

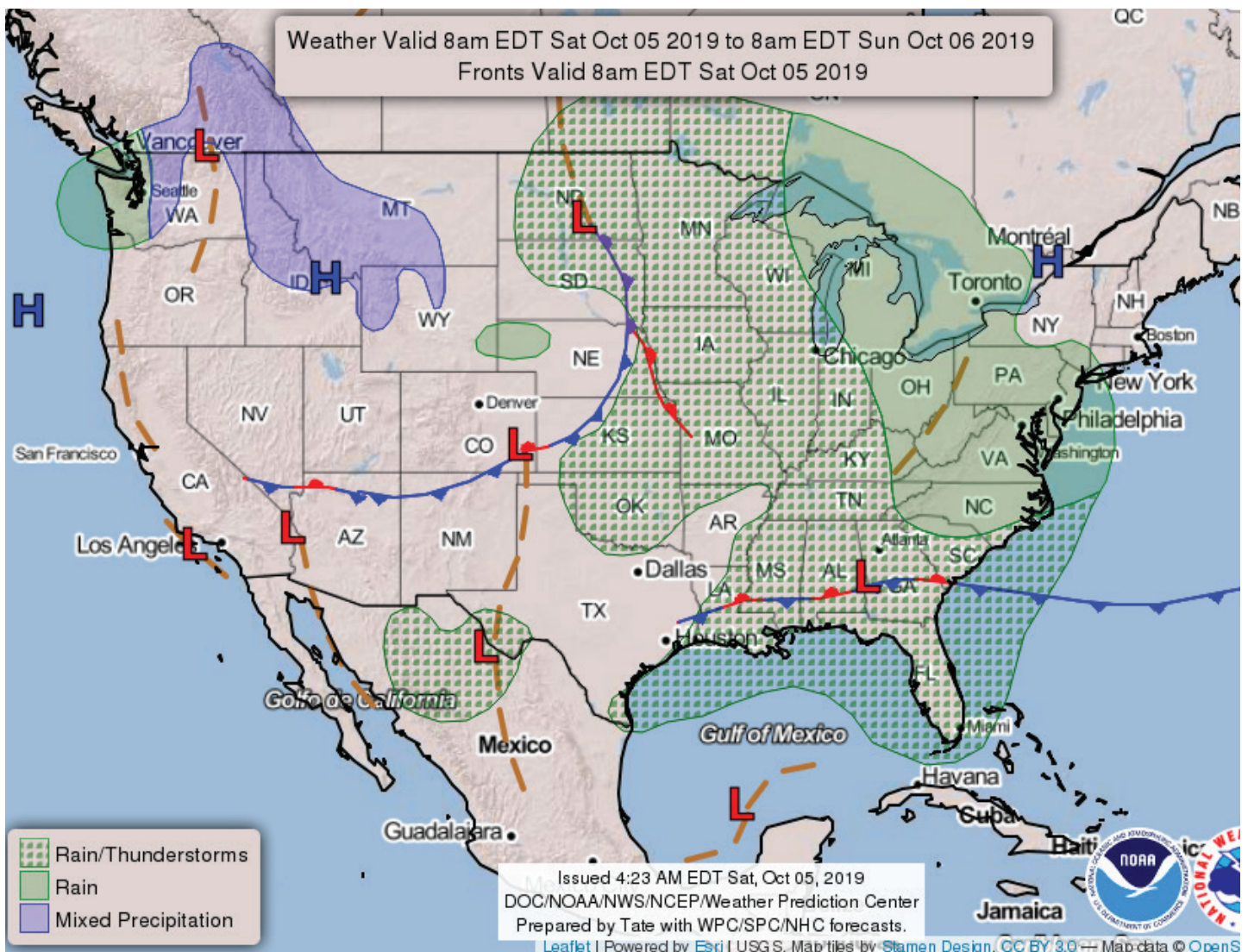
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 69 °F at 4:44 PM
Low Temp: 36 °F at 7:46 AM
Wind: 15 mph at 2:22 PM
Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 87° in 1936
Record Low: 9° in 1895
Average High: 62°F
Average Low: 36°F
Average Precip in Oct.: 0.54
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.38
Average Precip to date: 19.02
Precip Year to Date: 25.40
Sunset Tonight: 7:01 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:42 a.m.



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FROM TRIALS TO TRIUMPH

What do you do when you have a difficult time pleasing someone?

George Crum was the chef at a famous country club in Saratoga Springs, New York. One evening there was a guest who ordered fried potatoes to go with his meal. When his order of fries was served, he asked the waiter to return it to the kitchen saying they were too thick. This happened several times. Crum became frustrated. But he did not give up.

Challenged, he took his sharpest knife, sliced some potatoes wafer-thin, deep-fried them in boiling oil, and sprinkled salt on them. Then he had the waiter take them to the guest. The guest sampled them, smiled and decided to pass them around the table to his friends. Everyone enjoyed them and ordered more. The "potato chip" was born that evening and has become one of our favorite snacks.

There are times in all of our lives when people irritate us or bother us. It seems like nothing we do will ever please them or meet the standards they have set for us. No matter what we do or how hard we try, it is not going to be good enough. So, we are tempted to give up or quit. Paul said, "God causes all things to work together for our good." This includes the most painful problems and difficult demands of life. In all things we must trust Him, be willing to do our best, and leave the results to Him. He, not others, knows what is best for our lives.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for giving us problems to solve and challenges to meet, so we can grow strong. Help us to be patient, to be polite, and to persevere. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes everything to work together[a] for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

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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)

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News from the  Associated Press

Monday's Scores By The Associated Press

Volleyball

Bon Homme def. Hanson, 8-25, 18-25, 25-22, 25-23, 15-8
Bridgewater-Emery def. Irene-Wakonda, 25-19, 25-7, 25-20
Colman-Egan def. Chester, 14-25, 24-26, 30-28, 25-23, 15-13
Corsica/Stickney def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-18, 25-22, 21-25, 20-25, 15-7
Dakota Valley def. Dell Rapids, 25-5, 25-10, 26-24
Deubrook def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-20, 25-7, 25-14
Edgemont def. Hot Springs, 23-25, 25-22, 25-12, 25-6
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Howard, 25-13, 25-13, 25-14
Ethan def. Menno, 25-9, 25-19, 25-11
Freeman def. Mitchell Christian, 25-13, 25-16, 25-23
Leola/Frederick def. North Central, 25-18, 25-22, 10-25, 22-25, 15-9
Marshall, Minn. def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 25-12, 25-7, 25-14
McCook Central/Montrose def. Baltic, 25-18, 25-10, 25-16
McIntosh def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-16, 25-12, 25-8
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Lennox, 23-25, 25-17, 25-22, 25-13
New Underwood def. Wall, 25-17, 25-14, 25-15
Oelrichs def. St. Francis Indian, 25-13, 26-24, 20-25, 25-17
Redfield def. Mobridge-Pollock, 25-14, 25-21, 21-25, 25-22
Sioux Falls Christian def. Yankton, 25-18, 25-18, 25-15
Tri-State, N.D. def. Wilmot, 25-9, 25-19, 26-24
Tri-Valley def. Vermillion, 25-12, 30-28, 25-17
Warner def. Wolsey-Wessington, 25-12, 20-25, 25-18, 25-20

Swedish teen climate activist rallies crowd in South Dakota

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A 16-year-old environmental activist from Sweden urged politicians Monday at a South Dakota appearance to listen to indigenous people on climate change.

Greta Thunberg spoke at a rally in Rapid City that attracted hundreds of people. She spoke out against the proposed path of the Keystone XL pipeline through South Dakota, which she said is "not morally defensible."

"Indigenous peoples have been leading this fight for centuries," Thunberg said. "They have taken care of the planet and they have lived in balance with nature and we need to make sure that they're voices are being heard. We need to listen to them because they have knowledge that is valuable right now."

Also speaking was Tokata Iron Eyes, a 16-year-old from Pine Ridge who planned the rally and invited Thunberg to speak at the Pine Ridge and Standing Rock reservations.

"We are marching for our lives, we are marching for climate justice and we are marching for indigenous rights at the same time — because those two things go hand in hand," Iron Eyes said. "There's no one without the other. Indigenous people need to be in the forefront of the climate movement because we are the frontline communities who are suffering the most from this crisis and Greta knows that."

Thunberg plans to appear Tuesday on the North Dakota side of the Standing Rock Reservation.

A police spokesman tells the Rapid City Journal that up to 400 people attended the rally.

Thunberg traveled to the United States in August on a sailboat to promote her climate change campaign. She garnered international attention when she scolded world leaders at the United Nations.

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

Authorities resume search for missing South Dakota hunter

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have resumed the search for a hunter who has been missing for nearly a week in western South Dakota.

A Pennington County sheriff's spokeswoman says search and rescue workers resumed looking for 66-year-old Larry Genzlinger on Monday after taking Sunday off and searching through snow on Saturday.

She tells the Rapid City Journal that authorities hope to find Genzlinger before more snow arrives.

Genzlinger, who is from Howard, was last seen on the afternoon of Oct. 1. He and his nephew separated to hunt for elk near Deerfield Lake, but Genzlinger never returned to their meeting spot.

Authorities say Genzlinger is diabetic and likely has been without food and insulin.

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

South Dakota Volleyball Polls

By The Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Here is the South Dakota media volleyball poll. Teams are listed with first place votes in parenthesis, record, points and previous ranking.

Class AA

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Watertown	(19)	14-1	99	1
2. S.F. O'Gorman	(1)	13-1	81	2
3. Huron -	10-4	44	RV	
4. S.F. Roosevelt -		11-4	42	RV
5. Brandon Valley -		8-5	20	5

Others receiving votes: : S.F. Washington (10-5) 8, Aberdeen Central (8-4) 6.

Class A

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Dakota Valley	(15)	17-1	95	1
2. Miller (2)	15-1	73	2	
3. S.F. Christian -		15-8	72	3
4. McCook Central-Montrose		-	15-3	37 4
5. Hill City -	21-0	18	5	

Others receiving votes: Parker (16-6) 4, Groton Area (16-4) 1.

Class B

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Northwestern	(20)	26-0	100	1
2. Faulkton Area	-	15-3	76	2
3. Chester Area	-	15-6	59	3
4. Faith -	15-2	33	5	
5. Ethan -	15-3	15	RV	

Others receiving votes: Burke (18-4) 11, Kadoka Area (19-2) 4, Gayville-Volin (17-4) 2.

South Dakota Prep Polls

By The Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Prep Media football polls for the week of Sept. 3 are listed below, ranking the top-five teams in each class. First-place votes received are indicated in parentheses.

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Class 11AAA

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs	
1. Sioux Falls Roosevelt	(22)	5-1	114	2	
2. Sioux Falls Lincoln	(1)	5-1	90	3	
3. Harrisburg	-	5-1	59	4	
4. Brandon Valley	-	4-2	57	1	
5. Sioux Falls O'Gorman	-	4-2	25	5	

Others receiving votes: None.

Class 11AA

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs	
1. Pierre (23)	6-0	115	1		
2. Brookings	-	6-0	92	2	
3. Mitchell	-	3-3	63	3	
4. Huron	-	3-3	47	4	
5. Sturgis	-	2-4	23	NR	

Others receiving votes: Yankton 5.

Class 11A

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs	
1. Tea Area (17)	5-1	109	1		
2. Dell Rapids	(6)	6-0	98	2	
3. Dakota Valley	-	4-2	55	3	
4. Madison	-	3-3	37	5	
5. Canton	-	4-2	24	RV	

Others receiving votes: Tri-Valley 20, West Central 2.

Class 11B

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs	
1. Bridgewater-Emery-Ethan	(24)	6-0	111	1	
2. Winner (4)	7-0	96	2		
3. Webster Area	-	6-0	65	3	
4. St. Thomas More	-	5-1	45	4	
5. Mount Vernon-Plankinton	-	4-2	22	5	

Others receiving votes: McCook Central-Montrose 6.

Class 9AA

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs	
1. Bon Homme	(22)	7-0	114	1	
2. Viborg-Hurley	(1)	6-0	93	2	
3. Deuel	-	5-1	68	4	
4. Parker	-	5-1	46	5	
5. Hamlin	-	5-2	9	RV	

Others receiving votes: Arlington-Lake Preston 6, Baltic 5, Lemmon-McIntosh 4.

Class 9A

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs	
1. Sully Buttes	(16)	6-0	105	1	
2. Canistota-Freeman	(6)	6-0	98	2	
3. Britton-Hecla	-	6-0	71	3	
4. Howard	-	5-1	41	5	
5. Gregory	-	5-1	26	4	

Others receiving votes: Warner 4.

Class 9B

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Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Colman-Egan	(21)	8-0	113	1
2. Dell Rapids St. Mary	(2)	8-0	94	2
3. Wolsey-Wessington	-	8-0	62	3
4. Harding County -	6-2	49	4	
5. Herreid5Selby Area	-	6-2	24	5

Others receiving votes: Alcester-Hudson 3.

Police shoot suspect in Sioux Falls

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls' police chief says an officer-involved shooting began with a call involving an assault with a weapon.

Chief Matt Burns said at a briefing Monday two officers are on administrative leave as a result of the shooting Sunday night in which the suspect was wounded. No officers were injured.

Police were called to a residence about 9:30 p.m. and learned the armed suspect had left the home. Authorities say the man was found a short time later near his residence and ran from officers. Burns says the suspect showed a weapon during a foot chase and was shot. There's no word on his condition. The chief says a handgun was recovered at the scene.

The South Dakota Department of Criminal Investigation is handling the case, per protocol.

South Dakota native commanding new warship

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota native has taken command of the Navy's newest warship.

The USS Cincinnati combat ship was commissioned last week in Gulf Port, Mississippi. Jedediah Kloppel, a 1996 graduate of Spearfish High School, is the ship's new commander.

Kloppel says his highest goal when he joined the Navy was to become captain of a warship, so to reach that goal is amazing. He credits the sailors with whom he works. The crew includes about 70 sailors and officers.

The Black Hills Pioneer reports Kloppel says the ship's primary mission focus is locating and disposing of mines manned and unmanned resources. Recently, several cargo ships were damaged in the Persian Gulf by mines allegedly placed by Iranian assets.

Information from: Black Hills Pioneer, <http://www.bhpioneer.com>

Iran urges Turkey not to go ahead with attack on Syria Kurds

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran is urging Turkey not to go ahead with an attack on Syrian Kurds following President Donald Trump's decision to abandon the Kurdish fighters ahead of the expected Turkish incursion into northeastern Syria.

Iranian state TV reported Tuesday that Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif called his Turkish counterpart, Mevlut Cavusoglu, to express Tehran's opposition to the anticipated Turkish operation.

Zarif urged Turkey to respect Syria's integrity and sovereignty.

Iran, Turkey and Russia have been working together as part of the so-called Astana group on the Syrian civil war, talks that have run parallel to U.N. efforts to find a solution to the conflict.

Trump this week declared that U.S. troops will step aside for an expected Turkish attack on the Syrian Kurds, longtime U.S. allies against the Islamic State group.

Climate activists block roads, protest in Australian cities

By TRISTAN LAVALETTE Associated Press

PERTH, Australia (AP) — Activists blocked major roads and demonstrated in Australian cities Tuesday in a second day of global protests by the Extinction Rebellion movement demanding more urgent actions to

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counter climate change.

In Brisbane, protesters chained themselves to intersections in the city center and three people locked themselves onto barrels filled with concrete. A protester hanging from a harness beneath Brisbane's Story Bridge and brandishing "climate emergency" flags was taken into police custody and charged with unregulated high-risk activity.

Queensland police confirmed 29 people - ranging in age from 19 to 75 - were arrested in the city, and six others were arrested in Sydney after lying in a downtown street intersection.

More than 100 protesters dressed as bees at Sydney's Hyde Park to highlight their claim that insects are under threat due to the impact of humans on the environment.

Some activists camped at Melbourne's Carlton Gardens overnight before marching to a street corner locked down by more than 100 protesters in inclement weather. Police arrested 59 people for blocking an intersection.

"I don't know that shutting the city down necessarily wins you many friends," Victoria premier Daniel Andrews said.

In Perth, about 50 protesters converged outside the offices of The West Australian, the city's daily newspaper. The front page of Tuesday's paper was left intentionally blank for protesters to use as a placard.

Two protesters were arrested after trying to enter the offices of Seven West Media - which houses The West Australian.

A bigger event is planned for Friday, when activists are set to descend on Perth's city center.

The activists are running a "Spring Rebellion" series of demonstrations to pressure the Australian government into declaring a climate emergency.

Founded in Britain last year, Extinction Rebellion has chapters in some 50 countries and wants to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2025.

On Monday, activists with the movement stopped traffic in European cities and smeared themselves and emblems of Wall Street in fake blood and lay in New York streets.

In Berlin, 300 people blocked Potsdamer Platz, placing couches, tables, chairs and flowerpots on the road. They earlier set up a tent camp outside German Chancellor Angela Merkel's office out of dissatisfaction with her government's climate policy.

Merkel's chief of staff, Helge Braun, criticized the group's tactics.

"We all share an interest in climate protection, and the Paris climate targets are our standard in this," he told ZDF television. "If you demonstrate against or for that, that is OK. But if you announce dangerous interventions in road traffic or things like this, of course that is just not on."

Read more stories on climate issues by The Associated Press at <https://www.apnews.com/Climate>

Company making Costco pajamas flagged for forced labor

By MARTHA MENDOZA Associated Press

The Trump Administration is blocking shipments from a Chinese company making baby pajamas sold at Costco warehouses, after the foreign manufacturer was accused of forcing ethnic minorities locked in an internment camp to sew clothes against their will.

The government is also blocking rubber gloves sold by industry leader Ansell whose customers include surgeons, mechanics and scientists around the U.S., accusing a Malaysian manufacturer of staffing its factories with migrants from Bangladesh, Nepal and other countries who went into crushing debt from paying exorbitant recruitment fees. Imports of bone charcoal from Brazil that firms like Plymouth Technology and ResinTech Inc. used to remove contaminants in U.S. water systems, diamonds from Zimbabwe and gold from eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, were stopped as well.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection on Oct. 1 slapped rare detention orders on goods imported from an unprecedented five countries in one day based on allegations that people producing those items might be children, or adults subjected to forced labor. The orders are used to hold shipping containers at the

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U.S. ports of entry until the agency can investigate the claims of wrongdoing.

CBP did not release information about the companies that were importing the goods covered by last week's detention orders. But The Associated Press tracked items to several buyers, including Costco and the U.S. subsidiary of Ansell, an Australian protective gloves manufacturer. The companies said they were not aware that their products were being made with forced labor.

Acting CBP Commissioner Mark Morgan said the orders, the most issued in a single day, "shows that if we suspect a product is made using forced labor, we'll take that product off U.S. shelves."

Custom's action last week is sending ripples globally, with exporters now on notice to improve labor conditions. Domestically, some U.S. importers were shaken to learn their products might have been made by people forced to work against their will or under threat of punishment. Human rights experts warn as many as 25 million people globally are victims of forced labor. In recent years, investigations by media organizations and advocacy groups have tracked products suspected of being made by forced labor as they travel from manufacturers, through brokers and dealers, into the hands of American consumers.

"CBP's announcement is significant because of the unprecedented number of actions and for the message that it sends across corporate supply chains," said labor advocates at Humanity United and Freedom Fund in a joint statement. "We know that myriad imported goods U.S. consumers enjoy every day — from clothing to electronics to chocolate, fruits and vegetables, and other food s— are likely tainted by forced labor in their supply chains. Making real progress to change this will require a concerted effort across and outside of government, including through strong enforcement of existing laws like this."

Until recently, the detentions orders used to block the shipments last week would have been almost impossible.

Before 2016, the Tariff Act — which gave Customs and Border Protection the authority to seize shipments where forced labor was suspected and block further imports — had been used only 39 times over its first 85 years, largely because of two words: "consumptive demand" —meaning if there was not sufficient supply to meet domestic demand, imports were allowed regardless of how they were produced.

After an AP investigation found that seafood caught by slaves in Southeast Asia was ending up in restaurants and markets around the U.S. with impunity because of the loophole, Congress and President Barrack Obama changed the law . Since then, under both the Obama and Trump administrations, CBP has used its detention authority 12 times to stop shipments, including those last week.

Under the law, U.S. importers have 90 days to prove no forced labor was used to produce their products. If they can't, they can either ship their products to another country or surrender them to Customs.

Costco Pajamas

One major case from last week involves China's Hetian Taida Apparel, which AP reported last year was forcing Uigher Muslims and other ethnic minorities to sew clothes for U.S. importers inside a Chinese re-education camp.

This was one of a growing number of internment camps in China's far western Xinjiang region, where by some estimates 1 million Muslims are politically indoctrinated while detained and forced to give up their language and their religion. The Washington-based Worker Rights Consortium published further evidence this year that Hetian Taida was doing business both inside a camp, and at nearby state-subsidized factories where detainees are sent once they are released.

In response, Hetian Taida's U.S. buyer Badger Sportswear, in Statesville, North Carolina, cut off imports and Hetian Taida stopped exporting to the U.S., according to records published by ImportGenius, which tracks shipping activity around the world.

But last month, Costco Wholesale Corp. began importing baby pajamas made by the company. On September 21, 2019 and again on Sept. 26, 2019, Hetian Taida sent shipping containers filled with 100% polyester blanket sleepers for babies and toddlers to the U.S., labeled for Costco, according to shipping records.

In an interview with the AP, Costco officials said "we believe (the baby sleepers) were made in a factory other than the one that was the subject of the CBP detention order. As the facts develop, we're prepared to consider what action we should take relative to the issue of a supplier to our supplier owning factories that may have problems."

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As of last weekend, the microfleece, zippered pajamas, sold under the label Absorba, were seen by an AP reporter on some Costco shelves in packs of two, for \$14.99.

Scott Nova, executive director of Worker Rights Consortium, said he was shocked that Costco agreed to do business with a firm already associated with China's re-education camps. "The Chinese government has created a human rights nightmare for the Uighur people and Hetian Taida has been an active partner in Beijing's brutality. The company's use of forced labor is well documented and CBP is right to act," said Nova.

Reached by phone on Monday, Hetian Taida Chairman Wu Hongbo told the AP that the company will cooperate with U.S. Customs and provide the agency with any documents it needs. Wu declined to answer further questions and said he has chosen to reject all media interview requests.

Rubber Gloves

Meanwhile in Malaysia, which supplies half of the world's medical exam and surgical gloves, government and industry officials were shaken that one of their own — WRP Asia Pacific — had its products detained by Customs for allegations of forced labor.

The news sent Malaysian ministry officials immediately to the U.S. Embassy for information on how much of the rubber glove industry would be affected by the U.S. government actions. It later sparked an anxious rubber glove manufacturer's town hall.

"The industry has since last year worked on social compliance initiatives in order to continuously improve the welfare of the employees in the rubber glove industry," the Malaysian Rubber Export Promotion Council said in a statement.

Workers at WRP and many other rubber glove factories have been forced to pay staggering fees as high as \$5,000 in their home countries, including Bangladesh and Nepal, for jobs that don't meet their promise, said activist Andy Hall, who has advocated on behalf of Southeast Asian migrant laborers. Some of the rubber glove makers don't pay workers for months, house them in unkempt and overcrowded conditions, hold their passports so they can't leave and don't allow them to quit, he said.

Hall said CBP's detention orders "fired a starting gun to warn both Malaysian and Thai governments that rubber manufactured products like gloves, condoms, medical equipment as well as an array of other labor intensive products from the region that are currently manufactured using systemic migrant forced labor cannot be exported to the US."

WRP importers include some of the leading medical suppliers in the U.S. like global giant Ansell, as well as smaller firms like Bay Medical Company Inc. in Brisbane, California.

In a statement, Ansell said it was ending its business with WRP: "Ansell takes the labor practices of these third-party suppliers seriously, and any allegations of forced labor among the company's suppliers are of the highest concern."

Bay Medical's owner David Dorris was visiting WRP last week in Malaysia when he heard, first-hand, that his shipping container had been detained.

"We were completely blindsided," he said. "It's deeply disturbing for me personally and for our company."

Dorris said he hopes the accusations are not true.

Bone charcoal, Gold and Diamonds

Bone charcoal manufacturer, Bonechar Carvão Ativado Ltd. in southern Brazil, said accusations leading to its CBP detention order came from a competitor's unfounded smear campaign. Bone charcoal is made by workers who burn animal bones, mostly cattle, in sealed ovens at temperatures as high as 1,292 °F (700 °C). CBP alleged that Bonechar Carvão has deceptive hiring practices and abusive living and working condition.

Bonechar Carvão owner Francisco Meira said their workers are not abused, and that U.S. Customs blocked the shipment based on false allegations that have been investigated and dismissed by Brazilian authorities. Prosecutors concluded Bonechar was "framed in a criminal scam," according to documents filed with the Office of the US Trade Representative in April 2019.

A handful of U.S. companies imported bone charcoal from the Brazilian company last year, mostly for use

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in water filtration, pigments and sugar refining, according to shipping records from ImportGenius. These included Plymouth Technology in Rochester Hills, Michigan, Ebonex Corporation near Detroit, ResinTech Inc. in West Berlin, New Jersey and American Charcoal Co. in Jackson, Wyoming.

AP reached out to all the firms for comment. Ebonex Corporation, the only company that responded to AP's queries, said they were aware of the trade dispute, and that they didn't believe Bonechar abused workers and wouldn't import from them if they do. The other companies could not be reached for comment.

The CBP action also covers any gold mined at small artisanal mines in eastern Congo and all rough diamonds from the Marange diamond fields in Zimbabwe, areas with a history of conflict and abuse and already subject to other U.S. sanctions. Those imports are harder to track, because they aren't specific companies.

Zimbabwe's government, which insists it has cleaned up its diamond industry, called the U.S. decision "a blatant and shameless lie."

Further north, in the Congo, as much as \$600 million of gold smuggled out annually, often by armed groups responsible for ongoing deadly attacks, according to the United Nations. The Congolese Embassy in Washington D.C. did not respond to calls from the AP.

Advocates lauded the new orders on Congo's gold.

"Customs action sends a strong signal to U.S. tech, financial, and other companies: either do their homework on gold from Congo and countries it is smuggled or refined in, or risk having their shipments stopped at the border," said Sasha Lezhnev at the Washington-based Enough Project, which supports peace in Africa's conflict zones.

Associated Press reporters Luis Alonso in Washington D.C., Yanan Wang and Dake Kang in Beijing, and Diane Jeantet in Rio contributed to this report.

Torres leads Yankees to 5-1 win and sweep of Twins

By DAVE CAMPBELL AP Sports Writer

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The last time the New York Yankees won the World Series, a full decade ago, Gleyber Torres was not yet a teenager in Venezuela.

Boosted by an age-defiant performance by their 22-year-old star second baseman, the Yankees moved one step closer to that elusive trophy.

Torres got New York going with a second-inning home run, scored after each of his two doubles and made a pair of sparkling defensive plays, fueling the Yankees to a 5-1 victory over Minnesota on Monday night that finished yet another Division Series sweep of the Twins.

"He's a really special player," first baseman DJ LeMahieu said. "No moment's too big for him."

Didi Gregorius hit two RBI singles, Cameron Maybin homered and Aroldis Chapman struck out three batters in a five-out save for the Yankees, who completed the three-game wipeout and pushed their postseason winning streak over the Twins to 13 games. LeMahieu, Gregorius and Aaron Judge also made outstanding defensive plays for key outs.

"All we did was to go out there and play our best baseball," said Gregorius, who went 4 for 10 with six RBIs in the series and is 23 for 50 with seven homers and 33 RBIs in his last 14 games against Minnesota.

Following a 103-win regular season and their first AL East title since 2012, the Yankees will start the AL Championship Series on Saturday, either at Houston or at home against Tampa Bay.

"We're focused already to the second series," Torres said.

Thanks largely to their talented young second baseman.

With the Yankees employing an aggressive shift that had him in shallow right field, Torres slid and scooped a sharp grounder by Eddie Rosario with two on in the fifth and managed to throw him out to end the inning. In the seventh, Torres made a slick stop on a grounder by Jorge Polanco and flipped to Zack Britton covering first. Torres even stole third base after his double in the ninth.

"He played so well in this series, and then today, I think, just continued to show the world just how good

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a player he is on both sides of the ball," New York manager Aaron Boone said.

Torres became the fifth-youngest Yankees player to hit a postseason homer, with only Yogi Berra, Mickey Mantle, Tony Kubek and Derek Jeter doing it at younger ages.

The last time the Twins beat the Yankees in a playoff game? Torres was only 7.

AL Central champion Minnesota became the first 100-win team swept in the Division Series and dropped to 2-16 against the Yankees in the playoffs, including 0-13 since winning the 2004 ALDS opener. Outscored 23-7 in the series, the Twins batted just .218. After hitting a record 307 homers, they had just four in the Division Series, all solo shots.

Minnesota went 1 for 12 with runners in scoring position and stranded 11, falling to 3 for 28 in the series with 25 left on base.

"Our guys should be walking out of that clubhouse with our heads held high, and they never stopped playing," manager Rocco Baldelli said. "We got beat over the last three days, and there's no way around that. That's going to happen from time to time, but what an amazing season it was."

Minnesota has lost 16 consecutive postseason games, tying the North American major sports record set by the NHL's Chicago Blackhawks from 1975-79.

Yankees starter Luis Severino pitched out of trouble for four scoreless innings in just his fourth big league appearance after recovering from a spring training lat muscle injury, escaping a bases-loaded, no-outs jam in the second.

Chad Green, the third of five Yankees relievers, got four outs for the win and Chapman froze Nelson Cruz with a 99 mph called third strike to end it. Yankees relievers allowed three runs over 13 1/3 innings in the series.

Rosario went 3 for 4 for the Twins with a homer starting the eighth off Britton, who jammed his right ankle while grabbing Torres' toss in the seventh and left one out later with assistance from head athletic trainer Steve Donahue.

"It shouldn't be anything that bothers me going forward," Britton said.

On this idyllic fall evening that started at 62 degrees, the energy from the over-capacity crowd of 41,121 for the first playoff game at Target Field since the ballpark's 2010 debut season persisted deep into the night, well after Torres took Twins starter Jake Odorizzi deep on a ball that barely cleared the dark green wall in left-center.

Typifying this long-running lopsided matchup, almost all the could-go-either-way plays went to the Yankees, leaving the Twins largely shaking their heads at all their near misses.

The Yankees were impeccable in the field, for starters. LeMahieu made a slick leaping catch of a sharp line drive by Marwin Gonzalez to end the fourth. The 6-foot-7 Judge made a jumping catch in front of the right-field warning track of a smash by Miguel Sanó after Luis Arraez's double in the sixth. Gregorius made a diving snag of fellow shortstop Polanco's drive for the second out of the ninth with two on, flashing a big smile. That kept the tying run from coming to the plate. Then there were the plays by Torres.

Severino, who didn't make his 2019 debut until Sept. 17, started 11 of 17 batters with balls, including all six in the second inning. Still, a far better output than his wild-card game start against the Twins in 2017 when he fell behind 3-0 and was yanked after one out.

"We got killed by paper cuts tonight, solo homers and things we can manage," Minnesota catcher Mitch Garver said. "We just couldn't put up any runs on the board. That's baseball."

BY THE NUMBERS

According to MLB's Statcast, the pitch Rosario hit for a double in the second was the third-highest tagged for an extra-base hit in 2019, at 4.22 feet above the ground. ... Sanó went 1 for 12 with eight strikeouts in the series.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Yankees: With nearly his optimal lineup finally available after an onslaught of injuries, Boone used an identical batting order for three straight games for the second time this year, after Sept. 6-8.

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

Supreme Court takes up cases over LGBT rights

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is set to hear arguments in two of the term's most closely watched cases over whether federal civil rights law protects LGBT people from job discrimination.

The cases Tuesday are the court's first on LGBT rights since Justice Anthony Kennedy's retirement and replacement by Justice Brett Kavanaugh. A decision is expected by early summer 2020, amid the presidential election campaign.

The issue is whether a key provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that bars discrimination in employment because of sex covers LGBT people.

A ruling for employees who were fired because of their sexual orientation or gender identity would have a big impact for the estimated 8.1 million LGBT workers across the country because most states don't protect them from workplace discrimination. An estimated 11.3 million LGBT people live in the U.S., according to the Williams Institute at the UCLA law school.

Kennedy was a voice for gay rights and the author of the landmark ruling in 2015 that made same-sex marriage legal throughout the United States. Kavanaugh generally is regarded as more conservative.

The Trump administration has changed course from the Obama administration and now supports the employers in arguing that the civil rights law's Title 7 does not prohibit discrimination because of sexual orientation or transgender status.

People have been waiting in line outside the court since the weekend to try to snag the few seats the court makes available to the public for arguments.

The justices will first hear appeals in lawsuits filed by Gerald Lynn Bostock, who claims he lost his job working for Clayton County, Georgia, after he began playing in a gay recreational softball league. He lost his case in federal district court and at the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta.

Skydiving instructor Donald Zarda was fired shortly telling a woman he was preparing to take on a dive that he was gay. Zarda, who worked for Altitude Express on New York's Long Island, said he would sometimes reveal his sexual orientation to allay concerns women might have about being strapped together during a dive.

Zarda initially lost his lawsuit, but the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled for him. Zarda has since died.

The other case involves fired transgender funeral home director Aimee Stephens. She lost her job when she told Thomas Rost, owner of the Detroit-area R.G. and G.R. Harris Funeral Homes, that she had struggled with gender identity issues almost her whole life. She was planning to exchange the dark suit and tie she had worn to work for nearly six years as an embalmer and funeral director for a conservative dress or skirt that was required for women who worked for Rost.

Rost told Stephens her plan wouldn't work and let her go. The federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission sued on her behalf and, after losing in a district court, won a ruling in the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati.

During the Obama years, the EEOC had changed its longstanding interpretation of civil rights law to include discrimination against LGBT people. The law prohibits discrimination because of sex, but has no specific protection for sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Trump administration and the employers say Congress could easily settle the matter by amending Title 7 to include LGBT people. Legislation to that effect is pending in Congress, but is not likely to pass the Republican-controlled Senate.

But the workers contend, and the lower courts that have ruled for them have reasoned, that the law as it stands plainly covers sexual orientation and gender identity because discrimination against them is based on generalizations about sex that have nothing to do with their ability to do their jobs.

They also argue that they were fired for not conforming to sex stereotypes, a form of sex discrimination that the Supreme Court recognized 30 years ago.

White House to battle impeachment by stalling, attacking

By JILL COLVIN, ZEKE MILLER and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As House Democrats fire off more subpoenas, the White House is finalizing a high-stakes strategy to counter the impeachment threat to President Donald Trump: Stall. Obfuscate. Attack. Repeat.

Trump aides are honing their approach after two weeks of what allies have described as a listless and unfocused response to the impeachment probe. One expected step is a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi rejecting the inquiry because Democrats haven't held a vote on the matter and moving to all but cease cooperation with Capitol Hill on key oversight matters.

The strategy risks further provoking Democrats in the impeachment probe, setting up court challenges and the potential for lawmakers to draw up an article of impeachment accusing Trump of obstructing their investigations. But as lawmakers seek to amass ammunition to be used in an impeachment trial, the White House increasingly believes all-out warfare is its best course of action.

"What they did to this country is unthinkable. It's lucky that I'm the president. A lot of people said very few people could handle it. I sort of thrive on it," Trump said Monday at the White House. "You can't impeach a president for doing a great job. This is a scam."

House Democrats, for their part, issued a new round of subpoenas on Monday, this time to Defense Secretary Mark Esper and acting White House budget director Russell Vought. Pelosi's office also released an open letter signed by 90 former national security officials who served in both Democratic and Republican administrations, voicing support for the whistleblower who raised concerns about Trump's efforts to get Ukraine to investigate political foe Joe Biden.

"A responsible whistleblower makes all Americans safer by ensuring that serious wrongdoing can be investigated and addressed, thus advancing the cause of national security to which we have devoted our careers," they wrote. "Whatever one's view of the matters discussed in the whistleblower's complaint, all Americans should be united in demanding that all branches of our government and all outlets of our media protect this whistleblower and his or her identity. Simply put, he or she has done what our law demands; now he or she deserves our protection."

The House Intelligence, Oversight and Foreign Affairs committees are investigating Trump's actions pressing Ukraine to investigate Biden and his son, potentially interfering in the 2020 election. The former vice president, for his part, has accused Trump of "frantically pushing flat-out lies, debunked conspiracy theories and smears against me." Trump also withheld hundreds of millions of dollars in military assistance to Ukraine.

The White House has struggled to communicate its message beyond Trump's angry public proclamations and an endless stream of tweets.

Indeed, top officials were absent from the Sunday talk shows, and the sole White House official to appear in public on Monday dodged questions on the inquiry.

Asked whether he believed the president was joking or in any way not serious when he suggested publicly that China should investigate the Bidens, Larry Kudlow, Trump's top economic adviser, responded: "I don't honestly know."

Trump and his team's initial strategy had been to try to undermine the credibility of the intelligence community whistleblower who first raised questions about Trump's conduct with Ukraine, just as they tried to undercut special counsel Robert Mueller and his team. They stressed that the whistleblower had only second- or third-hand information and alleged that the person misrepresented the president's efforts. But now a second whistleblower has come forward to corroborate the information, and a cache of text messages echoes the concerns that have been laid out.

As the impeachment inquiry ramps up, the White House plans to reprise its past response to congressional oversight: open scorn. The president's aides have ignored document requests and subpoenas, invoked executive privilege — going so far as to argue that the privilege extends to informal presidential advisers

who have never held White House jobs — and all but dared Democrats to hold them in contempt.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo blew a Friday deadline for complying with a subpoena. But he said over the weekend that the State Department had sent a letter to Congress as its initial response to the request. He also indicated a new willingness to comply, saying: "We'll obviously do all the things that we're required to do by law."

The letter to Pelosi has been delayed as aides work to finalize legislative and communications plans to go along with the legal strategy.

At the same time, Trump's campaign, which has reported a fundraising surge since the impeachment inquiry, held a curiously timed briefing call with reporters Monday to trumpet its efforts to overhaul the delegate selection process to ensure there is no drama at the Republican National Convention. Trump campaign officials said the effort had nothing to do with concerns about fending off a primary challenge.

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Trump envoy set to testify hasn't always been a Trump backer

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An envoy wrapped up in a congressional impeachment inquiry was a late convert to President Donald Trump, initially supporting another candidate in the Republican primary and once refusing to participate in a fundraiser on his behalf.

But Gordon Sondland nonetheless donated \$1 million to Trump's election effort and ultimately scored a plum post as U.S. ambassador to the European Union.

Now, a whistleblower's complaint and text messages released by another envoy portray Sondland as a potentially important witness to allegations that the president sought to dig up dirt on a rival in the name of foreign policy.

On Tuesday, Sondland heads to Capitol Hill to face questions about the episode, the second time in as many weeks that congressional lawmakers have privately interviewed an ambassador about the president's push to get Ukraine to investigate Democrat Joe Biden ahead of the 2020 presidential election.

Until last week, Sondland was far better known in his home state of Washington than in the nation's capital, where he finds himself embroiled in an impeachment inquiry centered on a July 25 call between Trump and his Ukrainian counterpart. But even if not accustomed to the global spotlight, the wealthy hotelier, philanthropist and generous benefactor of political campaigns has long been comfortable around the well-connected on both sides of the political aisle.

"He very much enjoyed having personal relationships with those in power," said David Nierenberg, a Washington state investment adviser who has known Sondland for years. "Some people collect books. Some people collect cars. He collected those relationships."

Text messages released by House Democrats show Sondland, the U.S. ambassador to the European Union, working with another of Trump's envoys to get Ukraine to agree to investigate any potential interference in the 2016 U.S. election and of the energy company that appointed Biden's son Hunter to its board. In exchange, the American officials dangled the offer of a Washington meeting with Trump for Ukraine's new president. There has been no evidence of wrongdoing by Biden or his son.

The messages also show Sondland trying to reassure a third diplomat that their actions were appropriate, but that they should take precautions by limiting their text messages.

"The President has been crystal clear no quid pro quo's of any kind. The President is trying to evaluate whether Ukraine is truly going to adopt the transparency and reforms that President Zelensky promise during his campaign," he wrote, adding, "I suggest we stop the back and forth by text."

Like the president who picked him, Sondland cut an unconventional path to becoming a Washington power broker.

The son of German immigrants who fled the Nazis in the 1930s and later founded their own dry cleaning

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business in Seattle, Sondland is best known in the Pacific Northwest as the founder of the Provenance Hotels chain. He and his wife also established a foundation that's bestowed millions of dollars on health care and regional arts and culture programs.

While Sondland emerges in the texts as in sync with the president's wishes, he hasn't always been supportive of Trump himself. He took a meandering path to supporting the president, contributing over the years to eventual Trump adversaries like Mitt Romney and John McCain. In 2015, he donated thousands of dollars to a super PAC associated with Jeb Bush, Trump's Republican primary opponent.

But as Trump emerged as the Republican nominee, four limited liability corporations controlled by Sondland gave the Trump inaugural at least \$1 million, according to Federal Election Commission records and business filings in Washington state and Oregon.

He still had concerns, though. In August 2016, Sondland and another hotelier, Bashar Wali, refused to take part in a fundraiser for Trump over his criticism of the Muslim parents of an American soldier killed in combat, The Willamette Week reported. A spokeswoman for his hotel chain told the publication at the time that their names were added without their approval to a draft invitation for the event, and that neither would be participating.

"Mr. Trump's statements have made it clear that his positions do not align with their personal beliefs and values," Buska told the publication. "Neither of them will be hosting or attending any fundraisers for the Trump campaign in Seattle or Portland." Buska did not return a call Monday from The Associated Press.

Nierenberg, who recalled Sondland working with him to promote Bush's presidential campaign, said he was perplexed to learn that Sondland had contributed to Trump's inaugural committee but suspected that it might have had something to do with an ambition to get an ambassadorship.

"I'm profoundly troubled by something that is a lot bigger than Gordon's text messages," he said. "People who try to help the president wind up being thrown under the bus and soiled by their association with a person who is so profoundly narcissistic and ungrateful. Many good people have been hurt by their association with him. I'm saddened to see this happening to Gordon, as it happened to so many people before him."

In his role as the Trump administration's representative to the EU, Sondland has articulated the president's agenda through forthright, occasionally abrasive statements.

He has bristled at what he claims is the slow pace of the EU's executive arm, the European Commission, in trade talks. He's criticized the EU's stance on the Iran nuclear agreement and even waded into the chaos surrounding Brexit, saying Britain has "decided to leave, and we want them to leave in a way that they are free to do business with the United States."

Len Bergstein, a Portland, Oregon, political consultant who had worked with Sondland, described him as "a self-made man who had gotten where he was by putting together complex deals." But he said he remained puzzled about how and why Sondland became entangled in the Ukraine matter.

"The arc of Gordon's story is of a guy who's tremendously successful in everything he touches, reaches for the stars here, and gets in the middle of a little bit of a scandal," Bergstein said.

Associated Press writers Lorne Cook in Brussels, Eugene Johnson in Seattle, Brian Slodysko in Washington and Andrew Selsky in Portland, Oregon, contributed to this report.

Israel's Gideon Saar challenges lengthy Netanyahu Likud rule

By ARON HELLER Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — With a simple tweet, Gideon Saar did what no Israeli politician from the ruling conservative party has done in more than a decade — openly challenge its chief, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The brazen move against the long-serving Israeli leader has solidly positioned the 52-year-old Saar as the Likud party's leading candidate to replace Netanyahu, who is fighting for his survival amid a pending corruption indictment and post-election political paralysis.

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A former aide and senior Cabinet minister under Netanyahu, Saar has long been considered a rising star in Likud and one of the lone independent voices in a party that has, in general, blindly followed its leader.

But that has begun to change. Netanyahu failed in two elections this year to capture a parliamentary majority, and the possibility of a criminal indictment in the coming weeks has hindered his efforts to head a coalition government. Seeking to solidify his status, the premier last week floated the prospect of a snap internal leadership primary in which he expected Likud to endorse him. But he quickly backed down after a two-word Twitter response from Saar: "I'm ready."

It was a risky maneuver in a party that fiercely values loyalty and has had only had four leaders in its 70-plus-year history. Saar followed it up with a more detailed tweet clarifying that he was not out to topple the prime minister, as Netanyahu has long claimed. Still, Saar left no doubt about his ultimate objective.

"No one is denying the prime minister's role as chairman of the Likud," Saar wrote on Twitter. "When there is a race for leadership of the party — as the prime minister himself initiated a few days ago — I will run."

For Saar, it was a move long in the making. A former lawyer and journalist, he was first brought into politics 20 years ago by Netanyahu, who made him his Cabinet secretary during his first term in office.

Saar then established himself as a staunch nationalist who opposed Israel's 2005 withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and resisted the prospect of a Palestinian state. He quickly rose in the Likud ranks, twice finishing first in internal elections for its parliamentary list and enjoying successful stints as education minister and interior minister after Netanyahu returned to power in 2009.

But as with others in Likud who saw their popularity rise, he too began to be perceived by Netanyahu as a threat. Their falling out was capped by Saar's active role in getting Netanyahu's nemesis Reuven Rivlin elected president, over the prime minister's objections.

With his advancement stunted, Saar abruptly quit politics in 2014 to spend more time with his new wife, Israeli TV anchor Geula Even, and their young children.

He made his comeback this year, chosen by Likud members for a senior position on the party's list of candidates in parliamentary elections. While campaigning hard for Likud, Saar has been its only top official to occasionally flaunt Netanyahu — resisting calls to legislate immunity for the prime minister and attending a media conference Netanyahu had called to boycott.

"Gideon has no fear and he's straight as an arrow," said Shimshon Shoshani, Saar's former director general in the Education Ministry.

Though he didn't share Saar's right-wing ideology, Shoshani said they worked in tandem on bold education initiatives and he saw a public servant fit to lead the country.

"He's a man who has a vision, and he knows how to translate that vision into concrete plans," said Shoshani, an 82-year-old veteran of the Israeli bureaucracy.

Despite his hard-line positions, Saar enjoys good relations across the political spectrum and is perceived as a potentially more comfortable partner for a unity government with the rival Blue and White party, which emerged as the largest party in last month's election.

But neither it nor the Likud control a parliamentary majority. A coalition government between the two parties appears to be the best way out of the deadlock, but Blue and White's leader, former military chief Benny Gantz, refuses to sit with Netanyahu because of his expected indictment on corruption charges.

Saar's independent streak has drawn frequent fire from Netanyahu's lackeys, and Netanyahu himself last year accused Saar of orchestrating a "putsch" with Rivlin to unseat him.

Under Israeli law, if neither Netanyahu nor Gantz can form a coalition, a majority of lawmakers could theoretically choose an alternative as prime minister. Saar is widely seen as the politician most capable of winning such support.

With a primary election seemingly off the table for now, Netanyahu is talking about convening a Likud functionary body to stipulate he's the party's sole candidate for prime minister.

Netanyahu's office has refused to comment about his plans. However, Limor Livnat, a former Likud Cabinet minister and Netanyahu ally, decried the conduct against Saar as a show of weakness.

"Instead of cultivating potential successors, Netanyahu has neutralized every Likud member who has shown any independence and has surrounded himself with yes-men," she wrote in the Yediot Ahronot daily.

"Since when is announcing one's candidacy in a party primary construed as a plot against the incumbent party chairman?"

Eran Davidi, a long-time confidante of Saar's, said Saar and Netanyahu have not met in five years and the enmity was likely to cost Saar a Cabinet post if Netanyahu succeeds in forming another government. But if he fails again, and the country heads to an unprecedented third election within a year, Davidi said he expected the long-hidden cracks to finally emerge within Likud.

While others have expressed interest in heading the party after Netanyahu voluntarily steps aside, Saar remains the only one who doesn't intend to wait till that happens.

"He has ambitions and he has said that he came back to politics to lead the country," Davidi said. "Eventually, the Likud members will appreciate that he had the courage to run. That's the qualities of a leader."

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FBI: Inmate is the deadliest serial killer in US history

By TAMARA LUSH and ADRIAN SAINZ Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — The inmate who claims to have killed more than 90 women across the country is now considered to be the deadliest serial killer in U.S. history, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said.

Samuel Little, who has been behind bars since 2012, told investigators last year that he was responsible for about 90 killings nationwide between 1970 and 2005. In a news release on Sunday, the FBI announced that federal crime analysts believe all of his confessions are credible, and officials have been able to verify 50 confessions so far.

Investigators also provided new information and details about five cases in Florida, Arkansas, Kentucky, Nevada and Louisiana.

The 79-year-old Little is serving multiple life sentences in California. He says he strangled his 93 victims, nearly all of them women.

Some of his victims were on the margins of society. Many were originally deemed overdoses, or attributed to accidental or undetermined causes. Some bodies were never found.

The FBI provided 30 drawings of some of his victims — color portraits that were drawn by Little himself in prison. They are haunting portraits, mostly of black women.

The agency also provided videos taken during prison interviews with Little. He described how he spoke about a woman he strangled in 1993 — and how he rolled her down a slope on a desolate road.

"I heard a secondary road noise and that meant she was still rolling," he said.

In another video, he described a victim in New Orleans. "She was pretty. Light colored, honey brown skin," he said with a small smile. "She was tall for a woman. Beautiful shape. And, uh, friendly."

It was 1982, and they met in a club. She left with him in his Lincoln, and they parked by a bayou.

"That's the only one that I ever killed by drowning," he said.

Investigators around the country are still trying to piece together his confessions with unidentified remains and unsolved cases from decades past. In August, he pleaded guilty to murdering four women in Ohio. He was convicted in California of three slayings in 2013 and pleaded guilty to another killing last year in Texas.

Little, who often went by the name Samuel McDowell, grew up with his grandmother in Lorain, Ohio. He was described by investigators as a transient and former boxer who traveled the country preying on drug addicts, troubled women and others.

Authorities in Knox County, Tennessee, said Monday that a woman named Martha Cunningham was likely a victim of Little's.

The Knoxville News Sentinel reported in December that a cold case investigator with the Knox County Sheriff's Office had identified the victim who Little called "Martha." The Knoxville mother's body was found in a wooded area in eastern Knox County in 1975.

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Cunningham's body was found by a pair of hunters on the afternoon of Jan. 18, 1975. She was bruised and nude from the waist down; her pantyhose and girdle bunched around her knees. Her purse and some of her jewelry were missing. Her body appeared to have been dragged into the woods and dumped behind a pine tree, authorities said at the time.

Despite that evidence, detectives at the time attributed Cunningham's death to natural causes within a day of the discovery. The medical examiner's investigative report lists the probable cause of death as "unknown."

Cunningham was a talented singer and pianist who grew up performing with her parents and her six younger siblings in a gospel group known as the Happy Home Jubilee Singers.

Law enforcement in Tennessee had Little in custody 19 years after Cunningham's body was found.

Little was convicted of misdemeanor larceny in 1994 in Nashville, Tennessee, and he was sentenced to 90 days in jail, according to Tennessee Bureau of Investigation criminal records obtained Monday by The Associated Press.

Ted Bundy confessed to 30 homicides from about 1974 to 1978. John Wayne Gacy killed at least 33 boys and young men in the 1970s.

Arguably one of the deadliest globally was an English general practitioner named Harold Shipman, who an investigative panel determined was responsible for the deaths of 250. He was convicted in 2000 in the deaths of 15.

Sainz reported from Memphis, Tennessee.

Scherzer, Zimmerman lead Nats past LA 6-1 to force Game 5

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Sports Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Max Scherzer is 35. So is Ryan Zimmerman.

The Washington Nationals would not be headed to a win-or-go-home Game 5 in their NL Division Series against the Los Angeles Dodgers without them.

"We're a bunch of viejos. We're old guys," Scherzer joked. "Old guys can still do it."

Sure can. And for a guy whose teams used to lose repeatedly in the postseason, Scherzer sure is delivering now.

Every time he's pitched this October, the Nationals have won. His latest outing was a season-saving, seven-inning masterpiece that combined with Zimmerman's three-run parabola of a homer to lift the wild-card Nationals to a 6-1 victory over league-best Los Angeles on Monday night, tying the best-of-five NLDS at two games apiece.

"I was just gassed. I was out," said Scherzer, who threw 109 pitches. "I was empty in the tank."

Scowling and muttering to himself as showers fell for part of his gritty performance, Scherzer allowed one run and four hits while striking out nine — and, most importantly for Washington, he prevented LA from closing out the NLDS after taking a 2-1 lead into Game 4.

"He really gave it all he had," said Anthony Rendon, who drove in three runs for Washington.

With fans who braved rain chanting, "Beat LA!" in the late going, Sean Doolittle and Daniel Hudson combined to get the last six outs for Washington, which will send Stephen Strasburg to the mound against Walker Buehler on Wednesday night at Los Angeles.

"If I could bet, I'd bet on him," Nationals outfielder Adam Eaton said about Strasburg. "He's a very good pitcher. A polished pitcher. To have him healthy and ready to go in that situation only boosts our confidence."

Whichever team advances to the NL Championship Series will face the Braves or Cardinals next. Their NLDS heads to a Game 5 at Atlanta on Wednesday.

Zimmerman showed what he still can do at the plate by taking a 97 mph pitch, the second thrown by reliever Pedro Báez, and turning it into a high-arching 400-foot-plus rainbow that descended onto the green batter's eye in straightaway center field for a three-run shot that made it 5-1.

"Zim put a really good swing on it," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said.

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That was after Julio Urías, LA's third pitcher and the one charged with the loss, began the fifth by serving up a line-drive single to Trea Turner, who finished with three hits. Rendon, who led the majors with 126 RBIs during the regular season but entered Monday with just one in the playoffs, delivered a run-scoring single that made it 2-1.

Rendon also brought home runs via sacrifice flies in the third and sixth.

That was plenty for Scherzer, who clenched his teeth while getting through his last inning after loading the bases by issuing a pair of walks with one out in the seventh. But he got out of that by striking out pinch-hitter Chris Taylor and getting Joc Pederson — whose liner on a first-pitch cut landed about an inch foul — to ground out.

Scherzer shook his arms and yelled as he stalked to the home dugout.

"You can't say enough about his compete," Roberts said. "He just sort of wills his way to getting outs."

The Dodgers' lone run came when Justin Turner connected for a no-doubt-about-it homer to left on Scherzer's 10th pitch, a 95 mph fastball. But from there, facing an LA lineup stacked with a half-dozen lefty hitters, Scherzer displayed the sort of ornery dominance that helped him win three Cy Young Awards.

"He might look like a maniac out there," catcher Kurt Suzuki said, "but he's smart."

Scherzer entered these playoffs on a skid: His teams, Detroit and Washington, had been 0-7 in his most recent seven postseason appearances. But the Nationals won the NL wild-card game last week, which he started; Game 2 of the NLDS, when Scherzer struck out all three batters he faced in relief of Strasburg; and now Game 4.

Scherzer said a Game 5 appearance was out of the question.

"That pushed me all the way to the edge and then some," he said. "So, yeah, I can't imagine any scenario where I'm pitching."

LA's own three-time Cy guy, Clayton Kershaw, will be available to follow Buehler, Roberts said.

The Dodgers are trying to get to the NLCS for the fourth year in a row, while the Nationals have never been to that round since moving from Montreal in 2005. Washington will be playing in its fourth NLDS Game 5 in the past eight years; the Nats are 0-3 so far, with all those losses at home, including against the Dodgers in 2016.

Zimmerman for so many years was the face of the franchise for the Nationals, who made him their first draft pick 14 years ago. So he's been through all their highs, including four NL East titles, and lows, including early exit after early exit in the playoffs. He no longer is an everyday player — Game 4 marked his second start of this postseason — and his teammate-mandated dugout dance after his homer consisted of pretending to use a walker.

"He's been here forever," Rendon said. "Man, he means everything to this city, to this team."

This could be a last hurrah for Zimmerman with the Nationals, who hold an \$18 million contract option on him in 2020. He insists he's not thinking about the future, other than figuring that he'll continue playing beyond this season.

"There's been a lot of people," Zimmerman said, "that think these are my last games."

That prompted Scherzer to pipe up.

"I really don't think," Scherzer said, "these are his last games."

TRAINER'S ROOM

Nationals: CF Victor Robles was out of the starting lineup for the second game in a row after straining his right hamstring in Game 2.

UP NEXT

The Game 5 starting pitchers both already have shown what they can do in this series. Buehler allowed just one hit in six innings and got the win in LA's 6-0 victory at home in Game 1 last Thursday. Strasburg started Game 2 a night later, a 4-2 Washington victory, and took a perfect game into the fifth inning while outdueling Kershaw. Strasburg struck out 10 and gave up just one run in six innings, leaving his career postseason ERA at 0.64 — the best in history for pitchers with at least four starts.

Suit says feds using immigration marriage interviews as trap

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — Alyse and Elmer Sanchez were thrilled when they survived their “green card” interview, a crucial step in obtaining lawful status in the United States. She texted her family from the immigration office as relief washed over her: The officer had agreed that their marriage is legitimate.

Moments later, Elmer was in shackles, detained pending deportation to his native Honduras, leaving her alone with their two little boys.

“We feel it was a trap, a trick, to get us there,” Alyse said.

The Sanchezes have joined five other couples in a class action accusing federal agents of luring families to marriage interviews in Baltimore, only to detain the immigrant spouse for deportation.

Federal regulations allow U.S. citizens like Alyse to try to legalize the status of spouses like Elmer, who has been living in the country illegally. Thousands of families are doing it: Records show the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services approved 23,253 provisional unlawful presence waivers, the final documents spouses, children or parents of citizens need before leaving the country and applying to rejoin their families legally.

But the American Civil Liberties Union says a growing number of officers have “cruelly twisted” the rules by detaining immigrant spouses following marriage interviews. The ACLU is pursuing a similar complaint in Massachusetts and says dozens of detentions also have happened at field offices in New York, Virginia, Florida, Illinois and California.

The Maryland case is assigned to U.S. District Judge George J. Hazel, who already reversed the deportation of a Chinese man detained after a successful marriage interview in Baltimore. Ruling just before Wanrong Lin landed in Shanghai last November, Hazel said the government can’t use the process “as a honeypot to trap undocumented immigrants who seek to take advantage of its protections.”

Alyse told The Associated Press her family’s life “just seemed so perfect.”

She and Elmer, now 31 and 41, began dating in 2013, after he learned she was selling her car and showed up at her door. He bought it, and they married that year. They have two sons, 4 and 2, and live in the Washington suburb of Kensington, Maryland, where he owns a home-remodeling company. She works at a veterinary clinic in nearby Sandy Spring.

“Everyone has their ups and downs in their relationships, but ours has been pretty smooth,” she said. “... He’s been there for every important event in my life. He’s been the most important event in my life.”

Court records show Elmer had been ordered in absentia to be deported in September 2005, after missing an immigration hearing he said he was never notified of. After consulting with lawyers, Alyse submitted paperwork to get her husband a green card in September 2018. Their notice for the May 7 appointment said the required interview was “solely to confirm the bona fides of the couple’s marriage,” according to the lawsuit.

Obama-era regulations provide for this, even for people with deportation orders. The months-long process typically requires couples to demonstrate the legitimacy of their marriage as part of the first step. If the couples pass the interview and earn other approvals, immigrant spouses eventually must travel abroad for a visa interview at a U.S. consulate. Only if they receive a visa can they return to the U.S. legally.

It’s unclear how many individuals have successfully become permanent U.S. residents through the process. It facilitates a proper record for families with mixed citizenship, and it’s meant “to avoid the grievous consequences of forcing a spouse or parent to leave” the U.S. for years while trying to build a lawful immigration case from their home countries, the ACLU says.

Now, the plaintiffs say, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is unlawfully using the process as bait. ACLU of Maryland attorney Nick Steiner said it began in 2017 and seems to happen randomly nationwide.

“Previous practice would allow immigration lawyers to bring their clients to their interviews without fear of arrest because there was an understanding that they were trying to receive Green Cards, notwithstanding the removal orders, and there’s also longstanding guidance that USCIS should be following, that prohibits arrests at interviews,” he said in an email.

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The Homeland Security agencies — through Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokesman Shawn Neudauer and Citizenship and Immigration Services spokeswoman Jane Cowley — said they don't comment on pending litigation. But depositions and emails released in the Massachusetts case suggest federal officials were coordinating to target immigrant spouses at their marriage interviews.

"In my opinion, it makes sense for us to arrest aliens with final removal orders as they represent the end of the line in the removal process," wrote Andrew Graham, a Boston-based ICE officer. "They are typically the easiest to remove, they have the shortest average length of stay, and at the end of the day we are in the removal business and it's our job to locate and arrest them."

The government in its response to the complaint filed in Maryland argued the case should be dismissed because the court lacks jurisdiction and the plaintiffs' "claims are not likely to be successful." It also argued Elmer was "personally served" with a notice for his deportation hearing and that it showed a date, time and place.

The Sanchezes were nervous but hopeful as they told their interviewer how they met and answered questions. At the officer's request, Alyse spoke with her husband in Spanish, on camera. The interviewer confirmed their bona fides — Alyse would get the formal approval in the mail the next day — but said his supervisor "had to come and authenticate the case," according to the lawsuit.

Alyse was told to leave the room. Minutes later, their lawyer told her Elmer had been detained, leaving her sobbing in the hallway.

Six chaotic weeks followed. Elmer was shuffled around detention facilities while Alyse sought counseling and tried to console their 4-year-old, who constantly asked about his dad.

Their attempt to reopen Elmer's case was denied June 3. He began to lose hope in a Louisiana detention center.

"The treatment is so bad that they know that you cannot last there for a long time," he said. "The food is very bad, the light, the icy air. It's like a psychological war that you are put in so that you sign your deportation."

Elmer was released June 19 after the ACLU sought an emergency order to prevent imminent deportation.

Elmer was released June 19 after the ACLU sought an emergency order to prevent imminent deportation.

Trump defends decision to abandon Kurdish allies in Syria

By **ROBERT BURNS, LOLITA C. BALDOR and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Monday cast his decision to abandon Kurdish fighters in Syria as fulfilling a campaign promise to withdraw from "endless war" in the Middle East, even as Republican critics and others said he was sacrificing a U.S. ally and undermining American credibility.

Trump declared U.S. troops would step aside for an expected Turkish attack on the Kurds, who have fought alongside Americans for years, but he then threatened to destroy the Turks' economy if they went too far.

Even Trump's staunchest Republican congressional allies expressed outrage at the prospect of abandoning Syrian Kurds who had fought the Islamic State group with American arms and advice. It was the latest example of Trump's approach to foreign policy that critics condemn as impulsive, that he sometimes reverses and that frequently is untethered to the advice of his national security aides.

"A catastrophic mistake," said Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, the No. 3 House Republican leader. "Shot in the arm to the bad guys," said Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina.

Trump said he understood criticism from fellow GOP leaders but disagreed. He said he could also name supporters, but he didn't.

Pentagon and State Department officials held out the possibility of persuading Turkey to abandon its expected invasion. U.S. officials said they had seen no indication that Turkey had begun a military operation by late Monday.

Trump, in late afternoon remarks to reporters, appeared largely unconcerned at the prospect of Turkish forces attacking the Kurds, who include a faction he described as "natural enemies" of the Turks.

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"But I have told Turkey that if they do anything outside of what we would think is humane ... they could suffer the wrath of an extremely decimated economy," Trump said.

In recent weeks, the U.S. and Turkey had reached an apparent accommodation of Turkish concerns about the presence of Kurdish fighters, seen in Turkey as a threat. American and Turkish soldiers had been conducting joint patrols in a zone along the border. As part of that work, barriers designed to protect the Kurds were dismantled amid assurances that Turkey would not invade.

Graham said Turkey's NATO membership should be suspended if it attacks into northeastern Turkey, potentially annihilating Kurdish fighters who acted as a U.S. proxy army in a five-year fight to eliminate the Islamic State's so-called caliphate. Graham, who had talked Trump out of a withdrawal from Syria last December, said letting Turkey invade would be a mistake of historic proportion and would "lead to ISIS reemergence."

This all comes at a pivotal moment of Trump's presidency. House Democrats are marching forward with their impeachment inquiry into whether he compromised national security or abused his office by seeking negative information on former Vice President Joe Biden, a political rival, from Ukraine and other foreign countries.

As he faces the impeachment inquiry, Trump has appeared more focused on making good on his political pledges, even at the risk of sending a troubling signal to American allies abroad.

"I campaigned on the fact that I was going to bring our soldiers home and bring them home as rapidly as possible," he said.

The strong pushback on Capitol Hill prompted Trump to recast as well as restate his decision, but with renewed bombast and self-flattery.

He promised to destroy the Turkish economy "if Turkey does anything that I, in my great and unmatched wisdom, consider to be off limits."

Sunday night the White House had said the U.S. would get its troops out of the way of the Turkish forces. That announcement came after Trump spoke by phone with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

One official described that White House announcement as a botched effort appeared aimed at making Trump look bold for ending a war. The official said attempts by the Pentagon and State Department to make the statement stronger in its opposition to Turkey's military action were unsuccessful.

That official, like others interviewed, was not authorized to speak on the record and was granted anonymity to comment.

The official added that Erdogan appeared to be reconsidering his earlier resolve because he was relatively quiet Monday. But damage done to relations with the Kurds could be irreparable.

An official familiar with the Erdogan call said the Turkish president was "ranting" at Trump, saying the safe zone was not working and that Turkey couldn't trust the U.S. military to do what was needed. And in reaction, Trump said the U.S. wanted no part of an invasion and would withdraw troops.

The announcement threw the military situation in Syria into fresh chaos and injected deeper uncertainty into U.S. relations with European allies. A French official, speaking on condition of anonymity on a sensitive topic, said France wasn't informed ahead of time. A Foreign Ministry statement warned Turkey to avoid any action that would harm the international coalition against the Islamic State and noted the Kurds had been essential allies. It entirely omitted any mention of the United States.

U.S. involvement in Syria has been fraught with peril since it started in 2014 with the insertion of small numbers of special operations forces to recruit, train, arm and advise local fighters to combat the Islamic State. Trump entered the White House in 2017 intent on getting out of Syria, and even before the counter-IS military campaign reclaimed the last militant strongholds early this year, he declared victory and said troops would leave.

Trump defended his latest decision, acknowledging in tweets that "the Kurds fought with us" but adding that they "were paid massive amounts of money and equipment to do so."

"I held off this fight for almost 3 years, but it is time for us to get out of these ridiculous Endless Wars, many of them tribal, and bring our soldiers home," he wrote.

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In his later remarks, Trump asserted that American troops in Syria are not performing useful work. They are, he said, "not fighting." They are "just there," he said.

Among the first to move were about 30 U.S. troops from two outposts who would be in the immediate area of a Turkish invasion. It's unclear whether others among the roughly 1,000 U.S. forces in northeastern Syria would be moved, but officials said there was no plan for any to leave Syria entirely.

Bulent Aliriza, director of the Turkey Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said that a U.S. withdrawal from Syria would be a major boost to Russia's position there.

He added that other allies in the region, including the Kurds, will "look at this withdrawal as U.S. unwillingness to stand up for its rights and maintain its alliances in the region."

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., another strong Trump supporter, said in an appearance on "Fox & Friends" that he had concerns.

"I want to make sure we keep our word for those who fight with us and help us," he said, adding that, "If you make a commitment and somebody is fighting with you, America should keep their word."

Former Trump administration officials also expressed concern.

Nikki Haley, who served as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said the U.S. "must always have the backs of our allies, if we expect them to have our back. ... Leaving them to die is a big mistake."

Turkey considers the People's Protection Units, or YPG, an extension of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, which has waged an insurgency against Turkey for 35 years.

With contributions from Associated Press writers Zeynep Bilginsoy in Istanbul; Zeina Karam and Sarah El Deeb in Beirut; and Lori Hinnant in Paris.

Lions kill cattle, so people kill lions. Can the cycle end?

By CHRISTINA LARSON AP Science Writer

LOIBOR SIRET, Tanzania (AP) — Saitoti Petro scans a dirt road in northern Tanzania for recent signs of the top predator on the African savannah. "If you see a lion," he warns, "stop and look it straight in the eyes — you must never run."

Petro points to a fresh track in the dirt, a paw print measuring nearly the length of a ballpoint pen. He walks along a few more yards reading tracks the way an archaeologist might decipher hieroglyphics, gleaning meaning from the smudges in the dust. A large male passed here within the past two hours, he says. "Here he's walking slowly, then you see his claws come out in the tracks. Perhaps he's running after prey, or from something else."

The tall, slender 29-year-old is marching with four other young men who belong to a pastoralist people called the Maasai. Beneath the folds of his thick cloak, he carries a sharpened machete. Only a few years ago, men of Petro's age would most likely have been stalking lions to hunt them — often, to avenge cattle that the big cats had eaten.

But as Petro explains, the problem now is that there are too few lions, not too many. "It will be shameful if we kill them all," he says. "It will be a big loss if our future children never see lions."

And so he's joined an effort to protect lions, by safeguarding domestic animals on which they might prey.

Petro is one of more than 50 lion monitors from communities on the Maasai steppe who walk daily patrol routes to help shepherds shield their cattle in pasture, with support and training from a small, Tanzanian nonprofit called African People & Wildlife. Over the past decade, this group has also helped more than a thousand extended households to build secure modern corrals made of living acacia trees and chain-link fence to protect their livestock at night.

This kind of intervention is, in a way, a grand experiment. The survival of lions — and many other threatened savannah species, from cheetahs to giraffes to elephants — likely depends on finding a way for people, livestock and wild beasts to continue to use these lands together, on the plains where the earliest humans walked upright through tall grass.

Across Africa, the number of lions has dropped by more than 40 percent in two decades, according to

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data released in 2015 by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, putting lions on the list of species scientists consider “vulnerable” to extinction. They have disappeared from 94 percent of the lands they used to roam in Africa, what researchers call their “historic range.”

The biggest reason for lion’s retreat is that their former grasslands are being converted into cropland and cities. Losing habitat is the top risk to wildlife in Africa and globally. But on open savannahs where lions still roam, poaching for body parts and revenge killings are the next most significant threats.

Lions are respected as worthy adversaries in Maasai culture. Anyone who harms more than nine is said to be cursed. But avenging the death of a prize cow wins respect, like dueling to avenge a lost family member.

These retaliatory killings have become more deadly in recent years, as many herdsman have switched from spearing individual lions to leaving out poisoned carcasses, which can decimate a pride of lions, along with other animals that might feed on tainted meat.

But what if the triggering conflicts could be prevented? “Our elders killed and almost finished off the lions,” Petro says. “Unless we have new education, they will be extinct.”

And so he hikes the steppe, looking to teach people how to live more peaceably alongside large predators.

On a July morning, he stops suddenly and points toward a tree-lined ravine. The tracks he’s been following have veered off the road, so he thinks the lion moved toward a stream in the gorge. The footprints must be recent because there are not yet bits of grass strewn on top.

As his team walks toward the gully, they hear cow bells jingling. “We should go and check if anyone is coming this way,” says Petro. “We need to warn them.” They soon find two young shepherds — pre-teen boys — sitting under an acacia tree, playing with small yellow fruit like balls in the dirt. Their two dozen cattle are meandering toward the ravine.

Petro kneels to greet the boys, then advises them about the lion. The men help the boys to turn their herd around, with a high whistle the cows recognize, sending them grazing in a safer direction. Petro knows most of the families near here; later, he will make a home visit.

In most corners of the planet, humans and big predators don’t easily co-exist. When forests and savannahs are converted to farms and cities, the land ceases to be suitable habitat for most large animals. And predators lingering on the edge of cultivated lands are often demonized, or exterminated — witness the heated debates about allowing gray wolves on the margins of Yellowstone and the French Pyrenees.

But on the elevated plains of northern Tanzania, pastoralists have long lived alongside wildlife: grazing their cows, goats and sheep on the same broad savannahs where zebras, buffalo and giraffe munch grass and leaves — and where lions, leopards and hyenas stalk these wild beasts.

It’s one of the few places left on Earth where coexistence may still be possible, but it’s a precarious balance. And what happens here in Tanzania will help determine the fate of the species; the country is home to a more than a third of the roughly 22,500 remaining African lions, according to data from researchers at the University of Oxford.

There’s some evidence that recent steps taken to mitigate conflict are working.

In 2005, the village of Loibor Siret (population 3,000) on the Maasai steppe saw about three predator attacks on livestock each month. In 2017, the number had declined to about one a month. The biggest change in that interval was that about 90 village households built reinforced corrals, which are much more effective than the older barriers of tangled thorn bushes at keeping predators away from livestock.

Although protecting animals in pasture is a trickier challenge, the lion monitors helped to defuse 14 situations in 2017 that might have led to lion hunts, according to records collected by African People & Wildlife.

While the number of lion hunts in the region is dropping, they do still sometimes happen. In July, one of the field patrols submitted a report about a recent revenge killing, including a photograph of a dead lion with its four paws and tail removed — an old ritual for collecting talismans.

Despite such setbacks, the local lion population is beginning to bounce back.

Within a study area monitored by the nonprofit Tarangire Lion Project, the monthly count of lions hit a low of around 120 lions in fall 2011 — down from about 220 lions in 2004. But the population started to recover in 2012, reaching more than 160 lions by 2015.

“Once you make lions safe, their numbers can recover quickly,” because lions reproduce rapidly, says

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Laly Lichtenfeld, an ecologist and co-founder of African People & Wildlife.

Says Craig Packer, a biologist and founder of the Lion Center at the University of Minnesota, who is not involved in the project: "These conflict-mitigation efforts clearly help lions, although there's always the question of whether they're going to last 20 or 50 years with a growing human population."

Wildlife refuges are sometimes not a sufficient answer — at least for species that require large ranges.

Within the boundaries of Tanzania's Tarangire National Park, lions sleep on open river banks and dangle from tree branches — they are, after all, cats — often ignoring the squadrons of open-top safari tour vehicles passing by. Here, they are mostly safe. But the protected area of the park is only a portion of the land that these lions and their prey depend upon. Large migratory animals range widely, and on the parched savannahs of eastern Africa, they mostly follow the rains.

The zebras and wildebeests that spend the dry months inside Tarangire National Park move outside the park during the wet winter months, where they munch on more nutritious grass and give birth to most of their calves. And lions, leopards and cheetah trail behind them, roaming widely on the Maasai steppe.

"The animals in Tarangire spend so much of the year outside the park, you could never put a fence around it — a fence that blocked migration in and out of the park would kill it," says Packer.

Increasingly scientists are realizing that lands outside national parks must also be considered in conservation strategies. In a study published in March in the journal *Science*, researchers linked the access and condition of lands surrounding Tanzania's famous Serengeti-Mara ecosystem to the health of wildlife inside the park. Overgrazing and fire suppression on the edge of the park, for instance, "squeezed" the animals into a smaller area within it, they found.

"The current way of just thinking about the borders of protected areas isn't working," says Michiel Veldhuis, an ecologist at University of Leiden in the Netherlands and a study co-author. When devising conservation strategies, he says, "we need to think about how to include people living next to protected areas."

Those people can be skeptical. Some people in nearby villages say they aren't happy about Petro's efforts.

"We don't want to hear lions roar at night," says Neema Loshiro, a 60-year-old woman selling handmade jewelry spread out on a cloth on the street of Loibor Siret. The only wildlife she wants nearby are giraffes and impalas because "they're pretty and don't attack people or eat crops."

Still, attitudes are evolving. Petro Lengima Lorkuta, Saitoti Petro's 69-year-old father, killed his first lion when he was 25, hurling a spear after the cat attacked his largest bull. In those days, he says, "If you killed a lion it showed that you were a strong warrior."

Since his extended family moved into a new ranch home and erected a reinforced corral four years ago, he says they have not lost any livestock to predators. "The modern fence is very helpful," he says.

"Now I love to see lions," just not too near his home — and he supports his son's efforts to educate neighbors about avoiding predator conflicts.

Petro still rises each day at dawn to take the cattle to pasture, as his ancestors have done for generations. But the culture is changing in many ways: Rather than allowing his father to arrange his marriages, as most young Maasai men do, Petro wooed his two brides.

"We expect the growing generation to get more education than us," he says, "and therefore to know the importance of wild animals."

This Associated Press series was produced in partnership with the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Airline went into records after Max crash, engineer says

By BERNARD CONDON Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Ethiopian Airlines' former chief engineer says in a whistleblower complaint filed with regulators that the carrier went into the maintenance records on a Boeing 737 Max jet a day after it crashed this year, a breach he contends was part of a pattern of corruption that included fabricating documents, signing off on shoddy repairs and even beating those who got out of line.

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Yonas Yeshanew, who resigned this summer and is seeking asylum in the U.S., said that while it is unclear what, if anything, in the records was altered, the decision to go into them at all when they should have been sealed reflects a government-owned airline with few boundaries and plenty to hide.

"The brutal fact shall be exposed ... Ethiopian Airlines is pursuing the vision of expansion, growth and profitability by compromising safety," Yeshanew said in his report, which he gave to The Associated Press after sending it last month to the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and other international air safety agencies.

Yeshanew's criticism of Ethiopian's maintenance practices, backed by three other former employees who spoke to AP, makes him the latest voice urging investigators to take a closer look at potential human factors in the Max saga and not just focus on Boeing's faulty anti-stall system, which has been blamed in two crashes in four months.

It's not a coincidence, he said, that Ethiopian saw one of its Max planes go down when many other airlines that fly the plane suffered no such tragedy.

Ethiopian Airlines portrayed Yeshanew as a disgruntled former employee and categorically denied his allegations, which paint a blistering counterpoint to the perception of the airline as one of Africa's most successful companies and a source of national pride.

Yeshanew alleged in his report and interviews with AP that Ethiopian is growing too fast and struggling to keep planes in the air now that it is carrying 11 million passengers a year, four times what it was handling a decade ago, including flights to Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington and Newark, New Jersey. He said mechanics are overworked and pressed to take shortcuts to get planes cleared for takeoff, while pilots are flying on too little rest and not enough training.

And he produced an FAA audit from three years ago that found, among dozens of other problems, that nearly all of the 82 mechanics, inspectors and supervisors whose files were reviewed lacked the minimum requirements for doing their jobs.

Yeshanew included emails showing he urged top executives for years to end a practice at the airline of signing off on maintenance and repair jobs that he asserts were done incompletely, incorrectly or not at all. He said he stepped up his efforts following the Oct. 29, 2018, crash of a Lion Air Boeing 737 Max in Indonesia that killed all 189 people on board. One email Yeshanew sent to CEO Tewolde Gebremariam urged him to "personally intervene" to stop mechanics from falsifying records.

Those pleas were ignored, he said. And after the March 10, 2019, nosedive crash of an Ethiopian Boeing 737 Max outside Addis Ababa that killed all 157 people on board, Yeshanew said it was clear the mindset had not changed.

Yeshanew said in an interview that on the day after the crash, Ethiopian's Chief Operating Officer Mesfin Tasew openly agonized that the airline could get blamed because of its maintenance "issues" and "violations," and he ordered that records on the downed Max plane be checked for "mistakes."

"We pray to God that this will not point to our fault," Yeshanew quoted the COO as saying.

That same day, Yeshanew said in his report, someone logged into the computerized maintenance record-keeping system, specifically on the records from the downed plane that detailed a flight-control problem — "a roll to the right" — that pilots had reported three months earlier. Yeshanew included in his report a screenshot of a directory of the records related to the problem that showed a final entry that was time-stamped March 11.

Yeshanew said he didn't know what was in the records previously or if they were changed, only that the records were left to say that tests had been done and the issue had been resolved. While he doubted that the flight-control problem brought the plane down, he said any changes to the records would call into question the actual condition of the airplane at the time of the crash as well as the integrity of the airline as a whole.

Aviation experts say that after a crash, maintenance records — specifically, log books and task cards containing notes by pilots and fixes by mechanics — are required by international air safety regulators to be immediately sealed off, and any attempt to manipulate them is a serious violation tantamount to trampling on a crime scene.

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"If there is an accusation that you went into records, it means you're hiding something, you have something to hide," said John Goglia, a former member of the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board and an expert in aircraft maintenance.

In its response to AP, Ethiopian denied a history of tampering and shoddy maintenance, and denied its COO or anyone else ordered someone to change the maintenance records on the downed 737 Max. It said that as soon as the accident happened, those documents were sealed, stored in a secure place and delivered to Ethiopia's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau. It added that while "a technician tried to see the aircraft records," its review found no data was changed or updated.

Ethiopian is Africa's biggest airline, is profitable and is one of only a few on the continent that have passed the tests necessary to allow their planes to fly into Europe and North America, with a relatively good safety record.

The company confirmed Yeshanew served as director of aircraft engineering and planning but said he was demoted because of a "serious weaknesses in leadership, discipline and poor integrity."

"He is a disgruntled ex-employee who fabricated a false story about Ethiopian Airlines, partly to revenge for his demotion while working in Ethiopian, and partly to probably develop a case to secure asylum in the USA," the airline said in an email to AP. "We would like to confirm once more that all his allegations are false and baseless."

Yeshanew and his attorney, Darryl Levitt, said that he was never demoted and, in fact, his steady rise through the ranks over a 12-year career at Ethiopian continued even into this year when he was tapped to oversee a new venture making aircraft parts and investigate two pilots who botched a landing in Uganda and nearly skidded into Lake Victoria. Yeshanew said his recommendations after that incident — fewer inexperienced pilots in cockpits and better training — went unheeded.

Yeshanew also attached internal emails to the report that he contends show faulty paperwork and repairs, and investigations from parts suppliers that point to similar errors, including ones that led to two cockpit windows shattering in flight, a de-icing mechanism burning, and missing or incorrect bolts on key sensors.

"I personally saw that many task cards are signed without even doing what is written in the instruction," Yeshanew wrote to COO Tasew in 2017. "Such violations may even result in a serious safety issue."

Others have made similar claims. In 2015, an anonymous employee told an FAA safety hotline that mechanics often cleared planes for takeoff with "unresolved" mechanical issues. It was unclear if the complaint led to any action by the FAA or the airline.

Three other former Ethiopian employees made such allegations to AP, including one who provided documents that he said show faulty repairs and paperwork errors stretching back years, and another who said mechanics felt they had no choice but to "pencil whip it" — industry jargon for signing off on repairs never done.

"They would actually lie about it," said Franz Rasmussen, who flew for the airline for two years before leaving in 2016. "There was a philosophy: You can't ground an airplane — it's go, go, go."

Among the allegations in Yeshanew's report is that Ethiopian maintains a jail-like detention center on the grounds of its Addis Ababa headquarters that it used to interrogate, intimidate and sometimes beat up employees who got out of line. Yeshanew said he knows of at least two mechanics beaten up in the past three years after falling out of favor with the company, and he feared the same fate awaited him.

Yeshanew said in the report and later interviews with AP that he was taken to the single-story, dirt-floored detention center in July on suspicion he was talking to news organizations, and after 10 hours of questioning was told he would be thrown into jail "like all the other persons before" him if he didn't keep quiet. He took that as a threat of torture.

"If you are in jail, it means you'll be beaten, you will be tortured," he told AP. "There is no difference in the current political system of Ethiopia."

Four days later, Yeshanew fled to the U.S. with this wife and two children and settled in the Seattle area.

A former spokesman for the airline union, Bekele Dumecha, told AP that he met with more than a dozen workers over six years who had been beaten at the same detention center, including one of the alleged victims identified by Yeshanew. Dumecha said he saw that person an hour after he was released, bruised

and staggering.

"He couldn't walk properly," said Dumecha, who is now living in Minnesota and also seeking asylum. "He was mentally and physically destroyed."

Human Rights Watch said in an April report that torture in jails and "unmarked detention centers" have long been a "serious and underreported problem" in Ethiopia, and its former researcher there said he personally interviewed three airline workers who alleged they were tortured by the government, the most recent three years ago.

"It was all about ensuring the positive image of the company and the country is kept intact," said HRW researcher Felix Horne. "Many people who tried to speak out against government-controlled companies were inevitably thrown in prison and beaten up."

In its statement, Ethiopian Airlines denied that a detention center for torture exists and offered to show an AP reporter around the grounds. But after AP sought such a tour this past week, Ethiopian officials said it would take several weeks to arrange.

Yeshanew's allegations are the latest to cast a light on factors other than what has become the overriding focus of the Max crash investigations — a system on the plane called MCAS, for Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System, that automatically pushes the plane's nose down when it is at risk of stalling.

Preliminary reports indicate it misfired in both fatal crashes, with pilots losing control of the planes as they fought against it. Regulators have grounded nearly 400 737 Max planes while Boeing tries to fix the problem.

Another whistleblower from Ethiopian, veteran pilot Bernd Kai von Hoesslin, told the AP in May that after Indonesia's Lion Air crash, he pleaded with Ethiopian's top executives to give pilots better training on the Max, predicting that if pilots are not sufficiently drilled on Boeing's protocols for how to disable the autopilot system in the event of a misfire, "it will be a crash for sure."

Ethiopian has said the pilots followed all the steps Boeing laid out. But the preliminary report on the crash showed they deviated from the directives and made other mistakes, notably flying the plane at an unusually high speed and inexplicably reactivating the anti-stall system shortly after manually overriding it. Six minutes into the Max flight, the plane with passengers from nearly a dozen countries cratered into the ground about 40 miles from the airport.

For the 39-year-old Yeshanew, the decision to become a whistleblower has come at a heavy price. He is leaving behind relatives and a job that he called "the dream of my life," one with prestige and a big enough salary for him to buy a three-story house. He is not sure of what kind of job he can get in the U.S., or if he will even be granted asylum.

Ultimately, he said, he has dreams of returning to his native Ethiopia and even going back to work at Ethiopian Airlines.

"I have to reveal the truth, the reality to the world, so that the airline will be fixed," he said, "because it can't continue like what it is doing now."

Condon can be reached on Twitter at @BernardFCondon.

3 win Nobel Prize for showing how cells sense low oxygen

By MALCOLM RITTER and MARIA CHENG Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Two Americans and a British scientist won a Nobel Prize on Monday for discovering details of how the body's cells sense and react to low oxygen levels, providing a foothold for developing new treatments for anemia, cancer and other diseases.

Drs. William G. Kaelin Jr. of Harvard Medical School and the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Gregg L. Semenza of Johns Hopkins University and Peter J. Ratcliffe at the Francis Crick Institute in Britain and Oxford University won the prize for advances in physiology or medicine.

The scientists, who worked largely independently, will share the 9 million kronor (\$918,000) cash award, said the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm.

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They "revealed the mechanism for one of life's most essential adaptive processes," the Nobel committee said.

Cells can encounter lowered oxygen not only from situations like living at high altitudes, but also from things like a wound that interferes with local blood supply. Their response triggers reactions that include producing red blood cells, generating new blood vessels and fine-tuning the immune system.

The Nobel committee said scientists are focused on developing drugs that can treat diseases by either activating or suppressing the oxygen-sensing machinery. Such manipulation could help in attacking cancer cells, experts said.

Another payoff is pills to boost production of red blood cells in anemia, which can appear in people with chronic kidney disease. One such drug has been approved in China and Japan and a filing for approval in the U.S. is expected soon, Kaelin said.

Still other potential targets include heart attack and stroke, and a condition of reduced blood flow in the limbs that can lead to amputation, the researchers said.

Kaelin, 61, said he was half-asleep when the phone rang Monday morning with the news of his award.

"I don't usually get phone calls at 5:00 in the morning, so, naturally, my heart started racing and I could see the call was from Stockholm," he said. "And so I think at that point I almost had an out-of-body type of experience."

Kaelin is paid by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, which also supports AP's Health and Science department.

Ratcliffe, 65, said he learned the news after he was summoned out of a meeting this morning by his secretary, who had "a look of urgency."

Trained as a kidney specialist, Ratcliffe said his research began when he and colleagues simply wanted to figure out how cells sense oxygen.

"I thought it was a definable problem and just thought we'd find out how it worked," he said. It was about two years into their research program, which began in 1990, that they realized the discovery had much wider significance, Ratcliffe said.

"We saw that it wasn't just cells in the kidney that know how to sense oxygen, but all cells in the body. ... There are hundreds and thousands of processes the body uses to adapt to and regulate its oxygen levels."

He said while some promising drugs have been developed, it will be years before it's clear whether such discoveries are going to change the lives of tens of thousands.

In Baltimore, Semenza, 63, said he slept through the Nobel committee's initial phone call. "By the time I got to the phone it was too late," he said. He went back to sleep but was able to answer the second call from Stockholm.

He said kidney cancer may be the first malignancy in which a drug based on the prize-winning work might make chemotherapy more effective, and that he hopes many other cancers will follow.

Speaking at a news conference at Johns Hopkins University's School of Medicine, Semenza paid tribute to his biology teacher, Rose Nelson, at Sleepy Hollow High School in Sleepy Hollow, N.Y., for inspiring his pursuit of medicine.

"She used to say, 'Now when you win your Nobel Prize, I don't want you to forget that you learned that here,'" he said. "It's my great sadness that she is not still alive to share the moment because I know it would have meant a lot to her. She was my inspiration."

"That's the importance of teachers," he added. "To make that kind of spark."

Steven McKnight of the UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas noted that the process discovered by the three researchers is widespread in the animal kingdom, found even in the worm. He said the honored work is "of a heroic nature."

Last year, James Allison of the United States and Tasuku Honjo of Japan won the 2018 Nobel Prize for Medicine for their work in immunotherapy, activating the body's natural defense system to fight tumors.

Monday's announcement kicked off this year's Nobel Prizes. The physics prize will be handed out Tuesday, followed by the chemistry prize on Wednesday. This year there is a double-header for the Nobel

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Literature Prize — one each for 2018 and 2019 — which will be awarded Thursday. The Peace Prize will be announced on Friday.

The 2018 Nobel Literature prize was suspended after a sex abuse scandal rocked the Swedish Academy, the body that awards the literature prizes, so two prizes are being awarded this year.

The economics prize will be awarded next Monday. Officially known as the Bank of Sweden Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, it wasn't created by Nobel, but by Riksbanken, Sweden's central bank, in 1968.

The laureates will receive their awards at elegant ceremonies in Stockholm and Oslo on Dec. 10 — the anniversary of Nobel's death in 1896.

Read more stories on the 2019 Nobel Prizes by The Associated Press at <https://www.apnews.com/NobelPrizes>

Cheng reported from London. Associated Press writers Regina Garcia Cano in Baltimore, Christopher Chester in New York, Michael Warren in Atlanta, Jan M. Olsen in Copenhagen, Denmark, and David Keyton in Stockholm contributed to this report.

After stumbles, White House aims to hone impeachment defense

By JILL COLVIN, ZEKE MILLER and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As House Democrats fire off more subpoenas, the White House is finalizing a high-stakes strategy to counter the impeachment threat to President Donald Trump: Stall. Obfuscate. Attack. Repeat.

Trump aides are honing their approach after two weeks of what allies have described as a listless and unfocused response to the impeachment probe. One expected step is a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi rejecting the inquiry because Democrats haven't held a vote on the matter and moving to all but cease cooperation with Capitol Hill on key oversight matters.

The strategy risks further provoking Democrats in the impeachment probe, setting up court challenges and the potential for lawmakers to draw up an article of impeachment accusing Trump of obstructing their investigations. But as lawmakers seek to amass ammunition to be used in an impeachment trial, the White House increasingly believes all-out warfare is its best course of action.

"What they did to this country is unthinkable. It's lucky that I'm the president. A lot of people said very few people could handle it. I sort of thrive on it," Trump said Monday at the White House. "You can't impeach a president for doing a great job. This is a scam."

House Democrats, for their part, issued a new round of subpoenas on Monday, this time to Defense Secretary Mark Esper and acting White House budget director Russell Vought. Pelosi's office also released an open letter signed by 90 former national security officials who served in both Democratic and Republican administrations, voicing support for the whistleblower who raised concerns about Trump's efforts to get Ukraine to investigate political foe Joe Biden.

"A responsible whistleblower makes all Americans safer by ensuring that serious wrongdoing can be investigated and addressed, thus advancing the cause of national security to which we have devoted our careers," they wrote. "Whatever one's view of the matters discussed in the whistleblower's complaint, all Americans should be united in demanding that all branches of our government and all outlets of our media protect this whistleblower and his or her identity. Simply put, he or she has done what our law demands; now he or she deserves our protection."

The House Intelligence, Oversight and Foreign Affairs committees are investigating Trump's actions pressing Ukraine to investigate Biden and his son, potentially interfering in the 2020 election. The former vice president, for his part, has accused Trump of "frantically pushing flat-out lies, debunked conspiracy theories and smears against me." Trump also withheld hundreds of millions of dollars in military assistance to Ukraine.

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The White House has struggled to communicate its message beyond Trump's angry public proclamations and an endless stream of tweets.

Indeed, top officials were absent from the Sunday talk shows, and the sole White House official to appear in public on Monday dodged questions on the inquiry.

Asked whether he believed the president was joking or in any way not serious when he suggested publicly that China should investigate the Bidens, Larry Kudlow, Trump's top economic adviser, responded: "I don't honestly know."

Trump and his team's initial strategy had been to try to undermine the credibility of the intelligence community whistleblower who first raised questions about Trump's conduct with Ukraine, just as they tried to undercut special counsel Robert Mueller and his team. They stressed that the whistleblower had only second- or third-hand information and alleged that the person misrepresented the president's efforts. But now a second whistleblower has come forward to corroborate the information, and a cache of text messages echoes the concerns that have been laid out.

As the impeachment inquiry ramps up, the White House plans to reprise its past response to congressional oversight: open scorn. The president's aides have ignored document requests and subpoenas, invoked executive privilege — going so far as to argue that the privilege extends to informal presidential advisers who have never held White House jobs — and all but dared Democrats to hold them in contempt.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo blew a Friday deadline for complying with a subpoena. But he said over the weekend that the State Department had sent a letter to Congress as its initial response to the request. He also indicated a new willingness to comply, saying: "We'll obviously do all the things that we're required to do by law."

The letter to Pelosi has been delayed as aides work to finalize legislative and communications plans to go along with the legal strategy.

At the same time, Trump's campaign, which has reported a fundraising surge since the impeachment inquiry, held a curiously timed briefing call with reporters Monday to trumpet its efforts to overhaul the delegate selection process to ensure there is no drama at the Republican National Convention. Trump campaign officials said the effort had nothing to do with concerns about fending off a primary challenge.

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Profit, not politics: Trump allies sought Ukraine gas deal

By **DESMOND BUTLER, MICHAEL BIESECKER** and **RICHARD LARDNER** Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — As Rudy Giuliani was pushing Ukrainian officials last spring to investigate one of Donald Trump's main political rivals, a group of individuals with ties to the president and his personal lawyer were also active in the former Soviet republic.

Their aims were profit, not politics. This circle of businessmen and Republican donors touted connections to Giuliani and Trump while trying to install new management at the top of Ukraine's massive state gas company. Their plan was to then steer lucrative contracts to companies controlled by Trump allies, according to two people with knowledge of their plans.

Their plan hit a snag after Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko lost his reelection bid to Volodymyr Zelenskiy, whose conversation with Trump about former Vice President Joe Biden is now at the center of the House impeachment inquiry of Trump.

But the effort to install a friendlier management team at the helm of the gas company, Naftogaz, would soon be taken up with Ukraine's new president by U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry, whose slate of candidates included a fellow Texan who is one of Perry's past political donors.

It's unclear if Perry's attempts to replace board members at Naftogaz were coordinated with the Giuliani allies pushing for a similar outcome, and no one has alleged that there is criminal activity in any of these efforts. And it's unclear what role, if any, Giuliani had in helping his clients push to get gas sales agree-

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ments with the state-owned company.

But the affair shows how those with ties to Trump and his administration were pursuing business deals in Ukraine that went far beyond advancing the president's personal political interests. It also raises questions about whether Trump allies were mixing business and politics just as Republicans were calling for a probe of Biden and his son Hunter, who served five years on the board of another Ukrainian energy company, Burisma.

On Friday, Trump told a group of Republican lawmakers that it had been Perry who had prompted the phone call in which Trump asked Zelenskiy for a "favor" regarding Biden, according to a person familiar with Trump's remarks.

The person, who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity to describe a closed conversation among GOP officials, recounted that Trump said it was Perry who asked him to make the July call to discuss "something about an LNG (liquefied natural gas) plant." Trump's remarks were first reported Saturday by the news site Axios.

While it's unclear whether Trump's remark Friday referred specifically to the behind-the-scenes maneuvers this spring involving the multibillion-dollar state gas company, The Associated Press has interviewed four people with direct knowledge of the attempts to influence Naftogaz, and their accounts show Perry playing a key role in the effort. Three of the four spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation. The fourth is an American businessman with close ties to the Ukrainian energy sector.

A spokeswoman for the U.S. Energy Department said Perry, a former Texas governor and Republican presidential candidate, was not advancing anyone's personal interests. She said his conversations with Ukrainian officials about Naftogaz were part of his efforts to reform the country's energy sector and create an environment in which Western companies can do business.

Perry was asked about the AP's reporting on Monday while in Lithuania, where he was meeting with officials from Ukraine and other eastern European countries to discuss energy security and cooperation. He said any suggestion that he tried to force a management change at Naftogaz was a "totally dreamed up story."

"We get asked for our recommendations about people who are experts in areas, various areas," Perry said. "Folks who have expertise in particular areas. Obviously having been the governor of the state of Texas, I know a lot of people in the energy industry."

Perry also confirmed he had urged Trump to call Zelenskiy, but said the subject was the potential growth of Ukraine's energy sector.

"Absolutely, I asked the president multiple times, 'Mr. President, we think it is in the United States' and in Ukraine's best interest that you and the president of Ukraine have conversations, that you discuss the options that are there,'" Perry said, recounting his conversations with Trump.

The Trump and Giuliani allies driving the attempt to change the senior management at Naftogaz, however, appear to have had inside knowledge of the U.S. government's plans in Ukraine. For example, they told people that Trump would replace the U.S. ambassador there months before she was actually recalled to Washington, according to three of the individuals interviewed by the AP. One of the individuals said he was so concerned by the whole affair that he reported it to a U.S. Embassy official in Ukraine months ago.

THE BUSINESSMEN

Ukraine, a resource-rich nation that sits on the geographic and symbolic border between Russia and the West, has long been plagued by corruption and government dysfunction, making it a magnet for foreign profiteers.

At the center of the Naftogaz plan, according to three individuals familiar with the details, were three such businessmen: two Soviet-born Florida real estate entrepreneurs, Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman, and an oil magnate from Boca Raton, Florida, named Harry Sargeant III.

Parnas and Fruman have made hundreds of thousands of dollars in political donations to Republicans, including \$325,000 to a Trump-allied political action committee in 2018. This helped the relatively unknown

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entrepreneurs gain access to top levels of the Republican Party — including meetings with Trump at the White House and Mar-a-Lago.

The two have also faced lawsuits from disgruntled investors over unpaid debts. During the same period they were pursuing the Naftogaz deal, the two were coordinating with Giuliani to set up meetings with Ukrainian government officials and push for an investigation of the Bidens.

Sargeant, his wife and corporate entities tied to the family have donated at least \$1.2 million to Republican campaigns and PACs over the last 20 years, including \$100,000 in June to the Trump Victory Fund, according to federal and state campaign finance records. He has also served as finance chair of the Florida state GOP, and gave nearly \$14,000 to Giuliani's failed 2008 presidential campaign.

In early March, Fruman, Parnas and Sargeant were touting a plan to replace Naftogaz CEO Andriy Kobolyev with another senior executive at the company, Andrew Favorov, according to two individuals who spoke to the AP as well as a memorandum about the meeting that was later submitted to the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, formerly known as Kiev.

Going back to the Obama administration, the U.S. Energy Department and the State Department have long supported efforts to import American natural gas into Ukraine to reduce the country's dependence on Russia.

The three approached Favorov with the idea while the Ukrainian executive was attending an energy industry conference in Texas. Parnas and Fruman told him they had flown in from Florida on a private jet to recruit him to be their partner in a new venture to export up to 100 tanker shipments a year of U.S. liquefied gas into Ukraine, where Naftogaz is the largest distributor, according to two people briefed on the details.

Sargeant told Favorov that he regularly meets with Trump at Mar-a-Lago and that the gas-sales plan had the president's full support, according to the two people who said Favorov recounted the discussion to them.

These conversations were recounted to AP by Dale W. Perry, an American who is a former business partner of Favorov. He told AP in an interview that Favorov described the meeting to him soon after it happened and that Favorov perceived it to be a shakedown. Perry, who is no relation to the energy secretary, is the managing partner of Energy Resources of Ukraine, which currently has business agreements to import natural gas and electricity to Ukraine.

A second person who spoke on condition of anonymity also confirmed to the AP that Favorov had recounted details of the Houston meeting to him.

According to Dale Perry and the other person, Favorov said Parnas told him Trump planned to remove U.S. Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch and replace her with someone more open to aiding their business interests.

Dale Perry told the AP he was so concerned about the efforts to change the management at Naftogaz and to get rid of Yovanovitch that he reported what he had heard to Suriya Jayanti, a State Department foreign service officer stationed at the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv who focuses on the energy industry.

He also wrote a detailed memo about Favorov's account, dated April 12, which was shared with another current State Department official. Perry recently provided a copy of the April memo to AP.

Jayanti declined to provide comment. Favorov also declined to comment.

A Florida lawyer representing Sargeant, Christopher Kise, issued a statement Monday confirming that his client was at the Houston dinner with Parnas, Fruman and Favorov, but insisted he was there only to offer "broad industry guidance and his expert view on the challenges presented by operating in foreign markets."

"Attending a single, informal dinner in Houston does not place Mr. Sargeant at the center of any Naftogaz or Ukrainian business plan," Kise said. "Mr. Sargeant never discussed any role or participation in any Ukraine venture, nor any specifics regarding the potential business ventures of the other dinner participants."

The statement did not address whether Yovanovitch's fate was discussed at the dinner. Kise also said Sargeant has not met at Mar-a-Lago with Trump since he became president.

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On March 24, Giuliani and Parnas gathered at the Trump International Hotel in Washington with Healy E. Baumgardner, a former Trump campaign adviser who once served as deputy communications director for Giuliani's presidential campaign and as a communications official during the George W. Bush administration.

She is now listed as the CEO of 45 Energy Group, a Houston-based energy company whose website describes it as a "government relations, public affairs and business development practice group." The company's name is an apparent nod to Trump, the 45th president.

This was a couple of weeks after the Houston meeting with Favorov, the Naftogaz executive. Giuliani, Parnas and Baumgardner were there to make a business pitch involving gas deals in the former Soviet bloc to a potential investor.

This time, according to Giuliani, the deals that were discussed involved Uzbekistan, not Ukraine.

"I have not pursued a deal in the Ukraine. I don't know about a deal in the Ukraine. I would not do a deal in the Ukraine now, obviously," said Giuliani, reached while attending a playoff baseball game between the New York Yankees and Minnesota Twins. "There is absolutely no proof that I did it, because I didn't do it."

During this meeting, Parnas again repeated that Yovanovitch, the U.S. ambassador in Kyiv, would soon be replaced, according to a person with direct knowledge of the gathering. She was removed two months later.

Giuliani, who serves as Trump's personal lawyer and has no official role in government, acknowledged Friday that he was among those pushing the president to replace the ambassador, a career diplomat with a history of fighting corruption.

"The ambassador to Ukraine was replaced," he said. "I did play a role in that."

But Giuliani refused to discuss the details of his business dealings, or whether he helped his associates in their push to forge gas sales contracts with the Ukrainian company. He did describe Sergeant as a friend and referred to Parnas and Fruman as his clients in a tweet in May.

As part of their impeachment inquiry, House Democrats have subpoenaed Giuliani for documents and communications related to dozens of people, including Favorov, Parnas, Fruman and Baumgardner's 45 Energy Group.

The House Intelligence Committee also issued sweeping document requests to Parnas and Fruman, due Monday, and scheduled depositions for later in the week.

John Dowd, a former Trump attorney who now represents Parnas and Fruman, said he and his clients have not yet decided whether to comply. Democrats on Monday threatened to issue subpoenas if they don't show.

Baumgardner issued a written statement, saying: "While I won't comment on business discussions, I will say this: this political assault on private business by the Democrats in Congress is complete harassment and an invasion of privacy that should scare the hell out of every American business owner."

Baumgardner later denied that she had any business dealings in Ukraine but refused to say whether the replacement of Ambassador Yovanovitch was discussed.

Dowd said it was actually the Naftogaz executives who approached his clients about making a deal. Dowd says the group then approached Rick Perry to get the Energy Department on board.

"The people from the company solicited my clients because Igor is in the gas business, and they asked them, and they flew to Washington and they solicited," Dowd said. "They sat down and talked about it. And then it was presented to Secretary Perry to see if they could get it together.

"It wasn't a shakedown; it was an attempt to do legitimate business that didn't work out."

THE ENERGY SECRETARY

In May, Rick Perry traveled to Kyiv to serve as the senior U.S. government representative at the inauguration of the county's new president.

In a private meeting with Zelenskyy, Perry pressed the Ukrainian president to fire members of the Naftogaz advisory board. Attendees left the meeting with the impression that Perry wanted to replace the American representative, Amos Hochstein, a former diplomat and energy representative who served in the Obama administration, with someone "reputable in Republican circles," according to someone who

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was in the room.

Perry's push for Ukraine's state-owned natural gas company Naftogaz to change its supervisory board was first reported by Politico.

A second meeting during the trip, at a Kyiv hotel, included Ukrainian officials and energy sector people. There, Perry made clear that the Trump administration wanted to see the entire Naftogaz supervisory board replaced, according to a person who attended both meetings. Perry again referenced the list of advisers that he had given Zelenskiy, and it was widely interpreted that he wanted Michael Bleyzer, a Ukrainian-American businessman from Texas, to join the newly formed board, the person said. Also on the list was Robert Bensch, another Texan who frequently works in Ukraine, the Energy Department confirmed.

Gordon D. Sondland, the U.S. ambassador to the European Union, and Kurt D. Volker, then the State Department's special envoy to Ukraine, were also in the room, according to photographs reviewed by AP. The person, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to fear of retaliation, said he was floored by the American requests because the person had always viewed the U.S. government "as having a higher ethical standard."

The Naftogaz supervisory board is supposed to be selected by the Ukrainian president's Cabinet in consultation with international institutions, including the International Monetary Fund, the United States and the European Union. It must be approved by the Ukrainian Cabinet. Ukrainian officials perceived Perry's push to swap out the board as circumventing that established process, according to the person in the room.

U.S. Energy Department spokeswoman Shaylyn Hynes said Perry had consistently called for the modernization of Ukraine's business and energy sector in an effort to create an environment that will incentivize Western companies to do business there. She said Perry delivered that same message in the May meeting with Zelenskiy.

"What he did not do is advocate for the business interests of any one individual or company," Hynes said Saturday. "That is fiction being pushed by those who are disingenuously seeking to advance a nefarious narrative that does not exist."

Hynes said the Ukrainian government had requested U.S. recommendations to advise the country on energy matters, and Perry provided those recommendations. She confirmed Bleyzer was on the list.

Bleyzer, whose company is based in Houston, did not respond on Saturday to a voicemail seeking comment. Bensch also did not respond to a phone message.

Perry has close ties to the Texas oil and gas industry. He appointed Bleyzer to a two-year term on a state technologies fund board in 2009. The following year, records show Bleyzer donated \$20,000 to Perry's reelection campaign.

Zelenskiy's office declined to comment on Saturday.

In an interview Friday with the Christian Broadcasting Network, Perry said that "as God as my witness" he never discussed Biden or his son in meetings with Ukrainian or U.S. officials, including Trump or Giuliani. He did confirm he had had a conversation with Giuliani by phone, but a spokeswoman for the energy secretary declined to say when that call was or whether the two had discussed Naftogaz.

In Lithuania on Monday, Perry said he could not recall whether Bleyzer's name was on the list provided to Zelenskiy. But Perry confirmed he had known Bleyzer for years and called him "a really brilliant, capable businessman."

"I would recommend him for a host of different things in Kyiv because he knows the country," Perry said of Bleyzer. "He's from there. So, why not? I mean I would be stunned if someone said that would you eliminate Michael Bleyzer from a recommendation of people you ought to talk to about how to do business in the country, whether they're knowledgeable. It'd be remarkable if I didn't say, 'Talk to Michael.'"

Biesecker and Lardner reported from Washington. Associated Press reporter Alan Fram contributed.

Key findings from this story are summarized at the AP News website.

Follow AP investigative reporters Desmond Butler at <http://twitter.com/desmondbutler>, Michael Biesecker at <http://twitter.com/mbieseck> and Richard Lardner at <http://twitter.com/rplardner>

Contact AP's global investigative team at Investigative@ap.org.

This story has been corrected to show Bleyzer's first name is Michael, not Robert.

Judge says she couldn't refuse convicted ex-cop a hug

By JAKE BLEIBERG Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — The judge who gave a hug and Bible to a former Dallas police officer after she was sentenced to 10 years in prison for killing her neighbor said Monday that she watched the woman change during her trial and wants her to live a purposeful life.

Judge Tammy Kemp said she had never previously acknowledged her Christian faith to a defendant or given one a Bible, but Amber Guyger said she didn't have one at the end of her trial for the September 2018 killing of her upstairs neighbor, Botham Jean.

In her first interview since the jury convicted Guyger of murder last week, Kemp said she felt her actions were appropriate since the trial was over and the former officer told her she didn't know how to begin seeking God's forgiveness.

"She asked me if I thought that God could forgive her and I said, 'Yes, God can forgive you and has,'" Kemp told The Associated Press.

"If she wanted to start with the Bible, I didn't want her to go back to the jail and to sink into doubt and self-pity and become bitter," she said. "Because she still has a lot of life ahead of her following her sentence and I would hope that she could live it purposefully."

Critics contend that it was unethical of Kemp to hug Guyger and give her the Bible. One group asked for a judicial misconduct investigation, and some activists have said the hug took the focus off justified anger at a police killing.

Jean's death drew widespread attention because of the strange circumstances and because it was one in a string of shootings of unarmed black men by white police officers.

Guyger, 31, had just worked a long shift and was still in her uniform when she entered Jean's apartment and shot the 26-year-old accountant, who grew up in the Caribbean island nation of St. Lucia. She testified that she had mistaken his fourth-floor apartment for her own, which was directly underneath his, and that she thought he was an intruder.

After Guyger was sentenced and the jury left the courtroom, Jean's brother, Brandt Jean, was allowed to address Guyger directly from the witness stand. He told her he forgave her and that Botham would have wanted her to devote her life to Christianity before the two shared a tearful embrace. Soon after that, Kemp walked over to the defense table to speak with Guyger, who she said went through a "marked change" after the verdict.

Kemp said that Guyger asked twice if she could hug her as well and, after a moment's hesitation, the judge wrapped her arms around the former police officer.

"Following my own convictions, I could not refuse that woman a hug. I would not," said Kemp, who is black. "And I don't understand the anger. And I guess I could say if you profess religious beliefs and you are going to follow them, I would hope that they not be situational and limited to one race only."

Kemp said she doesn't know "the state of Ms. Guyger's Christianity, if she's even a Christian." But she said she pointed Guyger to a Bible passage about God's love "so that she could recognize that, even given the fact that she murdered someone, God still loves her."

Last week, the Freedom From Religion Foundation, a secular Wisconsin-based group that routinely files lawsuits challenging religious displays in government, said Kemp was proselytizing from the bench and filed a complaint with a Texas agency that investigates allegations of judicial misconduct.

Kemp defended her actions as appropriate Monday, saying they took place after the legal proceeding

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was over and were not part of the official trial record.

"I didn't do that from the bench," she said. "I came down to extend my condolences to the Jean family and to encourage Ms. Guyger because she has a lot of life to live."

Contract talks continue as GM strike enters fourth week

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Contract talks aimed at ending a 22-day strike by the United Auto Workers against General Motors continued Monday after United Auto Workers union bargainers rejected a company offer on Sunday.

In a letter to members, UAW Vice President Terry Dittes cast doubt on whether there will be a quick settlement in the contract dispute, which sent 49,000 workers to the picket lines on Sept. 16, crippling GM's factories.

Dittes' letter said the union presented a proposal to the company Saturday. He said GM responded Sunday morning by reverting back to an offer that had been rejected and made few changes.

The company's proposal did nothing to address a host of items, Dittes wrote on Sunday, specifying job security for members during the term of the four-year contract.

Normally in contract talks, the union bargains for commitments from the company to build new vehicles, engines, transmissions and other items at U.S. factories represented by the union.

"It did nothing to provide job security during the term of this agreement," Dittes wrote. "We, in this union, could not be more disappointed with General Motors who refuse to recognize the experience and talent of our membership."

In a statement, GM said it continues to negotiate in good faith "with very good proposals that benefit employees today and builds a stronger future for all of us."

The company said it is committed to talking around the clock to resolve the dispute.

Also Monday, Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said she is concerned about the growing impact of the strike as it entered its fourth week.

Whitmer, who visited workers on the picket lines at a GM plant near the state capital of Lansing, said she hopes the strike ends soon.

"These things are important, that they try to remedy them and find some common ground as quickly as possible," she said.

The strike immediately halted production at GM's U.S. factories. On Monday, GM shut down V8 engine and continuously variable transmission assembly lines at its Ramos Arizpe plant in Mexico, idling about 415 workers. Earlier the company closed two assembly plants in Mexico and Canada.

Despite Dittes' letter both sides continued bargaining Monday. He wrote that progress had been made on important issues last week, but the talks took a "turn for the worse."

Dittes also sent a sharp letter to GM's vice president for labor relations Sunday, saying: "You didn't even have a professional courtesy to explain why you could not accept or why you rejected our package proposal for each item we addressed."

A person briefed on the talks said Sunday that the union voiced concerns about GM increasing production in Mexico, where it now builds pickup trucks, small cars and two SUVs. The person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the talks are private, said both sides are far apart on guarantees of new products in U.S. factories.

GM leads all companies in automobiles produced in Mexico at just over 833,000 last year, according to LMC and the Center for Automotive Research, a think-tank based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Of GM vehicles sold in the U.S., 22% are produced in Mexico.

Industry analysts say GM is losing more than \$80 million a day as the strike continues. Workers earn \$250 per week in strike pay while they're on the picket lines, about one-fifth of what they normally make.

Judge says New York prosecutors can see Trump's tax returns

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — With President Donald Trump under siege on Capitol Hill, a federal judge dealt him a setback on another front Monday and ruled that New York City prosecutors can see his tax returns for an investigation into matters including the payment of hush money to porn star Stormy Daniels and a Playboy centerfold.

U.S. District Judge Victor Marrero emphatically rejected Trump's attempt to keep his financial records under wraps, calling the president's broad claim of immunity from all criminal proceedings "extraordinary" and "an overreach of executive power" at odds with the Constitution.

For now, at least, the tax returns remain beyond the reach of prosecutors. The president's lawyers appealed the judge's ruling to the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which put the matter on hold while it considers the case on an expedited basis.

At issue is a request from Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr. that Trump's accounting firm turn over eight years' worth of his business and personal tax returns dating back to 2011.

Vance, a Democrat, is investigating payments made to buy the silence of Daniels and model Karen McDougal, both of whom claimed to have had affairs with the president.

"The Radical Left Democrats have failed on all fronts," Trump fumed on Twitter after the judge's ruling, "so now they are pushing local New York City and State Democrat prosecutors to go get President Trump. A thing like this has never happened to any President before. Not even close!"

The district attorney's office declined to comment.

The investigation is unfolding with Trump already facing a fast-moving impeachment drive by House Democrats that was set off by his attempts to get Ukraine's leader to investigate his political rival Joe Biden.

Trump's lawyers have said that Vance's investigation is politically motivated and that the request for tax records should be stopped because Trump is immune from any criminal probe as long as he is president.

The judge swept that claim aside as overly broad.

"As the court reads it, presidential immunity would stretch to cover every phase of criminal proceedings, including investigations, grand jury proceedings and subpoenas, indictment, prosecution, arrest, trial, conviction, and incarceration," Marrero wrote. "That constitutional protection presumably would encompass any conduct, at any time, in any forum, whether federal or state, and whether the President acted alone or in concert with other individuals."

The judge said he couldn't accept that legal view, "especially in the light of the fundamental concerns over excessive arrogation of power" that led the founding fathers to create a balance of power among the three branches of government.

Trump has steadfastly refused to make his tax returns public, breaking a tradition set by presidents and White House candidates decades ago. He has also gone to court to fight congressional subpoenas issued to his bank for various personal financial records, including his tax returns. That dispute is also before the federal appeals court.

In yet another effort to pry loose Trump's tax records, California recently passed a law requiring candidates for president or governor to turn over five years' worth of returns, or else they cannot appear on the state's primary ballot. A federal judge blocked the law this month, saying it is probably unconstitutional.

Vance began his probe after federal prosecutors in New York completed their investigation into payments that Trump's former personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, arranged to be made to the two women to keep them silent during the presidential race.

Cohen is serving a three-year prison sentence for crimes that included campaign finance violations in connection with the hush money.

Trump was never charged, though prosecutors said publicly that he was aware of and directed the illegal payments. Justice Department policy has long been that sitting presidents cannot be charged criminally.

Grand jury proceedings and records in New York are secret. If Vance gains access to Trump's returns through a grand jury investigation, that doesn't necessarily mean their contents will be disclosed publicly.

It is unclear what Trump's returns might have to do with the criminal investigation or why prosecutors are reaching back as far as 2011.

But the long reach of the subpoena might stem in part from testimony Cohen gave to Congress early this year when he asserted that Trump overstated his wealth to financial institutions before he became president.

Cohen turned over copies of financial statements he said the president provided to Deutsche Bank during a 2014 effort to buy the Buffalo Bills. The statements showed Trump's net worth soaring from \$4.55 billion in 2012 to \$8.66 billion in 2013.

Associated Press writer Eric Tucker in Washington contributed to this story.

Jay Gruden fired by Redskins after 0-5 start to 6th season

By HOWARD FENDRICH and STEPHEN WHYNO AP Sports Writers

ASHBURN, Va. (AP) — Owner Dan Snyder and President Bruce Allen summoned coach Jay Gruden to the Washington Redskins' facility before dawn Monday to tell him he was being fired.

"It was a brief conversation," Allen said.

Now comes a longer conversation about the status of the floundering franchise that has won just two playoff games in Snyder's two decades of ownership and zero during Allen's tenure. Gruden is out after an 0-5 start to his sixth season and is the latest in a long line of Redskins coaches to take the fall for significant organizational shortcomings.

"To make a decision like this is difficult, but it was necessary," Allen said during a 13-minute news conference. "Our 0-5 start is not just disappointing. We had much different expectations for the beginning of the season. We owe it to our fans, ... the organization, the players, the coaches and their families to do everything we can to win."

The Redskins haven't won much lately, going 35-49-1 overall under Gruden with one playoff appearance in the 2015 season. A popular coach among players and a smart offensive mind, Gruden struggled in preparing his teams: Washington went 1-5 in season openers and lost a win-and-get-in game in Week 17 in 2016 against the New York Giants, who had nothing to play for.

Despite never before being a head coach in the NFL, and despite never winning more than nine games in a season, Gruden managed to stick around longer than anyone else who's held that job during Snyder's unsuccessful stint as owner.

Asked why Snyder wasn't addressing fans, Allen said, "Because I am." Snyder was not made available to reporters Monday.

None of the six coaches hired since Snyder bought the team has a winning record, including Hall of Famer Joe Gibbs and two-time Super Bowl champion Mike Shanahan. Offensive line coach Bill Callahan becomes the seventh after he was selected to replace Gruden on an interim basis.

Callahan has coached the Raiders in the NFL and Nebraska in college football.

"This is different territory for me," Callahan said. "It's bittersweet in a lot of ways. I had to replace a veteran coach in Jay and then to be asked to lead a program now in Week 6, it's uncharted waters for me."

This season alone has seen star left tackle Trent Williams hold out; a shuffle at quarterback after Dwayne Haskins was taken No. 15 overall in the draft; a series of injuries up and down the roster; and, perhaps most upsetting to team leadership, increasingly large contingents of visiting fans attending games at Washington's home stadium.

"All we can do is try to improve our product," Allen said. "These games, we weren't close in. We've lost five games, and we didn't lose them in the last second. We lost these games decisively. And we have to change that."

Allen is right: The Redskins rarely have even been competitive, ranking 30th out of 32 NFL clubs in scoring, averaging 14.6 points, and defense, allowing 30.2 points per game. The only club that ranks worse than Washington in both categories — the 0-4 Miami Dolphins — will host the Redskins next Sunday.

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Cornerback Quinton Dunbar wrote on Instagram that he owes Gruden "for life" for helping him by switching him from wide receiver after college and added: "Sorry we couldn't get the job done for you."

Gruden was fired the morning after a 33-7 loss to the defending champion New England Patriots. Afterward, Gruden said he didn't "have a concern" about his job status with a season remaining on his contract. "Nobody's told me anything," Gruden said. "(If) my key works on Monday, keep working."

Instead, Gruden is gone, and Allen was asked repeatedly about his own job performance. The Redskins are 59-89-1 with Allen working in some capacity since 2010.

Allen said he doesn't believe "anybody is hiding from their record" and took issue with questions about the organizational culture that has been the subject of widespread criticism.

"You know the culture is actually damn good," Allen said. "These people care. We have a very young core of players that we have brought in here who are accustomed to winning. If you look at the record of these guys they're accustomed to winning. They want to win."

WHAT'S WORKING

The brutal start to the Redskins' schedule is over, and the even more hapless Dolphins are up next.

WHAT NEEDS HELP

Everything on defense needs to be better, but Callahan said he won't make any changes to his coaching staff, including defensive coordinator Greg Manusky.

STOCK UP

Adrian Peterson better be ready to run. Callahan expressed a desire to commit to the running game, so an old-school ground game is coming.

STOCK DOWN

Haskins could be inactive as Washington's third quarterback Sunday at Miami with Callahan saying the Ohio State product will get his chance "at some point."

INJURED

Tight end Jordan Reed remains out with a concussion. Donald Penn, Williams' replacement at left tackle, injured a hamstring in the Patriots game.

KEY NUMBER

The Redskins' 88 rushing attempts are the third fewest in the NFL.

NEXT STEPS

Callahan will pick a starting quarterback between Case Keenum and Colt McCoy and alter the Redskins' practice habits.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

AP's key findings about Ukraine gas deal Trump allies sought

By **MICHAEL BIESECKER** and **DESMOND BUTLER** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Associated Press reported Monday that a circle of businessmen and Republican donors touted their connections to President Donald Trump and his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani as they sought to install new management at the top of Ukraine's state-owned gas company last spring. The intervention was happening while Giuliani was pressuring Ukraine to investigate Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden. But in this case, the aims were profit, not politics. Their plan hit a snag after the election of Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, but then U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry took up the effort to install a friendlier management team at the company, Naftogaz. Perry has denied any wrongdoing.

Among the AP's findings:

THE FLORIDA MEN: Two Soviet-born Florida businessmen who worked with Giuliani, Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman, leveraged political contacts made through hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations to Republicans, including \$325,000 to a Trump-allied PAC, to help pursue a business deal involving Naftogaz. With the men at a dinner in Houston was Florida GOP mega-donor and oil magnate Harry Sargeant III. According to two AP sources, their sales pitch was to force out the chief executive at the Ukrainian gas

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giant and replace him with a team that would carry out exclusive deals. The winners would be corporate entities controlled by Trump allies to profit from exporting U.S. liquefied natural gas into the war-torn former Soviet republic. A lawyer for Sargeant denies he was involved in any business dealings in Ukraine.

THE PRESIDENT'S LAWYER: During the same time period, Parnas and Fruman also served as fixers for Giuliani. They helped him set up meetings with key Ukrainian officials where President Trump's personal attorney pressed the country's government to open an investigation into Joe Biden. Trump himself later asked Zelenskiy in a July phone call to investigate the former Democratic vice president and his son. That request is now the focus of the impeachment inquiry by House Democrats.

THE TRUMP HOTEL MEETING: A couple weeks after the dinner in Houston, Parnas accompanied Giuliani to a meeting at the Trump International Hotel in Washington where the pursuit of energy deals in the former Soviet bloc was discussed, according to an AP source with knowledge of the conversation. Giuliani told the AP on Friday that the proposed deal involved Uzbekistan, not Ukraine.

THE AMBASSADOR: At both the Houston and Washington meetings, Parnas said Trump planned to remove U.S. Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch and replace her with someone more open to aiding their business interests, according to three AP sources. She was recalled to Washington two months later. Giuliani confirmed to the AP he "did play a role" in replacing Yovanovitch.

THE PRESIDENT'S EX-LAWYER: John Dowd, a former Trump attorney who now represents Parnas and Fruman, told the AP in an interview Friday it was actually the Naftogaz executives who approached his clients about making a deal. Dowd says the group then presented the proposal to Perry to get the Energy Department on board. Perry confirms he spoke with Giuliani by phone, but a spokeswoman for the energy secretary declined to say when that call was or whether the two discussed Naftogaz.

THE KYIV MEETING: In a face-to-face meeting with Zelenskiy in May, Perry pressed the Ukrainian president to replace a key Naftogaz supervisory board that is supposed to help root out corruption, according to an AP source who was in the room. Perry then provided a list of suggested replacements that included Michael Bleyzer, a Ukrainian-American businessman who gave \$20,000 to support the former Texas governor's 2010 reelection campaign.

THE ENERGY SECRETARY: Perry said Monday the Ukrainian government asked for a list of recommended advisers on energy issues, though he said he could not recall whether his political donor's name was on the list. The day before, a spokeswoman for the Energy Department confirmed Bleyzer was on the list.

THE PRESIDENT BLAMES PERRY: On Friday, Trump told a group of Republican lawmakers that it was Perry who had prompted the July phone call in which Trump asked Zelenskiy for a "favor" regarding Biden, according to an AP source familiar with the president's remarks. Trump said Perry had asked Trump to make the call to discuss "something about an LNG (liquefied natural gas) plant."

Follow AP investigative reporters Michael Biesecker at <http://twitter.com/mbieseck> and Desmond Butler at <http://twitter.com/desmondbutler>

Court seems ready to require unanimous juries as term opens

By **MARK SHERMAN** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court began a potentially contentious election-year term Monday in seeming general agreement that juries in state criminal trials must be unanimous to convict a defendant.

The justices took up a quirk of constitutional law, a 47-year-old ruling that requires unanimity in federal, but not state trials. Earlier in the day, the court also wrestled with whether states must allow criminal defendants to plead insanity.

The one minor surprise when the justices took the bench just after 10 o'clock was the absence of Justice Clarence Thomas. The 71-year-old Thomas was at home, likely with the flu, the court said.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was in her customary seat to the left of Chief Justice John Roberts. The 86-year-old Ginsburg asked the first question in the insanity arguments.

Ginsburg was treated this summer for a tumor on her pancreas.

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Meeting for the first time in public since late June, the court opened a term that could reveal how far to the right and how fast the court's conservative majority will move, even as Roberts has made clear he wants to keep the court clear of Washington partisan politics. The court is beginning its second term with both of President Donald Trump's Supreme Court appointees, Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, on board.

The justices could be asked to intervene in disputes between congressional Democrats and the White House that might also involve the possible impeachment of the Republican president .

Roberts would preside over a Senate trial of Trump if the House were to impeach him.

Its biggest decisions, in cases involving abortion, protections for young immigrants and LGBT rights, are likely to be handed down in late June, four months before the election.

Those cases probably will highlight the divisions on a court made up of five conservatives appointed by Republican presidents and four liberals named by Democrats.

But on Monday, conservative and liberal justices appeared to agree that the same rules should apply in federal and state trials. They heard arguments in an appeal by a Louisiana man who is serving a life term for killing a woman after a jury voted 10-2 to convict him. Oregon is the only other state that allows for non-unanimous convictions for some crimes.

Louisiana voters have changed the law for crimes committed beginning this year.

The court has formally held that most of the Bill of Rights applies to states as well as the federal government, but it has not done so on the Sixth Amendment's unanimous jury requirement.

"What about the constitutional rights of people in prison?" Gorsuch asked Louisiana Solicitor General Elizabeth Murrill, who argued that the state's court system could be inundated with claims if the justices rule against Louisiana.

A decision for defendant Evangelisto Ramos would result in his conviction being overturned and also would affect defendants who are still appealing their convictions. But the court is not expected to say anything about defendants whose cases are final. It would take another round of lawsuits to figure that out.

The case about an insanity defense comes from Kansas, where James Kraig Kahler was sentenced to death for killing his estranged wife, two teenage daughters and his wife's grandmother.

Kahler wanted to mount an insanity defense, but Kansas is one of four states that eliminated a defendant's ability to plead not guilty by reason of insanity. Idaho, Montana and Utah are the others. Alaska also limits the insanity defense.

It was unclear how the case would come out. Justice Elena Kagan suggested that even if Kahler were to win at the Supreme Court and could plead insanity, he ultimately would not get a reprieve from his conviction. In no state, she said, "would your client be found insane."

As impeachment looms, GOP revolts against Trump on Syria

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Politics Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — They may have his back on impeachment, but some of President Donald Trump's most loyal allies are suddenly revolting against his decision to pull back U.S. troops from northern Syria.

On Monday, one chief Trump loyalist in Congress called the move "unnerving to the core." An influential figure in conservative media condemned it as "a disaster." And Trump's former top NATO envoy said it was "a big mistake" that would threaten the lives of Kurdish fighters who had fought for years alongside American troops against the Islamic State group.

Trump's surprise move, which came with no advance warning late Sunday and stunned many in his own government, threatened to undermine what has been near lockstep support among Republicans at a critical moment in his presidency. Democrats are pursuing an impeachment inquiry in the House, while Republicans in the Senate stand as the president's bulwark against being removed from office.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., who has been among Trump's most vocal defenders, called the Syria decision "a disaster in the making" that would throw the region into chaos and embolden the Islamic State group.

"I hope I'm making myself clear how short-sighted and irresponsible this decision is," Graham told Fox

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News. "I like President Trump. I've tried to help him. This, to me, is just unnerving to its core."

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., who has shrugged off the key allegation in the impeachment inquiry — that Trump pressured foreign powers to investigate a top Democratic rival — tweeted that Trump's shift on Syria is "a grave mistake that will have implications far beyond Syria."

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, who has been more willing than many Republicans to condemn Trump's calls for foreign intervention in the 2020 election, called the Syria move "a terribly unwise decision."

And Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell likened Trump's latest foreign policy announcement to something from Barack Obama's presidency.

"As we learned the hard way during the Obama Administration, American interests are best served by American leadership, not by retreat or withdrawal," McConnell said.

Republicans in Congress have broken with Trump on Syria before. The GOP-controlled Senate voted overwhelmingly in February to oppose the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Syria and Afghanistan the last time he unveiled a similar proposal without warning on Twitter late last year.

But the intensity, scope and timing of Monday's backlash makes this time different. In the face of a serious impeachment inquiry, Trump's very political future depends on his ability to maintain the loyalty of his party on and off Capitol Hill.

"For Trump to make a very controversial move on Syria at the exact moment when he needs Senate Republicans more than ever is risky politics," said former Trump aide Alex Conant, noting the significance for many Senate Republicans of the United States' policy in northern Syria, where Kurds would be particularly vulnerable to a Turkish invasion.

"They're not just going to send out a couple of tweets and move on," Conant said.

For a day, at least, the intraparty clash dominated the political conversation, overshadowing the president's near-constant campaign to undermine the Democrats' impeachment investigation.

Nikki Haley, who was Trump's hand-picked ambassador to the United Nations, cast the decision to withdraw U.S. troops from northern Iraq as a betrayal of a key ally.

"The Kurds were instrumental in our successful fight against ISIS in Syria. Leaving them to die is a big mistake," she wrote on Twitter.

Rep. Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y., a member of the House Armed Services and Intelligence committees, called it a "misguided and catastrophic blow to our national security interests."

On Fox News, a network where many rank-and-file Trump supporters get their news, host Brian Kilmeade said it was "a disaster."

"Abandon our allies? That's a campaign promise? Abandon the people that got the caliphate destroyed?" Kilmeade said on "Fox & Friends."

A more frequent Republican Trump critic, Utah Sen. Mitt Romney, cast Trump's announcement as "a betrayal": "It says that America is an unreliable ally; it facilitates ISIS resurgence; and it presages another humanitarian disaster."

While unusually strong, the Republican rebellion was far from complete. And polling suggests that voters in both parties share Trump's desire to end the nation's decadeslong military operations in the Middle East.

Liberty University President Jerry Falwell Jr., a prominent evangelical leader, said Trump was simply "keeping his promise to keep America out of endless wars."

He suggested Trump could easily reengage in the region if the decision backfires.

"The president has got to do what's best for the country, whether it helps him with this phony impeachment inquiry or not," Falwell said in an interview.

Former Trump campaign aide Barry Bennett noted that the president has been talking about reducing troop levels in the Middle East since before the 2016 election.

"I understand that they don't like the policy, but none of them should be shocked by the policy," Bennett said. "He's only been talking about this for four or five years now. I think he's with the vast majority of the public."

Trump defended his decision among a stream of more than a dozen social media posts Monday, down-

playing the risk of a potential Turkish attack on the Kurds.

"If Turkey does anything that I, in my great and unmatched wisdom, consider to be off limits, I will totally destroy and obliterate the Economy of Turkey," Trump wrote. He added: "The endless and ridiculous wars are ENDING! We will be focused on the big picture, knowing we can always go back & BLAST!"

Associated Press writers Sagar Meghani and Alan Fram in Washington contributed to this report.

NBA's ties with China, worth billions, now under strain

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

It wasn't even a month ago that NBA Commissioner Adam Silver sat overlooking center court at an arena in Beijing, watching the gold-medal game at the World Cup with other basketball dignitaries.

That night was all smiles.

Silver's return to China later this week will be much different.

The relationship between China and the NBA — a multibillion-dollar marriage that involves media rights, streaming, merchandise sales and much more — is strained right now in ways unlike any other since the league first began planting roots there in earnest three decades ago. A since-deleted tweet from Houston Rockets general manager Daryl Morey that showed support for Hong Kong anti-government protesters prompted an immediate backlash, complicated further by the timing of the NBA having two preseason games in China this week.

"We apologize," Rockets star James Harden said in Japan on Monday. "We love China. We love playing there. I know for both of us individually we go there once or twice a year. They show us the most support and love. So we appreciate them as a fan base and we love everything they're about and we appreciate the support that they give us individually and as an organization."

That support is being sternly tested, be it from tweets that were deleted, uproars over an NBA statement that had some of its meaning lost in translation when posted in Mandarin and even the cancellation announced Monday of two G League games to be played in China between the minor-league affiliates of the Rockets and the Dallas Mavericks.

At least one Chinese sporting goods company said it was no longer cooperating with the Rockets and a sports news website in China said it was no longer covering the team.

"There is no doubt, the economic impact is already clear," Silver told Kyodo News in an interview Monday. "There have already been fairly dramatic consequences from that tweet, and I have read some of the media suggesting that we are not supporting Daryl Morey, but in fact we have."

The NBA is enormously popular in China: Oft-cited figures from basketball executives in both the U.S. and China say that 300 million people play the game recreationally there and that about 500 million Chinese watched at least one NBA game last season.

And the Rockets are among the biggest team brands there, no doubt because Chinese star Yao Ming — a Basketball Hall of Famer — spent his NBA career with Houston.

Yao is now president of the Chinese Basketball Association, which announced over the weekend it is suspending its ties with the Rockets in retaliation for Morey's tweet. While Yao has not shared his personal feelings on the topic, it's clear that the relationship between Yao and his only NBA team is currently, at best, rocky.

Silver will address the matter at a news conference Tuesday in Japan, where the Rockets are playing this week. He then is scheduled to speak in Shanghai on Thursday, in advance of two preseason games in China between the Los Angeles Lakers, led by global sports icon LeBron James, and the Brooklyn Nets, now owned by Joe Tsai, the co-founder of Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba.

"What is the problem with people freely expressing their opinion? This freedom is an inherent American value and the NBA has been very progressive in allowing players and other constituents a platform to speak out on issues," Tsai wrote in a lengthy open letter posted late Sunday. "The problem is, there are certain topics that are third-rail issues in certain countries, societies and communities."

And in China, discussion of the Hong Kong protests is one of those issues, Tsai said.

The NBA's relationship with China dates back about 30 years to the time when former Commissioner David Stern struck a deal with Chinese television to show games on a tape-delayed basis. Stern even talked about having an NBA-sponsored or branded league in China. The first league office there had three employees and flimsy furniture.

Now, about 200 NBA employees work in China in offices in Beijing and Shanghai. Games are streamed live and Chinese media cover all the league's biggest events such as All-Star weekend and the NBA Finals. The league has played preseason games there for years, has three NBA academies in the country — designed to find the next star prospect — and big-name players go there every offseason to promote their brand.

Retired Miami Heat guard Dwyane Wade has a lifetime contract with Chinese apparel company Li-Ning. Golden State guard Klay Thompson has a 10-year deal with another Chinese shoe company, Anta. Five-time champion Kobe Bryant has been visiting China annually for about two decades and is a massive star there, even now that his playing career is done.

The league has navigated its way around one thorny issue related to the U.S. and China in recent months: a trade war between the nations that includes back-and-forth tariffs. The Hong Kong tweet, though, is likely to present a much bigger test for the NBA.

"What I can tell you for sure is it's not going to erase the decades of work that, you know, myself and everyone else in the NBA has put in in building a tremendous base for basketball in China," Golden State Warriors COO Rick Welts said Monday in an appearance on CNBC. "And I think this will pass. And I do think our future in China is probably pretty remarkable."

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

Syria's Kurds stand to lose all gains from US pullout

By BASSEM MROUE and SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Syria's Kurds accused the U.S. of turning its back on its allies and risking gains made in the fight against the Islamic State group as American troops began pulling back on Monday from positions in northeastern Syria ahead of an expected Turkish assault.

U.S. President Donald Trump's abrupt decision to stand aside — announced by the White House late Sunday — infuriated Kurds, who stand to lose the autonomy they gained in the course of Syria's civil war.

The Kurdish force pledged to fight back, raising the potential for an eruption of new warfare in Syria. "We will not hesitate for a moment in defending our people" against Turkish troops, the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces said in a statement, adding that it has lost 11,000 fighters in the war against IS in Syria.

As many as 300,000 people could immediately be driven from their homes in northeast Syria if Turkey launches its offensive, the International Rescue Committee warned Monday.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has threatened for months to launch the military operation across the border. He views the Syria Kurdish forces as terrorists and a threat to his country as Ankara has struggled with a Kurdish insurgency within Turkey.

Ankara has been demanding a "safe zone" stretching the length of northern Syria along Turkey's southern border to be patrolled by Turkish troops and their allied Syrian forces. That would put a significant portion of Syria's Kurdish population under effective Turkish control.

Erdogan on Monday said American troops have started pulling back following his conversation with Trump the night before. He did not elaborate on the planned Turkish incursion but said Turkey was determined to halt what it perceives as threats from the Syrian Kurdish fighters.

The SDF issued a sharp condemnation of the American move. "The American forces did not abide by their commitments and withdrew their forces along the border with Turkey," it said.

A U.S. official confirmed that American troops were already moving out of the security zone area, which includes the Syrian towns of Ras al-Ayn and Tal Abyad. That official was not authorized to speak for the record and was granted anonymity to comment.

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A video posted by a Kurdish news agency showed a convoy of American armored vehicles apparently heading away from the border area of Tal Abyad.

America's rivals, including Iran, Russia and the Syrian government, stand to gain from a U.S. troop withdrawal from the oil-rich region in the north. Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif tweeted: "US is an irrelevant occupier in Syria — futile to seek its permission or rely on it for security."

In Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Moscow realizes Turkey's need to ensure its security, but noted that "it's necessary to respect Syria's territorial and political integrity." Peskov wouldn't comment on whether the U.S. withdrawal could push the Kurds to seek a dialogue with Damascus.

Russia and Iran have helped Syrian President Bashar Assad reclaim control over most of the country following a devastating eight-year civil war.

Abdulkarim Omar, a senior official in the Kurdish self-rule administration, said they had been expecting the U.S. decision to withdraw and have made preparations for it. He didn't elaborate. But he warned that securing facilities holding IS militants would be jeopardized if an offensive begins because forces would be deployed there.

"We have been flexible even in dealing with Russia, which may play a role in the political resolution. We were flexible even in regards to Damascus," he said. "But what happened today is illogical."

The Kurdish-led SDF has been the main U.S.-backed force in Syria in the fight against IS. In March, the SDF captured the last sliver of land held by the extremists, marking the end of the so-called caliphate that was declared by IS's leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in 2014.

The U.S. and Turkey had been working on a compromise "security mechanism" for the border region that the Kurds had hoped would avert any Turkish offensive. Since August, joint U.S and Turkish aerial and ground patrols had started in a 125-kilometer (78-mile) zone. The SDF had cooperated, removing fortifications from the areas and withdrawing with heavy weapons.

But vital details of the mechanism were still being worked out, and Ankara had repeatedly expressed its impatience, threatening an attack.

Mustafa Bali, the SDF spokesman, tweeted that his group had not been not expecting the U.S. to protect northeastern Syria. "But people here are owed an explanation regarding the security mechanism deal and destruction of fortifications," he said.

___ Associated Press writers Lolita C. Baldor and Zeke Miller in Washington, and Sarah El Deeb and Zeina Karam in Beirut contributed to this report.

Iraqi police replacing army in volatile Baghdad neighborhood

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq's prime minister on Monday ordered the police to replace the army in a heavily populated Shiite neighborhood of Baghdad where dozens of people were killed or wounded in weekend clashes stemming from anti-government protests, the military said.

Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi gave the order after a week of violence in Iraq left more than 100 dead and thousands wounded. Since Oct. 1, spontaneous rallies have erupted in Baghdad and a number of southern cities by Iraqis demanding jobs, better basic services such as electricity and water, and an end to endemic corruption. Security forces have responded with live ammunition and tear gas to quell the protests.

The unrest is the most serious challenge facing Iraq, two years after the victory against Islamic State militants. The chaos also comes at a critical time for the government, which has been caught in the middle of increasing tensions between Iran and the U.S. in the region. Iraq is allied with both countries and hosts thousands of U.S. troops, as well as powerful paramilitary forces allied with Iran.

Monday's order for withdrawing the army from Sadr City appears aimed at calming tensions in the sprawling neighborhood, where populist Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr enjoys wide support.

The army statement said excessive force was used in Sadr City, adding that officers and soldiers who "carried out these wrong acts" will be held accountable.

A day after the protests began, authorities imposed a curfew and blocked the internet to try to quell

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the unrest. The curfew, ignored by protesters, was lifted Saturday and the internet was restored after sunset Monday.

"Police forces have taken over security and deployed today in Sadr City to preserve the lives of citizens and protect protesters," police commander Maj. Gen. Jaafar Battat said.

Hundreds gathered on side streets near Sadr City, a Baghdad suburb about 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) from the central Tahrir Square, which has been the destination of demonstrators, although authorities prevented them from reaching it.

Iraqi security officials said 14 protesters were killed and 62 wounded on Sunday, many of them in Sadr City.

Baghdad streets were relatively quiet Monday with no protesters seen outside. Tahrir Square looked more like an army barracks, with a heavy military and police presence making it difficult for protesters to reach the area.

"Because of the killings, the use of live bullets and the loss of large number of people, we did not protest today," said Rasoul Saray, who took part in the demonstrations over the past week.

Protesters "will not be silent about our rights and the rights of the martyrs who were killed by the government," he added.

An activist in Nasiriyah who goes by the name of Ali Iraq said the southern city, which saw some of Iraq's worst clashes between protesters and security forces, was calm after a wave of arrests Sunday. He said plainclothes agents checked identity cards and went through cellphones, detaining those who had videos or photos of the protests.

Iraq's most senior Shiite spiritual leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, has urged protesters and the security forces to end the violence while Abdul-Mahdi has called on the protesters to go home.

National security adviser Falih al-Fayadh vowed to fight any attempts to "bring down the Iraqi state," adding that an ongoing investigation will determine who was behind the violence in Baghdad and the predominantly Shiite southern provinces.

"We will not let anyone meddle with the security of our people," al-Fayadh said.

___ This version corrects the start of the protests to Oct. 1, not Oct. 2.

Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Oct. 8, the 281st day of 2019. There are 84 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 8, 1998, the House triggered an open-ended impeachment inquiry against President Bill Clinton in a momentous 258-176 vote; 31 Democrats joined majority Republicans in opening the way for nationally televised impeachment hearings.

On this date:

In 1871, the Great Chicago Fire erupted; fires also broke out in Peshtigo, Wisconsin, and in several communities in Michigan.

In 1934, Bruno Hauptmann was indicted by a grand jury in New Jersey for murder in the death of the kidnapped son of Charles and Anne Morrow Lindbergh.

In 1944, "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet," starring Ozzie and Harriet Nelson, made its debut on C-B-S Radio.

In 1945, President Harry S. Truman told a press conference in Tiptonville, Tennessee, that the secret scientific knowledge behind the atomic bomb would be shared only with Britain and Canada.

In 1956, Don Larsen pitched the only perfect game in a World Series to date as the New York Yankees beat the Brooklyn Dodgers in Game 5, 2-0.

In 1982, all labor organizations in Poland, including Solidarity, were banned.

In 1985, the hijackers of the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro (ah-KEE'-leh LOW'-roh) killed American pas-

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senger Leon Klinghoffer, who was in a wheelchair, and threw his body overboard.

In 1997, Scientists reported the Mars Pathfinder had yielded what could be the strongest evidence yet that Mars might once have been hospitable to life.

In 2002, A federal judge approved President George W. Bush's request to reopen West Coast ports, ending a 10-day labor lockout that was costing the U.S. economy an estimated \$1 to \$2 billion a day.

In 2004, thirty-four people, most of them Israelis, were killed when suicide bombers blew up the Taba Hilton Hotel in Egypt.

In 2005, a magnitude 7.6 earthquake flattened villages on the Pakistan-India border, killing an estimated 86,000 people.

In 2017, Harvey Weinstein was fired from The Weinstein Company amid allegations that he was responsible for decades of sexual harassment against actresses and employees. Vice President Mike Pence left the 49ers-Colts game in Indianapolis after about a dozen San Francisco players took a knee during the national anthem.

Ten years ago: An Arizona sweat lodge ceremony turned deadly as some participants became ill and collapsed inside the 415-square-foot structure; three died. (Motivational speaker James Arthur Ray, who'd led the ceremony, was convicted in 2011 of three counts of negligent homicide and served 20 months in prison.) A powerful car bomb exploded outside the Indian Embassy in Kabul, killing 17 people. Romanian-born German writer Herta Mueller won the Nobel Prize in literature.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama told top military commanders at the Pentagon that he was confident the U.S. would keep making progress in its fight against the Islamic State group. Thomas Eric Duncan, a Liberian man who was the first person diagnosed with Ebola in the United States, died at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas 10 days after being admitted. U.S. researchers Eric Betzig and William Moerner and German scientist Stefan Hell were named recipients of the Nobel Prize for chemistry for giving optical microscopes much sharper vision than was thought possible.

One year ago: President Donald Trump said he had no plans to fire Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein. The Nobel Prize in economics was awarded to American researchers William Nordhaus of Yale University and Paul Romer of New York University; Nordhaus was honored for his work on the economics of climate change, and Romer had produced research showing how governments can advance innovation. The New York Yankees lost by the largest margin in the team's long post-season history, 16-1, to the Boston Red Sox; Boston's Brock Holt became the first player ever to hit a single, double, triple and home run in the same post-season game. New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees became the NFL's all-time leader in yards passing during a 43-19 win over the Washington Redskins.

Today's Birthdays: Entertainment reporter Rona Barrett is 83. Actor Paul Hogan is 80. Rhythm-and-blues singer Fred Cash (The Impressions) is 79. Civil rights activist Rev. Jesse Jackson is 78. Comedian Chevy Chase is 76. Author R.L. Stine is 76. Actor Dale Dye is 75. Country singer Susan Raye is 75. TV personality Sarah Purcell is 71. Rhythm-and-blues singer Airrion Love (The Stylistics) is 70. Actress Sigourney Weaver is 70. Rhythm-and-blues singer Robert "Kool" Bell (Kool & the Gang) is 69. Producer-director Edward Zwick is 67. Country singer-musician Ricky Lee Phelps is 66. Actor Michael Dudikoff is 65. Comedian Darrell Hammond is 64. Actress Stephanie Zimbalist is 63. Rock musician Mitch Marine is 58. Actress Kim Wayans is 58. Rock singer Steve Perry (Cherry Poppin' Daddies) is 56. Actor Ian Hart is 55. Gospel/rhythm-and-blues singer CeCe Winans is 55. Rock musician C.J. Ramone (The Ramones) is 54. Actress-producer Karyn Parsons is 53. Singer-producer Teddy Riley is 53. Actress Emily Procter is 51. Actor Dylan Neal is 50. Actor-screenwriter Matt Damon is 49. Actor-comedian Robert Kelly is 49. The mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, is 49. Actor Martin Henderson is 45. Actress Kristanna Loken is 40. Rhythm-and-blues singer Byron Reeder (Mista) is 40. Rock-soul singer-musician Noelle Scaggs (Fitz and the Tantrums) is 40. Actor Nick Cannon is 39. Actor J.R. Ramirez is 39. Actor Max Crumm is 34. Singer-songwriter-producer Bruno Mars is 34. Actor Angus T. Jones is 26. Actress Molly Quinn is 26. Actress/singer Bella Thorne is 22.

Thought for Today: "Don't let yesterday use up too much of today." — Will Rogers, American humorist (1879-1935).

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