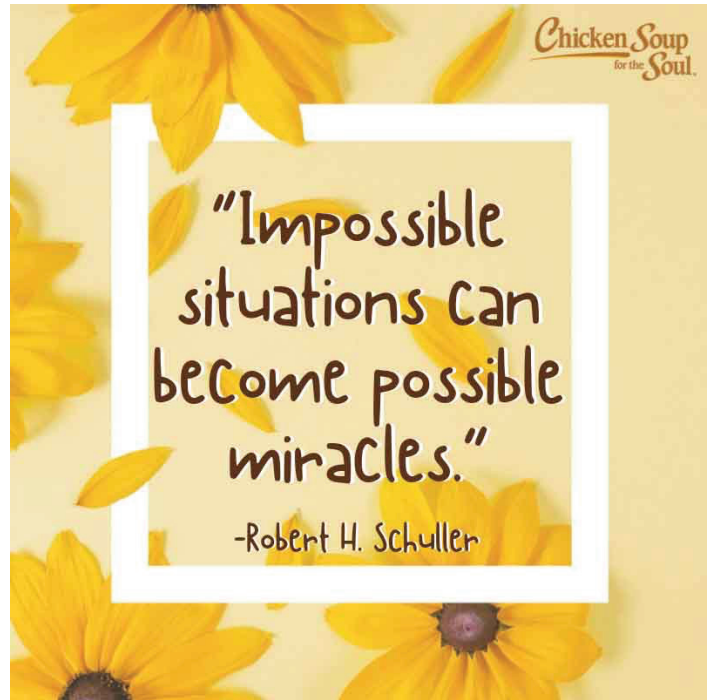


Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 1 of 36

- [2- Middle School Music Festival](#)
- [3- Grain producers, buyers and warehouses encouraged to review state laws and rules this harvest](#)
- [4- Weather Pages](#)
- [7- Daily Devotional](#)
- [8- 2019 Groton Events](#)
- [9- News from the Associated Press](#)



Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

Thursday, October 17, 2019

LifeTouch Pictures Groton Area High School
1:30am- 8:30pm: Parent/Teacher Conferences
GHS Gymnasium, Groton Area Elementary School
3:30pm: Cross Country: Varsity Regions @ Webster Golf Course
6:00pm Financial Aid Night at Groton Area High School Computer Lab

Friday, October 18, 2019

Faculty Inservice Groton Area Elementary School, Groton Area High School
No School Groton Area Elementary School, Groton Area High School
7:00pm: Football: Boys Varsity Game @ Moberidge-Pollock High School

Saturday, October 19, 2019

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.: Groton Pumpkin Fest
Oral Interp at Florence High School
Robotics at GHS Gymnasium

Volleyball: Girls Varsity Tournament at Milbank High School

8 a.m.: Groton Area vs. Clark/Willow Lake at Milbank High School Armory (west court)
11 a.m.: Groton Area vs. Aberdeen Christian at Milbank High School Armory (west court)
Next match at 1:30 p.m. with the third place match at 3:30 p.m. and the championship match at 4:30 p.m.

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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Middle School Music Festival

The following students were nominated and selected to be apart of the Northwestern Middle School Music Festival on Tuesday, Oct. 15.

Back Row: Instructor Desiree Yeigh, Lydia Meier, (Trumpet), Emily Clark (Percussion), Gretchen Dinger (1st Chair Flute), Faith Traphagen (Percussion)

Front Row: Veronica Tank (Flute), Cadence Feist (Bari Sax), Jaedyn Penning (Clarinet), Garrett Schultz (Baritone), Jayden Schwan (Trumpet) (Courtesy Photo)

Grain producers, buyers and warehouses encouraged to review state laws and rules this harvest

PIERRE, S.D. — As harvest season is underway, the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission encourages grain producers, buyers and warehouses to review state laws and rules regarding the purchase and storage of grain. Understanding these state policies is an essential step for producers and buyers to protect their investment.

The PUC helps preserve the financial security of South Dakota's grain industry through licensing and inspecting grain buyers and grain warehouses. The agency monitors licensed facilities to ensure they are meeting their obligations to grain producers and operating within the requirements of state laws and administrative rules.

"To protect their interests when making a sale, it's vital that producers fully understand the details of their contract," said PUC Chairman Gary Hanson. "Grain buyers offer a variety of purchase contracts and not all are created equal. For instance, when producers agree to a voluntary credit sale or price later contract, these sales are not protected by the grain buyer's bond or any form of insurance," Hanson explained.

The PUC recommends those in the grain industry be aware of these key points:

Licensed grain buyers and grain warehouses are subject to bonding requirements.

Deals made with unlicensed buyers offer producers and elevators no bond protection at all.

When selling grain, producers have 30 days to choose between receiving an immediate payment or payment at a later date. At the end of 30 days, grain must be either put to a contract or paid.

Cash sale grain is protected by a licensed grain buyer or grain warehouse's bond. Grain subject to a price later, deferred payment or delayed price arrangement is not.

All contracts between a grain producer and a licensed grain buyer must be signed by both parties.

When selling grain, title passes from the producer to the buyer once the grain is unloaded. At that point, producers relinquish all control unless the grain is placed into a warehouse facility.

South Dakota administrative rules outline requirements for temporary and emergency grain storage, including specifications for storage units.

South Dakota law requires grain buyers and grain warehouses to notify the PUC if they fall out of compliance with any financial licensing requirement.

Grain producers with any concerns, including those regarding a company's business practices, compliance with state laws and rules or timely payment to producers, are encouraged to contact the PUC grain warehouse program by calling 1-800-332-1782 or sending an email to PUC@state.sd.us.

"Farmers themselves play an important role protecting the integrity of the grain buying business in South Dakota. Know who you are doing business with, be leery of deals that seem 'too good to be true,' and immediately contact the PUC whenever grain payments are not made on time," recommended PUC Vice Chairman Chris Nelson.

The PUC issued 345 licenses in 2019 to state-licensed facilities, federally-licensed facilities, non-storage facilities-based grain buyers, processors, trucker and brokers. A current list of licensed facilities can be accessed on the PUC's website at www.puc.sd.gov/warehouse.

PUC staff conduct regular on-site inspections of licensed facilities to analyze the financial condition of grain warehouses and grain buyers. Inspectors review items like daily position reports, settlement sheets and warehouse receipts. To ensure facilities have the level of bond coverage required by state statute, monthly grain storage reports and quarterly balance sheets are also submitted to the PUC for review.

"We at the PUC understand that harvest season is a certainly busy time for everyone in the grain industry," stated PUC Commissioner Kristie Fiegen. "It's my hope that this reminder from the PUC helps keep producers, buyers and warehouses informed and educated and that consumer protection remains a key priority among all parties," she concluded.

For additional information about the PUC's role and responsibilities within the grain industry, including links to state statutes and rules, visit the PUC's website at www.puc.sd.gov/warehouse.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 4 of 36

Today



Sunny

High: 63 °F

Tonight



Increasing
Clouds

Low: 47 °F

Friday



Partly Sunny

High: 62 °F

Friday
Night



Decreasing
Clouds

Low: 40 °F

Saturday



Sunny

High: 58 °F

Today
Dry, mild, partly cloudy
HIGHS: 60-75 F

Friday
Dry, mild, mostly cloudy, breezy
HIGHS: 60-65 F

Saturday
Dry, mostly clear, breezy
HIGHS: 55-60 F

Sunday
Rain chances increase through the day
HIGHS: 50-55 F

Published on: 10/17/2019 at 12:30AM

Temperatures will continue to warm through Thursday, and then stay near where they should be for mid-October through at least the first half of the weekend. Next good chance for precipitation arrives Sunday.

Today in Weather History

October 17, 1910: The temperature in Aberdeen, South Dakota, warmed to 90 degrees on this day. This reading is the latest day in the calendar year in which the high temperature reached 90 degrees.

October 17, 2011: A strong low-pressure system to the northwest and a strong high-pressure system to the southeast brought stiff southerly winds across central and north-central South Dakota from the late morning until the early evening. South winds of 30 to 40 mph with gusts over 60 mph caused spotty damage across the region. The high winds created large waves on Lake Oahe near Pierre, which damaged several docks along with some boats at a marina. There were also some tree branches downed across the region, along with some damage to a few structures. With the high winds, warm temperatures, and low humidity, several grassland fires also broke out across parts of the region. The maximum wind gust of 68 mph occurred in Corson County.

1910: A category 4 hurricane moved north-northeast, passing just east of the Dry Tortugas. The maximum storm surge observed in Key West was 8 feet, with 15-foot waves at what is now Fort Zachary Taylor State Park.

1971: Great balls of fire were observed just ahead of a tornado moving down the main street of Wray, Colorado. However, little other electrical activity accompanied the storm. Nine people were injured in the storm, all at a trailer court at the edge of town.

1984: A snowstorm struck northern Utah producing a record 18 inches in 24 hours at Salt Lake City and 40 inches at the nearby Alta Ski Resort. The town of Magna, located ten miles west of Salt Lake City, did not receive any snow at all. The storm was responsible for a fifty-vehicle pile-up along Interstate 15 near Farmington, Utah.

1997: Late on October 17, Super Typhoon Ivan attained its peak intensity with winds of 185 mph and an official barometric pressure of 905 mbar. On the same day, while near peak intensity, Typhoon Joan was located about 1300 miles east of Typhoon Ivan.

1998: During the weekend of October 17-18, 1998, torrential rains fell over southern and southeast Texas. Up to 22 inches of rain fell, which first resulted in deadly flash flooding from San Antonio to Austin followed by record-breaking river floods along several South Texas rivers the following week. Based on provisional data from the USGS, which is subject to revision, the flood peak for this event was the highest known peak stage at 15 locations. Tragically, a total of 31 people died during the event (26 drownings, two tornado deaths, two heart attacks, and one electrocution/drowning). At least 17 of the drowning victims were in vehicles that were either driven into water or were swept away by rapidly rising water. Preliminary property damage estimates approached three-quarters of a billion dollars.

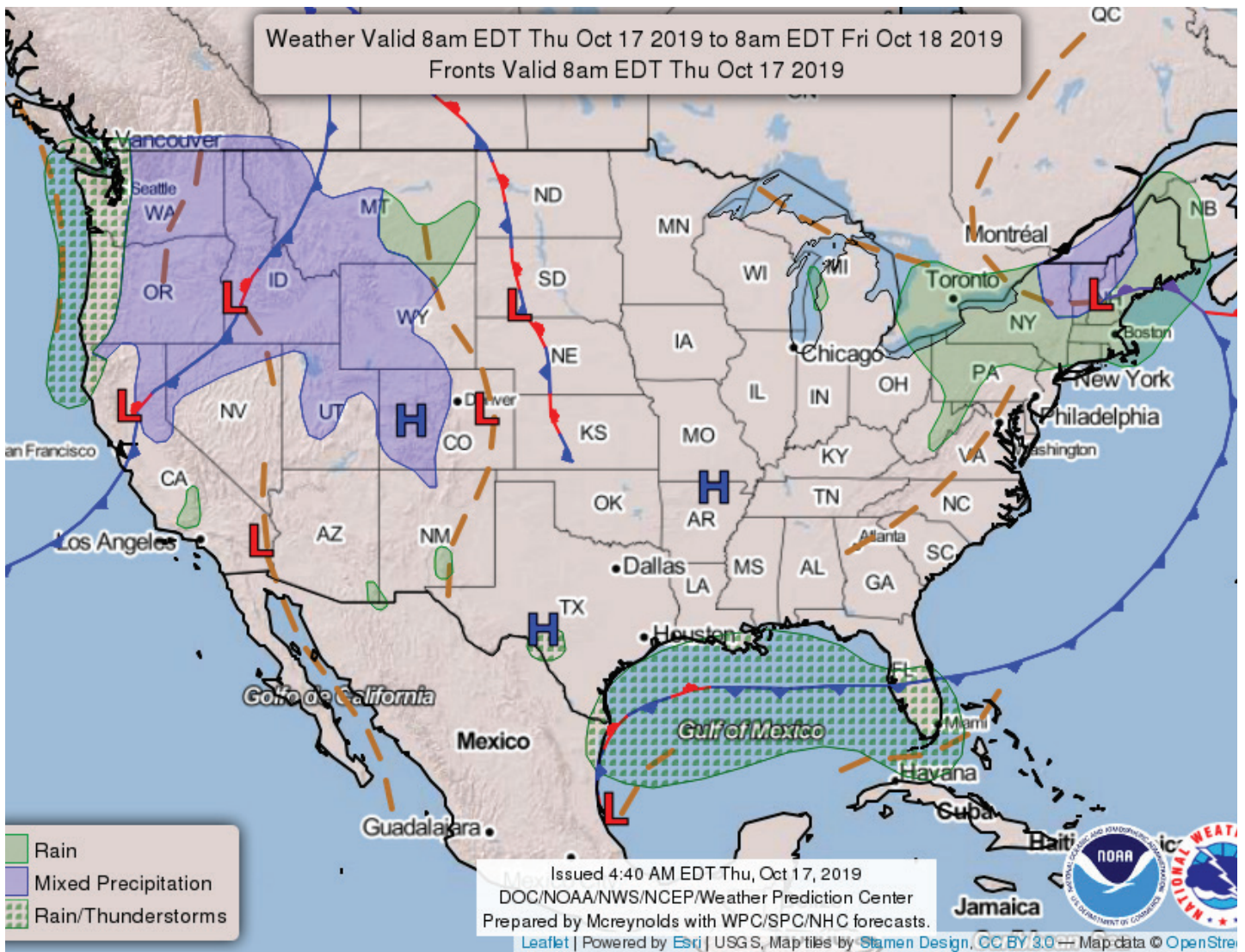
Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 6 of 36

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 48 °F at 4:58 PM
Low Temp: 37 °F at 8:13 AM
Wind: 14 mph at 12:12 AM
Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 92° in 1910
Record Low: 15° in 1976, 1930
Average High: 57°F
Average Low: 32°F
Average Precip in Oct.: 1.16
Precip to date in Oct.: 1.27
Average Precip to date: 19.64
Precip Year to Date: 26.29
Sunset Tonight: 6:45 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:54 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 7 of 36



LOVING SOME AIN'T EASY

A little girl was saying her evening prayers. There was a slight pause, and then she continued, "God, it must be difficult for You to love everybody. There are only four people in my family, and it's hard for me to love all of them."

Loving others does not always come easy. In fact, some people are almost impossible to love. As someone once said to me, "I love that person just enough to get into heaven."

But loving others is not an option, it is an obligation. Jesus said, "Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are My disciples." This was not a new commandment. It can be traced all the way back to Leviticus. But the disciples of Jesus saw a totally new way to love others. He taught them in and through His life and death to love others in a sacrificial way: His way - the way of the cross.

To love sacrificially demands that we go beyond the ordinary ways of helping people. It means that we are willing to be inconvenienced to help anyone who has a need we can meet. It means that we are willing to share the best of what we have - not only the surplus "junk" we no longer need. It means we may have to sacrifice something we value. But so was the way of the cross. This kind of love will draw others to Jesus because the world rarely sees it but needs it.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, help me to show others how much I love You by the way I live and the way I love others. May my life be an example of mercy, grace, and kindness. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: John 13:34-35 So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. 35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 8 of 36

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)

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 9 of 36

News from the Associated Press

Man charged in 2016 pipeline protest surrenders

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A South Dakota man who authorities say is linked through DNA evidence to a riot during the Dakota Access pipeline protest three years ago has turned himself in to sheriff's officials in North Dakota.

Prosecutors in Morton County filed charges against Lawrence Malcolm Jr. last month after state investigators were informed by the State Crime Lab that DNA from a cigarette butt found at the scene of a 2016 protest was a match for Malcolm. The Bismarck Tribune says the 23-year-old Sisseton man is charged with felony criminal mischief and engaging in a riot. An affidavit says more than 100 demonstrators, many with their faces covered, halted construction and vandalized equipment on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

Malcolm's attorney, Bruce Nestor, says the DNA evidence doesn't prove his client participated in the protest.

Information from: Bismarck Tribune, <http://www.bismarcktribune.com>

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

04-09-19-20-27

(four, nine, nineteen, twenty, twenty-seven)

Estimated jackpot: \$203,000

Lotto America

01-05-09-15-33, Star Ball: 5, ASB: 2

(one, five, nine, fifteen, thirty-three; Star Ball: five; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$3.74 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$71 million

Powerball

01-05-25-63-67, Powerball: 3, Power Play: 2

(one, five, twenty-five, sixty-three, sixty-seven; Powerball: three; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$100 million

Air Force IDs Ellsworth airman found dead off base

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The U.S. Air Force has released the name of an airman stationed at Ellsworth Air Force Base who was found dead at an off-base residence.

The Air Force says 24-year-old Senior Airman William Horton was a B-1 Journeyman with the 28th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

Horton was an active duty airman assigned to the 28th Bomb Wing. He was found dead Monday at an off-base residence.

Col. David Doss, 28th Bomb Wing commander, calls Horton's death "a tragic loss for the entire Raider family."

The Air Force says the death remains under investigation.

Sioux Falls teacher surprised with \$25K as a top US educator

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Alison Ter Horst meant to be a guidance counselor, not a teacher, but once

she tried student teaching she couldn't bear to leave the classroom.

On Wednesday, Ter Horst was surprised with a \$25,000 check at Washington High School in Sioux Falls as one of the nation's top teachers, recognized in part for helping create a dual credit program that lets students get college credit if they enroll in a teacher preparation program after graduation.

Ter Horst was one of only 40 teachers selected nationwide — and the only one in South Dakota this year — to receive a 2019 Milken Educator Award, the Argus Leader reported. More than 20 South Dakota educators have been honored with the award since 2002.

The Milken Family Foundation uses the awards — dubbed “the Oscars of Teaching” — to recognize inspirational teachers who encourage others to join the field.

Ter Horst has been teaching for about 12 years but originally wanted to be a guidance counselor. She was on her way to earning a master's degree when someone recommended she spend time student teaching in a classroom while she finished her courses.

“I loved it and I never had the desire to get out of the classroom,” Ter Horst said. “I do have my master's, but it's in education, not in counseling.”

The psychology teacher said she was in “pure shock” winning the award. Chosen teachers can use the money any way they want.

More than 1,000 students, administrators and state officials filled the high school gymnasium as Ter Horst was presented with a giant check.

Jane Foley, a senior vice president of the Milken Family Foundation who presented the money to Ter Horst, said the award is not someone can apply for or be nominated for. The award is based on the teacher's ability to further excellence in education, and award officials seek out those educators, Foley said.

“Great teachers like Alison Ter Horst change lives,” Foley said. “Sometimes, a gifted teacher like Alison can also inspire students to want to change the lives of others through teaching.”

South Dakota Education Secretary Ben Jones said too often, teachers “are unsung heroes, quietly going about their important work, inspiring young lives.”

“I hope we all remember the celebratory spirit of today with its schoolwide assembly and musical numbers and strive to always be vocal with our appreciation of educators,” Jones said.

Information from: Argus Leader, <http://www.argusleader.com>

New Aqua Feed Ingredient Verified For Sale In Europe

BROOKINGS, S.D., Oct. 16, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- Prairie AquaTech, an American manufacturer of animal feed ingredients, announces that its high performance protein ingredient for aqua feed— ME-PRO® —is ready to be sold as a feed ingredient in Europe.

This action follows an independent review confirmed by competent authorities in the EU that determined ME-PRO can be marketed as a feed material.

“ME-PRO is ready for Europe!” stated animal nutrition expert Angelo Lauwaerts of nutrition consulting firm, Salka Valka BV. “ME-PRO satisfies supporting documentation according to FSP (GMP+) and FEFANA.”

ME-PRO was developed in the United States at Prairie AquaTech's R&D facility in Brookings, SD. The protein ingredient has excellent characteristics that make it ideal for inclusion in European aqua feed.

With a 70% protein content, ME-PRO provides feed manufacturers and aqua farmers with an exceptional aqua feed ingredient for all species of fish and shrimp. However, ME-PRO also provides manufacturers and aqua farmers two unique features: reduction in phosphorus discharge in water (due to fish waste) and production based on non-genetically modified (non-GMO) plant protein.

“ME-PRO is important for the European aquaculture industry,” stated Prairie AquaTech CEO Mark Luecke. “The vision for developing ME-PRO was built upon three fundamental values that apply to successful feed ingredients: responsible sourcing, high performance and positive impact on the environment. It's really great news that we are now able to bring ME-PRO to European fish and shrimp farmers and feed mills!”

View original content to download multimedia: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/new-aqua->

feed-ingredient-verified-for-sale-in-europe-300939268.html
SOURCE Prairie AquaTech

US delegation seeking a cease-fire with Turkey and Kurds

By ZEKE MILLER and ROBERT BURNS Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — A senior U.S. delegation faces the herculean task of pressuring Turkey to accept a cease-fire in Northern Syria, hours after President Donald Trump declared the U.S. has no stake in defending Kurdish fighters who died by the thousands as America's partners against Islamic State extremists.

Vice President Mike Pence, heading a U.S. delegation that includes Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and White House national security adviser Robert O'Brien, arrived in Turkey on Thursday, a day after Trump dismissed the very crisis he sent his aides on an emergency mission to douse.

Trump suggested Wednesday that a Kurdish group was a greater terror threat than the Islamic State group, and he welcomed the efforts of Russia and the Assad government to fill the void left after he ordered the removal of nearly all U.S. troops from Syria amid a Turkish assault on the Kurds.

"Syria may have some help with Russia, and that's fine," Trump said. "They've got a lot of sand over there. So, there's a lot of sand that they can play with."

He added: "Let them fight their own wars."

The split-screen foreign policy moment proved difficult to reconcile and came during perhaps the darkest moment for the modern U.S.-Turkey relationship and a time of trial for Trump and his Republican Party allies. Severe condemnation of Trump's failure to deter Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's assault on the Kurds, and his subsequent embrace of Turkish talking points about the former U.S. allies, sparked bipartisan outrage in the U.S. and calls for swift punishment for the NATO ally.

Republicans and Democrats in the House, bitterly divided over the Trump impeachment inquiry, banded together for an overwhelming 354-60 denunciation of the U.S. troop withdrawal. Many lawmakers expressed worry that the withdrawal may lead to revival of the Islamic State group as well as Russian presence and influence in the area, besides the slaughter of many Kurds.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., publicly broke with Trump to call the U.S. relationship with the Kurds "a great alliance."

"I'm sorry that we are where we are. I hope the vice president and the secretary of state can somehow repair the damage," McConnell said Wednesday.

Even among top administration officials, there were concerns that the trip lacked achievable goals and had been undermined by Trump even before it began. While Erdogan faces global condemnation for the invasion, he also sees renewed nationalistic fervor at home, and any pathway to de-escalation likely would need to delicately avoid embarrassing Erdogan domestically. The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal thinking.

The White House disclosed that Trump had both cajoled and threatened Erdogan in an unusual letter last week, urging him to act only in "the right and humane way" in Syria. The letter was sent the day Erdogan launched the major offensive against the Kurds.

Trump started on a positive note by suggesting they "work out a good deal," but then talked about crippling economic sanctions and concluded that the world "will look upon you forever as the devil if good things don't happen. Don't be a tough guy. Don't be a fool!"

Trump did place some sanctions on Turkey for the offensive. But he appeared to undercut his delegation's negotiating stance, saying the U.S. has no business in the region — and not to worry about the Kurdish fighters.

"If Turkey goes onto Syria, that's between Turkey and Syria, it's not between Turkey and the United States," Trump said during an Oval Office meeting with Italian President Sergio Mattarella.

As he seeks to push Erdogan to agree to a cease-fire, Pence will confront doubts about American credibility and his own, as an emissary of an inconsistent president.

"Given how erratic President Trump's decision-making process and style has been, it's just hard to

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 12 of 36

imagine any country on the receiving end of another interlocutor really being confident that what Pence and Pompeo are delivering reflects Trump's thinking at the moment or what it will be in the future," said Jeffrey Prescott, the Obama administration's senior director for Iran, Iraq, Syria and the Gulf states on the National Security Council and a former deputy national security adviser to former Vice President Joe Biden.

The withdrawal is the worst decision of Trump's presidency, said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., who meets often with the president and is one of his strongest and most important supporters in Congress.

"To those who think the Mideast doesn't matter to America, remember 9/11 — we had that same attitude on 9/10/2001," Graham said

Even before Trump's comments, Erdogan had publicly stated that he will be undeterred by the sanctions and resisted calls for a cease-fire Wednesday, saying the fighting would end only if Kurdish fighters abandoned their weapons and retreated from positions near the Turkish border. If Pence can persuade Turkey to agree to a cease-fire, which few U.S. officials believed was likely, experts warn it will not erase the signal Trump's action sent to American allies across the globe or the opening already being exploited by Russia in the region.

"Deterring an action that hasn't yet been taken is almost always easier than trying to coerce someone to reverse an action that they've already committed blood, treasure and honor to," said John Hannah, former national security adviser for former Vice President Dick Cheney and a senior counselor for Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

In public appearances, Trump said he was fulfilling a campaign promise to bring U.S. troops home from "endless wars" in the Middle East — casting aside criticism that a sudden U.S. withdrawal from Syria betrays the Kurdish fighters, stains U.S. credibility around the world and opens an important region to Russia.

"We have a situation where Turkey is taking land from Syria. Syria's not happy about it. Let them work it out," Trump said. "They have a problem at a border. It's not our border. We shouldn't be losing lives over it."

Turkish troops and Turkish-backed Syrian fighters launched their offensive against Kurdish forces in northern Syria a week ago, two days after Trump suddenly announced he was withdrawing the U.S. from the area. Erdogan has said he wants to create a "safe zone" 30 kilometers (20 miles) deep in Syria.

Ankara has long argued the Kurdish fighters are nothing more than an extension of the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, which has waged a guerrilla campaign inside Turkey since the 1980s and which Turkey, as well as the U.S. and European Union, designate as a terrorist organization.

Burns reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Alan Fram, Darlene Superville, Jill Colvin, Kevin Freking and Ellen Knickmeyer contributed to this report.

Powerful Democratic Congressman Elijah Cummings has died

By BRIAN WITTE Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) — Maryland Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, a sharecropper's son who rose to become the powerful chairman of a U.S. House committee that investigated President Donald Trump, died early Thursday of complications from longstanding health issues, his office said. He was 68.

Cummings was a formidable orator who passionately advocated for the poor in his black-majority district, which encompasses a large portion of Baltimore as well as more well-to-do suburbs.

As chairman of the House Oversight and Reform Committee, Cummings led multiple investigations of the president's governmental dealings, including probes in 2019 relating to the president's family members serving in the White House.

Trump responded by criticizing the Democrat's district as a "rodent-infested mess" where "no human being would want to live." The comments came weeks after Trump drew bipartisan condemnation following his calls for Democratic congresswomen of color to get out of the U.S. "right now," and go back to their "broken and crime-infested countries."

Cummings replied that government officials must stop making "hateful, incendiary comments" that only serve to divide and distract the nation from its real problems, including mass shootings and white supremacy.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 13 of 36

"Those in the highest levels of the government must stop invoking fear, using racist language and encouraging reprehensible behavior," Cummings said in a speech at the National Press Club.

Cummings' long career spanned decades in Maryland politics. He rose through the ranks of the Maryland House of Delegates before winning his congressional seat in a special election in 1996 to replace former Rep. Kweisi Mfume, who left the seat to lead the NAACP.

Cummings was an early supporter of Barack Obama's presidential bid in 2008. By 2016, Cummings was the senior Democrat on the House Benghazi Committee, which he said was "nothing more than a taxpayer-funded effort to bring harm to Hillary Clinton's campaign" for president.

Throughout his career, Cummings used his fiery voice to highlight the struggles and needs of inner-city residents. He was a firm believer in some much-debated approaches to help the poor and addicted, such as needle exchange programs as a way to reduce the spread of AIDS.

A key figure in the Trump impeachment inquiry, Cummings had been hoping to return to Congress after a medical procedure he said would only keep him away for a week. His statement then didn't detail the procedure. He had previously been treated for heart and knee issues.

Cummings' committee, authorized to investigate virtually any part of the federal government, is one of three conducting the House impeachment probe of Trump. Cummings was among the three chairmen to sign a letter seeking documents into the formal inquiry into whether Trump pressured Ukraine to investigate the family of Democratic presidential rival Joe Biden, the former vice president. The committees have issued multiple subpoenas of witnesses in the face of the Trump administration's refusal to cooperate with the impeachment probe and have jointly been meeting behind closed doors to hear testimony.

Separately, Cummings led an effort to gain access to Trump's financial records. His committee subpoenaed records from Mazars USA, an accounting firm that has provided services to Trump. The panel demanded documents from 2011 to 2018 as it probed Trump's reporting of his finances and potential conflicts of interest. Last week, a federal appeals court ruled that the records must be turned over to the House.

Shortly after Cummings' death after 2 a.m., Thursday at Johns Hopkins Hospital, his constituents began mourning. Maryland's state Senate president, U.S. Sen. Ben Cardin of Maryland and others praised Cummings' service and friendship.

In a statement, his widow, Maya Rockey Moore Cummings, chairwoman of Maryland's Democratic Party, said "Congressman Cummings was an honorable man who proudly served his district and the nation with dignity, integrity, compassion and humility. He worked until his last breath because he believed our democracy was the highest and best expression of our collective humanity and that our nation's diversity was our promise, not our problem."

Cummings was born Jan. 18, 1951. In grade school, a counselor told Cummings he was too slow to learn and spoke poorly, and he would never fulfill his dream of becoming a lawyer.

"I was devastated," Cummings told The Associated Press in 1996, shortly before he won his seat in Congress. "My whole life changed. I became very determined."

It steeled Cummings to prove that counselor wrong. He became not only a lawyer, but one of the most powerful orators in the statehouse, where he entered office in 1983. He rose to become the first black House speaker pro tem. He would begin his comments slowly, developing his theme and raising the emotional heat until it became like a sermon from the pulpit.

Cummings was quick to note the differences between Congress and the Maryland General Assembly, which has long been controlled by Democrats.

"After coming from the state where, basically, you had a lot of people working together, it's clear that the lines are drawn here," Cummings said about a month after entering office in Washington in 1996.

Cummings chaired the Congressional Black Caucus from 2003 to 2004, employing a hard-charging, explore-every-option style to put the group in the national spotlight.

He cruised to big victories in the overwhelmingly Democratic district, which had given Maryland its first black congressman in 1970 when Parren Mitchell was elected.

In 2015, when the death of black Baltimore resident Freddie Gray sparked the worst riots the city had

seen in decades, Cummings was in the streets, carrying a bullhorn and urging crowds to go home and respect a curfew. He spoke at Gray's funeral, asking all lawmakers in the church to stand up to show Gray's mother they would seek justice for her son.

"I want justice, oceans of it. I want fairness, rivers of it. That's what I want. That's all I want," Cummings said, quoting from the Bible.

'See you at the polls': Trump and Pelosi have it out

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — He said she's a "third-grade" politician. She said he's having a meltdown.

And with that President Donald Trump and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi chalked up the latest explosive meeting that ended abruptly with a walkout at the White House.

It's a familiar ritual, with Trump and congressional leaders meeting on official business, only to see the session devolve into colorful, name-calling commentary that's a new kind of addition to the history books. But this time, against the backdrop of the fast-moving impeachment inquiry, Pelosi arrived not just as the leader of the opposing party but as the speaker who could determine Trump's political future.

The administration called in congressional leadership to discuss the situation in Syria. The House had just voted, 354-60, to overwhelmingly oppose the president's announced U.S. troop withdrawal, a rare bipartisan rebuke. Trump's action has opened the door for a Turkish military attack on Syrian Kurds who have been aligned with the U.S. in fighting the country's long-running war.

Trump kicked off the meeting bragging about his "nasty" letter to Turkish President Recep Erdogan, according to a Democrat familiar with the meeting who was granted anonymity to discuss it. In the letter, Trump warned the Turkish leader, with exclamation points, not to be "slaughtering" the Kurds. The person called Trump's opening a lengthy, bombastic monologue.

Pelosi mentioned the House vote and Sen. Chuck Schumer, the Democratic leader, started to read the president a quote from former Defense Secretary James Mattis on the need to keep U.S. troops in Syria to prevent a resurgent of Islamic State fighters.

But Trump cut Schumer off, complaining that Mattis was "the world's most overrated general. You know why? He wasn't tough enough." Trump went on, "I captured ISIS."

Pelosi explained to Trump that Russia has always wanted a "foothold in the Middle East," and now it has one with the U.S. withdrawal, according to a senior Democratic aide who was also granted anonymity.

"All roads with you lead to Putin," the speaker said.

Then it began.

Trump said to Pelosi, "I hate ISIS more than you do."

Pelosi responded, "You don't know that."

Schumer intervened at one point and said, "Is your plan to rely on the Syrians and the Turks?"

Trump replied, "Our plan is to keep the American people safe."

Pelosi said: "That's not a plan. That's a goal."

Trump turned to Pelosi and complained about former President Barack Obama's "red line" over Syria. According to Schumer, he then called her "a third-rate politician."

At that point, the genteel Rep. Steny Hoyer of Maryland, the House Majority Leader, interjected, "This is not useful."

Pelosi and Hoyer stood and left the meeting. As they did, Trump said, "Goodbye, we'll see you at the polls."

From the White House driveway, Pelosi told reporters Trump was having some kind of "meltdown" inside. She said they had to leave because Trump was unable to grasp the reality of the situation.

Later, she would insist he even botched the insult, calling her "third-grade" rather than "third-rate."

The impeachment inquiry never came up, she said.

Trump insisted later on Twitter that it was Pelosi who had a "total meltdown," calling her "a very sick person!"

He also tweeted pictures from the room. "Do you think they like me?" he asked mockingly about one,

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 15 of 36

showing Pelosi and Schumer looking exhausted and glum.

"Nervous Nancy's unhinged meltdown!" he tweeted with another.

In that photo, Pelosi can be seen, surrounded by congressional leaders and military brass around a table at the White House, finger outpointed. She is standing up, literally, to Trump.

Pelosi turned the photo into the banner on her Twitter page.

UK, EU reach tentative Brexit deal; still needs ratification

By RAF CASERT and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Britain and the European Union finally reached a new tentative Brexit deal on Thursday, hoping to escape the acrimony, divisions and frustration of their three-year divorce battle. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson now faces the Herculean task of selling the accord to his recalcitrant parliament — including his allies in Northern Ireland.

Only hours before Brussels hosted a summit of the bloc's 28 national leaders, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker tweeted: "We have one! It's a fair and balanced agreement for the EU and the UK and it is testament to our commitment to find solutions."

Johnson tweeted that the two sides had struck a "great new deal" and urged U.K. lawmakers to ratify it in a special session being held Saturday — only the first time since 1982 that British lawmakers have been at work on that day.

"This is a deal which allows us to get Brexit done and leave the EU in two weeks' time," Johnson tweeted.

The pound hit a five-month high against the U.S. dollar on the news.

Yet immediately complicating matters was Johnson's Northern Irish government allies, which didn't waste a minute before announcing they could not back the tentative Brexit deal because of the way it handled the Irish border.

Johnson, however, needs all the support he can get to push any Brexit deal past a deeply divided Parliament and that knowledge tempered jubilation at the EU summit. The U.K. Parliament already rejected a previous Brexit deal crafted by former British Prime Minister Theresa May three times.

EU Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier has been through this scenario before.

"We have this history. That is why my mountaineering temperament keeps me careful and cautious," said Barnier, who hails from the French Alps and organized the 1992 Olympic Winter Games there.

Barnier was in the room when the leaders called each other and said Johnson "told President Juncker this morning that he believed he was able to get the deal approved," adding Johnson said he was "confident about his capacity to convince a majority."

The agreement must still be formally approved by the bloc and ratified by the European Parliament.

The key hurdle to a Brexit deal was finding a way to keep goods and people flowing freely across the border between EU member Ireland and the U.K.'s Northern Ireland after Brexit. That invisible, open border has underpinned the region's peace accord and allowed the economies of both Ireland and Northern Ireland to grow.

Johnson insists that all of the U.K. — including Northern Ireland — must leave the bloc's customs union, which would seem to make border checks and tariffs inevitable.

But Barnier said the deal "squares this circle" by leaving Northern Ireland inside the EU single market for goods — so border checks are not needed — and also eliminating customs checks at the Irish border. Instead, customs checks will be carried out and tariffs levied on goods entering Northern Ireland that are destined for the EU.

That effectively means a customs border in the Irish Sea — something the British government long said it would not allow and something Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party vehemently opposes.

DUP leader Arlene Foster and the party's parliamentary chief Nigel Dodds said they "could not support what is being suggested on customs and consent issues," referring to a say the Northern Irish authorities might have in future developments on the border.

The party said their position was unchanged after the announcement of the provisional deal.

But the EU has compromised, too, by allowing Northern Ireland special access to its single market. And the deal gives Northern Ireland a say over the rules, something that was missing from May's previous rejected agreement. After four years, the Northern Ireland Assembly will vote on whether to continue the arrangement or end it.

Johnson — who took office in July vowing that Britain would finally leave the EU on Oct. 31 with or without a deal — on Wednesday likened Brexit to climbing Mount Everest.

Legislator Bim Afolami quoted the prime minister as saying "the summit is in sight, but it is shrouded in cloud. But we can get there."

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

Lorne Cook and Sam Petrequin contributed from Brussels and Mike Corder from London

Kurdish commander: Trump approved deal with Russia, Damascus **By LEFTERIS PITARAKIS and SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press**

CEYLANPINAR, Turkey (AP) — The U.S. President Donald Trump did not oppose a deal struck between the Syrian Kurdish-led forces, Russia and the Syrian government in Damascus to protect against a Turkish offensive in northeastern Syria, the commander of the force said as his fighters battled a new push by Ankara-backed fighters to seize a strategic border town.

The commander of the Kurdish-led forces, Mazloum Abdi, said Trump essentially gave the go-ahead for the deal in a phone call Monday.

The Kurds' deal, announced Sunday, came after Trump ordered U.S. troops to step aside as Turkey launched its attack last week. Under the agreement, forces of Syrian President Bashar Assad effectively replace the U.S. troops on the ground in the border areas, with Moscow guaranteeing the deal.

"We told (Trump) that we are contacting the Syrian regime and the Russians in order to protect our country and land," Abdi, better known by his nom de guerre Mazloum Kobani, told a local TV station, Ronahi TV. "He said, 'We are not against that. We support that.'"

Vice President Mike Pence, heading a U.S. delegation that includes Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, is set to arrive in Turkey Thursday afternoon, aiming to press Turkey to accept a cease-fire in its offensive. Before their arrival, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu met with White House national security adviser Robert O'Brien.

But on Wednesday, Trump dismissed the very crisis he sent his aides on an emergency mission to douse. Trump said the situation in northern Syria was under control and that the Syrian government was now protecting the Kurds.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Thursday once again called on Turkey to stop its military offensive in Syria, telling parliament that the offensive "makes tens of thousands, among them thousands of children, flee."

She said the military operation "a humanitarian drama with big geopolitical consequences," strengthening the role of Russia and Iran.

Syria's Kurdish fighters have allied with the U.S. since 2014 to fight Islamic State militants. Abdi said the priority now is to stop Turkey's invasion.

Abdi said his forces have frozen their activities to counter IS, other than defending themselves against the militants, who he said were taking advantage of the Turkish offensive. He said the militants have attacked prisons where fellow members are jailed and have freed some families of IS members from holding areas in displaced people's camps.

Abdi said his forces will decide what to do with detained IS prisoners and their families.

"The matter is in our hands. We captured them. We are holding them, and we will decide what to do with them. No one else," he told the channel.

Merkel said both the Middle East and Europe are being made to feel insecure because prisoners of the

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 17 of 36

Islamic State extremist group are no longer being adequately guarded by Kurdish-led forces. Those forces are now diverting their attention to the Turkish invasion.

So far, Syrian troops have deployed in the border town of Kobani, further south and along a main highway to the east.

But fighting for the strategic town of Ras al-Ayn continued, as Turkish-backed fighters make a new push for the town where the Kurdish-led group has put up stiff resistance. An Associated Press journalist on the Turkish side of the border reported heavy shelling into Ras al-Ayn.

An Associated Press journalist said Turkish cross-border artillery fire targeted the town of Ras al-Ayn and areas beyond the town on Thursday. The shelling came despite Turkey announcing that it has captured the town three days ago.

An official with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces said the town saw "insane bombing" from the air and land as the Turkish-backed fighters launched a three-pronged attack. They advanced slightly in the town but there were "fierce battles," the official spoke on condition of anonymity to describe operational details.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the Turkish-backed forces have encircled Ras al-Ayn.

The SDF official also said Syrian government forces have deployed south of Ras al-Ayn, near Tal Tamr and the highway there, taking a rear position behind the Kurdish forces.

El Deeb reported from Beirut. AP writers Salar Salim in Erbil, Iraq, contributed to this report.

Envoy key to Ukraine debate is due up in impeachment inquiry

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. ambassador to the European Union is expected to tell House lawmakers conducting an impeachment inquiry that he was merely repeating President Donald Trump's reassurances when he told another envoy that there was no quid pro quo in the administration's dealings with Ukraine.

Gordon Sondland, scheduled to appear Thursday, would be the latest in a series of witnesses to be interviewed behind closed doors by House lawmakers. Trump blocked his appearance last week, but Democrats promptly subpoenaed Sondland.

His appearance is especially anticipated since text messages and other witness testimony place him at the center of a foreign policy dialogue with Ukraine that forms the basis of the impeachment inquiry and that officials feared circumvented normal channels. Part of that effort involved pushing the former Soviet republic to commit to politically charged investigations sought by Trump, including into a gas company connected to the son of Democratic rival Joe Biden.

Sondland, whose name surfaced in a whistleblower complaint in August, is certain to be asked about text messages that show him working with two other diplomats to navigate the interests of Trump and his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani. The messages show the diplomats discussing an arrangement in which Ukraine's leader would be offered a White House visit in exchange for a public statement by Ukraine committing to undertake investigations into the 2016 U.S. presidential election and into Burisma, the gas company.

One text exchange that has attracted particular attention involves one diplomat, William "Bill" Taylor, telling Sondland that he thought it was "crazy" to withhold military aid from Ukraine "for help with a political campaign." Sondland said in response that Trump had been clear about his intentions and that there was no quid pro quo.

Now, Sondland is prepared to tell lawmakers that Trump told him by phone before he sent the text that there was no quid pro quo and that he was simply parroting those reassurances to Taylor, according to a person familiar with his account. He is expected to say that though he did understand there to be a quid pro quo involving a White House visit, he did not associate Burisma with the Biden family and believed

that an anti-corruption public statement was a goal widely shared across the administration.

Sondland will be testifying three days after Fiona Hill, a former White House aide, said that his actions so unnerved then-national security adviser John Bolton that Bolton said he was not part of “whatever drug deal Sondland and Mulvaney are cooking up” — a reference to White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney. But Sondland is prepared to say that neither Hill nor Bolton personally raised concerns about the Ukraine work directly with him, according to the person familiar with his account. The person spoke on condition of anonymity to describe the private information.

House lawmakers have been hearing over the last two weeks from other diplomats and administration officials, including from the State Department. The most recent was Michael McKinley, a career service officer and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s de facto chief of staff, who testified that the Trump administration’s politicization of foreign policy contributed to his resignation.

Follow Eric Tucker on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

Aid groups scramble to reach Syrians as battle lines shift

By **JOSEPH KRAUSS and ANDREA ROSA Associated Press**

BARDARASH, Iraq (AP) — Humanitarian groups in northeastern Syria are scrambling to provide aid to hundreds of thousands of people as rapidly shifting battle lines make it increasingly difficult to reach them.

Nearly all foreign aid workers have been evacuated because of security concerns, and there are fears that local staff could face reprisals, either at the hands of Turkish-led forces pushing in from the north or Syrian troops fanning out across territory held by the embattled Kurds.

The front lines are being rapidly redrawn as more than 160,000 people flee the fighting, including many who were displaced by earlier battles in Syria’s eight-year civil war. The offensive has created a new refugee crisis in a region where some 1.6 million people already rely on humanitarian aid.

Before the offensive, a camp in the northern town of Ein Eissa held an estimated 12,000 displaced people, including around 1,000 wives and widows of Islamic State fighters and their children. But rioting broke out as Turkish-led forces closed in over the weekend, leading to the escape of hundreds of Islamic State supporters.

Sonia Khush, the Syria response director at Save the Children, which was operating in the camp, now says it is “nearly empty,” with most of the residents having fled further south and the IS supporters melting away. She said the aid group can no longer access its office in Ein Eissa, and that most of its local staff have themselves been displaced.

“We have to leave as the battle lines change,” she said.

Turkish troops and allied Syrian fighters invaded northern Syria a week ago after U.S. President Donald Trump pulled back U.S. troops who had partnered with Syrian Kurdish forces in the costly five-year war against the Islamic State group. Turkey views the Kurdish fighters as terrorists because of their links to the decades-long insurgency in its southeast.

Abandoned by their U.S. allies, the Kurds turned to Syrian President Bashar Assad and Russia for protection, and over the past two days Syrian and Russian forces have moved into several towns and villages as the U.S. has pulled its remaining troops from the region.

So far, most of the displacement has been within northern Syria, but hundreds of refugees have crossed into Iraq in the past week, mostly through unofficial border points. On Wednesday, a first group of 890 people were bused to a camp in Bardarash, in northern Iraq’s semi-autonomous Kurdish region, which up until two years ago housed displaced people from the Iraqi city of Mosul.

“Where can we go except here?” said Omar Boobe Hose, a refugee from the northern Syrian town of Ras al-Ayn, which has seen heavy fighting. “We can’t go to Turkey, because they are our enemy, and the other side is also our enemy, the Syrian (government) side. Where can we go? We have only here. There are no other places for Kurds.”

Doctors Without Borders, which operates in war zones around the globe and is known by its French ac-

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 19 of 36

ronym MSF, said Tuesday it had decided to suspend most of its activities and evacuate all its international staff from northeastern Syria.

"The highly unpredictable and fast-changing situation at present has made it impossible for MSF to negotiate safe access to deliver healthcare and provide humanitarian assistance to people in distress," it said in a statement. "Given the numerous groups fighting on different sides of the conflict, MSF can no longer guarantee the safety of our Syrian and international staff."

The International Rescue Committee also said it has suspended its health operations in the northeast because of "hostilities and uncertainty."

It said an apparent airstrike hit a "trauma stabilization point" run by a local organization and that two of that group's ambulances were damaged despite being clearly marked. It said the local group's ambulances get fired upon every time they approach Ras al-Ayn, preventing them from reaching the town.

"Many hospitals have had to close and those that remain open are overwhelmed with casualties," the IRC said. At least 42 people have been killed, including three children, since hostilities began Oct. 9, and another 123 people have been wounded, it said.

In Hassakeh, one of the main cities in the northeast, schools are being transformed into shelters, and some residents are opening their homes to displaced people. The city's main water station was damaged in the fighting, and the International Committee of the Red Cross and other groups are working to maintain supplies for hundreds of thousands of people.

A woman from Ein Eissa said she fled with her family after an explosion near their home made her children cry.

"My husband and I took our kids, left the house and walked for hours," she told the ICRC, saying the journey took two days because they couldn't afford to rent a car. "Now we are staying in this school, where we feel a bit safer. But we brought no food, no water, no mattresses."

Karl Schembri, a spokesman for the Norwegian Refugee Council, said the escalating violence makes it difficult to deliver aid to the hundreds of thousands of people depending on it.

"It has become unsafe for humanitarian workers to carry out much of their daily work and has made several displacement camps outside of the reach of aid agencies," he said. The warring parties "need to guarantee that aid workers and civilians will not be targeted."

Save the Children and other aid agencies are still operating in areas farther from the front lines, including the al-Hol camp near the Iraqi border, where tens of thousands of IS family members are being held. But as Syrian government forces move in many of the biggest international aid providers will have to withdraw because they are not registered in Damascus.

"There will be a huge impact on where we're able to access in the northeast," Khush said. "As we leave areas and government-registered agencies come in there's always a gap in services in the transition period."

Krauss reported from Jerusalem.

Diplomat says politicization of foreign policy disturbed him

By LISA MASCARO, MARY CLARE JALONICK and MATT LEE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A former top State Department aide testified in the impeachment inquiry that the Trump administration's politicization of foreign policy contributed to his resignation, while the Senate GOP leader briefed colleagues on a possible Christmas impeachment trial.

The day's events, interrupted by an explosive meeting at the White House, churned as longtime State Department officials continued speaking out under subpoena — some revealing striking new details — about the actions President Donald Trump and his personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, took toward Ukraine that have sparked the House investigation.

On Wednesday, Michael McKinley, a career foreign service officer and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's de facto chief of staff, told investigators behind closed doors that he could no longer look the other way amid the Trump administration's dealings with Ukraine, which were among the reasons he ended his 37-

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 20 of 36

year career last week, according to multiple people familiar with the testimony, who, like others who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity, were not authorized to discuss it.

"I was disturbed by the implication that foreign governments were being approached to procure negative information on political opponents," McKinley testified, according to a former colleague familiar with his remarks.

The impeachment inquiry revolves around a whistleblower's complaint that Trump was pushing Ukraine's leader into opening an investigation of a company connected to the son of Trump's potential 2020 Democratic rival Joe Biden. It is illegal to solicit or receive foreign help in a U.S. election.

Among McKinley's concerns was the administration's failure to support Ukrainian Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch, who was ousted in March on orders from Trump.

McKinley, who as a Latin America expert was not specifically involved in Ukraine, was also frustrated that there had been no response to an August inspector general's report that found significant evidence of leadership and management problems, including allegations from career employees that Assistant Secretary of State Kevin Moley and his former senior adviser Marie Stull retaliated or tried to retaliate against them as holdovers from the Obama administration.

Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., told reporters outside the closed-door hearing that McKinley was complimentary about Pompeo's role but did raise other issues.

"I think most of this is a concern by a colleague for an ambassador that he held in high regard," Meadows said, declining to provide more details of the closed session.

Republicans are crying foul over the process of the impeachment inquiry, but as House Democrats press on with the investigation, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell briefed Republicans about the possible trial ahead.

McConnell warned of a possible House impeachment vote by Thanksgiving that would force a trial in the Senate, likely by Christmas. He used slides and history lessons during a private Senate GOP lunch in the Capitol to talk about the process, according to a person familiar with the meeting.

At the White House, congressional leaders abruptly ended an explosive meeting with the president on the situation in Syria, when Trump called House Speaker Nancy Pelosi a "third-grade politician," according to Democrats. Pelosi said later the president was having a "meltdown."

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said he knows his House colleagues didn't run for office to conduct an impeachment investigation, but he said, "The facts that are already in the public domain are so deeply troubling and must be taken very seriously."

Another key figure in the impeachment investigation, special envoy Kurt Volker, returned to Capitol Hill on Wednesday to review the transcript of his Oct. 3 testimony to investigators, according to a person familiar with his appearance.

Volker provided text messages to lawmakers that revealed an effort at the State Department to push Ukraine's leader into opening an investigation of the gas company Burisma connected to Biden's son, Hunter, in return for a visit with Trump.

That effort soon escalated into what one diplomat feared was a quid pro quo for U.S. military aid. Trump has denied that, saying assistance to Ukraine was delayed to pressure the country into addressing corruption.

Another ambassador involved in those text message exchanges, Gordon Sondland, has been asked to appear Thursday.

The testimony so far from the witnesses, mainly officials from the State Department and other foreign policy posts, largely corroborates the account of the government whistleblower whose complaint first sparked the impeachment inquiry, according to lawmakers attending the closed-door interviews.

One witness said it appeared "three amigos" tied to the White House — Sondland, Volker and Energy Secretary Rick Perry — had taken over foreign policy. Another quoted national security adviser John Bolton as calling Giuliani a "hand grenade" for his back-channel efforts to get Ukraine to investigate Biden and Biden's son Hunter.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 21 of 36

Trump's July 25 phone call in which he pressed Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, to investigate Biden's family is at the center of the Democrats' inquiry.

Pelosi, despite intensifying calls from Trump and Republicans to hold a formal vote to authorize the impeachment inquiry, showed no indication she would do so. She said Congress will continue its investigation as part of the Constitution's system of checks and balances of the executive branch.

"This is not a game for us. This is deadly serious. We're on a path that is taking us, a path to the truth," Pelosi told reporters Tuesday.

Trump calls the impeachment inquiry an "illegitimate process" and has blocked officials from cooperating.

At the same time, Republicans are bracing for a vote and trial. House GOP Whip Steve Scalise invited GOP Sen. Lindsey Graham, who was an impeachment manager decades ago during President Bill Clinton's impeachment, to brief Republican lawmakers on the process ahead.

Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee overseeing the probe, has praised the State Department officials for stepping forward, under subpoena, to shed light on the matter.

"We have learned much of this thanks to the courageous testimony of the State Department officials who have been put in an impossible situation by the administration," which is urging them not to comply with requests to testify to Congress, he said. "They are doing their duty."

Associated Press writers Michael Balsamo, Andrew Taylor, Matthew Daly, Colleen Long, Padmananda Rama, Eric Tucker and Alan Fram contributed to this report.

Cause for hope and caution following police shooting in home

By **ERRIN HAINES** and **COREY WILLIAMS** Associated Press

In the days after Atatiana Jefferson's killing in her own home by a white Fort Worth police officer, many in the black community say they've seen at least initial signs of swifter action with the officer's arrest, but also are noticing some recurring and troubling themes.

These include the release of police body camera footage and details from an arrest warrant showing that Jefferson had a gun — moves that are being perceived as attempts to place blame on the victim.

Jefferson's shooting Saturday in her home is the latest high-profile one in the era of the Black Lives Matter movement, which the fatal police shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, helped fuel in 2014. The events that followed her shooting have unfolded in ways that are both typical and unique, leaving her family and activists to balance hope with caution.

The officer who shot her, Aaron Dean, was taken into custody two days after the killing. Jefferson's family had been calling for an arrest.

"We would want them to move as swiftly as they move when it's a black person who is accused of a crime," said attorney Benjamin Crump, who has represented several black families whose loved ones were killed by police officers in recent years. "It should not be any different if you have a gun or badge."

Jefferson, 28, was killed in the early hours after a neighbor saw the front door at Jefferson's house had been left open and called police. Jefferson had stayed up late playing a video game with her 8-year-old nephew, who saw her get shot.

She was shot through a back window by Dean, who was outside the home. Dean was not heard identifying himself as police on the bodycam video, and Interim Police Chief Ed Kraus has said there was no sign Dean or the other officer who responded even knocked on the front door.

Dean resigned before being charged with murder Monday.

The killing immediately sparked outrage and peaceful protests in Jefferson's Texas community, which was still reeling from last year's shooting death of 26-year-old Botham Jean, a black accountant from the Caribbean island nation of St. Lucia who was killed in his apartment by a white Dallas police officer who was his neighbor. The officer, Amber Guyger, was fired soon after the shooting and charged with murder.

Guyger, who said she mistook Jean's apartment for her own, was convicted earlier this month — a rare jury decision — and sentenced to 10 years in prison, a punishment seen by some as too lenient for the

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 22 of 36

crime.

On Monday, Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price, who is white, penned a letter to the city expressing sadness and regret for Jefferson's death, an unusual move for a public official in such cases.

"On behalf of the entire city of Fort Worth — I am sorry," the letter reads. "To Atatiana's family — I am sorry. There is nothing to justify or explain what happened on Saturday morning. Nothing."

Price's letter also addressed James Smith, the concerned neighbor who called police, and Jefferson's nephew, who she asked the city to surround with prayers and support.

But even as the mayor and police chief were calling the shooting of Jefferson, a college graduate who was considering medical school, inexcusable, the inclusion of photos of a handgun found inside her home with the bodycam footage was seized upon by some as an effort to discredit her. Similarly, some reacted negatively to an arrest warrant that quoted Jefferson's nephew as saying his aunt pulled out a gun after hearing suspicious noises behind her house.

Price in her letter denounced the Police Department's initial mention of Jefferson's licensed handgun as "irrelevant."

Jean was unarmed but authorities pointed out that he had marijuana in his apartment, which activists called an attempt to smear him. And after Brown was killed by white Ferguson officer Darren Wilson, police said the unarmed, black 18-year-old was suspected of stealing cigarillos from a convenience store before the shooting and they released surveillance video of Brown, which upset protesters.

There have been encouraging signs of transparency in the handling of Jefferson's killing, with police releasing the bodycam footage and Dean's name to the public on Monday, said Villanova sociologist Jill McCorkel, author of "Breaking Women: Gender, Race and the New Politics of Imprisonment."

"It's critical that those names are released right away," said McCorkel, whose work focuses on police violence against women.

"If Jefferson had shot first, her name would've been released to the press immediately," she added. "We should have the same balance of accountability, particularly because police are public servants acting in all of our names."

Fort Worth police have had six deadly force shootings since June, and activists have been pushing for reform in the city for several years. Civil litigation attorney Geoffrey Fieger said some law enforcement agencies now appear to be responding appropriately and firing officers involved in misconduct.

"In the past, (police departments) didn't even fire them," said Fieger, a Detroit-based lawyer who represented the family of 7-year-old Aiyana Stanley-Jones. The family sued the city and was awarded more than \$8 million after she was shot to death during a 2010 police raid at her home while sleeping on a sofa.

While Dean wasn't fired, Kraus said he would've been had he not stepped down voluntarily.

Jason C. Johnson, president of the Law Enforcement Legal Defense Fund, said caution should be taken while the facts are still being investigated.

"There is tremendous pressure on mayors and prosecutors and police chiefs to take dramatic and very swift and harsh action on cases that target this type of attention," Johnson said. "Normally, these cases will be reviewed more exhaustingly."

Some are already skeptical that they will see Dean held accountable in a courtroom, an outcome not often seen in cases where the officer is a defendant.

Louis LaFleur, a 68-year-old retired school custodian who lives a block from Jefferson's home, said he has little faith in the criminal justice system in the case.

"Whatever they're going to do, they're going to do it," said LaFleur, who is black. "He's the lawman. He's got people behind him all the way. We don't have that."

Associated Press writers Jake Bleiberg in Fort Worth and Nomaan Merchant in Houston contributed. Haines reported from Philadelphia, and Williams from Detroit.

Workers celebrate deal with GM, show union power in industry

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — On the picket lines at a General Motors transmission plant in Toledo, Ohio, passing cars honked and striking workers celebrated a tentative contract deal by munching on 10 pizzas dropped off by a supporter.

They had carried signs for 31 days and demonstrated the muscle the United Auto Workers union still has over Detroit's three manufacturers.

Details of the four-year pact weren't released, but GM's latest offer to end the monthlong strike included wage increases and lump-sum payments, top-notch health insurance at little cost to workers, promises of new products for many U.S. factories and a path to full-time work for temporary workers.

That's a big difference from what GM wanted going into the talks: to slash total labor costs at its factories, which are about \$13 per hour higher than at foreign automakers in the U.S.

Terry Dittes, the UAW's chief bargainer with GM, said the deal offers "major gains" for 49,000 union workers who have been walking picket lines since Sept. 16. They'll stay off work for at least a couple more days while union committees decide if they will bless the deal. Then workers will have to vote on it.

The deal shows that the union, with less than one-third of the 1.5 million members it had at its peak in 1979, still has a lot of clout with GM, Ford and Fiat Chrysler.

"I think economically the UAW will do just fine in this agreement," said Art Schwartz, a former GM negotiator who now is a labor consultant in Michigan. "The union certainly still has power in this industry."

President Donald Trump called UAW President Gary Jones on Wednesday night, but union spokesman Brian Rothenberg said he did not know what the men discussed.

The strike immediately brought GM's U.S. factories to a halt, and within a week, started to hamper production in Mexico and Canada. Analysts at KeyBanc investment services estimated the stoppage cut GM vehicle production by 250,000 to 300,000 vehicles. That's too much for the company to make up with overtime or increased assembly line speeds. Analysts say the costs to GM will hit around \$2 billion.

Workers, on the other hand, lost north of \$3,000 each on average, the difference between their base wages and \$250 per week in strike pay from the union.

"It's nice to see there's a deal, but without knowing the details I'm a little skeptical because we don't know the highlights or the lowlights," said worker Nick Kuhlman, who was among the strikers huddled around a burn barrel on a blustery, gray Toledo afternoon.

"I just hope it gets done," said Toledo worker Mark Nichols, who thought the strike would last only a week or two and was ready to get back to work because his savings are running low.

GM apparently was able to close three of four factories that it wanted to shutter to get rid of excess capacity in slow-selling cars and components. The Detroit-Hamtramck plant will get a new electric pickup truck and stay open, but factories in Lordstown, Ohio; Warren, Michigan; and near Baltimore are to be closed. The Lordstown area will get an electric vehicle battery factory, but it won't have nearly as many workers as the assembly plant that for years made compact GM cars.

The deal now will be used as a template for talks with GM's crosstown rivals, Ford and Fiat Chrysler. Normally the major provisions carry over to the other two companies and cover about 140,000 auto workers nationwide. It wasn't clear which company the union would bargain with next, or whether there would be another strike.

Schwartz said depending on the contents, the GM contract could influence wages and benefits in other industries. But he said foreign automakers with U.S. factories, mainly in the South, will give modest pay raises regardless of the GM contract, and shouldn't be affected much.

Clarence Trinity, a worker at GM's engine and transmission plant in the Detroit suburb of Romulus, Michigan, said the deal sounds good, "but I have to see it in writing or hear from the leaders."

Trinity said he can't figure out why it took 31 days for the strike to end. "I don't understand what General Motors was expecting to get out of us. Maybe they didn't expect us to strike. Maybe they didn't expect us to strike this long."

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 24 of 36

If all of the committees bless the deal, it's likely to take several days for GM to get its factories restarted. Matt Himes, a worker at the GM plant in Spring Hill, Tennessee, heard news of the deal in Ohio, where he's trying to help his wife sell their house after the Lordstown GM plant where he used to work was shuttered. He hopes good news keeps coming. If they can sell their house, his wife can finally move south with him. "I'm proud that we stuck our ground and everybody stuck together," Himes said of the union workers during a phone interview. "And I'm relieved that hopefully it worked out, got us a good contract and we can move on and get back to work making cars like we should be."

Wall Street investors liked news that the strike could end. GM shares jumped 2.6% just after the news broke, but eased back to close up 1% at \$36.65.

GM and the union have been negotiating at a time of troubling uncertainty for the U.S. auto industry. Driven up by the longest economic expansion in American history, auto sales appear to have peaked and are now heading in the other direction. GM and other carmakers are also struggling to make the transition to electric and autonomous vehicles.

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump's trade war with China and his tariffs on imported steel and aluminum have raised costs for auto companies. A revamped North American free trade deal is stalled in Congress, raising doubts about the future of America's trade in autos and auto parts with Canada and Mexico, which last year came to \$257 billion.

Amid that uncertainty, GM workers have wanted to lock in as much as they can before things get ugly. They argue that they had given up pay raises and made other concessions to keep GM afloat during its 2009 trip through bankruptcy protection. Now that GM has been nursed back to health — earning \$2.42 billion in its latest quarter — they wanted a bigger share.

The union's bargainers have voted to recommend the deal to the UAW International Executive Board, which will vote on the agreement. Union leaders from factories nationwide will travel to Detroit for a vote on Thursday. The earliest workers could return would be after that.

In past years, it's taken a minimum of three or four days and as long as several weeks for the national ratification vote.

This time around — with a federal corruption investigation that has implicated the past two UAW presidents and brought convictions of five union officials — many union members don't trust the leadership. But they're also tired of striking and may return before they vote on the deal themselves.

The strike had shut down 33 GM manufacturing plants in nine states across the U.S., and also took down factories in Canada and Mexico. It was the first national strike by the union since a two-day walkout in 2007, and the longest since a 54-day strike in Flint, Michigan, in 1998 that also halted most of GM's production.

Associated Press writers Mike Householder in Detroit, John Seewer in Toledo, Ohio, and Jonathan Matise in Nashville, Tennessee, contributed to this report.

Syrian forces enter key border town, blocking Turkish plans

By ELENA BECATOROS and BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

CEYLANPINAR, Turkey (AP) — Syrian forces on Wednesday night rolled into the strategic border town of Kobani, blocking one path for the Turkish military to establish a "safe zone" free of Syrian Kurdish fighters along the frontier as part of its week-old offensive.

The seizure of Kobani by forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar Assad also pointed to a dramatic shift in northeastern Syria: The town was where the United States military and Kurdish fighters first united to defeat the Islamic State group four years ago and holds powerful symbolism for Syrian Kurds and their ambitions of self-rule.

The convoys of government forces drove into Kobani after dark, a resident said. The resident, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal, was one of the few remaining amid fears of a Turkish attack on the town. Syria's state-run media confirmed its troops entered the town.

Syria's presence in Kobani puts a firm limit on Turkish ambitions in its offensive. The town lies between a

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 25 of 36

Turkish-controlled enclave farther west and smaller areas to the east that Turkey seized in the past week.

Turkey had talked of creating a 30-kilometer (19-mile) deep "safe zone," driving out Kurdish fighters from the border region. Turkish forces had shelled Kobani in recent days as part of the offensive but had not advanced ground troops on it.

The battle for Kobani turned the once-nondescript town into a centerpiece of the international campaign against IS, with TV cameras flocking to the Turkish side of the border to track the plumes of smoke rising from explosions in the besieged town. Then-U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry declared it would be "morally very difficult" not to help Kobani.

The IS extremists were finally driven out in early 2015 in their first major defeat, and an alliance was cemented that would eventually bring down the group's "caliphate" in Syria.

Now the Kurdish authority agreed to allow Damascus to deploy its military in the town and other parts of northeast Syria to protect them from Turkey's offensive launched after U.S. President Donald Trump pulled back American troops working with the Kurds.

On Wednesday, the U.S.-led coalition said it had vacated a cement factory south of Kobani, which had served as a coordination center with the Kurdish-led forces. Coalition spokesman Col. Myles Caggins said that after troops left the base, two U.S. fighter jets launched pre-planned airstrikes to destroy ammunition that was left behind.

The coalition also said its forces had left Raqqa, the former capital of the Islamic State that was liberated in 2017, and Tabqa, a town to the west.

"Coalition forces continue a deliberate withdrawal from northeast Syria," Caggins tweeted.

After being effectively abandoned by the U.S., the Kurds' turn to the Syrian government for protection has allowed Damascus' ally, Russia, to step in as the biggest power player.

Moscow further asserted that role Wednesday, offering to mediate a resolution to the conflict, one day before U.S. Vice President Mike Pence was to begin a mission to press Turkey for a cease-fire.

On Monday, Trump imposed limited economic sanctions on Turkey to raise the pressure on Ankara. The move came five days after Trump raised the specter of sanctions in a letter to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in which he also said that if the Turkish leader invaded Syria he would be remembered as a "devil." Trump told Erdogan he wouldn't want to be responsible for "slaughtering thousands of people," and warned, "don't be a tough guy. Don't be a fool!"

Erdogan defied the sanctions, saying the only way its military offensive would end was if Syrian Kurdish fighters leave a designated border area.

Erdogan also said he had "no problem" accepting an invitation from Russian President Vladimir Putin to visit Russia soon to discuss Syria. But he threw into doubt a planned Nov. 13 meeting with Trump, citing anger over the sanctions that Washington imposed Monday on the NATO ally.

Despite an outcry among both Democratic and Republican lawmakers over the pullout and the Turkish invasion, Trump insisted a fight between Turkey and the Kurds was not a U.S. problem and that things are "very nicely under control" in northern Syria.

"Syria's friendly with the Kurds. The Kurds are very well-protected. Plus, they know how to fight. And, by the way, they're no angels," Trump told reporters at the White House while meeting with Italian President Sergio Mattarella.

Trump added that U.S. troops are "largely out" of the region, adding that if Russia wanted to get involved with Syria, "that's really up to them. It's not our border. We shouldn't be losing lives over it."

Still, the repercussions from America's abrupt withdrawal were expanding. Assad's forces are returning to regions of northern Syria they abandoned at the height of the 8-year-old civil war. Moscow has taken a more prominent role as an interlocutor among Assad, the former U.S.-allied Kurds and Turkey.

Erdogan's office confirmed the Turkish leader would meet Thursday with Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and said he would travel to Sochi, Russia, for talks on Tuesday.

Erdogan said he was not concerned by the U.S. sanctions. He told reporters that chances for his November trip to Washington are "something to be assessed" after the talks with the American delegation, he said, adding that the sanctions and criticisms in the U.S. constituted "great disrespect toward the Turkish

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 26 of 36

Republic.”

In an address to his ruling party legislators, Erdogan said Turkey would not be coerced into halting its offensive or accepting offers for mediation with the Kurdish fighters, which Turkey considers to be terrorists.

“Our proposal is for the terrorists to lay down their arms, leave their equipment, destroy the traps they have created, and leave the safe zone we designated, as of tonight,” Erdogan said. “If this is done, our Operation Peace Spring will end by itself.”

In a speech to Parliament, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Turkey won’t be affected by “sanctions and threats.” He also said Turkey would “give the appropriate answer to these sanctions.”

Turkish forces and Kurdish fighters also battled over the border town of Ras al-Ayn. Turkey said it had captured the town days ago, but its hold appeared uncertain.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in remarks carried by Russian news agencies that Moscow is committed to mediating between Syria and Turkey.

Russia already has announced it had deployed troops outside the flashpoint town of Manbij to keep apart the Syrian military and Turkish-led forces. Syrian forces took control of Manbij as U.S. troops completed their pullout from the town Tuesday.

Lavrov also said Moscow will also continue to encourage Syria’s Kurds and government to seek rapprochement following the U.S. withdrawal. The Kurds are hoping to reach a deal with Damascus that preserves at least some degree of the autonomy they seized for themselves during the civil war.

Lavrov also blamed the U.S. and the West for undermining the Syrian state, saying this pushed “the Kurds toward separatism and confrontation with Arab tribes.”

In another sign of Moscow’s rising profile, France suggested it will also work more closely with Russia in Syria.

French Foreign Minister Jean Yves Le Drian said told French TV channel BFM that France is now looking to Russia, given their “common interests” in defeating the Islamic State group in Syria.

A U.N. Security Council meeting concluded with no call for Turkey to end its military offensive against the Kurds. Instead, the diplomats issued a brief statement expressing concern about the dispersal of “terrorists” from the region and the humanitarian impact.

Mroue contributed from Beirut. Associated Press writer Suzan Fraser in Ankara, Turkey, and Albert Aji in Damascus, Syria, contributed.

APNewsBreak: Skeleton unearthed beneath California peak

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The climbers were closing in on the top of California’s second-highest peak when they came upon the grisly discovery of what looked like a bone buried in a boulder field.

Closer inspection revealed a fractured human skull. Tyler Hofer and his climbing partner moved rocks aside and discovered an entire skeleton. It appeared to have been there long enough that all that remained were bones, a pair of leather shoes and a belt.

The discovery a week ago beneath Mount Williamson unearthed a mystery: Who was the unfortunate hiker? How did he or she die? Was the person alone? Were they ever reported injured, dead or missing?

The Inyo County Sheriff’s Department doesn’t have any of those answers yet. But it retrieved the remains Wednesday in the hopes of finding the identity and what happened. There’s no evidence to suggest foul play, spokeswoman Carma Roper said.

“This is a huge mystery for us,” Roper said.

The body was discovered Oct. 7 near a lake in the remote rock-filled bowl between the towering peaks of Mount Tyndall and Williamson, which rises to 14,374 feet (4,381 meters). The behemoth of a mountain looms large over the Owens Valley below and overshadows the former World War II Japanese internment camp at Manzanar.

Hofer and a friend had gone slightly off the trail-less route as they picked their way through boulders

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 27 of 36

when they stumbled upon the shocking find.

"The average person who was hiking to Williamson wouldn't have gone the route we went because we were a little bit lost, a little bit off course," Hofer told The Associated Press. "So it made sense that nobody would have stumbled across the body."

Hofer phoned from the summit to report the finding and went to the sheriff's department the next day after hiking out to speak with investigators.

Sgt. Nate Derr, who coordinates the county's search and rescue team, said bodies found in the mountains are typically connected with someone they know who has gone missing. The opposite is rarer: finding the remains of someone who appears to not have gone missing or been reported as missing.

They plan to use DNA to try to identify the remains.

Because the body was so decomposed, investigators believe it's possibly been there for decades.

Authorities have ruled out that it's 1st Lt. Matthew Kraft, a Marine from Connecticut who vanished in February during a nearly 200-mile (320-kilometer) ski trek through the Sierra. Derr also doubts it's Matthew Greene, a Pennsylvania climber last seen in the Mammoth Lakes area — nearly 70 miles (112 kilometers) north — in 2013.

Investigators have gone back through decades of reports of people missing in the Inyo National Forest and come up empty, Derr said. Neighboring Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks also don't have reports of anyone missing in that area, he said.

Bodies of those who go missing in the mountains are discovered from time to time, but it can take years and even decades.

It took five years — after an exhaustive search was called off — before a trail worker discovered the body of Randy Morgenson, a Kings Canyon National Park ranger who vanished in 1996. A World War II airman whose plane had crashed near Mount Mendel on a training flight in 1942 wasn't found until 2005 when a receding glacier gave up his body.

Hofer, a church pastor in San Diego, said it appeared to him the body was intentionally buried. The skeleton was laid out on its back with the arms crossed over the chest.

"It wasn't in a position of distress or curled up," Hofer said. "It was definitely a burial because it was very strategically covered with rocks."

The death could have occurred in the days before helicopters were used to fly out bodies, Derr said. It's possible that the person perished on the mountain and was buried by a climbing partner.

"I can't say whether it's intentional or not, but it's not an area that would be prone to rockfall," Derr said.

Although the mountain is the state's second-highest, it's not summited as frequently as other high Sierra peaks because it is a forbidding approach. The elevation gain from the trailhead in the high desert to the summit is the greatest of any peak in California.

It can take more than a day to hike over Shepherd Pass and then the trail ends, and climbers have to make a tedious scramble over rock fields and sand across Williamson Bowl — where the body was found — before climbing the final 2,000 feet (600 meters) up a chute that includes moments of breathtaking exposure while picking their way up a rock face.

Hofer posted about his finding on a mountaineers forum on Facebook that sparked speculation about the death, in part because Hofer described the shoes as the type worn by rock climbers.

That seemed unusual because the area is not well known for rock climbing. And, because most climbers work in pairs, it raised questions about what had happened to any partner or whether the death had been reported.

Derr said he did not think they were climbing shoes but couldn't rule that possibility out.

Hofer said he summited the peak after his discovery and wasn't haunted by the image.

He was more excited he might be able to let someone know about a lost loved one as he ran through the various scenarios of how the body got there.

"A couple of times we said out loud, 'This is really crazy that we found a body there that no one knew about,'" he said.

Former Pompeo aide testifies; Senate talks impeachment trial

By LISA MASCARO, MARY CLARE JALONICK and MATT LEE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The swift-moving impeachment probe pushed onward Wednesday as a former top State Department aide testified that the Trump administration's politicization of foreign policy contributed to his resignation, while the Senate GOP leader briefed colleagues on a possible Christmas impeachment trial.

The day's events, interrupted by an explosive meeting at the White House, churned as longtime State Department officials are speaking out under subpoena — some revealing striking new details — about the actions Trump, and his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, took toward Ukraine that have sparked the House impeachment inquiry.

On Wednesday, Michael McKinley, a career foreign service officer and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's de facto chief of staff, told investigators behind closed doors that he could no longer look the other way amid the Trump administration's dealings with Ukraine, which were among the reasons he ended his 37-year career last week, according to multiple people familiar with the testimony, who, like others who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity, were not authorized to discuss it.

"I was disturbed by the implication that foreign governments were being approached to procure negative information on political opponents," McKinley testified, according to a former colleague familiar with his remarks.

The impeachment inquiry revolves around a whistleblower's complaint that Trump was pushing Ukraine's leader into opening an investigation of a company connected to the son of Trump's potential 2020 Democratic rival Joe Biden. It is illegal to solicit or receive foreign help in a U.S. election.

Among McKinley's concerns was the administration's failure to support Ukrainian Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch, who was ousted in March on orders from Trump.

McKinley, who as a Latin America expert was not specifically involved in Ukraine, was also frustrated that there had been no response to an August inspector general's report that found significant evidence of leadership and management problems, including allegations from career employees that Assistant Secretary of State Kevin Moley and his former senior adviser Marie Stull retaliated or tried to retaliate against them as holdovers from the Obama administration.

Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., told reporters outside the closed-door hearing that McKinley was complimentary about Pompeo's role but did raise other issues.

"I think most of this is a concern by a colleague for an ambassador that he held in high regard," Meadows said, declining to provide more details of the closed session.

Republicans are crying foul over the process of the impeachment inquiry, but as House Democrats press on with the investigation, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell briefed Republicans about the possible trial ahead.

McConnell warned of a possible House impeachment vote by Thanksgiving that would force a trial in the Senate, likely by Christmas. He used slides and history lessons during a private Senate GOP lunch in the Capitol to talk about the process, according to a person familiar with the meeting.

At the White House, congressional leaders abruptly ended an explosive meeting with the president on the situation in Syria, when Trump called House Speaker Nancy Pelosi a "third-grade politician," according to Democrats. Pelosi said later the president was having a "meltdown."

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said he knows his House colleagues didn't run for office to conduct an impeachment investigation, but he said, "The facts that are already in the public domain are so deeply troubling and must be taken very seriously."

Another key figure in the impeachment investigation, special envoy Kurt Volker, returned to Capitol Hill on Wednesday to review the transcript of his Oct. 3 testimony to investigators, according to a person familiar with his appearance.

Volker provided text messages to lawmakers that revealed an effort at the State Department to push

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 29 of 36

Ukraine's leader into opening an investigation of the gas company Burisma connected to Biden's son, Hunter, in return for a visit with Trump.

That effort soon escalated into what one diplomat feared was a quid pro quo for U.S. military aid. Trump has denied that, saying assistance to Ukraine was delayed to pressure the country into addressing corruption.

Another ambassador involved in those text message exchanges, Gordon Sondland, has been asked to appear Thursday.

The testimony so far from the witnesses, mainly officials from the State Department and other foreign policy posts, largely corroborates the account of the government whistleblower whose complaint first sparked the impeachment inquiry, according to lawmakers attending the closed-door interviews.

One witness said it appeared "three amigos" tied to the White House —Sondland, Volker and Energy Secretary Rick Perry — had taken over foreign policy. Another quoted national security adviser John Bolton as calling Giuliani a "hand grenade" for his back-channel efforts to get Ukraine to investigate Biden and Biden's son Hunter.

Trump's July 25 phone call in which he pressed Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, to investigate Biden's family is at the center of the Democrats' inquiry.

Pelosi, despite intensifying calls from Trump and Republicans to hold a formal vote to authorize the impeachment inquiry, showed no indication she would do so. She said Congress will continue its investigation as part of the Constitution's system of checks and balances of the executive branch.

"This is not a game for us. This is deadly serious. We're on a path that is taking us, a path to the truth," Pelosi told reporters Tuesday.

Trump calls the impeachment inquiry an "illegitimate process" and has blocked officials from cooperating.

At the same time, Republicans are bracing for a vote and trial. House GOP Whip Steve Scalise invited GOP Sen. Lindsey Graham, who was an impeachment manager decades ago during President Bill Clinton's impeachment, to brief Republican lawmakers on the process ahead.

Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee overseeing the probe, has praised the State Department officials for stepping forward, under subpoena, to shed light on the matter.

"We have learned much of this thanks to the courageous testimony of the State Department officials who have been put in an impossible situation by the administration," which is urging them not to comply with requests to testify to Congress, he said. "They are doing their duty."

Associated Press writers Michael Balsamo, Andrew Taylor, Matthew Daly, Colleen Long, Padmananda Rama, Eric Tucker and Alan Fram in Washington contributed to this report.

Chicago teachers to strike in nation's 3rd largest district

By KATHLEEN FOODY and DON BABWIN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Chicago parents and community groups are scrambling to prepare for a massive teachers' strike set to begin Thursday, prompting the city to preemptively cancel classes in the nation's third-largest school district.

The Chicago Teachers Union confirmed Wednesday night that its 25,000 members would not return to their classrooms Thursday after months of negotiation between the union and Chicago Public Schools failed to resolve disputes over pay and benefits, class size and teacher preparation time.

The strike is Chicago's first major walkout by teachers since 2012 and city officials announced early Wednesday that all classes had been canceled for Thursday in hopes of giving more planning time to the parents of more than 300,000 students.

"We want this to be a short strike with an agreement that will benefit our schools and our teachers. We have a ways to go," Chicago Teachers Union President Jesse Sharkey said during a union news conference. "We actually want to see improvement on all the issues we are talking about here."

Mayor Lori Lightfoot said she was disappointed by the union's decision to strike.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 30 of 36

"We are offering a historic package on the core issues — salary, staffing and class size," she said Wednesday night at her own news conference, adding that school district negotiators will remain at the bargaining table and that she hopes the union does, too.

During the 2012 strike, the district kept some schools open for half days during a seven-day walkout. District officials said this time they will keep all buildings open during school hours, staffed by principals and employees who usually work in administrative roles.

Breakfast and lunch will be served, but all after-school activities and school buses are suspended in the district serving more than 300,000 students.

Janice Jackson, the district's CEO, encouraged parents to send their children to the school that they normally attend, however they will be welcome in any district schools.

"We've put together a really comprehensive plan for the students," Jackson said. "We will make sure they are safe and they have a productive day."

Also striking will be 7,000 support staffers, whose union also failed to reach a contract agreement.

Before the strike announcement, June Davis said if teachers walked out, she would likely send her 7-year-old son, Joshua, to his usual elementary school — Smyth Elementary on the city's South Side where almost all students are low-income and minority.

Davis, 38, said she would otherwise have to take her son to his grandmother's in a southern suburb, requiring an hourlong trip on a regional bus line.

"Everybody's hoping they will come to some kind of agreement, find some compromise," Davis said.

Lightfoot preemptively announced that classes on Thursday would be canceled, saying she wanted to give parents more time to plan. A clearly frustrated Lightfoot said the city had not only offered a 16% pay raise over the five-year contract, but the city also had agreed to put language in the contract addressing "enforceable targets" on class size and increasing staffing levels for positions such as nurses, librarians and social workers — items the union said were critical.

She said the union's demands would cost an unaffordable \$2.5 billion per year.

Union leaders disputed Lightfoot's characterization of the city's willingness to concede to their demands on several issues, including class sizes.

"CPS' current class size offer falls far short of what's needed to address the sweeping scale of the problem," they said in a statement.

Lightfoot said the city agreed to make substantial changes on some of the union's top priorities, but its negotiators responded by issuing additional demands, including some she deemed unacceptable.

"The union is still demanding to shorten instructional time by 30 minutes in the morning," she said. "We won't do that. We will not cheat our children out of instructional time."

Before heading into a downtown law firm for bargaining talks Wednesday morning, union vice president Stacy Davis Gates said there is a "gross disconnect" between Lightfoot's comments and what negotiators have put in writing.

"To say that you have offered a proposal that respects what we are asking for, to say you've bent over backward ... it's absolutely ridiculous," Davis Gates said.

Community organizations have been preparing for days to welcome students, ranging from a \$100 per day camp for elementary school kids at the Shedd Aquarium to all-day programs run by the Boys & Girls Club of Chicago and accessible for a \$20 annual membership fee.

Mimi LeClair, president of the Boys & Girls Club of Chicago, said a strike is particularly difficult for single parents and those whose jobs have inflexible schedules.

"It's a horrendous dilemma, deciding between likely losing their job or having their paycheck docked when they rely on every penny or leaving their children home alone," LeClair said.

The city's public libraries also are planning programs for students, along with a network of churches and community centers that are part of the city's Safe Haven program intended to give kids a safe place during the summer months particularly on the city's South and West sides.

The YMCA of Metro Chicago expects highest demand for its all-day programs for children between the ages of 5 and 12, who are too young to stay home alone but whose parents may oppose sending them

to schools unstaffed by teachers.

"Real life still happens," said Man-Yee Lee, a spokeswoman for the organization. "Parents still need to go to work and their kids still need somewhere to go."

Trump dismisses Syria concerns; Dems walk out of WH meeting

By ROBERT BURNS AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Washing his hands of Syria, President Donald Trump declared Wednesday the U.S. has no stake in defending the Kurdish fighters who died by the thousands as America's partners against IS extremists. Hours later, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other top Democrats walked out of a meeting at the White House, accusing him of having a "meltdown," calling her a "third-grade politician" and having no plan to deal with a potentially revived Islamic State group.

Condemnation of Trump's stance on Turkey, Syria and the Kurds was quick and severe during the day, not only from Democrats but from Republicans who have been staunch supporters on virtually all issues.

The House, bitterly divided over the Trump impeachment inquiry, banded together for an overwhelming 354-60 denunciation of the U.S. troop withdrawal. Many lawmakers expressed worry that it may lead to revival of IS as well as Russian presence and influence in the area — in addition to the slaughter of many Kurds.

At the White House, Trump said the U.S. has no business in the region — and not to worry about the Kurdish fighters.

"They know how to fight," he said. "And by the way, they're no angels."

After the House condemnation vote, the congressional leaders of both parties went to the White house for a briefing, which grew contentious, with Trump and Pelosi trading jabs. The Democrats said they walked out when the meeting devolved into an insult-fest.

"What we witnessed on the part of the president was a meltdown," Pelosi told reporters, saying Trump appeared visibly "shaken up" over the House vote.

"We couldn't continue in the meeting because he was just not relating to the reality of it," she said.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer criticized Trump for not having an adequate plan to deal with IS fighters who have been held by the Kurds. He said the meeting "was not a dialogue, this was sort of a diatribe, a nasty diatribe not focused on the facts."

Republicans pushed back, saying it was Pelosi who'd been the problem.

"She storms out of another meeting, trying to make it unproductive," said House GOP leader Kevin McCarthy.

White House spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham called Pelosi's action "baffling but not surprising." She said the speaker "had no intention of listening or contributing to an important meeting on national security issues."

Trump himself has stalked out of his White House meetings with congressional leaders — in May, saying he would no longer work with Democrats unless they dropped all Russia investigations, and last January during the partial government shutdown.

Separately on Wednesday, a letter was disclosed in which he both cajoled and threatened Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan last week, urging him to act only in "the right and humane way" in Syria.

He started on a positive note, suggesting they "work out a good deal," but then talked about crippling economic sanctions and concluded that the world "will look upon you forever as the devil if good things don't happen. Don't be a tough guy. Don't be a fool!"

In public appearances Wednesday, Trump said he was fulfilling a campaign promise to bring U.S. troops home from "endless wars" in the Middle East — casting aside criticism that a sudden U.S. withdrawal from Syria betrays the Kurdish fighters, stains U.S. credibility around the world and opens an important region to Russia, which is moving in.

"We have a situation where Turkey is taking land from Syria. Syria's not happy about it. Let them work it out," Trump said. "They have a problem at a border. It's not our border. We shouldn't be losing lives over it."

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 32 of 36

Trump said he was sending Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to Ankara to urge the Turks to halt their weeklong offensive into northeastern Syria. But his remarks, first to reporters in the Oval Office and later at a news conference with his Italian counterpart, suggested he sees little at stake for America.

"Syria may have some help with Russia, and that's fine," he said. "They've got a lot of sand over there. So, there's a lot of sand that they can play with."

"Let them fight their own wars."

More than once, Trump suggested the United States has little concern in the Middle East because it is geographically distant — a notion shared by some prior to Sept. 11, 2001, when al-Qaida militants used Afghanistan as a base from which to attack the U.S. That attack set off a series of armed conflicts, including in Iraq, that Trump considers a waste of American lives and treasure.

The current withdrawal is the worst decision of Trump's presidency, said South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, who meets often with the president and is one of his strongest and most important supporters in Congress.

"To those who think the Mideast doesn't matter to America, remember 9/11 — we had that same attitude on 9/10/2001."

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said he strongly disagreed with Trump and had told the president so. But he asked, "What tools do we have" to back up that disagreement?

Turkish troops and Turkish-backed Syrian fighters launched their offensive against Kurdish forces in northern Syria a week ago, two days after Trump suddenly announced he was withdrawing the U.S. from the area. Turkey's Erdogan has said he wants to create a 30-kilometer (20-mile)-deep "safe zone" in Syria.

Ankara has long argued the Kurdish fighters are nothing more than an extension of the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, which has waged a guerrilla campaign inside Turkey since the 1980s and which Turkey, as well as the U.S. and European Union, designate as a terrorist organization.

Trump mischaracterized the progress made thus far by the U.S. military in carrying out his instructions to withdraw all 1,000 troops in northeastern Syria. He referred to the approximately two dozen soldiers who evacuated from Turkey's initial attack zone last week, but cast that as meaning the U.S. has "largely" completed its pullout.

A U.S. official familiar with planning for the withdrawal of the 1,000 said that they are consolidating onto two main bases but have not yet begun flying out of Syria in significant numbers. Military equipment is being gathered and flown out, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the withdrawal, which poses big security risks.

Trump downplayed the crisis that followed his decision to pull out of Syria, which critics say amounted to giving Turkey a green light to invade against the Kurdish fighters.

"It's not between Turkey and the United States, like a lot of stupid people would like you to believe," Trump said. "Our soldiers are not in harm's way, as they shouldn't be."

Trump did impose new sanctions on Turkey this week in an attempt to force Erdogan to end his assault. But he said Wednesday, "It's time for us to come home."

Even as Trump defended his removal of U.S. troops from northeastern Syria, he praised his decision to send more troops and military equipment to Saudi Arabia to help the kingdom defend against Iran.

Trump said the U.S. is sending missiles and "great power" to the Saudis, and "they're paying for that."

AP writers Alan Fram, Darlene Superville, Jill Colvin, Kevin Freking and Ellen Knickmeyer contributed.

Frustration and pride in Canada after a year of legal pot

By GENE JOHNSON, ELAINE THOMPSON and ROB GILLIES Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — The weed is expensive, the selection is limited, the black market persists, and licensed stores are scarce.

It's one year into Canada's experiment in legal marijuana, and hundreds of legal pot shops have opened.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 33 of 36

While many residents remain proud of Canada for bucking prohibition, a lot still buy cannabis on the sly, because taxes and other issues mean high-quality bud can cost nearly twice what it did before legalization.

Much of the drug's production and distribution over the years has been controlled by outlaw groups, including the Hells Angels, and replacing such criminality with safe, regulated sales is a key goal of legalization.

Yet legal sales in the first year are expected to total just \$1 billion, an amount dwarfed by an illegal market still estimated at \$5 billion to \$7 billion.

"One customer told me, 'I love you and I want to support you, but I can't buy all my cannabis here. It's too expensive,'" said Jeremy Jacob, co-owner of Village Bloomery, a Vancouver pot store that feels more like a museum gift shop, with its high ceilings, graceful lighting, tidy wooden shelves and locked white cabinets hiding packages of marijuana. "The black-market producers are being well rewarded by legalization."

The nation has seen no sign of increases in impaired driving or underage use since it joined Uruguay as the only countries to legalize and regulate the sale of cannabis to adults — those over 19 in most Canadian provinces. Delegations from other countries, including Mexico, have visited Canada as they explore the possibility of rewriting their own marijuana laws.

But officials promised legalization would be a process, not an event, and they weren't wrong. Kinks abound, from what many consider wasteful packaging requirements and uneven quality to the slow pace of licensing stores and growers across most of the country.

Canada allowed provinces to shape their own laws within a federal framework, including setting the minimum age and deciding whether to distribute through state-run or private retail outlets. Some have done better than others.

The result: There now are more than 560 licensed stores across Canada, but more than half are in Alberta, the fourth-largest province.

Ontario and Quebec, which together make up two-thirds of Canada's population, have only about 45 shops between them. In Newfoundland, Canada's easternmost province, pot shop owner Tom Clarke said he's about to hit \$1.5 million in sales but isn't making any money, thanks to rules that limit him to just an 8% commission.

Online sales, designed to ensure far-flung communities can access the market even if they don't have a licensed shop, have been underwhelming, at least partly because consumers are reluctant to pay with a credit card if that transaction might come to the attention of U.S.-based banks or border guards, said Megan McCrae, board chair of the Cannabis Council of Canada industry group.

Nowhere are the challenges of legalization more pronounced than British Columbia, which has had a flourishing cannabis culture since U.S. military draft-dodgers settled there during the Vietnam War era. They grew what became known as "B.C. Bud," high quality marijuana cherished by American consumers.

In Vancouver, which has 2.2 million residents and is Canada's third-largest city, there was tacit approval of marijuana even before legalization. Though storefront distribution of medical marijuana never was allowed by law, about 100 dispensaries operated in the city before legalization arrived.

Around the province, authorities have visited 165 illegal dispensaries in the past year and warned them to get licensed or shut down. Despite some raids, the government has been reluctant to close them all before more licensed shops open.

Licensing has been glacial, though, thanks to a change in power in the provincial government and cities being slow to approve zoning and other requirements, partly because the province has no tax-revenue-sharing agreement with local jurisdictions. Regulatory hurdles have also made it tough for B.C.'s many small growers to be licensed; instead, production is dominated by large corporations churning out pot by the ton from massive greenhouses.

Regulators hoped to have 250 legal shops operating in British Columbia by now; instead, they have only about 80 private stores and seven government-run shops. Through July, legal sales in B.C. were a meager \$25 million. Alberta, with a smaller population, hit \$145 million.

"Everybody still uses their neighbors and their backyards," said Susan Chappelle of the British Columbia Independent Cannabis Association.

Nevertheless, the legal market has fans. Vancouver resident Sarah Frank, who used to grow her own

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 34 of 36

marijuana plants, loves that she can walk into a clean, welcoming, legal shop and walk out with a few grams of her favorite cannabis, actor Seth Rogen's Houseplant Sativa brand.

"You don't feel like a criminal," said Frank, 41. "I have friends who can't travel to the States because 20 years ago they got busted with a joint."

Some who want to get into the legal business are still waiting. With legalization looming last year, Chris Clay shut down his gray-market pot shop on Vancouver Island for what he thought would be a few months, eager to apply for a license and reopen. A year later, he's still waiting.

Some of his workers went on unemployment and eventually found jobs elsewhere. He's barely avoided bankruptcy, and though local officials have finally started handling applications, he says it will likely be another three to six months before he's back in business.

"It's very frustrating," he said. "Tourists have been driving up and down the island all summer, saying, 'Where can we go? Where can we go?'"

For Mike Babins, who runs Evergreen Cannabis, the Vancouver shop where Frank buys her Seth Rogen-brand weed, it's just fine that legalization is developing slowly.

"Everyone's watching us," he said. "If anything goes wrong here, we're screwing it up for the whole world."

Gillies reported from Toronto. Gene Johnson, who reported from Seattle, is a member of the AP's marijuana beat team and can be followed at <https://twitter.com/GeneAPSeattle>. Follow AP's complete marijuana coverage: <https://apnews.com/Marijuana>

Asian shares mixed on caution over China-US trade deal

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Asian shares were mixed Thursday after officials signaled work remains to be done on an agreement for a truce in the tariff war between the U.S. and China.

Hong Kong led regional gains after its chief executive, Carrie Lam, announced help for the property sector. The semi-autonomous city's economy has been languishing amid months of increasingly violent political protests that are in part fueled by the sky-high cost of housing.

The Hang Seng index added 0.7% to 26,862.65 as real estate companies advanced. Cheung Kong jumped 1.8% while Sun Hung Kai added 2.5%.

But elsewhere sentiment was tepid. Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index was flat at 22,473.34 while the Shanghai Composite index also held steady at 2,978.85.

Australia's S&P ASX 200 lost 0.7% to 6,692.90 and the Kospi in Seoul gave up 0.2% to 2,079.55.

Shares fell in Taiwan and Singapore but logged gains in Jakarta and Bangkok.

The lackluster trading tracked similar action on Wall Street, where the S&P 500 index lost 0.2% to 2,989.69. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 0.1% to 27,001.98 and the Nasdaq fell 0.3%, to 8,124.18. The Russell 2000 index of smaller stocks eked out a tiny gain, adding 1.76 points, or 0.1%, to 1,525.06.

The benchmark S&P 500 index remains 1.2% below its all-time high set in July.

The modest losses came as investors weighed mixed data on the economy and the latest batch of corporate earnings reports.

A move on Tuesday by the House of Representatives to show support for the pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong appeared to dim some investor optimism about the prospects for progress in the latest trade talks between the U.S. and China.

On Friday, the U.S. agreed to suspend a planned hike in tariffs on \$250 billion of Chinese goods that had been set to kick in Tuesday. Beijing, meanwhile, agreed to buy \$40 billion to \$50 billion in U.S. farm products.

But in a White House news conference on Wednesday, U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told reporters that officials were still ironing out details of their preliminary agreement.

President Donald Trump has said he does not expect to sign an agreement until next month, when he is due to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the regional Asian Economic Cooperation, or APEC,

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 35 of 36

forum in Chile.

The conciliatory steps announced on Friday suggested the trade talks were making some progress, but the three resolutions passed in the House on Tuesday in support of pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong gave investors a new reason to be less optimistic.

In other trading, benchmark crude oil lost 43 cents to \$52.93 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It rose 55 cents to settle at \$53.36 a barrel on Wednesday. Brent crude oil, the international standard, lost 39 cents to \$59.04 a barrel.

The dollar fell to 108.74 Japanese yen from 108.76 yen on Wednesday. The euro strengthened to \$1.1077 from \$1.1073.

AP Business writers Alex Veiga and Damian J. Troise contributed.

Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Oct. 17, the 290th day of 2019. There are 75 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 17, 1979, Mother Teresa of India was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

On this date:

In 1610, French King Louis XIII, age nine, was crowned at Reims, five months after the assassination of his father, Henry IV.

In 1777, British forces under Gen. John Burgoyne surrendered to American troops in Saratoga, New York, in a turning point of the Revolutionary War.

In 1807, Britain declared it would continue to reclaim British-born sailors from American ships and ports regardless of whether they held U.S. citizenship.

In 1907, Guglielmo (Goo-lee-AH'-moh) Marconi began offering limited commercial wireless telegraph service between Nova Scotia and Ireland.

In 1931, mobster Al Capone was convicted in Chicago of income tax evasion. (Sentenced to 11 years in prison, Capone was released in 1939.)

In 1933, Albert Einstein arrived in the United States as a refugee from Nazi Germany.

In 1939, Frank Capra's comedy-drama "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," starring James Stewart as an idealistic junior U.S. senator, had its premiere in the nation's capital.

In 1966, 12 New York City firefighters were killed while battling a blaze in lower Manhattan. The TV game show "The Hollywood Squares" premiered on NBC.

In 1967, Puyi (poo-yee), the last emperor of China, died in Beijing at age 61.

In 1973, Arab oil-producing nations announced they would begin cutting back oil exports to Western nations and Japan; the result was a total embargo that lasted until March 1974.

In 1978, President Carter signed a bill restoring U.S. citizenship to Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

In 1989, an earthquake measuring 7.1 on the Richter scale struck northern California, killing 63 people and causing \$6 billion worth of damage.

Ten years ago: Pakistani soldiers attacked militant bases in the main al-Qaida and Taliban stronghold along the Afghan border. Songwriter Vic Mizzy, 93, who'd composed the catchy themes for the 1960s sitcoms "The Addams Family" and "Green Acres," died in Bel Air, California.

Five years ago: The World Health Organization acknowledged it had botched attempts to stop the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, blaming factors including incompetent staff, lack of information and budget cuts. Riot police cleared an offshoot Hong Kong pro-democracy protest zone in a dawn raid, taking down barricades, tents and canopies that had blocked key streets for more than two weeks, but leaving the city's main thoroughfare still in the hands of the activists. Sixteen people watching an outdoor pop concert in Seongnam, South Korea, fell 60 feet to their deaths when a ventilation grate they were standing on col-

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 108 ~ 36 of 36

lapsed.

One year ago: Residents of the Florida Panhandle community of Mexico Beach who had fled Hurricane Michael a week earlier returned home to find homes, businesses and campers ripped to shreds; the storm had killed at least 59 people and caused more than \$25 billion in damage in Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas and Virginia. Canada became the world's largest legal marijuana marketplace; customers stood in long lines for hours and then lit up and celebrated on sidewalks. Carroll Spinney, the puppeteer who had played Big Bird on "Sesame Street," announced his retirement after nearly 50 years on the show.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Marsha Hunt is 102. Singer Jim Seals (Seals & Crofts) is 77. Singer Gary Puckett is 77. Actor Michael McKean is 72. Actor George Wendt is 71. Actor-singer Bill Hudson is 70. Astronaut Mae Jemison is 63. Country singer Alan Jackson is 61. Movie critic Richard Roeper is 60. Movie director Rob Marshall is 59. Actor Grant Shaud is 59. Animator Mike Judge is 57. Rock singer-musician Fred LeBlanc (Cowboy Mouth) is 56. Actor-comedian Norm Macdonald is 56. Singer Rene' Dif is 52. Reggae singer Ziggy Marley is 51. Actor Wood Harris is 50. Singer Wyclef Jean (zhahn) is 50. World Golf Hall of Famer Ernie Els is 50. Singer Chris Kirkpatrick ('N Sync) is 48. Rapper Eminem is 47. Actress Sharon Leal is 47. Actor Matthew Macfadyen is 45. Rock musician Sergio Andrade (an-DRAY'-day) is 42. Actress Felicity Jones is 36. Actor Chris Lowell is 35. Actor Dee Jay Daniels is 31.

Thought for Today: "If you believe that life is worth living then your belief will create the fact." — Arthur Miller (1915-2005).

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