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——— POLITICS ——

Trump calls on Congress to end resistance politics

WASHINGTON (AP)

ace to face with emboldened Democrats, President Donald Trump on Tuesday called on Washington to cast aside "revenge, resistance and retribution" and end "ridiculous partisan investigations" in a State of the Union address delivered at a vulnerable moment for his presidency.

Trump appealed for bipartisanship but refused to yield on the hard-line immigration policies that have infuriated Democrats and forced the recent government shutdown. He renewed his call for a

border wall and cast illegal immigration as a threat to Americans' safety and economic security.

Trump accepted no blame for his role in cultivating the rancorous atmosphere in the nation's capital, and he didn't outline a clear path for collaborating with Democrats who are eager to block his agenda. Their opposition was on vivid display as



President Donald Trump delivers his State of the Union address at a joint session of Congress at the Washington Capitol on Tuesday, February 5, 2019.

Democratic congresswomen in the audience formed a sea of white in a nod to early 20th-century suffragettes.

Trump is staring down a two-year stretch that will determine whether he is re-elected or leaves office in defeat. His speech sought to shore up Republican support that had eroded slightly during the recent government shutdown and previewed a fresh defense against Democrats as they ready

a round of investigations into every aspect of his administration.

"If there is going to be peace and legislation, there cannot be war and investigation," he declared. Lawmakers in the cavernous House chamber sat largely silent.

Looming over the president's address was a fast-approaching Feb. 15 deadline to fund the government and avoid another shutdown. Democrats have refused to acquiesce to his demands for a border wall, and Republicans are increasingly unwilling to

shut down the government to help him fulfill his signature campaign pledge. Nor does the GOP support the president's plan to declare a national emergency if Congress won't fund the wall.

Wary of publicly highlighting those intraparty divisions, Trump made no mention of an emergency declaration in his remarks. He did offer a lengthy defense of his call for a border wall, declaring: "I will build it." But he delivered no ultimatums about what it would take for him to sign legislation to keep the government open.

"I am asking you to defend our very dangerous southern border out of love and devotion to our fellow citizens and to our country," he said, painting a dark and foreboding picture of the risks posed to Americans by illegal immigration.

Trump devoted much of his speech to foreign policy, another area where Republicans have increasingly distanced themselves from the White House. He announced details of a second meeting with North Korea's Kim Jong Un, outlining a Feb. 27-28 summit in Vietnam.

The president was surrounded by symbols of his emboldened political opposition. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who was praised by Democrats for her hardline negotiating during the shutdown, sat behind Trump as he spoke. And several senators running for president were also in the audience, including Sens. Kamala Harris of California and Cory Booker of New Jersey.

Trump's address amounted to an opening argument for his re-election campaign. Polls show he has work to do, with his approval rating falling to just 34 percent after the shutdown.

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Albert Torres, **CEO & President** Albert@tudecidesmedia.com

Ismael G. Campos, **Owner** Mel@tudecidesmedia.com

Gracie Campos, **Owner** Gracie@tudecidesmedia.com

Fernando Aceves **Editor & Sales**

Dr. Claudia Romay Translations

> Briseida Rios Staff Writers

Félix Connection, Isaiah Torres, Ezequiel Torres
Distribution

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Measles outbreak revives debate over vaccine laws

VANCOUVER, Washington (AP)

measles outbreak near Portland, Oregon, has revived a bitter debate over so-called "philosophical" exemptions to childhood vaccinations as public health officials across the Pacific Northwest scramble to limit the fallout.

At least 51 people in Washington and Oregon have fallen ill in recent weeks with the extraordinarily contagious virus, which was eradicated in the U.S. in 2000 as a result of immunization but arrives periodically with overseas travelers. More than a half-dozen more cases are suspected, and people who were exposed to the disease traveled to Hawaii and Bend, Oregon, raising the possibility of more diagnoses in the unvaccinated.

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee last week declared a state of emergency because of the outbreak.

"I would hope that this ends soon, but this could go on for weeks, if not months," said Dr. Alan Melnick, public health director in Clark County, Washington,

just north of Portland. The county has had most of the diagnosed cases so far."

Of the confirmed cases, 37 are people who were not immunized. Most of the confirmed cases have been children under 10. Authorities said Friday one case was a person who had received one dose of the measles vaccine.

"The measles vaccine isn't perfect, but one dose is 93 percent effective at preventing illness," Melnick said. "The recommended two doses of the measles vaccine provide even greater protection - 97 percent."

The outbreak has lawmakers in Washington state revisiting non-medical exemptions that allow children to attend school without vaccinations if their parents or guardians express a personal objection. Liberal-leaning Oregon and Washington have some of the nation's highest statewide vaccine exemption



This February 6, 2015, file photo, shows a measles, mumps and rubella vaccine on a countertop at a pediatrics clinic in Greenbrae, California.

rates, driven in part by low vaccination levels in scattered communities and at some private and alternative schools.

Washington and Oregon are among 17 states that allow some type of non-medical exemption for vaccines for "personal, moral or other beliefs," according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Numerous studies have shown vaccines do not cause autism — a common reason cited by those who don't want their kids immunized. Those opposed to certain vaccines also object to an outside authority mandating what they put in their children's bodies, and some have concerns about the combination of the measles vaccine with the mumps and rubella immunizations, which is how it's routinely given.

A measure introduced by Republican Rep. Paul Harris of Vancouver, Washington — the epicenter of the current outbreak — would remove the personal exemption specifically for the combined measles, mumps

and rubella vaccine, or MMR. It's scheduled for a public hearing in Olympia on Feb. 8.

Democratic Rep. Monica Stonier of Vancouver, a co-signer on the bill, said she would prefer an even broader proposal, but "right now we're looking at what we can get moved." Previous attempts have failed.



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NATIONAL ———

US prepares to start building portion of Texas border wall

HOUSTON, Texas (AP)

The U.S. government is preparing to begin construction of more border walls and fencing in South Texas' Rio Grande Valley, likely on federally owned land set aside as wildlife refuge property.

Heavy construction equipment was expected to arrive starting Monday, U.S. Customs and Border Protection said. A photo posted by the nonprofit National Butterfly Center shows an excavator parked next to its property.

Congress last March approved more than \$600 million for 33 miles (53 kilometers) of new barriers in the Rio Grande Valley. While President Donald Trump and top Democrats remain in a standoff over Trump's demand for \$5.7 billion in border wall funding, U.S. Customs and Border Protection has pushed ahead with building what's already funded.

That construction was often described as fencing, and the government funding bill that included construction was supported by some Democrats in the House and Senate. CBP refers to what it plans to build as a "border wall system."

According to designs it released in September , CBP intends to build 25 miles (40 kilometers) of concrete walls to the height of the existing flood-control levee in Hidalgo County next to the Rio Grande, the river that forms the

U.S.-Mexico border in Texas. On top of the concrete walls, CBP will install 18-foot (5.5-meter) steel posts and clear a 150-foot (45-meter) enforcement zone in front.

Maps released by CBP show construction would cut through the butterfly center, a nearby state park, and a



In this July 24, 2014 photo, you see a meander of the Rio Grande from a helicopter of the Texas Department of Public Safety patrolling Mission.

century-old Catholic chapel next to the river.

Many landowners oppose a border wall and have vowed to fight the U.S. government if it tries to seize their property through eminent domain. Court fights over condemning land could take weeks if not months.

CBP said in its statement that it

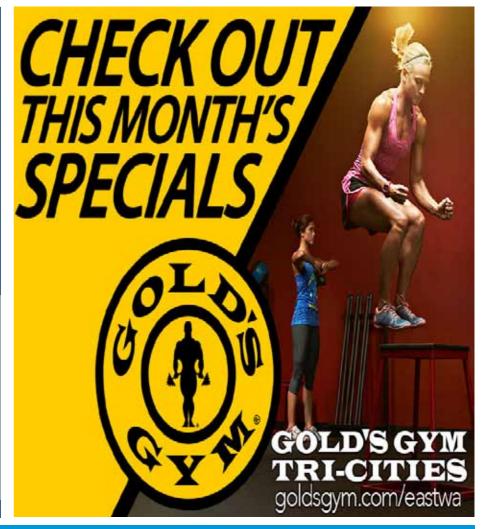
intends to start construction on federally owned land. Environmental advocates expect the government to use land that's part of the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

The refuge consists of dozens of parcels of land purchased over the last 40 years to create a corridor for endangered species and other wildlife.

The Department of Homeland Security can waive environmental

restrictions to construct a border wall and issued its waiver for Hidalgo County in October . A coalition of environmental groups has sued DHS over its use of waivers, arguing that wall construction would endanger ocelots, rare birds and other wildlife that rely on refuge land for habitat. That lawsuit is still pending.





NATIONAL —

'El Chapo' trial highlights corruption in Mexico

NEW YORK (AP)

In the same Brooklyn courthouse where jurors have heard testimony about Mexican politicians protecting Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman's drug empire, a former Mexican state attorney general pleaded guilty last month to taking bribes from narcotraffickers.

The juxtaposition underscored a recurring theme of Guzman's New York trial:



In this February 22, 2014 file photo, Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, center, is escorted to a helicopter in handcuffs by Mexican navy marines at a hanger in Mexico City, after he was captured overnight in the beach resort town of Mazatlan.

how pervasive official corruption in Mexico complicates American authorities' efforts to investigate and apprehend those involved in the drug trade.

Jurors are expected to begin deliberating Monday after 11 weeks of testimony that included a parade of Guzman's former associates who told of massive bribes paid to high-level officials.

One testified that the Sinaloa cartel paid \$10 million, twice, to a top com-

mander in the Mexican Federal Police. Another said Mexico's former federal security chief got a \$6 million payoff while a general got \$100,000. Witnesses testified about Guzman getting a police escort after a prison escape and politicians who asked for help shipping 100 tons of cocaine in an oil tanker. In the most sensational claim, one of Guzman's former aides said he'd heard him boast about having paid former Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto \$100 million.

"The corruption has been rampant, and it's systemic," said Arturo Fontes, a former FBI agent who spent years investigating Guzman's drug syndicate. "We always knew there was a risk of information getting to the wrong people."

The accused Mexican leaders have all denied the bribery allegations as the fabrications of criminals. And the corruption allegations have been mostly a sideshow in the trial of Guzman, who is charged with leading a cartel that smuggled tons of cocaine to the U.S. His lawyers have said he was not the real boss and that its true head is still at large in Mexico, protected by a web of bribes.

But colorful testimony about graft provided a window into the challenges

U.S. law enforcement agents face when working with Mexican partners — and the great lengths they went to in the Guzman case to ensure it wasn't compromised.

Underscoring the risks of sharing information with Mexican law enforcement, several months ago, a former Mexican intelligence-unit commander was sentenced to three years in a U.S. federal prison for leaking American investigative secrets to cartel bosses. Last month, Edgar Veytia, the former attorney general of the Mexican coastal state of Nayarit who is known as "Diablo," admitted to using his badge to help drug-trafficking organizations smuggling narcotics into the U.S., according to the Justice Department.

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- STATE ----

Hometown protest greets Schultz as he eyes 2020 bid

SEATTLE, Washington (AP)

rande ego. Venti mistake":
That was the message protesters had for former Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz as he returned to his hometown of Seattle last Thursday after announcing that he's mulling an independent run for president.

Several dozen protesters gathered outside a downtown theater before Schultz appeared to promote his new book. They included Democrats who fret his candidacy would hand President Donald Trump another term, and green-and-gold-bedecked basketball fans who haven't forgiven him for selling the Seattle SuperSonics to a group that moved the team to Oklahoma City more than a decade ago.

"The way he dealt with the Sonics shows a huge fault in his character," said Farheen Siddiqui, 26, who wore a team jersey to the protest. "He acted like a child who was not getting his way." Inside, though, he got a warmer reception, with hearty applause from a crowd of 1,100, especially when he apologized about the Sonics and described the health insurance and stock options he offered to Starbucks employees early on.

"I'm a fan of everything Howard's done with Starbucks," said Annie Peters, of Bellevue. "He obviously cares about people but has done a great job building the business as well. I've been waiting for someone like him to run."

The 65-year-old billionaire and Democratic donor, who stepped down as Starbucks chairman last June,

has been on a tour of talk shows and news interviews the past few days, coinciding with the release of his latest book, "From the Ground Up: A Journey to Rei-



David Schwartz, of Bellevue, Washington, yells as he takes part in a protest outside a book-promotion event held by former Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz, on Thursday, January 31, 2019, in Seattle, Washington.

magine the Promise of America."

He said he doesn't intend to decide whether to run for president for several months, but the reaction from prominent Democrats has been swift. Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, the party chairwoman in Washington state, top advisers to former President Barack Obama and the most powerful political action committee in Democratic politics are among those who have criticized him, saying an independent bid would likely split the opposition to Trump and make his re-election more likely.

The protesters outside his talk Thursday chanted: "Pick a party." Some carried signs decorated like Starbucks cups that read "Compost your campaign" and "Grande ego. Venti mistake" — a reference to the Italian names for drink sizes at the coffee chain.

Schultz promised the crowd,

"I will do nothing on any level to
proceed if I thought I would in any
way persuade Americans to vote
and re-elect Donald Trump."

In Seattle, where 92 percent of voters cast ballots against Trump in 2016, helping get him re-elected might be even less popular than selling off a beloved sports franchise.

IMMIGRATION —

US launches plan for asylum seekers to wait in Mexico

SAN DIEGO, California (AP)

he Trump administration on Tuesday quietly launched an effort to make asylum seekers wait in Mexico while their cases wind through U.S. immigration courts, despite clear reservations and conflicting messages from the Mexican government.

The U.S. returned one asylum seeker to Mexico — a Honduran man — on the first day of what would be one of the most dramatic changes to the U.S. immigration system of Donald Trump's presidency, if the policy survives an anticipated legal challenge. Carlos Gomez, 55, arrived in Tijuana around midday and asked authorities for a ride to a migrant shelter.

Mexican officials sent mixed signals on the crucial point of whether Mexico would impose limits on accepting families. Tonatiuh Guillen, commissioner of Mexico's National Immigration Institute, said Mexico would only accept people 18 to 60 years old, which rules out families with young children.

But Roberto Velasco, spokesman for Mexico's foreign relations secretary, said Friday that families would be considered case by case. And a Mexican official with direct knowledge of the process said Mexico requested that families be excluded from the policy but that the U.S. declined to make any commitment, conceding only to start with single adults. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the deliberations were not public.

The launch is limited to San Diego's San Ysidro border crossing, the nation's busiest, though Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan wrote in a memo released Tuesday that it is expected to expand to other crossings "in the near future." Adding to a sense of confusion, Guillen said Mexico will only allow it at the one



Carlos Catarldo Gomez, of Honduras, center, is escorted by Mexican officials after leaving the United States, the first person returned to Mexico to wait for his asylum trial date, ir Tijuana, Mexico, on Tuesday, January 29, 2019.

crossing that connects San Diego and Tijuana.

Katie Waldman, a Department of Homeland Security spokeswoman, insisted families will be included. A sharp increase in Central American families seeking asylum in the U.S. led to the Trump administration's dramatic move, and limiting families

lies would diminish the impact.

"It will be expanded across the entire Southwest border, and it will apply to family groups," Waldman said.

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen was in San Diego on Tuesday to observe the launch but had no public appearances. The U.S. Embassy in Mexico said in a news release that the program began Tuesday.

Mexico's foreign relations secretary said Friday that the U.S. would start with 20 people a day. Two U.S. officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because the deliberations were not public said shortly before the launch that the policy would start with about 100 people a week in a trial period of up to 90 days in San Diego.

The launch followed months of delicate talks between the U.S. and Mexico and marked a change to the U.S. asylum system that both the administration and asylum experts said was unprecedented.

NATIONAL -

Pentagon sending another 3,750 troops to Southwest border

WASHINGTON (AP)

he Pentagon said Sunday it will send 3,750 more troops to the U.S.-Mexico border to put up another 150 miles of concertina wire and provide other support for Customs and Border Protection.

The additions will bring the total number of active-duty troops on the border to 4,350.

The announcement is in line with what Acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan

had said on Tuesday when he provided estimates for the next phase of a military mission that has grown in size and length. Critics have derided it as a political ploy by the White House as President Donald Trump seeks billions to build a border wall.

Shanahan said on Tuesday that several thousand more troops would be sent mainly to install additional wire barriers and provide a large new system of mobile surveillance and monitoring of the border area. Sunday's announcement

said the mobile surveillance mission would last through Sept. 30.

Members of Congress have question whether the border mission is distracting troops from their main work of fighting extremists abroad and training for combat. The first active-duty troops were sent to the border on about Oct. 30 for a mission that was to end Dec. 15. It has since been extended twice.

"What impact does it have to readiness to send several thousand troops down to the Southern border? It interrupts their training. It interrupts their dwell time," Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee said at a hearing on Tuesday.

Vice Adm. Mike Gilday, the director of operations for the Joint Staff, told the panel that he does not believe military readiness has been significantly affected. He said some units have missed training opportunities because of the deployment and others have seen less time at home between deployments than the military likes to provide.









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