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Body

Mulvaney getting second-guessed on his defence of Trump

WASHINGTON (AP) - For Mick Mulvaney, the hits just keep on coming.

First, President Donald Trump's acting chief of staff stirred up a tempest by acknowledging that the administration had held up aid to Ukraine in part to prod that country to investigate Democrats and the 2016 elections. Then Mulvaney went on television Sunday to defend his boss in effusive terms - and ended up making a new problematic comment.

Explaining why Trump had tried to steer an international summit to one of the president's own properties before giving up on the idea, Mulvaney said Trump "still considers himself to be in the hospitality business." That did nothing to allay concerns that the Republican president has used his office to enrich his business interests.

The bookended performances over the span of a few days were panned by the president's allies and cast doubt on Mulvaney's job security at the White House.

Mulvaney denied on "Fox **News** Sunday" that there was any consideration of his resignation, "Absolutely, positively not."

US troops in Syria heading to Iraq, not home as Trump claims

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) - While President Donald Trump insists he's bringing home Americans from "endless wars" in the Mideast, his Pentagon chief says all U.S. troops leaving Syria will go to western Iraq and the American military will continue operations against the Islamic State group.

They aren't coming home and the United States isn't leaving the turbulent Middle East, according to current plans outlined by U.S. Defence Secretary Mark Esper before he arrived in Afghanistan on Sunday. The fight in Syria against IS, once spearheaded by American allied Syrian Kurds who have been cast aside by Trump, will be undertaken by U.S. forces, possibly from neighbouring Iraq.

Esper did not rule out the idea that U.S. forces would conduct counterterrorism missions from Iraq into Syria. But he told reporters travelling with him that those details will be worked out over time.

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Trump nonetheless tweeted: "USA soldiers are not in combat or ceasefire zones. We have secured the Oil. Bringing soldiers home!"

The Republican president declared this past week that Washington had no stake in defending the Kurdish fighters who died by the thousands as America's partners fighting in Syria against IS extremists. Turkey conducted a weeklong offensive into northeastern Syria against the Kurdish fighters before a military pause.

Researchers find second warship from WWII Battle of Midway

MIDWAY ATOLL, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (AP) - A crew of deep-sea explorers and historians looking for lost World War II warships have found a second Japanese aircraft carrier that went down in the historic Battle of Midway.

Vulcan Inc.'s director of undersea operations Rob Kraft and Naval History and Heritage Command historian Frank Thompson reviewed high frequency sonar images of the warship Sunday and say that its dimensions and location mean it has to be the carrier Akagi.

The Akagi was found in the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument resting in nearly 18,000 feet (5,490 metres) of water more than 1,300 miles (2,090 kilometres) northwest of Pearl Harbor.

The researchers used an autonomous underwater vehicle, or AUV, equipped with sonar to find the ship. The vehicle had been out overnight collecting data, and the image of a warship appeared in the first set of readings Sunday morning.

The first scan used low-resolution sonar, so the crew sent their AUV back to get higher-quality images.

10 Things to Know for Today

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

1. WHOSE Defence OF THE PRESIDENT IS BEING SECOND-GUESSED

Trump's acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, in an effort to defend his boss, keeps making problematic statements.

2. CBD PIONEER PLEADS GUILTY IN VAPE CASE

Southern California woman is accused of being a drug trafficker who distributed "massive quantities" of synthetic marijuana. More than 30 people have died and hundreds have developed mysterious lung illnesses.

AP FACT CHECK: Trump says troops coming home; they're not

WASHINGTON (AP) - As President Donald Trump describes it, the U.S. swooped into an intractable situation in the Middle East, achieved an agreement within hours that had eluded the world for years and delivered a "great day for civilization."

It was a mission-accomplished moment that other Republican leaders, Democrats and much of the world found unconvincing.

Trump spent much of the past week trying to justify his decision to pull U.S. troops away from America's Kurdish allies in Syria, leaving those Kurdish fighters vulnerable on several fronts and already reeling from attacks by Turkish forces.

In the process, Trump exaggerated the scope of a deal bringing a temporary cease-fire to Turkish-Kurdish hostilities, falsely suggested U.S. troops in Syria will come home, and mischaracterized the history of the conflict and even the geography of it.

A look at his rhetoric on that topic and other subjects over the past week as well as a sampling of statements from the latest Democratic presidential debate:

Illegal vapes traced to California woman who was CBD pioneer

CARLSBAD, Calif. (AP) - Some of the people rushing to emergency rooms thought the CBD vape they inhaled would help like a gentle medicine. Others puffed it for fun.

What the vapours delivered instead was a jolt of synthetic marijuana, and with it an intense high of hallucinations and even seizures.

More than 50 people around Salt Lake City had been poisoned by the time the outbreak ended early last year, most by a vape called Yolo! - the acronym for "you only live once."

In recent months, hundreds of vape users have developed mysterious lung illnesses, and more than 30 have died. Yolo was different. Users knew immediately something was wrong.

Who was responsible for Yolo? Public health officials and criminal investigators couldn't figure that out. Just as it seemed to appear from nowhere, Yolo faded away with little trace.

APNewsBreak: US takes step to require asylum-seekers' DNA

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Trump administration is planning to collect DNA samples from asylum-seekers and other migrants detained by immigration officials and will add the information to a massive FBI database used by law enforcement hunting for criminals, a Justice Department official said.

The Justice Department will publish an amended regulation Monday that would mandate DNA collection for almost all migrants who cross between official entry points and are held even temporarily, according to the official. The official spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the regulation had not yet been published.

The rule does not apply to legal permanent residents, or anyone entering the U.S. legally. Children under 14 are exempt. It's not clear yet whether asylum-seekers who come through official crossings will be exempt.

Homeland Security officials gave a broad outline of the plan to expand DNA collection at the border two weeks ago, but it was not clear then whether asylum-seekers would be included, or when it would begin.

The new policy would allow the government to amass a trove of biometric data on hundreds of thousands of migrants, raising major privacy concerns and questions about whether such data should be compelled even when a person is not suspected of a crime other than crossing the border illegally. Civil rights groups already have expressed concerns that data could be misused, and the new policy is likely to lead to legal action.

In Congo, an Ebola survivor with a motorbike helps ease fear

BENI, Congo (AP) - When Germain Kalubenge gets a request for a ride on his motorcycle it can be a matter of life or death. The 23-year-old is a survivor of the Ebola virus and often is the only driver his community trusts to help if someone suspects they are infected.

"I wake up every day at 5 in the morning to ... wait for calls from suspected Ebola cases who do not like to take an ambulance," he said. "In the community they are afraid of ambulances. They believe that in an ambulance, doctors will give them toxic injections and they will die before arriving at the hospital."

Kalubenge is a rare motorcycle taxi driver who is also an Ebola survivor in eastern Congo, making him a welcome collaborator for health workers who have faced deep community mistrust during the second deadliest Ebola outbreak in history. More than 2,000 people have died since August of last year, and the World Health Organization last week said the outbreak still warrants being classified as a global emergency, even as the number of confirmed cases has slowed.

This is the first time Ebola has been confirmed in this part of Congo, and rumours quickly spread in Beni, an early epicenter of the outbreak, that the virus had been imported to kill the population. The community has been traumatized by years of deadly rebel attacks and is wary of authorities, blaming them for the insecurity that has killed nearly 2,000 people since late 2014.

Gaining people's trust has been a constant challenge for health workers.

Bolivia's Evo Morales likely forced to presidential runoff

LA PAZ, Bolivia (AP) - President Evo Morales came out ahead in the first round of Bolivia's presidential election, but he appears to have failed to get enough votes to avoid the first runoff in his nearly 14 years in power.

The preliminary results released late Sunday dealt a harsh blow to South America's longest serving leader in what has become the tightest political race of his life. But Morales, who is seeking a fourth term, still declared victory and told supporters at the presidential palace that "the people again imposed their will."

The Andean country's top electoral authority said that with 83% of the vote counted from Sunday's election, Morales was in first with 45.3%, followed by former President Carlos Mesa with 38.2% for second place in the field of nine candidates.

A special electoral mission from the Organization of American States said it was closely monitoring the election and requested information from the Supreme Electoral Tribunal after the transmission of preliminary results was halted.

If the results hold, Morales and Mesa will face off in a December ballot in which Morales could be vulnerable to a united opposition.

Cowboys run over Eagles, take 1st in NFC East with 37-10 win

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) - Ezekiel Elliott powered into the Philadelphia secondary and simply ran over safety Malcolm Jenkins.

The apparent 14-yard touchdown run by the star Dallas running back was overturned on review because his knee was down at the 1 - but the message had been sent early in a game with the division lead on the line.

The Cowboys (4-3) are back in control of the NFC East after ending a three-game losing streak that clouded the high expectations for the defending division champions following a 3-0 start.

Elliott got his touchdown the play after overpowering Jenkins on his way to 111 yards, Dak Prescott threw an easy scoring pass on a great fake to his backfield mate before a late TD run and the Cowboys rolled to a 37-10 victory over the Eagles on Sunday night.

"That's how I play every week," Elliott said. "I like to think of the defence as a shield. In the first quarter, you hit them a couple times, you dent the shield a little bit. You keep on hitting it."

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