



‘So what?’ Trump allegedly said of riot

Filing contesting his immunity puts spotlight on his actions on Jan. 6

BY SPENCER S. HSU,
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TOM JACKMAN
AND AMY GARDNER

President Donald Trump appeared indifferent as rioters stormed the Capitol to try to prevent the transfer of power on Jan. 6, 2021, telling an aide “So what?” even after learning security measures were being taken to protect his vice president, prosecutors alleged in an explosive new court filing Thursday.

The much-anticipated 165-page filing from special counsel Jack Smith offers a searing portrayal of Trump just a month before the 2024 election. It describes in more extensive detail than before how many people — including Vice President Mike Pence, party and state leaders, his own campaign officials, his own campaign lawyers, and others — told Trump there was no proof the election was stolen, and how Trump nonetheless waged a campaign to overturn the result.

Prosecutors reconstructed behind-the-scenes interactions, including one in which an aide rushed to the dining room to share with Trump, who had been watching the events on TV and tweeting, that action was being taken to ensure the safety of Pence, who was in the Capitol building.

“The defendant looked at him and said only, ‘So what?’” the filing alleges.

Much of the evidence against Trump in the case had already become public, either through previous filings, news reports or an extensive congressional investigation into the events of Jan. 6.

SEE FILING ON A10



JABIN BOTSFORD/THE WASHINGTON POST

National Guard soldiers load food and water into a helicopter in Salisbury, N.C., for delivery to areas affected by Hurricane Helene.

Taps run dry after Helene’s flooding

BY SCOTT DANCE
AND JOSHUA PARTLOW

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — There is water to come by in this storm-ravaged swath of rural North Carolina — but just barely. Among thousands of people, there is a palpable desperation for it and other basic necessities, a grim reminder of just how far the community is from normal life.

Across the region, the torrential floodwaters after Helene tore through late last week inundated wastewater treatment plants, oil facilities and plastics factories. Pipes that deliver much of this city’s water, as well as backup lines, were destroyed, cutting off running water to about 100,000 people for an extended period, officials said. That



MANDEL NGAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

President Joe Biden speaks with officials upon arriving at a South Carolina airport for a helicopter tour of storm damage. Story, A7

Lengthy toll: Deaths spike for years after a hurricane, a study finds. A3

Asheville: Flooding shows no city is safe from climate change. A6

has left many scrounging for water from pools or streams to flush toilets.

In Black Mountain, about 15 miles east of Asheville, water still isn’t running, either. Even when it starts flowing again, boil-water advisories will be ordered for weeks as pipes get patched and state labs test the water quality, said Jamey Matthews, the town’s public works manager. And the struggle extends beyond North Carolina: Many residents of Augusta, one of the most populous cities in Georgia, were also without running water Wednesday for the fourth consecutive day.

The question now is just how long these places will have to go without reliable taps. And at least in Asheville, a city with a history of issues

SEE HELENE ON A5

Listeria outbreak came after string of alerts at Va. plant

Former Boar’s Head
workers tell of filthy
conditions, lax controls

BY RACHEL ROUBEIN
AND JOE HEIM

In mid-July, as listeria infection cases multiplied across the United States, Maryland health officials who track foodborne illnesses grew increasingly alarmed. The outbreak was spreading at a much more rapid rate than normal for listeria.

Two people — in Illinois and New Jersey — had already died and more than two dozen had fallen ill in the previous seven weeks. The health officials feared that many more would succumb.

“We were getting a lot of cases in a very short window of time,” said Sophia Wozny, an epidemiologist who tracks outbreaks with her colleagues at the state health department.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had identified the strain of listeria that was sickening and killing people. But its source remained a mystery. The sooner the culprit could be found, the more deaths and illnesses would be prevented.

Wozny and her colleagues were in regular contact with local

health departments, as well as their counterparts in other states and at the CDC. They shared information on cases and pored over questionnaires filled out by those who had fallen ill to find out what they had eaten in the weeks before. As they read the responses, one item kept appearing: liverwurst.

Boar’s Head was the brand cited by many of the respondents. “We know we have to act,” Wozny remembered thinking at the time. “This has gone on too long.”

A health department worker went to a Baltimore store, purchased an unopened 3.5-pound tube of Boar’s Head liverwurst and delivered it to the state lab for testing. Lab workers ground the meat in an industrial blender to create a “liverwurst smoothie” — a method to ensure that no parts of the product went untested.

A preliminary result showed the presence of listeria, but they needed evidence that the bacteria was alive and infectious. Confirmation arrived days later on July 25. Wozny and a colleague alerted the CDC and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which oversees food-safety inspections.

Tracking the origin of the contaminated liverwurst was simple. Boar’s Head produced liverwurst only at its Jarratt, Va., plant, a sprawling facility surrounded by a tall security fence on a sleepy

SEE LISTERIA ON A18



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TROUBLE IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

Tensions disrupt international cables

BY REBECCA TAN

SINGAPORE — Undersea cables below the South China Sea have long provided vital connectivity to countries in Southeast Asia as demand for internet service has surged.

To maintain the extensive network of cables and develop new ones, private cable companies

China’s bid for dominance delays repairs, construction of crucial network

Teneo, a vessel for deep sea cable installation and maintenance, docks in Singapore on Aug. 13.

have for decades relied on being able to move freely through this waterway, despite conflicting claims over the sea by China and a half dozen other governments.

But now, competition for control of the South China Sea is disrupting the repair and badly needed construction of subsea cables, raising costs and at times

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Israeli restraint is urged on Iran

BIDEN AIMS TO LIMIT
WIDER ESCALATION

Some allies say U.S. isn’t
using enough pressure

BY YASMEEN ABUTALEB,
JOHN HUDSON,
KAREN DEYOUNG
AND MICHAEL BIRNBAUM

The White House is working to limit the Israeli response to the barrage of ballistic missiles that Iran fired into the country Tuesday, as some U.S. officials worry the Middle East could be edging closer to the all-out war that President Joe Biden has sought to prevent for nearly a year.

Several senior Biden officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive conversations, said Wednesday that Israeli officials have told them privately that they do not feel the need to hit back against Iran in an immediate and massive way. Yet officials in the United States and Europe fear that Israel could hit economic targets in Iran that would prompt a dangerous escalatory reaction.

Tehran has long signaled that attacks on its oil and gas industry would be a “red line,” a senior European official said. Such a strike would probably prompt retaliatory attacks from Iran on Western energy interests, potentially disrupting the global economy one month before the U.S. presidential election.

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Damage toll: Iranian barrage seen as major provocation. A12

‘Stronger’ response: Iran warns its attacks could grow worse. A13

Likely scope of ground offensive is not yet clear

BY LOVEDAY MORRIS,
MIRIAM BERGER
AND SHIRA RUBIN

TEL AVIV — Eight Israeli soldiers were killed in Lebanon on Wednesday in the first fatalities of Israel’s ground campaign against Hezbollah, a signal of the potentially bloody toll such an offensive could take as the military widens its battle with the militant group.

The Israel Defense Forces said the soldiers were killed in three separate incidents, with seven others seriously injured, but did not give further details. The statement came just hours after the military said it was engaged in “close-range” firefight inside Lebanese territory.

If the pace of Israeli casualties continues in Lebanon, experts say, it could shape the depth and scope of the offensive, which the IDF announced early Tuesday, saying the aim was to destroy Hezbollah infrastructure near the border. For Israel, the deaths will revive difficult memories of the invasion of Lebanon in 2006, when the first tank to cross the border hit a roadside bomb and four soldiers were killed.

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Sites from Maine to Texas are snarled by the strike, affecting bananas, vehicle machinery and other goods. A17

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