

White House may take less money for wall

■ Government shutdown, though, could extend into the new year

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Both sides in the long-running fight over funding President Donald Trump's U.S.-Mexico border wall appear to have moved toward each other, but a shutdown of one-fourth of the federal government entered Christmas without a clear resolution in sight.

In fact, a top White House official warned the shutdown could stretch into January.

Acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, who is also the budget director, said he was waiting to hear from Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York about a counteroffer the White House presented Schumer over the weekend.

Mulvaney would only say the offer was between Trump's \$5.7 billion request and \$1.3 billion Democrats have offered.

"We moved off of the five and we hope they move up from their 1.3," Mulvaney said less than a day after a senior administration official insisted that Congress would have to cave into Trump's demand for the shutdown to end, highlighting Trump's unpredictable negotiating style.

Schumer's office said the parties remained "very far apart."

Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., argued for increased use of technology along the border instead of "some medieval wall." Asked whether he's willing to offer more money as long as it is not spent on a wall, Durbin responded: "Absolutely."

Trump blamed the Democrats for the stalemate on Monday, tweeting, "Virtually every Democrat we are dealing with today strongly supported a Border Wall or Fence. It was only when I made it an important part of my campaign, because



Evan Vucci/The Associated Press

President Donald Trump makes a statement on the possible government shutdown before signing criminal just reform legislation in the Oval Office of the White House Friday.

people and drugs were pouring into our Country unchecked, that they turned against it. Desperately needed!"

However, an AP Fact Check found that U.S. arrests on the Mexican border jumped 78 percent in November from a year earlier to the highest level in Trump's presidency. Increased arrests indicate that more people are trying to cross the border illegally.

A stalemate over the wall led parts of the government to shut down Saturday after funding for numerous departments and agencies expired. The closure affects hundreds of thousands of federal workers across the country and was expected to last at least through Thursday, when the House and Senate meet again.

Monday and Tuesday, Christmas Eve and Christmas, respectively, are federal holidays, meaning the government would have been closed anyway. That means Wednesday is the first day the public could begin to feel the effects of lost government

services, Mulvaney said.

He predicted the shutdown could go into January, when Democrats assume control of the House based on their midterm election gains.

"It's very possible that this shutdown will go beyond the 28th and into the new Congress," Mulvaney said.

Justin Goodman, a spokesman for Schumer, countered: "If Director Mulvaney says the Trump Shutdown will last into the New Year, believe him, because it's their shutdown." Trump recently declared he'd be "proud" to shut down the government over border issues.

Democrats held firm Sunday in opposition to a wall, which Trump promised his political base he would build. Mulvaney said "the president's not going to not accept money for a border wall."

Trump tweeted Sunday, the shutdown's second day, that what's needed is "a good old fashioned WALL that works," not aerial drones or other measures that "are wonderful and lots of fun" but not

the answer to address drugs, gangs, human trafficking and other criminal elements entering the country.

He put off plans to spend Christmas at his Florida estate and remained in Washington.

The routines of about 800,000 federal employees, meanwhile, were about to be disrupted.

More than half of those employees are deemed essential, such as U.S. Secret Service agents and Transportation Security Administration airport agents, must work without pay, though retroactive pay is expected. Another 380,000 were to be furloughed, meaning they will not report to work but would be paid later. Legislation ensuring that workers receive back pay was expected to clear Congress.

Trump had savored the prospect of a shutdown over the wall, saying he'd be "proud" to force one over an issue that was one of his biggest campaign promises. He had said he wouldn't blame Democrats for a shutdown but now blames them

for not contributing to the 60 votes needed for such legislation to clear the closely divided Senate.

But Democrats aren't the only ones resisting Trump on the wall. Republican Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee, who is leaving Congress in January and has criticized Trump on other issues in the past, called the border-wall fight a "made-up fight so the president can look like he's fighting."

"This is something that is unnecessary. It's a spectacle. And, candidly, it's juvenile. The whole thing is juvenile," Corker said, arguing for measures that he said would secure the border better than a wall.

Democrats said they were open to proposals that don't include a wall, which Schumer said is costly and ineffective. They have offered to keep spending at existing levels of \$1.3 billion for border fencing and other security.

Senators have approved a bipartisan deal to keep the government open into February and provide \$1.3 billion for border security projects, but not the wall. But as Trump faced criticism from conservatives for "caving" on a campaign promise, he pushed the House to approve a package temporarily financing the government but also setting aside \$5.7 billion for the border wall. That bill lacks the votes to pass the Senate.

The stalemate blocked money for nine of 15 Cabinet-level departments and dozens of agencies, including Homeland Security, Transportation, Interior, Agriculture, State and Justice.

The Pentagon and the departments of Veterans Affairs and Health and Human Services are among those that Congress has fully funded and will operate as usual.

Mulvaney appeared on "Fox News Sunday" and ABC's "This Week." Durbin spoke on NBC's "Meet the Press" and Corker was interviewed on "State of the Union" on CNN.

What actually shuts down during a government shutdown?

The Associated Press

Here's a look at the impact of the partial government shutdown:

WHAT'S OPEN AND WHAT'S CLOSED

Social Security checks will go out and troops will remain at their posts. Doctors and hospitals will receive their Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements. The U.S. Postal Service, busy delivering packages for the holiday season, is an independent agency and won't be affected. Passport services, which are funded by fees and not government spending, will also continue.

Virtually every essential government agency, including the FBI, the Border Patrol and the Coast Guard, will remain open. Transportation Security Administration officers will staff airport checkpoints.

The air traffic control system, food inspection, Medicare, veterans' health care and many other essential government programs will run as usual. The Federal Emergency Management Agency can continue to respond to disasters.

Nearly 90 percent of the Department of Homeland Security's 240,000 employees will be at work because they're considered essential.

Special counsel Robert Mueller's office, which is investigating potential ties between the Trump campaign and Russia, is unaffected by a shutdown.

But hundreds of thousands of federal workers will be forced off the job, and some services will go dark.

In the past, the vast majority of national parks were closed to visitors and campers, but beginning with the

last government shutdown, in January, the Interior Department has tried to make parks as accessible as possible despite bare-bones staffing levels. Some are staying open thanks to funding from states and charitable groups.

In Washington, the museums along the National Mall will remain open at least through Jan. 1, but Smithsonian officials said they will reevaluate the situation if the shutdown continues into the new year. The Washington Monument is closed for repairs.

Arizona and Utah officials put in place plans to keep open Grand Canyon, Zion, Arches and Bryce Canyon and Zion national parks.

At the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, it was business as usual, thanks to funding from New York state.

FEDERAL WORKERS STILL GET PAID — EVENTUALLY

While they can be kept on the job, federal workers won't be paid for days worked during the lapse in funding. In the past, however, they have been repaid retroactively even if they were ordered to stay home. White House officials said that would be the case again.

The Senate already has passed legislation ensuring that workers will receive back pay. The House seems sure to follow suit.

Federal employees already were granted an extra day of vacation on Monday, Christmas Eve, under an executive order Trump signed this past week.

Federal workers are exempted from furloughs if their jobs are national security-related or if they perform essential activities that "protect life and property."

According to a report by Democrats on the Senate

Appropriations Committee, more than 420,000 federal employees deemed essential will continue to work without pay, including about 41,000 law enforcement and corrections officers. The Homeland Security employees who will keep working include about 150,000 from the Coast Guard, TSA and Customs and Border Protection.

More than 380,000 employees will be furloughed — including nearly all from NASA and Housing and Urban Development and 41,000 from the Commerce Department. About 16,000 National Park Service employees — 80 percent of the agency's workforce — will be furloughed.

Also among those who will be furloughed: 52,000 staffers at the Internal Revenue Service, slowing analysis and collection of hundreds of thousands of tax returns and audits.

SHUTDOWNS HAPPEN

Shutdowns happened every year when Jimmy Carter was president, averaging 11 days each. During President Ronald Reagan's two terms, there were six shutdowns, typically just one or two days apiece.

Before a three-day lapse in January, caused by Democrats' insistence that any budget measure come with protections for young immigrants known as "Dreamers," the most recent significant shutdown was a 16-day partial shuttering of the government in 2013.

That one came as tea party conservatives tried to block implementation of President Barack Obama's health care law. The government also shut down for a few hours last February amid a partisan dispute over deficit spending.

Death toll in Indonesia tsunami climbs to more than 370 — 1,400 injured

The Associated Press

TANJUNG LESUNG, Indonesia — Efforts to collect hundreds of bodies and save the injured were stepped up in Indonesia on Monday following the country's latest tsunami, as scientists collected evidence on how a volcanic eruption triggered the weekend tragedy.

Casualty figures from Saturday night's disaster continued to rise, with at least 373 people confirmed dead and more than 1,400 injured. The death toll was certain to rise further, with 128 people still missing from the affected areas along the coastlines of

western Java and southern Sumatra islands, where hundreds of military personnel and volunteers were conducting their grim search along debris-strewn beaches.

Where victims were found, yellow, orange and black body bags were laid out, and weeping relatives identified the dead.

The waves that swept locals and tourists into the sea along the Sunda Strait followed an eruption and apparent landslide on Anak Krakatau, or "Child of Krakatoa," one of the world's most infamous volcanic islands.

Hotels and hundreds of

homes were heavily damaged by the waves. Broken chunks of concrete and splintered sticks of wood littered hard-hit coastal areas, turning popular beach areas into near ghost towns. Debris from thatch-bamboo shacks was strewn along the coast.

The Indonesian Medical Association of the worst-affected Banten region said that it sent doctors, medical supplies and equipment, and that many of the injured were in need of orthopedic and neurological surgery. It said most victims are domestic tourists who were visiting beaches during the long weekend

ahead of Christmas.

It was the second deadly tsunami to hit seismically active Indonesia this year. A powerful earthquake triggered a tsunami that hit Sulawesi island in September, giving residents a brief warning before the waves struck.

On Saturday night, however, the ground did not shake to alert people before the waves ripped buildings from their foundations and swept terrified concertgoers celebrating on a resort beach into the sea.

"I heard people shouting to run away and I saw the water had gone up to the main-

land and the hotel had been flooded by water," said witness Feri Ardian. "About 200 people were dragged away by the waves."

Dramatic video posted on social media showed the Indonesian pop band Seventeen performing in a tent on Tanjung Lesung beach at a concert for employees of the state-owned electricity company. A wave smashed through the makeshift stage, tossing the band and its equipment into the audience.

Seventeen's bass player, guitarist, drummer, road manager and technician were all killed. The lead singer, Riefan

Fajarsyah, survived, but his wife, who was also a backup singer, remains missing.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo, who faces what promises to be a tough re-election campaign next year, responded Monday to the lack of any warning of the disaster with a vow to have all equipment used for detection of tsunamis replaced or repaired.

Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, spokesman for Indonesia Disaster Mitigation Agency, acknowledged on Twitter that the country's network of detection buoys had been dysfunctional since 2012, due to vandalism and budget shortfalls.



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