

## WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

## Trump warns Comey: Better hope there are no 'tapes' of talks

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump, in a warning to his fired FBI director, said today that James Comey had better hope there are no "tapes" of their conversations. Trump's tweet came the morning after he asserted Comey had told him three times that he wasn't under FBI investigation.

"I said, 'If it's possible, would you let me know, am I under investigation?' He said you are not under investigation," Trump said in an interview Thursday with NBC News. He said the discussions happened in two phone calls and at a dinner in which Comey was asking to keep his job.

Comedy has not confirmed Trump's account. Late Thursday, The New York Times cited two unnamed Comey associates who recounted his version of a January dinner with the president in which Trump asked for a pledge of loyalty. Comey declined, instead offering "honest." When Trump then pressed for "honest loyalty," Comey told him, "You will have that," the associates said.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders disputed the report and said the president would "never even suggest the expectation of personal loyalty." Officials did not immediately respond to questions about whether Trump recorded his discussions with the FBI director.

The president's morning Twitter comments again raised the specter of Richard Nixon, whose secretly taped conversations and telephone calls in the White House ultimately led to his downfall in the Watergate scandal. Trump's firing of Comey already has left him with the dubious distinction of being the first president since Nixon to fire a law enforcement official overseeing an investigation tied to the White House.

## 20 attorneys general call for independent probe into Russia

BOSTON — A group of 20 attorneys general, all Democrats, is calling for the appointment of an independent special counsel to continue the investigation into Russian interference in last year's presidential election.

The group led by Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey called Republican President Donald Trump's firing of FBI Director James Comey during the ongoing investigation a "violation of public trust."

The group said in a Thursday letter to Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein that only the appointment of an independent special counsel "with full powers and resources" can begin to restore public confidence.

Those signing the letter include the attorneys general of California, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Iowa, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, Vermont and Washington.

## No drought warnings in Pacific Northwest for first time since 2011

SEATTLE — For the first time since 2011, the Pacific Northwest isn't showing any signs of drought.

The latest U.S. Drought Monitor report shows that Oregon, Washington and Idaho are free from drought worries.

Kathie Dello, deputy director of Oregon's climate office, says the Northwest saw lots of precipitation during the water year that began in October.

She says snow and rain came earlier and stayed later. Typically drier months such as October, February, March and April were wetter than usual across the region.

Idaho had its wettest January to April on record, breaking the previous record set in 1904. Seattle also broke its record for wettest April.

Dello says reservoirs are full and the region has ample mountain snowpack.

## State commission rejects UO's planned tuition increase

EUGENE — The state Higher Education Coordinating Commission has rejected the University of Oregon's plan to increase to raise in-state undergraduate tuition by more than 10 percent.

Under state law, public universities can raise tuition by no more than 5 percent without state approval.



AP Photo

**President Donald Trump, in an apparent warning to his fired FBI director, said that James Comey had better hope there are no "tapes" of their conversations. Trump's tweet came the morning after he asserted Comey had told him three times that he wasn't under FBI investigation.**

University spokesman Tobin Klinger tells The Register-Guard the vote is a tremendous setback for the school. The university can adjust and resubmit its proposal.

The commission also rejected a sharp tuition increase sought by Portland State University while approving increases for Oregon Tech, Western Oregon University and Southern Oregon University.

Oregon State University and Eastern Oregon University plan to raise in-state tuition by less than 5 percent, so they don't need state approval.

## Former inmates sue four Oregon prisons over unsuitable food

PORTLAND — Three former inmates have filed a class action lawsuit alleging Oregon's Department of Corrections fed them chicken and fish marked "not for human consumption."

The Oregonian reports the suit, which was filed in U.S. District Court on Tuesday in Portland on behalf of current inmates, accuses the Corrections Department of civil rights violations and seeks to force state prisons to provide sufficient nutrition and sanitary food handling.

The lawsuit says inmates were often nauseated during and after meals.

Two Rivers Correctional Institution in Umatilla, Columbia River Correctional Institution in Portland, the Oregon State Penitentiary in Salem and Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Wilsonville are cited in the suit.

The suit seeks unspecified damages.

A spokeswoman for the corrections department said the agency doesn't comment on pending litigation.

## Aid officials report spike in Jordan deportations of Syrians

AMMAN, Jordan — Life as a refugee in Jordan suddenly ended for a Syrian carpenter when he was summoned for interrogation, blindfolded and sent on a bus back to Syria with his wife and four children the next morning.

After more than four years in Jordan, the 31-year-old is back in a war zone where he fears for his family's safety and struggles to find work. He hasn't heard from parents left behind in Jordan, presumably because they fear the same fate if they make contact.

"Everyone is afraid," he said by Skype from Syria's Daraa province.

Deportations from Jordan have spiked in recent months, with entire Syrian families sent back for the first time, including large numbers of children, said two international aid officials. One offi-

cial said that more than one-third of several thousand refugees who went back to Syria between January and April were forcibly deported, while others returned voluntarily.

The international group Human Rights Watch said it has documented "numerous cases" since 2014 of Jordan forcibly returning Syrian asylum seekers to Syria. In many cases, the deportations violate international law which bars returning people to situations where they face danger or persecution, said Lama Fakih, deputy director of the group's Middle East and North Africa division.

## China's Silk Road forum latest effort to boost Xi's stature

BEIJING — China will seek to burnish President Xi Jinping's stature as a world-class statesman at an international gathering centered on his signature foreign policy effort that envisions a future world order in which all roads lead to Beijing.

The Belt and Road Forum opening Sunday is the latest in a series of high-profile appearances aimed at projecting Xi's influence on the global stage ahead of a key congress of the ruling Communist Party later this year. All feed a fundamental yearning among ordinary Chinese: to see their country's prestige and status rise.

"Xi is now seen as a world leader with a lot of influence and respect internationally and that will definitely boost his domestic appeal," said Joseph Cheng, a long-time observer of Chinese politics now retired from the City University of Hong Kong.

Leaders from 28 countries are set to attend, including Presidents Vladimir Putin of Russia and Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines. The most prominent attendee from the West will be Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni.

Other Western nations, including the United States, will be represented by junior officials. Washington is sending a delegation led by Matt Pottinger, special assistant to the president and senior director for east Asia at the National Security Council. Britain, Germany and France are to be represented by finance officials.

## New TV ad shows Marines looking for a few good women

WASHINGTON — A Marine in full combat gear moves through dark, frigid water, gripping an M-16 rifle, before plunging under barbed wire and through a submerged drainage pipe. It is only when the fighter shouts an order over the sound of explosions does the historical nature of the TV advertisement become clear: the Marine is a woman.

For a Corps that has struggled with the perception that it is the least welcoming of women among the military services, the new ad is part of a campaign to appeal to a new generation of Marines. It is also a bid for more female recruits for "the few, the proud," particularly athletes capable of meeting the tough physical standards required.

"The water was 27 degrees and coated with a layer of thick ice," said Marine Capt. Erin Demchko, describing the great difficulty of the gauntlet, all while being surrounded by camera crews. "Giving the film production staff what they wanted, while maintaining my bearing as a Marine officer and trying not to look cold, was a challenge."

Demchko, a deputy commander at Camp Courtney in Okinawa, Japan, is part of the Marine Corps' expanding effort to recruit women. The smallest military service has the lowest percentage of women, and wants at least 10 percent representation by 2019. While female Marines occasionally have appeared in ads and been featured in online videos, this is the first time a woman is the focus of a national television commercial for the Corps.



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