

WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

Trump takes on controversy-laden agenda on Capitol Hill

WASHINGTON — Top Democratic leaders in Congress have abruptly pulled out of a planned meeting with President Donald Trump after he attacked them on Twitter.

Trump tweeted early Tuesday that “I don’t see a deal!” with Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer and top House Democrat Nancy Pelosi.

Schumer and Pelosi shot back with a statement asking for talks with top GOP leaders in Congress.

They said, “given that the president doesn’t see a deal between Democrats and the White House, we believe the best path forward is to continue negotiating with our Republican counterparts in Congress instead.”

Congress faces a Dec. 8 deadline to pass stopgap legislation to keep the government open.

They added, “we don’t have any time to waste.”

Trump was set to meet with Republican congressional leaders to discuss budget and immigration issues. The president’s year-end agenda is at a critical juncture.

Trump’s ‘Pocahontas’ job stuns families of Navajo war vets

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — Families of Navajo war veterans who were honored at the White House say they were dumbfounded that President Donald Trump used the event to take a political jab at a Massachusetts senator, demeaning their work with an unbreakable code that helped the U.S. win World War II.

Trump turned to a nickname he often deployed for Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren during the 2016 presidential campaign: Pocahontas. He then told the three Navajo Code Talkers on stage Monday that he had affection for them that he doesn’t have for Warren.

“It was uncalled for,” said Marty Thompson, whose great-uncle was a Navajo Code Talker. “He can say what he wants when he’s out doing his presidential business among his people, but when it comes to honoring veterans or any kind of people, he needs to grow up and quit saying things like that.”

Pocahontas is a well-known historical figure who bridged her own Pamunkey Tribe in present-day Virginia with the British in the 1600s. But the National Congress of American Indians says Trump wrongly has flipped the name into a derogatory term, and the comment drew swift criticism from American Indians and politicians.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Hucka-



AP Photo/Firdia Lisnawati

Mount Agung volcano on Bali has erupted for the first time in more than half a century, forcing closure of the Indonesian tourist island’s busy airport as the mountain gushes huge columns of ash that are a threat to airplanes.

Volcano gushing ash over Bali closes airport

KARANGASEM, Indonesia — A volcano gushing towering columns of ash closed the airport on the Indonesian tourist island of Bali for a second day Tuesday, disrupting travel for tens of thousands, as authorities renewed their warnings for villagers to evacuate.

Mount Agung has been hurling clouds of white and dark gray ash about 13,000 feet high and lava is welling in its crater.

The local airport authority said its closure for another 24 hours was required for safety reasons. Volcanic ash poses a deadly threat to aircraft, and ash from Agung is moving south-southwest toward the airport. Ash has reached a height of about 30,000 feet as it drifts across the island.

“I don’t know, we can’t change it,” said stranded German tourist Gina Camp, sitting on a bench at the airport. “It’s the nature and we have to wait until it’s over.”

She decided to look on the bright side, saying she planned to go back outside to enjoy another day on the island.

bee Sanders, asked about criticism of Trump’s remarks, said a racial slur “was certainly not the president’s intent.”

Pope meeting Suu Kyi on Myanmar refugee crisis amid outcry

NAYPYITAW, Myanmar — Pope Francis traveled to Myanmar’s capital on Tuesday to meet with Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who has come under increasing international criticism over a military crackdown on Rohingya Muslims that the U.N. and U.S. have termed a campaign of “ethnic cleansing.”

Francis’ speech to Suu Kyi, other Myanmar officials and the diplomatic corps is the most anticipated of his visit, given the outcry over the operation which has sent more than 620,000 Rohingya fleeing into neighboring Bangladesh. The Rohingya, who have been denied citizen-

ship and other basic rights for decades in Buddhist-majority Myanmar, have reported entire villages burned and looted, and women and girls raped.

Leaders of Myanmar’s Catholic Church have stressed that Suu Kyi, the country’s civilian leader, has no power to speak out against the military over the operation, and have urged continued support for her efforts to move Myanmar toward a more democratic future that includes all its religious minorities, Christians in particular. How Francis bridges the local Catholic concerns with his legacy of speaking out for oppressed minorities will be key in his speech in Naypyitaw, the capital.

His address comes just hours after Suu Kyi was stripped of her latest honor in the West, a “Freedom of the City” award given to her by the Oxford City Council, which said anyone who turns a blind eye to violence tarnished its own reputation. Suu Kyi studied at Oxford before returning to Myanmar and being placed under detention for 15 years during the country’s long military dictatorship.

Before arriving in Naypyitaw, Francis met in

Yangon with interfaith leaders at the archbishop’s residence, and separately with a prominent but controversial Buddhist leader.

Powell casts himself as a figure of stability for the Federal Reserve

WASHINGTON — Jerome Powell says that if confirmed as the next chairman of the Federal Reserve, he expects the Fed to continue raising interest rates gradually to support its twin goals of maximum employment and stable prices.

Under his leadership, Powell also says, the Fed would consider ways to ease the regulatory burdens on banks while preserving the key reforms Congress passed to try to prevent another financial crisis.

Powell’s comments came in written testimony prepared for his confirmation hearing Tuesday before the Senate Banking Committee.

A member of the Fed’s board since 2012, Powell was nominated by President Donald Trump to succeed Janet Yellen after her four-year term as chair ends in February. Trump decided against offering Yellen a second term.

In his remarks released Monday, Powell sought to send the reassuring message that he would represent a figure of stability and continuity at the nation’s central bank while remaining open to making certain changes as appropriate.

Thousands of foreign troops in Syria — but will they leave?

BEIRUT — Syria’s long-running civil war may be winding down slowly, but the country is awash in weapons and a confounding array of local militias and thousands of foreign troops, some of which may never leave.

With crucial aid from allies Iran and Russia, President Bashar Assad has regained control over large areas of Syria in advances that appear to have put to rest the possibility of a military overthrow, at least for now. But his rule is extremely reliant on continued assistance from Iranian-sponsored militias, which have spread across the war-ravaged country.

The fight against the Islamic State group, which proliferated soon after the conflict began in 2011, has provided a convenient justification for foreign troops to be deployed in Syria with the pretext of fighting the extremists. Now that IS no longer holds any significant urban territory in Syria, the numbers of some forces may be scaled down, but foreign powers with longer-term ambitions and interests will try to maintain a presence in the country for years to come. That will further complicate prospects for a peace settlement.

Some countries have already indicated that they plan to stay for the foreseeable future.

CLASSIFIEDS

CLASSIFIED INDEX

<p>NOTICES</p> <p>Special Notices.....104</p> <p>Public Notices.....107</p> <p>Announcements.....110</p> <p>PERSONALS</p> <p>Lots & Found.....181</p> <p>Personals.....184</p> <p>Fund-raisers.....188</p> <p>AUTOMOTIVE</p> <p>Antiques/Classic Vehicles.....201</p> <p>Automobiles.....204</p> <p>SUVs/Trucks.....207-210</p> <p>4WD.....213</p> <p>Vans.....216</p> <p>ATVs/Motorcycles.....219</p> <p>Truck/Auto Parts.....222</p> <p>Detailing.....225</p> <p>Tires & Wheels.....228</p>	<p>MARINE</p> <p>Boats for Sale.....251</p> <p>Boating Parts & Accessories.....254</p> <p>Boats Wanted.....257</p> <p>Boat Trailers.....260</p> <p>Marine Supplies & Equip.....266</p> <p>Boat/RV Storage.....269</p> <p>RVs & Trailers</p> <p>RVs & Travel Trailers.....301-307</p> <p>Campers, Utility Trailers.... 310-313</p> <p>REAL ESTATE</p> <p>Open Houses.....501</p> <p>For Sale.....504-513</p> <p>Lots & Acreage.....516</p> <p>Income Property.....519</p> <p>Manufactured Homes.....522</p> <p>Commercial Property.....525</p> <p>Real Estate Wanted.....531</p>	<p>RENTALS</p> <p>Properties for Rent.....601-613</p> <p>Rooms & Roommates.....616</p> <p>Commercial Rental.....619</p> <p>Vacation Rentals.....622</p> <p>Storage Space.....628</p> <p>Wanted to Rent.....634</p> <p>RV/Mobile Home Space.....637</p> <p>BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>Business Opportunities.....643</p> <p>Business for Sale.....644</p> <p>HELP WANTED</p> <p>Help Wanted.....651</p> <p>Work Wanted.....652</p> <p>SERVICES</p> <p>Childcare/Adult Care.....661</p> <p>Services.....664</p>	<p>PETS/LIVESTOCK</p> <p>Animal Boarding.....701</p> <p>Feed-Hay-Grain.....704</p> <p>Pets & Supplies.....710</p> <p>Horses & Tack.....713</p> <p>MISCELLANEOUS</p> <p>Fuel, Heating & Firewood.....807</p> <p>Furniture & HH Goods.....810</p> <p>TV & Electronics.....811</p> <p>Antiques & Collectibles.....813</p> <p>Jewelry.....814</p> <p>Arts & Crafts.....816</p> <p>APPLIANCES & EQUIP.</p> <p>Tools & Heavy Equipment.....851</p> <p>Lawn & Garden Equipment.....854</p> <p>Appliances.....860</p> <p>Medical Equip. & Supply.....866</p> <p>Farm Equipment.....923</p>
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