

White House: Trump would accept less money for border wall

By **DARLENE SUPERVILLE**
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 counter-offer 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, 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 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.

Today and Tuesday, Christmas Eve and Christmas, 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.

Shanahan working to streamline defense spending

By **LOLITA C. BALDOR**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The sooner-than-expected departure of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis shifts the focus to President Donald Trump's appointment of an acting Pentagon chief and plans for a permanent replacement.

It also signals an acrimonious end to a tense relationship between Trump and Mattis that had eroded in recent months. A fracture developed last week over Trump's decision to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria and worsened after Mattis' public disagreement with Trump, aired in his resignation letter.

Mattis made clear in the letter he did not see eye to eye with a president who has expressed disdain for NATO. That drew a critical tweet from Trump today.

"We are substantially subsidizing the Militaries of many VERY rich countries all over the world, while at the same time these countries take total advantage of the U.S., and our TAX-

PAYERS, on Trade," Trump tweeted. "General Mattis did not see this as a problem. I DO, and it is being fixed!"

Deputy Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan will take over as acting secretary on Jan. 1, Trump announced in a tweet Sunday. He had worked for more than three decades at Boeing Co. and was a senior vice president when he became Pentagon deputy in July 2017.

In the new year Trump wants to focus on streamlining purchases at the Pentagon, an issue on which Shanahan has already been working, a White House official said. The official asked not to be identified publicly discussing personnel matters.

U.S. officials said they didn't know if Shanahan would be Trump's nominee to replace Mattis. During a lunch with conservative lawmakers Saturday at the White House, Trump discussed his options. They were "not all military," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., who was among those attending.

Stealth Indonesia tsunami turns perfect night into nightmare

By **NINIEK KARMINI and MARGIE MASON**
Associated Press

TANJUNG LESUNG, Indonesia — The tsunami that roared ashore in Indonesia, killing more than 370 people and injuring over 1,400, was particularly cruel.

It hit on a busy holiday weekend when many were enjoying the warm night breeze on the beach under a full moon. And unlike

most big waves, which are typically portended by an earthquake's violent shaking, this was a stealth attack.

There were no major ground convulsions, no sirens, no text messages.

A volcanic island rumbled as it has been doing for months before a giant chunk of it apparently broke free like a rock falling into a tub, silently unleashing a disaster.

Even in a disaster-prone

country like Indonesia, survivors of Saturday's tsunami said it seemed extra

menacing because everything seemed perfect until it hit.

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CLASSIFIED INDEX

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

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