News

World News Briefs

Trump Firing Comey Shrouds Russia Probe in Doubt, Turmoil

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's stunning firing of FBI Director James Comey throws into question the future of a counterintelligence investigation into the Trump campaign's possible connections to Russia and immediately raised suspicions of an underhanded effort to stymie a probe that has shadowed the administration from the outset.

Democrats likened Tuesday's ouster to President Richard Nixon's "Saturday Night Massacre" and renewed calls for the appointment of a special prosecutor, and some Republicans also questioned the move.

In his letter to Comey, Trump said the firing was necessary to restore "public trust and confidence" in the FBI. The administration paired the letter with a scathing review by Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein of how Comey handled the investigation into Democrat Hillary Clinton's email practices, including his decision to hold a news conference announcing its findings and releasing "derogatory information" about Clinton.

While Comey has drawn anger from Democrats since he reopened the email investigation in the closing days of last year's campaign, they didn't buy that justification for his firing Tuesday. Several Republicans joined them in raising alarms of how it could affect probes into possible coordination between Trump associates and Russia to influence the 2016 presidential election.

Trump will now appoint a successor at the FBI, which has been investigating since late July, and who will almost certainly have an impact on how the investigation moves forward and whether the public will accept its outcome.

Tunnel Collapse Latest Safety Issue at Nuclear Site

RICHLAND, Wash. (AP) — The collapse of an underground tunnel containing radioactive waste that forced workers at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation to shelter in place is the latest incident to raise safety concerns at the sprawling site that made plutonium for nuclear bombs for decades after World War II.

Officials detected no release of radiation Tuesday and no workers were injured, said Randy Bradbury, a spokesman for the Washington state Department of Ecology.

No workers were inside the tunnel when it collapsed, causing soil on the surface above to sink 2 to 4 feet (half to 1.2 meters) over a 400 square foot (37 square meters) area, officials said.

The tunnels are hundreds of feet long, with about 8 feet (2.4 meters) of soil covering them, the U.S. Department of Energy said.

The anti-nuclear group Beyond Nuclear said the incident helped show "radioactive waste management is out of control."

S. Korea's Leader Willing to Visit North, Talk to US, China

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — New South Korean President Moon Jae-in said as he took office Wednesday that he was open to visiting rival North Korea under the right conditions to talk about Pyongyang's aggressive pursuit of nuclear-tipped missiles.

Moon's softer stance on North Korea could create friction with Washington, which has swung from threats of military action to hints of dialogue as it seeks to formulate a policy under President Donald Trump.

South Korea's first liberal leader in a decade, Moon also said he'll "sincerely negotiate" with the United States, Seoul's top ally, and China, South Korea's top trading partner, over the contentious deployment of an advanced U.S. missile-defense system in southern South Korea. The system has angered Beijing, which says its powerful radars allow Washington to spy on its own military operations.

In a speech at the National Assembly, Moon pledged to work for peace on the Korean Peninsula amid growing worry over the North's expanding nuclear weapons and missiles program.

"I will quickly move to solve the crisis in national security. I am willing to go anywhere for the peace of the Korean Peninsula — if needed, I will fly immediately to Washington. I will go to Beijing and I will go to Tokyo. If the conditions shape up, I will go to Pyongyang," Moon said.

AP PHOTO/CAROLYN KASTER, FILE

In this May 3 file photo, FBI Director James Comey listens on Capitol Hill in Washington. President Donald Trump has fired Comey. In a statement on Tuesday, May 9, Trump says Comey's firing "will mark a new beginning" for the FBI.

Trump to Meet Top Russian Diplomat at the White House

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump will meet Wednesday with Vladimir Putin's top diplomat at the White House, officials say, marking the highest level, face-to-face contact with Russia of the American leader's young presidency. It would also signal that the two countries have improved ties that Trump recently described as being at an "all-time low."

Trump's talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will take place after the Russian's meetings earlier in

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