

News

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populated town that killed a dozen people and injured over a hundred, activists and rescuers said Wednesday.

Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said an overnight 'frenzied' bombing campaign continued into Wednesday, with at least 350 missiles lobbed into Nawa and its surrounding areas. The Observatory said at least 12 were killed as rescuers struggled to get to the casualties.

Khaled Solh, head of the local Syrian civil defense known as White Helmets, said only one ambulance was able to access the town and civilians relied on their cars to bring out at least 150 injured. He said the only hospital in the town was struck in the overnight campaign, rendering it non-operational. He said one of the last orthopedists in the town was killed in the strikes.

In less than a month, Syrian government forces backed by Russian air power have been able to seize control of most of Daraa province, including the eponymous provincial capital that was the cradle of the uprising against President Bashar Assad more than seven years ago.

They have stepped up their military offensive on the remaining opposition pockets in the southwestern region that includes Daraa and Quneitra provinces that straddle the border with Jordan and the frontier with the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

Trump Backs Off Siding With Russia Over US Intelligence

WASHINGTON (AP) — Blistered by bipartisan condemnation of his embrace of a longtime U.S. enemy, President Donald Trump backed away from his public undermining of American intelligence agencies, saying he simply misspoke when he said he saw no reason to believe Russia had interfered in the 2016 U.S. election.

Rebuked as never before by his own party, including a stern pushback from usually reserved Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, the U.S. president sought to end 27 hours of recrimination by delivering a rare admission of error.

"The sentence should have been, 'I don't see any reason why I wouldn't, or why it wouldn't be Russia'" instead of "why it would," Trump said Tuesday of the comments he had made standing alongside Vladimir Putin on the summit stage in Helsinki.

That didn't explain why Trump, who had tweeted a half-dozen times and sat for two television interviews since the Putin news conference, waited so long to correct his remarks. And the scripted cleanup pertained only to the least defensible of his comments.

He didn't reverse other statements in which he gave clear credence to Putin's "extremely strong and powerful" denial of Russian involvement, raised doubts about his own intelligence agencies' conclusions and advanced discredited conspiracy theories about election meddling.

Ala. Congresswoman Wins Runoff Turning on Loyalty to Trump

MILLBROOK, Ala. (AP) — U.S. Rep. Martha Roby won Alabama's Republican runoff, fighting through lingering fallout from her years-old criticism of then-candidate Donald Trump in a midterm contest that hinged on loyalty to the GOP president.

The four-term incumbent will now represent the GOP on the November ballot having defeated Bobby Bright, a former Democrat who tried to cast himself as the more authentic Trump ally in the low-turnout Republican contest.

The Trump White House was on Roby's side.

"It's been a true privilege to have the support of the White House through this campaign," Roby told cheering sup-



President Donald Trump gestures while speaking during his meeting with members of his cabinet in Cabinet Room of the White House in Washington, Wednesday, July 18, 2018. Looking on is Deputy Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan.

porters Tuesday night, her voice cracking with emotion at times. "I am so humbled that the people of Alabama's 2nd Congressional District have again placed their trust and their confidence in me."

Trump and Vice President Mike Pence endorsed the four-term incumbent in recent weeks. The vice president went further over the weekend and recorded robocalls distributed on her behalf saying she's a reliable vote for the Trump agenda.

Ex-FBI Chief Comey Urges Voters to Support Democrats in Fall

WASHINGTON (AP) — James Comey, the FBI director who was fired last year by President Donald Trump, is urging voters to support Democrats in November's midterm elections.

Comey says on Twitter that the "Republican Congress has proven incapable of fulfilling the Founders' design that 'Ambition must ... counteract ambition.'" That refers to the need for Congress to provide checks and balances to presidential power.

Comey writes: "All who believe in this country's values must vote for Democrats this fall. ... History has its eyes on us."

The former FBI director recently said he no longer considers himself a Republican.

On Monday, after Trump's press conference with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Comey tweeted, "This was the day an American president stood on foreign soil next to a murderous ly-

ing thug and refused to back his own country."

6 States and NYC Sue US Over Immigration-Related Policy

NEW YORK (AP) — Six states and New York City sued the federal government Wednesday, joining other cities and states who say the government is trying to unlawfully force "sanctuary" communities to engage in federal immigration enforcement if they want anti-crime funds.

Lawsuits were filed in Manhattan federal court on behalf of New York state and city, Connecticut, New Jersey, Washington, Massachusetts and Virginia.

The federal government in July 2017 imposed conditions requiring cities receiving public safety grants to notify federal agents when immigrants in the country illegally are about to be released from police detention.

Since then, federal courts in Illinois, Pennsylvania and California have struck down the conditions affecting so-called "sanctuary" communities.

Justice Department spokesman Devin O'Malley called two lawsuits filed Wednesday "a disservice to these states' law-abiding citizens."

"By choosing not to comply with a federal statute that promotes cooperation between local jurisdictions and federal immigration authorities, political leaders deliberately choose to protect criminal aliens in their custody and to make their communities less safe," he said.

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