

News

World News Briefs

NASA Rover Finally Bites the Dust on Mars After 15 Years

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — NASA's Opportunity, the Mars rover that was built to operate for just three months but kept going and going, rolling across the rocky red soil, was pronounced dead Wednesday, 15 years after it landed on the planet.

The six-wheeled vehicle that helped gather critical evidence that ancient Mars might have been hospitable to life was remarkably spry up until eight months ago, when it was finally doomed by a ferocious dust storm.

Flight controllers tried numerous times to make contact, and sent one final series of recovery commands Tuesday night, along with one last wake-up song, Billie Holiday's "I'll Be Seeing You," in a somber exercise that brought tears to team members' eyes. There was no response from space, only silence.

Thomas Zurbuchen, head of NASA's science missions, broke the news at what amounted to a funeral at the space agency's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, announcing the demise of "our beloved Opportunity."

"This is a hard day," project manager John Callas said at an auditorium packed with hundreds of cur-



AP PHOTO/MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ

Scientists and other NASA officials applaud and embrace after a mission briefing for the Mars Exploration Rover Opportunity at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2019, in Pasadena, Calif.

rent and former members of the team that oversaw Opportunity and its long-deceased identical twin, Spirit. "Even though it's a machine and we're saying goodbye, it's still very hard and very poignant, but we had to do that. We came to that point."

US Says Ex-Intel Official Defected to Iran, Revealed Secrets

WASHINGTON (AP) — A former U.S. Air Force counterintelligence specialist who defected to Iran despite warnings from the FBI has been charged with revealing classified information to the Tehran government, including the code name and secret mission of a Pentagon program, prosecutors said Wednesday.

The Justice Department also accused Monica Elfriede Witt, 39, of betraying former colleagues in the U.S. intelligence community by feeding details about their personal and professional lives to Iran. Four hackers linked to the Iranian government, charged in the same indictment, used that information to target the intelligence workers online, prosecutors said.

Witt had been on the FBI's radar at least a year before she defected after she attended an Iranian conference and appeared in anti-American videos. She was warned about her activities, but reassured agents that she would not provide sensi-

WANTED BY THE FBI

MONICA ELFRIEDE WITT

Conspiracy to Deliver National Defense Information to Representatives of a Foreign Government; Delivering National Defense Information to Representatives of a Foreign Government



FBI VIA AP



This image provided by the FBI shows part of the wanted poster for Monica Elfriede Witt. The former U.S. Air Force counterintelligence specialist who defected to Iran despite warnings from the FBI has been charged with revealing classified information to the Tehran government, including the code name and secret mission of a Pentagon program, prosecutors said Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2019.

tive information about her work if she returned to Iran. She was not arrested.

"Once a holder of a top secret security clearance, Monica Witt actively sought opportunities to undermine the United States and support the government of Iran — a country which poses a serious threat to our national security," said FBI executive assistant director Jay Tabb, the bureau's top national security official.

Tabb said "she provided information that could cause serious damage to national security," though he did not provide specifics.

In House's Yemen Vote, Congress Reasserts War-Making Powers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Asserting congressional authority over war-making powers, the House passed a resolution Wednesday that would force the administration to withdraw U.S. troops from involvement in Yemen, in a rebuke of President Donald Trump's alliance with the Saudi-led coalition behind the military intervention.

Lawmakers in both parties are increasingly uneasy over the humanitarian crisis in Yemen and skeptical of the U.S. partnership with that coalition, especially in light of Saudi Arabia's role in the killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi, a critic of the royal family.

Passage would mark the first time Congress has relied on the decades-old War Powers Resolution to halt military intervention. It also would set up a potential confrontation with the White House, which has threatened a veto. The House voted 248-177 to approve the measure, sending it to the Senate, where a similar resolution passed last year.

"We have helped create, and worsen, the world's largest humanitarian crisis," said Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif., during the debate. "Our involvement in this war, quite frankly, is shameful."

The chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, Rep. Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., said the vote represents "Congress reclaiming its role in foreign policy."

Nevada Woman is the 6th to Accuse Arias of Sexual Misconduct

RENO, Nev. (AP) — The longtime director of the international center at the University of Nevada in Reno is the latest woman to accuse Nobel Peace Prize winner and former Costa Rican President Oscar Arias of sexual misconduct.

Carina Black said in interviews this week that Arias boxed her in against a wall inside an elevator at the university in 1998 and then tried to kiss her. She said it happened after she spent a day escorting Arias to meetings and an evening speaking engagement at the university.

"I just smacked him in the face and pushed him away," Black said. "Then the elevators doors opened, and I left."

Arias, 78, met with prosecutors in Costa Rica on Wednesday to give a statement in two criminal complaints against him alleging sexual assault and sexual abuse, but he has declined to provide any specific public comment since he denied the initial complaint last week.

At least six women have made accusations against him ranging from unwanted advances to alleged assault. The Associated Press interviewed three people Black told about Arias' behavior shortly after she said

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