

Trump tries to move past controversies, toward legislating

By JULIE PACE
AP White House
Correspondent

WASHINGTON — As President Donald Trump begins his second month in office, his team is trying to move past the crush of controversies that overtook his first month and make progress on health care and tax overhauls long sought by Republicans.

Both issues thrust Trump, a real estate executive who has never held elected office, into the unfamiliar world of legislating. The president has thus far relied exclusively on executive powers to muscle through policy priorities and has offered few details about what he'll require in any final legislative packages, like how the proposals should be paid for. The White House also sent conflicting signals about whether the president will send Congress his own legislative blueprints or let lawmakers drive the process.

White House chief of staff Reince Priebus told The Associated Press that he expects a health care plan to emerge in "the first few days of March." Pressed on whether the plan would be coming from the White House, Priebus said, "We don't work in a vacuum."

On Sunday, White House advisers held a three-hour meeting on health care at Trump's South Florida club, their third lengthy discussion on the topic in four days. Gary Cohn, the former Goldman Sachs banker now serving as Trump's top economic adviser, and newly sworn in Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin have been leading talks with Republican lawmakers and business leaders on taxes. Neither man has prior government experience.

Republicans long blamed Democrats for blocking efforts to overhaul the nation's complicated tax code and make changes to the sweeping 2010 health care law signed by President Barack Obama. But with the GOP now in control of both the White House and Congress, making good on those promises rests almost entirely with the president and his party.

To some Republicans' chagrin, both issues were overshadowed during Trump's first month. The president spent more time publicly fighting the media than selling Americans on his vision for a new health care law. Fresh questions emerged about Trump's ties to Russia, particularly after national security adviser Michael Flynn was fired for misleading the White House about his conversations with a Russian envoy. The White House botched the rollout of



AP Photo/Andrew Harnik
Ivanka Trump, daughter of President Donald Trump, her husband, senior adviser Jared Kushner, their two children Arabella Kushner and Joseph Kushner, Chief White House Strategist Steve Bannon, second from right, and Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, right, walk to Air Force One at Andrews Air Force Base in Md., Friday.

Trump tweets further criticism of Sweden

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump is trying to send further criticism of Sweden's immigration policies.

The president tweeted Monday that: "The FAKE NEWS media is trying to say that large scale immigration in Sweden is working out just beautifully. NOT!"

People in Sweden have been scratching their heads since Trump suggested during a rally Saturday that some sort of incident had

occurred in their country.

Trump tweeted Sunday he was referring to something he saw on television.

The president might be referring to a segment aired Friday night on the Fox News Channel show "Tucker Carlson Tonight" that reported Sweden had accepted more than 160,000 asylum-seekers last year but that only 500 of the migrants had found jobs in Sweden. The report went on to say that a surge in violence had followed.

a refugee and immigration executive order, Trump's most substantive policy initiative to date, and the directive was quickly blocked by the courts. Priebus said the distractions did not slow down work happening behind the scenes on the president's legislative priorities.

Priebus said he expects Congress to pass both a tax package and legislation repealing and replacing Obama's health care law by the end of the year. But the White House's outward confidence belies major roadblocks on both matters.

After spending years criticizing "Obamacare," Republicans are grappling with how to replace it and pay for a new law. While some lawmakers worry about getting blamed for taking health insurance away from millions of people, others worry the party won't go far enough in upending the current system.

"My worry now is that many people are talking about a partial repeal of Obamacare," Rep. Rand Paul, R-Ky., said. "If you only repeal part of it and you leave it some sort of Obamacare light, which some are talking about, my fear is the situation actually gets worse."

Trump has said he wants to keep popular provisions like guaranteeing coverage

for people with pre-existing medical conditions and allowing young people to stay on their parents' insurance plans until age 26. He's also raised the prospect of allowing people to buy insurance across states lines, which is not part of the law.

On taxes, Republicans have a potentially more vexing impasse. House Republicans want to scrap the 35 percent tax on corporate profits, which is riddled with exemptions, deductions and credits, and replace it with a "border adjustment tax." The system would tax all imports coming into the U.S., but exclude exports from taxation.

House Speaker Paul Ryan's office has been vigorously promoting the idea to Trump, who has called the system "too complicated." Some House aides have privately voiced optimism that the White House is coming around, though Priebus would only say that border adjustment was "an option we're all discussing and debating."

The president has said he plans to release a "phenomenal" tax plan in the coming weeks.



Tyler White/The San Antonio Express-News via AP
A CPS Energy transmission tower is bent in half Monday in San Antonio. Severe storms pushed at least two tornadoes through parts of San Antonio overnight, ripping the roofs off homes and damaging dozens of other houses and apartments yet causing only minor injuries, authorities said Monday.

Russia's ambassador to U.N. dies at 64

NEW YORK (AP) — Russia's ambassador to the United Nations, a veteran diplomat known as a potent, savvy yet personable voice for his country's interests who could both spar and get along with his Western counterparts, died suddenly Monday after falling ill in his office at Russia's U.N. mission.

Vitaly Churkin was taken to a hospital, where he died a day before his 65th birthday, said Russia's deputy U.N. ambassador, Vladimir Safronkov. The cause of his death was unknown.

As Russia's envoy at the United Nations since 2006 and a diplomat for decades, Churkin was considered Moscow's great champion at the U.N., where he was the longest-serving ambassador on the powerful

Security Council.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called Churkin "an outstanding diplomat."

"Ambassador Churkin served the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation with distinction through some of the most challenging and momentous periods of recent history," Guterres said in a statement.

Russian President Vladimir Putin esteemed Churkin's "professionalism and diplomatic talents," spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, according to the state news agency TASS. Diplomatic colleagues from around the world mourned Churkin as a master in their



Churkin

field: a passionate and effective advocate for his country; an intellectual with a doctorate in history who was also a onetime child actor with an acute wit; a formidable adversary who could remain a friend.

"We did not always see things the same way, but he unquestionably advocated his country's positions with great skill," U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley said in a statement.

Her predecessor, Samantha Power, described him on Twitter as a "diplomatic maestro and deeply caring man" who had done all he could to bridge differences between the U.S. and Russia.

North Korea calls for joint investigation

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — North Korea's ambassador to Malaysia denounced the country's investigation into the death of the exiled half brother of North Korea's ruler, calling it politically motivated and demanding a joint probe amid increasingly bitter exchanges between the once-friendly nations.

Malaysia responded with its own accusations, with a foreign ministry statement saying the ambassador's comments were "culled from delusions, lies and half-truths." Earlier Monday, Malaysia said it was recalling its ambassador to Pyongyang.

The diplomatic spat

comes in the wake of the death last week of Kim Jong Nam, who died after apparently being poisoned in the Kuala Lumpur airport.

The attack spiraled into diplomatic fury when Malaysia refused to hand over Kim's corpse to North Korean diplomats and proceeded with at least one autopsy over the diplomats' objections.

"The investigation by the Malaysian police is not for the clarification of the cause of the death and search for the suspect, but it is out of the political aim," North Korean Ambassador Kang Chol told reporters Monday, saying Malaysia was in collusion with South Korea, as Seoul tries to deflect attention

from its own months-long political crisis.

Police "pinned the suspicion on us, and targeted the investigation against us," Kang said, calling on Malaysia to work with North Korea in a joint investigation. Kang referred to the dead man as "Kim Chol," the name on the passport found with Kim Jong Nam.

Malaysia Prime Minister Najib Razak told reporters later Monday that he had confidence in the objectivity of his country's police and doctors.

Malaysia had no reason to "paint the North Koreans in a bad light," he said, adding, "We expect them to understand that we apply the rule of law in Malaysia."

Want To Create Outdoor Living Space? We've Got YOU Covered!

Backyard By Design, LLC

FREE estimates!
541-720-0772

Come see us at the Home & Garden Show At TRAC in Pasco Feb 24th-26th!

www.mybackyardbydesign.com

Patio Covers Pergolas · Sunrooms Retractable Awnings Screen Rooms Handrail · Sun/Solar Shades & More!

FOUR SEASONS SUNROOMS SUN CONTROL Sunesta

UEC UMATILLA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Umatilla Electric is offering the following scholarships for the 2017-18 school year:

ACADEMIC

Twelve \$2,500 scholarships are available for members of UEC and/or their dependent children who are enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate program at a two- or four-year college. Apply online at: www.oregonstudentaid.gov.

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

A \$5,000 scholarship is administered to a college student who has completed their freshman year and is interested in pursuing a degree in Electrical Engineering-Power Systems. Apply at www.oregonstudentaid.gov.

LINEMAN TRADE

A \$2,000 scholarship is available to members and/or applicants whose parent or guardian is an active member, and are interested in the Line Construction trade and will be attending an accredited Line College. Go to: UmatillaElectric.com to download the application.

For more information visit our offices in Hermiston or Boardman or our website: UmatillaElectric.com.

You can also call us at 541-567-6414 or OSAC at 1-800-452-8807.



PART-TIME DRIVER

Part-time driver needed to deliver East Oregonian publications throughout Eastern Oregon. Must be able to lift up to 50 pounds, have a valid driver's license and a good driving record. Shifts vary but will regularly include Tuesday nights. Duties may include non-driving work if extra hours are desired. Drug test, driving record and criminal background checks will be completed before hire.

Pick up an application at 211 SE Byers, Pendleton or e-mail resume and cover letter to hr@eomediagroup.com

Deadline is March 1, 2017