



AP Photo/Richard Drew
U.S. President Donald Trump addresses the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly, at U.N. headquarters Tuesday.

In stark UN speech, Trump threatens to ‘destroy’ NKorea

NEW YORK (AP) — Trump’s overheated language was rare for a U.S. president at the rostrum of the United Nations, but the speech was textbook Trump, dividing the globe into friends and foes and taking unflinching aim at America’s enemies. North Korea’s ambassador and another top diplomat left the General Assembly chamber before he spoke to boycott his speech, leaving behind two empty chairs.

The president urged nations to work together to stop Iran’s nuclear program and defeat “loser terrorists” who wage violence around the globe. He denounced “radical Islamic terrorism,” an inflammatory label he had shied away from in recent months after trumpeting it on the campaign trail. He called Syrian President Bashar Assad’s government a “criminal regime.”

He said violence-plagued regions of the world “are going to hell.” He made little mention of Russia.

For all of that, he said there was still hope the United Nations could solve “many of these vicious and complex problems.”

But he focused more on the problems than the hopes.

His lashing of North Korea was a vigorous

restatement of what’s been said by U.S. leaders before, but delivered with new intensity in the august setting of the General Assembly. After a litany of accusations — the starvation of millions, the abduction of a Japanese girl and more — he questioned the legitimacy of the communist government by referring to it as a “band of criminals.”

Trump, who has previously warned of “fire and fury” if Pyongyang does not back down, claimed that “no one has shown more contempt for other nations and for the well-being of their own people than the depraved regime in North Korea.” And he scolded that it was “an outrage” to enable and trade with North Korea, seeming to point a finger at China, although he did not mention it by name.

Despite the speech’s bombast, it signaled little in the way of policy change. Trump stopped short of demanding regime change, which North Korea regards as the ultimate American intention and treats as a reason for its development of nuclear weapons. That may offer some reassurance to China and Russia, which have urged the U.S. to tone down its rhetoric and restart dialogue with North Korea.

149 killed as quake fells buildings in Mexico

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A powerful earthquake shook central Mexico on Tuesday, collapsing buildings in plumes of dust and killing at least 149 people. Thousands fled into the streets in panic, and many stayed to help rescue those trapped.

Dozens of buildings tumbled into mounds of rubble or were severely damaged in densely populated parts of Mexico City and nearby states. Mayor Miguel Angel Mancera said buildings fell at 44 places in the capital alone as high-rises across the city swayed sickeningly.

Hours after the magnitude 7.1 quake, rescue workers were still clawing through the wreckage of a primary school that partly collapsed in the city’s south looking for any children who might be trapped. Some relatives said they had received Whatsapp message from two girls inside.

President Enrique Pena Nieto visited the school late Tuesday and said 22 bodies had been recovered there, two of them adults. He added in comments broadcast online by Financiero TV that 30 children and eight adults were still reported missing. Rescuers were continuing their search and pausing to listen for voices from the rubble.

The quake is the deadliest in Mexico since a 1985 quake on the same date killed thousands. It came less than two weeks after another powerful quake caused 90 deaths in the country’s south.

Luis Felipe Puente, head of the national Civil Defense agency, reported Tuesday night that the confirmed death toll had been raised to 149.

His tweet said 55 people died in Morelos state, just south of Mexico City, while 49 died in the capital and 32 were killed in nearby Puebla state, where the quake was centered. Ten people died in the State of Mexico, which surrounds Mexico City on three sides, and three were killed in Guerrero state, he said.



AP Photo/Marco Ugarte
A man walks out of the door frame of a building that collapsed after an earthquake in the Condesa neighborhood of Mexico City on Tuesday.

The count did not include one death that officials in the southern state of Oaxaca reported earlier as quake-related.

The federal government declared a state of disaster in Mexico City, freeing up emergency funds. President Enrique Pena Nieto said he had ordered all hospitals to open their doors to the injured.

Mancera, the Mexico City mayor, said 50 to 60 people were rescued alive by citizens and emergency workers in the capital. Authorities said at least 70 people in the capital had been hospitalized for injuries.

The federal interior minister, Miguel Angel Osorio Chong, said authorities had reports of people possibly still being trapped in collapsed buildings. He said search efforts were slow because of the fragility of rubble.

“It has to be done very carefully,” he said. And “time is against us.”

At one site, reporters saw onlookers cheer as a woman was pulled from the rubble. Rescuers immediately called for silence so they could

listen for others who might be trapped.

Mariana Morales, a 26-year-old nutritionist, was one of many who spontaneously participated in rescue efforts.

She wore a paper face mask and her hands were still dusty from having joined a rescue brigade to clear rubble from a building that fell in a cloud of dust before her eyes, about 15 minutes after the quake.

Morales said she was in a taxi when the quake struck, and she got out and sat on a sidewalk to try to recover from the scare. Then, just a few yards away, the three-story building fell.

A dust-covered Carlos Mendoza, 30, said that he and other volunteers had been able to pull two people alive from the ruins of a collapsed apartment building after three hours of effort.

“We saw this and came to help,” he said. “It’s ugly, very ugly.”

Alma Gonzalez was in her fourth floor apartment in the Roma neighborhood when the quake pancaked the ground floor of her building, leaving her no way out —

until neighbors set up a ladder on their roof and helped her slide out a side window.

Gala Dluzhynska was taking a class with 11 other women on the second floor of a building on trendy Alvaro Obregon street when the quake struck and window and ceiling panels fell as the building began to tear apart.

She said she fell in the stairs and people began to walk over her, before someone finally pulled her up.

“There were no stairs anymore. There were rocks,” she said.

They reached the bottom only to find it barred. A security guard finally came and unlocked it.

The quake sent people throughout the city fleeing from homes and offices, and many people remained in the streets for hours, fearful of returning to the structures.

Alarms blared and traffic stopped around the Angel of Independence monument on the iconic Reforma Avenue.

Electricity and cellphone service was interrupted in many areas and traffic was snarled as signal lights went dark.

BRIEFLY

Hurricane Maria aims at Puerto Rico after slamming Dominica

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Hurricane Maria barreled toward Puerto Rico on Tuesday night after wreaking widespread devastation on Dominica and leaving the small Caribbean island virtually incommunicado.

As rains began to lash Puerto Rico, Gov. Ricardo Rossello warned that Maria could hit “with a force and violence that we haven’t seen for several generations.”

“We’re going to lose a lot of infrastructure in Puerto Rico,” Rossello said, adding that a likely island wide power outage and communication blackout could last for days. “We’re going to have to rebuild.”

Authorities warned that people in wooden or flimsy homes should find safe shelter before the storm’s expected arrival Wednesday.

“You have to evacuate. Otherwise, you’re going to die,” said Hector Pesquera, the island’s public safety commissioner. “I don’t know how to make this any clearer.”

One last chance: GOP strains for Obamacare repeal votes

WASHINGTON (AP) — Time growing short, President Donald Trump and Republican Senate leaders dove into a frantic hunt for votes Tuesday in a last-ditch effort to repeal and replace “Obamacare.” The pressure was intense, the outcome uncertain in a Capitol newly engulfed in drama over health care.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, whose failure to pass an Obamacare repeal bill in July opened a bitter public rift with Trump, pressed hard for the newly revived effort, which had been left for dead as recently as a week or two ago. But in a sign he remained short of votes, McConnell refused to commit to bringing the legislation to the floor.

As in July, much of the focus was on Arizona Sen. John McCain. Would he step back in line with fellow Republicans now that there was a bill co-written by Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, his best friend in the Senate? McCain wasn’t saying. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, another crucial vote, wasn’t disclosing her views either.

Republicans must act by Sept. 30 in the Senate, or face the prospect of a Democratic filibuster. That blocking action is currently staved off by budget rules that will expire at the end of the fiscal year. The new legislation, by Graham and Sen. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, would undo the central pillars of former President Barack Obama’s health care law, and replace them with block grants to the states so they could make their own health care coverage rules.

Democrats are unanimously opposed, arguing that the legislation would result in millions of Americans losing their health insurance, decrease access to affordable care



AP Photo/Carlos Giusti
David Cruz Marrero watches the waves at Punta Santiago pier hours before the imminent impact of Maria, a Category 5 hurricane that threatens to hit the eastern region of the island with sustained winds of 165 miles per hour.

and damage the Medicaid health program for the poor.

So McConnell must win the votes of 50 of the 52 Senate Republicans. That would amount to victory in the 100-member Senate, because GOP Vice President Mike Pence would then break a tie.

Rohingya Muslims are being wiped off Myanmar’s map

YANGON, Myanmar (AP) — For generations, Rohingya Muslims have called Myanmar home. Now, in what appears to be a systematic purge, the minority ethnic group is being wiped off the map.

After a series of attacks by Muslim militants last month, security forces and allied mobs retaliated by burning down thousands of Rohingya homes in the predominantly Buddhist nation.

More than 500,000 people — roughly half their population — have fled to neighboring Bangladesh in the past year, most of them in the last three weeks.

And they are still leaving, piling into wooden boats that take them to sprawling, monsoon-drenched refugee camps in Bangladesh.

In a speech Tuesday, Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi did not address a U.N. statement that the army has engaged in a “textbook case” of ethnic cleansing. Instead, she told concerned diplomats that while many villages were destroyed, more than half were still intact.

U.N. General-Secretary Antonio Guterres told the General Assembly on Tuesday that “I take note” of Suu Kyi’s speech.

“This is the worst crisis in Rohingya history,” said Chris Lewa, founder of the Arakan Project, which works to improve conditions for the ethnic minority, citing the

monumental size and speed of the exodus. “Security forces have been burning villages one by one, in a very systematic way. And it’s still ongoing.”

Common Core used widely, despite continuing debate

WASHINGTON (AP) — Most of the states that first endorsed the Common Core academic standards are still using them in some form, despite continued debate over whether they are improving student performance in reading and math.

Of the states that opted in after the standards were introduced in 2010 — 45 plus the District of Columbia — only eight have moved to repeal the standards, largely due to political pressure from those who saw Common Core as infringing on local control, according to Abt Associates, a research and consulting firm. In Oklahoma, Gov. Mary Fallin signed a bill to repeal the standards in 2014 less than six months after defending them in a speech. She said Common Core had become too divisive.

Twenty-one other states have made or are making revisions — mostly minor ones — to the guidelines. Illinois kept the wording while changing the name. In April, North Dakota approved new guidelines “written by North Dakotans, for North Dakotans,” but some educators said they were quite similar to Common Core. Earlier this month, New York moved to revise the standards after parents protested new tests aligned to Common Core, but much of the structure has been kept.

“The core of the Common Core remains in almost every state that adopted them,” said Mike Petrilli, president of the conservative Thomas B. Fordham Institute. Launched in 2010 by a bipartisan group

of governors and state education chiefs, Common Core sought to bring scholastic standards to the same high level nationwide. The standards became controversial when the Obama administration offered states federal dollars to nudge them to adopt it.

Key California farm district rejects governor’s tunnel plan

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) — A group of powerful California farmers pulled their support Tuesday from a pair of massive, \$16 billion tunnels that would have re-engineered the state’s water system in a decisive move that dealt a major blow to the project pushed by Gov. Jerry Brown.

The board of Westlands Water District, the nation’s largest supplier of irrigation water to farms, voted to withdraw its participation from the project after more than an hour of tense discussions and comments from farmers who overwhelmingly concluded it was too expensive.

After the vote, John Laird, secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency, said the aging water infrastructure must be modernized.

“Failing to act puts future water supply reliability at risk,” he said in a statement. “This vote, while disappointing, in no way signals the end” of the project known as WaterFix.

Tuesday’s vote leaves the project’s future in peril, potentially heightening a longstanding feud between typically dry Southern and Northern California, where much of the state’s water originates.

Trump’s lawyer to publicly testify in Senate next month

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump’s lawyer will return to Capitol Hill for a public hearing next month after the Senate intelligence committee abruptly canceled a closed-door staff interview Tuesday morning.

Committee leaders said they called off the interview after Michael Cohen sent a public opening statement to the media just as the meeting was about to start. Senate intelligence committee Chairman Richard Burr, R-N.C., and the panel’s top Democrat, Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia, issued a sharp statement saying the panel had asked Cohen to “refrain from public comment” and that they would request he return — this time for a public hearing.

“We declined to move forward with today’s interview and will reschedule Mr. Cohen’s appearance before the committee in open session at a date in the near future,” Burr and Warner said in the statement.

“The committee expects witnesses in this investigation to work in good faith with the Senate.”

The committee scheduled the public hearing for Oct. 25. Cohen’s lawyer, Stephen Ryan, said Cohen had accepted the invitation.