

Trump celebrates Christmas like most of America, with family

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

PALM BEACH, Fla. — President Donald Trump is celebrating Christmas the way millions of Americans do: surrounded by family, the White House said.

But unlike most Americans, he released a brief video in which his wife, Melania, joined him to "wish America and the entire world a very Merry Christmas."

The first lady says that at this time of year "we see the best of America and the soul of the American people" in children packing boxes to help brighten Christmas for service members and communities helping one another.

"In this season of joy, we spend time with our families, we renew our bonds of love and goodwill between our citizens and, most importantly, we celebrate the miracle of Christmas," Trump said, noting the story of Jesus' birth.

"This good news is the greatest Christmas gift of all, the reason for



AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster

President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump speak on the phone with children as they track Santa Claus' movements with the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) Santa Tracker on Christmas Eve at the president's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Fla., Sunday.

our joy and the true source of our hope," the president said.

Trump is spending his first Christmas in office at his estate and private club in Palm Beach, Florida. The White House did not say which

family members are with him at Mar-a-Lago, but the first lady and their son, Barron, arrived days before he joined them last Friday.

But the day was not without work. White House press secretary

Sarah Huckabee Sanders said the president had been briefed on Monday's suicide bombing in Kabul, Afghanistan. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack, which killed six.

Heading into the holiday, Trump took note of those he considers naughty (a top FBI official, the news media) and nice (U.S. troops stationed overseas and their families, kids eagerly awaiting Santa's arrival). He also squeezed in time for golf, time with family and time for church.

"Merry Christmas," Trump said Sunday night as he and the first lady arrived for a Christmas Eve service at the Church of Bethesda-by-the-Sea in Palm Beach, where congregants welcomed them with a standing ovation. The Trumps wed at the church in 2005.

Trump also sought to cheer U.S. troops who are spending the holiday away from their own families.

"Every American heart is thankful to you and we're asking God to watch over you and to watch

over your families," he said via video hook-up from his estate.

Trump complimented each military branch, but heaped his most effusive praise on the Coast Guard, which impressed him with its rescue operations during a devastating hurricane season.

"You've done such an incredible job in Texas and Florida and Puerto Rico," Trump said.

Trump opened Christmas Eve by tweeting against those he feels don't support him, including FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe and the news media.

After playing golf at his private club in neighboring West Palm Beach, the president joined his wife to field calls from children eager to know when Santa Claus would come to town. The calls came by way of a Santa tracking program run for more than 60 years by NORAD, the North American Aerospace Defense Command.

Trump ate Christmas Eve dinner with family before heading to church.

Russian officials bar Navalny from running for president

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian election officials on Monday formally barred Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny from running for president, prompting calls from him for a boycott of next year's vote.

The Central Election Commission decided unanimously that the anti-corruption crusader isn't eligible to run.

Navalny is implicitly barred from running for office because of a conviction in a fraud case which has been viewed as political retribution. He could have run if he was given a special dispensation or if his conviction was cancelled.

Incumbent Vladimir Putin is set to easily win a fourth term in office in the March 18 election, with his approval ratings topping 80 percent.

Over the past year, Navalny has mounted a grassroots campaign which reached out to the most remote corners of Putin's homeland.

Navalny, 41 is the most serious challenger that Putin has faced in all his years in power, and the court

cases against him have been widely seen as a tool to keep him from running for office.

In a pre-recorded video message that was released minutes after the Election Commission handed down the decision, Navalny called on his supporters to boycott the vote.

"The procedure that we're invited to take part is not an election," he said. "Only Putin and the candidates he has hand-picked are taking part in it."

"Going to the polls right now is to vote for lies and corruption."

Peru's president grants medical pardon for jailed Fujimori

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Peru's president announced Sunday night that he granted a medical pardon to jailed former strongman Alberto Fujimori, who was serving a 25-year sentence for human rights abuses, corruption and the sanctioning of death squads.

President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski released a statement on Christmas Eve saying he decided to free Fujimori for "humanitarian reasons," citing doctors who had

determined the ex-leader suffers from incurable and degenerative problems.

The 79-year-old Fujimori, who governed from 1990 to 2000, is a polarizing figure in Peru.

Some Peruvians laud him for defeating the Maoist Shining Path guerrilla movement, while others loathe him for human rights violations carried out under his government and some human rights groups quickly criticized the pardon.

His daughter, Keiko Fujimori, narrowly lost Peru's last presidential election to Kuczynski, and her party dominates congress. Her party mounted an attempt this month to oust Kuczynski over business ties to the Brazilian construction company Odebrecht, which is at the center of a huge Latin American corruption scandal, but the president survived the impeachment vote late Thursday.

Critics of Fujimori again raised speculation that Kuczynski agreed to pardon the former leader in return for some opposition lawmakers not supporting his impeachment.

Fujimori filed a request seeking a medical pardon more than a year ago, citing deteriorating health.

He has said on his Twitter account that he suffers from arrhythmia, for which he has been hospitalized several times this year. He remained at a clinic Sunday night where he was taken from prison a day earlier after suffering a drop in blood pressure.

N. Korea says it's a 'pipe dream' that it will give up nukes

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea said it is a "pipe dream" for the United States to think it will give up its nuclear weapons, and called the latest U.N. sanctions to target the country "an act of war" that violates its sovereignty.

The U.N. Security Council unanimously approved tough new sanctions against North Korea on Friday in response to its latest launch of a ballistic missile that Pyongyang says can reach anywhere on the U.S. mainland. The resolution was drafted by the United States and negotiated with the North's closest ally, China.

"We define this 'sanctions resolution' rigged up by the U.S. and its followers as a grave

infringement upon the sovereignty of our Republic, as an act of war violating peace and stability in the Korean peninsula and the region and categorically reject the 'resolution,'" North Korea's foreign ministry said in a statement on Sunday.

The ministry said the sanctions are tantamount to a "complete economic blockade" of North Korea.

"If the U.S. wishes to live safely, it must abandon its hostile policy towards the DPRK and learn to co-exist with the country that has nuclear weapons and should wake up from its pipe dream of our country giving up nuclear weapons which we have developed and completed through all kinds of hardships," said the statement, carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency.

DPRK is short for North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

China called for restraint Monday, with Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying saying that nations should "make positive and constructive efforts to de-escalate tensions" on the Korean Peninsula.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON & EVENING

Table with columns for time slots (12 PM, 12:30, 1 PM, 1:30, 2 PM, 2:30, 3 PM, 3:30, 4 PM, 4:30, 5 PM, 5:30, 6 PM, 6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30) and rows for various channels (FOX, KPTV, CBS, NBC, ABC, PBS, CABLE).

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Table with columns for time slots (12 PM, 12:30, 1 PM, 1:30, 2 PM, 2:30, 3 PM, 3:30, 4 PM, 4:30, 5 PM, 5:30, 6 PM, 6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30) and rows for various channels (A&E, AMC, ANPL, CMT, CNBC, CNN, DISC, DISN, ESPN, ESPN2, FNC, FOOD, FREE, FOX, GOLG, GSN, HALL, HGTV, HIST, LIFE, NICK, ROOT, SPIKE, SYFY, TBS, TCM, TLC, TNT, UNI, USA, WE, WGN, HBO, HBO2, HBO3, MAX, SHOW, STARZ, STZENC).

TUESDAY LATE NIGHT & WEDNESDAY MORNING

Table with columns for time slots (12 AM, 12:30, 1 AM, 1:30, 2 AM, 2:30, 3 AM, 3:30, 4 AM, 4:30, 5 AM, 5:30, 6 AM, 6:30, 7 AM, 7:30, 8 AM, 8:30, 9 AM, 9:30, 10 AM, 10:30, 11 AM, 11:30) and rows for various channels (FOX, KPTV, CBS, NBC, ABC, PBS).