Message

From: The Washington Post [email@washingtonpost.com]
Sent: 9/19/2019 1:50:07 PM
To: Jordan, Deborah [Jordan.Deborah@epa.gov]
Subject: The Daily 202: Trump's purported 'promise' to a foreign leader came after the White House scaled back readouts

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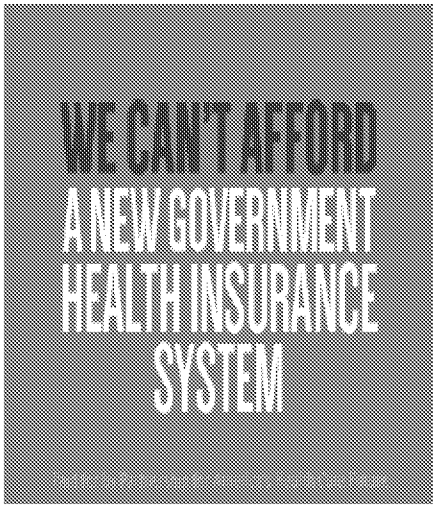

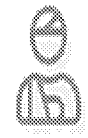

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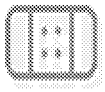

POLITICIANS IN CONTROL OF

Trump's purported 'promise' to a foreign
after the White House scaled back readou

President Trump boards Air Force One on Wednesday at Marine Corps Air Static
(Evan Vucci/AP)

BY JAMES HOHMANN
with Mariana Alfaro

THE BIG IDEA: After President Trump initiated a phone call with July 31, the American people found out when the Russian gover it on Twitter and Facebook.

The White House press office waited several hours to confirm that th then did so with a two-sentence statement sent to a pool reporter afte "expressed concern over the vast wildfires afflicting Siberia," the 28-w "The leaders also discussed trade between the two countries."

The 149-word Russian readout went further: "The President of Russi President's offer as a sign that it is possible that full-scale bilateral rel restored in the future. The presidents of Russia and the United States contacts in the form of telephone conversations as well as personal m

This is one of several newsworthy communications that Trump had w state that first became public because the other side disclosed it. **The House has curtailed the longstanding, bipartisan practice of aut out summaries of presidential communications with other world** from transparency, which has often allowed adversaries to shape the fresh scrutiny and raises a battery of new questions in the wake of a by my colleagues.

-- "**The whistleblower complaint that has triggered a tense showd U.S. intelligence community and Congress involves President Tr communications with a foreign leader**," Greg Miller, Ellen Nakashi report, citing two former U.S. officials familiar with the matter:

"**Trump's interaction with the foreign leader included a 'promise' as so troubling that it prompted an official in the U.S. intelligenc a formal whistleblower complaint with the inspector general for t community** … It was not immediately clear which foreign leader Trum

or what he pledged to deliver … One former official said the commun
call. …

"**Intelligence Community Inspector General Michael Atkinson det
complaint was credible and troubling enough to be considered a
concern,' a legal threshold that requires notification of congress
committees. But acting director of national intelligence Joseph M
to share details about Trump's alleged transgression with lawma**
legal and political dispute that has spilled into public view and prompt
the spy chief is improperly protecting the president. … The complaint
Atkinson's office on Aug. 12, a date on which Trump was at his golf re
White House records indicate that **Trump had had conversations o
at least five foreign leaders in the preceding five weeks.**"

-- One of those five interactions was that July 31 phone call with

-- On Aug. 20, Trump reiterated his call for Russia to be allowed
of Seven industrial nations. "I guess President Obama, because Pu
— President Obama thought it wasn't a good thing to have Russia in,
Russia out," Trump said in the Oval Office before flying to France for
his predecessor's push for a united stand against Russia after it anne

Crimea region. “But I think it’s much more appropriate to have Russia
expelled from the group in 2014 after the annexation, which Obama c
international law. The Kremlin subsequently interfered in the 2016 U.
election.

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THE PUBLIC OPTION

Trump revealed highly classified intel in Oval Office meeting with Russians

-- If the whistleblower complaint turns out to be about something Putin call, it would certainly not be the first time the president's one of the United States' biggest geopolitical rivals have caused career intelligence professionals.

In March 2018, Trump ignored specific warnings from his national se
he congratulated Putin on his reelection. "DO NOT CONGRATULATE
materials stated in all-capital letters. Experts said Putin only got 76 pe
because it was a rigged election.

In May 2017, Trump revealed classified information about espionage
senior Russian officials in the Oval Office.

Trump has gone to extraordinary lengths to conceal details of his con
including on at least one occasion taking possession of the notes of h
and instructing the linguist not to discuss what had transpired with oth
officials. "Trump did so after a meeting with Putin in 2017 in Hamburg
attended by then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson," Miller reported in
officials learned of Trump's actions when a White House adviser and
Department official sought information from the interpreter beyond a r
Tillerson."

**-- The White House decision to restrict private and public readou
with foreign leaders followed a series of leaks that embarrassed**
Washington Post, you might recall, published full transcripts in the su
Trump's calls with the leaders of Australia and Mexico.)

In another memorable episode from April 2017, no one at the White H
Trump had spoken on his personal cellphone with Canadian Prime M
Trudeau. They found out only when Canada issued a readout that sa
complained to Trump of "unfair duties" and "baseless" claims about tr
administration officials. "After the call, White House aides urged Trum
conversations with foreign leaders through the Situation Room, as re
records law," a senior administration official told The Post at the time.

-- Social media is abuzz with reaction to the latest revelations:

From a former CIA spokesman who resigned when Trump took office

From a senior counsel at the Justice Department and the Departmen
Security during the Obama administration:

From a Democratic congressman who sits on the House Judiciary Co
advocates impeachment:

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From a University of Michigan law professor who formerly served as a

From another lawyer:

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WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING:

Damaged vehicles are seen at the site of a car bomb attack in Qalat, capital of Za
Afghanistan. (Stringer/Reuters)

-- A Taliban suicide bomber attack struck a hospital in southern

leaving more than 15 dead, while a U.S. airstrike killed nine civili

east. Afghanistan's Ministry of the Interior said the car bomb in the so
province also wounded 66 people. U.S. Col. William Leggett said the
conducted in the Nangahar province was targeting Islamic State grou
George reports.

Justin Trudeau apologizes for brownface photo from 2001

-- Trudeau apologized for wearing brownface and blackface afte
surfaced showing him at an Arabian Nights-themed party in 200
Canadian prime minister in another scandal as he struggles to w
Amanda Coletta, Hannah Knowles and Reis Thebault report: "The ph
Wednesday by Time and taken while Trudeau was a teacher at the p
Grey Academy in Vancouver, depicts the then-29-year-old smiling wh
feathered turban, his face darkened in a practice with racist roots. …
Aladdin costume and put makeup on,' Trudeau said at a news confer
evening. 'I shouldn't have done that. I should've known better, but I d
sorry.' Trudeau also admitted to wearing blackface in high school whi
'Day-O' at a talent show. ... Trudeau faces a formidable challenge fro
leader Andrew Scheer, who blasted his opponent Wednesday night,
photo 'an act of open mockery and racism.'"

-- Pennsylvania state Sen. Mike Folmer (R) resigned after being c
possession of child pornography. "The married grandfather of seve
the result of a tip that the blogging site Tumblr had found that a user l
image of child pornography using its application," Lateshia Beachum
authorities that he received child pornography images through his Tu

was experiencing 'some personal problems,' according to the Patriot-
charging documents."

Attorney General William Barr arrives at the White House on Monday. (Patrick Se

THE DOMESTIC AGENDA:

-- Trump's leaked plan to expand background checks on firearm
attacks from the National Rifle Association, which promised to fi
Kim, Paul Kane and Josh Dawsey report: The NRA "immediately disr
drafted by the Justice Department as a non-starter. A White House sp
that the document was a White House product — even though its top
was briefing GOP senators on the plan's details. Many Republicans w
specifics of the background checks measure remained lukewarm abo
GOP senators who had been directly briefed by Attorney General Wil
plan acknowledged that the proposal was incomplete — at best."

-- Trump claimed a deal on guns has become "much harder" bec
O'Rourke's calls for a mandatory buyback program for assault-s
O'Rourke, Trump tweeted, "convinced many that Dems just want to ta
Meanwhile, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said Co
for Trump's guidance on what gun-related proposals he's willing to su
Wagner.

-- A new report released by Democrats on Congress's Joint Eco
measured the staggering human economic toll of gun violence i
key findings:

- Firearms killed more people than motor vehicle acci
  time in 2017.
- Sixty percent of gun deaths each year are suicides.
- Gun violence costs the country $229 billion a year,
  the nation's GDP.
- Compared to other high-income countries, the U.S.'
  fatality rate is nearly 50 times higher for teens and y

-- Nancy Pelosi said she would have held former Trump campaig
Lewandowski in contempt "right then and there" when he showe

House members during his hearing. Rachael Bade reports: "In a si
lawmakers from across the caucus, Pelosi (D-Calif.) complained that
able to treat members of Congress like [Lewandowski] did during a T
before the House Judiciary Committee … Several lawmakers in the r
as a dig at House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler (D-N
to hold Lewandowski in contempt for his defiant behavior on Tuesday

**-- House Democrats eager to impeach Trump are struggling to g
support.** Bade, Mike DeBonis and Josh Dawsey report: While Lewar
"acrimonious testimony drew headlines and attention, even some imp
proponents said it wouldn't sway the public. … The skepticism unders
Democrats face as they weigh whether to draft articles of impeachme
overwhelmingly oppose a move to oust the president — and some po
sentiment moving in the opposite direction. The public, some Democr
desensitized to Trump-related scandals, making the committee's job
even more difficult. … 'Any other president, had they done one of tho
— the public would be screaming,' said Rep. Lois Frankel (D-Fla.). 'T
become numb, and he gets away with it.'"

**-- The White House will pull the nomination of Jeffery Byard to le
Emergency Management Agency,** per Politico: "The official said tha
nomination after an accusation surfaced that he was in an altercation
that the FBI determined that the accusation was unsubstantiated."

**-- Sen. John Kennedy (R-La.) said he's "doubtful" he'll support T
nominee Steven Mensahi.** "My thought is, look, if he'll treat a United
way he treated us, I wonder how he would treat the people," Kennedy
throwing a major blow at an already controversial court pick.

**-- Lynne Patton, a senior Housing and Urban Development offici
by the Office of Special Counsel for making political statements**

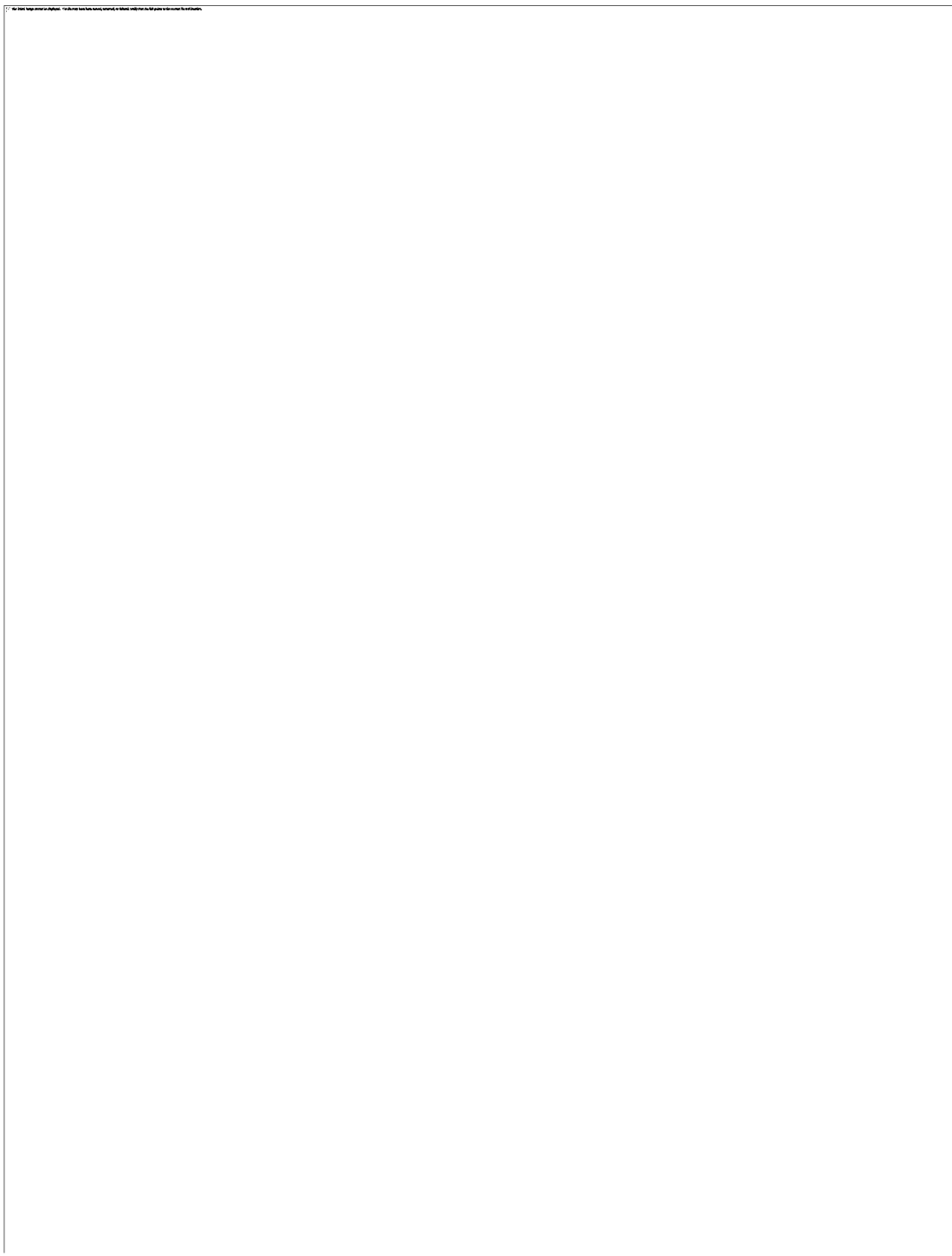
"used her official government Twitter account to promote political twe
red 'USA' hat sold by the Trump campaign in her office," Politico repo
a warning letter determining that both activities violated the Hatch Act
of two other alleged violations, including an appearance at an oversig
former Trump personal lawyer Michael Cohen.

**-- Purdue Pharma's bankruptcy plan includes special protection
family fortune.** If lawsuits against the wealthy family aren't halted, th
unwilling—or unable" to contribute billions to the drugmaker's bankru
Purdue said in a court filing. (Renae Merle and Lenny Bernstein)

**-- Federal authorities are conducting a criminal investigation of t
compliance officer at a McKesson Corp. warehouse in southern
alleging he conspired to illegally distribute powerful narcotics o**
Bernstein, Matt Zapotosky and Scott Higham report: "With no annour
Gustin was indicted in March by a grand jury in eastern Kentucky on
conspiracy, a charge that carries a penalty of as much as 20 years in
records reveal the charges against Gustin stem from his responsibility
13,000 pharmacy customers in 15 states were allowing drugs distribu
be diverted to the black market. Two other people have been told the
of the probe, and subpoenas for information have been issued to Mcl
drug distributor in the United States..."

**-- Trump threatened to slap San Francisco with environmental vi
homeless population.** Allyson Chiu reports: "'It's a terrible situation
Angeles and in San Francisco,' Trump told reporters aboard Air Forc
the [Environmental Protection Agency] should issue a notice in less t
unclear what laws San Francisco is accused of violating, but the pres
'tremendous pollution' entering the ocean through storm sewers, spe

concern about used needles. ‘They have to clean it up,’ he said. ‘We
going to hell.’”



Saudi military shows alleged weapons debris from oil installations attack

THE NEW WORLD ORDER:

-- While Trump claims his plan to respond to Iran remains "very
State Mike Pompeo laid the blame on Tehran and labeled the att
Kareem Fahim, Carol Morello and John Wagner report: "Pompeo, wh
Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Wednesday evening, told r
before arriving in Saudi Arabia that the intelligence community had 'h
the weapons systems used in the attacks were not in the Houthis' ars
had also not come from the south, where the Houthis control territory
'flight patterns' that would have explained the location of impact point
facilities. **'This was an Iranian attack,' he said. 'It didn't come fron**
senior administration official familiar with Pompeo's visit said the U.S.
photos and debris, including some intact weaponry.

"**Meanwhile, the United States still has not issued visas for Irania**
Rouhani and his delegation to go to New York next week for the
General Assembly, and the Iranians may cancel their trip, state n
Wednesday. Pompeo declined to discuss visas for Rouhani and Zarif
States sanctioned in July."

-- Pompeo said he's in the Middle East to build a coalition to det
that the U.S. will use the upcoming U.N. assembly to rally for su
against Tehran. From CNN: "Vice President Mike Pence has sugges
retaliation is possible ... But the President and US allies are sending
Trump, who campaigned on getting the US out of foreign fights and h
American involvement in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, faces a battl
would be complicated by a new conflict. And Saudi officials have mad
House that they do not want to be dragged into war either."

-- Iran's foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif warned that any
country will result in "all-out war," in an apparent response to P
(AP)

Meet Trump's new national security adviser Robert C. O'Brien

-- Trump tapped Robert C. O'Brien, who previously served as the
hostage negotiator, as his new national security adviser, replaci
John Hudson and John Wagner report: O'Brien's appointment solidifi
as "the most influential foreign policy voice in the administration. Pom

O'Brien for years and backed his ascension to the job after battling w
array of policy issues on Afghanistan, Iran and North Korea … Officia
friendly demeanor and experience as a lawyer could bring more stabi
an often chaotic policymaking process going into the 2020 election."

**-- The new national security chief forged a relationship with Trur
secure the freedom of American hostages.** Missy Ryan, Shane Ha
Hudson report: "People close to some of the hostages freed and thei
believe his appointment might bring more attention to their plight. … S
of the Trump administration, some 20 Americans have been released
or captivity abroad, though it is difficult to say whether O'Brien's effort
release of those freed under his watch. … O'Brien has shown himself
bureaucrat, developing a strong channel to top administration officials
in policy deliberations beyond hostage issues..."

**-- From the sidelines, Bolton has made little secret of his disagre
president.** From Politico's Daniel Lippman: Bolton "harshly criticized
policy on Wednesday at a private lunch, saying that inviting the Taliba
sent a 'terrible signal' and that it was 'disrespectful' to the victims of 9
Taliban had harbored al Qaeda. Bolton also said that any negotiation
and Iran were 'doomed to failure,' according to two attendees. All the
Iranians want to do is negotiate for relief from sanctions to support the
Bolton, who was speaking before guests invited by the Gatestone Ins
think tank. 'He ripped Trump, without using his name, several times,'

-- O'Brien will inherit a National Security Council struggling to at
and former U.S. officials told NPR: "In the Trump administration, som
brightest minds are turning down high-powered NSC assignments, ar
avoiding the place altogether. Career foreign policy professionals incr
joining the NSC, which is part of the White House, will taint them as p
'There is a school of thought that it can be risky for your career — so

puts you in a position where you have to say no to ambassadors and
and they may remember that when you return,' said one senior foreig
turned down an offer to serve at the NSC. … A senior NSC official dis
that people don't hold the NSC in the same regard as before. He saic
slim down the NSC, so there may not be as many opportunities. The
though, were proud of their work and extended their assignments."

Netanyahu and main rival speak to supporters after exit polls show them in a dea

-- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, seeing his chance slipping as the final votes from this week's election were counte power-sharing agreement with his chief political rival — who pro down. Ruth Eglash and Steve Hendrix report: "Benny Gantz, head of and White party, said he was open to the idea of unity government as top of it. Netanyahu had rejected the idea of a unity government throu but he invited Gantz to 'meet me today' soon after Blue and White wa picked up another parliamentary seat, giving it an edge over Netanya party of 33 seats to 31, with 97 percent of the vote recorded. …

"**Gantz said his party won the election outright, receiving a large than Likud. He also said he would continue to pursue the creatio secular and liberal government.** … The shortest path to a majority is to turn to the other for a coalition and share the prime minister's job positions on a rotating basis. Israel has had several such unity govern period in the 1980s when rivals Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Shamir sh Netanyahu and Gantz both appeared — and shook hands — at a me Peres on Thursday, and Netanyahu called for the parties to follow his sharing. … But in today's Israel — a polarized country with Netanyah polarizing figures — a unity government would be a tough sell, even i leaders begin to talk."

-- Trump appeared to give Bibi the cold shoulder after declining embattled Israeli prime minister encouragement or praise now th potential defeat. Anne Gearan reports: "Speaking a day after Israeli leave Netanyahu weakened, Trump seemed cool to the Israeli conse touted his ideological lockstep with Trump as a chief reelection crede had not spoken to Netanyahu, a man he has described as a close frie

that the election is close while playing down Netanyahu's importance
between the United States and Israel. 'Our relations are with Israel, s
happens,' Trump told reporters traveling with him in California."

**-- Avidgor Lieberman's gamble has paid off: He could now play t
kingmaker.** From the AP: "Lieberman took the political gamble of his
his mentor [Netanyahu] and forced an unprecedented repeat election
emerged as the election's true winner — the one most likely to dictate
next government. Lieberman passed up the post of defense minister
government following April's election and refused to join the new coal
the prime minister one seat short of a parliamentary majority. Instead
alternative candidate a chance to form a government, Netanyahu diss
called another snap election — launching a scathing campaign aimed
of his former protégé. But now it may turn out to be the other way aro

**-- Israel is a "Russian-speaking country," Putin declared in Mosc
two countries share a common history and extensive family ties**

Trump signs U.S.-Mexico border wall

2020 WATCH:

-- Trump toured a section of fencing along the U.S.-Mexico borde of force on immigration ahead of the 2020 election. Philip Rucker, David Nakamura report: "Trump's visit to the Otay Mesa area ... near

the administration has felt emboldened after winning new legal autho
in funding a border wall and, at least temporarily, gaining additional p
restrictions on asylum that could help blunt a record surge of Central
Capping a three-day road trip that included a campaign rally in New M
campaign fundraisers in California, **Trump touted his team's progre
24-mile section of replacement barrier** here. 'People are hearing a
they're not coming up nearly as much,' Trump told reporters while sta
foot steel bollard fencing, **which he called the 'Rolls-Royce' of bor**
see this — it's one of the reasons I'm doing this — and they think, 'Th
make that long journey up because we're not getting into the United S
added."

**-- The Pentagon warned of dire outcomes unless Congress paid
military construction projects nationwide — the same projects th
canceled to fund Trump's border wall.** Aaron Gregg and Erica We
warnings are contained in Defense Department budget requests sent
recent years. They include potentially hazardous living conditions for
families, as well as unsafe schools that would impede learning. In nu
Defense Department warned that lives would be put at risk if building
military's standards for fire safety or management of explosives. Ever
construction funding was pulled to support a wall along the U.S.-Mexi
buildings across the country often had been neglected in favor of othe
defense spending limits that took effect after a 2013 budget deal desi
government shutdown starved the military's construction budget for y
analysts say, meaning many construction projects are long overdue."

**-- The Interior Department is transferring more than 500 acres of
Pentagon for construction of the border wall,** reports the Wall Str

**-- Meanwhile, the U.S. military spent $184,000 at Trump's Scotla
to documents released by the House Oversight Committee.** Lead

Democratic-led committee said information provided by the Pentagon taxpayer funds were used to pay for more than three dozen separate more than previously disclosed, per John Wagner and David Fahrent

-- Trump's friend Tom Barrack, who is under scrutiny by prosecu possible foreign influence over the president's 2016 campaign, r at Trump's California fundraisers. Barrack, who has given $360,60 Victory Committee, participated in two of Trump's California events, a president's relatives, party and campaign officials, reports the Times.

-- Barack Obama offered a thinly veiled critique of Trump's penc media and TV news while speaking at a private event held by dat Greg Bensinger reports: "Obama explained how he had approached some 3,000 political appointments, before offering this advice: 'The o helpful is not watching TV or reading social media.' 'Those are two th you're our president, not to do,' he said. 'It creates a lot of noise and judgment.' … 'I'm proud of the fact we didn't have indictments,' durin office, he said."

-- Desperate to revive her fading campaign, Sen. Kamala Harris (all on Iowa. From Politico: "Harris is putting her stumbling campaign new Iowa-or-bust strategy: She's shifting away from the closed-door dominated her summer calendar to focus on retail politicking in the cr Harris huddled with top campaign officials Tuesday in Baltimore to di as a series of polls show her plummeting into the mid-single digits. … make weekly visits to the state and nearly double the size of her 65-p operation … Harris herself appeared to confirm the Iowa focus on We on purpose. **'I'm [expletive] moving to Iowa,' she joked to a collea within earshot of a reporter."**

-- Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) parted ways with his Iowa political
Mazour. Sean Sullivan reports: "A campaign official ... said Mazour w
summer and has not been replaced. Mazour, who was a high-rankin
not the director of the Iowa effort, did not immediately respond to a re
The campaign did not publicly announce her departure at the time."

-- Rep. Joe Kennedy III will make official his primary challenge to
Edward Markey during a rally on Saturday. Bobby Kennedy's gran
Markey to tell him in person, Colby Itkowitz, Mike DeBonis and Annie
intergenerational matchup could be unsettling for donors in Massachu
has long supported both of them.

-- Tom Perez, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, w
terms that the party cannot partner effectively with the Trump ad
off foreign interference in the 2020 election because of the presi
doubts about Russian interference in the 2016 election. Isaac Sta
reports: "The president's words and actions have made it difficult to d
effective trust-based relationship with the Department of Homeland S
in a letter to Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) in response to a request for in
the major national party committees were guarding against informatio

-- With no warrant or subpoena, Kentucky State Police seized a c
Office of Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes as part of
into how Grimes and her aides used voter data. The computers w
Grimes' ongoing legal challenge to a law enacted earlier this year tha
her powers as secretary of state over the Kentucky Board of Election
Leader)

-- "Alexa, I want to make a political contribution": Starting next m
Amazon's voice-controlled home assistant Alexa will be able to
donations to a 2020 presidential campaign. Users will be able to m

least $5 and up to $200. Alexa Political Contributions is among the ne
the home assistant to help users find more information about the 202
election, Michelle Ye Hee Lee reports. (Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos owr

SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:

Trump shared a warning in Spanish. Unfortunately, it wasn't gramma
Twitter quickly took note:

Two presidential candidates from Texas also critiqued the tweet:

Trump sent the tweet while visiting a portion of the border fence, whic

Sharpie:

Migrants won't be able to go over the fence, Trump claimed:

A Post reporter shared more pictures from the border:

A Post reporter found out why Trump sometimes carries cash with hi

The president also lashed out (again) against the Fed chair, a man he

QUOTE OF THE DAY: "I am submitting this report as my tes
don't want you to listen to me, I want you to listen to the scie
activist Greta Thunberg, 16, said during a congressional hea
submitting a landmark United Nations report that warned of c

consequences for the planet if the atmosphere continues to
to unite behind science. And then I want you to take real act
(Kayla Epstein)

VIDEOS OF THE DAY:

A back-to-school PSA from anti-violence nonprofit Sandy Hook Prom
gut. (Content warning: the video depicts scenes of school shootings a

Sandy Hook Promise releases back-to-school PSA

Our theater critic Peter Marks went to New Hampshire to follow Pete campaign trail:

The Post's theater critic takes a look at Pete Buttigieg's campaign performance

Samantha Bee held a "Second Annual Brett Kavanaugh Remembran
a year, Americans are forced to relive the trauma of his confirmation:

Stephen Colbert joked that the new national security adviser looks lik
lead on "Suits":

While dissecting the Saudi Arabia-Iran situation, Trevor Noah said he
secretary of state because he always gets sent to clean up bad situat

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