



WEEKLY DIGEST  
JANUARY 10, 2020



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GV Wire/Janz Tello

# LOCAL

## DYER AND JANZ GO TOE-TO-TOE IN HARD-HITTING FORUM

January 8, 2020 | Nancy Price

Fresno's leading candidates for mayor hammered on their campaign themes — and sometimes on each other — at a televised forum Tuesday evening that covered a variety of topics, including homelessness, marijuana dispensaries, and facing up to mistakes. Jerry Dyer emphasized his long experience as the city's police chief, overseeing multi-

**"I'm going to make it very plain and simple — I'm not taking a dime from the developers." — Andrew Janz**

million-dollar budgets and thousands of employees, as a key reason why he should be elected. Andrew

Janz, a Fresno County deputy district attorney, said he will offer a fresh perspective and will not be beholden to the special interests — developers — who he says have long called the shots at City Hall.

(You can watch a replay of the forum [at this link.](#))

And although Janz said in a [recent radio interview](#) that he might consider accepting donations from developers in the future, on Tuesday he said adamantly that he won't. (Note to readers: GV Wire's publisher is Darius Assemi, who is president and CEO of Granville Homes.)

"Campaign finance reform is very important to me," he told GV Wire after the forum. "It is something I ran on when I was running for Congress, and it's something that I'm running on here locally. There is too much money from the developer class that has been spent on our local politics. And they've really owned the politicians. So I'm going to make it very plain and simple — I'm not taking a dime from the developers." The one-hour forum was broadcast at CMAC, the Community Media Access Collaborative on Van Ness Boulevard in downtown Fresno, and was moderated by Bill McEwen, GV Wire's news director.

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### Solving Homelessness Crisis

After asking Dyer and Janz about their qualifications to head California's fifth-largest city, McEwen asked them how they would solve Fresno's homelessness crisis. Dyer and Janz agreed that it's the city's top problem and the issue they hear about most from residents. Dyer said there have been good efforts to address the problem, but they have been clearly insufficient as the city's homeless population continues to grow, expanding by 17% just in the past year. He said the city will need to work closely with the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, who control the county's social services budget — Dyer noted that he has been endorsed by all five supervisors — to attack the problem in new ways.

### New Center Would House Homeless

He said he favors creating "navigation centers," which he says have been effective in places like San Diego County to provide safe shelter. They can be subdivided to serve different homeless populations, including families and veterans, he said. "Those navigation centers are intended to bring services to individuals, to stabilize them over about a three- to four-month period," Dyer said. "At the end of that period, they transition out into some form of housing." With Fresno's shortage of affordable housing, the city needs to look at alternatives such as tiny home villages or C train housing (shipping containers), he said.

**"Those navigation centers are intended to bring services to individuals, to stabilize them over about a three- to four-month period. At the end of that period, they transition out into some form of housing." — Jerry Dyer**

### Government Needs to Step Up

Janz said government needs to take a bigger role in addressing the problem, which he said up to now...





# JUDGE ORDERS HMONG MURDERS SUSPECTS TO REMAIN JAILED

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January 8, 2020 | David Taub

Three suspects accused of conspiracy in the killing of four men at a football-watching party on Nov. 17 will remain in detention, a federal judge in Fresno ruled Wednesday afternoon. Jhovanny Delgado-Marcelo, Pao Choua Vang, and Johnny Xiong were denied release by Judge Stanley Boone. The three face conspiracy charges related to the Nov. 17 shootings at a Fresno home near the airport.

Killed in the barrage of bullets: 23-year-old Xy Lee, 31-year-old Phia Vang, 38-year-old Kou Xiong, and 40-year-old Kalaxang Thao. In previous hearings, the suspects all pleaded not guilty. Three other suspects, Porge Kue, Anthony Montes, Billy Xiong, entered not guilty pleas last week to four counts of murder, and 12 counts of attempted murder. They face state charges at the Fresno County Superior Court.

A seventh suspect, Ger Lee, is in custody in Sherburne County, Minnesota. He faces an extradition hearing on Jan. 31. Lee is called the ring leader in a criminal complaint.

**Related Story: Hmong Murders: 4 Could Face Death Penalty, 7th Suspect Named**

## Judge Cites Flight Risk, Danger

Delgado-Marcelo, Vang, and Johnny Xiong appeared in blue prison uniforms from the Kern County jail, where they are being held. An attorney for Vang says it is not unusual to be held out of the area, based on federal contracts with local jails. Boone held the three cases in consecutive order. He used similar reasoning to hold the suspects in jail, mainly he agreed with the U.S. government's argument that they are a flight...

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## FINANCIAL STRUGGLES END CAL FOOD EXPO'S 9-YEAR RUN

January 8, 2020 | GV Wire

The California Food Expo is no more. In a news release Wednesday, event leaders cited financial challenges for closing up shop effective Jan. 31. With a big push from then-mayor Ashley Swearengen, the annual food and beverage showcase began in 2011 as the Fresno Food Expo.

### Event Strived to Increase Business for Valley's Food Industry

The idea behind the show was to grow new business opportunities for the San Joaquin Valley's food industry. And to market Fresno as a place that not only grows crops but turns those crops into popular food items. By most accounts, **the expo accomplished that goal.**

However, its financial underpinnings proved unsustainable despite attracting more than 1,000 attendees annually. "On behalf of the board of directors, we would like to thank all of our supporters who have played a role in making the California Food Expo a marquee food industry event; specifically, the...

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Special to GV Wire

## THIS METH RING STRETCHED FROM MODESTO TO ALASKA

January 6, 2020 | GV Wire

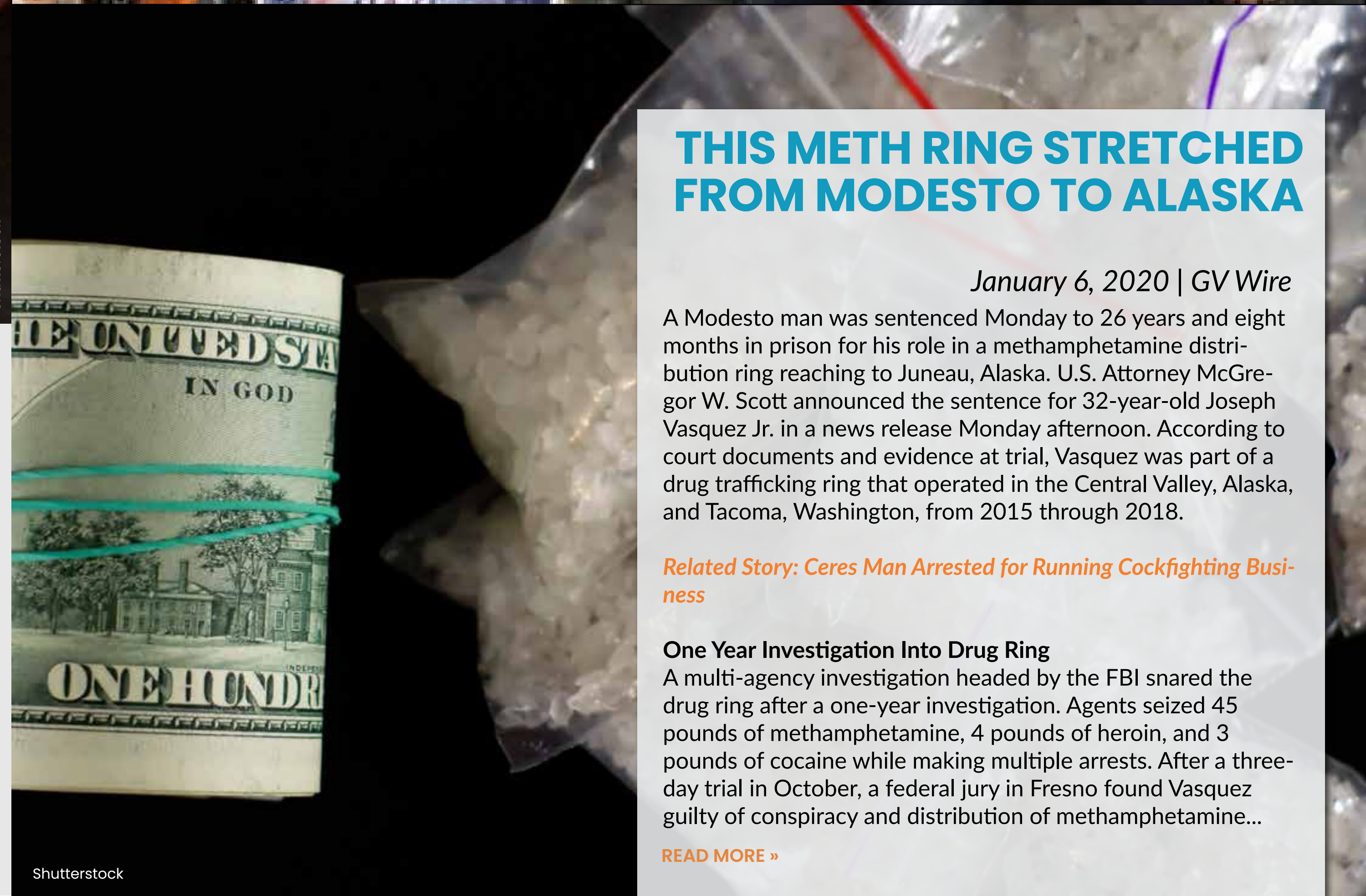
A Modesto man was sentenced Monday to 26 years and eight months in prison for his role in a methamphetamine distribution ring reaching to Juneau, Alaska. U.S. Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced the sentence for 32-year-old Joseph Vasquez Jr. in a news release Monday afternoon. According to court documents and evidence at trial, Vasquez was part of a drug trafficking ring that operated in the Central Valley, Alaska, and Tacoma, Washington, from 2015 through 2018.

**Related Story: Ceres Man Arrested for Running Cockfighting Business**

### One Year Investigation Into Drug Ring

A multi-agency investigation headed by the FBI snared the drug ring after a one-year investigation. Agents seized 45 pounds of methamphetamine, 4 pounds of heroin, and 3 pounds of cocaine while making multiple arrests. After a three-day trial in October, a federal jury in Fresno found Vasquez guilty of conspiracy and distribution of methamphetamine...

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AP File

# STATE

## GOV. NEWSOM TARGETS HOMELESS CRISIS IN BUDGET, ORDER

January 8, 2020 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Gavin Newsom said Wednesday that he is seeking \$750 million in part to help pay rent for people facing homelessness in the most populous state's latest attempt to fight what he called a national crisis. Newsom planned to sign an executive order Wednesday creating the fund, two days before he presents his second annual budget proposal to the state Legislature. The state's worsening affordable housing and homelessness problem has prompted anger and outrage from citizens and repeated criticism from President Donald Trump aimed at Newsom and other Democratic leaders.

*Related Story: California's Homelessness Crisis — and Possible Solutions — Explained*

The governor also directed the state to provide 100 travel trailers and modular tent structures to cities and counties that meet certain criteria. The trailers and tents would be used for temporary housing and to provide related health and social services. He also announced a multi-agency "strike team" to help local governments address homelessness. The new fund could include not only state taxpayer money but donations from philanthropic organizations and the private sector. The money would go to providers to pay rent, pay for affordable housing units, or to aid board and care homes.

Newsom said a year ago that he wanted to build housing on surplus state property. His new order directs his administration to identify some of those properties that can be used by local governments or nonprofits to shel-

ter homeless individuals on a short-term emergency basis, so long as it doesn't delay the development of affordable housing.

**Compassion for Those Who Are Homeless 'Isn't Allowing a Person Suffering a Severe Psychotic Break'**

He said the state will measure local governments' success in moving people off the streets as a requirement for receiving more state assistance. "Californians are demanding that all levels of government — federal, state and local — do more to get people off the streets and into services — whether that's emergency housing, mental health services, substance abuse treatment or all of the above," Newsom said in a statement.

He said compassion for those who are homeless "isn't allowing a person suffering a severe psychotic break or from a lethal substance abuse addiction to literally drift towards death on our streets and sidewalks." To that end, he said he is also seeking \$695 million including federal funds to increase spending on preventative healthcare through the state's Medicaid program. The money, which he expected to eventually reach \$1.4 billion, would go to prevent things that he said can lead to homelessness, including aiding tenants and helping people find housing. A portion could even go to rent assistance if it helps individuals lower their high use of healthcare services.

Another nearly \$25 million, eventually growing to more than \$364 million, would go to test programs in three of the state's 58 counties to put those deemed...

**Another nearly \$25 million, eventually growing to more than \$364 million, would go to test programs in three of the state's 58 counties to put those deemed incompetent to stand trial for criminal offenses into community programs instead of state mental hospitals.**

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# AS WILDFIRES GET WORSE, SMOKE SPREADS, STOKES HEALTH WORRIES

AP/Matthew Brown

January 9, 2020 | AP News

PARADISE — First came the flames, a raging firestorm propelled by 50 mph wind gusts that incinerated Kelsey Norton’s house and killed 85 people in her community. Then came the smoke — not just from the forest but also from 14,000 houses and their contents that burned, generating a thick plume that enshrouded portions of Northern California for weeks and left Norton gasping.

“I don’t want to have cancer in my 50s because I inhaled smoke in my 30s,” she said. The immediate toll of lives and property lost a year ago when the Camp Fire tore through the Sierra Nevada foothills town of Paradise, California is

well documented. Still unknown is the long-term impact of the intense smoke exposure suffered by the tragedy’s survivors and the hundreds of thousands of people living in communities downwind of the blaze.

Increasingly intense wildfires are scorching forests from California to Australia and stoking concern among residents and health professionals about long-term health impacts from smoke exposure. The issue has far-reaching implications as climate change turns some regions of the globe drier and more prone to fires that send up smoke plumes that can travel thousands of miles and affect millions of people...

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Grayden Fanning/Capt. Dave’s Dolphin & Whale Watching Safari via AP

## WATCH NEWBORN GRAY WHALE SWIM WITH MOTHER OFF CALIFORNIA COAST

January 8, 2020 | AP News

DANA POINT — A baby gray whale heading south with its mother was spotted swimming alongside dolphins and sea lions off the Southern California coast.

Crew members on a whale-watching boat recorded video of the pair in about 100 feet of water near Salt Creek Beach in Dana Point on Tuesday.

Capt. Frank Brennan aboard Dana Wharf’s Ocean Adventure estimated that the calf was just a day or so old.

“You could still see the fetal folds on it behind the blowhole,” he said of the young whale.

Brennan told the [Orange County Register](#) he followed the pair as white-sided dolphins stopped feeding to check the whales out. The dolphins and whales were then joined by a group of sea lions. The whales are migrating to the...

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## MCDONALD’S TRIES TO SHOO HOMELESS WITH BAGPIPE MUSIC

January 7, 2020 | GV Wire

A McDonald’s restaurant in midtown Sacramento is trying to drive away homeless people by loudly playing nonstop bagpipe music. The tactic isn’t working and it is also annoying the neighbors of the restaurant, which is open 24 hours a day. “It actually penetrates through the walls. We can hear it (when) I’m trying to watch TV or whatever and it’s going through that,” Arnold Phillips told Sacramento television station CBS13.

[Related Story: California’s Homelessness Crisis — and Possible Solutions — Explained](#)

### Bagpipes Tactic Is ‘Absurd,’ Says Neighbor

Another neighbor, Kiara Reede, called the tactic “an absurd action to take instead of actually dealing with the issue.” Patrons who ate at the restaurant Friday told CBS13 they’re weren’t pleased by the sound of blaring bagpipes. “It was offensive to me because it was just so annoying,” Susan Smart said. Phillips, meanwhile, complained to the restaurant’s managers. “They...

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AP/Alex Brandon

# PRESIDENT TRUMP TALKS TO NATION ON IRAN: THIS IS THE TRANSCRIPT

January 8, 2020 | GV Wire

*The following is a transcript of President Donald Trump's remarks on Iran this morning after Iran's ballistic missile strike on two airbases in Iraq that housed American and coalition forces:*

"As long as I'm president of the United States, Iran will never be allowed to have a nuclear weapon. Good morning. I'm pleased to inform you the American people should be extremely grateful and happy. No Americans were harmed in last night's attack by the Iranian regime. We suffered no casualties. All of our soldiers are safe and only minimal damage was sustained at our military bases.

"Our great American forces are prepared for anything. Iran appears to be standing down, which is a good thing for all parties concerned and a very good thing for the world. No American or Iraqi lives were lost because of the precautions taken, the dispersal of forces and an early warning system that worked very well. I salute the incredible skill and courage of America's men and women in uniform. For far too

**"Our great American forces are prepared for anything. Iran appears to be standing down, which is a good thing for all parties concerned and a very good thing for the world." — President Donald Trump**

long, all the way back to 1979 to be exact, nations have tolerated Iran's destructive, destabilizing behavior in the Middle East and beyond. Those days are over. Iran has been the leading sponsor of terrorism and their pursuit of nuclear weapons threatens the civilized world. We will never let that happen. "Last week, we took decisive action to stop a ruthless terrorist from threatening American lives. At my direction, the United States military eliminated the world's top terrorist, Qassem Soleimani.

"As the head of the Quds force, Soleimani was personally responsible for some of the absolutely worst

atrocities. He trained terrorists armies, including Hezbollah, launching terrorist strikes against civilian targets. He fueled bloody civil wars all across the region. He viciously wounded and murdered thousands of U.S. troops, including the planting of roadside bombs that maim and dismember their victims. Soleimani directed the recent attacks on U.S. personnel in Iraq that badly wounded four service members and killed one American. And he orchestrated the violent assault on the U.S. embassy in Baghdad. In recent days, he was planning new attacks on American targets, but we stopped him. Soleimani's hands were drenched in both American and Iranian blood. He should have been terminated long ago. By removing Soleimani we have sent a powerful message to terrorists: if you value your own life, you will not threaten the lives of our people.

**"As we continue to evaluate options in response to Iranian aggression, the United States will immediately impose additional punishing economic sanctions on the Iranian regime." — President Donald Trump**

"As we continue to evaluate options in response to Iranian aggression, the United States will immediately impose additional punishing economic sanctions on the Iranian regime. These powerful sanctions will remain until Iran changes its behavior. In recent months alone, Iran has seized ships in international waters, fired an unprovoked strike on Saudi Arabia, and shot down two U.S. drones. Iran's hostilities substantially increased after the foolish Iran nuclear deal was signed in 2013, and they were given 150 billion dollars, not to mention 1.8 billion dollars in cash. Instead of saying thank you to the United States, they chanted Death to America. In fact, they chanted Death to America the day the agreement was signed. Then Iran went on a terrorist spree funded by the money from the deal and created hell in Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The missiles fired last night at us and our allies were paid for with the...

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# MCCONNELL: GOP WILL START IMPEACHMENT TRIAL, DELAY WITNESSES

AP/J. Scott Applewhite

January 7, 2020 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Tuesday he has secured the Republican votes needed to start President Donald Trump’s impeachment trial and postpone a decision on witnesses or documents that Democrats want.

McConnell is expected to launch the trial as soon as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi sends the articles of impeachment to the Senate. She is set to meet late Tuesday with her leadership team. “We have the votes,” McConnell told reporters. He said the question of new witnesses will be addressed lat-

er “and not before the trial begins.” The GOP leader told senators at their closed-door lunch Tuesday has support for his plan, which is modeled after Bill Clinton’s impeachment trial 20 years ago. It would start the trial first and postpone votes on witnesses until later in the process. “He has 51, for sure,” said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., a top ally of the president, exiting the meeting.

Democrats are ramping up pressure on Republicans to insist on hearing from former national security adviser John Bolton and other witnesses, and not to go along with McConnell’s...

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AP/Ross D. Franklin

## THE OTHER FAKE MEAT: IMPOSSIBLE FOODS UNVEILS PORK, SAUSAGE

January 7, 2020 | AP News

After a big year for its plant-based burger, Impossible Foods has something new on its plate. The California-based company unveiled Impossible Pork and Impossible Sausage on Monday evening at the CES gadget show in Las Vegas. It’s Impossible Food’s first foray beyond fake beef. The Impossible Burger, which went on sale in 2016, has been a key player in the growing category of vegan meats.

Like the burger, Impossible Food’s pork and sausage are made from soy but mimic the taste and texture of ground meat. Impossible Pork will be rolled out to restaurants first. The company isn’t yet saying when it will come to groceries. Impossible Foods only recently began selling its burgers in grocery stores, although they’re available at more than...

[Related Story: Meatsplainer: How New Plant-Based Burgers Compare to Beef](#)

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## STABBINGS, SHOOTINGS, ASSAULTS WEIGH ON US JEWISH YOUTH

January 8, 2020 | AP News

NEW YORK — When a man spewed anti-Semitic slurs and spat on her face, Shoshana Blum remembered her ancestors who survived the Holocaust, and instead of looking down – she defiantly stared at him eye to eye. The 20-year-old junior at City College of New York left the subway in tears. But months after the attack, she continues to wear proudly the same Star of David necklace she wore that day, and on Sunday, she joined thousands of people in a solidarity march against a rise in anti-Semitism and acts of hate.

“It’s important to stand strong in my Judaism,” she said. “If this is what’s happening when we’re out being proud Jewish people, what’s it going to be like if we’re afraid and in hiding?” Many young Jewish people in the United States say their generation is searching for ways to cope with an alarming string of recent anti-Semitic attacks across the country. The “No Hate, No Fear” march on Sunday came as a...

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AP/Emily Leshner





AP/Refiq Maqbool

# WORLD

## US KILLS IRAN'S MOST POWERFUL GENERAL IN BAGHDAD AIR STRIKE

January 2, 2020 | AP News

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran sent mixed signals Thursday as tensions with the U.S. appeared to ease, with President Hassan Rouhani warning of a “very dangerous response” if the U.S. makes “another mistake” and a senior commander vowing “harsher revenge” for the killing of a top Iranian general. Both sides appeared to step

**“We are hearing some intelligence to suggest that Iran is sending a message to the militias not to move forward.” — Vice President Mike Pence**

back on Wednesday after Iran launched a series of ballistic missiles at two military bases housing American troops in Iraq without causing any casualties. Iran said the attack was retaliation for the U.S. strike that killed Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the architect of its regional security strategy, in Iraq earlier this week. Rouhani said the missile attack was a legitimate act of self-defense under the U.N. Charter, but he warned that “if the U.S. makes another mistake, it will receive a very dangerous response.”

In addition to launching the missile attack, Iran also abandoned its remaining commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal, which President Donald Trump had walked away from in May 2018. But Rouhani said Thursday that Iran would continue to cooperate with U.N. inspectors. Senior Iranian military commanders struck a more defiant tone. Abdollah Araghi, a member of Iran’s joint chiefs of staff, said the Revolutionary Guard “will impose a harsher revenge on the enemy in the near future,” according to the semi-official Tasnim news agency. Tasnim also quoted Gen. Ali Fadavi, the acting commander of the Guard, as saying the missile attack was “just one of the manifestations of our abilities.”

### Fueling Concerns That Iran’s Regional Proxies May Carry out Attacks

“We sent dozens of missiles into the heart of the U.S. bases in Iraq and they couldn’t do a damned thing,” he was quoted as saying. Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh, who

leads the country’s aerospace program, said that while Iran only fired 13 missiles at the two bases, “we were prepared to launch hundreds.” He said Iran had simultaneously carried out a cyberattack against U.S. monitoring systems. He also repeated unsubstantiated claims that dozens of Americans were killed or wounded in the strikes. But he said the goal of the operation was not to kill anyone, but to “strike the enemy’s military machine.”

On Wednesday, Trump signalled that he would not retaliate militarily for the strike on the bases. That raised hopes that the current standoff, which brought the two countries to the brink of an all-out war, may be winding down. The strike that killed Soleimani also killed a high-ranking commander of the Iran-backed militias in Iraq known as the Popular Mobilization Forces, which had also vowed to take revenge. That fueled concerns that Iran’s regional proxies may carry out attacks. But U.S. Vice President Mike Pence said the militias also appeared to be standing down. “We are hearing some intelligence to suggest that Iran is sending a message to the militias not to move forward,” he told the Fox News Channel, without elaborating.

### The UK Stands by the Nuclear Deal and Is Urging Iran to Return to Full Compliance

Rouhani meanwhile spoke by phone Thursday with Prime Minister Boris Johnson, urging Britain to denounce the killing of Soleimani. As head of Iran’s elite Quds Force, Soleimani had mobilized powerful militias across the region and was blamed for deadly attacks against Americans going back to the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. In Iran, he is seen by many as a national hero who played a key role in defeating the Islamic State group and resisting Western hegemony. Without Soleimani’s efforts leading forces in Syria and Iraq against IS, “you would not have peace and security in London today,” Rouhani was quoted as saying by Vice President Alireza Moezi, who tweeted about the call...

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## WORLD'S LARGEST VOLUNTEER FORCE FIGHTS AUSTRALIA'S WILDFIRES

AP/Rick Rycroft

January 9, 2020 | AP News

TOMERONG, Australia — The wildfire was behaving erratically last week, and Doug Schutz and his team needed to make a quick decision. So they moved a bulldozer from another job and used it to widen a firebreak. That likely helped prevent hundreds of homes from going up in flames.

If anybody was qualified to make that call, it was Schutz. He began volunteering with the Rural Fire Service in Australia's New South Wales state some 53 years ago, at the age of 13, back when Land Rovers were used as firetrucks. Now captain of the Tomerong brigade, Schutz has also been the victim of a wildfire that burned down his business on Christmas Day in

2001. Schutz is part of an army of 72,000 people from across the state who make up the world's largest volunteer fire service. They've been at the forefront of fighting wildfires that have devastated parts of Australia since September. At least 26 people have been killed by the fires, including three volunteer firefighters.

"I've lived here all my life, and seen a lot of fires. And this one just doesn't want to do what it's supposed to do," Schutz said. "This fire has its own agenda. In some ways, I nearly think it's got a brain. When you think you've got a handle on it, it will sneak around the backdoor and bite you on the...

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AP/Alastair Grant, File

## UPROAR IN UK OVER HARRY AND MEGHAN'S STEP BACK FROM ROYALS

January 9, 2020 | AP News

Britain's royal family scrambled Thursday to contain the fallout from the surprise announcement by Prince Harry and Meghan that they plan "to step back" from royal duties, a shift that ignited media outrage and public unease in the U.K. The couple's declaration that they planned to forge a "progressive" new path for royals in the modern world clearly upset senior royals — who apparently weren't told of the decision in advance.

Britain's media didn't like it either, lambasting the Duke and Duchess of Sussex in articles, columns and editorials Thursday that expressed everything from disappointment to fury. The Daily Mirror said in an editorial that the couple's failure to tell Harry's grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II, about their plans "shows shocking disregard for a woman whose entire life has been ruled by a sense of public duty and honor." The Times of London accused Harry of "petulance and hot-headedness," while the Daily Mail said the couple wanted "the...

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## RENOVATION CHIEF: NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL IS NOT SAVED YET

January 6, 2020 | AP News

PARIS — The French general overseeing the reconstruction of fire-devastated Notre Dame Cathedral says the Paris landmark is not saved yet because there's still a risk its vaulted ceilings might collapse. Gen. Jean-Louis Georgelin told French broadcaster CNews on Sunday that "the cathedral is still in a state of peril" after last year's fire, which destroyed its roof and toppled its 300-foot, 750-ton spire as the cathedral was undergoing renovations.

"Notre Dame is not saved because ... there is an extremely important step ahead, which is to remove the scaffolding that had been built around the spire" before the fire, he said. The rector of Notre Dame, Monsignor Patrick Chauvet, told the AP last month that the cathedral is still so fragile there's a "50% chance" the structure might not be saved, because the scaffolding may fall onto the vaulted ceilings. A former chief of staff of France's armed forces, Georgelin was named by...

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AP/Christophe Ena



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