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Trump drops plan for executive action on census citizenship question

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday was expected to reverse course and drop plans to add a contentious citizenship question to the 2020 census, but order the government do the survey by other means, ABC News reported.

White House: Trump will do all he can to determine who legally lives in the United States

House to hold contempt vote on Barr, Ross next week: Pelosi
White House officials declined to comment ahead of the president's remarks, which were scheduled for 5 p.m. (2100 GMT).

Trump was expected to announce some type of executive action to survey the American public on whether or not they are U.S. citizens, but how that would work was not immediately clear.

The administration's attempts to add the question had been blocked in the courts because of challenges from some U.S. states and civil rights groups.

The census is used to determine how many seats each state gets in the U.S. House of Representatives and also affects how billions of dollars in federal funds are doled out across the country.



FILE PHOTO: U.S. President Donald Trump points to a questioner while taking questions during a news conference following Tuesday's mid-term congressional elections at the White House in Washington, U.S., November 7, 2018. REUTERS/ Kevin Lamarque/File Photo

U.S. government posts \$8 billion deficit in June

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. government posted an \$8 billion budget deficit in June, according to data released on Thursday by the Treasury Department.

Analysts polled by Reuters had expected a \$6.35 billion deficit for the month.

The Treasury said federal spending in June was \$342 billion, down 12% from the same month in 2018, while receipts were \$334 billion, up 6% compared with June 2018.

The deficit for the fiscal year to date was \$747 billion, compared with \$607 billion in the comparable period the year earlier.

When adjusted for calendar effects, the deficit for June was \$55 billion compared with an adjusted deficit of \$30 billion in June 2018. Calendar adjustments had little effect on the year to date figures.



A U.S. Dollar note is seen in this June 22, 2017 illustration photo. REUTERS/ Thomas White/Illustration

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Editor's Choice



Dassault Rafale jet fighters of the French Air Force, fly over statues of the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel during a rehearsal of the traditional Bastille Day military parade in Paris, France, July 11, 2019. REUTERS/Benoit Tessier TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



Royal Navy Type 23 frigate HMS Montrose is pictured at speed in the Mediterranean Sea during Exercise Cougar 12 October 10, 2012. Picture taken October 10, 2012. LA(PHOT) Joel Rouse/Royal Navy/Ministry of Defence/ Handout via REUTERS.



A man carries a broken sunbed following heavy storms in the village of Nea Plagia



Damages at the beach at a hotel in Porto Carras after severe weather hit Greece



Pro-democracy activists lay sunflowers at a memorial site for anti-extradition bill protester Marco Leung, who died after falling from a scaffolding at the Pacific Place complex while protesting, in Hong Kong



A woman stands photographing the scene in a flooded street in New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S., July 10, 2019. Ryan Pasternak/Handout via REUTERS



Girls row a makeshift raft past submerged houses at a flood-affected village in Karbi Anglong district



Rescue workers wade through flood waters as they evacuate a woman with an inflatable swimming pool on a street following heavy rainfall in Pingxiang, Jiangxi

Spectacular Bridge Sculpture Opens in Venice, Italy



Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

An unusual bridge opened in Venice May 11, 2019. The Italian artist Lorenzo Quinn presented his newest sculpture, "Building Bridges", a work of art that consists of six pairs of giant hands, which hang in the form of a bridge over the Venetian Arsenal. Its height is 15 meters, and its width is 20 meters. The "bridge" is located in the area of Castello - the medieval shipyard, which is considered one of the key attractions of the city. The artist calls on people to pay attention to common values and to meet each other, "Humanity does not grow by creating barriers. It has always grown, opening its borders and welcoming new cultures. Venice is a testament to this. The city opened routes to Asia, to the Far East thanks to Marco Polo and merchants. It has always been the driving force of European growth. Venice - is a city of world heritage and a city of bridges. It is an ideal place to tell mankind about the ideas of unity and peace and to encourage more people around the world to build bridges instead of building walls and barriers," said the Italian sculptor Nsky.



The sculpture was opened as part of the 58th Venice Biennale of Contemporary Art. The opening ceremony was attended by the world-famous pianist Lola Astanova, the mayor of Venice and the world reknown Italian singer Andrea Bocelli. "Each pair of hands symbolizes one of six universal values: friendship - to create the future together; wisdom - to make mutually beneficial decisions; help - to strengthen long-term relationships; faith is a symbol of trust in your heart; hope - to continue important undertakings; love is a fundamental goal all of this," explained the artist.



The world-famous pianist Lola Astanova and the world reknown Italian singer Andrea Bocelli performed at the opening of the "Building Bridges" sculpture in Venice.

The artist Lorenzo Quinn has been widely recognized for his work from all over the world. He is the son of the famous

actor, Academy Award winner Anthony Quinn. In all his works, the artist reveals the themes of love and relationships through very unusual forms, including depicting giant human hands. His sculpture "Support", also created in Venice, became the most photographed work of art in 2017. Then through the image of gigantic human hands, he tried to call people for delicate coexistence.



Two years ago, in conjunction with the 2017 Venice Biennale, he created Support, two big hands that supported Ca'Sagredo on the Grand Canal to raise awareness about climate change. Now with Building Bridges - the name of this sculpture - the artist wants to celebrate the six universal values of man: love, friendship, wisdom, help, faith and hope with six pairs of hands that they make up a bridge and on the whole they tell how with cooperation between people it is possible to achieve great goals for the community.

The work, located at the Arsenale of Venice and which has colossal dimensions, 15 meters by 25, within a few days has become, despite being outside the official circuit, the symbol of the Biennale d'Arte.



Interview With The Artist Lorenzo Quinn

Lorenzo Quinn, born and raised in Rome, is an internationally renowned artist with several personal exhibitions - including those at Halcyon which boasts three locations in London and one in Shanghai - and many public sculptures housed in some of the world's great capitals includ-

ing London, Mumbai, Shanghai, Barcelona, Hog Kong, Birmingham and Doha. Forbes.it met Lorenzo Quinn to ask him some questions regarding his new sculpture.

How are your works born?

First individual a theme - which can be personal or of general interest - and what I want to convey because for me it is important that art is a dialogue with the viewer, then I choose the title and some adjectives that can describe the idea and only then I realize the first sketch.

In your art, therefore, the need to transmit a message is correct, correct?

Absolutely yes. I believe in the fourth dimension of art: the message. Art is a universal language and for this reason I have taken the commitment to create works that can be understood by anyone. I absolutely do not want to say that it is enough to create a work to improve themes of general importance but I believe that art can serve to improve the condition of the world.



How do you get to Building Bridges?

I am an artist but also a father and therefore I ask myself about the world we will leave to our children. The first work I did in Venice was called "This is not a game" and depicted two hands blocking a tank. In that case, I wanted to raise public awareness of the war as there was a time of conflict. In 2017 with Support, instead, I wanted to address the issue of climate change. Now with Building Bridges I want to talk about humanity and collaboration between people as an essential element to improve the world. I think it is important to do this because the concept of collective humanity is being lost. My work is an invitation to perform an action.

Making a work of such dimension is

complex, does it tell us about the main phases?

I thought about this work about 18 months ago and after the first renderings I presented it to the municipal administration, which I thank for the support it has always given me over the years. Once they got their approval, we started working thanks to the financial support of the Halcyon Gallery in London. Five months ago, when I still didn't know where it would be placed, I started to produce it anyway because otherwise we wouldn't have arrived in time. A few weeks ago, with all the authorizations in order, we installed it after making some technical changes. It was a great team work as around 350 people with different skills worked on the project.



What will become of Building Bridges after the period of the Art Biennale?

I would like this sculpture of mine to continue to have a life. I have two dreams but I prefer to keep them for myself at the moment.

Have you already developed some ideas for the 2021 Biennale?

Yes, I only say that the work will not represent hands. I want to do something different.

In his art the message is important, this is very reminiscent of street art, what is the idea of street art?

I really like street art and I follow it. I think it's a necessary art form since not all artists have the chance to have the support to get to the galleries. There are terribly beautiful works that can send very strong and direct messages. (Courtesy <https://forbes.it/>)

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SPECIAL REPORT

Oil War On The Horizon?

Iran Threatens To Disrupt Oil Exports From The Persian Gulf



Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Recent developments in the Persian Gulf demonstrate that Iran has taken a strategic decision to respond to escalating U.S. financial and diplomatic pressure against it by threatening the ability of Arab Sunni states—bitter rivals of Iran and allies of America—to export oil to the world. The message from the Islamic Republic to the Trump administration is clear: If Iran won't be able to export its oil, neither will its Arab Sunni neighbors—and so the entire global market is at risk of disruption and destabilization. This is a direct response to the ever-tightening sanctions being placed on Tehran by Washington. Recent U.S. steps include Trump's decision in April to cancel sanction waivers to eight countries that purchase Iranian oil. In recent days, the United States imposed new sanctions on Iranian industrial metals.



President Trump vows to bring about "the official end of Iran" if it threatens the US again.

Last month, the State Department classified its Islamic Republican Guards Corps (IRGC)—a major player in Iran's regional power projection, terrorism network and inside Iran's economy—as a terrorist organization. The latter move is one that some in the American defense establishment assessed could result in retribution.

The decision by Iran to retaliate and extract "a price" for these moves must have been approved by Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei. It has already been translated into action on the ground, with two attacks on oil sites in recent days.

The first occurred the UAE, in which four commercial ships were damaged in sabotage attacks by an oil-tanker hub near the Straits of Hormuz—a major international oil-shipping artery that Iran has threatened in the past. The second attack took place in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, targeting oil facilities near the Saudi capital of Riyadh with explosive drones.

It is safe to assume that the IRGC is behind

both attacks, even if its role in the second incident was limited to passing on instructions to the Iranian-backed Houthi organization in Yemen to launch the drones.



Iran maintains a large network of terrorist, heavily armed proxies throughout the region, giving it the ability of hitting targets while maintaining a facade of plausible deniability.

Its targeting of these sites is no coincidence, as Tehran is particularly enraged by statements from Saudi Arabia pledging to keep the oil-production market steady to make up for the drastic reduction in Iran's oil exports. On April 24, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani stated that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates "owed their existence to Iran" because the Iranians had refused to help former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein invade the two countries. The speech was part of a rebuke of those Gulf states for their willingness to assist the American sanctions. It appears as if the rebuke did not end at the rhetorical level.

Tehran pushes back in calculated approach

Iran's actions are not limited to escalating the security situation in the Gulf.



The U.S. Administration has branded the

Iranian Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) as a terrorist organization.

It has also imposed an ultimatum on the European Union, giving it 60 days to rescue the 2015 nuclear deal. Iran is demanding that Europe come through on financial mechanisms that would allow it to bypass American oil and banking sanctions.

To make it clear that it is serious, the Islamic Republic declared that it would stop observing limits for stockpiling low-enriched uranium, which the nuclear deal limits to 300 kilograms, and its heavy water (which can be used to produce plutonium). Tehran said the nuclear agreement allows it to take these steps if other members of the deal exit it, as the United States had done in May 2018.

Iran is threatening, in essence, to walk away from the nuclear deal if the Europeans cannot shield it from Trump's sanctions. So far, the E.U.'s leaders have made due with calling on Iran to refrain from any dangerous steps.

Ultimately, Iran is so far telling the United States that it will not succumb to pressure tactics designed to get it back to the negotiating table, which is Trump's openly stated goal. Washington wants to drag Iran back to talks in order to come up with a better nuclear deal, as well as address Iran's destructive, aggressive conduct throughout the Middle East.



The US has sent warships and missiles to the Middle East amid Iran tensions.

This approach was summed up last year by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and his 12 demands of Iran, which include ending support for its network of terrorist proxies and an end to its ballistic-missile program.

The Iranians are signaling that they have no

intention of going down that route, even if Pompeo's demands represent an "opening position" in Trump's bargaining tactics.

Meanwhile, America is flexing its own military muscle, both through the mobilization of a carrier strike group to the region and through media reports. This includes Monday's New York Times report, describing how Trump's security team are weighing the sending of a massive U.S. force of 120,000 soldiers, backed by air and naval firepower assets, should Iran resume its nuclear program or attack U.S. forces in Iraq, Syria or at sea.

At this stage, Iran appears to be pursuing a calculated and phased approach, which is limited to sending warnings. But it is a dangerous new development in the standoff with Iran, which is prone to miscalculations and rapid escalations, even if they are unintended.



With no one blinking at this stage, Israel will need to be on high alert for Iranian proxy attacks on it. Whether from Syria or Lebanon—where Iran has built an armed force that has more firepower than most militaries in the world—or in Gaza, Iran has the ability to drag Israel into the fray should the situation escalate further. (Courtesy jns.org)

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