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Chinese citizens turn to virus tracker apps to avoid infected neighborhoods



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Democrats condemn Trump at trial as threat to American democracy



WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Even with acquittal seemingly assured, the Democrats prosecuting President Donald Trump in his impeachment trial made a forceful appeal for conviction on Monday, calling him a man with no moral compass who must be removed to protect American democracy.

Congressman Adam Schiff wrapped up closing arguments for the seven U.S. House of Representatives lawmakers who prosecuted Trump in the historic proceedings after the Republican president's lawyers in their own arguments called the case against him politically motivated, reckless and baseless.

"We have proven Donald Trump guilty. Now do impartial justice and convict him," Schiff, assailing Trump in unusually personal terms, told the assembled senators.

Factbox: 'Midnight in Washington' - quotes from Trump's impeachment trial

"He has betrayed our national security and he will do so again. He has compromised our elections and he will do so again. You will not change him. You cannot constrain him," Schiff said. "If you find the courage to stand up to him, to speak the awful truth to his rank falsehood, your place will be among the Davids who took on Goliath - if only you will say, 'Enough.'"

The Senate impeachment drama neared its conclusion a day before the president is slated to give his annual State of the Union speech to Congress and on the same day that voters in Iowa cast ballots in the first contest in the state-by-state process of choosing the Democratic nominee to challenge Trump in the Nov. 3 election.

On Wednesday, the 100-member, Republican-controlled

Senate is due to vote on whether to remove Trump from office. The Senate seems certain to acquit him. A two-thirds majority is required to remove a president. None of the 53 Senate Republicans has called for conviction.

The Democratic-led House impeached Trump on Dec. 18 on charges of abuse of power for asking Ukraine to investigate political rival Joe Biden and obstruction of Congress for blocking testimony and documents sought by lawmakers in their investigation. Trump has called the impeachment effort an attempted coup by Democrats.

In his arguments, Trump personal lawyer Jay Sekulow urged senators to "stand firm" against what the defense team called an illegitimate impeachment drive.

"This was the first totally partisan presidential impeachment in our nation's history. And it should be our last," Sekulow said. "What the House Democrats have done to this nation, to the Constitution, to the office of the president, to the president himself and to this body (the Senate) is outrageous. They have cheapened the awesome power of impeachment."

Senator Joe Manchin, a Democratic moderate, said he has not decided on whether to vote to acquit Trump and sees "no path" to the required two-thirds majority. But Manchin predicted that a bipartisan majority in the Senate would vote to censure Trump for his actions, a lesser rebuke.

"Removing this president at this time would not only further divide our deeply divided nation but also further poison our already toxic political atmosphere," Manchin said.

Schiff said America's founders intended impeachment - the power given to Congress under the U.S. Constitution to re-

move a president for committing "high crimes and misdemeanors" - to be used rarely.

But he said it must be used to remove a president who "would sell out his country for a political favor," undermine the integrity of elections and invite foreign interference in American affairs.

"For a man like Donald J. Trump," Schiff said.

"He has not changed. He will not change. He has made that clear himself without self-awareness or hesitation," Schiff added. "A man without character or ethical compass will never find his way."

'THE ANSWER IS ELECTIONS'

Sekulow said neither of the charges brought against Trump represent an impeachable offense, and accused Democrats of seeking to negate the 2016 election won by Trump and to subvert the will of the American people.

"The answer is elections, not impeachment," Sekulow said. "The president has done nothing wrong," White House Counsel Pat Cipollone added. "We can, together, end the era of impeachment."

During the trial, Trump's lawyers offered an expansive view of presidential powers and argued he could not be removed for abuse of power. Seizing on these arguments, Schiff told the Senate that if a president cannot be impeached for abuse of power, that would open the door to a range of "utterly unacceptable conduct."

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Chinese citizens turn to virus tracker apps to avoid infected neighborhoods

SHENZHEN, China (Reuters) - Chinese citizens are using mapping programs and travel trackers in a bid to avoid neighborhoods with infections of the coronavirus and to better prepare for the dangers they face.

FILE PHOTO - A woman wearing a mask checks her mobile phone in Shanghai, China January 29, 2020. REUTERS/Aly Song

Both data mapping company QuantUrban and a third-party Wechat mini-program developer have created platforms that take official information on the neighborhoods where confirmed cases live and map it geographically so that users can gauge how close they are to infection sites.

While the WeChat program, called "YiKuang" - or "Epidemic Situation", covers the southern cities of Shenzhen and Guangzhou, QuantUrban's browser-based maps also cover nine other cities in the province.

"Shenzhen might have a major outbreak in the next few days, and government data comes out slowly," said April, a Shenzhen-based manager who declined to give her full name.

"Seeing the map is a psychological comfort. You can't guarantee there won't be fresh cases, but you can avoid an area that's already hit," she said.

Confirmed cases in Shenzhen have climbed rapidly to 245 as of Monday, making the southern tech capital the worst-affected of China's main cities - Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. It has a large population of migrant workers from the heavily affected central provinces.

"We wanted to annotate the information on the map so that the public could better see how epidemic sites are distributed more intuitively, and also remind everyone to make adequate protection," said Yuan Xiaohui, QuantUrban's co-founder and CEO.



FILE PHOTO - A woman wearing a mask checks her mobile phone in Shanghai, China January 29, 2020. REUTERS/Aly Song

Volunteers also help the team to keep the map up to date as the government releases data daily, she said.

Yikuang also relies on volunteers to keep up to date and originally denoted neighborhoods with confirmed cases with a skull and crossbones logo. It has since changed to less alarming exclamation points after

users on social media platform Weibo complained they would cause panic.

"If I know that there are sick people nearby, I can take steps to be extra cautious," a finance student named Steven told Reuters. "I live between Shenzhen and Guangzhou, and these maps are really great there."

QuantUrban is also covering nine other cities in Guangdong province, Yuan said.

State-owned media CCTV and the People's Daily have also given their endorsement to separate programs that help users track whether a bus, train or aeroplane they have traveled on was also used by a confirmed infected patient.

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Witness Jessica Mann leaves Manhattan Criminal Court after testifying in the trial of Harvey Weinstein in New York, US.



A protester is removed from a press conference about U.S. President Donald Trump in Des Moines, Iowa, U.S., February 3, 2020. REUTERS/Carlo Allegri TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



People wait to board a United Nations plane which will carry them and other patients to Amman, Jordan in the first flight of a medical air bridge from Sanaa airport in Sanaa, Yemen



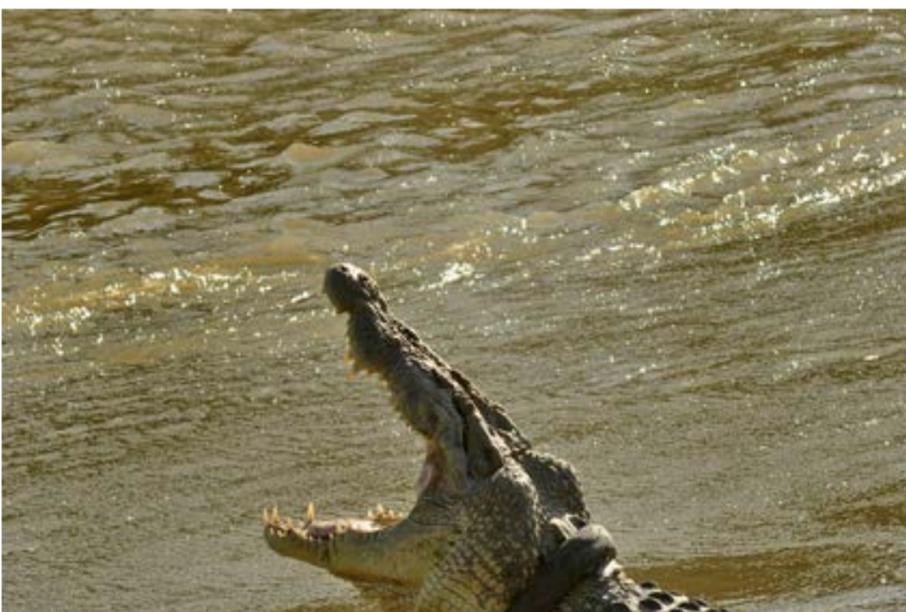
Feb 2, 2020; Washington, District of Columbia, USA; Fans show support for Washington Wizards forward Rui Hachimura (8) before the game between the Washington Wizards and the Golden State Warriors at Capital One Arena. Mandatory Credit: Brad Mills-USA TODAY Sports



Polish President Duda meets with his French counterpart Macron in Warsaw



An Israeli border policeman is on fire as he is hit with a molotov cocktail thrown by Palestinian demonstrators during a protest against the U.S. President Donald Trump's Middle East peace plan, in Hebron in the Israeli-occupied West Bank



A wild crocodile with a tire wrapped around its neck is seen in Palu, Central Sulawesi



NFL Football - Super Bowl LIV - Kansas City Chiefs v San Francisco 49ers - Hard Rock Stadium, Miami, Florida, U.S. - February 2, 2020. Kansas City Chiefs' Patrick Mahomes scores their first touchdown. REUTERS/Shannon Stapleton TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY

West African Artifacts Recall Great Forgotten Empires And The Battle To Own Africa's Art



Installation view of Sahel: Art and Empires on the Shores of the Sahara at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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

The fight for control of Africa's art objects is one of the most hotly debated topics in today's art world. Museums in London, Paris, New York and across the Western world hold some of Africa's most treasured artifacts, despite calls from African politicians, artists, activists and scholars to return the objects that were originally stolen during slave trade and the colonial period.

A major exhibition on life in the Sahel region before and during colonialism that opened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City Thursday, Jan. 30, raises the issue again even while also placing the region's crucial contributions to the modern world at the forefront of one of the globe's most visited museums. With more than 200 works of art made from clay, iron, gold, wood, stone, ink, cloth, and more ranging from more than 2,000 years ago to the early 20th century, "Sahel: Art and Empires on the Shores of the Sahara," which runs until May 10, is the largest exhibit on the Ghana, Mali, Songhai, and Segu empires.

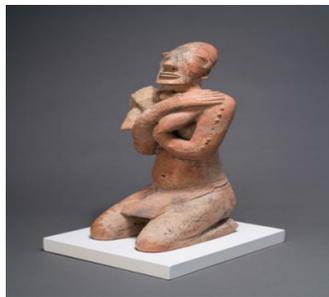


Installation view of Sahel: Art and Empires on the Shores of the Sahara at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Conceived in part to counter contemporary narratives of violence and insecurity that Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger are facing, the exhibition is an important step towards building a more comprehensive and accurate view of world history, which is a prerequisite for dealing with today's challenges both in the Sahel and abroad. "The exhibit forces us to ask, what is the legacy of this long history? How has it been affected by colonial and post-colonial legacies?" said Dr. Mamadou Diouf, director of Columbia University's Institute for African Studies and a consultant for the exhibition. The exhibit implies

that looking to the precolonial past can help imagine a better world for the future.

The Sahel at the time of Ghana, Mali, Songhai, and Segu empires was home to dynamic and flourishing societies with expansive trade networks that became abundantly wealthy centers of learning and exchange, as well as of warfare and slavery. Colonialism and its myriad legacies impeded and erased these histories both in West Africa and abroad.



Middle Niger civilization, Mali 12th-14th century Terracotta The Menil Collection, Houston (1982-20 DJ)

These erasures began with a conscious effort to attempt to diminish the humanity of West African people in order to justify the transatlantic slavery and later, colonization. They have led to the attempted destruction of knowledge of indigenous systems of governance in favor of European-imposed ones in West Africa.

A number of objects on display recall those systems of governance and ways of life. A gravestone for a queen who did not come to power through marriage or bloodline in Gao, modern-day Mali, in 1119, attests to women heads of state whose stories have been otherwise erased from both oral and written histories. Seated figures sculpted from clay, a medium traditionally associated with women, challenge today's gender norms that have often excluded women sculptors.

An 18th century manuscript in Arabic script describes "curing diseases both apparent and hidden," while a 15th century

map depicts legendary emperor Mansa Musa holding a gold nugget, the wealth that later that century attracted meddling foreigners.

This exhibition is the first of its kind by a major American institution, which illustrates the paucity of international institutional resources dedicated to showcasing art from this region. The Met's permanent collection of African art (not including Ancient Egypt), for example, is grouped with art from Oceania and the Americas and hosts some 11,000 objects, while its European Sculpture and Decorative Arts collection alone contains more than 50,000 objects, and have remained abroad ever since.



Reclining Figure Middle Niger civilization, Jenne-jeno, Mali 12th-14th century Terracotta Musée National du Mali, Bamako (R 88-19-275)



Timbuktu, Mali 1733 Manuscript on paper Mamma Haidara Memorial Library, Timbuktu, Mali (116)

But calls for the immediate repatriation of looted art, like the 46,000 African objects from the colonial era currently held in the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris, are growing. In a highly publicized ceremony in November, French prime minister Edouard Philippe returned a sword from West African scholar and military com-

mander El-Hadj Omar Tall to Senegal's current president Macky Sall. French troops had taken the sword, as well as jewelry, manuscripts and other military equipment, during their military conquest of the royal palace in Segou, current-day Mali, in 1890, and Senegal had asked for the return of art objects to be housed in its newly-opened Museum of Black Civilizations.

The exhibition doesn't address the issue of the objects' contested status, undermining the implications of Diouf's opening questions. On display are a handful of ornate necklaces and other jewelry made from gold, silver, and leather, from the same royal palace, on loan from the Musée du Quai Branly. The accompanying description explains that the jewelry was part of "the collective wealth removed from the palace of Ahmadu Sheku in 1890, at the time of French conquest." It avoids the active voice, the concept of theft, and the demands for the objects' repatriation.

Today, the Sahel is threatened by jihadist groups affiliated with Al Qaeda and ISIS, and a flailing and entrenched military strategy led by France. Hundreds of thousands of children are out of school, and scores of people are killed each month. The rising insecurity has ground most archaeological work in the region to a halt, despite the unknown quantity of priceless art and other historical objects lying in the soil. (Courtesy qz.com)

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“We still have a low risk to the American public. But we want to keep it at a low risk.”
---NIAID Director Anthony Fauci

U.S. Declares A Public Health Emergency Due To Coronavirus



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

A White House task force announced a nationwide public health emergency over the coronavirus outbreak Friday, triggering mandatory quarantines for US citizens traveling from the epicenter of the disease in China’s Hubei province. In a presidential proclamation, the task force also announced that President Trump would be barring foreign nationals traveling from China from entering the US. Relatives of US citizens would be allowed entry. The orders took effect on Sunday at 5 p.m. ET. “It really is intended to stop the spread of this virus,” CDC Director Robert Redfield said at a White House briefing on the announcement. He added that the current risk of the virus for people in the US is “low.” Under the order, U.S. travelers from Hubei province in China would face mandatory quarantines of up to 14 days in screening centers, while travelers from elsewhere in China would be asked to self-quarantine at home.



U.S. travelers from Hubei province in China face mandatory quarantines of up to 14 days in screening centers, while travelers from elsewhere in China are asked to self-quarantine at home.

“We still have a low risk to the American public,” said National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease Director Anthony Fauci. “But we want to keep it at a low risk.” As justification for the steps, Fauci and Redfield cited the still-unknown incubation period for the virus, and its newly confirmed ability to infect new people while patients don’t display symptoms. “We don’t know the natural history of

how this virus is secreted,” said Redfield. As of Saturday morning, the total 2019-nCoV coronavirus case count stood at more than 12,000 patients, the vast majority in China, and 259 deaths, the vast majority in Hubei province. There are now seven US cases, the most recent announced on Friday in California’s Santa Clara County, an adult man who had recently returned from Wuhan, China, the apparent origin of the outbreak. Asked about the daily changes to travel warnings and restrictions over the course of the outbreak, microbiologist Matthew Frieman of the University of Maryland School of Medicine referenced boxer Mike Tyson’s adage that ‘everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth.’ **Confirmed Coronavirus Cases In The U.S.**



A woman in the San Francisco Bay Area who became ill after returning from China is the ninth person in the U.S. to test positive for the new coronavirus, the Associated Press reported on Sunday. Additional confirmed U.S. cases have been reported in Boston, Los Angeles County and Orange County in California; Maricopa County, Arizona; Snohomish County, Washington; and a husband and wife in Chicago.

“We haven’t been punched in the face,” Frieman said. “But China has taken one.” Recent studies pointing to transmission of the virus early in an infection and the case of an infection occurring on US soil widens the potential for an outbreak, he said. “I would think they are taking these steps out of an overabundance of caution.” US airlines have halted flights to and from China, and discussions are under-

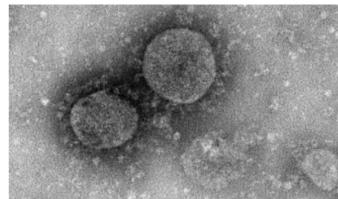
way with Chinese carriers on how to implement screening of passengers. And on Thursday, the World Health Organization had declared the outbreak a global health emergency but said that move was intended to steer medical screening assistance to smaller nations, not to trigger travel restrictions.



The Trump administration’s new travel restrictions and quarantine efforts have led some experts to criticize the measures as an overreach.

“This is exactly what WHO warned against,” said global health law expert Lawrence Gostin of Georgetown University. Gostin said the move to quarantine travelers coming from Hubei Province was reasonable, given case numbers there, but that the requirement should have been for voluntary home isolation instead of mandatory detention. And barring foreign travelers from China, along with making US citizens self-quarantine at home, he said, likely violated civil rights laws, without leading to any real lowered risk of a US outbreak. “We are slipping from overconfidence into panic and overreaction,” said Gostin. Amesh Adjala of Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, speaking for the Infectious Disease Society of America, said that “decades” of research show that travel bans are actu-

ally counterproductive in derailing outbreaks. They lead to difficulties getting resources to outbreak centers, bankruptcy, and economic hardship there, and cause stigma for residents from the affected areas.



The new coronavirus under a microscope.
“It’s kind of frustrating that we always have these kind of discussions during every outbreak, no matter how many experts explain why it causes negative consequences,” Adjala said. “I think it is a bad turn of events.” (Courtesy <https://www.upi.com/>)



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